

# Hasina to fly home

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Leading politicians of AL and BNP are seeing the filing of the case against AL President Sheikh Hasina as not only a mere lawsuit but as 'a major political development' in light of the changed political situation in the country.

"There is off course a political motive behind filing such a case in the present context," said a leading politician yesterday preferring not to be named and adding, "There were scopes for filing such a case during the last five years of BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government's regimes, so it's a threat to top level politicians."

"Awami League President Sheikh Hasina is a VIP, so the government is considering initiation of an investigation of the case under the National Task Force," Matin told journalists yesterday.

The investigation officer of the case Jane Alam, who is also the officer-in-charge of Tejgaon police station told The Daily Star last evening that he had talked to the complainant Kazi Tajul Islam Faruque yesterday and the day before as part of the inquiry.

But, The Daily Star failed to reach Faruque despite repeated efforts to contact him. A family source said the complainant is not interested to talk to the media about the case. They requested the correspondent to give Faruque some time to cool down following a seemingly tense situation he is in right now.

The family source however said although the case was filed on Monday, Faruque had been staying away from the family for the previous three days without letting them know where he had been staying.

He returned home only after filing of the case on Monday afternoon, family sources said. Meanwhile, police have been deployed at the Gulshan residence of Faruque.

As a state of emergency is in effect in the country with a ban on indoor politics, most politicians including leading AL members preferred to refrain from talking to the media about the case, but some of the leaders seeking anonymity said they believe the move was made against Hasina in aid to kick the current chiefs of AL and BNP out of politics.

A top BNP leader told The Daily Star seeking anonymity that the filing of the case against Sheikh Hasina is not a mere incident, rather it is a significant political development.

The BNP leader said cases can be filed against anyone if there are allegations, but filing a case against such a top politician who is a former prime minister requires rigorous political deliberation on the part of the government regarding whether it will allow it.

Since the ongoing drive against high-profile suspected corrupt politicians started in the first week of February, the country has been rife with speculation that the interim government will ultimately create an atmosphere where the current chiefs of the two major political parties – AL and BNP – will have no choice but to quit politics and go to self exiles.

The speculation was buttressed by Law Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain's comment on April 4 that the caretaker government is not interested in holding any election keeping the current leaderships of different political parties in place and that the government is especially interested to put an end to dynastic politics.

"We want good new leadership to emerge instead of the old ones," he said after a meeting with the chief election commissioner at the Election Commission Secretariat.

Within five days of the law adviser's comment leaders of different political parties yesterday said they are trying to find out whether there is any link between the comment and the filing of the extortion case against Sheikh Hasina.

Communication Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin who is also the chairman of the National Coordination Committee against major corruption and crimes clarified the government's position about the case yesterday and said there was no political motive behind it.

Asked whether the case has any link with the law adviser's recent comment, Matin said it seems that the government had no such plan.

But some politicians think that the case is an 'open threat' to Sheikh Hasina to keep her in exile and at the same time a pressure on Khaleda Zia so that she also gets ready to face the same fate.

As the date for Hasina's return was getting closer, whether the AL chief will be allowed to come back home and at the same time whether the BNP chairperson will be forced to go on exile, were the most talked about topics in the country.

Some influential leaders of AL told The Daily Star last night that they think Hasina should come back home quickly no matter what is the plot behind the case. They said they have already conveyed their suggestion to Hasina. "We have information that our party chief will fight the case after she returns home as early as possible," said an AL leader.

Hasina, who had attended the oath taking ceremony of the present caretaker government led by Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed and openly supported many moves of the government, especially the drive against corruption, made some comments on April 7 criticising the non-party government and the Election Commission for 'delaying' the next general election on 'different pretexts' terming the interim administration 'undemocratic and unconstitutional'.

Some AL leaders said the harsh comments by Hasina might have irked the government to the point where it might allow such a case against her to stand.

Few influential AL leaders see a 'designed structure and sequences' flowing through the incident of filing of

## GARO LEADER'S DEATH Environmental group demands judicial probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Environment Network (BEN) yesterday demanded immediate judicial inquiry into the killing of Choles Ritchil, a leader of the Garos in Modhupur forest area.

BEN in a press release also demanded punishment of the killers. "We condemn this killing in the strongest terms possible and urge the government to scrap the Modhupur Eco Park project."

Expressing concern over the mistreatment of ethnic minorities, BEN said such mistreatment can create grave security problems and the country's experience in Chittagong Hill Tracts amply illustrates this point.

A network of pro-environment Bangladeshis worldwide, BEN also questioned the motive of the joint forces in arresting Ritchil and subjecting him to such inhumane torture.

