

Release of Hasina demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations at home and abroad condemned the arrest of former prime minister and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina and demanded her immediate release.

The US unit of AL demanded unconditional release of Hasina within 24 hours at a protest rally at Astoria, New York, yesterday.

Terming the arrest anti-democratic, the leaders also demanded resignation of the council of advisers and saying, "If they remain in office, the advisers would be considered an enemy of the people."

The leaders at the rally insisted on sending the army back to the barracks and demanded immediate identification of the joint forces personnel who are violating human rights. If anybody tries to organise a council meeting without Sheikh Hasina, he would be considered an enemy of the nation, they observed.

The US chapter leaders decided to send a lawyer from the US to assist Hasina fight the charges brought against her. Besides, the leaders would also hold a sit-in in front of the Bangladesh Consulate and the New York Times office on July 16 and hold a protest rally in front of the United Nations Headquarters on July 19.

Sajjadur Rahman Sajjad, acting general secretary of AL US unit,

organised the rally.

Meanwhile, the AL Austria unit held a protest rally at Vienna's Stad Park. Nazrul Islam, former president of Bangladesh Press Club and convener of Bangladesh Genocide 1971, said the government orchestrated the plot to arrest Hasina and tarnish the image of the AL chief and through this the interim government has quickened its end.

Besides, eminent writers, poets and intellectuals of the country including Syed Shamsul Haque, Selina Hossain, Nirmolendu Goon considered the arrest of Hasina and the order to send her to jail a plot to harass her.

Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) termed the case farcical and said it would create dispute over the transparency of the court and legal procedure.

Without the petition of the investigation officer and the approval of a magistrate such an arrest is conspiratorial and intentional.

Fifty-one teachers of Dhaka University in a joint statement said the arrest of Hasina points to the double standards of the government where political leaders are being harassed and arrested for demanding free, fair and transparent elections and the so-called reformists are being entertained for the formation of new parties even during the period of emergency.

Bangladesh Mukti Juddho Projanma League leaders including its President AK Faiyazul

Haque Raju and General Secretary Mohammad Shamim Khan said Hasina's arrest was part of a conspiracy designed by national and international conspirators to destroy the independence, sovereignty and democracy of the country.

Protesting the AL president's arrest Bangladesh Krishak League President Mirza Jalil, General Secretary Motahar Hossain Mollah said the caretaker government has violated human rights.

Chairman of Mukti Juddha Paribar Kalyan Sangsad Syed Shahid Uddin and Secretary General Abdul Hye Manik said, "It is hypocrisy to talk about establishing democracy while attacking democracy itself." They demanded immediate release of Hasina.

On information, GOC of Savar Cantonment Maj Gen Ashab Chowdhury rushed to the school and arranged admission of 29 students and the teacher to Saver Combined Military Hospital.

Panic spread in villages following the incident.

The authorities declared the school closed for two days.

Three students who regained sense in a local clinic were sent back home.

After regaining consciousness, Hena, a student of class VI, said she felt headache, pains in hands and legs and tendency of vomiting before falling unconscious about 9:30am.

Meanwhile, our correspondent reports that the condition of the students of Adiabadi Islamia High School and College of Raipura upazila in Narsinghdi district has further improved, and no-one was faint or admitted to the hospital yesterday.

"A total of 30 students were admitted to Narsinghdi District Hospital since Wednesday. Most of them were either treated here and sent to their home or referred to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) for better treatment," Resident Medical Officer (RMO) of Narsinghdi District Hospital Dr Tutul told The Daily Star over telephone.

There are only five students now in the District Hospital, he said, adding that the medical team that came from Dhaka is treating the students and would visit the school spot again to clear the whole picture.

Quoting the special team, the RMO said it is called a mass psychogenic illness that affects mostly children aged between 14 and 15.

"It is a type of psychological problem called mass hysteria. It usually affects the young and females and spreads among those who are staying at the same place," said DMCH Principal and Prof of Medicine MA Foyez, adding that it usually spreads by seeing or hearing from close quarters.

"It is not an incident of infection and there is nothing to be panicked," said Prof Foyez who is supervising the treatment.

On reforms. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 9:30am.

Prize giving ceremony

The prize giving ceremony of the IT Festival 2007 organised by Computer Club of International Islamic University, Chittagong Dhaka Campus will be held. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre. Time: 11:00am.

Launching ceremony

The Ministry of Industries organises the launching ceremony of Small and Medium Enterprise Foundation (SMEF). Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 11:00am.

Workshop

Chittagong Port Authority and The World Bank will jointly organise a workshop on 'Improving port efficiency: Sharing international experience of private container terminal operations'. Venue: Hotel Purbani. Time: 9:00am.

Discussion

Greater Mymensingh Cultural Forum will hold a discussion titled 'Poet Moniruddin Yusuf and Shahnama by Ferdousi'. Venue: Iranian Cultural Centre auditorium. Time: 6:00pm.

Seminar on reforms

The Centre for Governance Studies organises a seminar on 'Policy debates



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed launches the Indigenous Species of Fish Preservation and Expansion Campaign 2007 through releasing fish fry in the pond of Government Harogonga College in Munshiganj yesterday.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

Mechanical Engineering Division, Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) organises a seminar titled 'Nephron system: A lubricating oil dialysis system for optimal engine health'. Venue: Seminar room, IEB headquarters. Time: 5:00pm.

Exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of an exhibition titled 'Kaththokra Show on arts and crafts' will be held. Venue: Zainul Gallery-2, Institute of Fine Arts. Time: 11:00am. The exhibition will run till July 23 from 10:00am to 7:00pm everyday.

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Paper Studio organises a unique exhibition titled 'It's in the paper... with the artworks of 10 contemporary prominent artists. Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts. Time: 6:00pm.

