

Hasina insists on caretaker

FROM PAGE 1
participate in the next polls without electoral reforms as demanded by the opposition.

The Awami League chief, who returned home in the early hours yesterday after a month-long foreign trip, said her party and other mainstream opposition parties are now working out a common formula on these reforms.

"We will place a common formula very soon," she said at the crowded press conference held at the party's Dhanmondi office.

Brushing aside Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's allegation that AL is conspiring to foil the next general election by boycotting it in the name of reforms of caretaker government system, Hasina said, "Awami League doesn't believe in any conspiracy."

"We believe people's verdict is the only way to go to power," she said putting a counter allegation that the BNP-led government has planned to rig the next general election through 'election engineering'.

"Sensing defeat in the next election, the ruling BNP has planned to snatch people's verdict," said the opposition leader. "They are going to appoint a party man as the caretaker government chief," she added.

The former prime minister urged the people to resist any move of BNP to rig the polls.

Asked about the prime minis-

ter's rigid stance against the electoral reforms, Hasina said, "Khaleda Zia made similar statements during the 1996 movement and she realised what is caretaker government after a mass upsurge."

"This time too she will learn what reforms are ... She has no way to escape without bringing reforms (in the caretaker government system)," said the AL chief.

The opposition leader said even the alliance partners of BNP are now saying that BNP is harbouring religious militants and has failed to govern the country.

Refuting another allegation of the prime minister that the opposition parties are tarnishing Bangladesh's image in the international arena, Hasina said, "It is not the opposition, this government is enough to tarnish country's image abroad."

"Even the government has used the national news agency to spread propaganda against my son, also involving a neighbouring country's defence minister," she said referring to a BSS report that claimed her son Sajib Wajed Joy has recently met Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee in New Delhi which the Indian government has denied.

"Doesn't it tarnish the country's image?" she posed a question.

The opposition leader said the government has also blackened the country's name by issuing a false statement following a joint

letter of three influential US senators on the inquiry of the killing of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria.

"The government claimed FBI is investigating the Kibria killing case, but the US embassy categorically denied this. Doesn't it damage our image?" she said.

The AL president accused the BNP leaders of using money from the government exchequer to organise party's union level councils.

She demanded the new pay scale for government employees be effected from the year 2002, when the prime minister and her cabinet colleagues increased their remuneration showing the reason of price hike of essentials.

Hasina was awarded the Congressional Medal of Achievement from the Philippines House of Representatives while participating at a meeting of the Association of Asian Parliamentarians for Peace in Manila.

She also attended an international conference on terrorism and democracy in Madrid and later went to Florida, USA, for treatment of her hearing debility caused by last year's grenade attack on her meeting in Dhaka.

Senior leaders of the party were present at the press conference.

KIBRIA KILLING 'My husband is a victim of conspiracy'

Says Quiyyum's wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wife of AKM Abdul Quiyyum, the prime accused in Shah AMS Kibria killing case, yesterday said that her husband is 'a victim of conspiracy by some vested interest groups'.

Quiyyum's wife Suraiya Afroza in a statement yesterday also said that Quiyyum is being deprived of his 'constitutional rights to prove that the allegations against him are false and outcome of a conspiracy'.

She alleged that an influential quarter envying her husband's popularity among the Habiganj locals has falsely implicated him in the murder of Kibria.

"We too want the real culprits in Kibria slaying to be brought to justice," she said adding, "But an innocent man like Quiyyum should not be made fall guy for the murder."

Describing her husband as a pious and honest man, she said he always respected Kibria as a person, and went to see him [Kibria] in the hospital and attended his namaz-e-janaza.



Zonta Club IV (Bangladesh) organised an annual charity fashion show and fund raising event at Hotel Purbani in the city recently.

Charity fashion show to raise funds

Zonta Club IV (Bangladesh), a Chicago-based international organisation, held an annual charity fashion show and fund raising lunch at Hotel Purbani in the city recently, says a press release.

The ceremony titled "Innovation in Printing" was organised to raise funds for the rehabilitation of the marginalised and tortured women and children.

The programme began with the national anthem presented by the students of Nabakoli Girls' School, a school for the deprived girls, run by the Zonta Club.

Zonta Club President Nizma Islam in her address briefed about the objectives and activities of the club. The main objectives of the club are to rehabilitate the deprived women and children in the field of education and health, she said.

Dilruba Ahmed, governor of Zonta International District-25, was present as chief guest.

The daylong programme also included an exhibition and Zonta Bazar. The women entrepreneurs showcased different handicrafts, sarees and salwar kameezes.

BRTC holiday service from today

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) will operate holiday service in the city from today with its Volvo Double-decker buses.

The service is aimed to facilitate the city dwellers for travelling to different amusement centres in the city and its outskirts on holidays.

BRTC Chairman Advocate Taimur Alam Khondaker will inaugurate the service at BRTC Training Institute at Khanpur in Narayanganj at 10:00am today.

The buses will ply on Motijheel-Nandan Park via Fantasy Kingdom-Ashulia route and Narayanganj-Savar-Nandan Park route on every Friday and other holidays.



HSBC Bangladesh Chief Executive Officer Steve C Banner hands over a cheque for Tk 100,000 to Gulshan Literacy Programme School teacher Shipra Dev at a simple ceremony on the school premises in the city on April 5.

HSBC helps GLP School

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) Limited in Bangladesh handed over a cheque for Tk 100,000 to Gulshan Literacy Programme (GLP) School at a simple ceremony on April 5 on the school premises, says a press release.

Steve Banner, Chief Executive Officer of HSBC in Bangladesh, handed over the cheque to Shipra Dev, a teacher of the GLP School.

The assistance was given to expand its educational programme.

The school has been providing primary education to the destitute children in the Gulshan slum areas since 1985.

The GLP School has now 181 children. The school, employing 6 teachers, follows the Bangladeshi curriculum. Classes are held 5 days a week and range from Kindergarten to Grade 5.

Recently, the school has expanded their programme and started a second kindergarten class with 20 new students.

HSBC is committed to contributing towards the educational efforts of organisations that cater to the underprivileged children of our society.