

Hasina's return

FROM PAGE 1 further hatred and confusion among the people. All this might disrupt the country's law and order and threaten the national security and economy, it adds.

The measures however are temporary.

The foreign, civil aviation and tourism ministries and the inspector general of police have been asked to take necessary steps in line with the government's decision.

The AL spanning 59 long years mostly on the streets seems to be in a quandary with its senior leaders completely clueless about the developments.

"The government has just banned her from entering the country," Abdul Jalil, AL general secretary, told The Daily Star last night. "I don't have any comment at this stage."

Some leaders think the fate of Hasina and Khaleda was a foregone conclusion from the moment the new caretaker government took over. In fact, the so-called 'Minus Two' formula – politics without the two begums – so much speculated about for the last few months is now coming into play.

The speculation was buttressed by Law Adviser Mainul Hosen's recent comment that the government is not interested in any election keeping the current political leadership in place.

"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 on April 4.

Speaking in return for anonymity, a senior BNP leader said, "If they [the two leaders] had committed any crime, they should have been tried here and sentenced. But what we are witnessing now is a completely new approach to democracy."

However, most of the leaders stayed mum on the popular talks that politics with these two leaders in place has no future.

The BNP with a comfortable history of over 25 years, mostly in power with the aid of political remnants of other parties including the AL, is today panting in its sudden twilight existence. It too is short on answers to what the future holds for the party.

Khaleda has already packed her bags and is set to fly to Saudi Arabia apparently to 'perform' Umrah. Then she will stay back there without any fuss, according to an arrangement learnt to have been made by the powers that be.

She has already secured the release of her younger son, Arafat Rahman Coco, who is widely alleged to have been involved in massive corruption, keeping a very low profile.

Khaleda's daughter-in-law went to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday to bid farewell to her husband, Tarique Rahman, who in the last five years had become the icon of graft in Bangladesh.

Khaleda wanted to take Tarique along with her to exile, but so far the only concession that she seems to have gained is a six-month stay on the proceedings of the extortion case against him.

Meanwhile, sources said party colleagues informed Hasina of the 'ban on her return' Tuesday night, much before the press note was

issued. She was apparently shocked at the news as only on the 11th of this month she was told by the government not to cut short her visit.

She had planned to return on April 14 instead of scheduled April 23 after an extortion case was filed against her. She was assured by the government that 'measures would be taken not to tarnish her honour and image'.

Hasina yesterday talked to her party leaders over phone and asked them to discuss what steps to be taken next. The AL presidium is likely to meet this evening.

A leader of the party told The Daily Star that leaders feel that it is all up to Hasina now to decide whether to face an uncertain future at home or stay back in the ease of her family's contact abroad.

The allegations brought against her in the press note are tantamount to sedition charges, the leaders fear. They now want to weigh how much the party can do to protest the actions of the government under the state of emergency. But they want to pursue on one point of the press note – that the 'special cautionary measures' on Hasina's return is temporary.

The two leaders who held hatred for each other close to their heart and never exchanged so much as a word between them in the last 15 years now ironically share a similar fate. Options before them are not many – how they come out of it will be something to be followed with keen interest both nationally and internationally.

Meanwhile, the British High Commission in Dhaka sought clarification from Bangladesh government regarding restrictions imposed on the AL president's return to the country from the US, reports UNB.

"We're aware of the report and seeking clarification [from the authorities concerned]," a spokesperson for the high commission told the news agency yesterday evening.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1 are rather likely to join her along with Tarique after his release from prison. The sources said although there is pressure from higher authorities on Tarique's wife Dr Zobaida to leave the country with her mother-in-law, she is unwilling to leave without her husband.

In absence of Khaleda Zia, Tarique's wife and his only daughter will stay with his mother-in-law Iqbalmand Banu in her Dhanmondi residence in the capital, the sources added.

Khaleda Zia's cantonment residence on Shahid Moinul Hossain Road, which was donated to her by the erstwhile government following the assassination of late president Ziaur Rahman in 1981, will be put under a caretaker to be appointed by the Cantonment Board until the current government decides on its next course of action.

Meanwhile, Dr Zobaida Rahman and her mother yesterday met Tarique at Dhaka Central Jail, which the jail authorities termed as a routine monthly visit.

The sources said the BNP chief and her family members, who are leaving with her, are done with their preparations for departing the country.

