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## Return to democracy



AZIZUR RAHIM PEU / DRINKNEWS

After the Awami League president Sheikh Hasina was set free on bail, the release of BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has strengthened and encouraged the mass people of the country to stick to their faith that the present caretaker government is on the right track to holding the next general parliamentary election in time.

The next parliamentary election is a must for the country to come back from its present course to the course of democracy. Needless to say that not only the political parties but all the people want a return to democracy.

Every conscious citizen of the country will admit unhesitatingly

that the present government has achieved tremendous success in all areas except one or two. Especially, the on going anti-corruption drive, acclaimed by the whole nation, has played a very important role in combating the social malady.

This is an evidence of the government's efficiency and ability to do whatever is good for the country and the nation. But at this very moment what the people expect is that the government will hold the next parliamentary elections in a neutral, credible and acceptable manner.

Kshitish Chandra Milan  
Assistant Teacher  
BograYMCA Public School, Bogra

### Looking back to 1/11

1/11 had rescued the nation from a 'civil war' and a catastrophe, at a juncture when time was rapidly running out at the irresponsible stance of both the major political parties of our country.

Election was on the verge of being seriously rigged and results hijacked! The president had no option left but to declare emergency. But emergency with a 'civilian' face for ease of acceptability, when it had been with the support of armed forces. But alas! Emergency with all or any of its connotations had proved so MEEK and toothless, that almost everyone, directly or otherwise, flouted, albeit threatened the establishment at times to achieve political concessions, etc.

Mr Shahnoor Wahid's piece today (16th Sep) in the DS summed it all in its essence, and lamented that the nation is about to find all the criminally accused persons back on their seats again to continue with corruption! The bailing out in the dozens of the known criminals, and garlanding by the sycophants, is such a national face that it defies all sanity.

Are there no competent candidates ready to head/lead the parties? No, because we simply idolise our 'leaders' blindly. Absolutely incompetent leaders who know well how to lead the nation to disasters are ensuring that we plunge into the depth of corruption

and incompetence.

Some say that they were in fact 'protected' in VIP enclosures/rest houses away from any possible wrath and hatred that would have been brewing in common people's minds. What a novel and generous way to treat the known CRIMINALS! They have looted, mismanaged and destroyed all the institutions with bribery and hooliganism for their selfish goals during their reign.

Again the common people want to know on whose orders and pressure, hundreds are being bailed out? Is this at all going to legitimise the 'democratic' practices and the elections or is it the exit strategy of the CTG?

This had been a very opportune time for the nation to ascend a step or two towards achieving MDGs and show the light to the nation through reducing corruption, decriminalising politics, and overhauling the education sector positively, so that in a decade or so the nation matures into a sound society, and we gradually improve in the human development index. We are indeed far behind other nations.

Currently, we have the maximum number of PhDs ever in the history of any government in Bangladesh. Who else will think of the intellectual uplift of the nation other than these people? Again we wish to see that these PhDs sit and brainstorm to give the nation a sound, effective education policy

to qualify us for the 21st century.

So, please for the sake of the nation, roll your sleeves up and start working and thinking how and what you can do for the nation while there is still 'power' in your hands. Please show some sincerity before you all leave the seats to the same old, criminal politicians.

Whither our education? our population plan? Our fiscal rescue plan? Our social security plan?

CTG, please leave behind at least one particular legacy that is really significant in restoring peace and enhancing education standards which now have touched the nadir! We can expect this only from the you, I wish to believe. If not this, it will surely help the next generation. There is no other way out!

Syed Imtiaz Ali  
Banani  
Dhaka

### Marching ahead

Our society is intertwined like other developing countries with progressive ideas for ensuring peace, progress and prosperity.

We are in the last days of the annual holy month of Ramadan and getting close to the holidays for festivals like Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja. The country's political culture has to improve before we can live in peace throughout the year.

