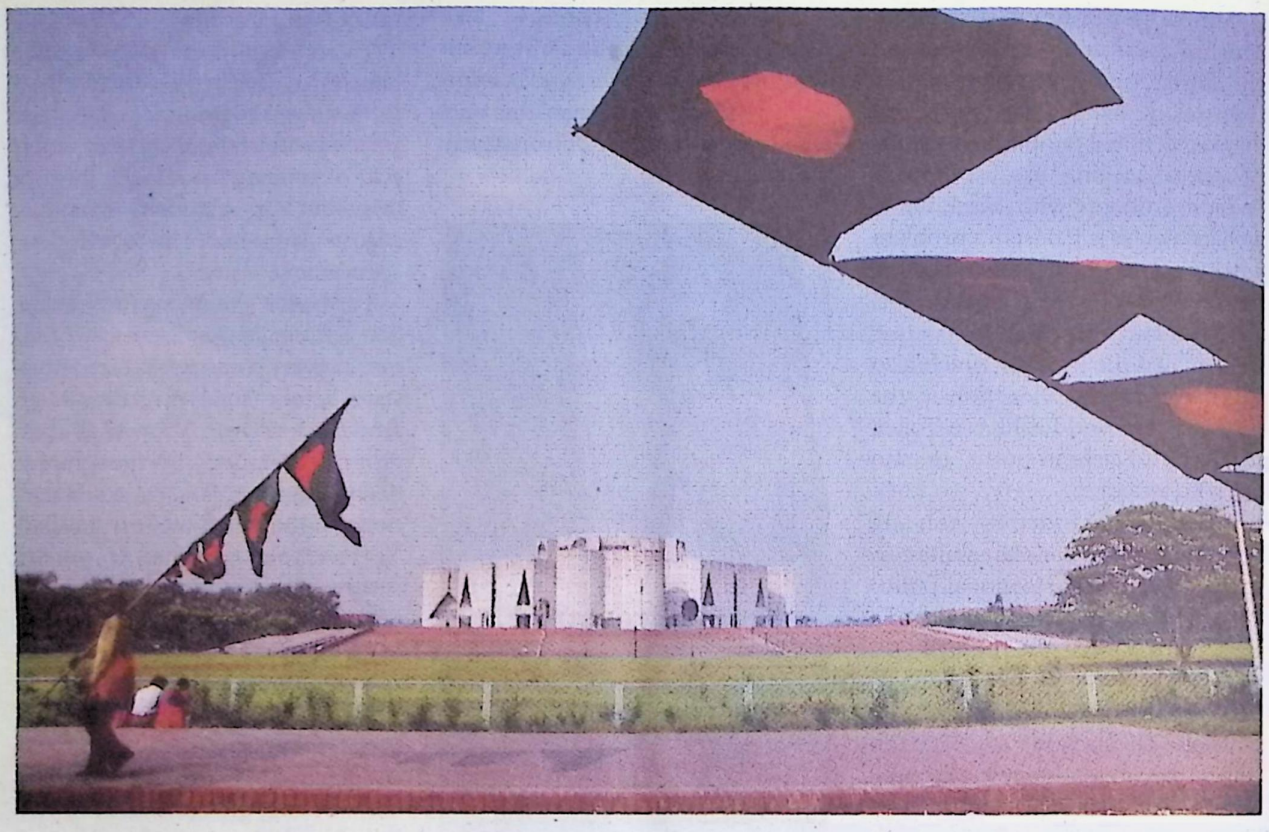


MUNIRUZZAMAN/DRIKNEWS

Informed Choice

Access to information is the key to good elections, argues SHAYAN S. KHAN

BANGLADESH'S return to democracy is much anticipated, and an obvious cause for much speculation. The recent dilly-dallying about our date with that destiny we are so eager to meet has finally settled for the fag end of December.

Who does not wonder what it holds for us? Can it awaken us to a different conscience? Will it ring the bells of change that is positive, egalitarian, and progressive? Or will it be a mere instrument to revert back to that model of society unique to us from 1991 to 2006 (which, if one may be so crude, was nothing more than a bastardisation of the concept of democracy)?

What is the change that we seek anyway? Leave no room for doubt, that each and every Bangladeshi, whether individually or as part of a group, party or social circle exerts concern over his or her country's future. But our singular failure as a people over the last two years has been in defining, consensually, what we want, expect, and can entrust to our government.

So as December 29 approaches, is there any indication of a better class of politicians, a better conduct of politics, on the horizon? If there is, I certainly have not seen it. It could not have been expected, of course. Two years is a timeframe for quitting cigarettes. Not for cleansing a nation's political structure.

And so, for better or worse, we are set to vote again for the same old faces, engage in the same old vices, and then swear at the same broken promises. But two years cannot be erased from the course