

Restriction on Hasina

FROM PAGE 1
not notify the AL chief about it officially, he said.

Intelligence sources said they have government directives to bar everyone from meeting Hasina, except her "close relatives". Talking to The Daily Star members of different intelligence agencies said the AL president is going to meet the fate of the BNP chairperson.

Hasina's hitherto bitter political rival BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has been virtually confined in her cantonment residence for almost four months now. The High Court on Sunday asked the caretaker government to explain the restriction on Khaleda within four weeks.

Similarly only the close relatives of Hasina, whom the government will give permission, will be allowed to visit Sudha Sadan, according to the intelligence sources who added that within a couple of days, Hasina, who widely criticised the present government on various issues, will be put in virtual confinement or house arrest.

Another source said Hasina will be needing clearances from security officials to come out of her residence.

As part of the restrictions, police yesterday evening barred AL Joint General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam, and two other AL leaders -- BM Mozammel Haque and former lawmaker Motahar Hossain -- from going into Sudha Sadan.

The law enforcers last night even kept AL senior presidium members Zillur Rahman and Suranjit Sengupta, General Secretary Abdul Jalil, and AL Advisory Council Member Maj Gen (ret'd) Subid Ali Bhuiyan waiting for about 10 minutes before letting them inside Sudha Sadan.

Police also barred AL Presidium Member Motia Chowdhury and former education minister and AL Advisory Council Member ASHK Sadique from going into Sudha Sadan last night after having them wait at the security post 200 yards off the residence for about half an hour.

Earlier in the morning police did not let AL Organising Secretary Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed, and some other mid-level AL leaders go into Sudha Sadan.

As the AL chief went to pay her last respects to AL leader Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan who had died in the early

Govt committed

FROM PAGE 16
submitted a draft law prepared on the basis of a working paper prepared by the Law Commission in 2002.

Before preparing the draft, the core group held discussions in the divisional headquarters with different civil society groups, experts, lawmakers, human rights activists and media professionals.

The Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) is facilitating and coordinating with the civil society members to raise awareness regarding formulation of the act.

The delegation member include Sultana Kamal, former adviser to the caretaker government, Atiur Rahman, chairman of Unnayan Shamunnay, Shaheen Anam, executive director of the MJF, barrister Tanjib ul Alam and Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

They felt that enactment of the law would bring positive changes in the lives of people and pave the way for a democratic state.

hours of yesterday in Lab Aid Cardiac Hospital in the capital, a few hundred people including the hospital staff rushed to have a glimpse of the leader who had been away for 52 days in the US and UK. That was her first public appearance since her return from London on Monday.

Bhuiyan, a former commissioner of ward No 48 of Dhaka City Corporation, suffered a heart attack on Monday and was taken to the hospital.

Hasina stayed there for half an hour from 11:00am. Senior leaders of the party Abdur Razzak, Suranjit Sengupta, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Mannan and Dr Hassan Mahmud were also present.

CA says

FROM PAGE 1
eliminate corruption.

"It is driven by greed, and therefore its complete elimination is not possible in human societies, not even in developed countries.

"But we believe we can certainly make corruption costly enough so that its impact is reduced significantly and the anti-corruption measures that we have started really are measures in that direction," he said.

Our correspondent says that Dr Ahmed is an unlikely figure to be leading Bangladesh through its current crisis.

A former World Bank bureaucrat, he was appointed to head the emergency government following the collapse of January's general elections amid widespread political violence.

He set about the task of overhauling the fraud-ridden electoral system and tackling rampant corruption with a sense of urgency, but he has remained a somewhat elusive figure.

Dozens of high-profile politicians and civil servants have been rounded up, imprisoned and are awaiting trial since he came to power.

But he took over largely as a result of actions by the military, who intervened to pull the country back from disorder and chaos over claims that the election was being rigged.

While some observers in Dhaka are concerned that the army's role in politics could result in the return of a military-led government, correspondents say that few in Dhaka feel it is interested in taking power in the same way it did in the 1970s and 1980s.

ACC files

FROM PAGE 16
109 of the Penal Code and Section 15 (Gha) (5) of the Emergency Power Rules 2007.

In the FIR filed by the ACC assistant director against Hafiz Ibrahim and his wife Mafriza Sultana, he mentioned that Hafiz in collusion with his wife used their influence and acquired over Tk 18.40 crore worth movable and immovable properties illegally.

He also mentioned that the properties were not mentioned in their asset statements placed to the ACC earlier.

