

# Russia expelling 4 British diplomats

AP, Moscow

Russia said Thursday it will expel four British diplomats and suspend counterterrorism cooperation with London, the latest move in a mounting confrontation over the radiation poisoning death of former KGB officer Alexander Litvinenko.

Britain had announced Monday the expulsion of four Russian diplomats and restrictions on visas issued to Russian government officials after Moscow refused to extradite Andrei Lugovoi, accused of killing Litvinenko in London last November.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin announced the expulsions after summoning British Ambassador Anthony Brenton to the ministry and informing him.

Kamynin described Russia's response as "targeted, balanced and the minimum necessary." He contended that Russia was forced to respond, saying Britain had made a "conscious choice of worsening relations with our country."

Brenton relayed London's "continuing disappointment" with the Russian response.

Kamynin also said Russia would stop issuing visas to British officials and seeking British visas for Russian officials until London provides more information on the restrictions it has imposed.

"Until the new procedure is explained, Russian officials will not request British visas. And analogous requests by British officials will not be considered," he said.

He also said Moscow would suspend cooperation against terror.

"To our regret, cooperation between Russia and Britain on issues of fighting terrorism becomes impossible," Kamynin said.

He did not elaborate, and the extent of current cooperation with ties already damaged by Russian intelligence services' accusations of British spying was unclear.

Natalia Leshchenko, an analyst at the Global Insight think tank, said on BBC TV that Britain and Russia do cooperate against terror, but suggested the suspension was mainly meant to tarnish the new government of Prime Minister Gordon Brown in the eyes of its own people.

"The cooperation itself is there and we can also say it can be exaggerated if needed to show that Gordon Brown acts against the British people. At least

that's what they are saying to the Russian public at the moment," Leshchenko said.

Kamynin said the interests of tourists and businessmen would not be hurt. He said that on visa issues Russia would mirror Britain's actions from now on.

Brenton said he met with Kamynin's deputy, Alexander Grushko.

"He has given me certain messages to deliver back to the foreign office, which I will now do," Brenton said. "I have underlined to him our continuing disappointment at Russia's reaction so far to our request for the extradition of Mr. Lugovoi and our continuing hope that Russia will find a way to cooperate."

Litvinenko, a fierce Kremlin critic, died Nov. 23 after ingesting radioactive polonium-210. From his deathbed, he said Russian President Vladimir Putin was behind his poisoning.

**Fertiliser, energy**

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yesterday placed a fresh proposal for urea price hike while a similar proposal by the ministry on June 26 was sent back by the committee.

The June 26 proposal sought to raise urea price to Tk 7,000 per tonne at factory gate, an increase by 51 percent. The ministry yesterday proposed three alternative prices of urea with one being Tk 7,500 for per tonne. "The new proposal has increased the price more as the government is going to hike natural gas prices," said one source.

On deep-sea port, Mirza Aziz said, "It's a long term project and if work for deep-sea port starts now it will end in 2055... Besides, if we accept Sonadia island as site, we need another Tk 6-7 crore for study on the site."

The committee held back the proposal considering all aspects, he added.

Yesterday's meeting approved a proposal by the civil aviation ministry for leasing an airbus with an option to purchase it after a certain period.

The ministry proposed three options for airbus leasing -- the other two only for taking lease.

The finance adviser said it would need \$23 million for lease with purchase option and \$17.5 million for only lease.

"We have approved the option to buy airbus after a period of lease," he said. Though this will involve an additional expenditure of about \$5 million, the committee approved it as the government will own the airbus after 2010.

The advisory body yesterday waived Tk 1.18 crore interest on loans of Modern Kariyil Silk Mills Ltd, a privatised silk factory managed by its employees, on condition that the factory owners will pay Tk 2.37 crore outstanding loans in the next three months.

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## Zillur

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only after release of Sheikh Hasina and lifting of the ban on indoor politics."

Queried about the reported bickering among the senior leaders over intra-party reforms, he said, "All misunderstandings have been cleared after Tofail and Razzaq met me Wednesday."

