

Nuke answer

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body to implement and run the project, said speakers who represented Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC), Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), the private sector and International Finance Corporation (IFC).

A plant cannot be so large that it generates more than 10 percent of the total peak supply to the national grid. Otherwise, such a plant may cause the whole grid to fail. It means that the national grid should have a peak supply of 10,000MW to have a single unit 1,000MW nuclear plant. The speakers said if the country goes for nuclear power now, the national demand would hit around 10,000MW anyway by 2016.

Towfiq-e-Elahi picked a suggestion from another discussant to address this issue. "If our grid is connected to the regional [India or Myanmar] grid, then the 10 percent issue can be addressed. We would like to extend our grid to the regional network during our government's tenure."

He pointed out that even if the country had enough gas, the energy sources should be diversified. Nuclear power should be one of the choices.

"We are open to new ideas. We are committed to nuclear power. It is sad that our engineers went to other countries to build nuclear power plants while we sat for decades. But let us start now," Towfiq-e-Elahi said.

In addition to ensuring highest level of safety, the government needs to address one of the main impediments to nuclear power, ensuring purchase of nuclear fuel. This can be a geopolitical issue as only a few countries produce and sell uranium, the fuel that needs to be replenished every 18 to 24 months.

The other constraint is dumping the radioactive nuclear waste, which is still a globally debated issue. While it does not emit harmful gases, nuclear waste is an environmental issue. Most plants preserve the nuclear waste at the plant site, while some waste is dumped underground in deserts. A speaker suggested that Bangladesh should strike a deal with the fuel supplier to take back the waste.

A 1,000MW nuclear plant running at 80 percent factor for one year generates waste of 78 cubic feet, the roundtable was told.

Presenting a paper, Abdul Matin, former chief nuclear engineer of BAEC, said currently there are 436 nuclear reactors in the world generating 372,000MW power. Forty-four reactors with 38,848MW capacity are under construction. By 2030 there will be 862 reactors in the world generating more than 800,000MW.

He said nuclear electricity

generation cost is cheaper than coal or gas fired power in most countries. The cost of power from nuclear energy in France is 3.93 cents per kilowatt while it is 4.42 cents for coal power and 4.30 cents for gas power. In Japan the cost of nuclear, coal and gas-generated electricity are 6.86 cents, 6.91 cents and 6.38 cents respectively. In the USA nuclear power costs 4.65 cents, coal 3.65 and gas 4.90 cents.

Matin explained why there was a renewed interest in nuclear power worldwide. "World's fossil fuel reserves are limited and depleting fast. There is growing concern about emission of greenhouse gases from the combustion of fossil fuels and the consequent global warming and climate change. At the same time, nuclear power provides a safe, environmentally clean and economically viable alternative source of power generation," he said.

He noted that if 50 percent of our 13.5 trillion cubic feet of gas is dedicated to electricity, it will provide 3200MW for 30 years. If 90 percent of 1,000 million tonnes of the country's coal is dedicated to power generation, it will produce 15,750MW power for 30 years.

The country's power demand will shoot to 5,720MW next year, 9,211MW in 2015, 14,172MW in 2020 and 20,823MW in 2025. Presently the country can supply up to 4,162MW of power.

In the short term, Bangladesh may import electricity from neighbouring countries, improve plant efficiency, import Liquefied Natural Gas and take up conservation measures. In medium term, the country may go for coal and gas exploration, interconnect the national grid with neighbouring countries, go for two 1,000MW nuclear power plants in Rooppur, to be in commission in 2016 and 17.

In the long term, the country should use coal on a large scale for power and take up four 1,000MW nuclear plants for base load in Chittagong and Khulna to be in commission between 2022 and 2026.

Hizb ut-Tahrir

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teenage boys were in attendance.

The Hizb ut-Tahrir operatives were holding the meeting without prior permission they needed to do so, he added.

Besides the leaflets, a lap top, CDs and a banner were recovered during the raid.

In primary interrogations, the arrestees admitted they are members of the Islamic outfit suspected to have links to militancy.

OC Wazed said the others were not detained as they were there believing it was going to be a religious gathering.

Lanka shelling hospitals

Says rights group

AP, Colombo

Human Rights Watch on Saturday accused Sri Lankan forces of repeatedly striking hospitals in the northern war zone with indiscriminate artillery and aerial attacks that have killed scores of people, a charge the military denied.