The case was filed under Section 26 (1), 26 (2), 27 (1) of the ACC Act 2004, Sections 109 of the Penal Code, sections 15 (Ka), 15 (Kha), 15 (Gha) (5) of the Emergency Power Rules 2007 and section 5(2) of the No 2 Anti-Corruption Act of 1947.

Iftekhar to go to Pakistan for ICFM meet

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury is likely to leave for Pakistan on May 14 to attend a three-day Islamic Conference of the Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in Islamabad.

Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Alamgir Bashir Khan Babar met the adviser yesterday and discussed his upcoming visit to Pakistan.

On the sidelines of the ICFM to be held on May 15-17, the foreign adviser will also hold bilateral talks with the Pakistani leaders and his counterparts from the OIC member states.

The foreign adviser's visit to Pakistan will be the first high-level contact between Dhaka and Islamabad after the caretaker government assumed office.

Jalil pledges

FROM PAGE 16

He said AL had asked for government approval allowing 107 party leaders to receive Hasina. However, the government reduced the number to 16. The mass gathering outside the airport had not been planned by the party, he added.

Police sources said they have started collecting video footage to identify those who brought out processions and chanted slogans at the airport. By examining the video footage, the police are hoping to collect names and addresses of those who took part in the procession. Those identified would be arrested.

Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad told reporters that under the state of emergency, processions, rallies and such gatherings cannot be held. "Everyone has to abide by the law," he said.

In connection with the failure to prevent the gathering, the police administration on Tuesday removed three top Uttara cops from their posts.

Deputy Commissioner Tanveer Haider, Additional Deputy Commissioner Iqbal Hossain and Assistant Commissioner MM Salahuddin were transferred to police headquarters while Uttara Zone Patrol Inspector Kamruzzaman was suspended for 'neglect of duty'.

Govt officials

FROM PAGE 1
corruption, and stronger safety net programme for the rural poor.

"Social safety net programmes such as Food for Work should be expanded to support the worst affected parties due to this price spiral," the report said.

IN FY07, 1,057,000 MT food grains including 849,000 MT rice and 208,000 MT wheat was proposed to be distributed under the non-monetised food distribution programmes. The CPD has suggested that these programmes should be increased significantly in the next budget.

Sonadia

FROM PAGE 16

After getting final approval from the government, the same firm will be asked to make a second phase survey before beginning the physical construction work of the port. In the second phase, the company will present in details about all the requirements for the port.

Shipping Adviser MA Matin, high officials of the ministry, Cabinet Secretary Ali Imam Majumder, ERD Secretary M Aminul Islam Bhuiyan, Planning Secretary Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury, Shipping Secretary Sheikh Enayetullah and Chairman of Securities and Exchange Commission Faruq Ahmed Siddiqui were present during yesterday's presentation by the Japanese firm.

The shipping adviser told the journalists that the government would appeal to the World Bank and Asian Development Bank for arranging the fund for the port.

The Japanese firm, appointed in August last year for conducting a techno-economic feasibility study for setting up a deep-sea port in the country, will get Tk 14 crore for completing the study within a year.

The company conducted survey on nine places in the coastal belt of Bangladesh.

Of those, the names Patenga, Kutubdia point and Middle Island were dropped after preliminary examination and detailed survey was conducted at six places -- Kutubdia Channel, Sonadia Island, Moheshkhali Channel, Elephant point, Saint Martin Island, and Akram point in Khulna.

In the first phase, the company submitted four other reports of the study for the port -- inception report, port plan report, port administration model report, and marketing and business administration report.

AL, BNP press

FROM PAGE 1

BNP Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan also said at least the restriction on indoor politics should be lifted so that the political parties can hold discussion on electoral reforms within the parties and with the EC.

"The Election Commission has taken initiatives to implement legal and political reforms but we have nothing to do at this moment since all sorts of political activities are banned," Nazrul told The Daily Star.

The EC has repeatedly said it will not finalise the electoral reform proposals without consulting with the political parties, who are its main clients.

The EC held talks with eminent citizens on April 26 and will hold discussions with editors of different national dailies on April 17. But it is not sure when it can hold talks with the political parties and because of this uncertainty, the task for electoral reforms is unlikely to be completed by the commission's July deadline.

Talking to reporters at his Mercantile Bank office, the AL general secretary said the EC informed them that it will not take any final decision without discussing with the political parties.

"But we cannot give our views to the Election Commission before discussing the issue in our own party forum," Jalil said, adding that the restriction on indoor politics must go to allow the parties to sit with the EC.

