

Canal lost to grabbers

PINAKI ROY

All kinds of affordable furniture were being sold there. The concrete signpost is hardly visible amid the stack of cots, chairs, tables and clothes rack.

The sign reads that the owner of the canal is "The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh". It also says, "Keep the canal and its land free from illegal occupation, it is the property of Dhaka Wasa and it is for the passage of people only."

The sign went on to say that it is everyone's duty to preserve the canal.

Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) set up the sign near Khilgaon level crossing just a year ago. The colour has not faded yet.

But there is no sign of a canal there, not one even close by. "What do you want to buy?" a furniture shopkeeper asked The Daily Star correspondent as he was trying to decipher the sign surrounded by furniture. "All these are good furniture," he said.

"Actually, I am looking for the Khilgaon Canal," said the correspondent.

"This is the canal," the shopkeeper said pointing to a gravel road not more than three to four feet wide as furniture shops occupy both the sides.

The box culvert canal zigzagged its way towards Bashabo.

It was hard to walk on it with all those furniture shops displaying their goods there.

The correspondent finally found the canal over one kilometre south of the signpost in Bashabo where there was no culvert on the canal.

Locals said the Khilgaon Canal flows into the Norai and the Dolai rivers through Bashabo but now it has turned into a wide gutter where muck flows.

The correspondent could not find the northern end of the canal.

Locals claimed that covering the canal and filling up of other wetlands in Bashabo, Khilgaon and Shahjahanpur areas are the key reasons for water logging there.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

