

Three years

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Just a few days before the incident took place Nurul Islam had submitted his nomination paper for Noakhali-1 constituency to contest the 2008 general elections under Awami League banner.

CID Inspector Shahinur Bari, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, said, "We are certain of the incident being an act of arson, as experts of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) detected highly toxic compounds in the ashes collected from the scene."

The CID received the BCSIR chemical report late in October this year, said the IO.

Earlier on April 25, 2011, the BCSIR lab report signed by Sub-Assistant Engineer Kamruzzaman was submitted to the CID investigators, but the investigators sent it back asking for elaboration.

On receiving the report, the IO said, investigators talked with Nurul Islam's wife Rubi Rahman and his daughter Moutushi Islam at CID's Malibagh office. The IO, however, kept from disclosing the information they obtained from the victim family.

Sources said the CID would conduct drives based on that information to detect the culprits involved in the arson.

Moutushi said, "The investigators should very soon submit a charge sheet in the case since the incident was confirmed as an act of arson."

The family alleged that the investigators did not take their suspicions into account although from the very beginning of the probe they had been trying to draw the CID's attention to the fact that the fire did not burn any plastic objects or clothes but killed two people.

Earlier BCSIR sources told the media of detecting Osmic compounds and arsenic from the ashes. Heated Osmic compounds and arsenic release toxic fumes that directly attack the respiratory system and cause quick death. Osmium is used in no home appliances while arsenic to make pesticides and rodenticides.

Meanwhile, two other probe reports prepared by the chemistry department of Dhaka University and Dhaka Power Distribution Company clearly stated that the fire did not originate from electric short circuit.

BNP warns

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hartal in the city a success to protest the government's move. "We will resist the initiative to divide the capital. It cannot be implemented."

The prime minister and her cabinet will be accountable to the people for splitting Dhaka, he mentioned.

Blaming the government for hatching a fresh conspiracy to harass the opposition men, Fakhrul said, "The government is planning to file cases against 26,000 opposition leaders and activists accusing them of torturing and repressing some members of a minority community after the 2001 elections."

The government has trumped up a report on the incidents by a "so-called" commission comprised of their own men, he complained.

Former DCC mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka said the government has hurt the public sentiment by deciding to divide the capital.

"We will observe the hartal to keep Dhaka intact. All sorts of agitation programmes will be declared to save Dhaka," maintained Khoka, also the convener of Dhaka city BNP.

The party will hold rallies in every thana of the capital today.

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami acting secretary general Shafiqur Rahman in a statement yesterday expressed their solidarity with the hartal, saying the nation has rejected the decision of splitting the capital.

Ignoring widespread criticism and protests, parliament on Tuesday passed a bill to split DCC.

Two days later, President Zillur Rahman signed the bill into law.

Delhi open

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government and Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam on October 24, which is an intent to set up a joint venture company to implement the project.

Sources said it was suggested during the meeting that Bangladesh could put in money in part of the project, get stake and in return draw electricity from the power project to be set up on the Barak river at Churachandrapur district of the northeastern Indian state of Manipur.

Since Bangladesh is electricity-starved, Dhaka could consider participating in the project under the cross-border power trade cooperation among Saarc countries.

It was agreed that a final call on this matter would be taken by Bangladesh only after getting all details regarding the project.

India has repeatedly assured Bangladesh at various levels that Tipaimukh project would not entail diversion of water of the Barak and so there is no question of affecting the lower riparian country.

Bangladesh in 2009 had sent a 10-member delegation of lawmakers who visited the project site and left convinced that it would not hurt the interests of Bangladesh.

In order to further address concerns over Tipaimukh, it was agreed in yesterday's meeting that state-owned Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam and NHPC will conduct a study on the project before commencing work.

The two companies will then discuss the outcome with Bangladesh authorities and seek the latter's views to explore the possibility of accommodating its suggestions, said the sources.

"The prime minister (Singh) reiterated the assurance he had given to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during his visit to Bangladesh in September that India would not take any step on Tipaimukh project that will adversely affect Bangladesh," Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman Vishnu Prakash said.