As per the publicly proclaimed intentions, the joint forces are supposed to act against the corrupt and the criminals, BEN said, adding that Ritchil did not fall into any of these two categories.

The Modhupur Eco Park project is being pursued by vested interest groups including corrupt forest department officials, contractors, suppliers and local goons, who benefit from gabbing the land belonging to the Garos historically, the press release said.

"We would like the authorities to look carefully into whether there was any influence of these vested interest groups on the course of the events leading to Ritchil's death preceded by the death of another Garo leader Piren Snal on January 3 in 2004."

The use of torture is a grave crime and it violates the fundamental rights protected by the constitution of Bangladesh. The UN Convention also prohibits torture. The operations by the joint forces to combat corruption and restore law and order must be carried out by following internationally recognised norms to uphold human rights, BEN noted.

Choles Ritchil was the leader of the Garo movement against the ill-conceived Modhupur Eco Park project, under which a wall is being constructed around 3,000 acres of the Modhupur forest.

According to most observers, the wall will basically destroy the forest and disrupt the livelihood of the indigenous people including the Garos, who live in the area and depend on the forest for their livelihood.

Ritchil took up the leadership after Piren Snal, the previous leader of the Garo movement against the Modhupur Eco Park project, was killed on January 3, 2004 when police fired on a peaceful demonstration against the project. The firing also caused injuries to twenty-five people including women and children, the press release said.

"We hope good sense would prevail among government authorities and the project would be abandoned," the press release said terming the torture and killing of Ritchil 'medieval'.

Cops press charge

**FROM PAGE 16**  
of Huda's case, submitted the charge sheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka showing 17 people as prosecution witnesses.

The joint forces seized a revolver, 14 bullets, a huge amount of local and foreign currencies, four passports and a mobile phone set from Huda's Dhanmondi residence and arrested him on February 4.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that the seized revolver and bullets were invalid, as he (Huda) did not renew the validity of the firearm and ammunition.

The case was filed under the Arms Act on March 8.

SI AKM Monzurul Haq Akand filed another case on February 15 for illegally possessing a huge amount of foreign and local currencies under the Money Laundering Act.

The seized currencies include Tk 18,68,470 and 1,796 Singapore dollars, 1,350 pounds, 300 euros and 18 dinars.

The former communications minister was widely accused of making huge money through corruption relating to CNG-run autorickshaws and allocation of land for filling stations during the tenure of the immediate past BNP-led four-party alliance government.

Huda even allotted a costly piece of Bangladesh Railway land in the heart of the city for his wife's human rights organisation at a nominal price.

Our Narayanganj correspondent reported that Special Judge Abdul Quddus Mia passed the order to attach Osman's properties in connection with a graft case filed on April 4 by the Anti-Corruption Commission as he did not submit his and family members' wealth statement within the commission set time frame.

The court fixed April 15 for next hearing of the case.

# Police force

**FROM PAGE 16**  
He also lauded the force's active participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping missions and said that they have been commended worldwide for their work in Sierra Leone, Liberia and East Timor, among others.

Fakhruddin also presented Bangladesh Police Medal, the highest national police award, and the President Police Medal awards to the winners.

Earlier, the CA received salutes from a combined parade of Rab, armed police, police of Dhaka and Rajshahi ranges, combined police ranges, railway and highway police, DMP, CMP, combined metropolitan police and Mohila police.

The parade was also attended by Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad, caretaker government advisers, chiefs of army, navy and air forces, diplomats, senior civil and military officials and distinguished personalities.

**AWARDS**  
A total of 28 police and Rapid Action

## De Villiers

**FROM PAGE 16**  
was a blessing in disguise for South Africa. Kallis, walking in to bat, was in a belligerent mood. On occasion Kallis can be dour and defensive, but on Tuesday he was hell-bent on imposing himself on the opposition. He set the ball rolling with a classic pull shot against Collymore, rolling his wrists beautifully over the ball and keeping it down.

The one to really suffer, though, was Dwayne Bravo. When he came on to bowl, first change, it was obvious that Kallis had decided to target the lesser bowlers. He crashed one in front of point and predetermined the next, walking across his stumps and whipping through midwicket. Then Kallis made room and lofted effortlessly over the off side for the first six of the match. Hungry for more, Kallis capped off the 18-run over with a deflatable chip over midwicket for four.

De Villiers struggled early and offered a couple of half-chances that were put down by the sloppy West Indian fielders. But after that the right-hander batted fluently. He was especially severe when the ball was dropped short, rocking back and pulling with panache.

Earlier Brian Lara, whose side need to win all three of their remaining Super Eight matches to keep their chances of reaching the semifinals alive, won the toss and put South Africa into bat.