Golam Ashraf  
BTM Mayfair Apartment  
Gulshan, Dhaka

### Traffic jam in Gulshan

The posh residential area Gulshan has become a busy commercial hub of the city, it has gradually lost its residential character. As a result, a huge number of multinational and national corporate houses set up their multistoried offices in Gulshan. Most of the offices are on the Gulshan Avenue and nearly every one of them has no parking space. Let me tell you the story, starting from the shooting club point, in front of the club a bank has its head office without any parking space and some steps ahead a mobile company recently started their new corporate office and that creates chaotic traffic jam as lots of cars are parked on the street, none of the law enforcers are saying anything to them. Now come to Gulshan-1 intersection where a shopping mall is situated and cars are parked in front of the mall. These generate huge traffic jam as the left side of the intersection goes to the car owners. The on-duty policemen are helpless and cannot go against the lawbreakers as they are more powerful.

How can we deal with the VIP lawbreakers whose number is increasing day by day? S.M.A. Rakib  
Uttara R/A  
Dhaka

### Ban smoking

The government should ban smoking completely because it causes serious health problem. It not only harms smokers but non-smokers are also affected by it. Though the govt. earns hefty revenue from the tobacco industry it should ban marketing of tobacco & related products. Non-smokers should not suffer for the fancy of smoking cigarettes by others.

Smoking may be discouraged by imposing heavy duty on import of raw tobacco & VAT on retail cigarette. Hope the government will take necessary steps in this regard. Syed Muhammad Azim  
Moushumi R/A, Nayabazar  
Chittagong

### Student leaders or trouble makers?

Being students of Dhaka University, we are subjected to undemocratic, asocial and uncivilised conducts by the so called student leaders, either from the JCD or the BCL. They try to dominate and force the general students into subjugation, which of course is not acceptable. The political parties should address the issue and play a role in ensuring healthy student politics in the educational arena.

Tonmoy Anwar  
A final year student  
Dhaka University

### Dhaka Warriors

In one way, I do feel that they are defectors and, on the other hand, I feel good that at least some new cricketers will get the opportunity to play for the national team. The BCB should learn how other countries deal with this kind of situation and how their players respect rules of their cricket board. Look at countries like England and Australia.

Ricky Ponting came to play for IPL and when his services were needed at home his exit was easy from the IPL to join the rest of the Australian team.

Anyway, if 'Dhaka Warriors' do not play well then they will be criticised in the international media and their management as well. Even though they will be signing for three years, but bear in mind that to stay in the best eleven, players have to perform well and if they don't, then the management will always find replacements.

So, my suggestion is—just let them play. Do not bring the money issue in, as you have to remember that they are professional cricketers.

