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COMPLIMENTARY

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Moments before the arrest

STAR REPORT

"Can I use my phone?" Hasina asked as members of the joint forces entered her room on the first floor of Sudha Sadhan at around 6:00am. Getting a positive reply, she picked up her mobile and starting making a few calls to her son Joy, AL leader Sahara Khatun and few others. The last person she called was Law

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Unfortunate, unnecessary Observe political leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political leaders yesterday said the arrest of Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina is unfortunate and unnecessary.

The AL in its official reaction said the present government has arrested Hasina to implement its "minus two" formula.

Reformists and the leaders loyal to Hasina blamed each other for the present consequences of the AL

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Hasina arrested, sent to sub-jail

Over a thousand law enforcers raid her residence at dawn; she is charged with extorting Tk 3 crore

STAR REPORT

The joint forces yesterday arrested Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina at her residence in Dhanmondi at around daybreak and later a city court sent her to jail on charges of extortion.

Hasina, also a former prime minister, had been detained several times in her 26 years at the helm of AL, all for campaigning against the autocratic regime in the '90s. This is the first time she has been held in a case filed for criminal offence.

Like it was throughout the rule of former military strongman HM Ershad, she is not entitled to seek bail from any court under the Emergency Power Rules.

Sources close to her have told The Daily Star that she was bracing herself for what many consider was the inevitable.

Political observers see the arrest

as a leap towards the "minus-two theory" that seeks to dethrone Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia who have reigned over the country's politics for years. As of last night, there was however no indication of a move to haul in Khaleda.

Only a day before, the Election Commission (EC) announced a roadmap for the next general election amid bickering in AL and BNP over intra-party reforms.

Insiders say the pro-reform leaders in both the organisations have been working to arrange the councils in a way so their party chiefs cannot attend those. Some analysts believe the arrest might be somehow linked to those plans that reportedly enjoy tacit support from the military-backed interim administration.

In April, the government had tried to force Hasina stay abroad by imposing a ban on her coming

home from the UK. But in the face of criticism both at home and abroad, it withdrew the restrictions, leading to a triumphant return for her.

From the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, Dhaka, Hasina was taken to the Parliament Complex where a two-storey house built for the deputy speaker has

been declared a sub-jail.

At the court, she protested her innocence. She said, "I have done nothing wrong. The charges

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PHOTO: STAR

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina being taken to Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in the capital yesterday. The court sent her to a sub-jail on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises.

27 years in politics no cakewalk for her

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina was arrested and put under house arrest many times before, between 1983 and 1990, for her stance against the erstwhile military ruler and for her role in the fight for restoring democracy in the country.

During the current regime of the military backed caretaker government, Hasina, also an ex-prime minister, faced restrictions on her movement and was virtually confined to her Sudha Sadan residence for few days prior to her latest arrest yesterday following her scathing criticisms of the interim government's activities.

After being detained yesterday, the AL president reiterated that the current government is playing with the people's right to franchise. "My fault is that I sought voting

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The case against her

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The case in which Awami League President Sheikh Hasina was arrested yesterday was filed on June 12 this year by Azam J Chowdhury, managing director of Eastcoast Trading Private Ltd, with Gulshan Police Station.

The complainant accused Hasina and AL leader Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim of extorting over Tk 2.99 crore.

Russian power generation company Principal Messers Techno Prom Export (TPE) obtained work order for the first phase of building

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Her statement to party men before arrest

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) President and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, in her pre-arrest statement yesterday, urged the countrymen and the leaders and workers of her party not to lose moral strength and stand against injustice.

"Wherever you are, stand against injustice. Truth will ultimately prevail. I am with you and I will remain with you until my death," she said in the statement.

"Whatever consequence falls on

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She accuses govt of conspiring to disqualify her from election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the military-backed caretaker government is conspiring to disqualify her from running in the next parliamentary elections by implicating her in false cases because she stands up for people's rights.