There were three changes from the West Indian side that lost by 113 runs against Sri Lanka in Guyana in their most recent match nine days ago.

Local favourite, Grenada batsman Devon Smith, replaced Marlon Samuels, while Kieron Pollard and Corey Collymore came in for Dwayne Smith and Jerome Taylor.

South Africa included batsman Herschelle Gibbs, who suffered a calf strain during his team's shock 67-run loss against Bangladesh in Guyana Saturday.

South Africa, who have gained one more win than the West Indies in the Super Eight phase but also might need to win all their last three matches, made two changes.

Batsman Loots Bosman replaced Justin Kemp, while all-rounder Andrew Hall returned in place of Charl Langeveldt.

## Khaleda flips mind

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Khaleda, the BNP chief, said to have consented to the move earlier, has now backtracked on her previous position and informed 'negotiators' involved in the move that she would stay on in the country, well placed sources in the BNP said.

Asked whether the government has taken any move to pressure Khaleda and Hasina to leave the country, Communications Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin yesterday ruled out any such initiative.

The adviser replied in the negative when journalists asked if the extortion case against Hasina was filed to prevent her return home.

Following proclamation of the state of emergency, a move was reportedly initiated to make the BNP and AL chiefs leave the country, and thereby rid the two major parties of political control.

The move got momentum as the ongoing crackdown on corrupt suspect politicians began on February 4, and the BNP chairperson almost agreed to it on some conditions, sources said.

Some influential persons close to the 'authorities' had started 'negotiations' in this regard. Khaleda told them she might leave the country with all her family members, including her elder son and BNP Senior Secretary General Tarique Rahman, arrested on March 7, the sources said.

But the former PM later made her mind to face any situation staying in the country, one source said.

"She (Khaleda) is determined not to leave the country," a senior BNP leader told The Daily Star. "It is apprehended that pressure might continue on her to change her mind," he added, declining to be named.

Meanwhile, Khaleda has been reportedly made to refrain from meeting senior leaders of her party, and she is under strict surveillance.

BNP leaders under being verbally asked not to visit Khaleda's cantonment residence, and guests are also being discouraged to do so, sources claimed.

Battalion (Rab) personnel were selected for four separate award categories, including Bangladesh Police Medal and President Police Medal for their outstanding contribution to curb crime and militancy and help improve the law and order in the country in 2006.

Rab members bagged 10 medals while 18 awards went to police.

Eight officials were decorated with the President Police Medal, two of whom received it posthumously.

The award winners' list include Lt Colonel Gulzar Uddin Ahmed, Maj Atikur Rahman, Maj Md Shamsuzzoha, Coln Md Mahbubul Alam Molla, Mr Osman Ghani, Capt Abdullah Al Mansoor Bhuiyan, Mohammad Ali, Lt A B M Foyzal Haider, Capt Tanvir Haider of Rab and Md Siraj Mia, Naeem Ahmed, Md Abdul Khaleque, Md Shafiul Azam, Mr Riaz Uddin Ahamed, Kamrul Islam, Md Abdur Rob, Md Shafiur Rahman, S M Kamrul Hasan, Md Shamsuddoha, Md Sayedur Rahman Bhuiyan, Mr Khandaker Nozmul Hasan, Md Mainul Islam, Md Ismail, Md Abdus Samad, Md Shahjalil Mia, Md Harun-Ar-Rashid of Police.

Late Md Jahangir Hossain of Police and Late P C Md Kanchan Ali of Rab were given posthumous award.

Of the awards, seven were given for successful operations against the militants of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh while the rest include successful operation to recover firearms and unearthing criminal syndicates.

## BNP leaders

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Sent from a Bangla national daily linked to BNP, the fax had the party letterhead but the signature in it was unclear.

When contacted last night, both BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan said they were not aware of any such statement.

Usually, the statements by the BNP chairperson are undersigned by the party spokesperson, office secretary or assistant office secretary.

## Mamun, Harris Chy

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amount on different dates from 2001-2006 from the construction firm, threatening to cancel their work orders.

Each time, accompanied by several goons, Mamun visited the office of the firm and realised the amount in cash and cheques. The goons had threatened them with dire consequences if the demanded money is not paid.

Being scared, they did not dare to file any case against the accused at that time, the complainant added.

Meanwhile, Sub Inspector of Gulshan Police Station Babul Hossain filed a case under Money Laundering Act against Harris Chowdhury.

According to the statement, Harris hoarded foreign currencies worth about Tk 5.64 lakh with a plan to smuggle those abroad.

On February 4, the joint forces seized two briefcases with the currencies from the house of Harris.

