

# Hasina, Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1

sources added.

Examining the information and documents, the sources in the ACC said they believe inconsistencies might be found in the statements to be submitted by the two former prime ministers.

According to the ACC rules a person will be punished with a maximum of ten years imprisonment, if that person is found guilty of suppressing information in the wealth statement.

Meanwhile, the ACC is preparing to file more corruption cases against the two top leaders as the intelligence agencies already sent some documents to the commission for taking such actions, the sources said.

Besides, the ACC is looking into the possibility of reviving the unresolved cases filed with the now defunct Bureau of Anti-corruption against the two former premiers.

Both the top leaders, who are already under tremendous pressure within and outside their parties to retire from politics, will face increased difficulties if they have to deal with the ACC's new initiatives.

Hasina, who is now in a sub-jail and already sued in three extortion cases during the army backed caretaker government's regime, might face additional difficulties in preparing her wealth statement for possible lack of proper counsel.

On the other hand, although BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has not been detained yet, she is virtually confined to her residence and isolated.

Neither the government nor any individual has yet filed any case against Khaleda Zia during the caretaker government's regime. But the sources said corruption cases might be filed

## AL faces

FROM PAGE 16

But now when she is in jail for the first time on a specific criminal charge, the leaders and workers are not sure what to do as they find themselves in an uncharted situation both in and outside the organisation.

Hasina sought to step down as the party chief following the 1991 election debacle, but was forced to backtrack in the face of a huge pressure from leaders and workers at all levels.

This time she faces the possibility of being disqualified from contesting the next parliamentary election. The AL will have to do without her in the election next year if she ends up being convicted under the emergency rules.

## 12 AL women

FROM PAGE 16

Emergency Power Rules.

Police chased the protesters and lobbed teargas shells. They also arrested four JML activists from the scene.

The arrested JML activists—Parul Akter, Kona Biswas, Nasima Ahmed and Lovely Sultana—were yesterday produced in a Dhaka court that sent them to jail.

## Rajuk CBA leader

FROM PAGE 16

they lodged a case with Motijheel Police Station accusing three including Rajuk CBA President Amir Khashru and Abdul Haque. Khashru is absconding.

Joint forces would interrogate the arrested intensively after taking him on remand.

The official also said they recovered the three rooms used as CBA office and handed those over to the Rajuk authorities.

## Woman SC lawyer

FROM PAGE 16

The victim's eight-year-old daughter Ayman Jara Tofa, a class III student of Scholar School and College in Dhamondi, was asleep during the killing. Her husband, a retired PWD engineer, and son Ali Sayem Rumman, a doctor of Central Hospital, were outside the house.

Mina told the police she opened the door hearing doorkell and saw a tall youth aged around 26 who looked for Sayma.

"Madam came and seeing the youth uttered, 'Oh you, come in please,'" Mina told journalists. "They were having a conversation in the drawing room and I returned to the kitchen."

A few minutes later Aleya found the youth washing blood of his hand. Both of them also saw the youth searching Sayma's bedroom.

Mina and Aleya told the police they realised Sayma was killed but did not raise an alarm fearing the same consequence. They informed the matter to relatives and neighbours when the killer disappeared.

Sayma's brother Mozammel Haq Khan told The Daily Star he received a call from a relative, who informed him that Sayma's house was being robbed off. He called Sayma who in feeble tone said, "Save me brother, I'm being killed." Then someone disconnected the phone.

The murderer took away three mobile sets including two of the victim.

## UK asks govt

FROM PAGE 1

government to follow due process to the letter and make sure every assistance is given to Sheikh Hasina within the process," he told journalists after attending a luncheon arranged by Foreign Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury for the visiting Sri Lankan ministerial delegation at a state guest house.

Asked whether Hasina's arrest would affect the crackdown on corruption or create a political crisis, the envoy said, "This government is treating it as simply a law and crime issue. They should follow due process, and what most people ask for is to make sure that no laws are broken to protect interests."

He went on, "We expect Sheikh Hasina issue will be resolved quickly with due legal process ... What is important here is that if anybody is arrested, evidence and due process are to be followed."

He declined to make any comment when asked whether he feels that the AL chief has been arrested as part of the 'minus-two' theory, saying it is a matter for the people and government of Bangladesh.

"Whatever is done must be done through a legal framework, for a better Bangladesh, an outstanding election and a better democracy. After all, that is what the caretaker government said it stands for."

The envoy said, "This (arrest of Hasina) is a significant event given this is a former prime minister and these are also serious charges."

"We see the government is very keen to arrest the state of corruption. I'm sure that is part of that drive. The government has been very consistent with stated principles during the past six months. We expect the Sheikh Hasina issue will resolve quickly with due legal process."

Welcoming the election roadmap announced by the Election Commission and reconfirmation of the election date, he said they have noticed that the roadmap allows the elections to be held earlier than November or December if the voter list is completed earlier than expected.

The high commissioner hoped that preparing the voter list does not take longer than necessary and that Britain would assist Bangladesh in holding free, fair and credible elections at the earliest.

