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## Shell-shocked family wants justice

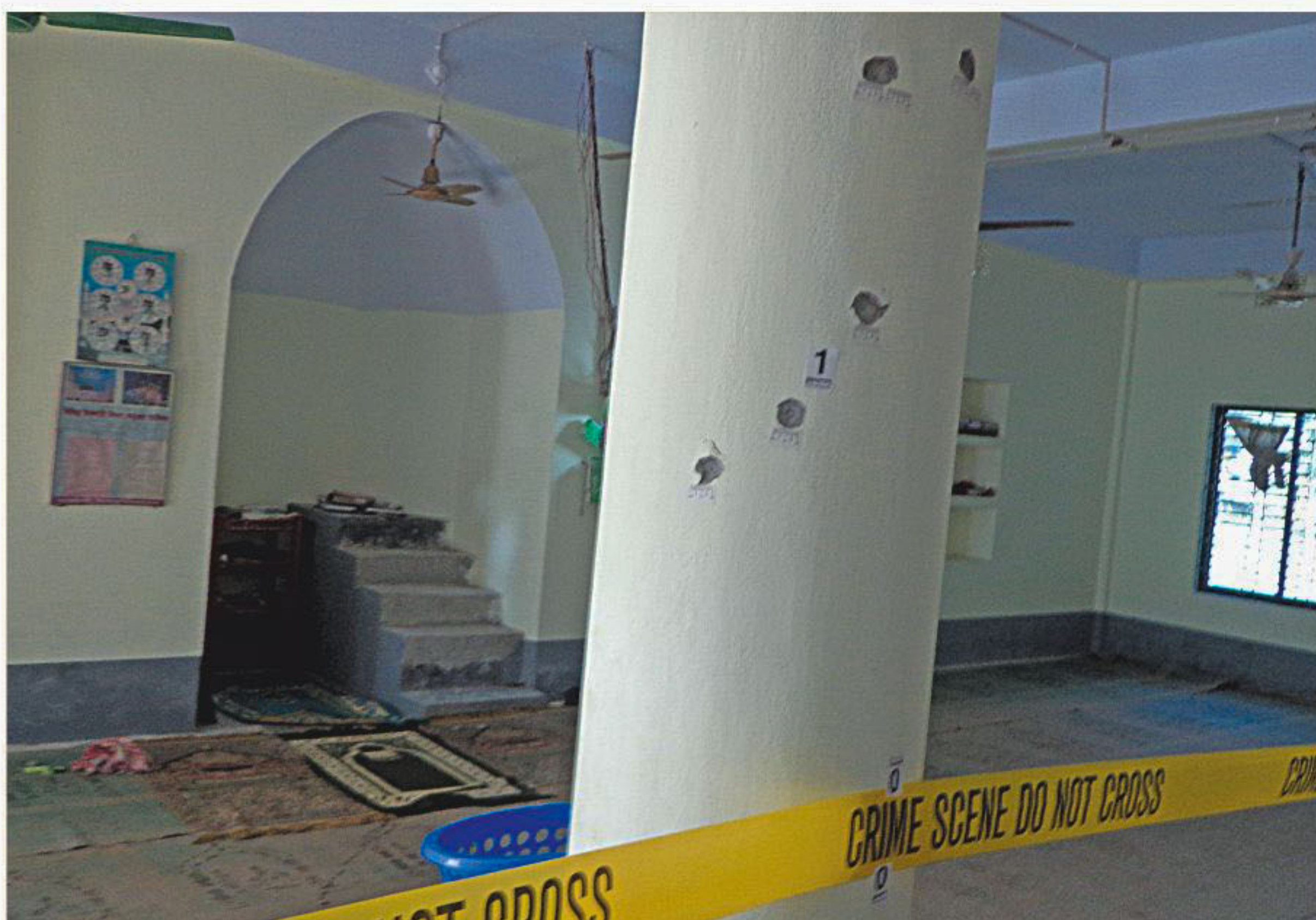
MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

There were tears and sighs all around the small house as the family members and neighbours mourned Moazzem Hossain, the muezzin of the Shia mosque in Bogra, killed in Thursday's shooting.