The briefcases were opened on April 2 in presence of Metropolitan Magistrate Ali Reza and the foreign currencies were found, sources said.

## Inqilab

**FROM PAGE 16**  
According to the deputy ranger, Rafique had demanded Tk 10 lakh from him. After negotiations, Rafique agreed to accept Tk 20,000 on condition that the rest of the sum would be paid up later.

## Taskforce

**FROM PAGE 1**  
taskforce for investigation, as she is a VIP.

"As the Awami League President Sheikh Hasina is a VIP, the government is considering investigation into the case under the National Taskforce," he told reporters in his office at the communications ministry.

"It is an old case. So, it needs adequate investigation. I myself contacted the law adviser in this regard," said the chief of the taskforce.

Tajul Islam Farook, a businessman, on Monday filed an extortion case against Awami League President and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina with Tejgaon Police Station.

Replying to a query whether it is a pre-emptive government's move so that Hasina, now in the United States, could not come back to the country, the adviser said it is a false allegation. "Anyone can file case against anybody."

Responding to another question about the restriction on BNP Chairperson and immediate-past prime minister Khaleda Zia's movement and reported pressure on her for leaving the country, Matin said, "As far as I know, there is no restriction on her movement and no pressure on her for leaving the country."

Referring to the case filed against those included in the list of corruption suspects, he said 13 cases have already been filed against the corrupt persons and the Anti-Corruption Commission is considering filing case against 13-14 more suspects.

Replying to another question, the communications adviser said for the shortage of Investigation Officers (IO), the number of units of the taskforce is not being increased at this moment.

## Bird flu

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"It is a village in the border area, so the virus infection might have come from the neighbouring country," said a control room official.

Earlier, the spread of the deadly virus was limited to poultry in the farms of the country, not free-ranged poultry.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reports: 955 chickens were culled at Chanda Poultry Farm in Baro Durgapur of Sadar upazila after bird flu was detected there, the first in the district. The joint forces cordoned the whole area off during the culling of the chickens.

The district administration sources said five chickens from one Fakrul Islam's farm died Monday night. The district livestock department officials sent the dead chickens to their head office in Dhaka where the carcasses tested bird-flu positive.

The police urged all farm owners in the area to be cautious. The district administration sources said all free-ranged poultry within one kilometre radius of the infected farm would be culled. The administration sealed off the bird flu infected farm.

## Bail hearing

**FROM PAGE 1**  
of the Penal Code were not held yesterday as the amendment did not bring any provisions for granting bail to those accused.

Earlier on March 21, the government promulgated an amendment, suspending the rights to petition for bail and seek redress from any higher court until a case is resolved in a trial court. It caused uproar among the lawyers, litigants and rights activists.

In the section pertaining to bail, the amended ordinance says, "Regardless of whatever is stated in sections 497 and 498 of the Criminal Procedure Code or any other law, an accused under the Emergency Powers Ordinance will not be released on bail during the enquiry, investigation and trial of the case against that person."

However, arrestees with charges of corruption, smuggling, hoarding, black-marketing, money laundering, illegal possession of firearms, explosive substances, foreign currency, and narcotics, tax evasion and other crimes considered a threat to security of the state, people and the economy were not eligible for bail.

The second amendment [March 21] had suspended the right to bail also for those accused of offences under the Penal Code.

Following that, no hearing on bail petitions in cases filed under the Arms Act, Explosive Substances Act, Foreign Exchange Regulation Act and Penal Code has taken place in any court of the country.

## Election timeline

**FROM PAGE 16**  
of this government and these tasks determine the timeline.

However, he said it is up to the Bangladesh people and the media to hold free discussions on the subject and see whether the roadmap and individual tasks of the government are appropriate to a timeline.

Asked his comment on political parties' observation that 18 months is too long a time to prepare voter list, the ambassador said they observe it with great interest. "We look forward that majority opinion will be taken into account by this government," he noted.

About the case filed against Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, Mayke said, "These are domestic political matters, and of course legal matters."

The foreign affairs adviser said they discussed these matters stated by the Ambassador and EU-Bangladesh relations also came up.

He said the European Union is studying the steps so far taken by the present government.

## 4 JMB cadres

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Police said the JMB militants, Said Ali, 45, Joyen, 28, from Roynagar, Khoyer Ali, 36, from Kodapara, and Akram, 40, from Sirpur of the same upazila took part in JMB operations led by Bangla Bhai in 2004 and are wanted in several cases of atrocities.

The other two, Mamun, 23, from Taherpur Basia and Khwaza Moyaen, 28, from Maria villages, are listed PBPC outlaws, added police.

