



7.3 PERCENT GROWTH TARGET Energy sector is key

MUSHFIQUR RAHMAN

IN his budget speech, Finance Minister Mr. A.M.A. Muhith said that the government plans to increase power generation capacity within 2018 to 18,162 MW. The present installed capacity for power generation is nearly 10,000 MW but effectively the existing power plants can generate around 7,000 MW. So, the target is to double the generation capacity within the next three years. Earlier, the government had targeted generation of 20,000 MW power within 2021. This target has been re-fixed at 24,000 MW for the same period.

As stated in the Budget for the fiscal year 2014-2015, the government intends to reduce gas-based power generation (which is currently around 78%) and gradually shift to coal-fired power generation. Following the guideline, the government is targeting generation of 1,426 MW coal-fired power within 2017. Presently, the Barapukuria mine coal-fired power plants generate nearly 160MW electricity (installed capacity 250 MW) only.

1,320 MW coal-fired power plant at Rampal was the major initiative of the government in its previous term. Reports say that the land development works have been carried out and it was expected that the physical construction works would commence in October-November this year. Apart from the planned ultra-supercritical coal-fired power plant construction works, the Rampal power plant will require development of coal import facilities through the sensitive Sundarbans mangrove forests. Huge river dredging, and barging and anchoring facilities for oceangoing coal-carrying mother vessels at Akram Point are some of the major necessary infrastructure development works associated with the Rampal project.

Reports suggest that the JV Company (Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Generation Company Ltd., a 50:50 joint venture company of BPDB and NTPC of India), which is responsible for arranging funds from international financing institutes is still waiting for funding commitments. It is expected that the Rampal power plant proponent will take \$4 1.82 billion commercial loans for implementation of the project. The government's proposed budget for 2014-2015 did not propose any fund allocation for Rampal power plant or associated infrastructure development.

Recently, M/S Fischtnr GmbH of Germany was appointed as 'Owner's Engineer' to assist the project implementation authority. Fischtnr will, among others, help the proponent to prepare the international bid documents for selecting EPC Contractor, and evaluate and recommend appointment of the EPC Contractor. Until the EPC Contractor is engaged, no construction work will be started. The optimistic expectation is that the Rampal 1,320 MW power plant will come into operation in 2019.

In the meantime, the government signed a major agreement for developing Matarbari 1,320 MW coal-fired power plant in Moheshkhali Island with Japanese assistance during the official visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in May 2014. The Japanese commitment for \$ 6 billion assistance to Bangladesh includes the Matarbari plant and associated infrastructure development. It is estimated that the project will

cost approximately \$44 billion. Japanese JICA is set to sign the loan agreement for Matarbari plant development project this month so that the project could be implemented by 2021.

Another major Chinese government assistance for funding 1,320 MW coal-fired power plant at Kolapara, Patuakhali was agreed between Bangladesh and Chinese government during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to China (June 2014). As reported, Bangladesh and China signed five major economic cooperation agreements during the meeting between the Bangladesh Premier Sheikh Hasina and her Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang in Beijing. The deals include implementation of 1,320 MW Patuakhali coal-fired power plant to be executed by the Joint Venture between China Machinery Import and Export Company (CMC) and North West Power Generation Company of Bangladesh. The plant will use imported coal and the construction work is expected to be completed in 2020.

The energy and power sectors received allocation of Tk. 11,540 crore (14.3%) in the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2014-2015. It is not clear how the major infrastructure developments associated with the large coal-fired power plant development initiatives and their necessary infrastructure for huge coal import operations can be implemented without adequate budget allocations. The officials concerned indicate that after the international loans arrangements, government will divert necessary funds from its 'blocked allocation' (approximately Tk. 5,500 crore) for annual development programme during the fiscal year 2014-2015. The government also expects that international development partners like Asian Development Bank will actively join hands in power sector development projects including in coal-fired power generation initiatives.

Ruppor Nuclear Power Plant Project with 2000 MW power generation capacity remains the government's priority project, and furthering its implementation will require budget allocation in the range of Tk. 2000 crore.

