accused shall be asked whether he or she pleads guilty or not. Talking to journalists at the court premises, Khaleda also questioned how the judge could frame charges without asking her whether she pleaded guilty or not.

Framing charge against Khaleda, also a former prime minister, has come as the latest blow to the crisis riddled BNP. It will not be easy for the party to take to the street to wage agitation against the government though the BNP chief had earlier announced that her party would begin movement after the upazila parishad elections in March. Better performances by BNP backed chairmen candidates in the first two phases of the ongoing upazila parishad polls seemed to have boosted the morale of the BNP high command.

Some senior BNP leaders including its acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir were sent to jail denying bails in some cases. It has sent a strong message to many BNP leaders that taking stance against the government will bring unpleasant consequences for them.

Khaleda Zia, who had earlier announced to reshuffle her party units to revamp the organisation, is still facing a huge challenge to reorganise the Dhaka city unit of the BNP. It has been reported that some BNP leaders have already declined to take the responsibility of leading the city unit of the party considering the enormous responsibility and the consequences. Success and failure of any anti-government agitation depends on the situation in the capital. The BNP-led alliance's street agitation demanding for installation of a non-partisan caretaker government could not mount pressure on the government as the alliance failed to take control of the capital.

All the prevailing signs tell us that the BNP may not be able to wage any strong street agitation in the near future. Such a situation is dangerous for the country as it makes the government even more intolerant and contributes to the rise of an authoritarian regime. The AL has already demonstrated signs of intolerance. The Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has recently been made subject to the growing intolerance of the ruling AL and Jatiya Party MPs. They made sweeping comments against the TIB, accusing it of hatching a conspiracy against the government.



PHOTO: STAR FILE

In a very interesting strategy, Jatiya Party MPs on March 23 staged a walk out in protest of the price hike of power. They staged the protest around two weeks after the price hike. When they were walking out Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and many of her party MPs were laughing. The JP MPs returned to the House proceedings after nine minutes. On return, the main opposition chief whip Tajul Islam Chowdhury was seen talking to the prime minister in the House. Both of them were seen smiling.

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