Hamard Seminar

Hamard organises a seminar titled 'Hundreds of years in healthcare, education and human welfare'. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 7:30pm.

Obituary

Mohammad Ahammadul Huq, father of Coordinating Committee Member of National People's Party Eng. Enamul Huq Enam, passed away due to a cardiac arrest yesterday in his Chittagong residence, says a press release.

National People's Party, in a condolence message, prayed for salvation of the departed soul and expressed sympathy to the bereaved family.

Death anniversary

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.4	26.6	86	86
Chittagong	28.7	26.0	95	96
Rajshahi	34.2	26.2	87	81
Khulna	31.0	27.5	81	88
Barisal	31.0	26.8	87	84
Sylhet	33.3	27.2	90	95
Cox's Bazar	28.8	26.0	97	91

Iajuddin undergoes medical checkup

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed underwent a medical check-up at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore yesterday.

Cardiologist Maurice Choo said that the president is "in very good health", according to a release from Bangabhaban.

Another case was filed against Hasina on April 9 for extorting Tk 3 crore.

In the June 12 first information report (FIR), Azam mentioned that Sheikh Hasina's cousin the then lawmaker Sheikh Selim tried to be local agent of the Russian company TPE. Selim on different occasions tried to influence the TPE chief to serve his purpose, he added.

As all his attempts turned futile, Selim started putting pressure, and Azam met Selim at his Banani residence with the proposal of appointing him consultant for the second phase of the work and told him that he would be given a large amount of commission during the phase, the FIR said.

Angry at the proposal, Selim threat-

The case against her

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and commissioning of Siddhiganj power plant in Narayanganj in 2000, Azam said in the complaint. And his company Eastcoast Trading Private Ltd was appointed local agent of the Russian company when Sheikh Hasina was prime minister.

Sheikh Selim was paid over Tk 2.99 crore in eight cheques between October 24, 2000 and March 14, 2001.

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Moments before the arrest

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Adviser Barrister Mainul Husein.

"This is not a good thing you are doing," a member of the joint forces quoted Hasina to have told Mainul. "I will soon come out free. And then none will be spared. Not even you."

She reportedly told Mainul that in the past he had visited her for help, and he would do so in the future as well.

As soon as her conversation with Mainul was over, the joint forces members seized her cellphone.

"Hasina appeared to be confident and was prepared for the arrest," said the member of the joint forces.

When the law enforcers entered her residence at around 5:00am, Hasina was saying her prayers on the first

floor. She asked her staff to tell the law enforcers to stay on the ground floor.

After some time, when a few of the officers went upstairs to meet her Hasina became agitated.

"What so many of you have come here to take me away?" she questioned. "Why are you here? Do you carry any warrant?"

The next moment she calmed down and asked the law enforcers if they would like to have breakfast. She then gave them tea and biscuit, and then she went inside her bedroom to get ready.

When she came down the stairs, Hasina stopped in front of her staff's room where her personal aides had gathered.

"Don't loose heart and patience," she told them. "Truth will prevail."

estly and neutrally without yielding to any unwarranted pressure or interference.

He also asked them to engage people in implementing government programme and to take opinion of people, particularly grassroots ones, in planning and thinking and to reflect people's aspiration in their activities.

Responding to local demands raised by the local speakers, he assured that his government would try to meet the demands and carry out development works as far as possible. He informed that he has discussed with ministries concerned and donors the construction of Padma Bridge and hoped it would be materialised.

The CA himself took note of the demands, proposals and problems raised by the locals. Principal Secretary to the Chief Adviser Ali Imam Majumdar and Home Secretary Abdul Karim, who were on the dais, also took note.

reach their party offices when the law enforcers intercepted.

Joint forces, Rab and police have been deployed as part of beefed up security measures in the city.

Our Mymensingh correspondent adds: Agitating youths damaged five vehicles near Mashkanda inter-district bus terminal yesterday noon while BCL activists brought out a procession on Phulbari Degree College campus protesting the arrest of AL chief.

Police dispersed a procession of BCL at Pura Bazar in Sujanagar upazila, our Pabna correspondent adds.

Our staff correspondent reports from Khulna: Several protest processions were brought out on Khulna Railway Station Road, Labon Chora, Cemetery Road, Dakbungalow Road, Court Road, Khulna MM City College, BIDC Road and Phulbari in the city.

Additional law enforcers have been deployed at different points in the city.

A correspondent in Gazipur reports: A group of people brought out a procession around 9:30pm on Azimuddin College Road protesting the arrest of Sheikh Hasina.

An employee of Petrobangla said the situation is much better now during the present government's regime.

"We, the common people want peace that we didn't get during the regimes of BNP and AL governments," he said.

SWEET DISTRIBUTION

Meanwhile reports received from several places said the police obstructed processions protesting the arrest of Sheikh Hasina at many places but they did not take any action when some people expressed their joy in public and distributed sweets on streets following the arrest.

Sweets were distributed in Rajshahi and Mymensingh celebrating Sheikh Hasina's arrest, our correspondents reported.

Our Rajshahi correspondent reported that three Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) employees Rafique, Sadek and Abbas distributed three packets of sweets around 11:30pm in front of the office of deputy inspector general of Rajshahi Divisional Police at Bherpara in the city.

The three were distributing sweets telling people that those were gifts from a local ward commissioner on the occasion of Hasina's arrest, said a shopkeeper.

Rafique, Sadek and Abbas told reporters present at the scene that Abu Hashim, commissioner of ward no 5 of RCC had employed them to distribute the sweets.

Our Mymensingh correspondent reported that a group of people distributed sweets at Station Road, Kirtipur and Purahit Para of the town giving rise to a mixed reaction among the people.

Kotwali police however said they knew nothing about the sweet distribution following Hasina's arrest.

No one above law

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