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invested Tk 8.40 lakh in the cooperative in two equal instalments in 2008 and 2009.

The DMCSL member, who works as a physician at an international NGO in Bangladesh, said one of his former colleagues convinced him and several others to make the investments. Now, they are doubtful whether they will get back their principal amount, let alone dividends.

"When I paid them [Destiny Cooperative] Tk 4.20 lakh under a package, they gave me Tk 52,000 as benefit of network expansion. I was inspired and invested another Tk 4.20 lakh the following year. DMCSL then gave me Tk 53,000 as benefit," said the doctor.

Many of the DMCSL members have expressed disappointment over lack of initiative from the government agency concerned to help them get back their money.

"Shareholders have to claim their money from the DMCSL's present committee [ad hoc]. If the committee fails to pay back, they can inform us," said Iqbal Hossain of the DoC.

Campaign posters of the Gazipur City Corporation polls hide the sky at Tongi Bazar yesterday as candidates turn up the heat in their quest to become mayor and councilors. Inset, a councilor candidate uses a rickshaw and a megaphone to make sure her message is getting to the voters.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



City polls results

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M Hafizuddin Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, told The Daily Star: "We had thought the two rival camps would soften their stance on the mode of an election-time government. But they have taken a hard line after the city polls."

Prof Dilara Chowdhury, who teaches political science, echoed Hafizuddin's view and said she was fearful of bitter political confrontations in the coming days if the two camps did not soften their stance.

To justify her apprehension, she cited the use of indecent language by AL and BNP lawmakers against each

other in parliament over the last few days.

Senior BNP leader Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman supported their views, saying the results of the four city polls had shut the door for them.

"The election results have put the two sides in an unbending position. It also opened the window for new polarisation in the national politics," said Mahbub, a member of BNP's standing committee.

A senior leader of the AL-led alliance said the city polls results had made it clear that the AL would not make any compromise with the BNP on the issue of a polls-time government.

AL Presidium Member Kazi Zafarullah said the city polls had been a boost for the BNP.

"They [BNP] should now keep confidence in the present government that it does not interfere in or influence elections. It has been proved once again in the city polls," he added.

Rashed Khan Menon, chief of Workers Party, a component of AL-led alliance, said the BNP won the city polls, but its demand for a polls-time government suffered a defeat.

Both Menon and Zafarullah defended the premier's latest stance on the issue of a caretaker government.

But Hafizuddin Khan differs, and recalls the political stalemate that led to the declaration of the state of emergency on January 11, 2007, and the subsequent installation of an army-backed caretaker government.

He said the armed forces had intervened only when the country was sliding into a political crisis arising from the rigid stance of the two main parties.

"And if the prime minister thinks the masterminds behind the declaration of the state of emergency are still active, why doesn't her government take action against them?" he said.

Mass protests

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The announcement Wednesday that the controversial fare hikes would be canceled in Rio and Sao Paulo, Brazil's two most populous cities, did nothing to placate the protesters.

Since then he has remained traceless.

The movement has no political hue and no clearly identified leadership.

More than 1.25 million people marched Thursday in more than 100 cities across this country of 194 million people, according to police and experts quoted by the local media.

In Rio, riot police fired tear gas and rubber bullets, then charged a large crowd of protesters after a smaller crowd hurled rocks at the officers.

Some 300,000 protesters marched to City Hall in Rio de Janeiro to vent their anger.

In Brasilia, where 30,000 people protested, one group broke through the police barrier surrounding Brazil's foreign ministry and hurled home-made firebombs at the building.

At least 35 people were wounded, three seriously, as law enforcement struggled to keep the crowd at bay, police said.

The first fatality of the protest was an 18-year-old man who was struck by a car while he protested in the southeastern city of Ribeirao Preto, police said.

Most of the protesters are middle-class, educated youths marching to express their outrage at the high cost of living and the poor quality of public services.

Protesters say they want higher funding for education, health and housing. They are also railing against what they view as rampant corruption within the political class.

Social media networks have been key to the organization of the mass protests, with demonstrators using the slogan "It's more than just 20 cents" -- a reference to the bus fare hikes -- to rally people to their cause.

Guard shoots Jew dead at Jerusalem's Western Wall

AFP, Jerusalem

An Israeli security guard shot dead a Jewish visitor at Jerusalem's Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray, yesterday, apparently mistaking him for a Palestinian militant.

Public radio said that police were seeking to have the guard remanded in custody.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said that he was being taken in front of a magistrate, but had no further details.

"There was a Jewish guy, an Israeli guy, who was in the bathroom area,"

Rosenfeld told AFP.

Citing the news item,

Disappearance of Jahangir

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in Tongi area Jahangir was picked up and taken away in a vehicle by some former Chhatra League leaders, according to locals.

