

# Anwar, Nizami

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state minister from Rezaul Karim.

When Anwar took charge of the ministry in October 2001, he faced a number of challenges for coping with the changing world economic scenario. Among them the major ones were formulation of a fresh industrial policy, improving fertiliser supply and distribution network, setting up export processing zones (EPZs) on Admajee Jute Mills premises and in Chittagong Steel Mills area, and shifting Hazaribagh tannery plants to the suburban Savar.

He also was expected to better the sugar production situation and increase the industrial sector's contribution to the GDP.

Apparently due to his failure to improve the overall industrial situation, the alliance government replaced him and his partner with Nizami and Pintoo, counting on a better performance.

## NEW INDUSTRIAL POLICY REMAINS ON PAPER ONLY

Carrying out a major task of his ministry, Nizami introduced a new industrial policy in 2004, but experts said the policy is nothing but a refurbished version of the old one.

"The new policy has not set any provision by which the almost stunted industrial sector can grow faster than before," an entrepreneur said, claiming, "It is but the old wine in a new bottle."

The newly adopted policy has co-opted 17 new industries on the list of trust sectors that will enjoy certain privileges, such as cash incentives for export, tax rebates, concessions in utility tariffs and reduced interest rates on loans.

Readymade garments, light engineering, pharmaceuticals, optical frame, cold roll coil, herbal medicine, furniture and handicrafts are among the new entrants that have raised the number of trust sectors to 33 from the previous 16.

But after adoption of the policy, no significant steps have been seen to translate it into reality, an RMG exporter said.

## NOREMEDY FOR SICK INDUSTRIES

Other than preparing a list of around 2,000 sick industries in different sectors with the help of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Industries Minister Nizami did not take any initiative to salvage them.

The industries became sick due to lack of financing and the impact of the changed market scenario. The entrepreneurs of the industries at various occasions appealed to the government to waive the interests on their previously taken loans and to provide fresh bank loans at a low interest rate, but their requests went in vain.

## PROTRACTED EPZ PROCESS AT ADMAJEE, CTG STEEL

In early 2003, Nizami initiated a step to turn the loss-incurring Adamjee Jute Mills, which lied with the jute ministry, and Chittagong Steel Mills Limited into EPZs, placing them among Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation. The corporation led by Nizami worked for some two years, but failed to accomplish the task, which then was shifted to Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza).

Nizami also seemed little concerned with rehabilitation of around 25,000 workers of Adamjee Jute Mills after it was declared closed in June 30, 2002. No significant rehabilitation efforts have so far been taken for the axed workers.

## FERTILISER CRISES CONTINUE

Localised crises of fertiliser dogged both Anwar and Nizami through out the last four year due to a faulty distribution and marketing network. A huge quantity of

fertiliser has been being smuggled into India and Myanmar owing to the fault and the price differences between the neighbouring countries.

Every year the government had to provide subsidy of around Tk 15,200 a tonne of imported urea fertiliser. The country consumes around 26 lakh tonne urea annually, while the six state-owned fertiliser factories, one even 50-year old, can produce 18 lakh tonne. But Nizami is yet to formulate any policy to bring private sector into urea fertiliser production to meet the 8-lakh tonne shortfall.

## SUGAR SECTOR FACES RUIN

Over the two and a half years of Nizami in charge of industries, the sugar sector has come to the verge of ruin.

The country's industrial and household demand for sugar is around 42 lakh tonne a year. In comparison, the state-owned mills in fiscal year 2004-05 produced only 14.14 lakh tonnes of sugar against a target of 22.27 lakh tonne.

Due to the absence of an appropriate policy and support, farmers have been reluctant to sell sugarcane to government factories, forcing them to remain idle for long periods.

Nizami has liberalised and relaxed duties on sugar import to keep sugar price stabilised. But no significant initiative has been undertaken to install new sugar factories or improve sugar farming in the country.

## OTHER SHORTCOMINGS

As the industries minister, Nizami also has failed to relocate the environmentally hazardous tannery industries from the densely populated Hazaribagh in the city to Savar in the last three years.

Though the country has witnessed substantial investment in some basic industries like cement, glass, steel and pharmaceuticals but Nizami was blamed for not undertaking any initiative to sustain the booming industries in a nascent economy like Bangladesh.

Neither Anwar nor Nizami did create any special package or policy support to protect any industry from the possible negative impacts of the open market competition.

Though Nizami claimed to the press that the contribution of the industrial sector to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached 16.58 percent in FY2004-05 from 15.59 percent in FY2000-01, some senior economists alleged the contribution was less than what he had claimed.