## Protests pour

FROM PAGE 1

Kabir Chowdhury, Hena Das, Kalim Sharafi, Prof Muhammad Jafar Iqbal and 41 other eminent personalities also signed the statement.

Col (retd) Shawkat Ali, Dr Alaudin Ahmed, Hemayet Uddin Birprotik and 20 others under the banner of Mukti Joddha Oikya Parishad demanded immediate release of Hasina.

Meanwhile, 75 lawyers of Rajshahi court in a statement protested the arrest of AL chief Hasina and demanded her release.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote, Bangladesh Krishak League, Bangladesh Awami Jubo Ajibji Parishad, Bangladesh Islami Oikya Jote, Sammilito Sangskritik Jote of Rajshahi district unit, Mukti Joddha Phatagar, Joy Bangla Sangskritik Jote, Swadhinata Chikitshak Parishad also criticised Hasina's arrest through separate statements.

Our correspondents in Rajshahi, Gazipur and Thakurgaon said AL and its front organisations brought out processions in those districts yesterday. They chanted slogans against the government and demanded immediate release of Hasina.

A group of Jubo League activists Monday night vandalised vehicles on Dhaka-Rajshahi Highway in front of Natore NS Government College in protest against the arrest of Hasina.

Meanwhile, AL Mymensingh district unit condemned the arrest of Hasina. In a statement, its president former AL lawmaker Matir Rahman and secretary Abdul Matin protested the arrest of Hasina and demanded her immediate release.

In a separate statement, vice-presidents of district AL Mujibur Rahman Milki and Nazim Uddin Ahmed also demanded the release of Hasina in the greater interest of the country.

According to scholars, ancient Buddhist scriptures record that two Indian traders were given a lock of Buddha's hair when they earnestly requested for it. They have been identified as Thapassu and Bhalluka. According to an ancient Pali text, Jathakata Katha, the two received the lock of hair seven weeks after the ascetic Siddhartha Gauthama attained Buddhahood.

A pali stone inscription at Girihuda Seya in an eastern province of Sri Lanka states that Thapassu and Bhalluka enshrined the hair at Girihuda Seya, which would place Buddhism in Sri Lanka well before Indian kings introduced the religion to the region.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will inaugurate the event.

Two commissioners, Muhammad Sohul Hussain and M Sakhaman Hossain, would visit Rajshahi on Sunday prior to the chief adviser's visit to oversee the process.

Some religious scholars contend that the lock of hair was carried to Girihuda Seya by descendants of Thapassu and Bhalluka. Ancient texts show that traders, as well as kings, were instrumental in the spread of Buddhism.

## Talks next month

FROM PAGE 1

ministers for collecting a relic of Gautam Buddha's hair from a Buddhist temple in Chittagong, also met Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed earlier yesterday.

Fakhruddin asked the Sri Lankan delegation to invest in Bangladesh, especially in the jute sector, as the government opened up jute mills to foreign investors, reported UNB.

The delegation will fly to Chittagong this morning, where the foreign adviser will officially hand over the relic of Buddha's hair to his counterpart in a ceremony later today.

Religious Affairs and Moral Uplift Minister of Sri Lanka Pandu Bandaranaike, Trade Minister Bandula Gunawardena, and the Chief Priest of that country visited the International Buddhist Monastery in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, in a joint news briefing after the bilateral talks, Iftekhar told the media that Dhaka and Colombo will activate all bilateral mechanisms, starting with a Bangladeshi trade delegation who will visit Sri Lanka soon to boost export to the island nation.

Bogollagama told reporters that Colombo is also keen on Bangladesh's emerging banking and financial sectors as well as strengthening the existing links in the apparel industry.

Bangladesh exported around \$13 million worth of goods to Sri Lanka in the FY 05-06, and imported goods of around \$11 million in the same period, according to official figures.

Bogollagama also met the Sri Lanka Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce (SBCCI) at Hotel Sonargaon in the capital, where he said the trade volume means nothing to him, rather the two sides should minimise all trade related difficulties.

He said Bangladesh can export cement to Sri Lanka, as the latter is annually producing only 2.7 million tons of cement against its demand for 3.5 million tons per year.

In reply to a query, the Lankan foreign minister also said Bangladeshi

businesses should engage further with the Sri Lankan commerce ministry to receive long-term visa facilities.

Iftekhar said Sri Lanka expressed a keen interest in pharmaceuticals, leather goods, cement, and potatoes among other commodities.

He added that civil aviation delegates from both sides will sit at the earliest to re-establish direct air links that were severed in 2002. While, Bogollagama agreed that both sides should sit to ensure that the two countries are connected 'as fast as possible'.

The two sides also plan to meet to discuss direct shipping links and are looking to take steps to reduce shipping costs between Chittagong and Colombo, he said.

Bangladesh foreign ministry sources said Colombo has been demanding greater 'freedom rights' for their flights to Dhaka, an issue that offers itself for quick resolution.

