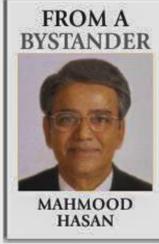


PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN IRAN

Will Hassan Rouhani get a second term?



FROM A BYSTANDER
MAHMOOD HASAN

It is a crucial time for the political future of theocratic (Shia) Iran. Around 55 million voters are scheduled to go to polls on May 19, 2017 to elect the 12th President of the country. The 5th municipal elections and the midterm elections for the 10th Islamic Consultative Assembly (Iran's

Legislature) will also be held simultaneously. This election is important as it will decide who will lead — an "Osoulgarayan" (principalist) or a reformist — the future political trajectory of Iran both domestically and internationally.

Iran's political structure is decentralised with several centres of power and influence. No doubt Ayatollah Khamenei is the supreme religious leader and defines the broad political parameters for the government — the elected president is quite influential and can define his priorities and goals within that broad matrix. Of course there are energetic debates among these centres of power jockeying for influence.

This time out of more than 1,600 applicants, the Guardian Council selected 6 candidates — three Osoulgarayans against three reformists — to run for the presidency. The Council ensured that all the candidates are loyal to the basic tenets of the revolution and to the Supreme Leader.

Hassan Rouhani, incumbent President, lawyer, diplomat and academic — has led Iran since 2013. Rouhani is considered a moderate pro-dialogue President. He encourages personal freedom and free access to information. He is respected by the West for his openness and diplomatic skills. His greatest success has been to engage the West in 2-year-long complex negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme and finally signing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action Agreement (JCPOA) in 2015. The Agreement was endorsed by the UN Security Council which allowed Iran to retain its technological infrastructure and ability to acquire nuclear weapons in the future. Rouhani is the leader of pragmatic-centrist Moderation and



Supporters of Iranian President and presidential candidate Hassan Rouhani gather at a campaign rally in the capital Tehran on May 13, 2017.

PHOTO: AFP

Development Party (MDP). Eshaq Jahangiri, first Vice President of Hassan Rouhani, is a member of the reformist Executive of Construction Party (ECP). He is considered to be a dummy supporting Rouhani's campaign and may withdraw before the vote. Mostafa Hashemitaba, is a reformist politician served as Minister of Industries and Vice President, is a co-founder of ECP. Ebrahim Raisi-Sadat, is a conservative cleric and current custodian of Astan Quds Razavi, appointed by Ayatollah Khamenei. He was Attorney-General of Iran and Deputy Chief Justice and is associated with Combatant Clergy Association (CCA), a politically active group but not a political party. Ayatollah Khamenei has indicated his preference for principalist Raisi. Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Mayor of Tehran since 2005, is the spiritual leader of the Progress and Justice Population Party (PJP) and is close to the Supreme Leader. Earlier he served in the

Police Department and also the Revolutionary Guard Corps Air Force. Mostafa Mir-Salim, a mechanical engineer and former Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance is close to Ali Khamenei and is a member of the conservative Islamic Coalition Party (ICP). The six candidates have had three TV debates, which were not live but pre-recorded. The economic condition of the country following the signing of JCPOA is a widely discussed concern for Iranians. Rouhani's gamble was to strike a nuclear deal with the West and get economic sanctions removed so that Iran can freely export its oil and revive the economy. Rouhani pointed out that in a globalised world, Tehran's reclusiveness under conservative leadership have hurt the country economically. Though Iranians believe that the economic situation has not improved — Rouhani has put the economy back on track with 7 percent GDP growth (WB, 2016) and inflation cut down to 9.2 percent.

The problem is unemployment — 42 percent of the workforce. Overall, the economic situation has eased after the lifting of sanctions.

Conservatives accuse Rouhani of succumbing to Western pressure and for compromising Iran's sovereignty. They say Rouhani has failed to deliver on his promise to revive the economy following the sanction relief. They are touting "economy of resistance" and "self-reliance" to boost domestic production and strengthen Iran's economy. The Conservatives are also promising all kinds of programmes that will lift peoples' economic condition. Interestingly, the conservatives have not come out with any statement that they will renege on JCPOA.

The Supreme Leader appears to be in a dilemma — whether to promote his protégé Raisi, who is his potential successor or moderate Rouhani. He wants a strong president to confront Washington, but pushing Raisi could create a split in the 88-member Assembly of Experts, which will appoint the next supreme leader. Though he openly supported the JCPOA in 2015, Rouhani's reforms are a source of deep worry for Khamenei as it may undermine the revolution. Khamenei also knows that opposing the trend of reforms may spark street revolts as in 2009. People are not ready to suffer economic hardship as they did for the past four decades.