SL wipe out

FROM PAGE 16 while out-of-form Kumar Sangakkara fell to a brilliant catch by Kenneth Carroll off Dave Langford-Smith for 5.

Ireland's score of 77 was the sixth lowest in World Cup history. Maharoor's haul of four for 25 in 10 overs included a sensational start that saw the pace bowler take three wickets in four balls in his first over.

Off-spinner Muralidaran followed up with two wickets in three balls in his first over on his way to a miserly return of four for 19 in five overs.

Ireland's total - which featured five noughts - was the lowest at this World Cup, edging Bermuda's 78 against Sri Lanka.

The 1996 champions recalled bowlers Chaminda Vaas and Muralidaran, controversially rested for the seven-wicket defeat by world champions Australia here Monday when they were already through to the semifinals, but it was Maharoor who sparked the slide.

The first change was pulled and driven through extra-cover for fours off his first two balls by Jeremy Bray, one of an all left-handed top five.

However, he then switched to round the wicket, and with his next delivery had Bray pushing a catch to Russel Arnold at short extra-cover leaving Ireland 28 for one in the eighth over.

Two balls later Andre Botha sparred outside off-stump and was caught behind by wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara for nought.

Next ball Eoin Morgan was brilliantly caught by a diving Sangakkara for a golden duck and Ireland were 28 for three with Maharoor on a hatrick at the start of his second over which Niall O'Brien survived.

But Maharoor had a fourth wicket when opener William Porterfield (17) skied to Sanath Jayasuriya at mid-on.

Murali then struck with his second ball when Niall O'Brien was caught behind and two balls later postman Kenny Carroll, on his World Cup debut and the only change to the team that beat Bangladesh by 74 runs in Barbados on Sunday, missed a full toss and was bowled round his legs for nought.

Sri Lanka's next match is the first semifinal in Jamaica on Tuesday where their likely opponents will be New Zealand.

Anti-graft

FROM PAGE 1 there should have been more coordination and understanding, he said.

The government in early February formed 40 task forces in Dhaka alone under the coordination committee to probe allegations of graft. The task forces comprise both civil and military officials.

"We are dealing with high profile people, many of whom were involved in corporate corruption.

To tell you the truth, none of our departments has any experience of (probing) corporate corruption," the general pointed out.

"Today's (Wednesday) meeting discussed these matters."

Explaining the situation, Masud said, "For example, National Board of Revenue (NBR) has not perhaps filed any case against a tax evader. This kind of lacking is there for all of us."

At yesterday's meeting, he also explained the method of work of the taskforces. "We discussed how to produce visible actions by overcoming our problems."

Asked why the authorities had arrested former prime minister Khaleda Zia's younger son Arafat Rahman and then released him after one day, Masud said, "Communications adviser has already clarified that he was asked to answer some questions. He was sent back after interrogation."

In reply to a question if this (Arafat's release) means there is no allegation of corruption against him, the general said, "As far as I can recall, communications adviser said there are some allegations. Those arrested earlier had named him during interrogations. For this reason, he (Arafat) was asked questions. But till now, this case has not come to our task force. So, I cannot really comment on that."

He evaded a reply when asked about restriction on Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's return home.

‘Used’ machinery

FROM PAGE 16 According to the sources, the importer opened an LC of \$9.15 lakh (equivalent to Tk 6.61 crore) with Southeast Bank, Dilkusha branch, for the capital machinery.

Due to a reported dispute between the bank and the importer over the declaration, the machinery of a Singapore brand had been lying undelivered for several weeks, sources said.

Zafrullah, Ashim

FROM PAGE 1 He said he and his family members got scared the way the law enforcers were picking up his father. "At first we thought that he was being kidnapped, but later police confirmed that he had been arrested," Omar added.

The official confirmation about the arrests was not immediately available.

Meanwhile, BNP leader advocate Toymur Alam Khondoker was placed on a two-day remand after his arrest yesterday.

A team of joint forces arrested him from his Gulshan residence in a pre-dawn raid.

In the afternoon, he was handed over to Paltan police who produced him before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka with a prayer for a seven-day remand in connection with a case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

In the case filed with Paltan Police Station, ACC Inspector Shafique Ullah mentioned that being a close aide of detained former communications minister Nazmul Huda, Toymur appointed 537 incompetent people in the BRTC through corruption.