Kazol Haque  
One-mail

## Sexual harassment by teachers

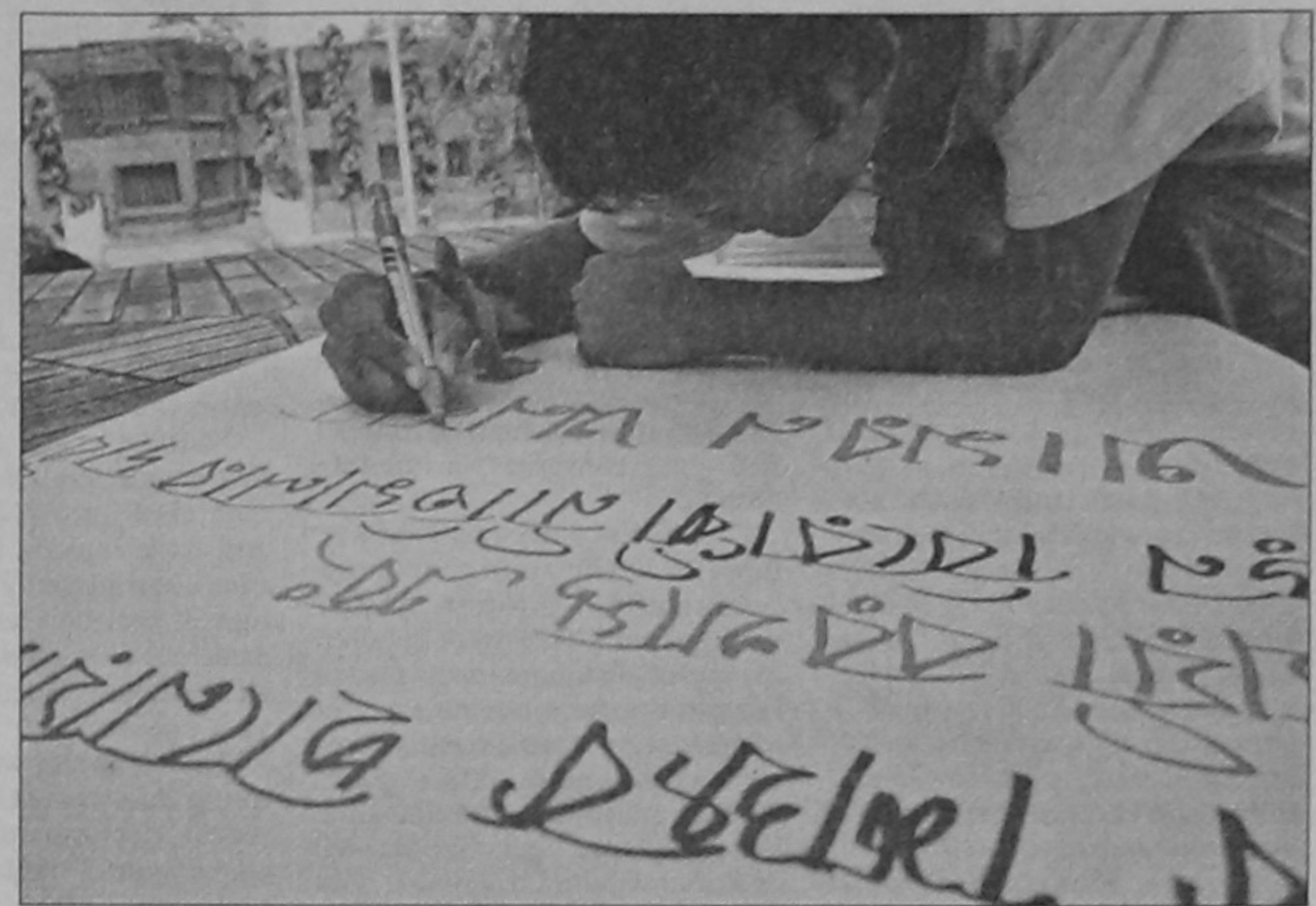
I am once more prompted to write this letter (refer to my letter of September 5, 2008 on the same subject) after reading the news item captioned "Sexual Harassment at JU: Make probe report public", published in your daily on September 17, 2008. This also has got to do with Ms. Nasrin Pervin's letter published on September 12, 2008 on sexual harassment in educational institutions. What is remarkable about the letter is, she specifically cited the name of a department and claimed that one of her close friends was the victim of her teacher's constant insistence to get into such a relationship. Thus the authenticity of her narrative cannot be disregarded.

To me, two things need to be noticed here. One that has been covertly hinted at by Ms. Pervin, and that is, not only the teachers of a particular university are engaged in such indecent behaviours with their female students, but also other public university teachers have been indulging in such practices for quite a long time. The other is, since she has mentioned an anonymous teacher of a particular department still

involved in this kind of debauchery, we have every reason to believe that there exist many such teachers in other departments too, and their masks need to be uncovered immediately. In this case the Ministry of Education, University Grants Commission, our

Judiciary and, above all, our parents have a strong role to play and the sooner something is done, the better for the country.