Asked whether Sri Lanka is interested in signing a Free Trade Agreement with Bangladesh, Bogollagama said at this stage they are looking to further cooperate on economic matters to generate higher bilateral trade to reach a point where both economies are ready to graduate to an FTA.

Bogollagama also expressed his gratitude for Bangladesh's donation of the relic of Gautam Buddha's hair, which he said will be a lasting monument of the friendship between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

The Lankan foreign minister also stressed the need for the two sides to boost intra-regional trade in South Asia. He also said the two sides looked at greater cooperation in BIMSTEC.

He also quoted the chief adviser to say that Fakhruddin condemned terrorism in all its forms and will look to cooperate with Colombo to eliminate terrorism from the region.

## ACC to quiz

FROM PAGE 16

March 7 and later shown arrested under section 16(2) of the Emergency Power Ordinance 2007.

He was earlier placed on remand on different terms in connection with a GD filed with Tejgaon Police Station.

### MAMUN'S GRAFT CASE

ACC Assistant Director Tahsinul Haq, who is also the IO of the graft case, yesterday submitted a 15-day remand petition to interrogate Mamun.

The court, however, fixed today (Wednesday) for hearing on the remand prayer in Mamun's presence.

Additional members of the law enforcement agencies were deployed on the campus and at the entrances to the university.

Academic activities of most of the schools and colleges in the capital were normal, sources said.

Our RU correspondent reported that students' presence was very thin and the employees attended the office late.

Classes and examinations were held duly and university buses ran as usual.

The strike was partially observed in Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology, Rajshahi Government College, Polytechnic Institute, Rajshahi City College and other major educational institutes of the city.

Meanwhile, our Kushtia correspondent reported that no classes or examinations were held at the Islamic University.

BCL activists barred university buses to ply the Kushtia-Jhenidah road. However, some buses reached the campus under police escort.

BCL men tried to bring out a protest procession but failed, as the police and the Rapid Action Battalion dispersed the crowd.

The court fixed July 22 for hearing.

## Akbar Ali

FROM PAGE 1

higher authorities decide to adjust the money, former adviser to the caretaker government Akbar Ali said.

"It appears to be an interim order and so should be subject to a review by higher authorities. It's quite difficult to say what will be the final decision in this regard," he said referring to the speaker's taking out his own medical bill.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Dr Akbar Ali, also a former cabinet secretary, said the prime minister, in the current context the chief adviser, can give a decision here under the Special Medical Attendance Rules, 1950 or the Jatiya Sangsads (JS) Secretariat Commission can do it under its own authority.

"If the decision does not go in favour of adjusting the said amount, the Comptroller and Auditor General's Office can ask him [the speaker] to refund the money," he added.

The Daily Star on last Thursday carried a news story on Sircar's drawing Tk 28 lakh as medical bill ignoring official objections. The same day, the speaker at a press conference protested the news and claimed whatever he has done was lawful and in good faith.

Asked if the speaker himself can approve an amount for his own expenditure, the former adviser said the sanctioning of the money floated the General Financial Rules that say, "No authority should exercise its powers for sanctioning expenditure to pass an order that will be directly or indirectly to its own advantage."

"We must remember that the speaker's privileges act does not provide for any such facilities. This is subject to public servants rules and in this case, permission from the prime minister was needed," he said.

"If we go by the precedents, former speaker late Humayun Azizul Karim filed another event.

Rashid Chowdhury had to take permission from the prime minister,"

said Akbar Ali, also a former finance secretary, in reference to the then prime minister's approving around Tk 35 lakh in medical expenses for Chowdhury who was suffering from kidney diseases.

In his statement to the press, the speaker claimed he has approved his medical bill under the authority of Jatiya Sangsads Secretariat Act, 1994. Asked whether the speaker can approve his medical bill under the authority of this act, Akbar Ali said the matter is supposed to be decided by the Jatiya Sangsads Secretariat Commission.

He, however, cited some other examples in the parliament secretariat. He spoke of a dispute between the audit office and parliament secretariat over whether some secretariat officers were entitled to mobile phones. The then speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury approved some mobile phones for certain employees of the parliament secretariat.

"If the decision does not go in favour of adjusting the said amount, the Comptroller and Auditor General's Office can ask him [the speaker] to refund the money," he added.

The then finance minister raised the issue of dispute at a meeting of the Jatiya Sangsads Secretariat Commission. The Commission directed that the facilities for the mobile phone should be discontinued.

The then speaker who was chief of the Commission complied with the decision, Dr Khan remembered.

"So, theoretically we can say four things. First of all, this is an interim order and no final decision has yet been taken in this regard. Secondly, either the prime minister's or presently the chief adviser's approval should be taken for decision about this expenditure; or the matter should wait to be placed before the next meeting of the Jatiya Sangsads Secretariat Commission; or the final decision can either be taken by the CA or the Commission," said Akbar Ali.

"If we go by the precedents, former speaker late Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, Kazi Firoz Rashid, former members of parliament GM Quader, Zahiruddin Swapan, former state minister Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury and Maj (retd) Akhtaruzzaman also took part in the discussion.

## BNP reformists