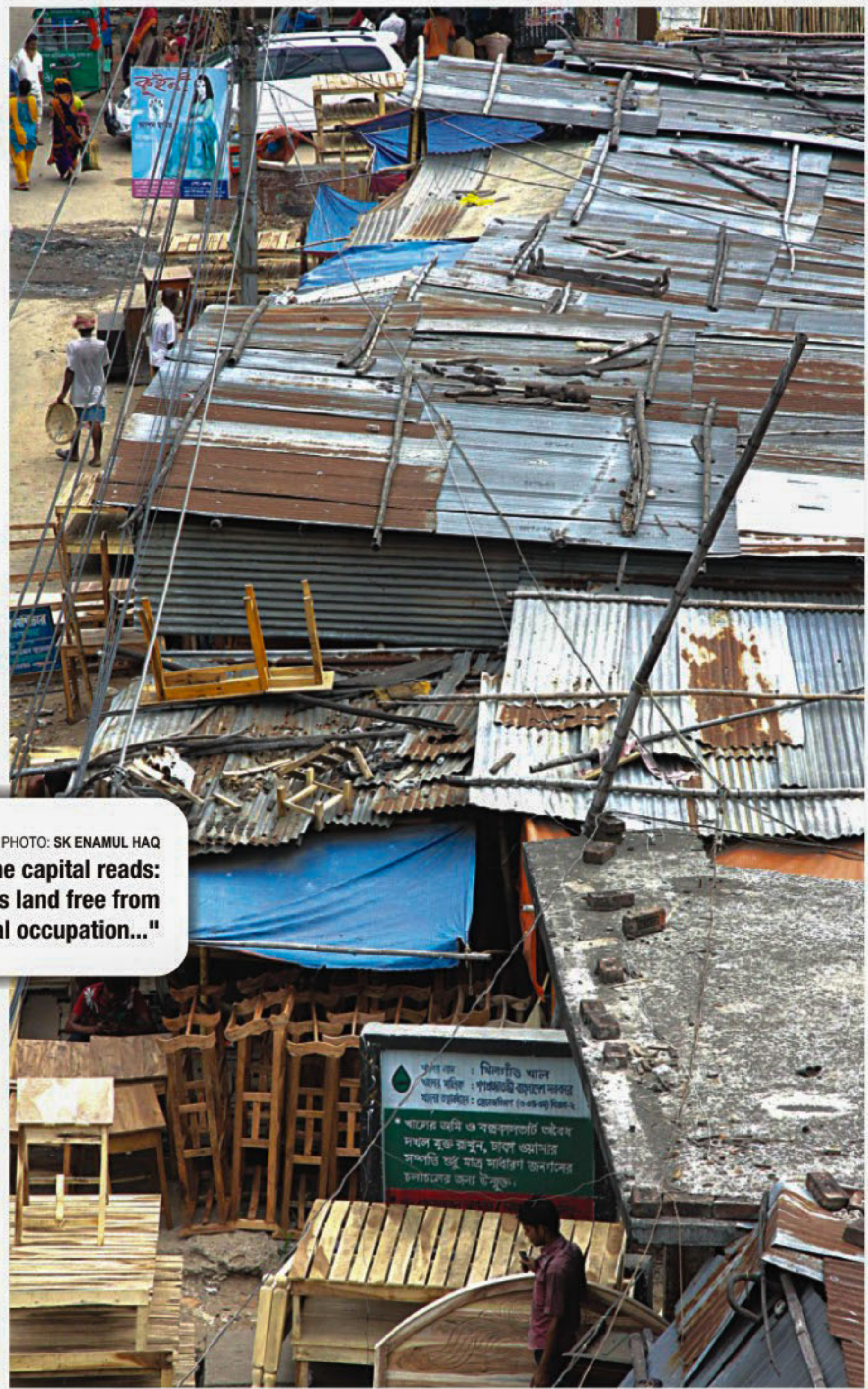


PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ
The sign at Khilgaon in the capital reads: "Keep the canal and its land free from illegal occupation..."

Hartal call stuns many in BNP

Some pro-BNP intellectuals behind the decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suggestions of some pro-BNP intellectuals and assurance of a number of mid-level leaders played a vital role in calling hartal as a beginning of anti-government movement announced by the main opposition.

Khaleda Zia's announcement of hartal came as a surprise to many of the leaders as there was strong opposition within the party to any kind of negative programmes like hartal and blockade.

Apart from taking opinion from the standing committee members on Sunday, the party chairperson also discussed the matter with some of her advisers and pro-BNP professionals, party insiders said.

They said the chairperson earlier was not interested in announcing hartal but a number of pro-BNP intellectuals and professionals persuaded her into declaring hartal.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Hartal called to block war crimes trial

Say AL leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of ruling party yesterday said the BNP has called the countrywide dawn to dusk hartal on June 27 in a bid to foil the trial of war criminals and create anarchy in the country.

"When the countrymen are against destructive politics, Khaleda Zia by calling hartal wants to hamper government's development activities and save war criminals, which proves that she is against a healthy positive political trend," AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam said.

He was speaking at a rally

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

GOVT OPENING UP VOIP

3,500 new licences in three months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to issue more than 3,500 licences to the local entrepreneurs for handling international calls to and from Bangladesh through voice over internet protocol technology, which is still prohibited under the existing law.

"The licences will be issued to the new entrants within next three months after the Telecom Regulatory Act 2010 gets parliament's nod," Telecom Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju said yesterday.

The minister's disclosure is expected to bring all illegal VoIP operators under a legal framework.

Industry insiders said at present more than 1,500 people are involved in illegal VoIP business.

The minister was speaking at a press meet with Telecom Reporters Network Bangladesh at the head office of Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd in the capital.

Sunil Kanti Bose, posts and telecommunications secretary, explained a bit more about this

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Rejoinder, our reply

In a rejoinder to a Daily Star report headlined -- 'Orchard Death for Sal Forest' -- published on May 17 the Ministry of Environment and Forest stated that the felling of trees in the Beribaid mouja under the Aronkhola Union of Madhupur Upazila had started during the regime of BNP and continued till the caretaker government period.

"During the last one year, no trees were felled. Of the 250 acres of forest, 75 were felled during the caretaker regime while the rest were felled during the regime of BNP. It is factually incorrect that the ruling party has involvement in tree felling," reads the rejoinder, signed by the ministry's public relations officer Mostafa Kamal Pasha.

It further stated, "In October 2009, 5000 saplings were planted in the cleared land but again the vested quarters uprooted a majority

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

CHEATING MIGRANT WORKERS

Hasina warns of instant action

Says govt to watch recruiting agencies closely

UNB, Kuala Lumpur

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government would take instant tough action if any recruiting agency is found to be cheating Bangladeshi immigrant workers.

"Government is strictly monitoring the recruiting agencies... anyone found guilty of cheating workers will be punished," she said speaking at a reception given by the Bangladeshi community at Putra World Trade Centre.

The premier, however, urged the expatriate Bangladeshis to abide by the laws of the country they have been living in and cautioned, "we'll have nothing to do if one is punished for one's misdeed."

Referring to her meeting with the Malaysian Prime Minister on Wednesday, Hasina said all problems facing the Bangladeshis here were discussed and he assured to look into those problems.

She said the Malaysian government will grant 10 scholarships for poor Bangladeshi students every year.