The New York-based group claimed military commanders responsible for ordering or conducting such attacks "may be prosecuted for war crimes."

The accusation came amid growing international concern for an estimated 50,000 civilians caught in the fighting between government forces and the separatist Tamil Tigers.

In the latest clashes, naval vessels destroyed two rebel boats after a sea battle off the northeast coast Saturday, killing at least 14 rebels, a military statement said.

On Friday, troops pushed further into the rebel territory, capturing an earthen fortification. The military said soldiers found 35 bodies of rebel fighters killed in the fighting.

There was no comment from rebels and it is difficult to verify the military's claims because reporters and independent observers are barred from the war zone.

Government troops in recent months have ousted the rebels from their strongholds across the north and say they have cornered the Tigers in a sliver of land just four kilometres-long on the northeast coast.

US sees

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The State Department also said the (ruling) Awami League failed to make good on promises to enact into legislation democratic-reform ordinances approved by the caretaker government.

"The ruling party rejected caretaker government measures to decentralise government and to clearly separate judicial functions from the executive branch. Parliament did enact, however, caretaker government measures to fight terrorism and money laundering that received strong support from the US government and other countries that provide Bangladesh counter-terrorism assistance."

The government was rocked by a mutiny by border guards on February 25-26, 2009 in which more than 50 army officers were murdered, said the State Department.

It observed that Sheikh Hasina faced strong opposition within the military for not ordering an immediate attack on the mutinous guards.

The political situation appeared to have stabilised several weeks after the mutiny, and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation sent teams to Dhaka to provide technical assistance to Bangladesh authorities responsible for the probe into the incident, said the addition to background note.

Australia, Japan

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destinations, including Thailand and Taiwan.

Japan's Health Ministry said it was checking into the reports but could not immediately confirm them.

Masuzoe acknowledged it would be difficult to trace all those who came into contact with the three infected Japanese, who were isolated and recovering at a hospital near Narita International Airport.

Asia has been largely spared from the virus that continues to claim lives in worst-hit Mexico, which announced its 45th death and 159 more cases Friday even as it emerged from a national shutdown that closed schools and businesses and shuttered churches and soccer stadiums.

But a handful of cases have cropped up in the region, including in South Korea and Hong Kong. The Chinese territory quarantined more than 200 people in a hotel after confirming its first case in a guest a week ago. They were released on Friday, and many were unable to contain their delight as they poured from the building for the first time in seven days. One man hugged a police officer and broke into song.

Australia reported its first case on Saturday in a woman it said was no longer infectious. She first noticed her symptoms while travelling in the US, federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon told reporters.

New Zealand the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to confirm cases reported two more on Saturday for a total of seven. The two high school students returned last month from a school trip to Mexico as had the five others diagnosed with the virus.

Infighting grips

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On the other hand, some younger junior leaders and a section of senior leaders, who still have a chance of being included in the new full-fledged committee, are demanding a fresh central committee excluding elderly leaders who are above the age of 40, married, and involved in professional lives, the sources added.

The two-year tenure of the existing central committee, with Azizul Barea Babu and Senior Vice-president Sultan Salauddin Tuku are allegedly lobbying for a convening committee while Organising Secretary Abdul Kader Bhuiyan Jewel, Joint Secretary Amirul Islam Khan Alim, and some other top leaders of Dhaka University unit are demanding a fresh full-fledged committee.

Shaful Barea Babu however said, "A convening committee might run JCD for a while after BNP district committees are reorganised."

"Some leaders expressed their demand for a convening committee to the chairperson while some others proposed a full-fledged committee," Babu said adding there is no internal feud in JCD except some competition for being in the leadership.

Tuku said, "We are demanding a convening committee, so we may reorganise grassroots committees before forming the new central committee, as we the older generation has the experience for doing that."

Some JCD leaders and activists even got involved in an altercation at a hospital in the capital a few days ago over who will and will not find places in the next full-fledged committee, according to the JCD sources.

"Some top most leaders

who are in the present committee and will not find places in the fresh committee, are lobbying BNP leaders very hard for a convening committee," a JCD central leader said on condition of anonymity.

"But, we the junior leaders, want fresh leadership giving priority to young leaders," he said adding, "JCD should come out of the grip of existing elderly leadership."

