

Former Bangladesh PMs free to move around

by UPI

DHAKA, Bangladesh - Bangladesh's army-backed interim government no longer will curtail the movements of former Prime Ministers Sheikh Hasina and her archrival Khaleda Zia.

The ban was lifted Wednesday, allowing Hasina, leader of the Awami League party and daughter of the country's founder, to return from London, and Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader Khaleda Zia, reportedly under virtual house arrest in Dhaka, to move around, the BBC reported. Local reports had said earlier that Zia had been under pressure to go into exile in Saudi Arabia.

"All restrictions on the two former prime ministers are lifted," said a statement from the government, which took power in January after a state of emergency was imposed on the country.

The government said the restrictions on Hasina were lifted "in view of the views expressed in the media and different quarters." The U.S. government had earlier said democracy in Bangladesh was under threat, the BBC report said.

The government statement also said there had never been any pressure on Zia "to leave the country and there were no restrictions on her freedom of movement."

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