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# Former Maldives president Nasheed jailed for 13 years

AFP, Malé

Former Maldives president and opposition leader Mohamed Nasheed has been sentenced to 13 years in prison on a terrorism charge after what rights groups said was a "flawed" trial, sparking international concern over the honeymoon islands.

Nasheed called on his supporters to take to the streets to protest against the sentence after a trial his party said was "blatantly politicised".

"I appeal to all of you today to stay courageous and strong, to confront the dictatorial power of this regime," his office quoted him as saying.

Nasheed, the Indian Ocean archipelago's first democratically elected leader, was convicted late on Friday under the country's tough anti-terror law of ordering the arrest of a chief judge when he was president in January 2012.

The 47-year-old was then taken to Dhoonidhoo prison on an island near the capital Male.

Nasheed's lawyers resigned before the end of his brief trial, saying it was biased and aimed at destroying his political career.

It came amid growing opposition to the government of President Abdulla Yameen and will effectively prevent Nasheed from running for president at the 2018 elections.

The opposition has held regular night-time rallies over the past year to protest what they call growing authoritarianism, which has damaged the atoll nation's image as a tourist paradise.

Local media reported that police clashed with Nasheed's supporters across Male after the verdict.

Nasheed's Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) said the verdict dealt a blow to the young democracy seven years after it embraced multi-party elections following three decades of rule by former strongman

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Stand-in Zimbabwe captain Brendan Taylor made it a memorable last assignment for his country at the Eden Park in Auckland yesterday. The 29-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman, who has decided to move to England after the World Cup, leaves the field after scoring an imperious 138 against India.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## KHALEDA'S BRIEFING Statement written on Tarique's advice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

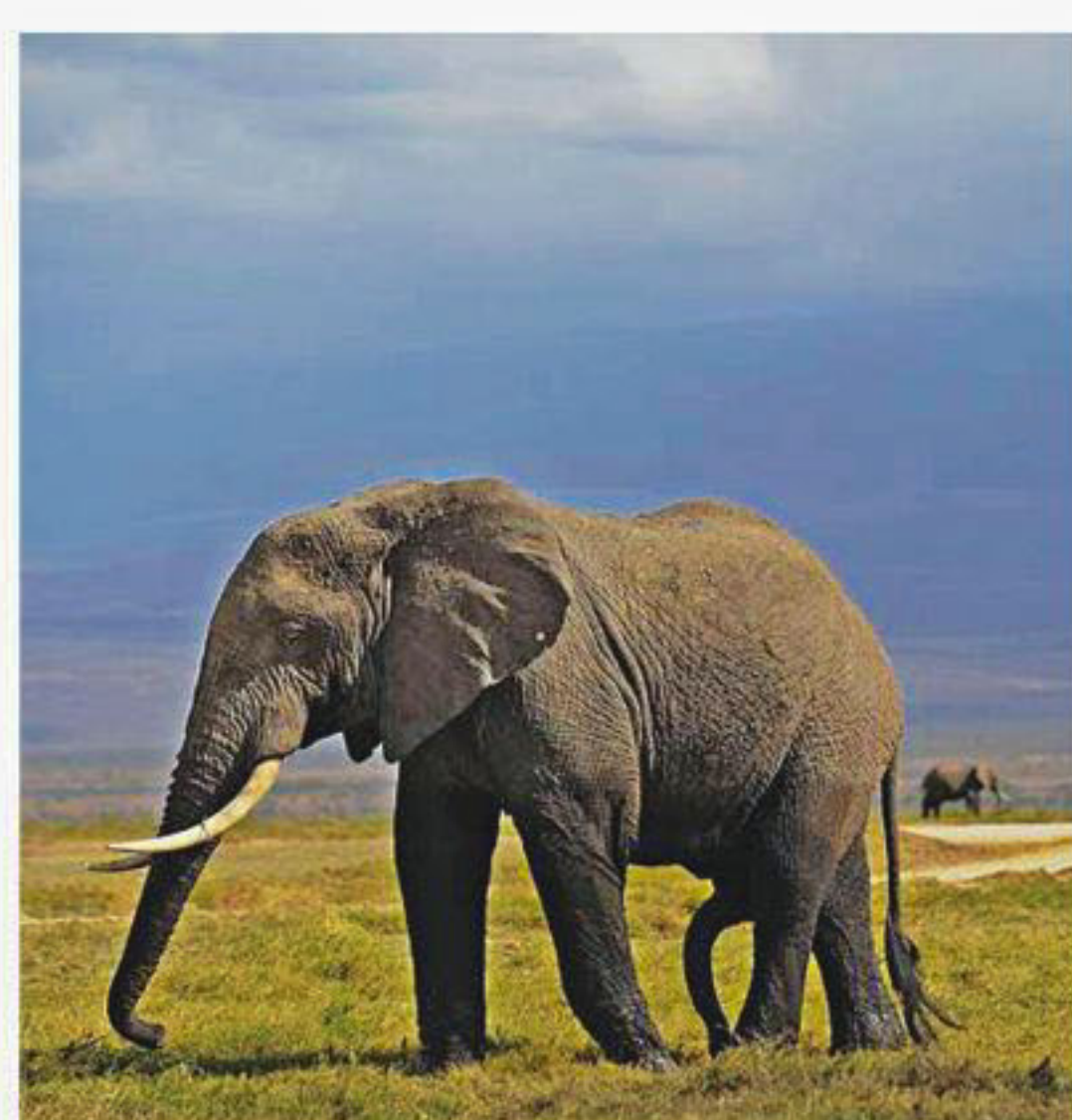
Most members of the BNP's highest policy-making forum were in dark about party chief Khaleda Zia's media appearance on Friday and were not consulted with about the statement she made before the press.