On the possibility of any united move with BNP, Jalil said there is no possibility of such simultaneous movement as they had bad experi-

ence with BNP in the past.

The BNP joint secretary general said the party wants to sit with the EC on reforms after taking decision in presence of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The party will finalise its proposals on both electoral and political reforms after holding discussion within the party when the ban on indoor politics is withdrawn, Nazrul said, adding that the EC also said discussion with political parties is necessary for the implementation of the expected reforms.

New boss

FROM PAGE 16

to reporters after taking oath as the new chairman of PSC.

He replaces ZN Tahmidia Begum, who ended her term on May 8. Chief Justice Ruhul Amin administered Saadat's oath taking at the office of PSC chairman.

The PSC chairman also said that he will adopt reform measures for PSC if necessary.

He did not make any comment on the postponement of medical tests for the 27th batch of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS). The government on April 18 postponed the tests due to widespread allegations over the selection process of the 27th BCS.

Saadat, a freedom fighter, joined the then Civil Service of Pakistan in 1969 and retired on November 23, 2005. He also served as secretary for home, education, and primary and mass education ministries.

Student leaders

FROM PAGE 16

arrestees on their list while friends and relatives of at least four arrestees said they did not have any political involvement.

After the raids many leaders and activists of JCD and BCL left the dormitories out of arrest fear. Intelligence sources said such raids would continue.

University authorities have approved the law enforcement agencies' raids on any dormitories to maintain law and order at the university.

Former president of Dhaka University Teachers' Association Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said a student, whether he has political track or not, cannot be arrested without any specific allegation.

"The law enforcement agencies should work to maintain law and order but they have to ensure that innocent students do not suffer due to their actions. The way the 10 arrestees were taken to the court, with rope tied around their waist, is humiliating to a Dhaka University student."

It is the university authorities' duty to ensure their students' security and dignity, Prof Siddique said.

Admitting the information of

common students' harassment due to hall raids by law enforcement agencies, Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz said, "On Tuesday, we had a discussion with the police on the issue. We directed them to be more careful so that common students do not suffer when the law enforcers work to maintain law and order."

Police and intelligence branches recently prepared the list of around 200 leaders and activists of JCD and BCL who violated the state of emergency and who have criminal records, sources said, adding that the list is getting longer.

Police and members of intelligence branches started raiding identified rooms of the halls and arresting their on-list people since the declaration of the state of emergency.

JCD took part in a procession on the campus on March 8 after the detention of Tarique Rahman, BNP senior joint secretary general.

BCL also did the same on April 22 in Shahbagh protesting against the government's steps to prevent Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina's return to the country.

Passport offices

FROM PAGE 16

is supposed to handwrite no more than 50 passports a day, but sometimes a writer now has to write more than 300 passports filling out five pages of each, a hectic task for a single person, leading to an increased number of errors on passports being issued. On an average 4,507 passports were issued everyday in March in the 15 passport offices in the country including the Dhaka office.

A passport writer now works six times more everyday than they are officially supposed to, due to a severe shortage of manpower, leading to a decline in the quality of writing.

The indispensable department of the government and its 15 offices across the country now have 313 officials and employees although the total number of posts in the department is 397. The last time the manpower was adjusted to the need of the department was in 1982 in line with the recommendations of Enam Commission, which the then government had formed as a part of its efforts to improve the manpower situation in all government offices.

In 1982 the number of passports issued, renewed or given attachments to yearly was 1.7 lakh only. The demand for new passports, renewals or attachments increased 19 folds since then, but the number of staff in DIP remains the same as 1982.

The officials in Dhaka office who have updated information for up to March said in that month a total of 1,35,217 passports were issued and 1,50,893 passports were renewed or given attachments to across the country.

Some former and present top DIP officials said due to the absence of a national database of citizens, currently the authenticity of Bangladeshi citizenship necessarily has to be ascertained through police verification.

Reportedly the bulk of the passport related corruption centre around the police verification.

Waheedul Haque said manpower should have been increased by 10 times considering the increase in the demand for passports.

OUTSTANDING GAS BILL

Hannan's company sued

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd yesterday filed a case against Brig Gen (ret'd) ASM Hannan Shah's business establishment Crown Wares Ltd.

The case was filed with Gazipur District and Sessions Judge's Court, as Crown Wares Ltd, situated in BSCIC industrial area at East Konabari in Gazipur, did not pay outstanding gas bill amounting to Tk 21,33,558 to Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company.

