Enforcement of dozens of hartals or blockades or any such street agitation would not have shaken the AL government in such a way. The power of ballots has exposed the fragile state of AL's political influence.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Ballots being counted to find out who would be the next mayor of Gazipur City Corporation.

The defeats in Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet and Gazipur did not appear suddenly. The recent defeats have just made longer the procession of defeat which began in 2010 when the AL-backed mayoral candidates were defeated to BNP favourite in Chittagong City Corporation election. In Narayanganj City Corporation polls in 2011, the AL-backed mayoral aspirant faced a humiliating defeat to party's another leader who contested the polls without the party's support. In 2012 in the Comilla City Corporation election, AL supported candidate was defeated to the BNP backed mayoral contender. AL-backed mayoral aspirant won only in Rangpur City Corporation polls held at the end of 2012.

The story of AL defeat goes on. In the beginning of 2011, AL favourites were outperformed by their rivals supported by the BNP in the municipality polls countrywide. AL-blessed mayoral candidates having 88 mayoral posts were behind the BNP-backed candidates who bagged 92 posts. The results surprised the AL leaders.

AL now looks very weak. The story of its overwhelming success in the battle of ballots four and a half years ago has turned into a distant memory. In December 2008 parliamentary polls, the party alone won more than two-third majority. Its rival BNP had faced a humiliating defeat after bagging only 29 parliamentary seats. The recent election results strongly speak of a healthy comeback of the