Party insiders said the statement was written on the instructions of BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman, who has been living in the UK since September 2008, and only two people were involved in drafting it.

In fact, the members of the BNP's national standing committee were taken by surprise when they learnt about the press conference only the night before, and that too through the media.

This was a crucial event considering the current political situation in which almost all the sectors of the country are rattled by the ongoing blockade and hartals enforced by the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2



## Elephants sniff out land mines!

THE INDEPENDENT

Elephants have become the latest creatures to join humans in the battle to detect explosives and potentially save lives.

Researchers in South Africa have proven that the enormous creatures can sniff out explosives using their keen sense of smell.

It was first noticed that elephants can detect explosives in Angola, when the creatures returned following a war in 2002, which left the ground littered with mines.

Researchers wanted to uncover whether elephants could smell the explosives, or whether they avoided certain areas because elephants had died

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# The Final Countdown

AFP, Sydney

The World Cup enters its final weekend of group games with former champions Pakistan and West Indies facing either early flights home or a last-gasp places in the quarterfinals.

Six of the eight quarterfinalists are already known -- New Zealand, Australia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh from Pool A and defending champions India and South Africa in Pool B.

That leaves 1992 champions Pakistan, 1975 and 1979 winners West Indies and non-Test side Ireland battling for the remaining two places.

Their fates will be decided today with Pakistan facing Ireland in Adelaide almost eight years to the day that they were knocked out of the 2007 World Cup by the Irish.

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It will be an emotional occasion for Misbahul Haq's team as that defeat in Jamaica was followed the day after by the death of their coach Bob Woolmer.

Earlier in Napier, the West Indies should roll over the United Arab Emirates to grab fourth spot in Pool B and a quarter-final against New Zealand in Wellington.

Before all that on Saturday, India look for a sixth win in six games against already-eliminated Zimbabwe in Auckland.

India have been impressive at the tournament, bowling out the opposition in all five games they have played.

Zimbabwe, meanwhile, have just one win and their game against India will be the last international for Brendan Taylor, the rock-solid batsman who will take up a county contract with Nottinghamshire.

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## Fresh 72-hr hartal from today

4 burnt in Cox's Bazar firebomb attack; 2 hurt in crude bomb explosion in city; BRTC bus torched in Barguna

STAR REPORT

The BNP-led 20-party alliance yesterday called a fresh spell of 72-hour countrywide shutdown from today, protesting the "arrest" of BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed.

The shutdown, beginning at 6:00am today, will continue until 6:00am Wednesday, according to a press statement issued by BNP Joint Secretary General Barkatullah Bulu.

The BNP-led combine called the

shutdown also to register its protest against "forced disappearance, killing, torture, abduction, and arrest of its leaders and activists".

The declaration of the fresh spell of hartal came a day after the BNP chairperson said the ongoing anti-government movement would continue until it reached a "logical conclusion".

The alliance has been enforcing hartal on all working days since February 1 on top of its countrywide indefinite blockade from January 6,

demanding a fresh election under a non-party administration.

It relaxed hartal for 12 hours on March 12 for celebrating the Tigers' victory against England in the World Cup Cricket match.

At least 86 people have been killed and over a thousand injured so far in the ongoing political turmoil.

Meanwhile, stray incidents of violence and arson attacks on vehicles marked yesterday, the 68th day of the

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## Farabi on fresh 5-day remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shafur Rahman Farabi, the prime suspect in the killing of writer-blogger Avijit Roy, was yesterday placed on a fresh five-day remand in a case filed under the Information and Communication Technology Act.

Fazlur Rahman, Inspector of Detective Branch of police and also

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**The Daily Star**

Integral Energy Limited

**ONLINE POLL**

Do you think it was justified for the BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to blame Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for the current political standoff?

Yes (66%)  
No (34%)

TOTAL VOTES: 102

**TODAY'S POLL**

Do you agree with BNP chief Khaleda Zia that the government is carrying out a false propaganda to brand people's democratic movement as militant activities?

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MARCH 15

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN	5-00	12-45	4-30	6-14	7-45
JAMAAT	5-35	1-15	4-45	6-18	8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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A wholesale broiler chicken shop in the capital's Karwan Bazar.

PHOTO: STAR

## POULTRY SALE AMID BLOCKADE Prices up on short supply

SOHEL PARVEZ

Prices of farmed chicken have shot up at the city markets, thanks to reduced production and disruption in supply from distant regions caused by the ongoing blockade and shutdowns.

Each kilogramme of broiler chicken was sold at Tk 165 yesterday at Hatirpool kitchen market, Tk 160 at Palashi and Tk 155 at Karwan Bazar.

Overall, prices of the farmed chicken rose by 17.65 percent to Tk 140-160 per kilogram from Tk 120-135 a month ago, according to retail price data by the state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

"Supply has reduced because many farmers are staying away from farming after incurring loss for very low prices of broiler chicken in December and early this year," said Abul Hossain Patwari, a wholesaler at Kaptan Bazar, one of the main wholesale depots in the capital.

Disruption in supply from remote districts and increased transport costs were other factors behind the spiralling prices, he added.

Khandaker Mohsin, general secretary of Bangladesh Poultry Farm Protection National Council, said many small farmers suffered huge loss for slumping prices since the beginning of the blockade on January 6.

Farmers had to sell their produce as low as Tk 90 per kilogram, which is lower than the production cost, in the wake of disruption in supply chain for the blockade, he informed.

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