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Project for disabled

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support for the whole project." Higher officials of the social welfare ministry, including its secretary Quomaran Nessa Khanam, could not be contacted after repeated attempts. It also urges the government to take necessary action to launch the project formally to provide services and better prospect for the millions of persons with disabilities as well as disadvantaged children in the country. Pointing out the reason behind the negligence of government official, JPUF governing body member Zahirul Alam said the WB gave a condition before the government that an independent body would be able to implement the project. He said some progress have already been made to launch the programme, including recruitment of project staff, approved by the planning commission on behalf of JPUF.

But the project money remains unused, as the government officials are reluctant to play their roles in starting the project activities, sources said. Though Social Welfare Ministry Secretary Quomaran Nessa in a report published in The Daily Star on April 1 claimed that they are trying to rehabilitate PWDs with trainings, assistance and development programmes through JPUF but the ministry is yet to take any initiative to launch the project formally.

The project has two components. One involving \$ 13 million under the project has been taken for welfare of disadvantaged children while another is involving \$ 22 million for the PWDs who represent 10 percent of the

country's population.

The project titled 'Promotion of Services and Opportunities to the Disabled Persons of Bangladesh', has been taken to treat disability as a development issue, raise awareness about it among policymakers and legislators and make existing laws and policies friendly to PWDs.

This programme would also provide services to PWDs, especially rehabilitation to disabled women, and education for them. The WB is providing the project money with a condition of making the project implementing organisation JPUF an independent body to deal with the programme. JPUF worked earlier under the social welfare ministry, has been made an independent body after restructuring. - Edited by Mahamudul Haque

Law minister

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void, that proviso will be back in force meaning a ban on the religion-based parties."

Shafique also noted that many political parties might have to change their names and charters if the fifth amendment, brought in 1979 to validate the changes made to the constitution by the martial law proclamations, is eventually rendered invalid.

He, however, said contrary to propaganda by some quarters, the word Bismillah will not be dropped from the constitution, and nor will Baksal [one-party rule] be reinstated.

The issue came to the fore after the government recently filed an application with the apex court to withdraw the appeal against the landmark HC verdict delivered in August 2005.

NID cards only

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According to a now defunct ordinance promulgated during the tenure of immediate past caretaker government, a separate national identity registration authority was supposed to be formed, and all citizens of the country were entitled to have NID card.

But the ordinance ceased to have effect on February 25 since it was not ratified by parliament within the timeframe specified in the constitution.

Officials in the EC Secretariat said NID cards prepared alongside preparation of the voter list remained unprotected, and it is difficult to take actions against making fake NID cards in the absence of necessary law.

The draft act provides for stern action against making fake NID cards, and destroying genuine ones.

Senior officials of the ministries of finance, law, and home, and of the EC discussed the draft at a meeting on Wednesday at the EC Secretariat.

"Now, we will send it to the law ministry for taking steps to make it a law," a senior EC official told The Daily Star.

The draft act also proposes that the EC could collect fee for providing NID card, and an individual holding such card

will have to renew it after 10 years.

Information collected during preparation and revision of voter list with photographs will be used as information for making NID cards. And according to the electoral rolls act 2009, every Bangladeshi citizen eligible for being registered as voter will be entitled to get NID card.

Asked about this, EC officials said it is not possible to give NID card to all citizens, particularly those below 18, which is the minimum age for being a voter.

The draft act provides that the government may make use of NID card mandatory for access to services and facilities in 17 fields.

It proposes that one will have to show NID card for getting a new passport or driving licence or their renewal, taxpayer identification number (TIN), business identification number, applying for jobs, opening bank account, getting bank loan, drawing government allowances, for trade licence, marriage registration, sale and purchase of land and properties, purchase of vehicles, gas, electricity, water and telephone connection and government facilities like subsidy and assistance.

Outlaw killed in 'crossfire'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An outlawed party leader was killed in a shootout between Rab and his cohorts at Khaskarra village in Alamdanga upazila of Chuadanga district early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Saidur Rahman, 32, a ring-leader of Janajuddha, one of the factions of Purbo Banglar Communist Party.

Police said Saidur, hailed from the village, was leading the outfit for regrouping the party cadres in the area.

Acting on a tip off, a team of the police and Rab raided a mango orchard of the village where Saidur and his men were holding a secret meeting at about 4:15 am.

Police said sensing presence of the law enforcers, the gang threw two bombs targeting the law enforcers, prompting them to open fire on the outlawed party cadres.

Saidur was killed in 'crossfire' during the shootout but his accomplices managed to flee, according to police.

Police recovered one revolver, three bombs and 20 bullets from the spot.