The spokesman noted that the Indian government has already conveyed to the Bangladesh government "its readiness to hold discussions on the project".

The two advisers yesterday also met Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Home Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram and External Affairs Minister SM Krishna. They had met Water Resources Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal, Power Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde and National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon the previous day.

Expressing her apprehensions over the project, Bangladesh opposition leader Khaleda Zia wrote to Singh on November 22. Singh wrote back on November 26 saying the project in no way would affect the interests of Bangladesh.

Despite the response, the BNP chief on Thursday at a press conference slammed Hasina's government over the issue saying that India is going ahead with the Tipaimukh project "due to its ineffective and bow-

Eight killed in Iraq attacks

AFP, Baghdad

Bomb and gun attacks in Iraq have killed eight people, including four anti-Qaeda militiamen, and wounded 12 others, security officials said yesterday.

"Four people were killed and seven wounded in two attacks by roadside bombs in the Taji area," just north of Baghdad, an interior ministry official said.

Unknown gunmen attacked a Sahwa checkpoint in the Al-Sharqat area, 120 kilometres northeast of Tikrit, killing three Sahwa members and wounding two others, a police major said.

And in Al-Tuz, about 75 kilometres south of the northern oil city of Kirkuk, a magnetic "sticky bomb" on a car killed a policeman while a roadside bomb wounded three civilians, police Major Khaled al-Bayati said.

He was identified as Nuruzzaman, 28, of Kutubkhali in Jatrabari. His body had stab marks.

down foreign policy".

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan, an environmentalist group, yesterday sent a pigeon -- having a letter tied to its neck -- to the Indian prime minister requesting him not to construct the Tipaimukh dam, reported UNB.

The innovative method of protest came up from a human chain and rally in Khowai Bridge area in Habiganj town in the morning.

Ashraf vows

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He also called upon the main opposition BNP and allies to participate in the elections.

Ashraf was speaking at a rally organised by Dhaka city AL on Bangabandhu Avenue.

His remarks come a day after President Zillur Rahman signed the local government (city corporation) bill passed in parliament last week, amid sharp criticism from the opposition and civil society organisations.

BNP has already called a daylong hartal in the capital for Sunday to protest the government move.

Blasting BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for opposing the split, he said, "I want to challenge BNP to come and participate in the elections. If we lose, we will accept your stance."

By casting ballots, he observed, the city dwellers would give their judgment whether the rearrangement of the city corporation was right or wrong.

The minister urged BNP not to pull out from the elections "in the middle of the night like they did in Narayanganj City Corporation".

He also claimed that opposition party is not brave enough to select their mayoral candidate for the Comilla City Corporation election yet.

Echoing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the AL general secretary criticised those opposing the DCC split. He described the talking heads scabbing about the bifurcation as "Gyanpapi".

He called upon the critics to sit with the party on the issue.

Leaders of the party's central and city units also spoke at the rally.

10 file papers

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Committee. Afzal Khan of Awami League and Yar Ahmed Selim of Jatiya Party also filed nomination papers on the last day. Selim claims himself as the grand alliance-backed mayoral candidate.

The others who applied for mayoral candidacy yesterday include independent candidates Chanchal Ghosh, Hasanul Alam, Salman Sayeed and Major (retd) Mamunur Rashid, Shirin Akhter of JSD and Nur-ur Rahman Mahmud, a rebel candidate from AL.

Earlier on Thursday, another rebel candidate from AL, Anisur Rahman Mithu, submitted his nomination paper.

City JP leader

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might have dumped the body at Balida of Dhamrai after shooting Dipu dead somewhere else. They said his head had bullet holes.

Jahangir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Dhamrai Police Station, told The Daily Star that after Dipu's family identified the body, it was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Mohammad Salahuddin, officer-in-charge of Dhaka Cantonment Police Station, said Dipu's wife filed a general diary around 1:30pm yesterday. She said she had not been able to reach him on his mobile phone since 10 on Thursday night.

Dipu lived in South Manikdi of Matikata in the area.

Meanwhile, police also recovered the body of a transport worker from a sawmill at Donia of Jatrabari yesterday evening.

