

COAL SCAM BJP slams Indian govt's zero-loss theory

PTI, New Delhi

Rubishing the no loss argument of the government in the coal block allocations, the BJP yesterday made it clear that it is in no mood to allow parliament to function till its demand for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's resignation is met. "A nation wide debate is on this issue though it is not taking place in parliament. Our strategy does not permit that we allow the government to use parliament to end this debate without any accountability. We want the debate to go on further," Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Arun Jaitley told reporters in New Delhi. "There are occasions when obstruction in Parliament brings greater benefit to the country," he said. Jaitley dismissed Finance Minister P Chidambaram's assertion on Friday that there cannot be a loss in the coal block allocations as no mining was done in many cases. "Kapil Sibal had propounded the zero loss theory in the 2G spectrum case... It was a bitter experience for him. He had to eat his words... Finance Minister P Chidambaram has not learnt lessons from Sibal's bitter experience and has tried to take it further," he said. The BJP insisted that once the coal blocks were allocated,



Arun Jaitley

the valuations of these 142 blocks in the market sky-rocketed. "Once the coal blocks are allotted to private parties, the right to mine lies with the allottees and not with the Government of India. Even without actual mining the government has lost control over these mines," Jaitley said. He maintained that there was a "huge opportunity cost" which the government has lost and termed Chidambaram's no loss theory as "preposterous". "The opportunity that the Government of India could have exploited now vests in private hands," Jaitley said, adding that the government has given away these blocks at "throwaway prices". Defending disruption of parliament, the BJP leader said when the opposition forced a washout of the winter session of Parliament in 2010 to press for its demand for a JPC on the 2G spectrum issue, it had led to benefits for the country. Enumerating these benefits, Jaitley said, then Telecom Minister A. Raja had to resign, a JPC was formed, charge sheet was filed in the scam, the 3G spectrum was auctioned which brought huge profits, and the 2G spectrum was re-auctioned at a base price of Rs. 14,000 crore when it had earlier been given away for Rs. 1,658 crore only.

Indian PM to meet Iranian leaders

AFP, New Delhi

India's prime minister will meet Iranian leaders when he travels to Tehran to attend the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit next week, a government official said yesterday. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, whose country is a longtime ally of Iran, will meet President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday. "During the meeting, the prime minister will review the state of bilateral ties," foreign secretary Ranjan Mathai told reporters in New Delhi. That will be followed by the summit on Thursday and Friday. On the sidelines there will also be a trilateral meeting between India, Afghanistan and Iran that will focus on the future of the region, added Mathai.



PHOTO: THE HINDU

India's surface-to-surface ballistic missile Prithvi II lifts off from a road mobile launcher at Chandipur in Odisha yesterday. The Defence Research and Development Organisation of India developed the Prithvi II, which is a single-stage missile that uses liquid propellants. It can carry a nuclear warhead weighing 500 kg.

NEWS IN brief

Key Cuban dissident detained

AFP, Havana

Leading Cuban dissident Guillermo Farinas was arrested by police after an argument with agents guarding his home, his mother and activists said Friday. Farinas, who has gone on hunger strike about two dozen times against the regime, was arrested late Thursday in front of his home in the central city of Santa Clara, his mother Alicia Hernandez told AFP. Farinas won the Sakharov prize -- the European parliament's top human rights award -- in 2010 after his 135-day hunger strike to press for the release of

Egypt blocks 120 tunnels in Sinai

AFP, Cairo

Egyptian military engineers have blocked 120 tunnels used for smuggling to and from the Gaza Strip since the start of operations in the neighbouring Sinai Peninsula, security officials said yesterday. "Tunnel entrances are being demolished every day and the operation will continue until all underground passageways are shut," one official told AFP. The military sent in tanks and soldiers into the lawless peninsula which neighbours both Gaza and Israel after gunmen killed 16 soldiers in an attack on an army outpost on August 5. Egypt is also searching for 120 wanted militants and believes around 1,600 extremists, including foreigners, are hiding out in the Sinai, the official MENA news agency reported Wednesday.