The government also plans to attain 800 MW capacity building for power generation from renewable energy sources within the fiscal year 2014-2015 and a Tk. 4,000 crore budget allocation has been proposed. Currently, power generation capacity from renewable sources, including Kaptai hydroelectric power plant, is nearly 350 MW. LNG terminal and re-gasification project development in Moheshkhali island and drilling of 21 wells for oil and gas exploration and development by Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company are also major projected programmes of the government within the budget year 2014-2015. In addition, the government intends to install 60,000 pre-paid electricity meters to increase power supply and management efficiency in the country within fiscal 2014-2015. Government sources say that approximately 27% electricity is lost in the generation, transmission and distribution stages.

All the above activities will require budget allocations and appropriate management capacity mobilisation. The government's target 7.3% GDP growth will depend on enhancing energy and power sectors performances and steady and planned growth.

The writer is a mining engineer.

Ghost of Al Capone in the country?

SHAHNOOR WAHID

THE way Mafia style killings are going on in the country for the control of illegal businesses, it may not sound too incredulous to say that soon things are bound to go out of control of the administration, like it did for the governments in many countries of the world. USA, Mexico, Italy, Brazil, Russia, had had experience with such criminal gangs, and at one point law enforcers had to go all-out to crush them. Everywhere a strong nexus of corrupt police officials, administration bigwigs and politicians made it possible for various gangs to operate right before the eye of the law.

Racketeering, counterfeiting, human trafficking, weapons trafficking, drug trafficking, extortion, illegal gambling, murder, prostitution, blackmailing, loan sharking, money laundering, fraud, contract killing, bribery, cigarette smuggling, robbery, tax evasion, kidnapping for ransom, offering protection for money, bootlegging, dealing in contraband foreign goods, running prostitution joints etc., were some of the "businesses" that made the gangs and their bosses filthy rich in a couple of years. To keep control, gang fights leading to multiple murders were just as common as taking breakfast in the morning. Knives, machetes, revolvers, pistols and sub-machine guns were their favourite weapons to annihilate each other.

The boisterous lifestyle and tragic end of some of the underworld leaders in the US became hot topic of a number of Hollywood movies in the sixties. Al Capone is one such underworld boss who created a niche for himself in the crime almanac. A movie has been made on his life as well.

Who was Capone? Alphonse Gabriel "Al" Capone, (January 17, 1899-January 25, 1947), was an American gangster who led a Prohibition-era crime syndicate. The Chicago Outfit, which subsequently also became known as the "Capones," was

dedicated to smuggling and bootlegging liquor, and other illegal activities, such as prostitution, in Chicago from the early 1920s to 1931.

Born in the borough of Brooklyn in New York City to Italian immigrants, Capone became involved with gang activity at a young age after having been expelled from school at age 14. In his early twenties, he moved to Chicago to take advantage of a new opportunity to make money smuggling illegal alcoholic beverages into the city during Prohibition. He also engaged in various other criminal activities, including bribery of government figures and prostitution.

Despite his illegitimate occupation, Capone became a highly visible public figure. He made donations to various charitable endeavours using the money he made from his activities. Capone's public reputation was damaged in the wake of his supposed involvement in the 1929 Saint Valentine's Day Massacre, when seven rival gang members were executed. (Dear readers, it's 7 murders, remember?)

Capone was convicted on federal charges of tax evasion in 1931 and sentenced to federal prison; he was released on parole in 1939. His incarceration included a term at the then-new Alcatraz federal prison. In the final years of Capone's life, he suffered mental and physical deterioration due to late-stage neurosyphilis, which he had contracted in his youth. On January 25, 1947, he died from cardiac arrest after suffering a stroke. (Source: Internet)

Bangladesh "Mafia" gangs

The spate of murders across the country in the recent past, especially amongst members of the same gang (party), is believed to be the result of intense rivalry over possession and control of the sources of illegal businesses. It's about earning crores of takas every month hence no human life is of any importance to the rival gangs. The killing style in all the recent

cases reminded this writer of the style followed by the Mafia gangs.