Besides, contrary to the government's commitment to make the capital market vibrant, Nizami has not initiated any step to offload the government stakes in about two dozens of profitable industries into the private sector. Neither was he prompt in bringing the necessary changes in the intellectual property rights to comply with the international demands.

Both the industries ministers also neglected making Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI) a fully equipped and well-manned body, despite it gaining much popularity for conducting drives against adulteration of and unhygienic foods.

## A FEW SUCCESSES

In spite of a string of limitations, Nizami did formulate the industrial policy and a policy on small and medium enterprises, launched anti-food-adulteration drives under the BSTI, formed a national food fortification committee and could turn Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation profitable.

## Saifur

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Referring to a memo of the finance ministry, the establishment ministry on October 26 issued an order, halting fresh appointments except for those already under process and cadre services as well as contractual basis.

Saifur Rahman was in Singapore from October 24 to October 29.

Sources concerned said while chairing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, the minister expressed his anguish over the establishment ministry's order as it contradicts the objectives of Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) approved by the government recently.

"I don't know about the matter (circular)," Saifur told reporters after the meeting.

He said fresh recruitments in the public sector should not be closed.

"The PRSP is to generate employment and reduce poverty," said the minister.

He said the government is unlikely to meet the target of the PRSP unless fresh jobs are created.

A circular signed by Establishment Secretary ASM Abdul Halim issued on October 26 said according to the decision of the committee formed for reviewing recommendations of 6th National Pay Commission, 2004, all recruitments in vacant posts except in cadre services and on contract basis for implementing development projects have been held up temporarily.

Following the circular, recruitment in about 60,000 vacant posts, which was under process this year, in different government and semi-government organisations once again has fallen into complexity due to the decision, government officials said.

The PRSP has a vision to create 91.6 lakh new jobs, raising the total number to 5.81 crore by the end of the fiscal 08.

## Pakistan, Nepal

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nation of the 21st century, saying as a prominent Saarc member Pakistan had played an important role in maintaining regional peace and stability, a role also recognised by the international community.

He also expressed the view that, in a rapidly globalising world, the cost of non-cooperation would be colossal.

He however said in the regional context, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) is yet to emerge as a vibrant force to be reckoned with.

He regretted the frequent postponement of the Saarc summits and non-implementation of major decisions made in the previous summits.

He suggested that overburdening of the Saarc agenda with new areas of cooperation without realising tangible cooperation in already agreed ones has to be avoided.

## Rezaul Karim

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In Cairo doing the necessary arrangements.

Bangladeshi Ambassador to Egypt MM Rezaul Karim, 70, died of a heart attack on October 29 in Cairo.

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam, former minister and mayor Barrister Abul Hasnet, Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka and Kushtia Samity have condoled his death and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

## BNP, AL vow

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problems between the BNP and Awami League through discussions," he said at an Iftar party hosted by the BGMEA at the Sheraton Hotel in the city.

Senior leaders from both the major parties attended the Iftar party.

Mannan Bhuiyan said prior to the quota phase out, it was predicted that Bangladesh readymade garment (RMG) sector will witness a major setback during the post-multi-fibre arrangement era.

"But, our RMG sector faced the quota phase out successfully and has the potential to improve further," he said.

Speaking at the function, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said the RMG sector is playing an important role in the country's economic development.

"Awami League will provide all necessary cooperation to the RMG sector to operate smoothly," he said.

BGMEA President Annisul Huq said the Iftar party was not for any political discussion but "a function of compassion".

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman, Textiles and Jute Minister Shajahan Siraj, Agriculture Minister MK Anwar, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, State Minister for Forest and Environment Zafrul Islam, State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud, State Minister for Health Mizanur Rahman Sinha, commerce ministry Adviser Barkat Ullah Bulu and Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka attended the Iftar party.

From the opposition side, AL presidium members Zillur Rahman, Abdur Razzak, Matia Chowdhury, Suranjit Sengupta, AL Joint Secretary Obaidul Kader, AL Dhaka city General Secretary Maya Chowdhury, and AL Publicity Secretary Asaduzzaman Noor were present at the function.

# Kashmiri group

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Saturday evening, two of them in markets packed with shoppers just days before major Hindu and Muslim festivals. At least 61 people were killed in the blasts.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh refused to speculate on who might have carried out the blasts, saying only that there were "some clues" which the authorities were trying to piece together.