He said that an eight-member committee headed by Barrister Rafiqul Haque has been formed to fight the charges brought against Hasina.

In a swipe at the military-backed interim administration, he said the way a leader of her stature was taken to jail was very inhuman. He demanded punishment to those responsible for what he said was a degrading treatment to a former prime minister.

Zillur, also ex-general secretary of the AL, said, "Misunderstandings and confusion that have been troubling the party are over now."

"Razzaq and Tofail yesterday told me that they have no resentment," Zillur said.

"Reforms mean nothing to us when our leader is in jail and at the moment, there is no room for division," he said quoting AL presidium members Tofail Ahmed and Abdur Razzaq.

He observed, "We are united in our resolve to free the leader."

About the extortion case against Hasina, Zillur said, "We will go to the High Court for the charges to be quashed."

"It's about eight years ago when there was no emergency in the country, so how come they file the case now under the emergency power rules," he said.

"Hasina's name was not in the first information report (FIR). Besides, it was never stated that she demanded money or was given money," he went on.

About BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's statement calling for release of her arch rival, he said, "She has acted like a true politician."

**HASINARECEIVESACCNOTICE**

The jail authorities yesterday did not allow the close relatives of Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina to meet her at the special jail "on security grounds".

Meanwhile, the AL chief yesterday received the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) notice, asking her to submit wealth statement.

Some relatives of the former prime minister stayed on the parliament premises for over two hours and then went back since the authorities did not allow them to meet her.

Earlier, the AL submitted a list of names of 27 close relatives of Sheikh Hasina and her four personal staff to the jail authorities seeking permission to meet her.

"We could not allow relatives to meet her due to security reasons," DIG Prisons Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui told The Daily Star last night.

He however said Hasina's lawyers could meet her, as she needs discussion with them to submit her wealth statement. "But legal procedures would be followed in this regard," added the DIG prison.

About the letter submitted to the jail authorities seeking permission for the relatives and personal staff to meet her, Haider said they have received the letter but they could not arrange it right now.

He said the AL chief is well and messages from relatives have been conveyed to her as per the normal procedures.

A doctor, a nurse and an ambulance have been kept all time for Hasina's treatment, he said.

**Ad firm filling**

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The workers said two months ago they got the work of a 30 feet by 15 feet billboard. One of them said the firm obtained permission from the DCC at a rent of Tk 100 for per square foot a month.

Earlier, a part of the Lake was filled up by dumping rubbish on that point for the construction.

Asked, Nazmul Haq, marketing and sales in charge of Neptune, claimed they have permission in this connection.

"Now no ad firm can establish a billboard without permission. After assessing papers and sites, the authorities allow or reject the firms' applications," said Haq. Admitting that they had earlier some illegal billboards, he said they have knocked those down.

For a billboard of 30 feet by 15 feet (450 square feet) they usually get Tk 4-5 lakh a year, he added.

However, DCC Chief Conservancy Officer Commander MR Chowdhury, who is in charge of advertisement section, said they are not allowing anyone to set up new billboards.

"I didn't permit any firm to erect the billboard there," he told The Daily Star over phone.

Expressing his gratitude for noticing him the matter, he said they would look into it.

The DCC had earlier taken steps to bulldoze illegal billboards. The move came in the wake of newspapers reports that a firm of Arafat Rahman, son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, set up unplanned billboards in connivance with the Corporation.

Arafat's advertising firm Advance AD allegedly wiped out its competitors from the market. It has had the control of the most lucrative advertisement spots in the capital during the era of BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

## First ODI today

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against the World Cup runners-up who are strong enough despite the fact that they will miss the services of spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran and paceman Chaminda Vaas, the attack pair who share 690 wickets between them in the one-day game.

The statistics will also hardly speak in favour of the Tigers when the match starts at 10:30am Bangladesh time with Ten Sports and BTV beaming the match live from Sri Lanka's oldest Test venue.

The two teams earlier met 19 times in the abridged-version of the game with the Tigers managing a solitary victory -- a four-wicket success at Bogra in February 2006 -- but most of the times they surrendered meekly.

