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Nuke answer to power

Govt firm on building N-plant to end electricity crisis, minister tells roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Previous governments may not have kept the promise to build a nuclear power plant for the last 40 years but this Awami League government is committed to make it happen during its tenure, said State Minister for Science and ICT Yeafesh Osman yesterday.

"We mean business," he said at a discussion titled "Prospects of nuclear power in Bangladesh", adding, "The Awami League has pledged to build the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant. We are clear about this. We have no option but to go for nuclear power for future energy security."

The discussion, jointly organised by Buet Alumni Association (Buetaa) and The Daily Star at The Daily Star conference room, overwhelmingly advocated immediate steps to build a 1,000-megawatt (MW) nuclear power plant at a staggered cost of \$2 billion.

NUCLEAR HIGHLIGHTS	
PROBLEM	SOLUTION
Nuclear fuel is available only from a small club of suppliers who are driven by geopolitics as well as cost.	Bangladesh should organise multi-country consortium of nuclear power plant operators to buy and reprocess fuel
To have a single 1000 mw plant, the grid capacity needs to be at least 10,000 mw to avoid national grid failure	Bangladesh can interconnect power grid with India or Myanmar to make the grid capacity even higher
Dumping nuclear waste is risky and complicated	The waste can be sent back to the nuclear fuel supplier or dumped by packing the waste in glass material down to subsoil hard rock layer in designated parts of the country

The discussants felt that the country's gas and coal resources are simply not enough to meet the future demands while nuclear power provides emission-free energy.

President of Buetaa Jamilur Reza Chowdhury moderated the discussion

in which Energy Adviser to the Prime Minister Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury and former adviser to a caretaker government CS Karim also participated.

While Yeafesh Osman did not shed light on the expected memorandum of understanding with Russia later this

month for two 1,000MW power plants, he said, "Whomever we sign our deals with, it will be win-win for both. We do not want charity. We want to win and we want the other country to win as well."

Such a plant can be built over a period of five years to 14 years at most with a life cycle of 40 to 50 years. Such plants are costly mainly because safety needs to be ensured.

The Rooppur Nuclear Power Project was conceived in early 60s and 260 acres of land was acquired for it close to the Padma since nuclear plants need huge amount of water for its cooling system. Experts reviewed the site in 2001 for a 600MW plant and had certified it as suitable.

The nation should prepare its manpower to run such plants, introduce education to create such manpower in the future and set up a new

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DETAILS ON PAGE 12

Govt's borrowing from banks may rise 34pc

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government's bank borrowing target for the next fiscal year (FY) may be increased by 34 percent over this year's and set at Tk 18,000 crore due to a possible mismatch between budgetary earning and expenditure next year.

In the current FY, the target of bank borrowing is Tk 13,500 crore.

Finance ministry sources however said the government may have to borrow Tk 10,000 crore, and not the targeted amount, because of a cut in annual development programme (ADP) and reduced subsidy requirement.

The ministry has already prepared a primary outlay of the budget for next FY. According to the outlay, revenue earning would increase by 12 per cent over that in the revised budget for this FY year but expenditure would go up by about 20 per cent.

Sources said deficit financing of about Tk 36,000 crore would be required in the next FY because of the mismatch between budgetary income and expenditure. Part of the deficit would be met with funds from foreign sources and savings instruments. And the government plans to borrow a big amount from banks.

Due to the rise in government's overall borrowing every year,

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5TH AMENDMENT Scrapping to mean ban on religion-based political parties Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said over 50 religion-based political parties will get banned if the Supreme Court upholds the High Court (HC) verdict declaring illegal the fifth amendment to the constitution.

Talking to reporters at his residence, he said parties like Jamaat-e-Islami and Muslim League were rehabilitated thanks to the fifth amendment.

"The amendment did away with the proviso of article 38 that banned parties exploiting religion for political gains. Now if it is declared null and

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OnlinePoll ✓

Do you think expanding and shuffling the cabinet will enable the govt perform better?

○ Yes (46.86%)
○ No (48.17%)
○ No Comments (4.97%)

Total votes: 845

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think that Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) should lift the ban on Bangladeshi cricketers playing in ICL tournament?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Troops kill 55 Taliban in fierce Swat fighting Suspected US missile strike claims 9 more in Pakistan

AP, Mingora

Doctors rushed to treat wounded Pakistani civilians and desperate refugees looted UN supplies yesterday, as thousands of troops backed by bomb-dropping warplanes sought to purge Taliban militants from a northwestern valley.

The army said it killed as many as 55 more Taliban fighters in clashes in the Swat Valley on Saturday. Four soldiers were wounded, a military statement said.

Further south, a suspected US missile strike killed nine people, mostly foreigners, in another militant stronghold near the Afghan border, officials said. The identities of the victims not immediately unclear.

Pakistan's leaders, encouraged by the United States,

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Dr Wazed no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent scientist and husband of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Dr MA Wazed Miah passed away yesterday afternoon in the capital's Square Hospital after a prolonged battle with multiple illnesses.

The prime minister was beside her husband at the moment of his passing away. He had been suffering for long from high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, and renal failure, and had been undergoing treatment in the hospital for the last one year.

The health condition of Dr Wazed, an internationally renowned nuclear scientist and a former chief of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, started

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Khaleda rushes to Sudha Sadan, consoles Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia rushed to Sudha Sadan last night to stand beside Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and convey her condolence on the death of Dr MA Wazed Miah.

The BNP chairperson went there around 9:00pm and stayed for around 25 minutes.

The BNP also decided last night to postpone a human chain programme today to show respect to Dr Wazed.

"The BNP chairperson hugged Sheikh Hasina and

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NID cards only for those eligible for becoming voters

Draft NID registration rules suggest

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Only people eligible for being registered as voters will now be entitled to get national identity (NID) card, according to a draft national identity registration act.

It also proposed that preparation of fake NID card and any cooperation in this regard would be considered a non-bailable offence with the offender liable to imprisonment for up to seven years.

The draft act has proposed empowerment of the Election Commission (EC) to carry out the task of preparation, distribution and preservation of NID cards, sources said quoting it.

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