On the veranda, his wife and daughter were wailing holding each other. Inside the house, his son was sobbing.

People kept coming to the house in Haripur village of Shibganj yesterday, but everybody was at a loss for words to console the family. They were still reeling from the shock and disbelief over the shooting on praying people inside the mosque that left the 70-year-old muezzin dead.

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Bullet marks on a pillar at Masjid Al Hussain, the Bogra Shia mosque, where a gun attack on Thursday left one dead and three others injured.

PHOTO: STAR

## BOGRA MOSQUE SHOOTING

# Shias feel insecure

Locals believe outsiders made the attack; 2 held

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, from Bogra

The minority Shia Muslims in Bogra's Shibganj upazila have never felt threatened living in the Sunni-dominated area. On the contrary, they have always lived peacefully with their Sunni brothers and sisters for decades.

But now a sense of fear has gripped them following Thursday's gun attack inside a Shia mosque by unknown assailants. The shooting killed the muezzin of the mosque and injured three more, including the imam.

The history of peaceful coexistence between the two sects in Shibganj goes back to 1982. In that year, Abu Jafar Mandal, a freedom fighter, attended a lecture in Dhaka. The lecture was given by the then foreign minister of Iran who was also a Shia scholar.

Though from a Sunni family, Jafar, then in his 30s, was inspired by the lecture and started to follow Shia faith, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Over time, more people joined, and at RELATED STORY ON PAGE 2 SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



## FINDING SINGLE CANDIDATES

# AL's job tougher than BNP's

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League may face more hassles than the BNP to pick single mayoral contenders in the upcoming municipality polls.

The ruling party has more than one prospective candidates in almost all the 236 municipalities to go to polls on December 30; so much so that in one municipality, there are as many as nine people who want the party ticket.

The Daily Star has talked to the grassroots leaders of different political parties in 192 municipalities and found that around 600 leaders are working to get the AL's mayoral nomination while the number of such people is 236 in the BNP camp.

Many of the AL-ticket aspirants said they were determined to contest the elections even if they do not get the nominations.

If they do so, the party may find itself in a

tight corner because in the last municipal elections, held in December 2010 and January 2011, the AL-backed mayoral aspirants could not fare well mainly due to rebel candidates and intra-party conflicts.

The BNP has a lot less aspirants than the AL does, as many grassroots-level leaders of the party are unwilling to contest the polls for fear of police harassment.

Some of them are already behind bars while some are on the run as they are facing cases in connection with widespread violence during the BNP's anti-government movement centring the January 5 elections in 2014 and the first anniversary of the AL government that assumed power for the second time in a row through the parliamentary polls.

The AL, however, will not face problems in all the 192 municipalities surveyed by this paper. It has single mayor aspirants in

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## Defer polls by 15 days

Demands BNP; EC says no

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday announced that it would contest the December 30 municipality polls on certain conditions, including deferral of the polls by 15 days.

The party also demanded a rescheduling of the polls, the release of party men from jail and an end to the arrests of its activists across the country. It also demanded that a level-playing field be created for a free and fair poll.

BNP spokesperson Asaduzzaman Ripon made the announcement at a press conference at the party's Nayapalton central office.

"The BNP is a democratic party and it takes part in all local body polls if the atmosphere is favourable for fair voting ... The party has decided to take part in the municipality polls on

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## Islam doesn't support militancy

Imams of city mosques give sermon during Juma prayers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At Dhaka Metropolitan Police's request, imams of different mosques in the capital yesterday gave sermons during Juma prayers, alerting the mosque-goers to the menace of militancy and criminal activities.

They talked about the negative impact of militancy on the society and requested all to be aware of the people involved in militant and criminal activities.

"There is no space for

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## GOPIBAGH SIX-MURDER JMB leader 'confesses' killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of banned Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh killed a pir (spiritual leader), his son and four disciples in the capital's Gopibagh in 2013 for their "anti-Islamic" activities.

Arrested JMB leader Tariqul Islam Tareque yesterday gave a confessional statement before the Metropolitan Magistrate Court of Mahabubur Rahman in this regard, court sources said.

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