

Obama warns Iran, N Korea over nukes

Says ME stalemate must end

AFP, Caen

US President Barack Obama said yesterday that North Korea's nuclear weapon test had been "extraordinarily provocative" and that it would be "profoundly dangerous" for Iran to get a nuclear bomb.

Iran's nuclear programme featured strongly in talks between Obama and French President Nicolas Sarkozy who condemned what he called "senseless" new remarks by Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad casting doubt on the Holocaust.

Obama was asked about general nuclear proliferation threats at a brief press conference afterwards.

"North Korea's actions over the last several months have been extraordinarily provocative," he said.

"They have made no bones about the fact that they are testing nuclear weapons."

Obama said the UN Security Council is working toward a new resolution on North Korea and he insisted that the international community would take a "very hard look" at how to deal with the isolated Stalinist state.

Obama added that letting Iran develop a nuclear bomb would be "profoundly dangerous" and would lead other Middle East states to say "we have to go for it as well."

Sarkozy, who met Iran's foreign minister on Wednesday, said, "I told him first of all that they have to take President

Obama's outstretched hand.

"Iran has the right to civilian nuclear power but not a military nuclear capability. And they must understand that."

"If their aims are peaceful they should accept international inspections, but we can't accept the Iranian leader making senseless declarations."

"The United States and France are entirely together on this question. Iran is a great country, a great civilisation. We want peace, we want dialogue, we want to help them develop, but we do not want nuclear proliferation. We are united on this."

Ahmadinejad, who is seeking a second term in office in an election this month, on Wednesday reaffirmed his bitter anti-Israel stance and called the Holocaust a "big deception".

He also accused the world's liberal democracies of degrading "human values" with their pro-Israel policies.

Sarkozy told Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki Wednesday that such comments were "unacceptable and profoundly shocking," his office said.

Obama also said Saturday it was vital to break the "stalemate" in the Middle East peace process, saying all sides had to recognise that their fate was inextricably linked.

"We have to move beyond the current stalemate," Obama said at a press conference in France where he was to attend commemorations marking the 65th anniversary of D-Day.

31 children die

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Between 50 and 70 children and a handful of care workers had been taking an afternoon nap when the fire broke out Friday, Larrinaga said.

Local media said that there were 176 children inside the ABC daycare centre.

The centre, in a working class neighbourhood in the south of Hermosillo, had a staff of around 20 people.

It belonged to Mexico's social security network, the Mexican presidency said in a statement. President Felipe Calderon had felt "most profound pain and expressed his most deeply felt condolences to the families of the children," it said.

The federal government has rushed to the area three additional ambulance crews as well as a dozen medical specialists trained to work with burn victims, the presidency statement added.

State investigators followed firefighters, Red Cross workers and police to the scene, police said in a statement.

Local media suggested the fire had started in a neighbouring tire shop, a claim the shopowners quickly denied, according to news reports.

But the local prosecutor's office cautioned against premature conclusions saying at the moment "it would be adventurous to pass judgment on what caused the fire."

Meanwhile, dozens of worried families gathered at the centre as well as at hospitals around the city.

Medics transferred five children who had been identified by their parents to Sonora State children's hospital, a medical worker told AFP.

At least 30 children with serious burns were transferred overnight to a specialised hospital across the border to the US state of Arizona, according to El Imparcial daily.

Calderon called on the national social security director, Daniel Karam Toume, to personally visit families and injured children at the scene, the statement said.

The federal government had sent three air ambulances and more than a dozen specialized doctors to help out, it added.

State Governor Eduardo Bours was in Arizona when the fire broke out and returned to Hermosillo Friday evening.

MCCI vows

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department of environment has to be more proactive and efficient in their fight against polluters.

The delegation members said eviction of river encroachers should go on and strong monitoring should follow up.

The MCCI team included CKHyder, adviser to the chamber, M Anis Ud Dowla, former president of the chamber, Syed Abu Naser Bukhtear Ahmed, and Golam Mainuddin.

The MCCI congratulated The Daily Star for its campaign for environment protection and presented a special crest to the newspaper for its contribution.