Saidur was wanted in five cases, including murder.

Khaleda

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said words of condolence," said a witness, adding that Khaleda also talked with other members of Hasina's family.

Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, a standing committee member of the BNP, said the two leaders met and Khaleda conveyed her sympathy to the PM.

"We are here to pray for the salvation of Dr Wazed Miah's departed soul and give strength to his bereaved family so that they can overcome the immense loss," he told reporters at Sudha Sadan. He hoped that the gesture Khaleda showed would have positive impact on the country's politics.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Moudud Ahmed, MK Anwar, Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, Nazrul Islam Khan and Rizvi Ahmed also visited Sudha Sadan to convey their sympathy to Dr Wazed's family.

Earlier, after the grenade attack on the then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina on August 21, 2004, Khaleda, the PM at that time, expressed desires to visit her at Sudha Sadan but could not due to strong opposition from Awami League supporters.

The BNP last night postponed its human chain programme announced on April 23 to protest the government's "attempt to hide the real culprits" of the Pilkhana carnage and press home its demand for quick and fair trial of the perpetrators.

"The decision has been taken to show respect to the noted scientist [Dr Wazed]," Rizvi Ahmed, BNP office secretary, told The Daily Star last night.

Immediately after getting the news of Dr Wazed Miah's death, the BNP chairperson asked the party secretary general to postpone the protest programme.

Govt's borrowing

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expenditure on payment of interest is also increasing, they pointed out.

About 17.3 per cent or Tk 12,570 crore of the revenue budget for this FY has been estimated to be spent on payment of interest on government borrowing. The amount may be about Tk 14,000 crore in the revised budget, and in the next FY it may go rise to Tk 16,000 crore.

The government's outstanding domestic debt till February this year stood at Tk 87,186 crore. As per statistics in February last year, foreign outstanding debt was Tk 1,48,833 crore or \$21,574 million.

Since the budget for next FY is the first one to be presented by this government, officials said allocation for both development and non-development expenditure is going to be large.

The size of the next budget is estimated to be Tk 1,13,000 crore while that of the revised budget for this FY is around Tk 95,000 crore.

And the size of next budget may increase further to implement recommendations of the National Pay Commission, sources noted.

Development expenditure in the next budget may be Tk 30,500 crore compared to Tk 23,000 crore in the revised budget estimate for the current FY.

According to latest information, revenue earning target for the next FY may be less than Tk 78,000 crore. Of this, the NBR's earning would be over Tk 60,000 crore.

In the revised estimate for this FY, revenue earning is Tk 69,000 crore.

Sources mentioned that a major source of the country's revenue earning is import. The global recession would affect it.

55 Taliban

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launched a full-scale offensive in Swat this week to halt the spread of Taliban control in districts within 100km of the capital.

But the fighting has caused hundreds of thousands of terrified residents to flee, adding a humanitarian emergency to the nuclear-armed nation's security, economic and political problems.

Witness accounts indicated that scores of civilians have already been killed or injured in the escalating clashes in Swat and the neighbouring Buner and Lower Dir districts.

On Saturday, medics at the hospital in Swat's main town, Mingora, were rushing to treat dozens of residents caught up in the fighting.

Riaz Khan, a 36-year-old schoolteacher, his wife and two daughters occupied four of the beds, the shrapnel wounds on their arms and legs covered by bandages.

Khan said his other two daughters were killed three days earlier when a mortar shell hit their home near Mingora.

"We buried our daughters on Thursday when the army relaxed the curfew," he told an Associated Press reporter. "We reached the hospital only with great difficulty."

Nisar Khan, one of only three doctors left at the hospital, said there were about 25 war-wounded among the 100 patients.

The unidentified bodies of three women and a man apparently killed in the fighting were also being kept there, even though the hospital had no morgue, he said.

There were scuffles Saturday between police and dwellers of one of the still-crude camps mushrooming around the city of Mardan, just south of the war zone.

Television image showed

dozens of men making off with blankets and tins of cooking oil. A policeman thumped one looter with the butt of his rifle while a man wearing a T-shirt bearing a UN logo urged others to return their booty.

"When people are desperate, it's hardly surprising that things like this happen," said Ariane Rumery, a spokeswoman for the UN refugee agency.

The agency has registered some 150,000 people fleeing the latest fighting. Pakistani and UN officials say the total number displaced may reach half a million.

