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Hasina freed on parole

Flies to Canada this morning; decides at party meeting to join talks with govt

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

Amid a rapturous welcome from thousands of party activists, supporters and leaders, former premier also Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina was released yesterday from detention on parole for two months with permission to go abroad for better treatment.

Hasina is scheduled to fly off to London tomorrow at 8:00am on board a flight of British Airways en route to Boston, from where she will catch a flight of a US airliner to Canada. She will later return to the US for treatment.

The AL chief walked out of the sub-jail set up on the parliament building premises in the capital after 11 months of detention around 1:45pm, following an executive order of the military backed caretaker government.

Hundreds of party colleagues and supporters escorted her motorcade jogging all the way from the sub-jail to Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on road no 32 in Dhanmondi, which houses a memorial portrait of her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who is regarded as the father of the nation.

At 8:00pm Hasina presided over an AL central working committee meeting in her Sudha Sadan residence, which finally decided that the party will participate in the ongoing politico-electoral dialogues between the government and political parties, meeting sources said.

AL was scheduled to sit with the government for that long awaited dialogue under the leadership of its chief Sheikh Hasina last night. According to the latest report, advisers to the military backed caretaker government Hassan Arif, Hossain Zillur, Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, and Ghulam Quader entered Sudha Sadan at 10:20pm.

AL, one of the oldest and largest political parties in the country, had been demanding its chief's release

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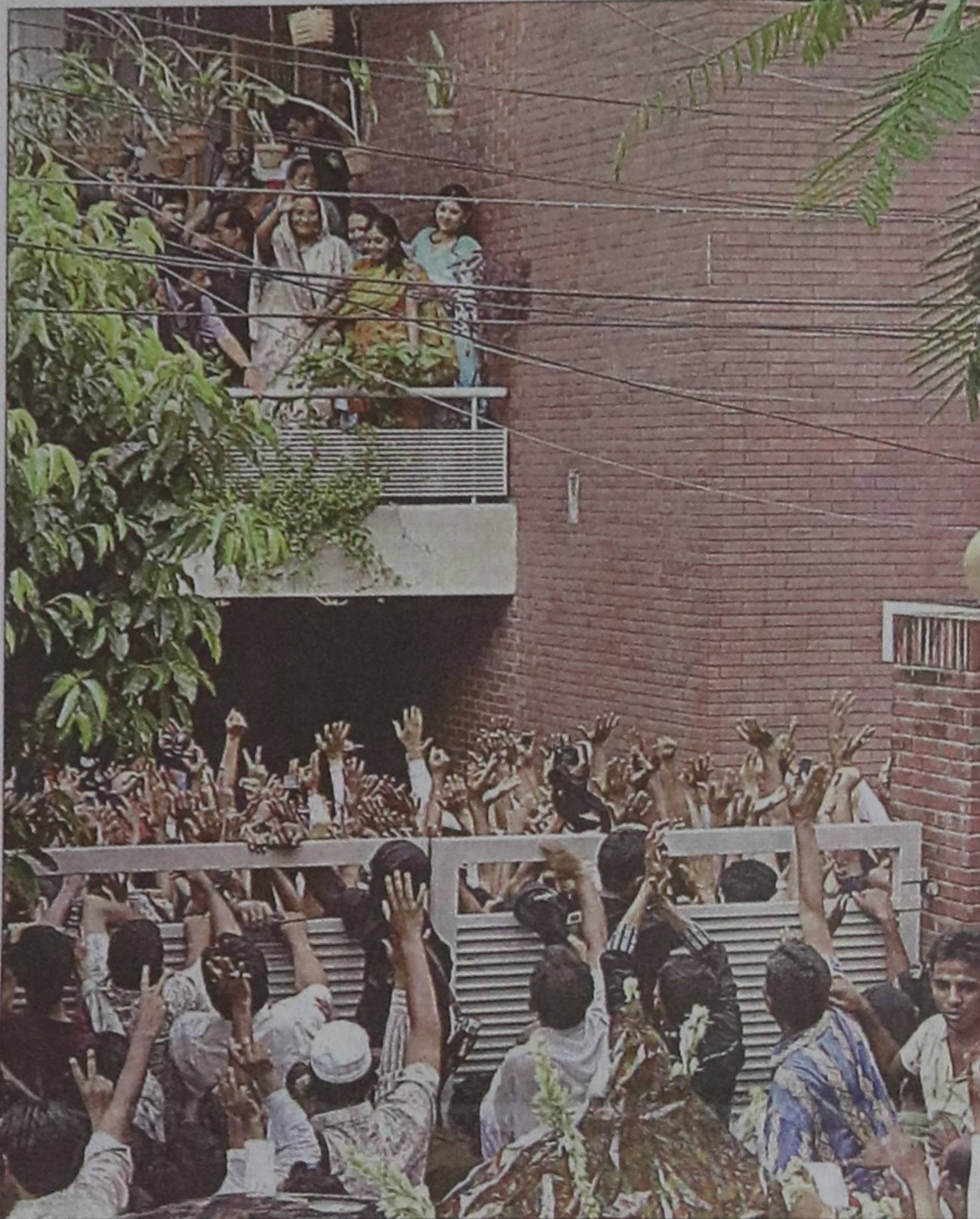


PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Released Awami League President Sheikh Hasina waved to her party supporters from the balcony of Sudha Sadan after she returned there from the sub-jail yesterday.

July 16 and since then

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday returned to Sudha Sadan upon her release, where she was arrested 11 months ago in an extortion case.

When she left the sub-jail on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises where she remained detained since her arrest on July 16 last year, Hasina had her names as accused in 14 criminal cases.

Businessman Azam J Chowdhury filed the case at Gulshan Police Station on June 13, 2007, accusing her of extorting, with others, Tk 2.96 crore from him for the installation work of a 210-megawatt power plant at Siddhirganj.

Hasina faced a steady string of case filings against her last year.

The Anti-Corruption

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Parole might be cancelled any time: govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government notification ordering temporary release of detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that the parole granted to the former prime minister might be cancelled any time without showing any reason.

The notification, signed by deputy secretary of the home ministry Md Mizanur Rahman, was issued at around noon following a meeting of IG Prisons Brig Gen Md Zakir Hasan with Home Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin at the Secretariat.

Following recommendations of a medical board, the

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GRENADATE ATTACK ON AL RALLY

Ex-BNP MP Salam, Huji leader Hannan charged

21ST AUGUST

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Charges were finally pressed yesterday in the sensational August 21 grenade attack case against 22 persons including top Harkat-ul-Jihad (Huji) leader Mufti Abdul Hannan and BNP leader and former deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu.

The development came after years of drama during the rule of coalition government led by BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami over



Abdus Salam Pintu Mufti Abdul Hannan

investigation into the grisly attacks on an Awami League (AL) rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in 2004.

The top brass of the then government had even said that the attack was not meant to kill AL chief Sheikh Hasina.

Investigators of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) have, however, found now that the only target of the attack was to assassinate Hasina as the arrested Huji leaders confessed to trying to kill her because she is "harmful" for Islam.

Although Hasina escaped with injuries, the attack left 24 AL leaders, including Ivy Rahman, and workers killed and 300 others injured, many of them maimed forever.

An investigation was conducted under the direct supervision of Lutfozzaman Babar, state

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Govt will prioritise decision on Tarique, Koko's release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is giving high priority to decisions regarding the possible release of former premier Khaleda Zia's detained sons, Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko, on 'humanitarian' grounds.

"We are placing highest priority to the humanitarian consideration and legal processes attached to these cases," Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said at a press briefing yesterday.

"We want to gain the trust of all parties to take this process for-

ward," he added.

"We are fully prepared to discuss Khaleda and her sons' demands," Zillur said after a dialogue with Unity for Political Reforms (UPR) at the Chief Adviser's Office.

UPR, led by its convener ASM Rab, at the talks proposed a referendum to set up a Constitution Review Commission to make changes to the 1972 constitution to strengthen democratic mechanisms in the country.

"We have not held these talks with the government for the sake of

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Govt pledges Khaleda's proper treatment at home or abroad

UNB, Dhaka

The government will take appropriate steps for the proper treatment of detained former premier Khaleda Zia "at home or abroad" through a coordinated legal process, a government announcement said yesterday.