Under a tight security, Paltan police produced a handcuffed Toymur before the CMM's court at 5:40pm where the defence lawyers submitted a petition for cancellation of the remand prayer.

In the forwarding report placed before the court, Officer-in-Charge of Paltan Police Station, who is also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, mentioned that Toymur appointed incompetent people at BRTC illegally which is considered to be a corruption.

So, he needs to be remanded to find out vital clues regarding his corruption, the IO said.

The defence lawyers submitted a petition for cancellation of the remand prayer saying that the case was filed against Toymur as part of a

conspiracy to harass him.

They said the process of appointing the candidates to different posts of BRTC was transparent.

Toymur told the court that the charges brought against him were false, fabricated and concocted. He also said the candidates were selected by different tests following the instruction from the concerned ministry.

After hearing both the sides, Metropolitan Magistrate Mamun AL Rashid rejected the defence petition for cancellation of the remand prayer and placed Toymur on a two-day remand.

UNDP

FROM PAGE 16 asked the offices of district election officers to inform the upazila election officers about the test, sources said.

The upazila election officers, who joined the job in 2005, have also been given a syllabus for the examination.

Barapukuria

FROM PAGE 16 Company Ltd (BCMCL) was unable to supply sufficient coal to the power plant.

The BCMCL now extracts a maximum of 1,000 to 1,200 tonnes coal a day, which is half the daily requirement of the Barapukuria power plant, according to sources at BCMCL.

Romendra Nath Ghosh, chief engineer at the power plant, told the Daily Star yesterday that the government floated tenders in March for importing coal on an urgent basis to cope with the growing demand of power during the Boro cultivation season.

The plant began production Tuesday night after receiving the third consignment of the imported coal early this month, he added.

Moudud sent to jail

FROM PAGE 16 Moreover, the case will be brought under the Emergency Power Rules 2007 and Moudud will be shown arrested under the rules within a short time for his alleged involvement with corruption. So, he should be confined in the jail custody until the investigation of the case is complete, the IO said.

Opposing the police report, advocates Azizul Haq and Mahbub Uddin Khokon argued that their client was mentally tortured during the remand and they did not know where he was taken for interrogation.

Moudud had been suffering from various diseases and he should be given treatment and provided with division during his confinement in jail custody, said the defence lawyers.

Asked by the journalists where he was taken during remand, Moudud in the dock said he was an accused and he should not disclose it to any people.

After hearing both the sides, the court ordered sending Moudud to jail and directed the jail authorities to take necessary steps for his treatment and provide division for Moudud in jail custody.

The army-led joint forces arrested Moudud from his Gulshan residence on April 13 and he was sued under Section 25 (B) of the Special Powers Act, 1974 for bringing the foreign liquors, evading government tax.

On March 25, the National Board of Revenue directed banks to freeze the accounts of Moudud Ahmed and his wife.

Huda's Arms Case Another Dhaka court yesterday adjourned the proceedings of the arms case against Nazmul Huda till April 26 following a time petition by the defence lawyers.

Judge Mohammad Aman Ullah of the Fourth Additional

Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the adjournment order after Huda was produced before the court at 11:45am under a heavy security.

The defence lawyers submitted two petitions one for adjournment of the hearing on charge framing against Huda and the other for talking to him about the case for an hour.

After the hearing, the judge granted the two petitions.

Dhanmondi police on April 10 pressed charges against Huda for possessing illegal firearms and ammunition.

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.

Press note

FROM PAGE 1 further hatred and confusion among the people. This might deteriorate the country's law and order, disturb the prevailing stability and threaten public safety and economy. Also to be noted, Sheikh Hasina herself is concerned about her security and has pleaded with the government through her party for special security arrangements. For the above-mentioned reasons, the government has decided to take some cautionary steps regarding her return. However, those measures are temporary.

Immigration at air and land ports, different airlines and the other authorities concerned have been informed to that end.

The foreign, civil aviation and tourism ministries, civil aviation authority and the inspector general of police too have been requested to take necessary steps.

\$250m ADB aid

FROM PAGE 16 and replacement of the existing lines with spaghetti lines.

ADB is assisting the government in piloting the proposed DWSP to provide round-the-clock safe, reliable, and efficient water supply.

Water losses have come down to 80 from 487 cubic metres a day in the project area. As a result, water consumption reduced to 471 cubic metres a day for 176 connections from 913 cubic metres per day for 145 connections during the same period.