He was identified as Nuruzzaman, 28, of Kutubkhali in Jatrabari. His body had stab marks.

Outsourcing

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Gurujot Singh Khalsa, CEO of WorldBridge Global Inc, said within the next 15 years Bangladesh should look to earn \$8 billion a year from the business.

He termed the figure realistic.

Countries like India, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Brazil, South Africa and Pakistan are doing business in the US's \$500 billion outsourcing market, he said.

Gurujot Singh said WorldBridge would invest \$150 million in Bangladesh in the next five years, which will create 10,000 direct and 3,000 indirect jobs earning \$100 million in foreign money per year.

It will draw attentions of other global companies to invest in the country, he added.

Danish Ambassador Svend Olling said, "Denmark believes in the future of the IT sector of Bangladesh."

Bangladesh's IT sector is small but it grew 40 percent each year for the last five years, he added.

He suggested that the local investors focus on a single service while dealing with foreigners. At the same time, the government should offer reliable internet connection at a low price.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan said Bangladesh has exported IT products worth \$11 million this year, which is 95 percent more than last year's.

Sajeb Ahmed Wazed, adviser to the ICT state minister, said the present government identified the challenges of the sector and was working to overcome those.

Bangladesh is one of the biggest freelance software developers in the world, he said.

The session was moderated by Richard Sykes, board member of Intellect UK.

Mark Hillary, CEO of IT Decisions of Brazil; Pradeep Mukherji, president and partner of Avasant, USA; H Karthik, vice president of Everest Research, India; Johan Gott, AT Kaerney, USA; Charles Ward, chief operating officer of Intellect, UK; Looi Kien Leong, chairman of ASOCIO, Malaysia; and Jerry E Durant of Philippines also spoke on the occasion.

More than 100 foreign dignitaries are attending the three-day event that will end today.

Half of world

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energy demand. Renewable energy use is increasing, but remains dwarfed by fossil fuel use.

India produced 2272.45 megatons of CO2e, a significant portion from methane generated by agriculture.

"Although per capita energy use in China and India is relatively low, overall energy demand is very large," said Maplecroft Analyst, Chris Laws.

"When combined with high use of coal and other fossil fuels, this results in large emissions in both countries."

Brazil's output of 1,144 megatons from energy use would be significantly higher if deforestation were taken into account.

Among advanced economies, the United States -- No. 1 among large nations for per capita emissions -- produced 6,539 megatons of CO2e.

Russia, at 1,963 megatons, ranked fourth. Its emissions dropped after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but are expected to rise.

In Japan, where output was at 1,203 megatons of CO2e, safety fears over nuclear power could lead to a greater reliance on fossil fuels -- and a spike in carbon emissions, Laws said.

He noted, however, that the Japanese government has announced their intention to fill the energy gap with renewable energy sources.

"The trend of increasing global greenhouse gas emissions is unlikely to be abated in the short-to-medium term," he said by e-mail.

The index of 176 nations ranks countries based on the total annual level of greenhouse gas emissions, combining data on CO2 emissions from energy use and non-CO2 emissions.

Data comes from several sources, including the US Energy Information Administration and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The 194-nation negotiations in Durban, under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), run until December 9.

UNO-led bodies

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important activities of the upazila, he said.

"We do not even know about all the committees, as we did not get copies of all circulars."

Upazila chairmen were made chiefs to two to three committees on less important matters, he said.

These committees have allowed government officials to retain control over the upazila administration ignoring upazila parishads constituted after the January 2009 polls.

"In fact, the upazila parishad administration is now run by these committees formed through circulars in violation of the constitution and the Upazila Parishad Act," local government expert Prof Tofail Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday.

The act allows parishads to form, on their own, standing committees on the departments.

"The standing committees are headed by elected representatives. If these committees are made effective, government officials will lose control over parishad's activities," Tofail said.

The total number of standing committees has been increased to 18 from 14 in the latest changes to the Upazila Parishad Act.

But, unfortunately, the standing committees on departments such as law and order, education, communications, health, land, and social welfare still remain dysfunctional.