During the forty-minute submission in her defence to the court, the former prime minister said her arrest is intended to 'destroy' poli-

tics and democracy in the country. She also said the Election Commission roadmap released on Sunday predetermines who will come to power after the next elections and thereby the government is trying to turn Bangladesh into a 'failed state', 36 years after the Liberation War.

"The extortion case has been filed to politically harass me. I might be given punishment in this case so that I cannot run for

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Joy vows to wage movement at home, abroad They cannot suppress us, says Rehana

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy and younger sister Sheikh Rehana consider her arrest part of a 'conspiracy' and protested this.

They vowed to wage a movement and create public opinion worldwide to free her.

Joy said the arrest of his mother is part of a conspiracy by the

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This is no way to strengthen democracy

Just as "command economy" failed, so will "command politics"

MAHFUZ ANAM

The only reason that the caretaker government has survived six months in power, and the chief advisor acknowledges it every time an occasion arises, is because the

general public think of it to be an instrument to strengthen democracy. But now if this very instrument of 'strengthening democracy' becomes a symbol of mindless and arbitrary use of power, then how will the public distinguish it from

such previous abusers of power and continue to lend it support?

As a newspaper which supported the reform process of this government, we raise the above question in all seriousness. For we

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AL activists enraged

STAR REPORT

Amid the state of emergency leaders and activists of Awami League (AL) and its different front organisations staged demonstrations at different places across the country protesting the arrest of their party chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

Police fired from shotguns and swooped on a procession at Malitola and on English Road in the old part of the capital injuring at least 20 demonstrators.

The law enforcers also charged batons on processions in Khulna and Kishoreganj, injuring several others.

Three policemen were injured

as the protesters pelted them with stones.

Agitating AL activists went berserk at different places and damaged vehicles.

During the demonstrations police arrested at least five leaders and activists of the AL and its front organisations.

Police were put on alert across the country including the capital after the arrest of Sheikh Hasina to prevent bringing out of any procession and any untoward incident.

As Sheikh Hasina was produced before the Court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka, pro-AL lawyers gathered at

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Follow due process of law

Urge US, UK, India

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United States and the United Kingdom have urged the caretaker government to ensure due process of law and international standards in dealing with former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who was arrested early yesterday.

"We are aware that former

prime minister Sheikh Hasina has been arrested," said a spokesperson for the US Embassy in Dhaka.

"All individuals should be treated fairly and receive the full range of their legal and constitutional rights. It is also incumbent upon the government to prove its case in a court of law," he said

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Govt firm on establishing honest politics Says Mainul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday said the government is committed to establishing honest politics and it is not desirable to arrest people on minor corruption charges while leaving the big fishes of corruption alone.

On the arrest of Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina,

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No one above law Says CA, vows to bring corrupt, lawbreakers to justice

UNB, Munshiganj

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed has categorically said no one is above the law and anybody found corrupt or lawbreaker, whoever he or she may be, will be brought to justice.

Explaining his caretaker government's stand against corruption, the CA said the present government is following two princi-

ples in combating corruption.

Firstly, he said the trial of corruption suspects will be held under the law of the land. Secondly, no one is above the law and, under this principle, if allegation of corruption against anyone proves true or anyone violates law, whoever he or she may be, will be brought to justice.

The head of the caretaker

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US hails EC roadmap to election

Urges govt to lift politics ban

UNB, Dhaka

The United States yesterday commended the Election Commission (EC) for releasing a roadmap to general election in Bangladesh but said a specific, time-bound goal to hold credible elections is the best way to generate momentum in

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Most people decry arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The majority of people The Daily Star talked to yesterday about Sheikh Hasina's arrest, expressed deep resentment over the government's move while a few termed the arrest as a significant step taken by it.

Following the arrest The Daily Star correspondents talked to around 100 people who are university teachers, physicians, govern-

ment employees, small traders, students, rickshaw pullers, cab drivers and other professionals.

Many of them termed the government's move as unwanted, saying it will not bring anything positive for the country. Instead it might lead to a loss of support for the current government and might even hamper the process of restoring democracy. Some even commented that Sheikh Hasina's arrest

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