Khaleda goes to Jail



The much-publicised arrest of Khaleda Zia came as no surprise to the public as talks of her arrest were in the air for quite a while. The arrest of her archrival Sheikh Hasina before her was to many, rather unfair since Khaleda headed the immediate past government, the rampant corruption of which was a far fresher memory than the previous AL government's. Not that the AL government was free from corruption as the cases against it's premier and past reports on her cabinet suggest. But the blatant corruption of Khaleda's deputies and her own nepotism was no secret to the public and definitely not to the media. The case against the former Prime Minister, her son and 11 others, was based on violation of tender conditions in appointing an indenting house for container handling. On her part there was the standard reply: the cases were false and baseless and part of a conspiracy to split her party. "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," said Khaleda in the metropolitan magistrate's court that rejected her bail petition and ordered sending her to jail.

While she claimed that this was a conspiracy to split the party that had landed her in jail, she herself seems to have aided the splitting by expelling the pro-reform leaders Secretary General of BNP Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Joint Secretary General Ashraf Hossain from the party altogether. Mannan Bhuiyan categorically rejected the decision and only time will tell what his political plans are.

Coming back to Khaleda Zia, it is sad that she continues to think people are deluded enough to believe that it is merely a conspiracy against her and her sons and their party that has brought her down from extreme power to the humiliation of being in prison. Under her premiership the worst kind of corruption took place with her sons completely controlling a major portion of business of the country. Her deputies and their sycophants have siphoned public money, encroached upon public land, filled the few remaining water bodies to build residential plots, blocked public roads for construction of their buildings, monopolised all crucial sectors, harboured terrorists and left a legacy of 'the most corrupt country' title. That is just a sliver of their bad deeds. There is so much more such as the politicisation of practically every institution - police, administration, even educational and cultural institutions were not spared, not to mention the overriding control of the electronic media. If Khaleda wants people to believe that all this happened without her knowledge, without her acquiescence it would be like erasing the memory techniques of aliens on humans in sci-fi films. Of course we remember and will hold her responsible since she held the highest power of the state and had every opportunity to put an end to the cancer that was eating up her government and country.

It is not a happy occasion to think that the two leaders we the people had placed so much trust on, enough to elect them to power, are now in jail. But justice takes its own course; as leaders they are responsible for the actions of those under their power as well as their own. For the public the only tangible feeling right now is the cruel realisation of being horribly let down by those who we thought would lead the way to our nation's progress.