

# Laden killing boosts Obama's popularity

REUTERS, Washington

The killing of Osama bin Laden sharply boosted President Barack Obama's image, improving Americans' views of his leadership and his efforts to fight terrorism, a Reuters/Ipsos poll released on Tuesday found.

About four in 10 Americans say their opinion of Obama improved after he ordered Monday's successful US military operation in Pakistan to kill bin Laden, the mastermind of the September 11, 2001, attacks in New York and Washington.

But the boost to Obama's popularity from bin Laden's death could be short-lived as voters focus again on the economy and lingering unemployment -- top concerns heading into 2012 election campaign.

"There is no evidence the boost in his approval rating will last until the election, but

an event like this could position Obama as more of a military leader and give him more authority," Ipsos pollster Julia Clark said.

That could put a long-term dent in Republican efforts to paint Obama as weak and indecisive on national security, particularly after criticism he was slow in reacting to the "Arab Spring" protests in the Middle East and North Africa.



Barack Obama

"The way we perceive Obama could change, and that will help him in the long run," Clark said.

Obama's approval rating has slumped into the mid-40s in recent weeks as voters have grown increasingly pessimistic about the future and upset at rising gasoline prices.

Obama's biggest task during the campaign is likely to be to convince Americans he is turning the corner toward an economic recovery, and to re-engage the young and first-time voters who helped propel him to victory in 2008.

## Laden death 'failure' for US: Iran

AFP, Tehran

Osama bin Laden's killing amounts to a "big failure" for Washington, Iranian Defence Minister Ahmad Vahidi said yesterday, as he cast doubt on the US decision to bury the Al-Qaeda chief at sea.

"The United States says it has achieved success with the death of bin Laden, but ... it actually is a big failure," Vahidi said, quoted by Iran's state news agency IRNA.

"The United States forced 10 years of war on three countries (Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan), left a million people dead and spent more than 1,000 billion dollars to kill one person."

Vahidi spoke of "ambiguities" over bin Laden's death. Shiite Iran has always considered al-Qaeda as a Sunni ultra-radical and anti-Shiite threat to its security.

## Nato for Pakistan's progress in anti-terror fight

AFP, Brussels

Nato's chief urged Pakistan yesterday to make progress in the battle against terrorism and said the US commando operation that killed Osama bin Laden near Islamabad was justified.

"We have encouraged the Pakistani authorities to reinforce the fight against terrorists and extremists, in particular in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region," Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen told a news conference.

"We have seen progress, I think there is potential for more progress," he said.

"We must actively cooperate with the Pakistani government and military in order to strengthen efforts against terrorists in the border region," Rasmussen added.

Pakistan has been forced on the defensive over how the slain al-Qaeda leader managed to live undisturbed in a sprawling villa near the Pakistani capital until US commandos killed him early Monday.

Rasmussen said it was important to continuously engage Pakistan in order to strengthen its partnership with Nato.

"It takes a positive engagement of Pakistan to ensure a long-term solution to the conflict in Afghanistan," Rasmussen said.

"This is also the reason why we have invested some efforts in developing a partnership with Pakistan and recent events do not change our strategy in that respect.

## BIN LADEN KILLING

### Daughter saw Laden killed

AFP, Islamabad

A young daughter of Osama bin Laden, now in custody with a Yemeni wife of the Al-Qaeda leader, saw her father shot dead, a Pakistani intelligence official said yesterday.

The official from the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency said up to 12 women and children who survived the US raid on their villa were now in custody.

The child, reported to be 12 years old, "was the one who confirmed to us that Osama was dead and shot and taken away," said the official.

### Pakistan told US about the compound in 2009

AFP, London

Pakistan alerted the US to its suspicions about a compound where Osama bin Laden was found hiding as far back as 2009, Pakistani Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir said yesterday.

Bashir also hit out at "disquieting" comments by CIA Director Leon Panetta that US officials had ruled out informing Islamabad in advance about Sunday's US raid on the Pakistani compound which led to the

### Relatives 'being looked after'

AFP, Islamabad

The Pakistani government said Tuesday that family members of Osama bin Laden were in safe hands and being looked after, with some undergoing medical treatment at top facilities.

"Questions have been asked about the whereabouts of the family members of Osama bin Laden," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

"They are all in safe hands and being looked after in accordance with law. Some of them needing medical care are under treatment in the best possible facilities."

### Corpse photo 'gruesome'

AFP, Washington

The White House warned Tuesday that a photo taken of Osama Bin Laden's corpse was "gruesome" and expressed concern it could be inflammatory if released to prove the al-Qaeda mastermind's death.

But CIA Director Leon Panetta appeared to suggest in an interview that the photo would in fact be released, though later said any such decision was down to the White House.

Two days after the daring special forces raid deep into Pakistan which killed the Saudi-born terror leader in his secret lair, top administration officials debated whether to make public the evidence that he was gone.

