

Hasina has to go through legal process to get freed

UNB, Dhaka

Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina, now free on executive orders, needs to go through legal process to earn her release.

He said this as reporters asked him how the AL chief could hold a meeting proposed by the government between her and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia when her parole status does not permit this.

"We're sure they're moving this way... we're hopeful about solving the problem," he said.

Hasina was freed on June 11 to facilitate her treatment abroad.

"We're hopeful that a new healthy culture would replace the mudslinging among the political parties," Zillur told the reporters at the communications ministry.

He reiterated that the government is working to hold the general election according to the roadmap announced by the Election

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Sea border talks start today after 28 years

Energy-rich Bay of Bengal makes Dhaka-Delhi discussion crucial

STAR REPORT

In a context of higher prospect of finding oil and gas in the Bay of Bengal, expert delegations of Bangladesh and India begin a three-day meeting in the city today to settle unresolved maritime boundary issues.

Earlier, Bangladesh and India sat on the same issue in 1982 only to have some primary talks.

Bangladesh is sharing the Bay with India and Myanmar but has not demarcated the sea territory with them which is creating disputes mainly over offshore search of oil and gas.

None of the countries has yet to claim about their marine boundaries to the United Nations.

Back in June, New Delhi and

Yangon strongly opposed Bangladesh's offshore block bidding for exploration of oil and gas.

Previously, Dhaka raised objections when India and Myanmar floated international tender for searching offshore in 2006 accusing them of overlapping Bangladesh territory but yet to get any reply from India.

Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury said in a press release yesterday, "The technical level talks are taking place after 28 years. We believe today both the governments are now deeply committed to strengthening their relations through resolutions of all outstanding issues."

A seven-member team led by Indian Rear Admiral BR Rao and the Bangladesh delegation led by

Additional Foreign Secretary MAK Mahmud will discuss different technical issues until September 17.

The Bay of Bengal has become very important, especially after India's discovery of 100 trillion cubic feet gas in 2005-06 and Myanmar's discovery of 7 tcf gas at the same time. Besides, India also discovered oil.

The Bay in Bangladesh's territory that has not been tapped at all promises huge natural resources, experts say. The Daily Star reported in 2006 discovery of sedimentary rock oilite that promises of oil and gas there.

"Without a win-win negotiation, Bangladesh might not be able to tap its own resources in future

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Hasina seeks HC stay on 2 cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday filed petitions with the High Court (HC) for staying proceedings against her in the Tk 3 crore extortion case and the MiG-29 war planes purchase corruption case.

She also sought bail in the extortion case filed by businessman Azam Chowdhury.

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Police raid 3 DU dorms

DU CORRESPONDENT

Police late last night raided three dormitories of Dhaka University (DU) to drive away outsiders and criminals from campus.

However, they failed to seize anything illegal or arrest anyone raiding Shahidullah Hall, Fazlul Haque Hall and Amar Ekushey Hall.

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'Grateful' Khaleda says no to lifelong leadership

BNP standing committee members apparently divided over Saturday decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday humbly refused the party's standing committee offer for leading the party for life.

"As a democratic party, BNP always runs by its constitution and there is no provision in the party constitution to lead the party or hold any party post for life," Khaleda said in a statement yesterday.

"As a person with some knowledge of history and faith in democratic norms and values I do not think the party leadership is a permanent post," said the statement signed by Maruf Kamal Khan, former deputy secretary to Khaleda when she was prime minister.

Khaleda's refusal came after the decision of the BNP Standing Committee irked a cross section of

people including the government policymakers and leaders of other political parties.

The proposal and the briefing by Standing Committee member Chowdhury Tanbir Ahmed Siddiky after the committee's meeting on Saturday attracted widespread criticism and created controversy among the rank and file of the party.

The former prime minister, however, expressed gratitude to the standing committee members for the proposal and said the meeting decision was the outcome of emotion felt by party leaders at a certain special moment.

She said party leadership, including the chairperson, has always been elected democratically. "I hope BNP's loyalty to democratic values and spirit will always prevail," she said.

At a meeting on Saturday the BNP Standing Committee, the party's highest policymaking forum, decided that Khaleda would lead the party for life.

At a press conference after the meeting, Tanbir claimed that the meeting unanimously approved the proposal for Khaleda's lifetime leadership.

Sticking to his earlier position, Tanbir said also yesterday that Khaleda would lead the BNP for life on being elected in the council. "If needed, we will amend the party constitution to see her at the party helm for lifetime," he told reporters at his office in the city's Dilkusha.

He, however, said they would not need to do that because Khaleda would be elected party chairperson in every council of the party.