Even in the World Cup, where Bangladesh were the most talked-about side following victories against India and South Africa, the Tigers suffered a humiliating 198-run defeat courtesy to a hundred from dashing Sanath Jayasuriya, who returns to the side after being rested for the Tests.

Bangladesh team management retained the side that won the lone warm-up match on Wednesday, leaving out uncapped all-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad as 12th man.

Javed Omar, Mehrob Hossain and Shahadat Hossain were the other players to be left out.

Despite his first-ball duck, Shahriar Nafees will open with hard-hitting Tamim Iqbal, who has the ability to make the difference.

Sri Lanka will finalise their eleven this morning as Jayasuriya, Jehan Mubarak and Chamara Kapugedera arrived from England only on Tuesday.

The rain can be a threat in the series as heavy shower started yesterday afternoon but the encouraging news is that there are reserve days for every game.

**TEAMS**

Bangladesh: Shahriar Nafees, Tamim Iqbal, Tushar Imran, Mohammad Ashraf (captain), Shakib Al Hassan, Aftab Ahmed, Mushfiqur Rahim, Forhad Reza, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Syed Rasel and Abdur Razzak.

Sri Lanka (from): Sanath Jayasuriya, Upul Tharanga, Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Chamara Silva, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chamara Kapugedera, Jehan Mubarak, Farveez Maharoor, Dilhara Fernando, Lasith Malinga, Malinga Bandara, Nuwan Kulasekera and Upul Chandana.

tion which could be provided under the existing law.

The bill has specified the duties of public organisations to respect and protect citizens' right to information. The duties include categorising and updating information from time to time, making them public, making the public access to information simple and easy, making all activities open and transparent, managing training to the employees.

Under the provision of updating various information, the bill has mentioned that the public organisations should update the information dating back to at least 20 years.

They should also prepare a list of 11 types of information related to their works and services. Such information should be made public within three months after the act is implemented and such information should be updated every three months.

A committee headed by the speaker of the parliament including Minister for Information and Communications and President of Federation of Nepalese Journalists as members will appoint chief information commissioner and information commissioners including at least one female. The two third majority of the parliamentary committee related to information could remove commissioners from post.

The bill has made separate provision for classifying the information, which falls under the need of preservation. A committee will be formed to classify information headed by chief secretary of the Nepal government and related secretary and chief or related expert recommended by the chief as members.

## NBR asks

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Binte Zaman and Tasfia Binte Zaman, sons Labib Ibne Zaman and Ahnaf Ibne Zaman, brothers Mirza Obaidur Rahman and Mohammad Golam Rahman, sisters Dr Farida Binte Rahman and Dr Latifa Binte Lutfor, brother-in-laws Khaled Rahman Payel and Shamsur Rahman, relatives Dr Afzalunnesa (wife of Dr Asif Mortaza), Nipa (wife of Faruk Ahmed), Mithila (wife of Ripon) and Mitra (wife of Badsha Mia).

The NBR also asked for bank account information of former BNP state minister for law Shahjahan Omar, his wife Mehzabin Farzana, daughter Mehzabin Fatema Oman, son Adnan Omar Osi, and SS Filling stations and Sangar Textiles Mills Limited owned by Shahjahan Omar and his family.

BNP lawmaker Sarwar Jamal Nizam, his wife Sabrina Khan Sabu, daughters Mabrura Nizam and Habiba Nizam, and Faizur Rahman, chief engineer of Roads and Highways Department.

**Indo-Bangla**

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three years," a JCE member said yesterday.

The JCE is assigned to review the flows of seven major common rivers, including the Monu, Dholai, Khowai, Dudhkumar, Feni, Matamuhuri and Dharla out of the 52 flowing through both the countries. The committee also has to make recommendations for sharing of waters of those rivers.

The Delhi meeting would also discuss other issues relating to the common rivers.

"Building protection embankments along different bordering rivers at 40 points in India and 29 points in Bangladesh has remained stalled for years. We would also discuss the issue," said Jobaer.