"It is fair to say it is a gruesome photograph ... it could be inflammatory," White House spokesman Jay

# PM calls for patience

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Hasina said everybody has to realise that the trial process has been initiated 40 years after independence.

"If we can wait for 40 years, we also can wait for some more time for the sake of an unblemished trial," she said.

The premier said the war crimes trial is a process.

"It is not that we will try two or three war criminals and then stop the process. Trying the war criminals would be a continuous process," she said.

Hasina urged the coming generations to continue to identify the war criminals and try them.

"Whenever a war criminal would be identified, they would have to be tried," the premier said.

Hasina said her party's and government's commitment to setting up the

Liberation War Museum would continue unabated.

"We have already allocated Tk 5 crore in the current fiscal to initiate the construction work. In next two fiscal, we will allocate another Tk 15 crore," she said.

The PM urged the affluent people to make donations for setting up the Liberation War Museum in the least possible time.

She also announced that those who will give donations for setting up the museum would be given tax rebates.

"I would also request affluent people to donate at the health and education sectors. In every case of donation, tax rebates would be given," she said.

The PM asked the Muktijuddha Smriti Trust to give receipts to the donors so that they can claim tax

rebates showing the receipts.

Hasina said she wants to see the museum established within the tenure of the present government.

The premier requested all quarters of society to inform the young generations about the real history of the country's independence, culture and heritage.

"Young people have spread ray of hopes among us showing keen interest to know about the real history. They have to be provided with the real history," she said.

The function was moderated by Trustee Asaduzzaman Noor while Liberation war museum trustees Rabiul Hussain, Sarah Zaker, Ali Zaker and Akku Chowdhury, among others, addressed it.

# Gaddafi regime mulls new deadline for rebel city

AFP, Tripoli

Muammar Gaddafi's government was mulling extending yesterday a deadline for rebels in Libya's third city Misrata to lay down their arms after the deputy foreign minister said scores had surrendered.

A rebel spokesman said at least five people were killed the same day as pro-Gaddafi forces shelled Misrata port, where a ship docked to evacuate 1,000 migrants and casualties, the International Organisation for Migration said.

As military heads of Nato's 28 member states gathered for a two-day meeting in Brussels, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said the aim of the Western alliance's air campaign was to weaken but not to kill Gaddafi.

The Italian parliament yesterday adopted a statement calling for a deadline on Italy's participation in Nato-led air strikes in Libya amid misgivings within the government over military action.

Yesterday's statement also called for "a decisive and strong political initiative on the international stage to find a diplomatic solution" and said the Italian government must exclude any use of ground troops in the future.

The motion was passed by 309 votes in the 630-seat lower house.

Deputy foreign minister Khaled Kaim told reporters in Tripoli that around 400 fighters had turned in their arms in Misrata, the rebel's last major bastion in western Libya, which has been under loyalist siege for almost two months.

His comments could not be verified.

He said the deadline to surrender in exchange for an amnesty expired at midnight (2200 GMT) Tuesday, but it had already been rejected by the rebels fighting to oust Gaddafi after more than 40 years in power in the oil-rich north African nation.

AFP correspondents heard no fighting during the night but medics said that at least one person was killed and some 30 wounded in clashes around Misrata on Tuesday. The death toll was sharply down on Monday when 14 people died.

The fighting centred on the city's western and southwestern suburbs, close to the loyalist forces' base at the airport on Tuesday, as rebel commanders reported several Nato air strikes on Gaddafi's armour.

# Nizami shown held Editors for stronger EC

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who appeared before the court for the state, said then Industries Minister Nizami did not take any legal action in connection with the seizure of arms and ammunition at Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd (CUFL) jetty. CUFL is a state-owned factory under the industries ministry.

Nizami's indifference regarding the seizure was revealed in a statement by former chairman of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (MIC) Maj Gen Mohammad Imamuzzaman, said the assistant PP.

In his statement before a Chittagong court under section 164 on October 5 last year, Imamuzzaman said then industries minister Nizami showed no interest to the seizure of 10-truck load of arms and ammunition. Nizami also asked the then BCIC chairman to do nothing regarding the incident since the home ministry was going to take steps.

The former BCIC chairman also said Nizami was loathing when he sought direction from him about forming a proboddy.

"I thought Nizami was avoiding the matter. I asked him twice or thrice if we needed anything to do in this regard. Will you [Nizami] form a probe body?" said Imamuzzaman in his statement, adding that Nizami then kept silence and looked upset.

CID moved the petition at the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday morning and the court fixed the hearing at the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Fazlul Bari in the afternoon.

The court during the hearing on the petition at around 3.00pm also allowed the investigators to interrogate Nizami at Dhaka Central Jail gate.

Meanwhile, Nizami will be quizzed today at a safe house in Dhanmondi in connection with war crime charges. Detained Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojahid will also be interrogated on similar charges at the same house on May 8.

Investigators will interrogate detained BNP lawmaker

Salauddin Quader Chowdhury on May 10 and Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delwar Hossain Sayedee on May 12 in connection with charges of crimes against humanity in 1971, an investigator told The Daily Star.