Pakistan's army is fighting to wrest Swat and neighbouring districts from militants who dominate the adjoining tribal belt along the Afghan frontier, where US officials say al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden is likely holed up.

Taliban militants seized much of the area under a peace deal, even after the government agreed to their main demand to impose Islamic law in the region.

US officials likened the deal to a surrender. Pakistani leaders said the agreement's collapse had opened the eyes of ordinary citizens to the extremist threat.

In the latest fighting, helicopter gunships attacked militant hide-outs in Mingora and killed 15 enemy fighters, a military statement said.

An estimated 30 to 40 more died in clashes in more than a half-dozen other locations, the statement said. Four soldiers were wounded.

The army has accused militants of causing civilian casualties with indiscriminate mortar fire.

However, it has declined to discuss the toll on innocents, and the army's account of the fighting could not be verified independently.

Nepal parties

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voted by the president.

President Ram Baran Yadav, a member of the opposition, set the Saturday midnight (0545 GMT) deadline for parties to form a national "consensus" government following the resignation of the former guerrilla leader.

But the parties were likely to miss the deadline, political leaders said.

"We're holding talks with other political leaders to reach a consensus," said Arjun Narsingh Khatri Chettri, spokesman of the Nepali Congress which holds the second largest number of seats in parliament after the Maoists.

"But the meeting of the deadline to form a national government is unlikely," he told AFP.

A group of more than 20 parties, including the Nepali Congress and the centre-left UML -- the third-largest party in parliament -- have been trying to form a new government.

But lacking the seats in parliament, they need the ex-rebels to take part and Prachanda has refused to cooperate.

"If the parties fail to come up with a consensus by the deadline, the president might extend it or ask the parties to form a simple majority government on Sunday," said Rajendra Dahal, the president's press advisor.

The Maoists, who won 40 percent of the seats in last year's elections, have vowed to boycott formation of a government, continue street protests and disrupt parliamentary sessions until the president apologises and forces the army chief to go.

The president is a member of the Nepali Congress.

The Maoists tried to sack General Rookmangud Katakaw for refusing to integrate 19,000 former Maoist fighters now confined to UN-supervised camps into the regular army.

The Maoists' integration into the army was stipulated by a 2006 peace deal that ended a decade of civil war which left

Ex-NSI officer

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Interrogation (TFI) cell in the afternoon. The interrogation started around 4:00pm, said the sources.

A Chittagong court earlier placed Sahab Uddin on a fresh six-day remand Thursday as the investigators of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced him before the court with a prayer for a ten-day remand.

He was sent to Dhaka around 9:00am under investigation officer of the case Senior ASP of CID Md Muniruzzaman's supervision, said CID Chittagong divisional Special Superintendent of Police (SSP) Mohammad Muslim.

The former director of NSI was arrested on May 3 for his alleged involvement in arranging transports for the consignment of illegal arms and ammunition following arrested NSI field officer Akbar Hossain Khan's confessional statement on May 2.

13,000 dead. Katakaw, accused by the Maoists of being a loyalist of the ousted monarchy, refused to allow the ultra-leftist fighters to join the army saying they had been politically indoctrinated.

"There's no question of helping the parties form a new government under the present situation," said Dinanath Sharma, spokesman of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).

"We need the supremacy of civilian rule to be guaranteed," he said, adding "the doors for forming a new government will open once the president apologises and rectifies his undemocratic move."

Maoist leader Prachanda, whose real name is Pushpa Kamal Dahal but who goes by a nom-de-guerre meaning "fierce one," has argued the row is part of a wider campaign to undermine his democratically elected government.

Analysts say the deadlock endangers impoverished Nepal's fragile peace process in the world's newest republic.

"The formation of a government without Maoist participation would be shaky," said Indrajit Rai, a conflict expert who teaches military science at Nepal's army college.

"Parties can't move forward by isolating the Maoists because they're the one dominating force in parliament," Rai said. "Without their support, the peace process could get derailed."

Girl, housewife

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Later Khilgaon police was informed of the matter. They recovered the body and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

Naim said he had left the house at around 7:30am with his rickshaw, his wife left soon afterwards for work. She worked a maidservant in a house. Their son also went to school around the same time. His youngest daughter was out playing at a nearby field when the incident occurred.

Naim said he could not suspect any one because he had no clue about why his daughter would kill herself.

The young housewife Julekha also allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself with a piece of cloth from a ceiling fan at her house in Korail slum