The Indian side is interested to talk dredging of the Ichhamati river in their territory, he said. "So, we would also start discussing the issue."

A JCE member said the upcoming talks would focus mainly on striking an interim agreement on the Teesta water sharing. "But before the talks start in August, more developments might take place," he added.

In September 2004, the JCE meet ended with many issues unresolved as it failed to settle a five-year deal on the Teesta river, a major river in the northern region of Bangladesh, that gets dry severely during the lean period greatly harming the country's agricultural production.

Sources said at that meeting, Dhaka proposed equal share of 80 per cent of the Teesta waters, preserving the rest 20 per cent as natural flow of the river. But New Delhi insisted on sharing the waters at a ratio of 39 per cent and 36 per cent for India and Bangladesh respectively.

The Indian side proposed keeping only 10 per cent of the Teesta waters for its natural flow and sharing 15 per cent in proportion to the command areas in Indian and Bangladesh territories, sources said.

The water resources secretary, who would lead the Bangladesh side at the upcoming meet, said composition of the delegation is yet to be finalised.

His Indian counterpart Gowri Chatterjee would lead his side.

**60 get life**

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K a m a l , N a b i r , K a d e r , Hamiduzzaman, Gopal Thakur, Shahid, Fazlu, Saiful, Amin and Yakub Pakhi.

The accused who died during the trial are Jalil, Enamul, Rustom, Sattar, Asgar and Ali.

In the police station looting case, the accused were given 52 years' jail under Section 3 of the Explosives Act of 1908 and under Section 4 of the same act.

The accused were also awarded another 32 years' imprisonment for killing a policeman during the looting.

According to the prosecution, a gang of armed criminals attacked Gurudaspur Police Station in Natore on February 24, 1987. They shot dead constable Habibur Rahman and took away three arrested persons, Abdus Sattar, Abed Ali, Abdul Hakim, breaking open the hajat.

The armed gang also looted 24 firearms and 1380 bullets from the police station and left the scene firing gunshots, blasting crackers and chanting slogans in favour of Purbo Banglar Communist Party.

Sub Inspector Wabaidul Haq lodged the two cases with the police station concerned 20 days after the incident.

During police investigation, three of the arrested accused gave judicial confession. But police failed to recover the looted arms and ammunition.

On November 15, 1990, Niranjana Chandra Saha, superintendent of CID police, submitted two separate charge sheets in the cases accusing 66 people.

In 1993, the case went to Natore District and Sessions Judge's Court for trial.

## First woman president

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ballot by an electoral college of 4,896 state and federal lawmakers.

Analysts had said lawmakers would vote along party lines, tipping the contest in Patil's favour.

Shortly before the end of polling, which an election commission official said was marked by heavy turnout, the main opposition Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) party conceded defeat.

"Pratibha Patil will win... she is now the president-elect," a senior BJP leader said.

However, the official, who asked that his name not be used, said Patil had "fallen in the eyes of the Indian people," referring to the scandals that had dogged her in the run-up to the vote.

Patil has been hit by accusations that she protected her brother in a murder probe and shielded her husband in a suicide scandal, as well as allegations of involvement in a slew of financial scams.

Although Patil, who was governor of the state of Rajasthan before her candidacy was sponsored last month by India's ruling Congress-led coalition, has denied all allegations of wrongdoing.

Presidential candidates and their families are traditionally expected to have an impeccable reputation.

"This sort of a dirty campaign is totally new, it has set a new low," said political analyst Mahesh Rangarajan.

The Congress party and its legislative allies were also claiming victory for the Hindi-speaking Patil.

"The nation celebrates the victory of the first woman president of the country," said Saifuddin Soz of Kashmir's National Conference party, which backs Congress.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, who have billed Patil's nomination as a push for gender equality, were among the first to vote at the parliament building.

Patil, plucked from relative political obscurity to be the Congress candidate, faced incumbent vice president 84-year-old Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, sponsored by the BJP.

Beyond the mudslinging, Patil was mocked when she spoke of a "divine premonition of greater responsibility."

