



Hasina to fly home early

Cops begin probe into extortion case, plaintiff slips behind the scene



JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and
HASAN JAHID TUSHAR

Former prime minister and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina is planning to return home much earlier than scheduled as a result of the filing of the extortion case against her, according to high ranking party leaders.

Hasina was originally scheduled to return home in the last week of this month. Although most leaders of her party could not say exactly on what date she will return home, AL Presidium Member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, who is also a cousin of

Hasina, told The Daily Star last night that she will arrive on April 14.

Meanwhile the police yesterday started investigating the case. The government on the other hand is planning to carry out the investiga-

tion of the case through the task force under the National Coordination Committee headed by Communication Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Taskforce to probe charge

UNB, Dhaka

Communications Adviser and chief of the National Taskforce Major General (retd) MA Matin yesterday said the caretaker government is contemplating bringing the extortion case against Sheikh Hasina under the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

AL terms case
farcical,
baseless

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) yesterday strongly condemned the filing of the extortion case against its President Sheikh Hasina, saying the case is "farcical" and "cooked up".

The case has been filed to destroy the political image of Sheikh Hasina, AL Acting President Zillur Rahman and General Secretary Abdul Jalil said in a joint statement.

"The case is false, baseless and part of a conspiracy," they said.

Sheikh Hasina has run the country for five years on the basis of honesty, sincerity and transparency. Even her extreme opponents

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Khaleda flips mind, won't leave country



BNP leaders
deny Khaleda's
'statement'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The reported move to make the two former prime ministers -- Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina -- leave the country has got a new turn as Khaleda has finally refused to leave the country.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Power Cell keeps on mishandling power projects

SHARIER KHAN

The Power Cell, which remains unreformed even after the present caretaker government took over, is once again following a controversial and inefficient path, and pushing three fresh power project tenders into uncertainty.

The projects are for building Sirajganj 450 megawatt (MW) power plant, Meghnaghat-3 450 MW plant and 10 small power plants.

Sources said unless the cell is revamped and its technical director is replaced with an efficient staff, the projects will land in the

same mess that the country's energy sector had been during the five-year alliance rule. The director was appointed in the cell in April 2005 as per the wish of the Hawa Bhaban, highly placed sources said.

A number of complaints about the technical director's inefficiency and controversial dealings have been filed with the director general of the Power Cell and with the energy ministry. But he continues to handle power projects just as he used to do earlier.

For instance, re-tender process for Sirajganj project is hanging for

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

BIRD FLU Over 1,000 chicken culled in 2 districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All 238 free-ranged poultry of different households in Shibobas or Sharsha upazila in Jessor yesterday as the deadly avian influenza was detected there.

Besides, 955 chickens were culled at a poultry farm in Baro Durgapur under Sadar upazila in Gaibandha.

The central avian influenza control room sources said their officials culled all the free-ranged poultry from 44 houses in Shibobas after detecting bird flu in the samples collected from the village. The villagers sent a number of samples to their laboratory and the carcasses tested bird-flu positive, the sources said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



A poultry trader waits for customers at a market opposite Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. Traders said their business suffered a drastic fall following detection of bird flu at several places in the country.

CHANGES IN EMERGENCY RULE Bail hearing restarts after 16-day pause

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Hearing on bail petitions of different cases filed under the Penal Code started in Dhaka courts after 16 days yesterday following the third amendment to the Emergency Power Rules 2007 on Sunday.

On the first day, over 150 people arrested in cases filed with different police stations were granted bail.

The District and Sessions Judge's Court and Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka yesterday took up the bail petitions for hearing and granted bail to a number of arrestees who had cases filed against them under the Penal Code.

Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court and District Magistrate's Court did not take the bail petitions for hearing, as they were yet to get the gazette notifications regarding bail hearings.

On April 8, the caretaker government brought an amendment to the Emergency Powers Rules 2007 to provide for bail in some cases filed under the Penal Code.

This is the third time changes have been made to the rules framed under the Emergency Powers Ordinance 2007.

Hearings on the bail petitions of the cases filed under sections 161, 162, 163, 385, 386, 387, 401, 406, 408, 420, 423, 467, 468, 471 and 477

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



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