But Indian newspapers were quick to accuse Lashkar-e-Taiba or Jaish-e-Mohammed, radical Pakistan-based groups also blamed for a 2001 attack on Delhi's parliament.

Analysts said the attacks were ruthlessly planned to spread fear and outrage, striking at ordinary Indian families during the festive season. Many of the victims were women and children.

"I am certain these attacks were carried out by groups from the subcontinent, although the operational method and modus operandi was inspired by al-Qaeda," Rohan Gunaratna, a Singapore-based expert on terrorism, said on Sunday.

"The only groups who have the infrastructure and operational history to mount attacks like this are Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed," he said. "It is very likely the attacks were meant to affect the peace process between Pakistan and India."

Lashkar and Jaish are both banned in Pakistan, even though experts say they continue to operate under different names.

Jamat-ud-Dawa, an Islamist charity linked to Lashkar, has been active in Pakistani Kashmir providing relief to victims of this month's devastating earthquake.

Both Lashkar and Jaish are thought to be strongly opposed to the India-Pakistan peace process, and their sympathisers accuse Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf of "selling out" to India over Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region claimed by both countries.

Both groups are also important players in a 16-year-old Muslim insurgency in Indian Kashmir which has cost tens of thousands of lives.

But the largest guerrilla group operating in Kashmir said Islamic militants would never strike at civilians.

"It is out of question that the Mujahideen would attack innocent civilians," said Salim Hashmi, a spokesman for the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen.

"In this situation when Kashmir has been hit by a disastrous earthquake, such attack could only be a conspiracy. It would be baseless to point fingers at the Mujahideen."

Experts have been wrong in the past, and were wrong-footed in May when bombs exploded inside two Delhi cinemas. Police ultimately blamed those attacks on Sikh militants angry at a film, which some Sikhs said had insulted their religion.

There are also dozens of insurgent groups fighting Indian rule in its troubled northeastern region.

But Gunaratna and Sahni said none of these groups had the capability nor ambition to mount such a major attack.

Saturday's blasts came as Indian and Pakistani officials held talks in Islamabad to open border crossings along the military Line of Control in Kashmir to help victims of the earthquake.

It was a significant move forward for the two countries, who have been implacable foes for decades over Kashmir, and the decision was announced just hours after the bomb blasts.

B. Raman, a former head of India's intelligence agency, the Research and

Analysis Wing, said the attacks could have been designed to refute Indian claims that militant groups suffered heavy losses during this month's earthquake in Kashmir.

"If the blasts were the handiwork of jihadi terrorists, these were also meant to reassure their followers and sympathisers in India that... their capability for action in Indian territory and their motivation remain undamaged."

## DELHI COPS CORDON OFF AREA AFTER BOMB SCARE

AFP reports from New Delhi: Police cordoned off an area in central New Delhi yesterday after the discovery of three parcels raised a bomb scare near a school for the blind, news reports said.

Privately-run New Delhi Television, or NDTV, said the parcels were found near the school in the early afternoon and police were called in to investigate and had ordered the area sealed off from the public.

At least 61 people were killed in three coordinated blasts in New Delhi Saturday ahead of the major Hindu Festival of Diwali this week, with suspicion falling on militants opposed to the peace process with Pakistan.

The explosions ripped through two crowded markets but a bus that had been targeted was spared when the driver hurled the device off the vehicle as it exploded.

The blasts came as diplomats from the nuclear-armed rivals were finalising a deal to open up their de facto border in disputed Kashmir for earthquake relief efforts.

Indian police Sunday handed out a sketch of a suspect in the serial blasts as experts said one detonation may have come from explosives packed in a pressure cooker.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blasts, but Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh planned a full-fledged cabinet later Sunday to review the investigation amid a nationwide security alert.

## ACC tells

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its powers and jurisdictions, and noted, "Once Singapore was infested with serious corruption and it used to be a poor nation like us. But now the city of Singapore is known as the cleanest and the country is known as one of the richest in Asia. To improve to this level, the Singapore administration played a tireless key role. We can also follow their path."

"Our administration can help build a dignified nation by ensuring transparency, accountability and efficiency," it added.

The ACC also pointed out that fighting corruption requires a combined effort of all. If the administration starts fighting corruption with sincerity, the fight will become easy to win, it said.

The commission urged the administration to inform it about any incident of corruption and to provide it with data on corruption.

Sources said the letter was prompted by the October 18 global corruption index report by Transparency International, in which Bangladesh was branded as the most corrupt country of the world for the fifth consecutive year.

