

It's a blueprint
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committee meeting last night.

"This [scrapping caretaker system] is nothing but a betrayal with the nation. The decision will heighten constitutional crisis, political tension and uncertainty and will put the country into a political conflict," the statement added.

He held a party Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office in the capital, the meeting also decided to announce a series of agitation programmes including hartal. Details will be finalised in consultation with like-minded parties, especially with its allies, party sources said.

BNP and its key ally Jamaat-e-Islami are scheduled to hold separate press conferences at their offices in the city at 3:00pm today to declare protest programmes.

Reading out the statement at a press briefing after the meeting, standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan said the government wants to change the constitution for grabbing the power again through vote rigging, knowing it won't win an election held in a democratic way.

Chaired by Khaleda Zia, the meeting was also attended by committee member Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

After the standing committee meeting, Khaleda also sat with the leaders of Jamaat, Islami Oikyo Jote and Bangladesh Jatiya Party.

Referring to the Supreme Court verdict that declared illegal the 13th amendment of the constitution, which introduced the caretaker government in 1996, Nazrul Islam said implementing the judgment is not obligatory for parliament.

"The apex court has been used to accomplish the political agenda of the government," he said.

Urea price

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held at the Gano Bhaban, said an official of the agriculture ministry.

Six months ago, urea was selling at Tk 20,000 to Tk 22,000 per tonne in the international market, but the price has now reached around Tk 35,000 per tonne, he said.

The government took the decision as to maintain the price at Tk 12 per kg urea requires a huge subsidy, he added.

2 Rab men

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Advocate Mohammad Khabir Uddin filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against the accused on charges of kidnapping his son Towfiq Ahmed alias Hassan, a student of Cambrian College, on May 13.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate MA Salam recorded statement of complainant and ordered a judicial inquiry into the matter.

In his complaint, Khabir Uddin alleged that his son was arrested on February 21 from in front of his Ramna residence for his alleged links with militants and later he was granted bail from the High Court on May 4.

Following the HC bail order, Towfiq was released from the Dhaka Central Jail on May 13 and the complainant was present there to receive his son. But Towfiq was picked up by a group of plain-clothes law enforcers from in front of jail gate soon after his release. Since then complainant's son has been missing.

Later the complainant came to know from different sources including policemen posted at the jail gate that his son was picked up by members of Rab aided by jail authorities, Khabir added.

The complainant appealed to the court for taking into cognisance the complaint against the accused responsible for kidnapping and hiding his son and give exemplary punishment to the kidnappers.

Khabir also prayed for rescuing his son.

Statements of the advi-

Putin claims Strauss-Kahn is the victim of conspiracy

THE DAILY MAIL ONLINE

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has claimed that Dominique Strauss-Kahn may be the victim of a shadowy conspiracy to force him out of his job as head of the International Monetary Fund.

He was arrested as he tried to catch a plane back to Paris hours after the alleged attack and is under house arrest at a luxury (pounds) 30,000-a-month Manhattan townhouse awaiting his trial.

Putin's unexpected support for the embattled former IMF head is likely to be seized upon by his critics who have accused him of being a male chauvinist.

He sparked uproar in 2006 when he was overheard joking about rape allegations against then Israeli President Moshe Katsav. Mr Putin was quoted as saying: "What a mighty man he turns out to be! He raped 10 women - I would never have expected this from him."

He suggested that a charged the French presidential candidate sexually assaulted and tried to rape a 32-year-old chambermaid may have been trumped up by the US authorities.

Vladimir Putin said: "It's hard for me to evaluate the hidden political motives but I cannot believe that it looks the way it was initially introduced. It doesn't sit right in my head."

American prosecutors put the claims down to mischief making by the Russian premier. Days before his May 14 arrest for the alleged attack at a Times Square, New York, hotel, Strauss-Kahn reportedly told friends that Mr Putin was seeking to oust him from the IMF.

He said the Russians, notably Putin, allied themselves with France to try to have him fired from the IMF, to stop him running for president, claimed French socialist politician Claude Bartolone, according to the EU Times.