Here is the story of a real life Mafia style killing in the US. "On April 18, 1980, Philadelphia Mafia consigliere Antonio Caponigro had Angelo Bruno killed without the The Commission's approval. Caponigro and his brother-in-law Alfred Salerno were taken to an isolated house in upstate New York and tortured before being killed. Salerno had been shot three times behind the right ear and once behind the left ear. The autopsy showed that a rope had been tied around his neck, wrists, and ankles, and most of his neck and face bones shattered. Caponigro had been suffocated, beaten, repeatedly stabbed and shot, and was found in a garbage bag." (Ring a bell?)

Often times, criminals and criminal gangs infiltrate the political power of the day to find shelter and protection. In return they send fat envelopes to some of the key figures of the party every month. With such protection ensured they keep amassing the ill-gotten wealth and become more and more violent in their dealing. As days go by, the number of dead bodies keep piling up on the trail. History tells us that when they fall ultimately they take many political people down with them.

In Bangladesh, we observe with great trepidation, the ever growing nexus between such criminals and some criminal minded politicians to the peril of the political parties supporting both. Saner minds in society have been sending warning signals regularly to the party chiefs about the consequence of such unholy alliance but none seems to have time or patience to listen. Criminality has penetrated the inner sanctum of political institutions and is eating them from inside.

Therefore, unless the ghost of Al Capone is driven away from politics by setting examples of good governance, we may see many more '7-murders' in the coming days.

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India's Third Republic

SARWAR JAHAN CHOWDHURY

THIS term 'Third Republic' in relation to India has been borrowed from a lecture by eminent Indian international relations scholar and strategist Dr. C. Raja Mohan, organised by Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), which he delivered recently in Dhaka. The idea suggests a paradigm shift in Indian politics from weaker central power to a stronger one, unlike the past two decades which were the 'Second Republic' as per Dr. Mohan's lexicon. The first one, of course, is the period of initial stability and its mixed continuity until 1989 when the era of the second begins. Although such taxonomy isn't entirely representative of the multifaceted socio-political and political economic dynamics India has endured; nevertheless, it underlines the significance pragmatic Indian analysts like Dr. Mohan wish to attach to the prospective stark alteration in the nature of the new Indian government.

This group of pragmatic observers predicts, contrary to the skeptic and centre-left liberal views, that the decisive mandate rendered to Prime Minister Narendra Modi coupled with the art of leadership he is mastering, would herald economic growth in India and simultaneously more constructive and engaging relationship with its neighbours and beyond. In their opinion, it ought to be a stark contrast to the weak and indecisive UPA-2 government. This optimism is supported by the post-election diplomatic gesture by Mr. Modi on the occasion of his government's inauguration ceremony, which was a counter intuitive reverse posture considering his campaign time strong anti-neighbour rhetoric.

Bangladesh is going to be the first destination for the new Indian Minister for External Affairs Mrs. Shushma Swaraj. It

implies the importance the Modi government puts to Bangladesh. It is to be seen whether they let the bygone rhetoric be bygone or let them come back once the euphoria of rising to power is over. The Modi government surely has a decisive majority and the political capital gained through the election to be able to help make substantive progress to take place regionally, transcending mere symbolism of invitation to the swearing-in.

The new government will be less vulnerable to provincial blackmail. Modi has shown a bit of it by ignoring Jayalalitha's threat not to invite Sri Lanka's Rajapaksa to his inauguration. Can he deal with ever impulsive Mamata, if the latter remains the same as before? Regardless of Dr. Mohan's optimism we have to wait and watch for something concrete. Non-advancement in solving bilateral issues with Bangladesh in recent times is incomprehensible. Bangladesh doesn't allow non-state actors to operate against India from within its boundary; rather it has, in recent years, addressed India's security concerns with regards to the hiding of north eastern separatists inside Bangladesh and their arms supply through the same. The present government in Bangladesh has been ready to do a mutually beneficial tradeoff between Teesta river water plus land boundary agreement and Indian transit through Bangladesh to its north east; notwithstanding the fact that such a deal would actually be skewed towards India. Rightful share of common river water is a natural right of lower riparian country and land boundary agreement would end the misery of the inhabitants of both sets of enclaves owned by Bangladesh and India.

