After Awami League has met its Gazipur

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It was inevitable. After its defeat in four big city corporation elections, ruling Awami League (AL) has been humiliated in Gazipur, otherwise known as its own turf. In the electioneering days, the AL leaders quite vociferously called the city the party's second bastion after Gopalganj, the hometown of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The margin of votes by which the rather clean AL-backed candidate has been defeated clearly indicates the party's declining popularity. There's no denying that its grassroots now stand humiliated and demoralised, especially at a time when the general election is only less than six months away.

Given the trend the five city polls have set, it will be difficult for the party, impossible almost, to return to power in the national election, if its leadership does not introspect and show brinkmanship. While doing so, it will find that, the government has created many issues that are impossible to handle in less than 180 days. And after the election schedule, supposed to be declared in September, the AL might find the administration act in a not-so-friendly way.

It is indeed surprising the way the AL rank and file has expressed shock and disbelief after the electoral tsunami. The disaster has always been looming large, and its ferocity could always be forecasted. The AL government has strings of achievements to boast, but the way proverbial bad apples spoil the whole bunch, the party's success stories are now forgotten by the ordinary voters thanks to some Awami Leaguers' unbridled corruption and its student wing's thuggery and gangsterism.

The results suggest a steep fall in popularity and it is time the AL arrests it to keep the casualty to the bare minimum. The best move would have been to dissolve the parliament in February to hold an early election under a caretaker government. It