

Writ petition likely today on Hasina's safety on return

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition might be filed with High Court (HC) today for a directive asking the authorities not to arrest or harass Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina on her return from abroad.

A group of lawyers prepare to move in the HC in this regard, Barrister Shafique Ahmed told The Daily Star last evening.

He said, "We are almost done with our preparations. We'll seek a court directive so that she is not detained or harassed without due legal authority."

Party sources said Hasina is likely to return to the country next week.

Shafique said that on behalf of the AL chief, her Protocol Officer Manzila Faruque would be the

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Quality should count equally in education

Campe, The Daily Star, Unesco, Brac University roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Quality should be as important in improving education as literacy rates, said speakers at a policy roundtable yesterday. They also stressed the importance of increasing enrolment of minorities and disabled children in an effort to achieve universal education in Bangladesh by 2015.

The speakers also opened up discussion on the much disputed figures of literacy rate, saying there

is a need for a common definition of literacy for greater consistency and coordination among different stakeholders in education development.

Education activists, former and current bureaucrats, NGO workers and academics participated in the roundtable styled "Education as a human right: Where are we?" jointly organised by Campaign for Popular Education (Campe), The Daily Star, Unesco and Brac University at Hotel Sheraton.

The participants pledged they will try, in their capacity, to ensure universal education, which is the second millennium development goal (MDG), by 2015.

Manzoor Ahmed, director of Brac University's Institute of Education and Development, in his keynote presentation said except reduction in gender disparity, all other education-related MDGs for 2015 are not on track in Bangladesh.

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Participants at a roundtable titled 'Education as a human right: Where are we?' pledge their efforts to ensure education for all by 2015. Campe, Unesco, The Daily Star and Brac University jointly organised the roundtable at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

DEATH IN COALMINE
Probe body starts work, to place report in 7 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A three-member probe committee yesterday started investigating the reasons behind the death of British consultant Albert Banes Davis and another consultant falling ill inside Barapukuria coalmine on Thursday.

The committee was asked to submit its report within seven days, Barapukuria Coal Mine Company Ltd (BCMCL) sources said. The probe body arrived at the mining site on Friday.

On Thursday, Petrobangla, parent organisation of BCMCL, formed the inquiry committee headed by General Manager (Mine Operation) Mohammad Moslem Ahmed, according to official sources.

Other members of the committee

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A farmer at Demra on the outskirts of the capital takes away bundles of damaged paddy sheaf from his field as a nor'wester destroyed crops in the area recently.

Colombo sealed off amid attack fears

AFP, Colombo

Police and security forces sealed off Sri Lanka's capital yesterday, searching every vehicle entering and leaving the city amid fears of a Tamil Tiger attack, officials said.

There were huge traffic jams at every entry point to Colombo with motorists spending several hours before they could be allowed in. Doctors and other essential services were also stuck at roadblocks.

"This is part of the operations to prevent Tigers getting into the city," a police official said.

Sixteen people were detained for questioning after the authorities searched nearly 10,000 vehicles and checked identity papers of 16,500 people, police said.

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Bush vows to veto Iraq troop withdrawal bills

AP, Camp David

President Bush warned Congress Friday that he will continue vetoing war spending bills as long as they contain a timetable for the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq.

Speaking a day after the Democratic-controlled Congress approved legislation that requires that a troop drawdown begin by Oct. 1, Bush said as he has before he will veto it because of that demand. He invited congressional leaders to come to the White House to discuss a new piece of legislation that would not include a timetable, and expressed hope a deal could be reached.

But he made clear that if Democrats insist on including timetables again, he will not hesitate to bring out his veto pen.

"If they want to try again that which I've said is unacceptable, of course I won't accept it," the president said during a news conference here with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. "I hope it won't come to that."

Passage of the Iraq spending legislation in both houses was not by big enough margins to override a presidential veto. So lawmakers and the White House immediately began talking about a follow-up bill.

Democratic leaders said they hoped to have one ready by June 1. Several Democratic officials have

said the next measure likely will jettison the withdrawal timetable, but may include consequences if the Iraqi government does not meet certain benchmarks, such as expanding democratic participation and allocating oil resources.

Bush has set benchmarks for the Iraqi government, but has steadfastly opposed attaching any timeframe to them or requiring any actions if they are not met.

Senate leaders said Friday that the bill approved Thursday should go to Bush early next week. The White House has not said whether Bush plans a quiet veto or a public ceremony. Spokeswoman Dana

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Ex-AL lawmaker Rafiqul Anwar arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday claimed that they arrested former Awami League lawmaker Rafiqul Anwar with a pistol raiding a residential hotel at Gulshan during the early hours.

Earlier, on May 27, different newspapers reported that joint forces had arrested Rafiqul Anwar and seized a few documents from his Paltan flat on May 26.

Neither the joint forces nor the Paltan Police Station confirmed the arrest of Rafiqul Anwar also known as 'Sona Rafiq' until yesterday.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Rafiq on a three-day remand as police produced him before the court seeking a five-day remand after implicating him in an arms case.

On May 27, after the joint forces arrested Rafiq from his Paltan flat on 11/2 Purana Paltan Lane, caretaker of the flat Mohammad Faruk said, "Rafiq usually stayed at the

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15 killed in suicide blast in Pakistan

Minister among several wounded

AFP, Peshawar

At least 15 people were killed and a federal minister was among several wounded in a powerful suicide blast at a political rally in northwest Pakistan, police said yesterday.

Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao was addressing the public gathering when the bomber exploded his device near the speaker's platform, provincial police chief Sharif Virk told reporters.

"Fifteen people were killed and several others are wounded," Virk said.

Local police officer Jehanzib Khan said the minister and his son were among the injured, but an

interior ministry spokesman said both were "all right."

The attack took place in the town of Charsada in North West Frontier Province bordering Afghanistan.

Police chief Virk said the head of the bomber, who appeared to be an Afghan, was found at the scene.

"We have found his severed head and he appears to be an Afghan," he said.

Witnesses said Sherpao had just finished speaking when a man was seen rushing towards the stage before a huge explosion went off.

As ambulances carried casualties to hospitals in Charsada, 35

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Benazir to return to Pakistan by end of this year

AFP, London

Pakistan's former prime minister Benazir Bhutto will return to her homeland by the end of this year and hopes to hold office again, she said in a newspaper interview published yesterday.

Benazir Bhutto also confirmed that she had had "back-channel" contacts with the regime of President Pervez Musharraf, but denied there was any "understanding" between them about her future.

"I plan to go back to Pakistan by the end of the year whether Musharraf would like it or whether he would not like it," she told the Times, calling for corruption cases against her and family members to be dropped.

"There have been 'back-channel' contacts with Musharraf

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PHOTO: STAR

Dilapidated pavement of the road from Malibagh intersection to Shantinagar in the capital still to be repaired due to negligence of Dhaka City Corporation.

2 aides of top criminal Joy held with arms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two accomplices of Khandakar Tanvir Islam Joy, one of the most wanted criminals, were arrested in the capital yesterday with two firearms and ammunition.

The arrestees, Nayan alias Sumon alias Oni, 24, and Shaikat Alam alias Emon alias Mahfuz, were apprehended by police patrol while they were fleeing the scene after shooting at a security guard of

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Prayer Timing		
April 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-29	6-34
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		