

Moments before the arrest

STAR REPORT

She seemed reluctant to meet her fate. As law enforcers knocked at the door of Khaleda Zia's house at 5:30am, she appeared on a seven-day remand a couple of hours after they were arrested on graft charges at their cantonment residence.

The law enforcers then told her about the case and the reason for their presence at the address.

"Ok," Khaleda tarty replied. "Let me offer prayers, get my suitcase packed and then I will come out."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Her letters to Bhuiyan, Ashraf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia expelled Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Joint Secretary General Ashraf Hossain from the party, according to notification letters sent to both the leaders.

Khaleda wrote the letters to Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, and Ashraf Hossain on Sunday prior to her arrest.

In another letter to Khandaker Delwar Hossain, on the same day, Khaleda Zia appointed him as the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

in the Jatiya Sangsads Bhaban complex.

Since the present military-backed caretaker government assumed power in January, the going has got tough for both the leaders who had run the country alternately for the last 15 years and boast a past of nine years' vigorous street agitations against military ruler HM Ershad.

The arrests followed close on the heels of the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) filing the first graft case against the former premier and her son after the state of emergency came into force on January 11.

In the case filed with the Tejgaon Police Station late on Sunday night, Khaleda, her son and 11 others were charged with violating tender conditions in appointing an indenting house for container handling.

The joint forces hauled them in a little after 7:30am, and took them straight to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, Dhaka at 8:05am.

At the court premises, Khaleda's lawyers in her presence announced that BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Joint Secretary General Ashraf Hossain have been expelled for "attempts to split the party in the name of reforms with support from the government".

Like her archrival Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina who was arrested on extortion charges on July 16, Khaleda too was sent to a special jail set up

be forced to quit politics for alleged abuse of power and corruption.

But lately many have been questioning the government's approach to its anti-graft drive, as it was yet to take action against Khaleda long after detaining

Hasina and having at least four cases filed against her.

Appearing before the crowded courtroom, the BNP chief protested her innocence and described the case against her and Koko as false and part of a conspiracy against her

party and family. She sought bail for her and Koko in line with the submissions made by their counsels earlier.

Law Adviser Mainul Hosein, however, rejected Khaleda's allegation and said, "Arrests of the two

former prime ministers have proved that the present government is not biased towards any party."

The mother and son, who once were considered to be dwelling somewhere high above the law, looked gloomy while in the dock.

Khaleda was brought in an ash Nissan Patrol while Koko in a red Pajero amid tight security measures along the stretch between their Shahid Moinul Road residence and the court.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Arrest proved impartiality of government

Says Mainul

UNB, Dhaka

Law, Justice and Information Adviser Mainul Hosein yesterday said the arrest of former prime minister Khaleda Zia has proved the impartiality of the government.

"The government is completely neutral about removing corruption," he told reporters in the information ministry's conference room, hours after the arrest of Khaleda and her youngest son Arafat Rahman Koko on corruption charges.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Ensure 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 legal and constitutional rights in dealing with former premier and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who was arrested along with her youngest son early yesterday.

The US embassy in Dhaka yesterday said all arrested individuals should be treated fairly and receive full range of their legal and constitutional rights.

Responding instantly to the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Khaleda lands in sub-jail

Son Koko taken on remand; she expels rebel Bhuiyan, Ashraf from party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to jail and placed her younger son Arafat Rahman Koko on a seven-day remand a couple of hours after they were arrested on graft charges at their cantonment residence.

The law enforcers then told her about the case and the reason for their presence at the address.

"Ok," Khaleda tarty replied. "Let me offer prayers, get my suitcase packed and then I will come out."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

in the event of conviction, they will be disqualified from contesting the next parliamentary election planned to be held within December 2008.

Soon after declaration of the state of emergency, it has been widely discussed that the two might

Tense hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

4:40am: Four vehicles of the joint forces enter Dhaka Cantonment through Jahangir Gate and move towards Khaleda Zia's Shaheed Mainul Road residence.

4:45am: A convoy of 36 vehicles carrying members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), intelligence forces and police follow the four vehicles.

5:45am: The forces knock on the door of Khaleda's residence after surrounding it. A caretaker comes out and tells them that she is coming.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



PHOTO: STAR
Escorted by police, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia waves before entering the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in the capital yesterday morning.

From a housewife to premiership

STAR REPORT

Khaleda Zia's political life has been defined by her rise from a reclusive and shy housewife of a slain president to the longest serving prime minister in Bangladesh's history.

First gaining fame as one of the spearheads of the anti-Ershad movement in the 80s, Khaleda subsequently became the country's first female head of government when she won the 1991 parliamentary elections after the restoration of democracy.

It all changed for Khaleda when her husband military leader and later president Gen Ziaur Rahman

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BNP split imminent

Bhuiyan rejects expulsion decision, 130 key leaders rally behind him

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

A split in BNP now seems only a matter of time as the detained party Chairperson Khaleda Zia expelled its Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Joint Secretary General Ashraf Hossain from the party for their alleged conspiracies to break up the organisation.