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Khaleda, Hasina should work together for democracy Says Moriarty

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

US Ambassador to Dhaka James Moriarty yesterday said the US hopes a free, fair and credible election is held by December with participation of all major political parties according to the EC's roadmap.

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UPAZILA, JS POLLS Schedule not before September 19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) is unlikely to announce its decisions on upazila and parliamentary polls before Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, now on a state visit to China, returns on September 19.

It wants to make the crucial announcements after consulting

the caretaker government chief. In the meantime, it will try to hold talks with the BNP, said EC sources.

As per his statement last week, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda was supposed to come up with a decision on upazila polls and a specific date for the national election yesterday.

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News analysis

BNP constitution ignored

SHAKHAWAT LITON

BNP national standing committee (NSC) clearly ignored the party's constitution when on Saturday through an unprecedented resolution it empowered Khaleda Zia to lead the organisation for life.

Although in the face of an avalanche of scathing criticism from all sections of the society, Khaleda yesterday 'humbly declined' to accept the NSC generosity, she had been the one to preside over the

controversial resolution.

An NSC member told The Daily Star last night, on condition of anonymity, that the committee in its next meeting, which is supposed to be held at least once a month according to the party constitution, will either amend or scrap Saturday's much-boiled resolution.

According to the party's constitution, the chief of BNP must be elected through direct votes of the delegates of a national council for two years on the basis of a simple

majority, and at the end of the tenure she or he will be eligible for re-election.

Saturday's resolution also ignored the amended Representation of People's Order (RPO) which says political parties willing to be registered with the Election Commission (EC) for contesting in parliamentary polls must promise to run their activities according to their constitutions.

Analysing the resolution in light

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PHOTO: STAR

Poorly parked cars of Eid shoppers occupy a large section of Mirpur Road in front of the New Market in the city yesterday.

US hurricane leaves 5,000 Bangladeshis homeless

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 5,000 Bangladeshi expatriates have become homeless in the Hurricane Ike-hit areas in Texas of the United States, reported News World, a US based news agency.

The hurricane hit the coast of Texas on Saturday with wind speed up to 100 miles per hour and an 11 feet-high tidal surge causing widespread damage to the city of Galveston.

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Muggers shoot ACI staff, snatch Tk 46 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed muggers took around Tk 46 lakh in cash and pay orders and cheques worth about Tk 50 lakh at the city's Gulshan Link Road. They also shot an assistant manager of ACI Group during the mugging and escaped from locals chasing them by spreading money on the street.

ACI officials said seven to eight muggers riding three motorbikes halted the minivan that was

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JORDAN Asian workers cease strike after deal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Asian workers, including 300 Bangladeshis, who had been on strike for 10 days protesting irregular payments and cutbacks in wages at a Jordanian garment factory, have gone back to work after signing of a tripartite agreement.

As per the agreement between the Jordanian labour ministry, MRAI Apparels and Asian workers,

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Several suspects caught after Delhi blasts

AP, New Delhi

Police commandos carried out raids across New Delhi, detaining several people believed to be connected to a series of blasts that ripped through the Indian capital, killing at least 20 people and wounding about 100 others, police said yesterday. A coordinated series of at least five explosions struck a park and crowded shopping areas in New Delhi just after sundown Saturday, a prime time for weekend shoppers in this crowded, chaotic city.

An Islamic militant group claimed responsibility for the bombings in an e-mail sent to several Indian news organisations.

By Sunday morning the death toll had risen to 20, said city police spokesman Rajan Bhagat. At least 98 others were wounded, he said.

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Rebellion in Tiger camp

11 national cricketers set to join Indian rebel league

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket's struggle is all set to mount after 11 national players including former captain Habibul Bashar have retired from all forms of cricket, what is believed, participate in the rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL).

Aftab Ahmed, Shahriar Nafees, Forhad Reza, Dhiman Ghosh and Mosharraf Hossain are the five others who called

SPORTS REPORTER



Shahriar Nafees Aftab Ahmed

time on their burgeoning careers after reported to have been offered a major deal by the breakaway event organisers.

The exodus of these players, some of whom have international experience, will have far-reaching impact the country's game. With the team already shorn of experience and facing tough times since last year's World Cup, it is difficult to see how this gap would be filled.

They are expected to pocket around 200,000 dollars each after signing the three-year contracts, several times more

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Amir Khasru gets bail HC stays graft case proceedings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) granted three months' anticipatory bail to former commerce minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury in two corruption cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday.

The vacation bench of justices Mirza Hussain Haider and Mamnoon Rahman also stayed the case proceedings against him for

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