Police teams led by Mirza Golam Sarwar, officer-in-charge of Bagmara police station, apprehended the criminals.

A total of 23 JMB militants and 51 PBPC outlaws have been captured since mid-January, said police.

Bogra police sources said the threat mail warned of serious actions against the entire administration unless harassment of female JMB activists is stopped.

The letter also mentioned that JMB is in a 60-day mourning since March 30 in memory of its six executed leaders.

Bogra police have taken precautionary measures at key installations in the city including the Judge Court to thwart any JMB attack.

# Corrupt PSC officials

**FROM PAGE 16**  
seventh general meeting on August 30, 1998, sources said.

At the eighth meeting, the commission instructed Rabiul to recover the consulting fees from Messrs Hasna Engineering and Consulting Ltd but Rabiul recovered only Tk 1.65 lakh, the sources added.

Rabiul, however, denied all the allegations, saying he was made OSD during the BNP-Jamaat alliance rule because he spoke against the corruption and irregularities of the present PSC chairman and members.

"These allegations against me are not true and it is the first time I hear of such allegations in my 20-year career. A few PSC staffs have conspired against me as I protested at the final selection of the 27th BCS without conducting the psychological test," Rabiul told The Daily Star.

Anwarul Islam was made OSD following a number of departmental cases against him and show-cause notices served on him on charges of corruption and failure to perform official duties.

PSC sources said Anwarul's promotion was deferred by one year for withholding a relief ministry file without any reason and he was informed of the punishment through a letter on November 13, 1993.

The 15th regular meeting of the PSC on December 2, 1993 decided to file a case against Anwarul for delaying the processing of important files and changing dates with "ill motives", the sources added.

Anwarul also denied the allegations and said he was "harshly victimised" during the 1991-1996 tenure of the BNP government.

**CORRUPTION AT PSC**  
Meanwhile, the extent of corruption has gone so far that even the lower level employees have become engaged with the corrupt syndicate, alleged applicants for job and promotion.

Many BCS candidates mentioned the names of third- and fourth-class employees as the ringleaders at the

lowest level at the PSC.

These staffs have strong connection with some allegedly controversial PSC members, including Prof Mahfuzur Rahman whose name is on the government list of top 100 corruption suspects, Latifur Rahman who allegedly masterminded the recruitment of 350 upazila election officers, Prof AKM Shahadat Hossain Mondol who is allegedly involved with the controversial recruitment of 545 teachers at Rajshahi University, Prof M Anwarul Huq—the first PSC member to have come from a non-government college, Prof Ashrafur Islam who was the chairman of the controversial 27th BCS exams, and PSC Director Awlad Hossain Khan who is the main accused in different departmental cases still pending, PSC sources said.

Many educationists said the caretaker government should immediately check the track records of the PSC officers and staff at all levels and remove the unscrupulous officers with the help of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

"It will be impossible to bring about meaningful reforms to the PSC without taking punitive action against the present controversial members and officers," said Sheikh Hafizur Rahman Karzon, assistant professor of law at Dhaka University.

Education Adviser Ayub Quadri told reporters on April 3 that the government will reform the PSC soon.

"It is very urgent to remove the controversial officers from the PSC. The caretaker government has already taken some internal measures for the reconstitution of the PSC," he said.

LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal also said earlier that the PSC chairman and members should resign.

# Ex-state ministers

**FROM PAGE 16**  
located at Lalpur upazila of the district, lodged the case.

The four other accused are Arshed, Kamru, Fazlul and Luffar.

The First Class Magistrate's Court in Natore ordered Lalpur police to investigate the matter.

In his complaint Rustom alleged that the four accused demanded Tk 1 lakh in toll from him a few years back.

On February 13, 2003, they along with 20 to 25 armed cadres went to his house and demanded the toll again.

As Rustom refused to pay the money, the criminals started beating him and other family members and vandalised his house.

At one stage, Rustom managed to escape and brought police from Lalpur Police Station.

Police found the criminals were ransacking the house.

Seeing the police, Arshed, one of the accused, called Fazlur Rahman over phone and connected a police officer by activating the speakerphone.

Rahman was heard to order the police to listen to Arshed's pleas, Rustom alleged adding that the police went away later.

Ex-state minister Amanullah Aman and 14 other BNP activists were sued on charges of extortion.

Abu Bakr, a trader, filed the case by with Keraniganj Police Station. According to the UNB.

# Female bomber

**FROM PAGE 16**  
oldest institute of higher education.

Another 10 people were wounded. A mortar round also slammed into a school on Palestine Street killing one person, a medical source said.

Colleges and academics have been a persistent target for insurgents in the four years since the US-led invasion.