The assurance came shortly after another detained ex-premier, Sheikh Hasina, was released by an executive order for an interim period for a trip abroad on medical grounds.

Sheikh Hasina's family appealed for permission to take her abroad for treatment in March.

On June 5, the government

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LOCAL GOVT

EC asks govt to create atmosphere for polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday asked the government to create a congenial atmosphere for holding local government elections from July amid the state of emergency.

Prior to leave for a meeting with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said EC does not want to embarrass the government by asking it to lift the state of emergency.

"We want a congenial atmo-

sphere for holding the polls. It depends on the government whether it will lift or relax the restrictions to ensure the atmosphere. But we'll not remain silent if the congenial atmosphere is not created," CEC Huda told a press briefing on the occasion of unveiling a report on dialogues between EC and political parties.

The EC plans to announce the schedules by June 20 for polls to city corporations of Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet and nine municipalities in July.

Elections to Dhaka City

Corporation and some other municipalities are likely to be held in between August and September, while polls to upazila parshads may start early October before the national polls in December.

"We've informed the chief adviser that we want to hold polls to four city corporations and nine municipalities in July. So we want that the government allow all poll related activities by either lifting or relaxing the restrictions on political activities in these areas," Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul

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Release viewed as way to dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The release of Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina is one of the major steps taken by this government to prepare the stage for an election acceptable to the nation, said highly placed sources in the government.

This also reinforces the government's commitment to hold the national election in December this year, the sources noted.

The former prime minister has been released considering a number of factors including the need for sending her to US for treatment of fear.

But more importantly, the government was unable to overcome the stagnation over election

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Sheikh Hasina cold-shoulders some leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) president Sheikh Hasina was yesterday seen to give the cold shoulder to some of her party leaders who had opposed her in different forums inside the party.

The former prime minister exchanged pleasantries with other party leaders as she entered her Sudha Sadan residence at around 2:30pm after being released from a sub-jail.

On entering the Sudha Sadan residence, the former premier embraced Motia Chowdhury, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and was seen to exchange words with acting general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam and some others.

Hasina was also seen talking to

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Khaleda happy

BNP now hopes for her unconditional release; other parties express mixed reaction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed satisfaction over the release of her once arch rival Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina, her lawyers say.

She expressed happiness when the lawyers met her at the makeshift jail during an interrogation by the officials of the Taskforce and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The lawyers add she was, however, surprised at her sons -- Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko -- not being allowed to receive treatment abroad.

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MiG-29 CASE

Mustafiz gets permanent bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday granted permanent bail to ailing former army chief Gen (ret'd) Mustafizur Rahman in the MiG-29 warplane purchase case.

Judge Golam Mortuza Majumder of the Special Judge's Court, Dhaka Division set up on the premises of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban passed the order following a bail prayer by the defence.

The court also deferred the hearing of charge framing in the case till June 19.

Other accused in the case are former premier and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, former air force chief Jamaluddin Ahmed, former defence secretary Syed Yusuf Hossain, Air Commodore (ret'd) Mirza Akhter Maruf, former joint secretary Mohammad Hossain Serniabat and Unique Group Managing Director Nur Ali.

Hasina was not produced before the court yesterday -- second time since she was allowed an exemption from appearing before the court in person due to her health conditions.

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Bata brings

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Basundhara City 1218 New Elephant Road

has assessed CREDIT RATING of

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A+

by Credit Rating Information and Services Limited (CRISL)

CREDIT RATING REPORT

	Long Term	Short Term
Entity Rating - 2007	A+	ST-3
Entity Rating - 2004	BBB+	ST-3
Date of Rating	04 June 2008	
Outlook	Positive	

A+ Rating Means

- Bank/FIs rated in this category are adjudged to offer adequate safety for timely repayment of financial obligations.
- This level of rating indicates a corporate entity with an adequate credit profile.
- Risk factors are more variable and greater in periods of economic stress than those rated in the higher categories.

ST-3 Good Grade

Good certainty of timely payment. Liquidity factors and company fundamentals are sound. Although ongoing funding needs may enlarge total financing requirements, access to capital markets is good. Risk factors are small.

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