Supporters of the beleaguered moneyman are adamant that he is being framed as part of a sinister international conspiracy to sabotage his bid for the French presidency.

Strauss-Kahn, who was

freed on bail after six days in custody, is facing charges of rape, sexual abuse and false imprisonment.

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"We will look into the matter," he said.

Concern over

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On May 20, Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique defended the Rapid Action Battalion by terming both Limon and his father criminals.

Three days later, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said it is not right expecting to get all the characteristics of the battalion altered overnight.

Comments by the defence adviser and the foreign minister prove that criminal tendency prevails inside Rab," said the statement signed by former caretaker government advisers M Hafizuddin Khan, Akbar Ali Khan and Rasheda K Chowdhury, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman and rights activist Khushi Kabir.

The March 23 shootout is a law and order issue. It has nothing to do with the defence, said the statement.

Commenting on the issue outside his jurisdiction, the defence adviser has encouraged Rab to carry out its questionable activities threatening democratic values.

On May 22, Home Minister Sahara Khatun backed the defence adviser by saying anybody can make comment on a case under trial and his comment is the government version.

HT Imam, the prime minister's public administration adviser, has echoed her words. "We own the statement the adviser had given earlier," Imam said.

The five dignitaries also said anything relating Limon is expected to be made public only through the home ministry.

They blasted the government representatives for discussing in public the matter still under trial and investigation.

Statements of the advi-

JP sees

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BNP does not participate in the polls without a caretaker government. The country cannot remain captive to the two big parties," he said at a party programme at the Institute of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh in the capital yesterday.

"Time is ripe for the rise of a third political force and Jatiya Party is that force. We don't want to assist anybody to go to power. We ourselves want to go to power," he said.

Ershad, a former military dictator who was ousted through a popular uprising led by AL and BNP in the 90s, hailed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for taking stance against the interim government system.

BNP maintains it will not go to polls if it is not held under such a government, which was introduced through the 13th amendment of the constitution in 1996.

"We're ready for election. Inshallah [God willing] we'll come to power again," said Ershad.

Last month, the Supreme Court declared his nine-year regime since 1981 illegal.

He also criticised the government for failing to control prices of essentials and the slide in law and order, and not taking steps against the share market manipulators.

Sayedee

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The prosecution opposed the bail petition saying he has been given proper treatment at the hospital.

A three-member tribunal, headed by Justice Md Nizamul Huq, is holding trial of the war crimes cases.

Md Helaluddin, a member of the tribunal's investigation agency, submitted the probe report and other related documents including compact disks and books on the allegations against Sayeedee to Chief Prosecutor Ghulam Areeff Tipoo at his office in Old High Court building.

Prosecutor Syed Haider Ali informed the tribunal they have to scrutinise the 15-part final report and other documents for pressing a formal charge against Sayeedee.

Sayedee was produced before the tribunal yesterday from Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital. Later he was sent back to the hospital around 10:45am as his health deteriorated.

The tribunal continued the hearing in his absence.

Barrister Tanvir Ahmed Al Amin appeared for Sayeedee.

The tribunal is likely to hear a remand petition today. Prosecutors filed the petition on Monday to allow the investigators quizzing Jamat-e-Islami leaders Motiur Rahman Nizami, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid, Muhammed Kamaluzzaman and Abdul Quader Molla, may be produced before the tribunal today in connection with charges of crimes against humanity, as per an earlier order of the tribunal in April.

The conflicting comments expose his weakness in discharging duties as the battalion chief and lack of transparency in the force, it added.

Only the court can decide whether anyone is criminal or not. Rab cannot just shoot someone by calling him or her a criminal, the statement read.

It also criticised the Rab probe team for questioning Limon at a hospital hiding identity.

The five prominent citizens recommended engaging National Human Rights Commission in the investigation to ensure impartiality.

It is inevitable that Rab requires radical reform against the backdrop of allegations of human rights violation despite the fact that the force has remarkable achievements, it said.

The statement also presented statistics from Ain o Salish Kendra, a human rights body, that 1,149 people were killed from 2004 to 2011 in the name of fire.

