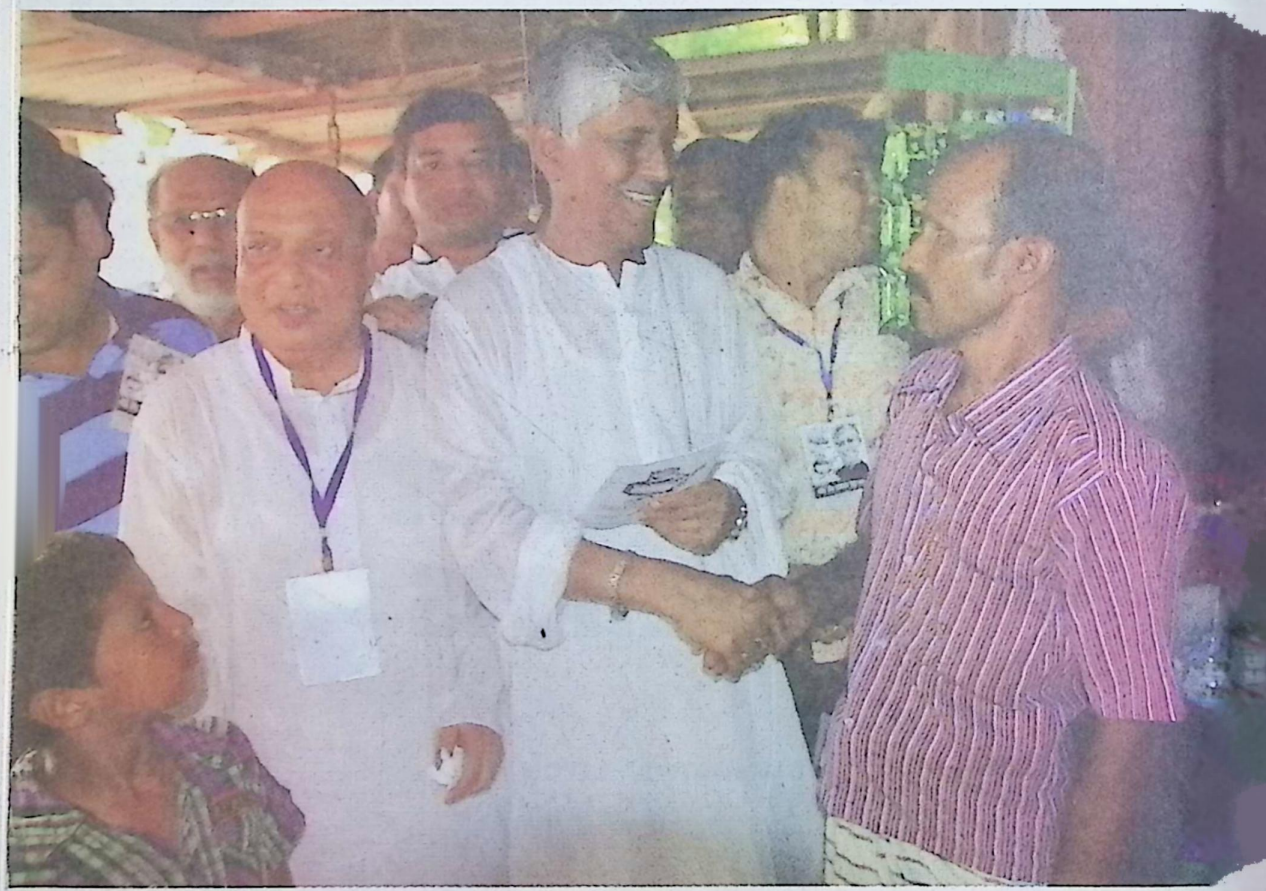
stronghold," Rajob Ali, general secretary of Tongi Thana unit of AL, told this correspondent the day after the defeat in the battle of ballots.

What will the policymakers of the government and AL now do after the stunning defeat in Gazipur which came hot on the heels of a humiliating defeat in the four city corporations of Rajshai, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet? They may hold one or two meetings with AL chief and PM Sheikh Hasina to find out the reasons behind the defeat in the recent city polls as some senior AL leaders including Obaidul Quader have been speaking.

The crucial question is: will they be able to discuss the real reasons that contributed largely to the defeat? Will they specify some crucial national issues like the stock market crash, the Sonali Bank-Hall Mark scandal, the Padma Bridge scam, the railway gate scam by a minister, violent and criminal activities of ruling party men, particularly of the Bangladesh Chhatra League activists?

The chances are slim. The reason is pretty clear. These issues scream the sheer failure of the government of Sheikh Hasina. Her government has miserably failed to take appropriate measures to address the issues that brought down people's skyrocketing confidence in the AL to the ground. And none of the ministers or party policymakers will have the courage to speak the truth in Hasina's presence. So, every possibility is there to conceal all the issues. But this will not work. Concealing them at their own forums will not divert people's attentions and remove their grievances. Whenever they will have a chance they will protest casting votes against the AL.

AL Presidium Member Obaidul Quader on Sunday rightly stressed the need for taking measures to correct their "mistakes to turn the negative votes into positive ones."



Despite his popularity in the area, AL candidate Azmat Ullah Khan could not win the battle. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

After its defeat in four cities on June 15, AL leaders and workers hoped for a comeback in Gazipur by winning the mayoral election. There were strong reasons for it as the district is considered a bastion of the party. AL nominated candidates have done well in the district in all the parliamentary polls since 1991.

The AL secured all five seats in the district in the last 2008 parliamentary polls, defeating the opposition candidates by big margins. At the 1996 elections, the party nominees won all four seats. The