As a good number of expatriates in one voice blamed the Bangladesh mission officials for not taking care of them, the PM said it is the responsibility of the Bangladesh High Commission

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

2 Ms sign up for Ctg battle

Loyalty still divided at AL camp; row minimised in BNP

STAR REPORT

ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury resigned as Chittagong City Corporation mayor yesterday, and applied for candidacy in a re-election bid with BNP-backed Mohammad Manjur Alam appearing to be his main rival.

Of the two major parties, BNP seems to have minimised intra-party feuds ahead of the June 17 election.

The ruling Awami League, on the other hand, braces for worsening internal conflicts with city AL leaders Rezaul Karim and Md Ishaq entering the fray alongside Mohiuddin.

Besides Mohiuddin and Manjur, Jatiya Party presidium member Solaiman Alam Sheith and Chittagong city Jamaat chief Aferuddin Chowdhury are among those who submitted candidacy papers yesterday, the last day for doing so.

The number of applicants for mayoral candidacy is 18, down from 22 in the last election, which was held in 2005.

None was allowed to hold rallies or bring out processions before or after filing applications to the returning officer's office. As a result, the atmosphere was different than that in the past.

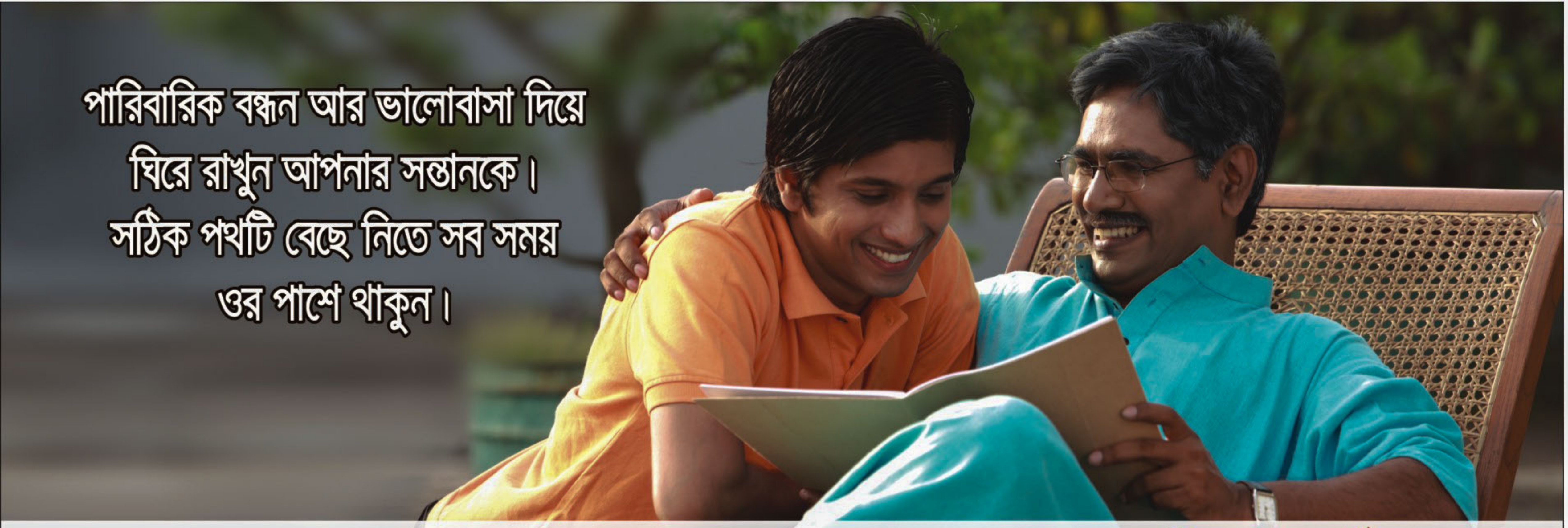
Both AL and BNP held massive rallies for their candidates on the closing day for submitting applications in the previous CCC polls.

This year a few were allowed to be with the applicants at the RO's office,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

PHOTO: STAR
 Awami League-backed ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury submits his application seeking candidature for the Chittagong City Corporation mayoral poll to the returning officer at the Chittagong District Election Office yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR
 BNP-backed Manjur Alam also submits his application for candidacy at the Chittagong District Election Office yesterday.



পারিবারিক বন্ধন আর ভালোবাসা দিয়ে
 ঘিরে রাখুন আপনার সন্তানকে।
 সঠিক পথটি বেছে নিতে সব সময়
 ওর পাশে থাকুন।

ভালোবেসে সন্তানকে - এগিয়ে নিন সঠিক পথে