The water delivery pressure has also increased alongside expansion of the distribution network while the spaghetti connections reduced and average hours of water supply increased to 24 hours in the project area, according to an evaluation.

Over 90 percent of the un-served households in Manikdi showed their willingness to pay for a household connection and the existing customers are willing to pay more for the 24-hour water supply, said a socio-economic survey carried out in the pilot project area in 2006.

Under the project, around 400 plumbers have been trained out of the targeted 700 of the entire

Five JMB men

FROM PAGE 16 cadres in separate raids on different villages of the upazila.

The arrested BPCP cadres are Abdul Kuddus, 35, Jalal, 26, and Kefayetullah, 40, of Sajuria village, and Muhammad Shahin, 27, of Ramrama villages.

SHERPUR In Sherpur, police arrested two more JMB cadres in Talatpur and Nohat areas of the district town, according to our Tangail correspondent.

The arrestees are Tara Miah, 20, son of Abul Hashem of Talatpur area, and Amir Hossain, 21, son of Noor Hossain of Nohat area.

On confessional statements of the JMB men arrested on early Tuesday in different places of Sherpur Sadar upazila, Police arrested Tara and Amir.

Police are quizzing the JMB men at Sherpur Police Station.

Five out of the 13 JMB cadres, who were arrested on early Tuesday, were placed on a three-day remand yesterday.

CHITTAGONG Our Chittagong correspondent reported that Rab arrested JMB member Mohammad Zulfiqar Ali, son of late Zahurul Haque of Delipara under Sitakunda upazila at a house at Rahatterpul Mazargatpara under Bakalia Police Station at 1:30pm yesterday.

Rab sources said Zulfiqar is a member of the suicide squad of the outlawed Islamist outfit. He was wanted in a case filed with Halishahar Police Station, they added.

Last Cup match

FROM PAGE 16 encounters, with the remaining two including the 2003 World Cup match in South Africa being washed out.

They also have an agonising memory of a ten-wicket thrashing in their last meeting in the ICC Champions Trophy in India against the West Indies, winners of the first two World Cups in 1975 and 1979.

But Dav Whatmore's boys have already shown in the tournament that they can turn the table on any team and bounce back from disasters. One more sparkling show would help them avoid the last place in the Super Eight.

So, everybody is pinning hopes on another fightback by the Tigers who lost to England and Ireland in their last two encounters on the back of a splendid success against the Proteas that had silenced the critics who were calling Bangladesh's win over India a 'fluke'.

Consistency in batting would be the key to success not only in their match against the Caribbeans but also would boost their morale ahead of next month's home series against India.

On the other hand, West Indies, winners of the ICC Champions Trophy in 2004 and runners-up in last year's edition, won all three preliminary round matches to raise hopes of a successful campaign but have failed to win a single match in the second round. Having lost to Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and South Africa, the home side will look to save their blushes against Bangladesh and England in their last games.

No change

FROM PAGE 16 remedial actions in both Magurchhara and Tangratia blow-out cases.

Officials of the BGFCIL, Titas field, Bapex and Petrobangla were holding separate meetings yesterday to discuss the situation at Titas field and its possible remedies.

Sporadic gas leakage from various points of the ground in Brahmanbaria had been noticed for the last three to five years. The phenomenon reached an alarming state since the last dry season.

Local villagers and farmers had told The Daily Star in February that gas was leaking out from more than 3,000 large holes -- including some 30-foot diameter holes -- on Iri fields, water bodies and the Titas river. Gases emitting through some of the holes have been burning in high flames.

Bapex, that was unsuitably assigned by the authorities last month to fix the uncontrolled leakage, barely escaped a catastrophic blowout by lighting a fire in the uncontrolled discharge of gas. Bapex earlier tried to fix anomalies in this well by killing it first.

The Titas field produces 400 mmcfcd gas against the country's total gas demand of 1500 mmcfcd. Discovered in the early sixties by Shell Oil, Titas was estimated to have a gas reserve of 5.12 trillion cubic feet (tcf). After four decades, the reserve now stands at 2.78 tcf.

Our correspondent in Brahmanbaria reports, the excessive pressure at the third well at Titas gas field remains the same while the authorities continue to discharge and burn a huge amount of gas through four outlets.

However, BSS reports, the unusual emission of natural gas from the southeastern part of Titas gas field came under control today following the temporary killing of a well in the morning.