Adnan Karim  
Kalabagan  
Dhaka



AMJADUL HUQ / DRINKNEWS

### BNP government in disguise

I have gone through the letter "BNP government in disguise" of 10 September '08 issue written by Abdul Moyeen. I read this letter attentively - and it was hard to believe it! In fact, I was doubtful whether it was seriously stated or not. However, if we see the last couple of days' developments between the government and the BNP, it seems the writer was right! It also appears the BNP has already gained or healed its wounds! Who worked behind it or who helped it really? There are three major driving forces - government, opposition and BNP itself.

I think people will find the real driving force behind this dramatic development. Nikhil Datta  
Dhanmondi  
Dhaka

### Admission tests

The education ministry is planning to draft a resolution regarding admission into higher seats of learning, it's considering cancellation of admission tests and introducing admission based on students' GPAs achieved in HSC & SSC exams. Already admission into colleges is GPA based. And we know what a mess it has created! In this case it can somehow be tolerated but in case of admission into universities, medical colleges it should better be aborted for the sake of quality education. Getting good grades, especially in public exams, is not that difficult now, given the present system.

This system cannot judge the real merit of a student. Admission tests create equal opportunities for all. Sharif Jafar  
Banani, Dhaka

### Visa issue

Why shouldn't issuance of prior visa be done away with between Bangladesh and India and also among the Saarc countries? I would like to know what is the problem between these two friendly countries.

Thousands of our students are studying in India, thousands of our people are going to India for better medical treatment, thousands of our tourists are visiting India just for the sake of tourism, our import business mainly depends on Indian supply, once we were part of greater India, still many relatives of thousands of families are living in India, then where is the problem? Who will be losing if prior visa system is not there?

I believe both the governments

are concerned about the well being of their respective citizens. So, I strongly demand of the government of the two countries to sit together and take a quick decision to withdraw prior visa system between these two countries and allow entry visa and thus help to minimize the sufferings of the people of both the countries. If Europeans are able to travel within Europe without visa, why can't we?

If you want to know what suffering I am talking about, please pay a visit to the Indian embassy in Dhaka and have a look at the thousands of people waiting and sleeping for 2/3 days at roadside and under the open sky for their golden deer--VISA.

Mohammad Nazakat Ali  
Pallabi Extension  
Dhaka

## BDR shops

Last year, we came to know that to provide vegetable etc at reasonable prices some vegetable markets at various locations of Dhaka city would be opened and these would be managed by the BDR. The vegetable prices will be fair, as vegetables producers will directly sell their products from these markets.

But this venture has failed. No vegetable is available at fair price in those markets. What they have achieved is establishing some markets by occupying govt land and, some playgrounds/parks etc. The BDR has also set up permanent department shops called "BDR shops" in some places.

Was it prudent to order BDR or any para-military force to go into such type of business activities for a long time? This will definitely divert their full



KAZOL HAQUE / DRINKNEWS

attention from their primary duty.

If asked by the government, they would definitely carry out open market sale of staple food items like, rice, flour etc from very temporary locations but definitely they should not go into permanent business by opening shops.

Let BDR, a very patriotic force and our pride, be involved in making our border secure, making life of people living in border areas safe from attacks from across the border and curtailing smuggling.

Quazi Salimuddin  
Adabor, Dhaka

### To tell the truth...

Almost all of us learnt in school -- "Always tell the truth". Since then, the more we can grasp the meaning of the truth, the more we comprehend the risks involved in telling the truth at the wrong time and wrong place! I browsed the encyclopedia to know why telling truth doesn't do justice to us.

For thousands of years, philosophy is on its relentless quest for the answer to the question "what is truth." According to philosophical reasoning, what one thinks true is true only when the criteria by which it is judged are true. The four main theories, in philosophy, proposed to answer this question, are the correspondence, pragmatic, coherence, and deflationary theories of truth.