Another low

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further. Monsoon is moderate to strong elsewhere over north Bay," the bulletin also said.

Squally weather may affect the maritime ports and coastal areas of Bangladesh, it said.

The maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing boats and trawlers over north Bay have been advised to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution until further notice.

Cyclone Aila hit the southern coastal districts of the country on May 25, killing at least 180 people and injuring many others. The storm damaged houses, crops and trees and washed away cattle.

Historic June 7

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under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Bangabandhu announced his historic six-point political and economic programme in Lahore in 1966, aiming to attain greater autonomy of East Pakistan.

To mark the day, AL has chalked out elaborate programmes. President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages on the occasion.

Zillur, in his message, said the seed of Bangladesh's independence lies in the six-point declared against the continuous disparity and long running repressive policy of the erstwhile West Pakistani rulers.

In her message, Hasina said, "Imbued with the spirit of all democratic movements and struggle, including the historic 7th June, the present government is committed to freeing the countrymen from all oppressions and deprivations."

She urged all to take a fresh vow to materialise the dreams of the 7th June martyrs by building a hunger, poverty, terrorism and corruption-free digital Bangladesh.

Culprits to get

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coordination between the party and the government for implementing its vision for 'digital Bangladesh' and the charter for change.

The decision came after some party leaders drew the prime minister's attention to the lack of coordination between the government and the party.

A few leaders said some ministers' statements on crucial issues like the Tipaimukh dam and the BDR mutiny exposed lack of coordination among the ministers that gave the opposition the chance to criticise the government.

The current political situation, extra-judicial killings by law enforcement agencies, Tipaimukh dam, power crisis, BDR mutiny and prices of essentials figured prominently at the five-hour-long meeting that began at 10:00am.

The meeting called upon the main opposition BNP to return to the House for making it effective.

"The government wants to make parliament effective bringing back the opposition to the House," said Ashraf.

Some party leaders criticised the recent extra-judicial killings especially those of the two students of Tejgaon Polytechnic Institute by law enforcers.

AL Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury said extra-judicial killings that constitute violation of human rights and rule of law must be stopped immediately.

Such killings will raise questions about govern-

ment's commitment to upholding human rights, he added.

Hasina, also the AL president, asked Ashraf to send a letter to the Election Commission seeking extension of time for holding party council. As per the Representation of the People Order (RPO) it is mandatory to hold party council by July 25.

Ashraf said the party's constitution review committee headed by Hasina would sit soon to bring necessary amendments to it in line with the RPO.

The meeting decided to form full-fledged committees in 16 districts and hold urgent council of the party's unit committees in 11 districts where council had not been held since 2002.

Ashraf said a committee headed by Deputy Leader of parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury has been formed to celebrate the party's 60th founding anniversary on June 23.

The meeting expressed its satisfaction over the government initiatives to reduce prices of essentials, fertiliser and diesel and also congratulated the premier for handling the BDR mutiny successfully.

Asked about the Tipaimukh Dam issue, the minister said decisions would be made based on opinions from water resources experts and recommendations of the standing committee on the water resources ministry.

"Every decision in this regard will be made keeping in mind the country's interests," he added.

Demolition

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documents including High Court orders produced by alleged encroachers trying to establish that there are legal bars on the eviction drive at some spots.

"Seven structures of Noman Group are encroaching on the river Turag, the executives of the company there produced three stay orders against our drive, and we asked for the actual documents, on the basis of which the learned court issued the stay orders," said an on-duty official of Gazipur district administration.

"We are trying our best to obtain the documents, so we are able to crosscheck their claim on the alleged encroached upon plots with our own map of government lands, but unfortunately it is proving to be too lengthy a process mainly due to a lack of coordination," he added.

According to Deputy Director of BIWTA Port Saiful Islam, the authorities allocated 55,000 taka a day, for three days of demolition drive.

"It was thought that three days would be enough to complete the job on the Turag, but we have to continue till tomorrow, which will be the fifth day, hiking up the total cost to 2,75,000 taka," said Saiful Islam without elaborating.

"I think the local administration should take some responsibilities of cleaning the debris too," he added.