India's leading news magazine, India Today, dubbed her the "Embarrassing Choice" on its front cover.

Various opinion polls showed most Indians favoured a second term for missile scientist Abdul Kalam, who has been called the "People's President" for his populist style. His term ends on July 24.

Congress refused to support a second term for Kalam because he was nominated by the previous BJP-led government.

Congress said it was giving a woman the chance to occupy the top post and that her election would

send a strong anti-discrimination message in India's 60th year of independence.

But the BJP charged that Patil was named due to her loyalty to India's powerful Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty and her friendship with the Italian-born party leader.

It launched an anti-Patil website with a banner that read: "India diminished, Indians disgraced."

Under the constitution, the prime minister wields most of the executive power. The president plays a role in forming government at the state and federal levels, which makes the job hotly contested.

In a bid to fight back, Congress has hit out at Shekhawat, questioning his patriotic credentials, saying he joined a British-run police force in pre-independence India in 1942 against Indian freedom fighters.

The election commission was to officially announce the results Saturday.

## EC wants

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will provide the Election Commission with the power," Election Commissioner Muhammad Sohul Hussain told The Daily Star yesterday.

The EC has already prepared a set of proposals which will be sent to the government for amending the Electoral Rolls Ordinance 1982.

To remove ambiguity in the existing electoral rolls ordinance, whether the voter list will be prepared afresh before each parliamentary election, the EC in its proposals incorporated a provision for updating the voter list every year, sources in the EC said.

The electoral rolls ordinance will have to be amended by this month as the preparation of the voter list with photographs is set to begin early next month. The government is expected to promulgate another ordinance to amend the electoral rolls ordinance, sources said.

Meanwhile, the local administration and the election office in Rajshahi City Corporation are almost ready to begin their work to prepare the voter list from the first week of August.

Two election commissioners--Muhammed Sohul Hossain and Brig Gen (ret'd) Sakhawat Hossain--will visit Rajshahi on July 22-23 and evaluate the field-level preparation work of the voter enrolment.

Talking to reporters at his office yesterday, Election Commissioner Sakhawat said it would take one month to complete the voter list in Rajshahi city.

"At the beginning, we are placing emphasis on preparing voter lists of the city corporations and municipalities so that elections of the local government bodies could be held," he said.

He said the EC by mid-July would announce a detailed plan to prepare the voter list across the country.

Asked whether political unrest will create any obstacle to the field-level task of making the voter list, Sakhawat said, "That is not our concern. In Rajshahi, we will see whether we face any problems."

ing areas of Pakistan. What is needed is concrete and actionable information and intelligence sharing," the Foreign Ministry said Wednesday.

Musharraf on Wednesday urged moderate Pakistanis many of whom are pressing him to resign and restore civilian rule to help him take on extremists.

Adding to the tension, a suicide bomber on Tuesday killed 16 people at a rally for Pakistan's suspended chief justice, whose legal battle with Musharraf has galvanized opposition to military rule. A verdict in the case is expected as early as Friday.

Critics accuse Musharraf of leading Pakistan toward civil war and using the crisis to shore up US support for his eight-year-old military regime. There is growing concern that year-end elections will be postponed. However, Musharraf insisted Wednesday the ballot would go ahead.

The Hub attack follows the July 8 slaying of three Chinese men in a rickshaw workshop in Peshawar, which drew a protests from Beijing, a key ally of Pakistan, and a pledge from Islamabad to protect some 2,000 to 3,000 Chinese nationals here.

Officials have suggested the Peshawar attack was linked to the then-ongoing army operation against Islamabad's Red Mosque. Troops moved in after Islamic radicals from the mosque kidnapped several Chinese women they accused of being prostitutes.

However, ethnic Baluch insurgents have been blamed for at least two past attacks on Chinese nationals.

"These anti-state elements were also involved in the previous attacks against Chinese citizens," Baluchistan Interior Minister Mir Shoaib Nosherwani said.

China is helping build a deep-water port in Gwadar near the Iranian border that Baluch nationalists view as a symbol of the resource-rich but impoverished province's exploitation.