

Boiler blast kills 18 in India

A hundred suffer burns; Many feared trapped under debris at coal-fired power plant in Uttar Pradesh

HINDUSTAN TIMES, Lucknow

At least 18 people were killed and around a hundred others injured in an explosion at a government-run coal-fired power plant in Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareilly district yesterday afternoon.

There was a "sudden abnormal sound" around 3:30pm at a recently commissioned 500 megawatt unit of the 1,550 megawatt plant in Unchahar, said a statement from the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC).

"There was an explosion inside the boiler. After the coal burns it gets deposited and has to be cleared. The people who were engaged in that cleaning," said a senior NTPC executive, requesting anonymity.

State Principal Secretary (home) Arvind Kumar confirmed the death toll.

Talking to Hindustan Times, Additional Director General (Law and order) Anand Kumar said, "The toll might quickly increase."

The plant has been shut down but several workers were still feared trapped under the debris as victims showed people with several minor injuries. The cause of the accident wasn't immediately known.

The accident occurred in the ash-handling section of the plant, and ash gushed out at high-temperature, burning several workers, said Lalmani Verma, an engineer at NTPC which is India's largest power-generation utility.

Two cops hurt in BCL infighting at CU

CU CORRESPONDENT

Two policemen were injured during the Chhatra League infighting on the Chittagong University campus last night.

Sources at the CU said BCL activist Mohammad Jobayer, an MBA student of the university, was injured when he was run over by a truck around 9:45pm as he tried to stop a scuffle between two groups of BCL.

He was taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

As the news spread, the two groups clashed and fought in the campus and heaved brick bats at each other.

Several police officers and law enforcement personnel were deployed to quell the violence. One of the officers was injured.

Another officer was injured when he was hit by a brick.

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Forgetting a dark past

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to his senses. Then and there he forgot himself that if he survived he would give up their once and for all.

"I really didn't to my past," says Motiur. "Each week I used to make off with hundreds of trees from the forest to support my family."

Looking for a new occupation, Motiur put his hand up to participate in training organised by a local non-government organisation, CODEC. He would learn about vermiculture, how to produce natural fertiliser using earthworms.

"Timber never really brought solvency to my family but vermiculture does," says Motiur. "Nowadays I produce more than 2,000 tonnes of compost to earn over Tk 80,000 per month. My two siblings are in high school and it's no trouble to cover their expenses. One of them achieved a GPA-5 in the primary school certificate."

As much as his improved economic condition, Motiur appreciates the dignity of an honest living. "Every morning people arrive at my home to buy fertiliser or ask questions," Motiur says. "I enjoy teaching the other villagers how to make compost. It can help them as well."

He not only helps villagers informally but regularly offers his advice at formal training sessions too. And to cope with demand, Motiur has opened four sales centres for his compost.

"We didn't know anything about vermiculture," admits local farmer Md Ibrahim. "Motiur distributed some for free and when we used it we realised it was better than the fertiliser we used before."

"Vermicompost is cheaper and also environmentally-friendly," agrees another farmer, Abdul Rahim. "Our farming costs have reduced significantly because of it."

The vermiculture Motiur is producing has changed the whole economic scenario of our village," says Md Golam Kabir Talukdar, chairman of the local Padda union, chairman in Buenos Aires said. A Belgian woman on a trip with her mother and sister was also killed, Brussels said.

One Argentine, a German and three Belgians, were among the at least 11

who were killed in the attack. The police are trying to restore order on the campus.

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JSC examinees

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The boat capsized after hitting a pillar of the Krishanapur Bridge under construction. Most of the students, except eight, swam ashore. It is suspected that the eight girls did not know how to swim. Deputy Assistant Director Sharul Ashan Bhuiyan of Brahmanbaria Fire Service said.

Passersby helped rescue bodies of two girls and the three others injured. All the rescued girls were rushed to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital, where doctors declared two of them dead on arrival.

Nabinagar upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) Tanvir Salehin Gazi told The Daily Star that firefighters are continuing their search for the three missing girls.