Local people witnessing the drive said the authorities should also clearly demarcate the areas that belong to the river.

The drive continues today.

DHAKA WASA STARTS CANAL RESTORATION
Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) started unclogging the canals of the capital yesterday to avoid waterlogging in the coming monsoon, and it will soon prepare a master plan for Dhaka's drainage system, a Wasa press release said.

Wasa will completely restore the canals by 2012, said Managing Director of Wasa Md Shahjahan Ali Molla Khan after inspecting some sites of canal cleaning yesterday.

Shahjahan along with Wasa Board Chairman Golam Mostafa visited Segunbagicha Khal, Begun Bari Khal, Khilgaon-Bashabo Khal, Jirani Khal, and Sutibhola.

Wasa officials said 55 pumps for logged water removal, will be installed in the coming monsoon at Rampura pump station.

Another 20 pumps will be set up at Kamalapur Janapath pump station, the release said.

There are 46 canals in the city, and Wasa is in charge of maintaining 26 of them.

Parliamentary Standing Committees.

"Now there are 64 women lawmakers in the parliament, which is 18.6 percent of the total number of lawmakers. I hope this number will go up in the future," he said.

The government is providing cars and other facilities including fuel to the members of the Parliamentary Standing Committees for the first time and also thinking of offering the same facilities to women MPs.

Chief Whip Abdus Shahid, NDI Interim Senior Resident Director Mark Wallem, USAID Mission Director in Bangladesh Denise A Rollins and former member of the Queensland Parliament Dr Lesly Clark also spoke on the occasion.

News agency UNB reports: Talking to UNB over cell phone in the evening senior BNP leader Moudud Ahmed yesterday expressed his disappointment over the speaker's remark that no more seat would be allocated to the main opposition in the House.

Moudud said offering one additional seat against their demand for three is disappointing, adding that the decision to join the budget session would be taken at the BNP parliamentary party meeting.

Ousted Qazi Faruque forms new Proshika body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The dispute surrounding the governing of Proshika, one of the largest NGOs of the country, took another turn yesterday after Qazi Faruque Ahmed, who was removed from the chairmanship of the organisation by its governing body last month, formed a new governing body yesterday.

The new governing body then elected him chairman of Proshika again. It also declared the May 24 proceedings of the other governing body illegal.

At a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) in the city yesterday, Qazi Faruque also informed that the new governing body has formed a new executive committee after holding an annual general meeting (AGM).

Meanwhile, the Wadud-led governing body of Proshika in a press release yesterday, said the so-called annual general meeting held by Qazi Faruque was illegal. The press release also termed the forming of a new governing body and election of a new chairman illegal.

On May 24, this governing body axed Qazi Faruque as chairman and appointed Md Abdul Wadud as the new chairman.

"According to the provision no 3 of the rules and regulations of the organisation, the

date and place of an annual general meeting should be fixed in a governing body meeting. But Qazi Faruque did not call a governing body meeting for about 10 months before the 105th meeting of the organisation on May 24, in which Qazi Faruque was removed from chairmanship," said the press release signed by Mahbub-ul-Karim, chief executive officer of Proshika.

"As he (Qazi Faruque) was axed as chairman by the unanimous decision of the governing body on May 24, any initiative taken by Qazi Faruque using the identity of Proshika Chairman now is totally illegal," the press release said.

"Four out of the nine newly elected governing body members are from Qazi Faruque's family -- Qazi himself, his nephews Nawshad-un-Nabi and Rafi Ahmed and sister-in-law Nargis Jahan Banu. This move reflects on how he manipulated things inside the organisation," Mahbub told The Daily Star.

Following the Wadud-led body's decision, Qazi Faruque had gone to the court seeking a stay on the decision of the governing body meeting. However, the court however rejected his appeal.

Sources said the latest meeting which elected a new governing body and chairman was held at the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Centre (BARC) though Qazi Faruque

claimed at the DRU press conference that the meeting was held at the Proshika office.

The new governing body at the press conference said it passed a Tk 1027 crore budget for running different programmes.

