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Hasina sued for genocide, crimes against humanity

Former ministers, law enforcers co-accused; AL, Jubo League, BCL may be prosecuted as organisations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A complaint was filed with the investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday accusing former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and eight others of committing crimes against humanity and genocide between July 15 and August 5.

Supreme Court lawyer Gazi MH Tamim filed the complaint on behalf of Bulbul Kabir, father of Alif Ahmed Siam, a 9th grader who, as per the complaint, was shot by police in Savar on August 5 and died two days later.

Tamim, who was a lawyer for several war crimes accused



Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul said the interim government decided to hold the trial at the International Crimes Tribunal for the killings during the mass uprising that toppled the government.

at the International Crimes Tribunal, appealed to the investigation agency to take legal proceedings following a proper investigation.

"We registered the complaint, and thus the investigation has started," Ataur Rahman, deputy director (admin) of the investigation agency, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Once the probe is done, we will submit the report to the Chief Prosecutor's Office of the tribunal so that the next procedures can begin," he added.

The others accused are Obaidul Quader, Awami League general secretary and former road transport and bridges minister; Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, former home minister; Zunaid Ahmed Palak, former state minister

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Salman F Rahman, private industry and investment adviser to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, and Anisul Huq, former law minister, in blue helmets, being taken to a Dhaka court yesterday evening.

Beximco leaves Janata Bank in poor health

MD MEHEDI HASAN

What is the purpose of a single borrower exposure limit? It is to ensure that a bank's fortune is not tied to the ebb and flow of a conglomerate's business.

But this rule, documents show, was not enforced by state-owned Janata Bank in the case of Beximco Group, arguably the largest conglomerate in the country led by Salman F Rahman, the private industry and investment affairs adviser of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina -- a post that

afforded him the rank of a minister.

This has left the health of the state-owned bank in a precarious position: about 49 percent of Janata's outstanding loans have gone bad -- and 37.5 percent of the defaulted loans are of Beximco Group, whose vice chairman Salman was put on ten-day remand yesterday.

At the end of June, Janata's total exposure to Beximco Group stood at Tk 25,000 crore, which is about 950 percent of the lender's paid-up capital.

Banks are not allowed to lend

more than 25 percent of their paid-up capital to a single party. At the end of June, Janata's paid up capital stood at Tk 2,314 crore.

What's more, as much as 72 percent of Beximco's outstanding loans with Janata have defaulted, documents show.

Of Janata's total disbursed loans of Tk 98,000 crore, 25.51 percent were given to 30 companies under the Beximco umbrella. And 26 of the 30 companies breached the single borrower exposure limit.

Salman, who was a member of

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Tuku, Palak, BCL's Shaikat held at Nikunja

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers arrested former deputy speaker Shamsul Haque Tuku and ex-state minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak from the capital's Nikunja residential area in Khilkhet last night.

Police also arrested Dhaka University Chhatra League General Secretary Tanbir Hasan Shaikat from the same area.

Confirming their arrests, the media wing of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police said the three were hiding there.

Md Sentu Miah, officer-in-charge of Paltan Police Station, said acting on a tip-off, they conducted a drive in Nikunja and arrested the three.

"They were arrested in the murder case of rickshaw puller Kamal Mia. The victim's wife, Fatema Khatun, filed the case at Paltan Police Station on July 20," he told The Daily Star.

According to the case statement, Kamal, 39, was waiting for passengers near the VIP Road intersection in

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Govt scraps contractual appointments of 11 secretaries NBR gets new chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government yesterday cancelled the contractual appointments of 11 officials of secretary or equivalent ranks and sent another secretary into forced retirement.

It also transferred three other secretaries. The government issued separate notifications in this regard.

This is the first major change to the civil administration since the interim government took office on August 8.

Jahangir Alam, secretary of the Public Security Division under the home ministry, was sent into forced retirement.

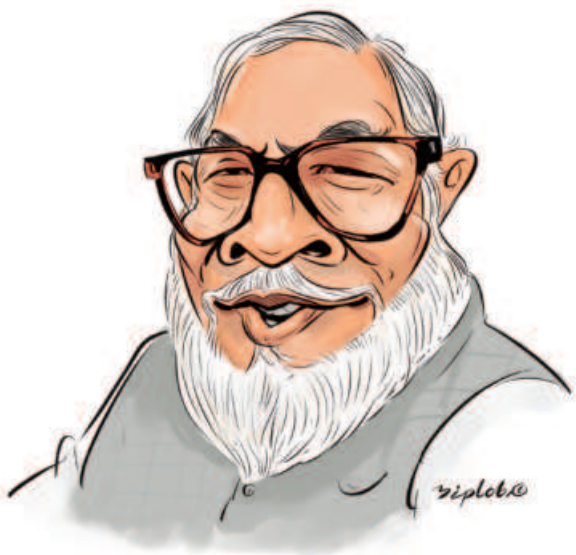
Jahangir served as the secretary of the Election Commission during the last national election on January 7, which was boycotted by almost all opposition political parties, including the BNP.

Md Mokabbir Hossain, chairman

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SALMAN F RAHMAN

'The architect of default culture'



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Salman F Rahman, one of Sheikh Hasina's trusted advisers with a ministerial rank, is now a disgraced suspect held in police custody. He was arrested in a case over the killing of a shop employee, not for financial misconduct he has long been known for. But this high-profile arrest brings into stark relief, once again, the rise of a man who used murky politics to drive his business empire. His proximity to Hasina and her political circle helped him bend the rules at ease in the corporate world.

Salman thrived on financial transgression, with his big footprints in the banking sector, now one of the beleaguered areas of the economy. Before his downfall, his last target was the country's burgeoning Islamic finance that he used to supercharge his business.

Many familiar with Salman's wrongdoing described him as "the father of default culture" in Bangladesh. That toxic malpractice encouraged other businesses to borrow and never repay, exposing Bangladesh's banking industry to serious risks.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue concluded that several banks are now "clinically dead".

One of the lenders with huge exposure to Salman's Beximco Group is Janata Bank. Beximco borrowed a colossal amount, nine times higher than the bank's paid-up capital, bringing significant risks to the state-run lender. That's just one example.

Salman seemed to have left his legacy to his son, Ahmed Shayan Fazlur Rahman, who recently lost directorship at IFIC Bank due to loan defaults. Founded in 1972 by Salman and his elder brother Sohail F Rahman as a commodity trading company, Beximco got its defaulted loans rescheduled on many occasions by compelling the regulators to make or amend rules. It also shielded itself from legal peril by securing court orders in its favour.

One of the instances of loan restructuring or rescheduling was in 2014 when Salman rescheduled Beximco's loans taken from Sonali Bank citing a liquidity crisis.

The company blamed the crisis on politically motivated credit restrictions between 2001 and 2008, repayment of Tk 800 crore in bank loans in the previous three years and economic disruptions during the prolonged spell of blockades and shutdowns in 2013-14.

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