

Bangladesh court grants bail to former premier

The High Court in Bangladesh Tuesday released former prime minister Khaleda Zia for four months to undergo medical treatment.

Zia, 63, was detained in September last year on corruption charges.

The same court granted her son and political heir Tarique Rahman an identical four-month release, also for medical treatment.

Both rulings were made on humanitarian grounds after the recommendation of medical boards, judicial officials said.

They came amid rising protests by the Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which is demanding the unconditional release of the two and withdrawal of all corruption charges against them.

The military-backed interim authorities have filed more than a dozen cases of corruption with the country's powerful Anti-Corruption Commission against the two, deputy prison chief Shamsul Haider Siddiqui said.

The charges range from extortion to the murder of political rivals.

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