"Twenty-two million cubic feet of gas was diverted from the flair line to the system in the morning and the well is now completely under control," said a press release issued by the Energy and Mineral Resources Division today.

UN refugee chief hails Iraq promise to support refugees

AFP, undated

An Iraqi pledge to help support millions of its displaced citizens has helped unlock international aid for the growing humanitarian crisis, the UN refugee chief said yesterday.

"This was indeed a major step forward and a crucial development," High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres told journalists after a two-day UN conference on Iraq's refugee situation.

A series of car bombs that killed 160 people in Baghdad yesterday only served to underline the dire security situation preventing many of those who have left their homes from returning.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari announced on Tuesday in Geneva that his country will provide 25 million dollars (18 million euros) to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

Iraq will work with neighbouring countries such as Syria and Jordan, which are struggling to cope with the ever growing influx of refugees, to reinforce health and education services.

The two neighbours are host to nearly half of the four million Iraqis who have fled both Saddam Hussein's regime and the violence following his ouster in 2003.

"We won't be able to get rid of this problem unless we find political solutions in Iraq," Zebari acknowledged.

Guterres said the meeting of host nations, donor governments and aid agencies also displayed a "clear commitment to burden-sharing," but that states must now make good by providing financial assistance and resettlement opportunities.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday urged countries to keep their borders open, amid signs that some were restricting access.

Rafiq Tschannen of the International Organisation for Migration said that the meeting had injected a new sense of momentum into aid for the Iraqis.

"The conference did have the effect that things are moving again, especially with Jordan and Syria," Tschannen said.

"Those countries were at a loss before on how to react."

Previously, some western donors had declined to provide funds on the grounds that Baghdad had enough money, aid officials said.

Germany announced additional funding of 2.2 million euros at the conference, while diplomats said France had pledged one million euros.

An EU Commission spokesman said on Wednesday that the 27-nation bloc will give some 10 million euros to Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

European Union countries are nevertheless opposed to resettling Iraqi refugees within their own

borders, a European diplomat in Brussels noted.

The United States said it had given 18 million dollars to the UNHCR's 60 million dollar aid programme for Iraqi refugees this year.

Meanwhile, the 1.9 million people displaced inside Iraq are facing increasingly harsh conditions.

Some regional authorities have started to turn back people arriving from other regions because their dilapidated infrastructure cannot cope, according to the IOM.

Guterres warned the Iraqi government and coalition forces they had a responsibility to stop population displacement exacerbating Iraq's sectarian divisions.

"We have a big concern that internal displacement in Iraq should not translate itself into the creation of a true apartheid," he said.

The conference was marked by fears that the fleeing Iraqis could turn into a permanent refugee population similar to several million Palestinians scattered throughout the Middle East for decades.

21 killed

FROM PAGE 16 continued until late morning.

Police exchanged fire with the gang members who had clambered onto surrounding rooftops. Panic spread throughout the neighborhood and a number of passersby were wounded by stray bullets.

Police arrested about a dozen suspects and seized numerous weapons, including hand grenades and mortars.

The violence prompted police to close one of Rio's main tunnels to traffic and four funerals at a nearby cemetery were canceled.

In a separate incident in the west of the city, six suspected drug traffickers were killed overnight Monday to Tuesday after facing off with police in the Rebu slum.

The six, aged 15 to 30, opened fire when the stolen car they were driving was pulled over, federal police said, adding that they had been taken to hospital where they had died.

Some 3,000 doses of cocaine were found in the vehicle, according to police.

The deadly shootouts came after Rio state governor Sergio Cabral asked President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva at the beginning of the month to send military troops to help curb the soaring crime in the city.

In Brazil, local police are usually expected to ensure the security of each individual state.

Lula promised to send in the troops, but drawn-out negotiations with the armed forces had postponed the move.

A website called Rio Body Count, which uses media reports to tally the number of dead and injured in violence in the city, said 710 people had died there since the beginning of February.

The city's security secretariat meanwhile put the number of dead since the beginning of the year at around a thousand.

BNP not losing

FROM PAGE 1 the current predicament, but they believe it has 'strong support among the people'.

Many of the party leaders and activists however fear that some sections might try to split the party in absence of Khaleda Zia.

Sources said the leaders and activists have not been getting any direction from the party high command since the arrest of their Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, creating a void that might give rise to some more problems for the party in the coming days.

According to the party leaders and activists, in absence of