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PRESS NOTE

Some reliable sources have informed the government that Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, now on a personal visit to the United States, might return to the country on April 23, 2007. It should be mentioned here that in the recent past, the law and order had been disrupted while national security and the economic climate had been jeopardized in a period of anarchy brought on by non-stop and irresponsible agitation and disorderly acts of Awami League and other political parties under her leadership. Inevitably, it all led to declaration of the state of emergency.

Besides, she has made provocative and malicious statements against the present caretaker government and law enforcement agencies at different meetings and in national and international media while staying overseas.

Under the circumstances, if Sheikh Hasina returns, she might seek to make provocative remarks like she did before, and create

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Govt blocks Hasina's return

Determined to rid politics of two most powerful women; Joy says Hasina to reach Dhaka April 23

Govt blocks out Hasina's views



The government through its Press Information Department and other agencies has instructed all newspapers not to carry any comment of Sheikh Hasina. An SMS

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BNP not losing its heart yet

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Most of the BNP leaders believe the party will manage to survive due to its popularity even if the military-backed government forces its chairperson Khaleda Zia into exile, although the feeling that survival will be a rough ride is quite widespread.

They think BNP is facing the worst ever crisis as a few of its corrupt leaders put the party in the

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JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Bangladesh politics wakes up to a new reality as the fate of the two leading lights of the archrivals Awami League (AL) and BNP seems to be sealed with Sheikh Hasina virtually barred from returning to the country and Khaleda Zia set to go into exile.

Law Adviser barrister Maimul Hosein told BBC Bangla Service last night that in case the AL chief returns legal measures will have to be taken against her. The government has already requested different airlines not to carry her home.

He added, "Though there are criminal cases against her, we don't want a leader of her stature to be in trouble."

Meantime, talking to The Daily Star over telephone last night, Hasina's son Sajib Wazed joy said, "She will return on April 23."

According to party sources, the former premier will fly to London this morning and there she will attend a number of programmes before leaving for Dhaka. She

will take a British Airways flight.

For the first time anything like this is befalling the two battling parties that hold sway over about 75 percent of voters. What happens next to the organisations or their leaders with noses bloodied in the ongoing drive to purge politics of corruption is an open question.

The latest twist came only a day after two advisers--Maimul Hosein and MA Mathi--had said that Hasina was free to fly in just as Khaleda, her match in politics, is welcome to carry her home.

In a press note issued yesterday, the government said it has decided to take special cautionary steps regarding Hasina's return.

During her stay overseas of late she has made inflammatory statements against the present administration and law enforcement agencies at several meetings and in national and international media, read the press note.

If she returns, she might seek to make provocative comments again and cause

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remaining formalities before that time.

The government is bearing the entire cost of air travel of Khaleda Zia and her family, said the source.

The source also said Khaleda might be allowed to meet her elder son at Dhaka Central jail sometime today prior to her departure from the country. The authorities are also likely to allow her to meet her close relatives before the departure.

There is also an indication that Khaleda might be allowed to meet some of her party leaders or talk to them over the phone.

Reliable sources said Khaleda Zia will be leaving with her younger son Arafat Rahman Coco, his wife and his two daughters.

Tarique Rahman's wife and their daughter are unlikely to leave the country with Khaleda Zia. They

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Anti-graft drive lacks experience, coordination

Admits chief of NCC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government's anti-corruption drive has not progressed as expected due to lack of experience and poor coordination and understanding among those involved in the process, said Maj Gen Masud Uddin Chowdhury, chief of the National Coordination Committee on Combating Corruption and Crime.

"Many of us involved in the process of inquiry and investigation lack experience. This is why we have decided to introduce a training programme for them," said Masud, also general officer commanding of Nine Division of the army.

He was talking to the press yesterday following a meeting with the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) at its office on the progress of

the ongoing drive.

"The task force members (under the coordination committee) from the army, navy and air force also do not have that kind of experience in investigations. This has specially affected the pace of progress of investigations," Masud noted.

The coordination committee has been working and assisting the ACC for two months. In some cases,

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AL leaders Zafrullah, Ashim Ukil, BNP leader Toymur held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Joint forces yesterday detained Awami League (AL) Presidium Member and former lawmaker Kazi Zafrullah, BNP leader and former chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) advocate Toymur Alam Khondoker and AL Deputy Publicity Secretary Ashim Kumar Ukil.

The forces picked up Zafrullah from in front of his Gulshan 2 residence at around 7:30pm while Ashim from Mirpur at around 8:00pm, said police and family sources.

Charges against Zafrullah and Ashim however were not disclosed.

"A team of plain clothed law enforcers came in a microbus and picked my father up when he was out for evening walk just outside the house," Zafrullah's eldest son Omar Zafrul told The Daily Star.

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BNP Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman's wife Zobaida Rahman coming out of Dhaka Central Jail after meeting her detained husband yesterday. IS BANGLA

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