

Murderers go unpunished

PBI examines 239 judgments; blames investigation, prosecution for failures

BISHAKHA DEVNATH

In 2017, a villager was killed as two groups clashed over the theft of a cow in Companiganj upazila of Sylhet. It took one year to complete the investigation of the murder case. Another seven years was taken to finish the trial. The pursuit of delayed justice resulted in nothing; in the verdict delivered in 2015, no one was punished.

This is just one example of the 239 judgments of as many murder cases that the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) researched to find reasons behind acquittal of accused in murder cases.

The judgments studied were delivered in Sylhet in 2015 and Chittagong, Rangpur, Barisal, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Bogra and Khulna in 2016.

51% cases saw no punishment

16 cases with faulty investigation leading to acquittals

Magistrate made mistakes in four cases

Post mortem report errors in 14 cases

No action ordered against those responsible

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the research findings which showed that more than 51 percent of the cases saw no conviction.

Sloppy investigations and medical reports, improper recording of confessional statements by magistrates and out-of-court settlements with prosecution witnesses, led to the acquittal of accused in 111 murder cases, the report stated.

"The honourable judges pointed out some of the mistakes in the judgments but didn't order any action against the police, investigation officer or any others responsible for them," the PBI said in the report.

It cited loopholes in the investigation and in the way the prosecution presented their arguments in court.

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Justice at cost of 28yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-two years ago, Abdul Kader was going to a local cattle market in Saatmile area of Jessore with two cattle he had brought from home. With him was his neighbour Mofizur Rahman who also had two to sell.

They were stopped by the members of the then Bangladesh Rifles and asked for documentations for the cattle, which the duo did not have.

A lance nayek of the paramilitary force filed a smuggling

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Abdul Kader

INAM AHMED and SHAKHAWAT LITON

The council members sat grim faced in the chamber of the UN Security Council. On the screen in front of them was projected an image with the words: IRAQ: FAILING TO DISARM: Denial and Deception.

Words like "accumulation of facts and disturbing patterns of behaviour" boomed in the chamber. The date was February 5, 2003. The speaker, US secretary of state General Colin Powell.

Months before, the US had started to look for the *casus belli*, a

justification of war, to invade Iraq and bring about a "regime change", get rid of Saddam Hussein. Despite US efforts, western allies were not convinced that Iraq had WMDs, or it had any intentions of attacking Western interests or the United States. Long time US allies like the governments of France, Germany and New Zealand argued there were no evidences to support US claims.

There were worldwide protests and anti-war rallies against the invasion of Iraq. The largest ever anti-war rally of three million people, according to the Guinness