On April 03, 2004, two cases were filed with Karnaphuli Police Station under section-25/B of the Special Powers Act for arms smuggling and section-19 (ka) of the Arms Act in connection with the arms haul.

Former State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar was shown arrested in the same cases on October 3 last year. CID has so far arrested several high officials including two former director generals of the NSI Maj Gen (ret) Rezaqul Haider Chowdhury and Brig Gen (ret) Abdur Rahim Chowdhury, former director (security) Wing Commander (ret) Sahab Uddin, former deputy director (technical) Maj (ret) Liakat Hossain, NSI Field Officer Akbar Hossain, former CUFL managing director Mohsin Talukder and General Manager (Admin) Enamul Haq in connection with the arms haul.

SC concludes

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deliver a verdict on the appeal on any day.

The apex court yesterday kept the case waiting for its verdict after concluding hearing arguments from the counsels on the matter.

The SC on March 1 started hearing a long overdue appeal against the HC verdict.

On January 1, 2001, the HC declared all punishments imposed in the name of fatwa illegal. The verdict came following a hearing on a suo moto rule issued earlier by the court after a newspaper report on Hilla marriage (marriage with a third person).

Human rights organisations Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and Ain O Salish Kendra argued against fatwa before the HC.

The same year, Mufti Mohammad Toyeeb and Abul Kalam Azad filed the mentioned appeal against the HC verdict with the SC.

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After the talks, many participants disclosed to reporters the suggestions they made to the committee.

"It is better not to retain the caretaker government system since it is against democracy. The Election Commission must be strengthened by appointing competent and acceptable people to hold free and fair polls," Prof Syed Anwar Hossain, editor of the Daily Sun, said.

Mohammad Atikullah Khan Masud, editor of a Bangla daily the Janakantha, said the EC should be given full authority to hold parliamentary polls in a free manner by scrapping the caretaker government system.

"We are accepting the caretaker government system due to the prevailing political situation. The system can be retained for holding one more parliamentary election," Golam Sarwar, editor of another Bangla daily the Samakal, said.

The editors suggested increasing the number of seats in the parliament including the number of reserved seats for women, stringent provisions for punishing extra-constitutional usurpation of state power -- treating the offence as treason, amending article 70 to free MPs from absolute control of their parties in the House, and restoration of the parliament's authority to remove constitutional officers.

They also suggested strengthening the parliamentary standing committee system, taking steps to end the House boycott culture, keeping the speaker's office above partisan politics, and introduction of a parliamentary confirmation system for appointments to constitutional posts, etc.

Almost all participants opposed keeping Islam's

status as the state religion, and keeping the phrase BISMILLAH-AR-RAHMAN-AR-RAHIM above the preamble of the constitution. A few editors however supported keeping those.

Some editors urged the parties of the ruling alliance to take measures to ensure opposition parties' participation in the process of amending the constitution, to make it acceptable to all. They also said BNP-led opposition parties should join the process.

In response, Abdur Razzaq and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, two members of the special committee, requested the editors to take steps to ensure that the main opposition BNP participates in the process.

The two committee members, who are also senior leaders of ruling Awami League, said they will continue their efforts to take opinions of the opposition parties on amending the constitution, meeting sources said.

Talking to reporters after the talks, Tofail Ahmed, another member of the special committee also a senior AL leader, said main opposition BNP did not nominate its MPs to work in the special committee, and it also did not join the talks declining the committee's invitation.

"The main opposition will get adequate time to give their opinion after we will place our report to the House on prospective changes to the constitution. They will also get time to express their views when the government will place a relevant bill in the parliament," Tofail said.

Matiur Rahman, editor of a Bangla daily the Prothom Alo, urged the government to ensure the opposition's participation by any means, to make the constitution amendment process accept-

able to all.

"If the opposition's participation is not ensured, the process will be questioned and crisis will be created in future. It will be difficult to implement the changes which will be brought to the constitution," Matiur Rahman told reporters about his suggestion.

He also suggested introduction of a parliamentary confirmation system for appointments to constitutional posts, and increasing the number of seats in the parliament.

Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, suggested an amendment to keep the office of the speaker above partisan politics, and to allow him or her function neutrally.

According to his proposal, a speaker will resign from the party post after being elected, and no political party will field candidate in his or her constituency in the next parliamentary election, so the immediate past speaker may win the poll uncontested.

He suggested increasing the number of MPs to 600 with a provision for electing one male and one female lawmaker from each of the 300 constituencies.

He also suggested that the special committee examine the issue of introducing an upper chamber of the parliament in future.

Mahmudur Rahman, editor of a Bangla daily the Amar Desh, proposed dissolving the current parliament and holding a fresh election to form a Constituent Assembly to frame a new constitution for the country.

AMM Bahauddin, editor of another Bangla daily the Inqilab, proposed maintaining Islam's status as the state religion, and to keep allowing religion based political parties.



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