

Salman F Rahman

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him to gain strong political hold, by using which he 'plundered' public money through different ventures. For participating in the election that was scheduled for January 22, he managed court stay orders on his loan defaults from the nationalised commercial banks Sonali, Rupali and Agrani banks.

Salman F Rahman, vice chairman of Beximco Group, who got AL nomination for Dhaka-1 constituency, is still a loan defaulter for big amount of money with National Bank Limited.

He allegedly plundered huge amount of money by giving false information about his father's industry New Dhaka Industry when the industries were nationalised after the independence of Bangladesh. The money earned in this way helped him establish the business enterprise Beximco.

From then on, he did not have to look back, as he played the role of an opportunist during every government - whether democratic or autocratic. He became owner of a huge amount of money, in both legal and illegal ways, especially during the governments of Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Parliamentary Affairs Adviser Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury is a business partner of Salman Rahman. Their company Beximco has a number of enterprises that borrowed 2,600 crore taka from national and foreign banks and financial institutions. The enterprises are now defaulters of 425 crore taka.

A case was filed against Salman for smuggling Tk 300 crore in 1996, but he thwarted its proceedings using his financial and political influence. All the 13 companies under Beximco Group allegedly

misappropriated hundreds of crore taka from the share markets by giving false information about the companies to the public.

One of his business enterprises also allegedly misappropriated more than Tk 100 crore in printing textbooks during the tenure of last AL government. The enterprise supplied the textbooks five months after the scheduled time.

At that time he also threatened the then Bangladesh Bank governor Lutfur Rahman to make him face consequences if actions were taken against Salman for loan defaults. The then finance minister Shah AMS Kibria took steps for legal actions against Salman's illegal financial activities. The steps against the influential business tycoon, however, could not proceed much.

Salman contested in the 2001 parliament election with AL nomination from Nawabganj in Dhaka. He failed in the election, but not in business. He maintained close links with Hawa Bhaban and continued his 'legal and illegal' business activities.

His appointment as a member of the AL advisory council dissatisfied many genuine AL leaders as well as AL's alliance partners, especially the leftist parties.

Salman Rahman's father Muslim League leader Fazlur Rahman was an education minister during the Pakistani regime and had good links with Jamaat-e-Islami during the 1971 Liberation War.

Sources said Salman F Rahman might have a hand in AL's signing the agreement with Khelafat-e-Majlis that allows the religious leaders to issue fatwa.

The law enforcers recently barred him at Zia International Airport from going abroad.

Jugantor owner's house raided

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel raided the Gulshan residence of Nurul Islam Babul, owner of vernacular daily Jugantor, around 1:30am Saturday.

Although they did not find him in his house, members of Rab-11 recovered a shotgun, a rifle and two pistols from there.

Confirming the arms recovery, Gulshan police told The Daily Star that the firearms are licensed but their validity expired. "Babul did not deposit the firearms despite a government order to do so," said the officer on duty.

Aman

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(JCD) Aman served the immediate past four-party coalition government first as the state minister for health and later in the labour and employment ministry.

Having from Keraniganj in Dhaka, Aman was elected in the parliament for three consecutive periods in 1991, 1996 and 2001. He was also made lawmaker in the controversial February 15 elections of 1996. Aman and his cadres beat up a lift operator at the Secretariat Building where he went as the state minister for education in the two-weeklong BNP government in 1996.

He invested most of his ill-gotten money in different businesses like housing, shopping centre, CNG station and buying lands in his constituency in Savar, locals said.

But Aman tactfully kept his name away from the documents of most of the businesses, making his long-time friend Mahin Chowdhury their 'owner' under the name of Tanaka Group.

Aman built a commercial building on Gulshan Avenue and a luxurious house in Gulshan residential area in the capital. He has also bought some hundred bigha of land in Savar.

There are allegations that Aman influenced the concerned government authorities to award development works to the local criminal groups and used them to establish a stronghold in the area.

There are at least 57 cases against Aman under the Public Safety Act and he had been on bail in a case for attacking the Keraniganj Police Station.

Ijtema ends

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devotees started pouring in the riverbank amid dense fog in the early morning, turning the venue into a humuska.

A pin-drop silence descended there when the Akheri Munajat started. Pilgrims camped on the bank of the Turag and from nearby houses, rooftops and tawlers joined the munajat. Devotees who were on the highway also took part in the prayer.

There was no facility for women devotees there, they joined the munajat from nearby Harirampur and different mills and factories in the area.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed joined the munajat from a dais in the main dhal.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia also joined the munajat from Bata Shoe Factory while Awami League President Sheikh Hasina from Atlas Honda Factory.