Hannan Shah, adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, is the managing director of the company.

6 held for 'plot' against US base

AFP, New York

Six suspected Islamic radicals have been arrested and charged with plotting to kill "as many soldiers as possible" at a US military base in New Jersey, US authorities said on Tuesday.

The suspects, including a pizza delivery man who allegedly used his job to case the army base, were arrested on Monday night as they tried to buy automatic rifles. They were due to appear Tuesday in a New Jersey court after a 16-month stinging operation.

Two undercover FBI informers had infiltrated the group and recorded their conversations about launching an attack on Fort Dix army base, federal prosecutors said.

The alleged plot was foiled after a shop clerk alerted police to a "disturbing" video that the suspects had made of themselves and asked to be burned to a DVD.

Tigers

FROM PAGE 1

bagged the man-of-the-match awards in both Dhaka and Port of Spain, Trinidad.

The team management, hopeful of a dramatic improvement of the pace spearhead, decided to delay the announcement of the final 12 till the morning. Sources, however, confirmed that the strike bowler -- whose four-wicket burst virtually knocked India out of the World Cup -- would not be risked for the sake of the whole series also involving two Tests.

Firebrand Shahadat Hossain, the quickest bowler in the country, is expected to take the new ball in the absence of Mashrafe, the highest ODI wicket-taker in the last calendar year.

One more change is expected from the eleven used regularly in the World Cup as the think-tank, having little faith in out-of-form openers Shahriar Nafees and Javed Omar, is looking forward to promote wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim from the middle-order to the opening slot beside Tamim Iqbal. This ploy if used might make way for all-rounder Forhad Reza as cover for Mashrafe and add variety to the attack, which will mostly depend on the spin trio.

A shoulder injury also dented Manoj Tiwari's chances to make his India debut as the promising top-order batsman from Bengal has been ruled out of the series and sent home. Piyush Chawla and RP Singh also did not figure in India's twelve.

For India, although the team management and captain Rahul Dravid have repeatedly denied the notion, it would be a grudge series as they try to re-establish their 'big brother' image after the World Cup debacle following that five-wicket loss to Habibul Bashar's men.

With the likes of Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly reserved only for the Test matches, the mighty Indians will have to think about Bangladesh on even terms for the first time, at least before the first ball is bowled.

HSC exams

FROM PAGE 16

Some 52,034 students will appear in Alim exams under Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board from 345 centres and 49,535 students will sit for the HSC (BM) exams under Bangladesh Technical Education Board from 480 centres.

Besides, some 166 candidates will sit for the HSC exams in five centers abroad under Dhaka Education Board. The centres are Jeddah, Riyadh, Tripoli, Doha and Abu Dhabi.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has slapped a ban on public entry into 200 yards of city centres during the examinations.

The ban will remain in force until the examinations are over, said a DMP press release.

Salman gets

FROM PAGE 1

lakh to the complainant of the case. In the case filed with Dhanmondi Police Station on March 19, the complainant alleged that Salman's Shinepukur Holdings Limited took Tk 2.35 lakh from him on different dates on an agreement for handing over a plot of three-katha land, but the company did not hand over the plot.

On February 5, the joint forces arrested Salman at his residence as a graft suspect.

Afghan air raid kills 21 civilians

AP, Kandahar, Afghanistan

Airstrikes called in by US Special Forces soldiers fighting with insurgents in southern Afghanistan killed at least 21 civilians, officials said yesterday. One coalition soldier was also killed.

Helmand provincial Gov. Assadullah Wafa said Taliban fighters sought shelter in villagers' homes during the fighting in the Sangin district Tuesday evening, and that subsequent airstrikes killed 21 civilians, including several women and children.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has repeatedly said more must be done to prevent civilian casualties during military operations. He warned last week, after reports that 51 civilians were killed in the west, that Afghanistan "can no longer accept civilian casualties they way they occur."

The US-led coalition said militants fired guns, rocket propelled grenades and mortars at U.S. Special Forces and Afghan soldiers on patrol 15 miles north of Sangin.

Maj. William Mitchell, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition, said troops killed a "significant" number of militants.

"We don't have any report of civilian casualties. There are enemy casualties. I think the number is significant," Mitchell said without releasing an exact figure.

More than 200 Taliban fighters gathered during the 16-hour fight, said Maj. Chris Belcher, another coalition spokesman.

A resident of the area, Mohammad Asif, said five homes in the village of Soro were bombed during the battle, killing 38 people and wounding more than 20. He said Western troops and Afghan

forces had blocked people from entering the area.

