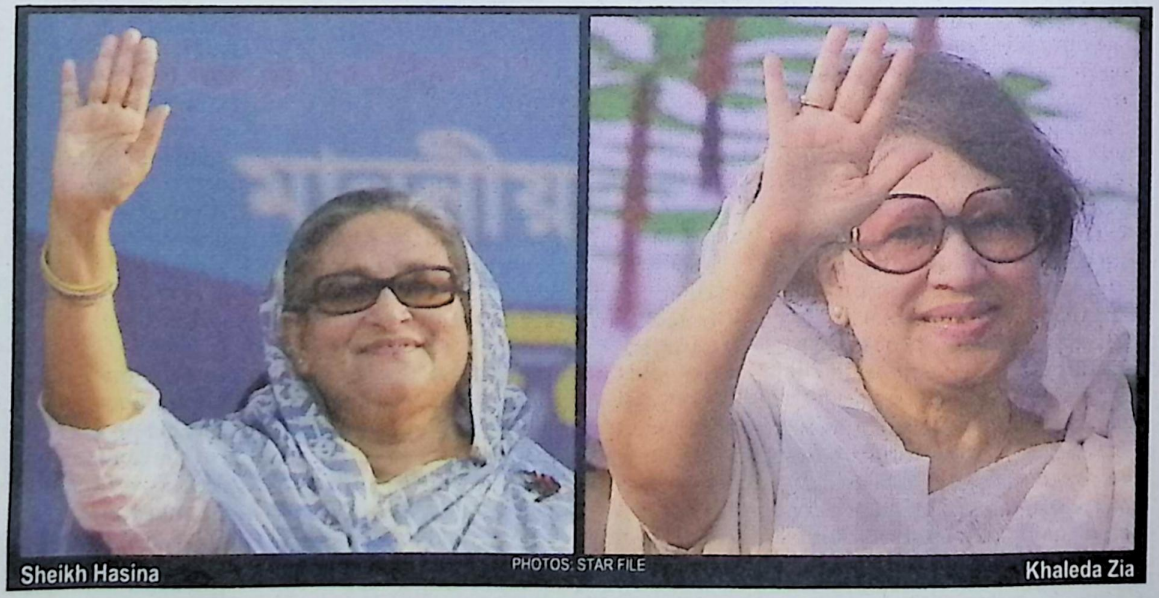
2013
A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE

From the very beginning of this year it has been a breathless rollercoaster ride. Corruption scandals, political shenanigans and the worst factory disaster left Bangladesh gasping for air. Politics took a devastating turn when political rivalry took the form of brutal violence against people and public property, its debilitating effects seeping into every crevice of society. In the midst of this bleak, blighted scenario, were a few silver linings - remarkable victories in the sports arena as well as acts of bravery by young men and women. *The Star* magazine team looks back at some of the individuals who made headlines - for the right and wrong reasons.

History's Terrible Twins

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her archrival Khaleda Zia are the by-products of two ghastly incidents of Bangladesh's history. Hasina was brought into politics after the tragic murder of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a time when the Awami League (AL) was split into two feuding factions, both facing waning popular support. Since those forlorn days, Hasina, who had little experience in politics, let alone leading the country's largest political party, has steered the AL into many turbulent bends. One of the biggest challenges to her leadership came when the AL had suffered an ignominious defeat in the general election of 1991; the other was in 2007 when a demand for reform was raised within the party, a move that could have ended her political career. She has handled the challenges against her leadership rather well, has consolidated power only to become one of the two most powerful persons in present Bangladesh.

Khaleda, on the other hand, was introduced into local politics after the assassination of her husband Lt Gen Ziaur Rahman. Khaleda faced the first big hurdle in politics when party stalwart KM Obaidur Rahman left Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) during the rule of deposed dictator Gen HM Ershad. Khaleda boycotted two general elections under Ershad, which has earned her the title of 'uncompromising leader'. She led the BNP to victory in 1991, a surprise win for the party.



Sheikh Hasina PHOTOS: STAR FILE Khaleda Zia