Among others present were Jatiya Party President HM Ershad, advisers, former MPs and leaders of different political parties.

Maudana Mohammad Hossain from Bangladesh also delivered sermons after Zohriprah yesterday.

The authorities set up loudspeakers across 10 square km area for the convenience of the devotees in hearing the sermons and the prayers.

Law-enforcers picked up 49 persons for pick pocketing and other crimes from the Ijtema ground yesterday, raising the number of total arrests to 1,202.

Three devotees died on the Ijtema ground yesterday. Of them, two were identified as Jalaluddin, 65, of Narail and Nazimuddin, 55, of Feni.

Besides, retired DIG of police and freedom fighter Mostafizur Rahman died of cardiac arrest on his way to the Ijtema ground yesterday.

Eighty-seven devotees were admitted to Tongi Hospital with various problems. Besides, 39 others were sent to different hospitals in Dhaka.

Shamsul Huda

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for recasting of the EC to regain people's confidence in the constitutional body and hold a free and fair ninth parliamentary elections after all the controversies created by Justice Aziz and his team.

The previous EC could not conduct the January 22 polls as the president declared a state of emergency on January 11 in the wake of severe political impasse over issues including the EC reconstitution.

Firearms

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bullets was also found at his village home at Ramsa, Kazipur.

People from surrounding villages of Ramsa, Kazipur, Nalanda, Basila, Patul, Khajura and Madhnagar expressed their joy at Dulu's arrest and exchanged sweets.

BNP leader Ruhul Quddus Dulu is known to have patronised vigilante gangs of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) led by Siddiqui Islam Bangla Bhai in their action against communist outlaws in 2004.

Many AL leaders believe Nasim's corruption was one of the major reasons for their party's defeat in 2001 elections.

Recommendation

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Identifying the existing legal, administrative and institutional inadequacies in rooting out corruption. It was asked to submit recommendations within two weeks.

"We won't ask anyone to quit the commission. We are assigned only to recommend ways to make the ACC effective and precisely that's what we are doing," Matin said, adding that now it is the government's responsibility to take steps accordingly.

Sources said the government might ask the ACC members to stand down once the recommendations are formally submitted to the interim administration chief.

ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan yesterday told The Daily Star that the commission members are ready to resign in case of the government asking them to do so.

Since its inception in November 2004, the ACC has remained non-functional, failing to live up to the popular expectations that it would combat corruption boldly and efficiently.

The committee also recommended re-screening of the staff who had been taken in from the now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac).

Matin, also a former director general of the Bac, said there are too many corrupt officials among the several hundred staffers drawn from the no longer existing anti-graft body.

He argued that those who were earlier screened out would also be re-examined, as there might be honest and competent officials among them.

The Bac with 1,271 officials was dissolved in 2004. Of its staff, the ACC took in 33 first class and 52 second class officers, and 658 class III and IV employees.

The cabinet division approved for them an organogram accommodating 650 staff members.

The committee suggested that the organogram should be altered to increase the manpower of the commission.

Jubilant citizens

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"Exemplary punishments must be meted out to these people irrespective of their political affiliations," said Mohamad Shahjahan, proprietor of a sari shop at Karwan Bazar.

When the poor are struggling to manage a meal a day, corrupt politicians have amassed crores of taka, Shahjahan said. He also demanded immediate arrest of corrupt bureaucrats.

Zakir Hossain, a rickshaw puller of Tejgaon area, said mere arrests are not enough, the guilty must be punished.

Anwar Hossain, a businessman of Shahbagh, said the trials must be held quickly so that the arrestees do not get a chance to avoid the hands of justice due to loopholes in the system, adding that the trials should be public so that the corruptionists understand that justice cannot be avoided if they resort to criminal activities.

Mohammad Abdul Majid, an evicted street vendor of Karwan Bazar demanded punishment for politicians who abused power. He said he is not happy with the government as the corruptionists under his political affiliations.

Supporting yesterday's high profile arrests, Kamaluddin Majumder, an electric appliance trader of Hatirjheel area, said all the top political leaders who patronise thuggery and terrorism should be arrested and tried.

He stressed the need for formulating laws so that no body can amass wealth through illegal

means.

Jayed Shahriar, a student of mass communication and journalism in Dhaka University, said,

"However powerful the corruptionists might be, they must be arrested," adding that the arrests must be made irrespective of their political affiliations.

He was forced to resign in November 2005 following allegations of irregularities in transporting Hajj pilgrims.

Sources in the party said Mir Nasir used to address BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia "mother". Perhaps a reason why he was able to evade all those allegations, the sources added.

Despite Biman employees' demonstration against his corruption, the four-party alliance did not take any action against him.

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