The ACC feels that it has achieved nothing in the last one year of its formation. But it is determined to salvage Bangladesh from the position of 'most corrupt nation' in the next one year, said the sources.

## Indian saris worth Tk 65 lakh seized at Hili

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized Indian saris and cloths worth about Tk 65 lakh and arrested one at the Hili border on Saturday night.

Being tipped off, BDR personnel raided a house around 10:00pm and seized the contraband items which were being loaded in a truck.

They seized the truck and arrested Debu Goutam, helper of the truck.

BDR sources said the saris and cloths were smuggled from India. The goods were deposited to the customs warehouse last night.

BDR officials said the smugglers are very active during Eid-ul-Fitr.

## PM, Hasina

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condolences and sympathies to the members of the bereaved families", she said in her message.

The prime minister also prayed for the early recovery of those injured in the blasts.

Expressing her vow to fight against terrorism, the prime minister also said: Bangladesh has always been opposed to terrorism and will continue to actively cooperate with the international community in the global war against terrorism, and also to strengthen our efforts to keep the South Asian region free from the scourge of terrorism.

## SHEIKH HASINA

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina condemned the deadly bomb attack in Delhi terming it a barbarous and cowardly act against humanity.

Hasina in a statement yesterday said those who had launched such attacks are enemies of humanity, democracy, peace and development.

She said the innocent and unarmed people, including women and children, became the victims of the attacks on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr and Dewali festivals.

She reiterated her stand against terrorism and urged all to build up united resistance against terrorism, which is killing innocent people as part of the international terrorism, especially in Bangladesh.

Hasina expressed her deep sympathy for the bereaved families and prayed for early recovery of the injured.

## Dhaka Declaration

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forum to implement various decisions relating to social and economic sectors.

The document is expected to highlight effective measures to deal with the aftermath of natural disaster like tsunami, cyclone and earthquake, collective approach to deal with growing menace of terrorism through implementation of additional protocol on suppression of terrorism and poverty alleviation.

In the declaration, the grouping might spell out a mechanism for coordinating various funds to implement poverty-reduction projects in the region and implementing the social charter to improve the status of the South Asians.

The declaration will also stress the need for enhancing intra-Saarc trade, which is only about 4 percent, while it is 26 percent in Asean Bloc and some 67 percent in the European Union.

The summit declaration may also focus on operation of multi-modal communications to facilitate trade and investment among the Saarc member states.

Since the 13th Saarc summit marks the beginning of the third decade of the forum, Bangladesh as next Saarc chair likes to transform the next 10 years into a "decade of implementation" to reach the benefit of the 20-year-old organisation to the common people of South Asia.

## Small power

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These issues will require an amendment to the policy.

On October 17, the Prime Minister's Office decided to shelve the process of awarding free-style power sales contract to small power entrepreneurs when the WB threatened to suspend all funds on grounds of massive nepotism, corruption and irregularities in these unsolicited schemes.

It was decided then that the government will float tenders seeking lowest price offers from small power developers.

Accordingly, the government shelved the October 19 deadline to award unsolicited power sales contracts to different small power developers.

Around 45 to 48 small power purchase agreements were set to be awarded to different ministers and ruling party parliamentarians, sources said.

These beneficiaries, with no knowledge about the power sector, were supposed to "sell" these deals to real power developers.

A PDB study shows that if 45 to 50 small plants are added to the national grid, a sudden trip of one small unit will have chain reaction shut downs of all other plants.

Yesterday's cabinet committee meeting also received two other proposals.

These are fixing a pricing policy for Bangladesh Railway's sellable lands and placing the sellable industries of the ministries of jute and textiles under the privatisation commission.

The cabinet committee decided to discuss these issues after the Saarc summit.

# Security men

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An additional 5,000 policemen will be drafted in from outside the capital to work with members of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) and other forces already working to maintain law and order during the Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr.

In mobilising forces from other districts, the authorities will give priority to those who have the experience of working in Dhaka.

The home ministry meeting yesterday emphasised further extensive searching of the people entering the capital through different points and said security men, as many as it requires' will be assigned to do the job.

Adequate smart-fores will be deployed at all key points within a security circle to ensure the safety of the Saarc delegates.

Rab members will patrol mainly inside the city. The coast guards will patrol the water bodies while two helicopters carrying Rab men will hover above Dhaka, scanning the city round-the-clock.

Besides, teams have been formed to keep watch on alleyways.