The correspondence theory traces its origin thousands years back in the 4th century BC. Greek philosopher Plato proposed the theory based on intuitive recognition. The core of this argument was that true statements correspond to the facts that is, agree with reality while false statements do not.

American philosopher Charles S. Peirce, in the late 19th-century, offered another answer. The pragmatist asserted that truth is that which experts will agree upon when their investigations are final.

A third theory of truth is the coherence theory that also concerns the meaning of knowledge. Coherence theorists have claimed that a set of beliefs is true if the beliefs are comprehensive that is, they cover everything and do not contradict each other.

At this juncture appear some theorists who advocate what is known as deflationary theories. They concur that there is a number of occasions in which a sentence such as "it is true that they've gone back on their word" can have different impact than the shorter statement "they've gone back on their word". Ironically, here the use of "it is true" deflates quality of the statement alluding to that most of it is true.

Honestly, as I was telling, people don't let on truth when it means letting the cat out of the bag. Sometimes, truth is in inverse relation to happiness. The more truth is heard, the more it unmasks

people.

In some cases people make a mountain out of a molehill and in some they sweep truths under the carpet. Truths are not all the time cohesive and truths may be conflicting as there are many sorts of truths.

In the course of time, truths, in permeation, gather diversity but deviating grain by grain, from their fundamentals. In this line of reasoning, German philosopher and poet Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche gives a gnomish answer "Truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins".

However, after a long time, at least one person claimed that telling "truth" saved his honour, thanks to the Truth Commission. To stop short of details, he started electrically and swept into his car and, in a flash, mingled into the course of life.

Roney  
One-mail

## Russia repeats the mistake!

At its peak, the Soviet Union was a formidable military power, but it was a Third World nation with missiles. The Soviet economy was simply not working. Without competition, most state-owned factories were producing shoddy products which no one wanted. Soviet agriculture was in a terrible state. Soviet Republic of Ukraine was once the bread-basket of Europe before collectivisation. But under the Soviet rule, it became anetimporter.

The largest portion of Soviet spending was going to maintain its huge military machine. As most Soviet-controlled states were seething with discontent, military might was keeping them under the Soviet control. This is why the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to prop up a pro-Moscow regime in Kabul. When 80,000 troops invaded Afghanistan to stop American-backed Mujahedins from toppling the pro-Moscow regime in Kabul, the Soviet commanders were supremely confident. The Soviet Union was a formidable superpower and the Soviet forces were backed up by fighter bombers, helicopter gunships, tanks and mechanised infantry divisions in full combat gear and the Mujahedins had no chance against such a mighty military machine. But the insurgents resorted to hit-and-run guerrilla attacks. In retaliation, the Soviet forces unleashed their enormous firepower.

The result was utter destruction of Afghanistan, but the Soviets could not defeat the Mujahedins who could regroup

using Pakistan's tribal areas as their staging posts. As a result, the Soviet forces were forced to withdraw after suffering massive casualties.

But the Afghan war proved to be enormously costly and the Soviet Union faced total bankruptcy. It is not surprising that the collapse of the Soviet Union came immediately after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan. A weakened Soviet Union could not hold on to its diverse republics and satellites in Eastern Europe and the mighty Soviet Union crumbled.

By invading Georgia to prop up its surrogates in South Ossetia, Russia seems not to have learned any lesson from its debacle in Afghanistan. Threats to Russia come from inside and not from NATO. Although defeated, Chechnya remains restless and the Chechnyan rebels are looking for an opportunity to strike back. Conflict with Georgia may offer them an opportunity to do so.

Also the warlike Cossacks inside Russia are known for their distaste for Russian domination. By invading tiny Georgia, Russia seems to have opened a Pandora's Box which might embroil the country in a never-ending conflict.

American philosopher George Santayana once remarked: "Those who don't learn from history, end up repeating it." By invading Georgia, Russia seems to have proved the point.

Mahmood Elahi  
Ottawa, Canada