Majid said standing committees have been formed but they cannot work for non-functioning of the parishads.

Upazila chairmen and local government experts said the recent changes to the

Upazila Parishad Act have given UNOs more power allowing government officials to consolidate their authority further over parishads.

UNOs have been made principal executive officers to upazila parishads in line with the new provisions. They previously acted as secretaries.

As principal executive officers, UNOs give secretarial assistance to parishads, implement parishads' decisions, ensure financial discipline, and perform other activities stipulated in the rules.

But, chairmen and vice-chairmen of 481 upazila parishads have long been demanding that they are given the authority over all upazila-level employees and officials of 13 departments under 10 ministries.

They say the government should repeal those provisions of the law that conflict with the spirit of the constitution. It is necessary to strengthen and democratise the local government system.

A delegation of upazila parishad chairmen met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Gono Bhaban and placed their demands on October 15.

The cabinet secretary, the prime minister's principal secretary and the local government division secretary were also present there.

Following the meeting, a number of chairmen said the prime minister had given directives to bring department officials under upazila parishad's jurisdiction curtailing UNOs' authority over the field-level administration.

They said the prime minister also asked the cabinet

division and the ministries concerned to issue executive orders to replace UNOs, who are now heading upazila-level committees, with upazila chairmen to make the local government system more effective and hold the government officials accountable at grassroots level.

"The prime minister's directives have not been implemented at all in the last one and a half months," said Mozammel, who was present at the meeting.

He said they plan to meet the cabinet and local government division secretaries next week to raise their demands.

Hasina on October 26 told the House that measures had been taken to reconstitute committees on the departments that have been brought under parishad's jurisdiction, and include chairmen and vice-chairmen in those.

The current state of upazila parishads reflects the Awami League-led government's indifference to its electoral pledge of strengthening local government.

"Local governments of districts and upazilas will be made self-reliant and autonomous, and they will play pivotal role in local development," says the ruling party's election manifesto "Charter for Change" that contributed greatly to its landslide victory in the 2008 parliamentary polls.

AL also promised to bring massive changes to the political structure with emphasis on the local government system. It says union parishads, upazila parishads and zilla parishads will be strengthened through decentralisation of power.

HSBC, Star

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difference in saving the country's environment.

In green business category of HSBC-The Daily Star Climate Awards 2011, Energypac Electronics Ltd won for their pioneering role in promoting, popularising and manufacturing energy efficient lights in Bangladesh.

Bengal Glass Works Ltd won the award in green operations category for their ground-breaking work in reducing energy consumption, heat/carbon emission, water and paper recycling, and waste management. In the same category, Grameenphone Ltd, the country's leading mobile phone operator, won the award, as a foreign entity, for converting 39 base transceiver stations (BTS) into renewable energy-run ones. The company aims to convert 160 more transceivers by 2012.

Radio Today, a popular FM radio channel, won the award in the knowledge management category. Under the campaign Green Radio, it raised awareness among urban people, especially the youth, about keeping the environment clean, saving water, electricity and gas, and managing waste.

In the community engagement category, the award went to Rural Development Academy, Bogra, a government initiative under the LGRD ministry. The academy is engaged in poverty alleviation interventions through research in farming, horticulture, floriculture, tissue culture, pisciculture, livestock, poultry and water management.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid handed over the awards to the winners.

"We have to stop polluting the environment and the nature. It is our obligation to give a safer future to the next generations," Nahid told the ceremony.

He said many rivers have been lost and those that are still alive have toxic water. He said many are damaging the environment either intentionally to serve their interest or unintentionally.

"We have to be aware and take realistic steps to protect the environment, as we face serious danger."

He said steps have to be taken at individual, family, societal and national levels

to create awareness. He said the school-going children have to be educated on this, otherwise the steps will not bear fruit.

The minister thanked HSBC and The Daily Star for introducing the award that can help protect the environment.

Sanjay Prakash, chief executive officer of HSBC, Bangladesh, said impact of climate change is long term. "It is the community that can make the difference..."

Prakash said, "The five climate awardees have shown us how adaptation can help them and the nation as well save the environment."