9/11 hearings delayed to October

AFP, Cuba

Preliminary hearings for the trial of five alleged 9/11 plotters canceled this week over Tropical Storm Isaac are now set for mid-October, the US military said Friday. The hearings, at which confessed September 11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed is due to appear, are now due to take place from October 15-19 at the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, according to the US military commissions website. Another series of hearings is set for December 3-7. The hearings had already been postponed once so that the defendants could observe the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, and then pushed back a day when a derailed freight train in Maryland caused

Three killed in north Iraq attacks

AFP, Mosul

Separate shootings in Iraq's main northern city of Mosul yesterday left three people dead, including a local councilman, security and medical officials said. In one attack, gunmen opened fire on a police checkpoint in Mosul, 350 kilometres from Baghdad, killing a policeman and a civilian, said police. In another incident, city councillor Ibrahim Yunis was gunned down outside his home in southeastern Mosul, according to Juburi and Khaled al-Rifaie, a

Top Haqqani leader killed in Pakistan

BBC ONLINE

A key commander in the Pakistan-based militant Haqqani network has been killed in a US drone strike, according to a family member and local sources. Badruddin Haqqani died last Tuesday in North Waziristan, a relative said. The death has not been confirmed by US or Pakistani officials. The Haqqani network has carried out high-profile attacks against foreign troops in Afghanistan. If confirmed, the death would be a major victory for US forces, correspondents say. In a separate development, Nato air strikes killed a regional commander of the Pakistani Taliban on Friday inside Afghanistan, officials said. Mullah Dadullah was killed along with a dozen of his fighters in Afghanistan's eastern Kunar province. He had taken over as leader of the Taliban in Pakistan's Bajaur tribal area earlier this year. 'Haven' Badruddin Haqqani has been described as a senior operational commander with the Haqqani network - masterminding and directing ambitious attacks on high-profile targets. He was also responsible for training camps, and for extorting funds from contractors, the BBC's Orla Guerin in Islamabad says. Tribesmen in North Waziristan and sources in the local administration told the BBC he is now dead and buried. Local sources also told the BBC that his replacement had already been named. But experts think the death would affect operations by the Haqqani network, our correspondent says.

Five suspects

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knives, two iron rods and one machete from the arrestees and recovered four pairs of gold bangles stolen from the victim's house. The DB produced the four arrestees before the newsmen at the Media and Community Centre of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) in the afternoon. The detectives claimed the murder was a coincident with burglary. The suspects committed the homicide as the physician yelled at them and tried to resist. Detained Peda Mashud said they were seven in the group. Of them, Kalam, Kamal and he himself were standing outside the building while Faisal, Saidul, Mintu and Masud entered the house by cutting iron bars on a window. "Mintu, Saidul and Masud had tied up the doctor while I was busy in looting valuables and breaking the almirah. When the doctor tried to resist us, Mintu stabbed him repeatedly," said another detainee Faisal. When the doctor's mother knocked at the door, they fled

through the window. Asked about the loot, Faisal said they did not take away anything from Narayan's house. Both Peda Mashud and Faisal claimed that Mintu and Masud, who have been on the run, masterminded the burglary. Meanwhile, Commander M Sohail, director of Legal and Media Wing of Rab, said they arrested Kamal who during preliminary interrogation admitted his involvement in the murder. Sohail said the Rab will hand over Kamal to the DB. Narayan's father on Thursday afternoon filed a murder case with Banani Police Station accusing unknown criminals. The following day the case was transferred to the DB. Contacted, victim's brother-in-law Suraj Chowdhury said they do not believe the homicide was a coincident with burglary. "There might be somebody else behind the murder. The criminals were hired for committing the crime."

'No permanent US bases in Australia'

AFP, Sydney

The United States will not seek permanent military bases in Australia and nor would hosting one be in Canberra's interests, Foreign Minister Bob Carr said yesterday. Australia has welcomed long-term ally Washington's plans for an enhanced naval presence in the Pacific and last year agreed to allow up to 2,500 US Marines to be deployed to a barracks near the northern city of Darwin. But Carr rejected the idea of a permanent US military base in Australia. "In fact, the Americans will not seek it because of the cost involved at a time when they are going to have to produce more cuts in their defence spending," he told Sky News. "And second, because it doesn't fit with the way they project power. But above all... it's not in Australia's interest." Carr said what Canberra liked about US troops training in the country was that it was "in and out". "I don't think Australians will be comfortable defining themselves with permanent American bases." Washington's plan to bolster its military presence in the strategically vital Asia-Pacific comes amid concerns about China's increasing assertiveness. The deployment of US Marines to Darwin, the first of whom touched down in April on a six-month rotational basis, has irked Beijing, which has described the Marines' presence as proof of a "Cold-War mentality".