Meanwhile Comilla Education Board chairman Abdul Khaleque, Brahmanbaria Deputy Commissioner Rezwanur Rahman and officials of various administrative departments visited the spot.

The district administration of Brahmanbaria formed a three-member inquiry committee to probe the incident. The committee is headed by Additional Deputy Magistrate ADM Shabbir Hossain and has members are Nabinagar upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) Tanvir Salehin Gazi and District Secondary Education Officer Gautam Chandra Mitra.

Comilla Education Board chairman Abdul Khaleque said this was an unexpected incident. Necessary action will be taken if someone is responsible for it, he added.

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PM's residence

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children and two of his associates in massive explosions inside their flat. The Rab claimed those were suicide blasts. Habibullah was arrested during the drive.

At a press conference on Tuesday, Mufi Mahmud Khan, director (legal and media wing) of Rab claimed that Sabir had been planning either to carry out a suicide attack on the houses of government high-ups with an aircraft or kidnap passengers of an aircraft and take it to a country in the Middle East.

The Rab official did not give details of the alleged plans. He claimed that they came to know about the plans made by Sabir along with Abdullah and Sarwar Jahan before and after the Gulshan Café attack last year.

Sarwar Jahan, a suspected JMB man, died after he jumped off a five-storey building during a Rab raid in Ashulia on the outskirts of the capital on October 8 last year.

The Rab official also claimed that they came to know about Sabir from suspected militant Bilal Hossain, who was arrested in Narayanganj on October 26.

Although Rab claimed that Abdullah was a top leader of Jama'at al Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), DMP's counterterrorism sources said the man, widely known as Kabutar Abdullah, had cut ties with the banned militant outfit.

Wishing anonymity, a CTC official

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Bhola gas

FROM PAGE 1

Ahmed Akbar Sobhan, chairman of Bashundhara Group, one of the largest business conglomerates, and president of Bangladesh Land Developers Association, said keeping retention areas for storm water management is an archaic idea.

"Do not make a plan that you cannot implement," he said, addressing Rajuk Chairman Md Abdul Rahman, who was chairing the meeting. "Any attempt to prepare a DAP excluding us would be a blunder."

Maj Gen Abu Sayed Md Masud, chairman of Jolshiri Abashon, a private housing scheme in Ruppangji defence officials, said DAP should not be prepared hurriedly and should be implementable.

Lack of coordination among different government agencies is not favourable for planned development, he observed. General Sayed, also the chief coordinator of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge.

In response, DAP Project Director Md Ashrafur Islam said the provisions for water retention areas in the city's eastern fringes are already incorporated in the DAP based on a study by British consulting firm Halcorw Group.

According to the master plan, there is no scope for endorsing whatever wetland and water bodies are filled up, said Rajuk development member planning Ziaul Hasan.

Echoing him, Rajuk Chairman Md Abdul Rahman said officials recorded rivers, canals and water bodies before they were filled up.

The 2,100-acre Jolshiri Abashon proposed in between the Balu and Shitalakkhya rivers in 24 maujas of Ruppangji upazila included flood zone, water bodies, agricultural lands and rural homesteads that the DAP earmarked as seven-minister.

However, a convenor committee later reviewed the DAP on recommendation by Rajuk and altered the designated land use on the basis of a water modelling design to make way for the housing scheme.

Similar land use alteration followed in favour of Bashundhara residential

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ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Myanmar's baffling claim

STAR DESK

Myanmar has come up with a baffling claim that Bangladesh is responsible for delaying the repatriation process of over 600,000 Rohingyas in hopes of gaining from international donations.

Myanmar was ready to begin the repatriation process any time, based along the lines of an agreement that covered returns of Rohingyas to Myanmar in the early 1990s. Reuters reports yesterday quoting Zaw Htay, spokesman for Myanmar's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi.

Claiming Bangladesh had yet to accept those terms, Zaw Htay linked the delay by Bangladesh to the money raised so far by the international community to help build gigantic refugee camps for the Rohingyas.

"Currently they (Bangladesh) have got \$400 million. Over their receipt of this amount, we are now afraid of delaying the programme of deporting the refugees," he said in comments carried in a front-page article in the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper on Wednesday.

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