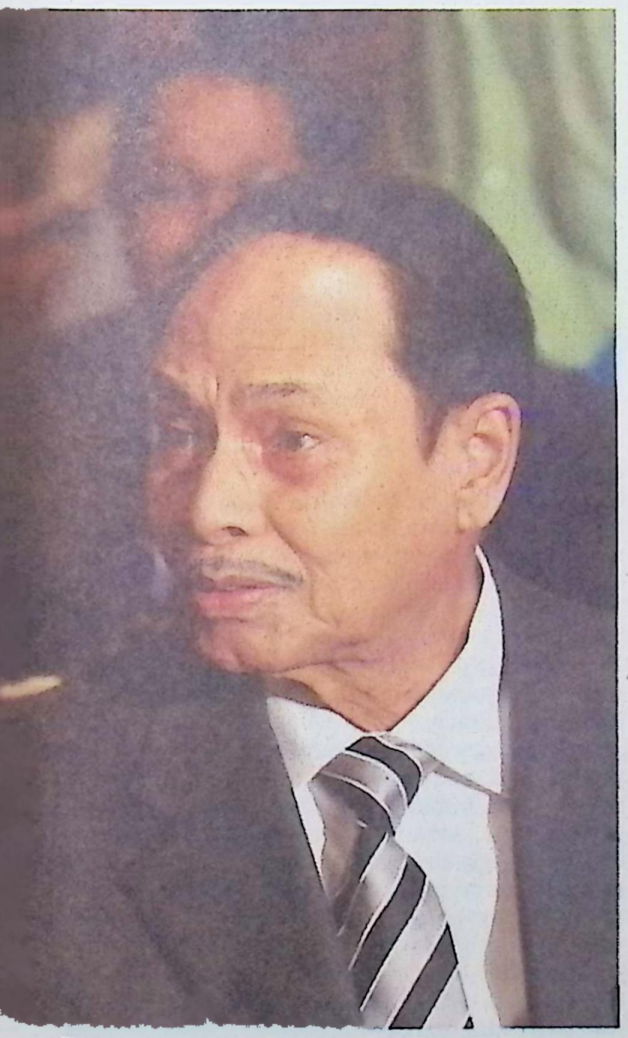
the candidates blessed by the BNP in exchange for money and other benefits. Ghulam Moshi, political secretary to the Leader of the Opposition in parliament Raushan Ershad, blames organisational weakness and dilemma over joining the January 5 polls for the poor results in the upazila elections. In his views, "It's alarming for the party. We must reorganise."

What Ghulam Moshi thinks now, JP grassroots leaders had thought long ago and they had also informed the party chief about the people's sentiment. On June 23, last year, Ershad convened a joint meeting of the presidents and general secretaries of his party's district and upazila units. At the beginning of the meeting held in the capital, Ershad reiterated that his party would independently contest the next parliamentary election. "It doesn't matter who will join the polls and who won't. We will contest on our own."



The chameleon of politics.

After his address, he wanted to hear grassroots opinions. Shyamnagar upazila unit General Secretary Hafez Abdur Rashid did not hesitate to use the opportunity to tell the truth. "Sir, we can't trust your statements. You say one thing in the morning and go back on that in the afternoon. Leave the Grand Alliance if you want to contest the polls independently." A number of grassroots level leaders echoed Rashid's view. The former military ruler however is clever enough to dodge the demand by saying, "This is nothing but propaganda. Ershad is not a man given to doublespeak."

But JP contested the January 5 parliamentary election held amid a boycott by the BNP-led alliance and has emerged as the main opposition in parliament. Some of JP MPs were even made ministers. Ershad who refused to join the polls was elected as an MP and he was sworn in as a lawmaker. He was appointed as a special envoy to the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with the status of a minister.

A party must have a clear political strategy. Any dubious strategy may cause debacle. JP has been glaring example of such politics.

His party has never faced such an electoral debacle before. The outcome of battle of ballots clearly show that voters do not like the unholy game the JP is playing on guidance of the AL. A party must have a clear political strategy. Any dubious strategy may cause debacle. JP has been the glaring example of such politics.

The JP's elimination from the ongoing battle of ballots has also brought unpleasant things for the ruling AL. The AL created the JP as the main opposition in parliament to keep the BNP away from the parliamentary politics. But the JP's poor performance in the upazila polls shows that it now enjoys little public support. In the parliamentary form of the government, the party enjoying second largest majority acts as the main opposition. How will a party like the JP with little public support act as the main opposition against the treasury bench that enjoys brute majority? Everything is possible for the AL that has given parliamentary democracy a new meaning, and literally so.

The writer is Senior Reporter, The Daily Star.