"Law enforcers will keep watch on all the houses, offices and other establishments adjacent to the summit venue, accommodation of the delegates, and areas of their movement," said another source of the meeting.

The government has directed the BDR to keep under constant surveillance the movement of the terrorists along the border. Having international links, those terrorists might pose a threat to the Saarc leaders, added the source.

A list of cross-border terrorists and their photographs have already been dispatched to different border outposts (BOPs) and international check posts (ICPs).

Another source said participants at

the meeting discussed in detail the latest serial blasts in the Indian Capital and emphasised the importance of taking additional steps to ward off such terrorist attacks.

"Although the government had already planned a foolproof security arrangement for the summit, Delhi blasts has sent a new wave of panic through the region and came as a further caution," said the source.

Soon after New Delhi blasts Saturday evening, the government issued high alert in the capital, bordering areas and elsewhere in the country.

Lutfozzaman Babar presided over the meeting which was attended, among others, by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Abdul Quayum, DMP commissioner SM Mizanur Rahman, Rab Director General Abdul Aziz Sarker and other top police and Rab officials.

UNB reports: The BDR yesterday faxed to all BOPs and ICPs a government order putting BDR on the alert for illegal intrusion on the eve of the Saarc Summit.

Some 60 platoons of BDR personnel have already been deployed in the capital to help police maintain security, the news agency reports. It also quoted a BDR source as saying that border guard units at different ICPs have been asked to beef up security, keep vigil on visitors and body-search the suspected ones.

The BDR and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) will co-ordinate patrolling at their respective areas.

BDNEWS reports: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel has decorated its newly constructed seven presidential suits for accommodating the guests in the upcoming summit.

The hotel has also installed closed-circuit television cameras for security of the guests while a media centre has been set up for the media personnel.

# August 17 blasts

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"We are instructed to submit flawless charge sheet to ensure that the cases are survived with the Speedy Trial Tribunal," said an IO asking not to be named.

The meeting was held in line with the home ministry's Thursday' caution to the investigators about any loophole in the charge sheets.

The investigators of 21 cases have so far submitted charge sheets, home ministry sources said.

The CID special superintendents also instructed the IOs to reinvestigate six cases, final reports of which have already been submitted.

The instruction came as investigators in Chittagong submitted final reports of six cases on October 24 to Kotwali, Panchlaish, Pahartali, Bakalia, Halishahar and Double Mooring police stations.

## CHUADANGA BOMB SEIZURE

Chuadanga police yesterday recovered a powerful bomb planted near the boundary wall of a local businessman's house in the town, reports our Kushtia Correspondent.

On information, police recovered the bomb beside the house of Rana Hossain in Majherpara in the town around 12:00pm.

A letter was attached to the bomb that read, "The bomb is for them who are not working to establish Islamic rule in the country."

The bomb was also for those who are making money through prevailing banking system instead of Islamic banking, the letter added.

Police suspect an unnamed Islamist militant group kept the bomb wrapped in a polyethylene bag. They said they are investigating the matter.

The incident created panic among the residents of the town.

## HABIGANJ

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) activist Shamim Ahmed, son of the former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer of Habiganj, declined to make a confessional statement yesterday, UNB reports.

Shamim, arrested on September 7 at his computer shop in Habiganj, claimed himself to be innocent.

Police, acting on his information, had arrested five people at Bashabo in Dhaka city and seized bomb-making materials, firearms, 70 detonators, one computer and Tk 2 lakh.

## KHULNA

Police are looking for Shaikhul Islam, 24, a JMB cadre, who has a master's degree in mathematics from Daulatpur Govt BL University College in Khulna, our Staff Correspondent in Khulna reports.

He was involved in the August 17 blasts in Khulna city, said Mahbubur Rahman, OC of Batiaghata Police Station.

Shaikhul blasted a bomb in front of

the Delta Residential Hall of his college and was absconding since then, he added.

Shaikhul hails from Panchakaran village in Morrelganj upazila of Bagerhat.

The OC also said the deadline to submit the charge sheet has been extended to November 10 since fresh names of JMB cadres are coming up as the investigation progresses.

## GOPALGANJ

The district judge of Gopalganj rejected the bail of Anisur Rahman Sagar, who is the younger brother of kingpin Mufti Abdul Hannan of Harkatul Jihad, A Correspondent in Gopalganj writes.

Anisur, arrested recently at Hiron village of Kotlipara, is accused of being involved in the August 17 blasts.

He is also accused of planting the bomb near the meeting venue of the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina at Kotlipara in 2001.

## Kashmir border

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