

Hasina sued

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location nearby. Besides, PDB had a host of complaints against Westmont which were later resolved.

CASE STATEMENT

The case statement says that the government took the initiative to fulfil the demand for power. Tajul then contacted a foreign company named Westmont Offshore and convinced them to set up a power plant in Bangladesh.

The complainant said he and the foreign company opened a company in Bangladesh named Westmont Bangladesh Ltd with its office at 54 New Eskaton. Tajul said he became the chairman of the company – which was registered with the Joint Stock Companies & Firms and the Board of Investment.

On December 15, 1996, the Power Development Board (PDB) invited international tender for setting up barge-mounted power plants in Khuila, Haripur, Shikabahar/Baghbari.

From among the bidders, the government invited four companies including Westmont Bangladesh Ltd.

The complainant mentioned that on March 13, 1997, a written agreement between his company and the government was signed for setting up the power plants. He also said the project implementation was delayed due to floods in 1998.

On July 22 the same year, Sheikh Hasina's personal staff Manu Majumder told him over phone that a terrible fate awaited Tajul as the work order for setting up the barge-mounted power plants was going to be cancelled.

The statement added that Tajul handed over the money to Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban at 7:45pm and the work order was not cancelled.

Tajul in the statement mentioned that Sheikh Hasina officially inaugurated the plant on August 3, 1999.

In the statement, Tajul also said, "With the help of Manu and by abusing the power of the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina harmed me both physically and mentally by forcefully realising Tk 3 crore in extortion from me. She tarnished my image with my foreign partner – who is also aware of the matter."

The statement said that in fear of death he did not dare to file any case at that time against the accused as they have ties with armed criminals.

No plan to extradite airline suspect to UK

Says Pakistan

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's foreign ministry yesterday denied reports that a Briton held over a plot to bomb transatlantic jets would be extradited to Britain in exchange for six separatist leaders.

The arrest of British national Rashid Rauf August by Pakistan sparked a worldwide security alert and arrests in Britain amid fears of a conspiracy to blow up airliners flying from London to the United States.

Rauf's family last week filed a legal petition alleging that Islamabad was negotiating with London to extradite him in return for six Baluchi nationalists who are based in Britain, and seeking to stop such a move.

"No" Pakistan foreign ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam replied when asked if Pakistan had any such plan, which was first reported by Britain's Guardian newspaper in March.

Hasina terms

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After the news of the filing of the case spread last night, hardly any leaders of AL or its allies in the 14-party alliance made any comments about it.

AL leaders mostly remained tight-lipped about the case. A number of them kept their cellphones switched off, sources said. Top AL leaders including AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu and Sheikh Fazul Karim Salim, a cousin of Hasina, did not receive phone calls yesterday despite repeated efforts to call them.

Talking to The Daily Star, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said, "We are trying to find out the reasons behind the filing of the case now as the complainant did not file the case in last five years when a government was in power." Jalil refused to comment any further on the issue.

AL presidium member Tofail Ahmed would not comment since he claimed he was not informed about the filing of the case.

AL presidium member Suranjit Sengupta told The Daily Star that he would comment on the issue after the news was published in newspapers. "Let the news be published in the newspapers, then I will comment. Otherwise my comments will be premature," Suranjit said.

Another AL presidium member Kazi Zafarullah told The Daily Star that it was definitely a conspiracy. "The filing of the case at this time is very suspicious and the allegation will not be believable to anyone at home or abroad as the complainant did not file the case when an elected government was in power during the last five years," said Zafarullah, a close aide to Hasina.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu told The Daily Star that the caretaker government would look into the context of the filing of the case and take necessary steps.

Asked whether there was any political motive or conspiracy behind the filing of the case, Inu, also a key-leader of the AL-led 14-party alliance, said first let the government unearth the facts through investigation and then he would comment on it.

EXTORTION CHARGE Arrested Sylhet journalists sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

the then prime minister told him that if he failed to pay Tk 3 crore in toll, his work order would be cancelled. She also threatened to send him to jail or jail him if he did not oblige.

He also alleged that he sought for a month's time to pay the tolls, but Sheikh Hasina refused to allow him any time.

The complainant said then he returned to his office and informed his colleagues of the matter.

On December 9, 1998, PDB sent separate letters to the secretaries to the Power Division and power, energy and mineral resources ministry seeking government approval to cancel the work order of the project.

Following the move, Tajul called Manu over the phone on December 12, 1998 requesting him to make arrangements for seeing the prime minister. The same day, he along with Manu in a Pajero went to Hasina's residence with a suitcase containing Tk 3 crore in 600 bundles of Tk 500 notes. His friend Baset was also present during his meeting with the prime minister.

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Kafrul OC suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT