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Salman used clout to help businesses secure loans

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Salman F Rahman is known for using his influence to get bank loans for Beximco Group by bending rules, but documents seen by this newspaper have revealed how he helped others secure credit, or at least tried to.

The Beximco boss who worked for Sheikh Hasina as one of her trusted advisers until the downfall of the Awami League government was overly influential in the financial sector of Bangladesh.

His clout grew so large in the 15 years of Hasina's regime that his recommendations were difficult for anyone to disobey, said current and former chief executives of three commercial banks who sought anonymity in fear of reprisal.



Salman is now a disgraced suspect held in police custody over the killing of a shop employee during the violent student-led protests that toppled the Hasina government.

The current administration has not yet charged him with financial misconduct linked to Beximco, for which he has long been known.

Having been the chairman of the privately owned IFIC Bank, Salman had mostly picked state-run banks for his endeavour to facilitate loans for other companies.

One such company Salman had helped, or tried to help, is Globe Janakantha Shilpa Paribar (GJSP), which sought and secured loans from scam-hit Janata Bank.

A document obtained by The Daily Star shows that

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DEER DASH!

A male axis deer or spotted deer, locally known as Chittra horin, dashes through a waterbody in the Sundarbans. Known to be one of the gems of the Sundarbans, axis deer are beloved to all Bangladeshis, so much so, that their local name is often used as a complement for beauty. Globally too, they are considered the most beautiful deer species. The timid mammals prefer to live in territories with woody vegetation for cover and open grasslands for food – grass, plants, fruits and flowers. As they are not as nocturnal as other deer species, they usually feed after sunrise and then a few hours before sunset. Patriarchal herds are common among Axis deer and, like the males, females can engage in aggressive behaviour when there is over-crowding at feeding sites.

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN

Palak, Tuku placed on 10-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed three people, including former deputy speaker Shamsul Haque Tuku and ex-state minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak, on a 10-day remand in a case filed over the death of rickshaw-puller Kamal Mia in the city's Paltan area on July 19.

The other accused is Tanbir Hasan Shaikat, Dhaka University Chhatra League general secretary.

Dhaka Metropolitan

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BRIBERY ALLEGATION

Ex-home boss faces ACC probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has launched an investigation into the allegations of bribery against former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and his aides.

According to a complaint submitted to the ACC, they have been accused of taking millions of takas in bribes through a syndicate for transfers, promotions, and recruitment within various departments under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

ACC's Deputy Director and

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US in touch with India on developments in Bangladesh

Says US State Dept

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United States is in touch with India and other countries in the region regarding the recent developments in Bangladesh and is seeking an end to the violence there, said a State Department official.

Vedant Patel, principal deputy spokesperson of the department, said this at a briefing yesterday when he was asked on the security situation, human rights issues, and the process of restoration of democracy in Bangladesh.

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Gaza death toll tops 40,000

Says Hamas-run health ministry as new round of ceasefire talks begin in Qatar

AGENCIES

Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip has killed at least 40,005 Palestinians since October 7, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday, as there was no let-up in Israeli strikes across the enclave.

A total of 40 Palestinians have been killed and 107 wounded in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

Pressure built for a ceasefire to be agreed at talks which resumed yesterday in Qatar to avert a wider war involving Iran, after months of fighting between Israel and Hamas.

In a veiled warning to Iran, Hamas and Israel, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani on Wednesday said "no party in the region should take actions that would undermine efforts to reach a deal," the US State Department said.

In a telephone call, the two discussed "efforts to calm tensions in the region and the importance of finalising a ceasefire in Gaza," it said.

Israel's delegation includes spy chief David Barnea, head of the domestic security service Ronen Bar, and the military's hostages chief Nitzan Alon, defence officials said on Wednesday.

CIA Director Bill Burns and US Middle East envoy Brett McGurk represented Washington at the talks, convened by Qatari prime minister, with Egypt's intelligence chief Abbas Kamel also in Doha.

Hamas officials, who have accused Israel of stalling, did not join yesterday's talks. However, mediators planned to consult with Hamas' Doha-based negotiating team after the meeting, the official briefed on the talks told Reuters.

In Gaza, where almost the entire population is displaced and much of the territory's housing and other infrastructure destroyed, rescuers said air strikes killed three people.

An Israeli air strike on a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank killed two Palestinians yesterday as Jewish worshippers visited a nearby disputed holy site, Palestinian sources and Israeli army said.

India will always help Bangladesh's growth: Modi

AGENCIES

Amid reports of attacks on Hindus and minorities in Bangladesh, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the 78th Independence Day of India yesterday, called for peace.

"I hope things will soon be normal in Bangladesh. 140 crore people want that Hindus, and minorities there be safe. We want that our neighbouring countries tread the path of peace and happiness," Modi said.

Modi added that India will always be supportive of Bangladesh's growth and development.

According to Indian Express, Hindus have faced more than 200 attacks in 50-odd districts since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government on August 5.

According to Bangladesh's 2022 census, a little more than 13.1 million Hindus reside in the country, making up for 7.96 percent of the country's population. Other minorities (Buddhists, Christians, etc.) together constituted less than 1 percent.

'Will back new govt as long as it stands for democracy'

Says Mirza Fakhru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said yesterday that the interim government would have the party's continued support as long as it stood for democracy and handed over power in a democratic manner.

"This government is the result of our movement. We will assist them as long as they stay in favour of democracy and transfer power through a democratic process," Fakhru said during a sit-in programme in front of the party's Nayapaltan office in the capital.

BNP organised the programme as part of its two-day event demanding that former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her aides be tried on charges of carrying out a mass killing during the recent student protests.

Fakhru said, "We want a change in government through elections. [For which] we are also willing to give a reasonable time to the interim government."

"Let me be clear, there is no alternative to democracy. There is no alternative to voting. We are fighting for that democracy."

Expressing gratitude to the interim government, the BNP leader hoped that the interim government would hold a free and fair election and that people would vote in the polls to form the government.

He called for the removal of the "conspirators within the government," who he claimed are working against country people.

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UK, Singapore pledge support to interim govt

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has assured Bangladesh's interim government of supporting its efforts to restore law and order for a peaceful transition to democracy.

"The British government wants to support you as you work to restore peace, law and order, and prosperity to Bangladesh," Starmer wrote in a letter to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

"We look forward to working with you and the interim government as it creates a peaceful transition to an inclusive, democratic future," the British PM added in the letter dated August 14, according to the chief adviser's press wing.

The UK values its "strong and enduring" relationship with Bangladesh, cemented by "deep" people-to-people ties and shared Commonwealth values, Starmer said.

"As friends, we have been deeply saddened by the violence and loss of life in recent weeks. We recognise the bravery of the students and many others who, through peaceful protest, called for a different future for Bangladesh," said the UK prime minister.

"I warmly welcome your appointment as chief adviser to the interim government in Bangladesh. At such a pivotal moment in Bangladesh's history, your leadership

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PHOTO: REUTERS

A displaced Palestinian woman and a child take shelter in a cemetery in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

Metro service won't resume tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Metro rail operation will not resume tomorrow, as per the earlier announcement, as the authorities could not complete necessary technical tests.

Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), the operating agency of metro rail, issued a press release in the regard last night.

It, however, did not mention when the service will resume.

Although the DMTCL did not state any reason, sources said the authorities failed to start the trial runs due to the ongoing work abstention by a group of DMTCL employees.

Operations of metro rail have remained suspended since July 18 amid violence centring the quota reform protest, which later turned into an uprising that toppled the Hasina-led government on August 5.

On July 19, attackers vandalised two metro stations

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