Prince is Back!

SHAKHAWAT LITON

On May 26, the day the Anti-Corruption Commission was allowed by a Dhaka court to seek assistance from Interpol in arresting and bringing back BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman home to put him in the dock for money laundering, a member of the national standing committee of BNP told this correspondent that his party would not remain silent if the government tried to "taint image" of Tarique. In his view, Tarique is BNP's asset and country's future prime minister. And therefore, the BNP will not hesitate to wage street agitations to resist the government any attempt to harass their leader Tarique Rahman, elder son of BNP chief Khaleda Zia and later President Ziaur Rahman.

What the BNP leader said in the afternoon of May 26 came true when district units of BNP started announcing to enforce hartal next day, Monday, in some districts. And some more district units of BNP on Monday announced that they would also enforce shutdown in their districts on Tuesday. Some BNP men particularly those belonging to party's youth fronts vandalized and torched some vehicles in different parts of the capital and Narayanganj to register their protests against the anti-graft body's move against Tarique, who has been staying in London since September 2008.

BNP chief Khaleda Zia did not wait to observe the situation. She convened an urgent meeting of her BNP led-18 party alliance on Monday night and announced to enforce a countrywide shutdown on Wednesday. And more agitation programmes will be enforced in the coming days.



Tarique Rahman PHOTO: STAR FILE

The ACC had filed the case against Tarique and his business partner Giasuddin Al Mamun in October 2009, in connection with a siphoning out of Tk 20.41 crore to Singapore between 2003 and 2007.

Tarique was not a topic for discussion in the political arena for the last five years. He also did not take part in any political programme and did not make any political statements in the last five years. But the things ha taken a new turn when he, on May 20 attended a meeting with BNP's UK chapters' leaders and called upon all non-resident Bangladeshis to play their roles from their respective positions to compel the government to restore the non-partisan election time government.

His remarks at the meeting irked the government and the ruling Awami League-led alliance leaders. They criticised Tarique, accused him of hatching a conspiracy against the government, and demanded that he be brought back home and tried. The prevailing situation centring around Tarique also worried the opposition BNP. Senior party figures alleged that the government was planning to harass Tarique again.

"The court did exactly what the state minister for law on Friday said about Tarique Rahman," claimed BNP spokesperson Shamsuzzaman