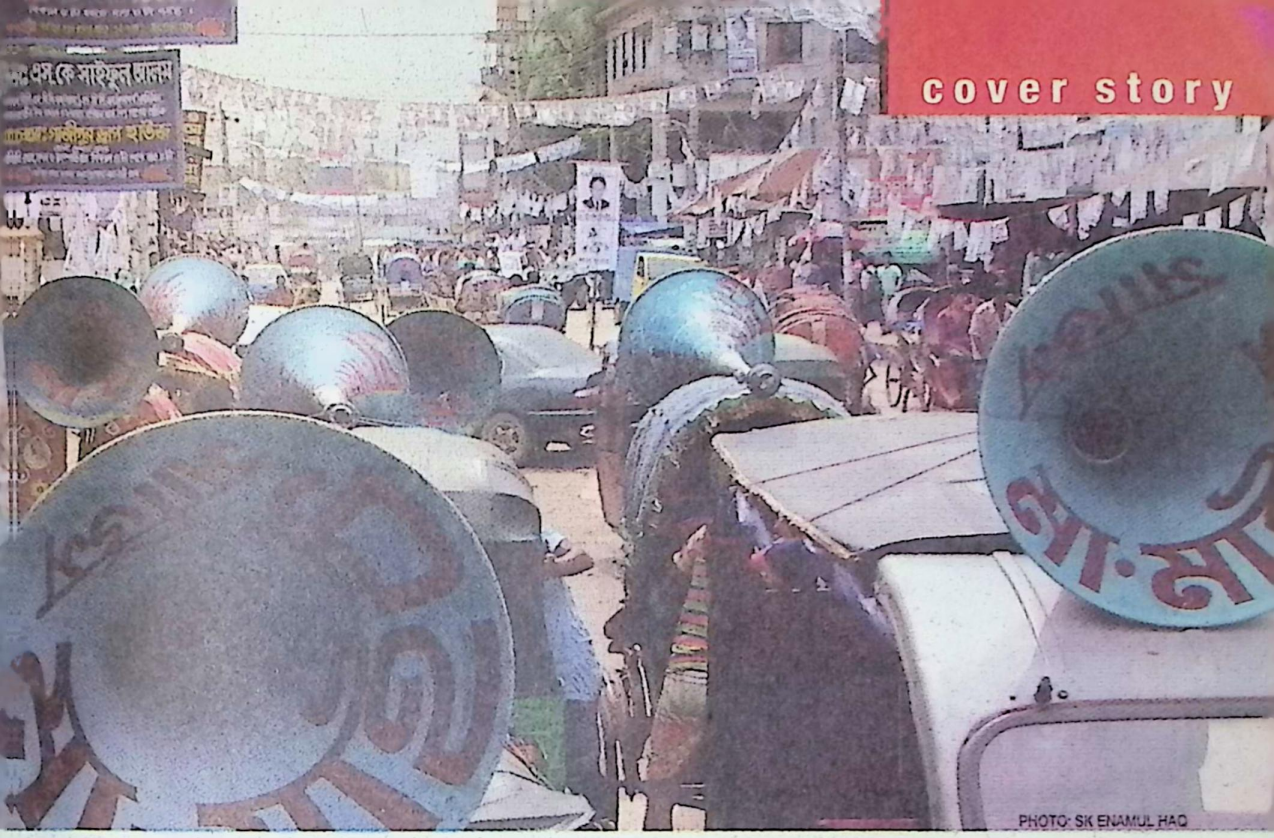


PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

The Power of Ballots

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The voting was over in the afternoon. They were enthusiastic about collecting election results from different polling centres through the polling agents of ruling Awami League-backed mayoral candidate Ajmat Ullah Khan. Local leaders and supporters of AL who gathered at their party office in Gazipur city could not wait to find out who won.

The month-long hard work for their mayoral aspirant did not make the AL workers feel exhausted. But the evening of July 6 brought an arctic darkness for them. The results coming out from different polling stations did not make them jubilant, rather shattered their hopes. They were demoralised sensing a defeat in their stronghold and eventually lost interest in gathering results from their own election agents. And most of them left the AL office by 9:00 at night.

The lights were out at the AL chief's political office in Dhanmandi around 10:00pm on the same night as disheartened leaders and workers headed home early. The early morning of July 7 announced the defeat of the AL-led alliance, its mayoral candidate, and also of Sheikh Hasina who has been leading the alliance. Thus, the defeat of AL-backed mayoral candidate has left the ruling party leaders stunned into silence.

"We never expected such a debacle in our