The general members under 27 (d) of the Proshika constitution also removed Abdul Wadud, Mahbub-ul-Karim, Abdul Matin, Mashrur Ul Islam, Sheikh Sultan Ahmed, Renuka Biswas, Shahjahan Haldar and Golapi Begum as the members of the governing body. The board also made Qazi Khaze Alam the chief executive officer.

While asked about the previous meeting on May 24th, Qazi Faruque said that according to Article 27 of Proshika's constitution, the post of the chairman or any member will be vacated only if he or she is convicted by a criminal court or removed by a special general meeting. As a special general meeting was not held, Faruque claimed his position as legal.

The new governing body members of the NGO, Advocate Intiaz Mahmud, Dr Naushad-Un-Nabi, Advocate Sheikh Rafiqul Islam, SM Shah Alam, Abdul Hamid Fakir, Nargis Jahan Banu, Rokeya Islam and Rafi Ahmed were present at the press conference.

Touhid

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Metropolitan Magistrate AKM Emdadul Haque recorded the statements of Touhid and Habib. Arrested on March 3, Touhid was placed on remand four times.

Touhid also mentioned names of several BDR men who abetted him in the February 25-26 carnage that left 74 people including 57 army officers dead.

DAD Touhid tops the list of 24 people named as planners and implementers of the carnage in the summary of the probe report of the national committee, formed to investigate the bloodbath at the Pilkhana BDR headquarters.

CID sources said Touhid's confession is regarded as a big step forward in the investigation and trial process of the BDR carnage case.

Lalbagh police filed the case on March 1 against over 1,000 BDR men.

1 chased down

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A staff of the company quoting Aminul said the criminals started chasing him as he continued to drive away ignoring the criminals' attempt to stop him at Moghbazar Wireless Gate.

"Aminul stopped the car outside the gate of the office. Before the guards could open the gate, three thugs jumped out of the taxi and stabbed him several times through the window," a witness said.

The four goons fled in the taxi they came in with his wallet and cellphone, after Aminul cried for help and his colleagues rushed to his rescue, the witness added.

With stab wounds in the chest and throat, Aminul was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he was declared dead around 4:00am.

Ramna police picked up three people in this connection. Police did not disclose their identities.

"We have picked up three people on suspicion and we are interrogating them to ascertain whether they were involved," Officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station Shibli Noman told The Daily Star.

Police suspect the criminals could be members of an organised carjacking gang who left the scene as Aminul's colleagues rushed in.

Moghbazar has become a hot spot for muggers and carjackers recently where even policemen become victims. A few months ago carjackers made away with a microbus requisitioned by the police while another gang gunned down video editor of ntv Atiqul Islam and took his motorbike.

Meanwhile, at East Jurain muggers stabbed Shaheen in the throat when he and some locals tried to catch them around 9:30pm Friday.

Injured Shaheen was admitted to the DMCH where he succumbed to his injury around 1:00am yesterday.

Shaheen told reporters at the DMCH that he was returning to his Kushumbagh home from work and saw locals chasing a gang of muggers. He said as he tried to grab one of them, he stabbed him in his throat.

Land service

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structure to realise exact tax money from the people. Many people don't speak the truth during land registration to dodge taxes," said the minister.

Muhith was speaking at a views exchange meeting on "Problems and Solutions in Deeds Registration" at the city's Bangladesh Institute for Administration and Management (BIAM) auditorium as the chief guest.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafique Ahmed, Land Minister Rezaul Karim Hira and State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam, among others, spoke at the special guests.

Law Secretary Kazi Habibul Awal chaired the session where sub-registrars across the country attended the daylong workshop to share their experience of land registration process.

The law minister warned the sub-registrars of tougher action for violation of the rules of registration and any kind of repression on the public during registration.

"I would not tolerate any kind of oppression, repression, hassle and bribery in land registration process. If anybody is found guilty, they must be punished," he said.

The minister said he will give his cellphone number to the public for calling him in case of any harassment during registration process.

"I would not tolerate the transfer business or prize posting in sub-registry offices," he warned the sub-registrars at the meeting.