Death tolls in remote battle sites in Afghanistan are impossible to verify. Taliban fighters often seek shelter in Afghan homes, leading to civilian casualties, and it is often difficult to determine if people killed in such airstrikes were militants or civilians.

A purported Taliban spokesman, Qari Yousef Ahmadi, said the group would "take revenge" for the killing of civilians.

The battle left one coalition soldier dead, the U.S. military said. The military did not release the soldier's nationality, but it was likely an American Special Forces soldier. Sangin, a militant hotbed in the heart of Afghanistan's biggest opium poppy region, has been the site of heavy fighting in recent weeks.

The soldier's death brings to 48 the number of NATO or coalition soldiers who have died in Afghanistan this year.

The report of civilian casualties comes less than a week after Afghan officials said that 51 civilians were killed in the western province of Herat.

It also comes one day after the U.S. military apologized and paid compensation to the families of 19 people killed and 50 wounded by U.S. Marines Special Forces who fired indiscriminately on civilians after being hit by a suicide attack in eastern Afghanistan in March.

Afghanistan's upper house of parliament on Tuesday passed a bill calling for a halt to all international military operations unless coordinated with the Afghan government, action seen as a rebuke of the international mission here.

Special court

FROM PAGE 1

that they did not get the certified copies of the case-related documents.

Another court meanwhile ordered further investigation into the graft case against former state minister for planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir following a petition filed by the prosecution lawyers. The court directed the authorities concerned to submit the probe report by May 21.

The three former ministers and a family member of one of them were produced before the special courts after they were set up at the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar MP hostels for the trials of graft cases against high-profile corruption suspects.

Aman, Nasir and Alamgir, who had once visited the parliament building in flag stand cars, yesterday went to the area as accused in different graft cases.

Aman, Nasir and his son Helal were brought to the courts in a prison van from the Dhaka Central Jail around 11:40am while Alamgir was brought from the Kashimpur Jail by a micro-bus at 12:15pm. Sabera Aman appeared before the court on a wheel chair due to illness.

CASE AGAINST MAMUN

After hearing from the prosecution and the defence, Judge Ashraf Hossain of the Fifth Special Court fixed May 14 for order on charge framing.

Earlier on April 30, Judge Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court framed charges against Mamun, counsel of the accused AKM Fakhrul Islam told the court yesterday.

The judge said according to the case records the matter was fixed for hearing yesterday.

The counsel pleaded for discharging his client, saying the process of Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) asking for wealth statements from 50 high-profile corruption suspects was not proper. Moreover, the metropolitan sessions judge did not have the jurisdiction to take the case into cognisance and the ACC secretary has no authority to issue notice upon any person, the counsel argued.

He also said the ACC has to investigate a person's wealth status before issuing a notice asking him/her to submit wealth statement. The notice issued upon Mamun said his wealth was inconsistent with his income. So, if the investigation was done, its report should be placed before the court. "But if not, how were they [the ACC] satisfied that Mamun acquired wealth which does not match with his known income?" Fakhrul said.

The ACC will have to assign an official through a gazette notification for investigation, he said, asking if it was done in accordance with the ACC Act in case someone was assigned to investigate the matter.

Mamun is a "lone, private individual" for whom it was not possible to commit corruption without connivance of any public servant, Fakhrul added.

Opposing the defence plea, prosecution lawyers Mir Ahmed Ali Salam and AFM Gholam Fatah prayed for charges to be framed against Mamun.

On April 5, the ACC filed the graft case against Mamun with the sessions court for not submitting

his wealth statement within its stipulated time.

THREE OTHER CASES

In the First Special Court, Judge Firoz Alam re-fixed the hearing for charge framing against Aman and his wife Sabera on May 15 as their counsel advocate MA Malek said they did not get any certified copy of the case documents. The court allowed them three working days to collect the copies.

Mir Nasir and his son Mir Helal's counsels also argued the same when their hearing started in the Second Special Court. Judge Amar Kumar Roy also granted the time petition and allowed them three working days to collect necessary papers. The judge fixed the hearing on May 15.

From the dock, Mir Nasir prayed to the court for allowing his lawyers in the jail so that he can consult with them about the case. The court said the matter will be dealt with according to the jail code.

Meanwhile, when the hearing started against Alamgir in the Third Special Court, prosecution lawyer Syed Mizanur Rahman submitted time prayer for further investigation. Judge Shahed Nur Uddin granted