Mannan Bhuiyan however categorically rejected the decision urging party members not to be confused.

Khaleda also appointed Khandaker Delwar Hossain as the new secretary general of the party.

The former prime minister made the drastic decisions on Sunday prior to her arrest the following

morning.

Terming the decision of expulsions as "undemocratic, unconstitutional and unacceptable", Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, at a news

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan

Khandaker Delwar Hossain

Commentary

The mandate that Khaleda Zia wasted

She could have transformed our political culture

MAHFUZ ANAM

Seldom did an elected leader, especially in parliamentary democracy, receive the type of popular mandate as Khaleda Zia did in 2001. In fact she is the only leader who got elected as prime minister twice (We are not counting the controversial election of February '96) in our country's history. Of the 15 years of our unbroken succession of elected governments she was in power for ten years. In the last election in 2001 her party, the BNP, alone won 194 seats in a

parliament of 300 seats. With her allies, her total strength in parliament was 217.

With such mandate and her personal stature as a politician at her peak, she was in a position to totally reshape Bangladesh's political culture and economic prospects. With so many MPs at her command she could have demanded a higher standards of integrity and dedication from them. She could have warned that anyone found wanting in honesty and integrity would be expelled from the party, which would automatically lead, as per our law, to

losing their seats in the Jatiya Sangsads. This would have saved us from corrupt politics, the primary reason for which our democracy now stands derailed.

The stability of government that such a massive electoral victory automatically implies could have easily been used to attract FDI. With steady FDI inflow, we could have easily reached our goal of 7 to 8 per cent of growth if not more. It was all within our reach only if she wanted it.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

It's a conspiracy to split BNP

Khaleda terms case false, baseless

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said she is being implicated in false and baseless cases as part of a conspiracy to split her party.

The former prime minister also alleged that the case against her was filed (on Sunday) as she had refused to go abroad when effort was being made to oust her and her family from the country.

"Me and my sons are being implicated in false and baseless cases as part of a conspiracy against BNP. Had I agreed to go abroad earlier, no such case would have been filed," Khaleda said in the metropolitan magistrate's court that

rejected her bail petition and ordered sending her to jail.

"Filing of false cases should be stopped to allow law to take its own course for the sake of the people and country. It is known to all that efforts are on to imprison me by implicating me in false cases," said Khaleda.

Claiming that her party would definitely go to power once again even if elections take place right now, the BNP chief said this is why a conspiracy is being hatched to split the party. "All of you know what is happening in the name of reforms in different political parties including BNP," she added.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

CIVIL SOCIETY MEMBERS DEMAND Transparency in trial, protection of rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society members yesterday said the government should prove its neutrality in netting people and ensure that nobody is harassed for unjustified reasons.

Prof Muzaffar Ahmad, an eminent economist, said the caretaker government should show its neutrality by taking necessary measures against the people whose activities are still under public suspicion.

The government also must establish that law all are equal in the eyes of law, Muzaffar said in a reaction to the arrest of former prime minister Khaleda Zia and her son

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Delwar at the helm of BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly-picked secretary general of the BNP, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, joined General Zia's political platform in 1978 from the National Awami Party (NAP).

A man of illustrious political past, he is a five-time member of parliament from Manikganj's Ghor-Dolatpur constituency, being the chief whip in the seventh and eighth parliament.

He has been a standing committee member of the BNP since 1985.

Born in Manikganj in 1933, Delwar Hossain graduated from the Dhaka University with a law degree in 1955. He started his political career through the Language Movement in 1952, contesting the 1954 elections from the Jukto Front. He joined

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Mixed reaction among public

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People of different walks of life yesterday expressed mixed reactions over the arrest of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her son Arafat Rahman Koko while many said they were not surprised at the government's move to arrest them.

Following the arrest, The Daily Star correspondents talked to over 100 people of different professions—lawyers, businessmen, NGO workers, students, rickshaw pullers, taxi drivers and other professionals.

Many preferred anonymity while some declined to make any comment regarding the arrest of the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



PHOTO: STAR
BNP chief Khaleda Zia's youngest son Arafat Rahman Koko being taken to a police vehicle as he fell ill in the CMM's Court yesterday.

Rights activists for fair trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human rights activists have demanded fairness and transparency in the trial processes of the detained chiefs of the two main political parties.

All are equal in the eyes of law and everyone has the right to get justice and protection, the rights activists said yesterday in the wake of Khaleda Zia's arrest, adding that an accused should not be stripped of human rights.

It is unfortunate that an elected prime minister has to face the consequences for her involvement in corruption, but the arrest of Khaleda Zia was not unexpected, former adviser to the caretaker

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

AL for justice to Khaleda

Terms fresh graft case against Hasina baseless

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) yesterday described the graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission against Sheikh Hasina on Sunday as "baseless" and called for justice to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

"She [Khaleda] was a prime minister of the country; so we think she has a right to justice as a citizen of the country," said the AL's acting President Zillur Rahman on the arrest of their arch political foe at a press briefing at his Gulshan residence.