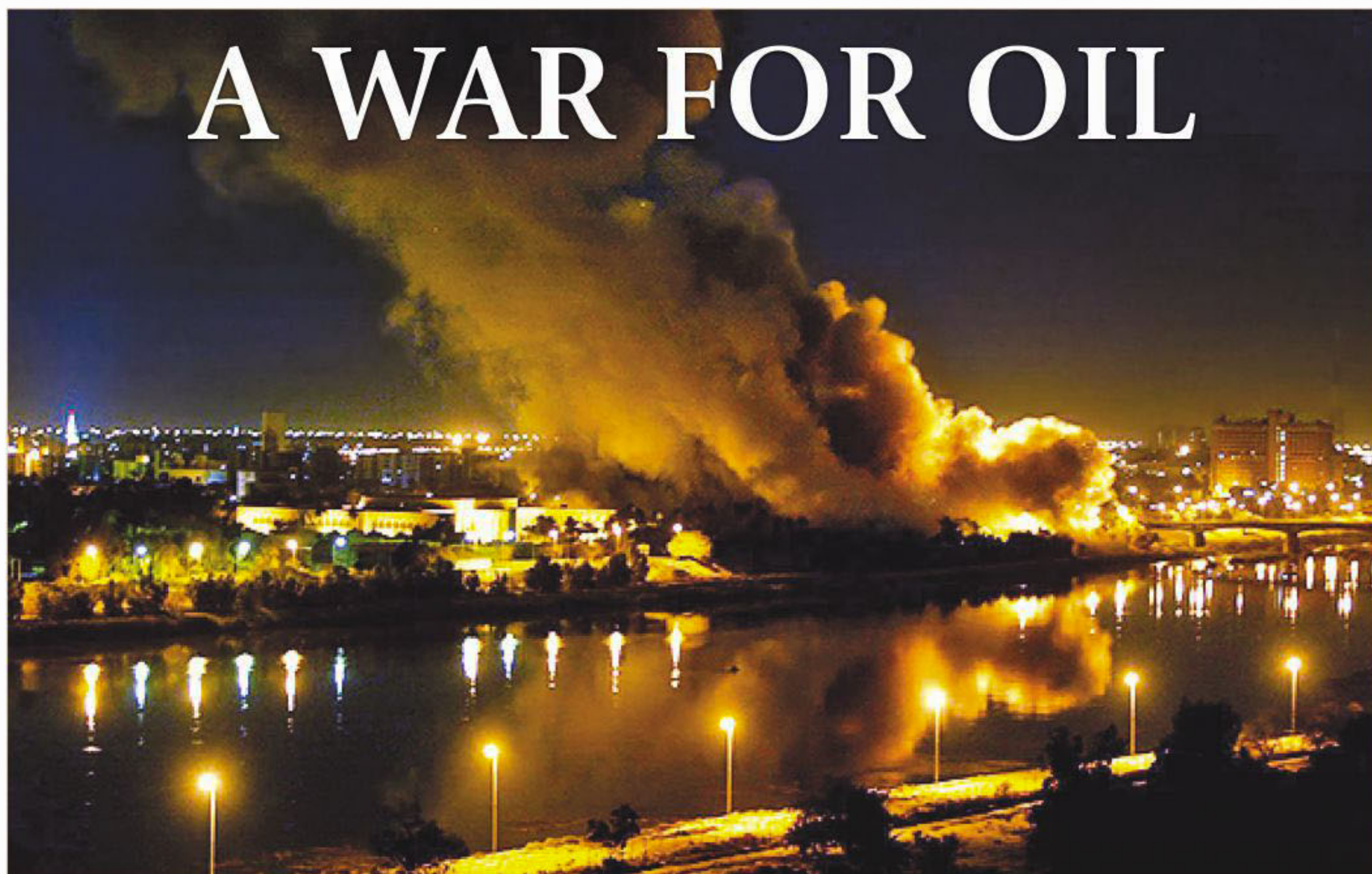
Book of World Records, was held in Rome. Between 3 January and 12 April, 2003, 36 million people across the globe took part in 3,000 protests against the Iraq war, according to French academic Dominic Reynié.

On that day, in the UN Security Council, the US was determined to prove its cause. This was its presentation before the world community to persuade them that Saddam Hussein was amassing WMD, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and was seeking to acquire nuclear capabilities to attack western inter-

ests. As Colin Powell pointed out pictures on the screen claiming those to be of biological weapons production facilities on wheels to escape UN inspectors, the whole world listened to his speech full of charged words.

Colin Powell was to address the press after his presentation outside the Security Council chamber where a tapestry version of one of the world's greatest anti-war arts, the "Guernica" by Pablo Picasso hung on the wall. The day before the presentation, the "Guernica"

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The first wave of American bombing of Baghdad at the start of the Iraq War on March 19, 2003.

FILE PHOTO: AFP

WORLD WATER DAY TODAY



Contaminated with industrial effluents, blackish water of Gupta Khal flows into the Karnaphuli near Airport Road in Chittagong city. Locals say this stretch of the river is a dolphin habitat.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



MARCH 22, 1971

Yahya postpones March 25 Nat'l Assembly session

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pakistan's president Yahya Khan declared postponement of March 25 National Assembly saying it was deferred to create unity among the political parties and leaders through discussions.

In the morning, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Pakistan

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FROM LDC TO DEVELOPING NATION

Celebration starts today

Some roads in city to remain closed for four hours today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has chalked out a two-day programme from today to celebrate the country's eligibility to graduate to a developing country from a least developed one.

As part of the celebration, Finance Minister AMA Muhith will hand over the UN's letter of recognition to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a reception at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre at 10:00am today.

The UN's Committee for Development Policy (CDP) gave the letter to Bangladesh on March 15.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police announced that a number of roads in the capital will be closed from 2:00pm to 6:00pm today to facilitate the celebration.

The closure of the roads may lead to traffic jam in the city. At a press conference at the secretariat yesterday, Monowar Ahmed, additional secretary of the Economic

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Four killed as train hits van in Feni

2 more crushed under train wheels in Rajshahi

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed in two accidents involving as many trains in Feni and Rajshahi yesterday.

In Feni, four people were killed and two others injured when the Chittagong-bound Turna Nishita Express from Dhaka hit a covered van on Barahipur rail crossing around 4:30am.

The impact of the collision threw the vehicle off the railway track, killing three people, including the driver and his helper, dead on the spot, railway police and witnesses said.

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