A police officer holding a document apparently saying Julian Assange is to be arrested in any circumstances if he comes out of the Ecuadorian embassy. The document, which was accidentally leaked, suggested that if the 41-year-old Australian attempted to leave the embassy in a vehicle, under diplomatic immunity or in a diplomatic bag, then he should be arrested. (Story on page 20)



Mashiur not going yet

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Rahman. The government has to provide the WB with documents about their removal. The government has prepared a draft letter with the help of the WB's Dhaka office requesting the project's lead financier to withdraw its loan cancellation, said the officials. "We have already prepared a draft letter. But there is a hitch. The letter will be sent when the hitch is gone," Finance Minister AMA Muhith said yesterday without giving any details about "the hitch". In an interview with private TV station Channel I, Muhith said they had reached an understanding with the WB after prolonged talks, and said the WB might withdraw the loan cancellation. However, the WB told the government that even if it revives its loan agreement, it would require at least six months to start the project's work. But the government did not agree to it, said Muhith. The finance minister said if everything went smoothly, tenders will be invited afresh in October or November. However, a finance ministry source said there was uncertainty about the resignation of the prime minister's economic affairs adviser. Mashiur told The Daily Star yesterday, "I have no part to play in the construction or implementation of the Padma bridge project. So the question of my involvement in the alleged corruption does not arise." "If anyone makes any complaint to me, it is my responsibility as the project's integrity adviser to settle it. I have no scope for making money from the project." Asked whether he had

knowledge of the WB's allegations against him, Mashiur said, "I don't know about this. The finance minister may know it if the WB has already informed him about this." In reply to a query whether his name was on the list of public officials the WB had recommended sending on leave, he said, "I have not seen the list. So, I cannot say." On whether the government had asked him to step down, he said, "Nobody has told me anything about it." The co-financiers of the project -- Asian Development Bank and Japan International Cooperation Agency -- extended their loan effectuation date till August 30, meaning that the government has to reach an agreement with the WB within this month. The WB in September last year suspended its promised \$1.2 billion funding for the country's biggest infrastructure project over corruption allegations. The global lender cancelled its loan agreement in June on the grounds that all its conditions had not been met. The government started fresh talks with the WB early this month and they are now at the final stage. The government with the help of the WB's Dhaka office prepared a draft letter mentioning the government steps, said a finance ministry source. The documents that have to be furnished with the letter include the gazette notification on the acceptance of Abul's resignation, terms of reference regarding the ACC probe into graft allegations over the project, the letter of acceptance on the resignation of the adviser concerned.

Vacancy Announcement

Promotion of Development and Confidence

Building in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces vacancy for the following positions for "Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility" under "Service Contract" modality. The duration of the contract is one year initially and subject to renewal on an annual basis upon satisfactory performance and availability of Funds.

1. Policy Specialist- 1 position
2. Cluster Leader - Admin Services-1 Position
3. District Community Empowerment Officer- 1 position

For details of the Terms of Reference and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Hard copy of the TOR can be collected from UNDP-CHTDF Offices of Dhaka, Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban. Applications should be submitted no later **September 10, 2012**

"Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Submitted documents will not be returned to the applicants"

"Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply"

Buet reopens

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general secretary of Buet Teachers Association, said the association did not announce any action showing respect to the High Court injunction against demonstration and strike on the campus. "But if any teacher demonstrates individually, it's his personal matter and the teachers association has no responsibility." The association started boycotting classes on April 7 demanding removal of Buet VC Prof SM Nazrul Islam and Pro-VC Habibur Rahman on 16 allegations against the two. The allegations include

reconstruction at the Buet administration and appointing the Buet pro-VC and a deputy registrar on political consideration. But terming the allegations baseless, the duo repeatedly claimed the teachers were agitating only to grab power. In May, agitating teachers went back to the academic activities after the prime minister assured them of solving the problem. But they again started demonstrating after the authorities shut the university for 44 days. Twenty-five teachers, including deans and department heads, resigned en masse protesting the closure.