The electoral success alone will not ensure the success of India's 'Third Republic' in spite of the fact that for the first time a non-Congress party has ascended to federal power on its own. But

there are caveats. BJP alone has mustered only 31% of popular vote and its alliance 39% in total. That's the classical paradox of 'First Past the Post' democracy.

However, it has been observed almost everywhere that unless something substantial is delivered in the early days of post-election popularity, the popularity keeps eroding and so does the political capital or the leverage to do difficult things. On the contrary, success in the early days prolongs political legitimacy for further actions. The creators of the 'Third Republic' are at its helm now in a period of honeymoon, they must know to hit the iron when it is hot, both domestically and regionally. Positive outcome would serve the common good and herald a lasting legacy, again, both domestically and regionally.

Mr. Modi had issues in terms of his acceptability. Electoral endorsement has removed part of it and most of the rest can also vanish if he reaches out to various quarters that are not traditionally comfortable with him. This fact holds true in the South Asian scenario as much as for his domestic liberal opponents. He had been talking tirelessly about development and inclusion. Post-election, he has started showing positive gestures to India's neighbours.

Constructive symbolism is perhaps a right step to start with, as put by Dr. Mohan. Let us be hopeful that the 'Third Republic' is actually able to transcend mere symbolism and steer the biggest nation of the region to the right direction and, perhaps, take the rest in the neighbourhood aboard -- as much as practically possible. That, ideally, should be the goal the perceived new republic ought to strive for.

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QUOTABLE Quote

As long as our civilization is essentially one of property, of fences, of exclusiveness, it will be mocked by delusions.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

ACROSS

DOWN

1 Mead or Michigan
5 San Antonio team
10 Sung drama
12 Principle
13 Harsh questioning
15 Use a chair
16 Rep'a rival
17 Mamie's mate
18 Astaire and Simpson
20 Commentary page
21 Moving sinuously
22 Cincinnati team
23 Politico Stevenson
25 Not quite closed
28 Take as one's own
31 Decays
32 Fancy homes
34 Superlative suffix
35 Smart-phone download
36 Recline
37 Crime mandating immediate imprisonment
40 Anne of TV and film
41 Stuffed
42 Incendiary crime
43 Disarray

1 "—luck!"
2 Garden pests
3 Harvey of "the Piano"
4 Screw up
5 Goblet part
6 Coat rack part
7 Not ready for picking
8 Smelled really bad
9 Spirited horses
11 Number in a sum
14 Work-space illu-minators
19 Deceitful people
20 Stellar hunter
24 Makes suitable
25 Singer Franklin
26 Leg-puller
27 Top stories
29 Civil
30 Kids' transports
33 Garden starters
35 Yemeni port
38 Letter before sigma
39 Ewe's mate

CRYPTOQUOTE

ON OH HEPX UYYJEYXNTVP NY AOHH
HYAPKYJF QYVU KPXYX NCPF QGMP
FYT.

-- NYVO AYXXOHYV

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: MOST WRITERS CAN WRITE
BOOKS FASTER THAN PUBLISHERS CAN WRITE
CHECKS.

-- RICHARD CURTIS

Yesterday's answer

CALL SPRAT
ARIA WAIVER
MEND ANGORA
UNDYING IMP
STABLES DIP
UKE JETE
CRAGS RUDER
HEWS HON
IVE SENECAIS
DIS ALABAMA
EVOLVE URAL
DAMIEN GAZE
LEERS STEM

A XYDLBAXR is
LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for
another. In this sample,
A is used for the three
L's, X for the two O's,
etc. Single letters,
apostrophes, the length
and formation of the
words are all hints. Each
day the code letters are
different.

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

I'VE DECIDED THAT
BEETLE AND I WOULD
DO WELL AS A MARRIED
COUPLE

WHAT MADE YOU
DECIDE THAT?

I NEED
THE SLEEP

HENRY by Don Trachte

DENTIST

GONE FOR THE
DAY

CARNIVAL
GROUNDS

RING THE
BELL
AND WIN A
PRIZE