

Hasina may fly

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contest in the next parliamentary election, and will return to the country before the poll scheduled for the third week of December this year, the party sources said.

Meanwhile, the government yesterday held a series of meetings with officials concerned discussing at length possible ways and means to allow the AL chief to go abroad 'for treatment'.

Sources at the home ministry and at the Chief Adviser's Office said the government however could not take a concrete decision regarding the matter till last night.

Since Hasina refused to be released on parole, a legal procedure to set free a prisoner on humanitarian grounds, the government was evaluating all other possible means before issuing the executive order.

A senior home ministry official said the government was assessing the situation very seriously as an executive order releasing Hasina, will also greatly affect the cases against other corruption suspects now in jails.

He said the context of the executive order will be very important, there is a fear that it might open up opportunities for other high-profile prisoners, now facing corruption and extortion charges, by setting a precedent.

Hasina was earlier exempted by courts from personally attending the hearings of the cases against her, but that does not mean she is being released on bail or on parole. She is facing a plethora of corruption and extortion cases.

"Since she is a charge sheeted accused there are many legal complexities in sending her abroad," said the home ministry official, adding that the crisis regarding the matter would not have arisen had she stayed at home.

The government will however impose some conditions restricting Hasina's movement after her release, like it did to AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, the sources said.

Earlier on March 3, the government released seriously ill Jalil on parole from detention for treatment abroad. Jalil is now undergoing treatment in Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore.

His condition is being reported to the Bangladesh mission every three days since his arrival there for treatment.

He was released on condition that he will not get involved in politics and business there, will not communicate with anybody or any organisation about any issue except issues related to his health, the government will be informed immediately after his treatment is completed, and that he will return home and not travel to any other country.

The first high level meeting of the government yesterday took place at the home ministry in the morning where Home Adviser Maj Gen (retd) MA Matin, Home Secretary Abdul Karim, and Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Zahir Hasan were present.

After the meeting, Zahir Hasan told reporters that they were yet to receive any order from the government about the detained AL president, while Matin declined to make any comment.

The home adviser and the home secretary then went to the CA's office where they had discussions on the issue with other advisers.

Matin sat for another meeting in his office in Bangladesh Secretariat in the afternoon, which was attended by the home secretary, Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad, and other senior home ministry officials.

"I am unable to say anything," he told reporters in his office last

Correction

In a news item headlined "Borrowing bothers economists" printed yesterday, a comment of Zaid Bakht should read as "the government will have to depend on huge bank borrowings to cover the budget deficit" instead of "the government will have to borrow between Tk 30,000 crore and Tk 35,000 crore from the banking sector to meet the deficit".

In the same story, picture of Quazi Shahabuddin, director general of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), was inadvertently printed with the caption "Asaduzzaman", research director of BIDS. We regret the errors.

ACC permitted

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allegations of misappropriation of funds from the orphanage trust against her.

Earlier on Monday, the same court allowed the ACC to interrogate the former prime minister's two sons Tarique Rahman and Koko at jailgate on the same charges.

The ACC filed the corruption case against Koko on April 23 this year, accusing that he made a fortune of over Tk 2.23 lakh through illegal means and concealed information about property worth over Tk 21.20 lakh.

Tarique, senior joint secretary general of the BNP, was arrested on March 7 last year after a general diary (GD) was filed against him under the Emergency Power Rules while Khaleda and Koko were detained on September 3 the same year after the filing of the Gato graft case.

ACC Assistant Director Shamsul Alam, also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet against them on Monday.

The ACC filed the case with Gulshan Police Station on December 6 last year.

Manju

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Faizal Alam filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station on July 25 last year accusing Manju of taking Tk 75 lakh in bribe from China National Overseas Engineering Corporation to get them work of constructing a road stretching 27 kilometres from Mollaghat to Town-Nopara in Bagerhat, public prosecutor Harun Ur Rashid said.

At that time, Manju was the communications minister, he added.

I hope that the political deadlock will be removed soon and an environment conducive to holding election will be created in the country and Awami League will take a decision to take part in the election," said AL Acting General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam yesterday while addressing an extended meeting of Awami Seschashebok League at the Diploma Engineers' Institution in the capital.

Syed Ashraful expressed hope that Sheikh Hasina will be released soon.

AL leaders Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan, Akhtaruzzaman, among others also addressed the meeting.

They also demanded unconditional release of Hasina so that the former premier may take part in the upcoming parliamentary poll.

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