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said in many cases the damage that is being done to the environment is irreversible. In a sense, the climate cannot repair itself.

"But we have ways and materials to solve the problem. The whole world's knowledge is at the doorstep of Bangladesh," he said, urging all to do something at individual and institutional levels and use less water, polythene and produce less garbage.

ATM Nurul Amin, professor and dean of environment science and management, North South University, said nothing would be achieved if the government does not come forward. The issue requires collective effort.

Nurul Amin led the four-member jury board that picked the winners.

"We have to change our behaviour to save the environment," he said.

AH Md Maqsood Sinha, executive director of Waste Concern, said businesses have to care for the environment, apply commonsense and comply with rules to protect the environment.

Tore Johnsen, chief executive of Grameenphone, Hishamuddin B Saleh, managing director of Bengal Glass Works Ltd, Md Nurul Aktar, CEO of Energypac Electronics, AKM Zakaria, joint director of RDA, Bogra, Moshfiqua Haque, a director of Radio Today, received the awards on behalf of their organisations.

The award winners also vowed to speed up their efforts to protect the environment.

"We have been airing social awareness programmes since we

launched the radio station. We are doing it every single day of the year," said Moshfiqua Haque, adding, "This award will encourage us to do more and do something bigger."

Tore Johnsen said Grameenphone is not focused on only solar energy to reduce energy consumption. "We have reduced our power consumption by 40 percent by changing equipment in our network."

"The new equipment does not require air-conditioners. We have taken air-conditioners out of 7,500 base stations. We will continue to do more to reduce energy consumption," he said.

AKM Zakaria dedicated the award to the country's rural women, who contribute to ensuring food security by preserving seeds.

A ray of hopes

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climate conference at Cancun and its modalities were approved yesterday.

Bangladesh and Canada are the co-chairs of this new window, which will provide ways for countries to assess their loss and damage from climate change.

Once they can quantify their damage, the countries will then be able to demand funds from the window.

So, when a cyclone will hit Bangladesh, it will follow the modalities to assess the damage and then claim funds.

The new window will go into operation at the next climate conference at Doha next year.

Meantime, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) yesterday at a press conference said not all hopes are lost for the Kyoto Protocol and funds.

Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the UNFCCC that hosts the conference, said a ray of hope can be seen at least on two issues -- Kyoto protocol second commitment period and an adaptation fund.

She said many countries have agreed to commit to the second commitment and hoped that a compromise agreement will take place.

Kyoto protocol, the only legally binding emission agreement that was signed in 1997 is to expire in 2012 and efforts are to give it a new lifeline by asking countries to assign it for a second term.

But complexities have arisen as US is not interested to sign it and neither is India.

Locals agitate

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spot, fire-fighters doused the flames, said Shakhawat Hossain, officer-in-charge of South Keraniganj Police Station.

The villagers also vandalised four salt-laden trucks of the company.

Eyewitnesses said six were injured when police charged baton to break up the demonstrations. Four cops received minor injuries from stones hurled at them.

An organiser of the agitation told The Daily Star that at least 100 people had fallen sick for inhaling toxic gas leaked from the factory on October 16.

In the last few months, several explosions took place at the factory, he claimed, adding that people are afraid that huge explosions may occur anytime.

"Global Heavy is polluting the environment with toxic waste and killing our crops and animals," claimed an agitator.

Factory authorities told reporters that they have the required license and environmental certificate for the factory. Also, the area was not a residential area when the factory was set up.

Yet, they added, they were trying to settle the issue through discussions with the locals.

Disappointing

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vindicated as both midfielder Shahedul Alam and goalkeeper Sahidul Alam put in stirring displays. Winger Alamgir Anik was however the odd one out, as the right winger struggled before being substituted at half-time.

It was a largely even encounter although it was perhaps Pakistan who shaded the game on chances, the first of which fell to their UK-based midfielder Adnan Farooq whose dipping effort was brilliantly parried by Sahidul.

Bangladesh grew into the game, largely thanks to crisp interplay in midfield from Shahed, Mamunul and Pranotosh, but