Meanwhile, Ibrahim's counsel Barrister Shaikh Md Zakir Hossain said he will decide on moving any appeal with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court after further discussions with his client.

Ershad, a former military

AL forgets Kibria

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the case tried to submit supplementary charge sheet on May 25 but he refrained from doing so in the face of strong criticism from her.

Asma said, "Awami League did not pay due respect on his [Kibria's] death anniversaries since it assumed power in 2009. Sometimes I say to myself: 'Oh Kibria, is this the party for which you sacrificed your life!'"

Talking to The Daily Star at her Gulshan residence, where she is now leading a solitary life, Asma shared her bitter experience with issues including the charge sheet of Kibria killing case and the negligence of the government and the party in this regard.

"I also sought to talk to Prime Minister and AL chief Sheikh Hasina for at least five minutes about the charge sheet of the case, but she said she did not have time for that," said Asma in helpless tears.

She said without identifying the real culprits the investigation officer (IO) of

the case tried to submit

Mujibnagar Government of the independent and sovereign Bangladesh and worked with great zeal and dedication to drum up support for Bangladesh in the US."

"His [Kibria's] name was not on the list of the defected officials and I cannot believe that this is happening when AL is in power," she said.

Kibria, also freedom fighter, chose the present foreign ministry building, but it was very unfortunate that the ministry forgot him, Asma told The Daily Star.

The Dhaka City Corporation also turned down Asma's request to name a road after Kibria.

"The mayor said he [Kibria] was not such a dignitary to name a city road after," Asma said.

"We saw a beam of hope when AL assumed power. But now I can clearly say that we the family of Kibria are deeply shocked and disappointed at the way the AL government is treating us and my departed husband," she said.

BNP claims

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founded, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was told during her just-concluded US visit.

This was claimed yesterday by the opposition leader's press secretary Maruf Kamal Khan Sohel at a press conference at Khaleda's Gulshan office in the capital.

The BNP chief returned home on Sunday after a 15-day tour of the UK and the US.

"UK and US officials told the chairperson that Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has been denied justice, and he was a victim of government vengeance," Maruf said.

"They also said the government has tarnished the country's image abroad by dishonouring him."

Maruf said Joseph Crowley, co-chairman of Bangladesh Caucus, already told the media about the US decision regarding the MDA contribution.

Maruf termed Khaleda's tour "hundred percent successful" and said it has brought honour for her as well as for the country. "No other leader of the opposition of our country before her got so much importance as she received," he added.

Other members of her entourage Shamser Mobin Chowdhury, Sabiuddin Ahmed, Abdul Awal Mintoo, Shafiqul Rehman and Musfiqul Fazal Ansari were present at the press conference.

Denying the allegation of extortion centring on the visit, Shamser Mobin Chowdhury, also vice chairman of the party, said, "Expatriate Bangladeshis provided the expenses of the tour. So, they can't tell you about this issue."

About the failure to organise a meeting with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, he said there were speculations about such a meeting, and they did not make any formal announcement in this regard before the trip. "No leader of the opposition in Bangladesh could meet the US secretary of state in the past," he said.

Shamser Mobin also said that during her meeting with US officials, the leader of the opposition emphasised direct contact between Washington and Dhaka.

Replies to a query regarding senior party leaders' absence from the chairperson's entourage, Maruf said it is not true since two advisers to the chairperson and a vice chairman accompanied her during the visit.

Hasina alleged that the opposition leader is attempting to portray a negative image of the country to discourage foreign investment, which grew significantly in the last two years of AL rule.

Talking about price hike of essentials, the PM said price hike and inflation is less than that of 2008. "People's buying capacity has increased; salaries and wages too," she said.

She said there is sufficient food stock now alongside the bumper production of Boro rice.

Businesses wary

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Supreme Court declared the system unconstitutional and void early last month. The court, however, said that the system may be in place for holding two more elections for the sake of "safety of the state and its people".

She said parliament has no authority to keep the caretaker system in the constitution after it was declared illegal by the SC.

On January 11, 2007, (popularly known as 1/11) an interim administration, backed by the army, assumed power after a deep political crisis.