In his speech Hira sought cooperation of the law minister in amending the outdated

National service

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Muhith said the next budget has been termed 'huge', but one year's budget is always bigger than the previous year's. The next one will be even bigger.

He said, "This time we are under pressure. There have to be budgetary mechanisms for offsetting the effects of global recession and also allocations for social security and employment generation. The size of the upcoming budget would be a little bigger as there have to be allocations for new programmes."

Since the government seeks to make the secondary education free, the next budget must have a number of steps to that end, Muhith added.

A proposal was made in parliament to continue budget discussion till July 23 but was turned down.

Muhith said from the next year on, they would try to place the budget at the beginning of June. The government however has no plans to make changes to the budget cycle (July-June).

land laws, which are failing to meet the demand of the people.

"It was not possible to introduce laws as per the demand of the people due to prevalence of the existing laws, which were formulated during the British and Pakistan rule," Hira said.

He added under the present legal system people are suffering a lot in land registration, mutation and recording.

Pledging introduction of digitised system for land management soon, Hira asked the sub-registrars and other employees under the land ministry not to take bribe and other tips from the people.

"You must prove you are working for the people's benefit. Otherwise, you would be punished," he warned.

10pc tax

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honest taxpayers.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya at a press briefing yesterday on economic condition of the country, said, "The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) is against frequent amnesties. If the government wants to allow whitening untaxed money, there must be a punishment rate in addition to the normal tax rate."

At present, honest taxpayers pay 10 percent, 15 percent, 20 percent and 25 percent tax.

During the last caretaker government's tenure, 56,845 people legalised their black money totalling Tk 9,773 crore, and paid Tk 911 crore tax on it.

From 1976-77, all successive governments gave the opportunity to whiten black money.

The finance minister, replying to a question yesterday, said, "I have heard opinions of all sides. Based on those, steps will be taken in the next budget." He however declined to elaborate.

On the new system of tax holiday from the next FY, sources said that in Dhaka and Chittagong divisions, industries getting the facility would have to pay five per cent tax in the first two years, 10 percent in the next two years and 15 percent in the fifth year.

In Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal divisions, and the three hill districts, rate of tax would be five percent in the first three years, 10 percent in the next three years and 15 percent in the seventh year.

The government is yet to specify the type of industries, which would get the new tax holiday. Sources however said the sectors would include agro-processing, infrastructure, shipbuilding, toy manufacturing, and backward and forward linkage units of garments industry.

At present, about 20 sectors enjoy tax holiday. Industries to be set up in these sectors by June 30 of 2011 would also get the facility.

English in schools

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national daily in association with the education ministry. They said its proper implementation will create great enthusiasm among the students.

In his address as chief guest, Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said the first 10 years of education shape an individual's personality traits. "So, programmes like English in Schools are of vital importance."

The habit of reading English newspapers will help students learn the language that is crucial in today's world where the major sources of knowledge are in English.

"There's no alternative to learning English to lead a decent life in the global village," said the DUVC.

Speaking as special guest, Education Secretary Syed Aatur Rahman said Bangladesh is never short of individuals with immense potential. Unfortunately, many fail to scale the heights in the academic world due to language barrier.

He said he believes The Daily Star-AKTEL project can really bring about a significant change.

The government has decided to form a committee to identify weaknesses in English teaching methods in use and recommend ways to overcome those. It also plans to set up a permanent institute for English language, he continued.

Besides, the government is considering making the most of information and communication technologies (ICT) to ensure more effective English teaching.

Teachers have a great role to play in the 'English in Schools' initiative. They need to motivate the students and make the subject interesting for better learning, Aatur observed.

Prof Noman Ur Rashid, director general of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, said, "We need to learn English, because we live in a global village. We fully support the initiative."

He noted that Bangladeshis are richly endowed, but they often could not reach optimum levels of their potentials due to language barriers.

He however said he is optimistic, and likened this initiative to small drops of water that together make a sea.

To the teachers, he said, "This is a great opportunity for you. Please grab it."

AKTEL Managing Director and CEO Jefri A Tambi said Bangladesh is a nation with bright future, but lack of proficiency in English often appears to be a key hurdle.