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Brac official

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of the incident and bringing back Habibur's body home as soon as possible.

"We are hoping to bring the body back home by Tuesday," said Jalal.

This is the first incident in the African country where a Brac official has been killed since the NGO had started its operations there in 2007.

It now runs 200 primary schools in South Sudan and employs 237 staff. Of them, 37 are Bangladeshis.

Hailing from Jamalpur, Habibur is survived by his wife and a son. He was very popular among the students and teachers of the schools.

He had joined Brac in 1990 and worked in its education programme for 22 years in Bangladesh before being posted to South Sudan in 2009.

Meanwhile, Brac in a message yesterday said it was deeply saddened by the loss of Habibur and considered his untimely death as an irreparable loss to the organisation.

The NGO expressed its deepest condolence to the bereaved family members and pledged to provide full support to them to deal with this loss.

OMS starts tomorrow

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"It is also a part of our Ramadan plan. The first instalment will be released on Monday while another in the middle of Ramadan," the TCB chief said.

The essentials would be sold through TCB's sales centres in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Barisal and Sylhet, TCB

sources said.

Anyone can buy soybean oil at Tk 121 and Tk 105 per litre from the sales centres.

Palm oil will be sold at Tk 75 per litre while sugar at Tk 44 per kg, pulse at Tk 70 per kg and chickpea at Tk 60 per kg.

Over 170 trucks will remain engaged in selling the essentials across the country,

TCB sources said.

Some 1,000 kg sugar, 200 kg pulse and chickpea, 200 litres of soybean oil will be sold from each truck everyday.

Meanwhile, the commerce ministry has put a ban on export of green chilli, eggplant, cucumber and coriander leaf to ensure their smooth supply in local

market during Ramadan.

Commerce Secretary Mahbub Ahmed said the order on banning their export would come seven days ahead of Ramadan.

The ban may continue for at least a month as the demand for these essentials goes up during Ramadan, the ministry sources said.

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Crucial battle in Gazipur

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allege that he usually did not settle local disputes himself, rather assigned his two cousins and one brother-in-law to hold arbitrations. In the process, his relatives abused power, realising money from victims.

However, he will have the full support from his party which won all the five parliamentary seats in the district in the 2008 national polls.

"We had witnessed waterlogging in our area even after a light rain. He [Ajmat] constructed many roads with drains in the

locality, thus minimising the problem," said Mamunur Rashid, a resident of Khaikur area at ward-38 in Tongi.

Voters in Tongi consider Mannan as a "seasonal well-wisher" who is reappearing in the political scene of the area after a long time. He was visible in the city the most when he was a state minister for religion during the BNP government's tenure in 1991-96, said the locals.

They, however, said Mannan had built roads, academic and religious institutions both in Gazipur and Tongi areas.

His party men, with their

confidence boosted by the June 15 victory, are likely to work hard for Mannan. His supporters are also set to use the critical national issues and failure of the AL-led government in the campaign to woo voters.

During a visit to Tongi and Gazipur areas, The Daily Star found the supporters of both the candidates campaigning.

There are 57 wards in the newly formed city corporation, about 30km away from the capital. Electronic voting machines will be used in the four polling stations at ward-25.

Govt bid draws flak

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to the statement.

Meanwhile, US Representative for New Jersey's 12th congressional district Rush Holt in a statement said, "It is past time for the government of Bangladesh to cease its efforts to destroy one of the true economic marvels of our age: Grameen Bank. I call upon Secretary of State Kerry to make it clear to officials in Dhaka that America supports Grameen Bank and its work for the poor in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the world."

Rush Holt said, "If the government of Bangladesh persists in its attacks on

the bank and Prof Muhammad Yunus [Nobel laureate who founded the bank], our government should re-evaluate the wisdom of our current push to deepen political and security ties to the current government.

"Bangladesh needs more institutions like Grameen, and more pioneers like Muhammad Yunus. It is past time for the government of Bangladesh to recognise those facts and work with Prof Yunus, not against him."

Accusing the government of conspiring to destroy Grameen Bank, BNP acting secretary general Mirza

Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday in a press statement said the main agenda of the government was to insult Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, who ran the bank for almost 30 years.

The BNP secretary general said the government had removed Prof Yunus from the post of managing director and was in its final push to ruin the bank.

Fakhrul protested the proposals of the commission, a government-backed institution, and said if the proposals were implemented, the microcredit bank would be destroyed, pushing the poor in big trouble.

BNP trashes reports

FROM PAGE 16

she visited the country for treatment of her teeth and other complications and returned home on March 1.

At a press conference on the night of March 1, Khaleda had announced to go for a one-point movement to oust the present government.

"There was a Jewish guy, an Israeli guy, who was in the bathroom area,"

Rosenfeld told AFP.

Citing the news item,