American-Iran relations are again under strain as Donald Trump has described Iran as "the world's number one terrorist state" and put it "on notice". With Washington cosying up to Saudi Arabia the choice for Iranian voters is to continue with the moderate approach or shift to a conservative hard line and throw away the gains made under Rouhani.

Opinion polls on Iran elections may not be very accurate as there are contradictory results from different pollsters. Elections in Iran are generally free and fair. A candidate getting 50 percent votes plus one vote is the winner. Otherwise the top two candidates will run for the second round on May 26. Analysts say that 1.4 million first time voters will decide who will win this election.

This election will actually be a referendum on Hassan Rouhani's nuclear deal.

The writer is former Ambassador and Secretary.

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How Bangladesh can achieve SDG 13 and climate change goals



POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE
SALEEMUL HUQ

At the turn of the century, under the United Nations, all countries agreed to try to achieve a set of ten Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Bangladesh was relatively successful at achieving most of them.

Since then, all countries have negotiated and agreed upon a set of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030.

Besides the number of goals going up from ten to seventeen, there are several other significant differences between the old MDGs and the new SDGs.

The first big difference is that while the MDGs only applied to developing countries, with the role of developed countries being relegated to only funding, the SDGs require every country to take actions at home to reach each of the goals.

The second big difference is in the inclusion of several new goals that were not there before. One of the most significant ones being SDG 13, which is on climate change.

I will discuss the implications of this new goal on climate change (SDG13) in the context of Bangladesh. First, however, let me describe how climate change is also being dealt with under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is in parallel to the SDG process.

Under the UNFCCC, all countries have agreed to take actions under the Paris



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Agreement (even if we are still not sure if the US will remain in the Agreement) in 2015 with a timeline for implementation also by 2030. This in turn has two big climate change goals, namely one on mitigation (to keep long term global temperature rise to well below 2 Degrees and if possible below 1.5 Degrees), and also a Global Goal on Adaptation (CGA).

The latter is a new goal, and it is still not clear what it consists of, as adaptation to climate change is much more difficult to

measure at global scales.

Nevertheless, all countries need to figure out how to achieve the Paris Agreement (PA) goals on climate Change along with SDG 13.

In Bangladesh, the government has already started the process of mapping and then planning how to implement both the SDGs as well as the PA. Under the Planning Commission, the mapping of responsibilities of different ministries regarding each SDG has been done, and a unit has been set up in the Prime Minister's Office to monitor progress.

For the PA, the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF) has taken the lead, but as climate change affects every sector, this ministry cannot achieve the goals alone, and will need all other relevant ministries to be involved.

Moreover, the successful implementation of plans and achievement of both the SDG and PA goals cannot be achieved by the government ministries and agencies on their own. It will require the inclusion of many other stakeholders, including the private

sector, the education sector, the research and knowledge sector, as well as others.

The private sector has the biggest role to play, starting from the investment sector of banks and insurance companies making green investments. As for the construction sector, it needs to ensure that all structures, both for infrastructure as well as buildings and housing, need to be both green as well as climate resilient. Another very important sector is the energy sector where the emphasis needs to shift from fossil fuel based to green and renewable energy investments. The agriculture sector also needs to be involved in climate resilient technologies and investments.

At the same time, media houses have a very important role to play in raising public awareness about both sustainable development as well as climate change.

For the longer term, the education sector, from primary to secondary to tertiary sectors, all have a role to play to educate children, youth and others to become green and climate aware.

Finally, achieving success in both SDG 13 as well as the PA lies in the nation's ability as a whole (within as well as outside the government) to collectively learn-by-doing, i.e. become conscious about climate change by knowing what to do about it. Here research and knowledge stakeholders will have a big role to play.

If all the actors work together in harmony with each other, then Bangladesh will be able to achieve both SDG13 as well as the climate change goals.

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A WORD A DAY



EPHEMERAL
adjective

Lasting for a very short time

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Fire proof?
 - 6 Mesa's cousin
 - 11 Onion's kin
 - 12 One of the Kennedys
 - 13 West Point student
 - 14 Davis of "Beetle-juice"
 - 15 Conclude
 - 16 However, for short
 - 18 Tire track
 - 19 Bakery buy
 - 20 Auction unit
 - 21 Hot blood
 - 22 Leather worker
 - 24 A very long time
- DOWN**
- 25 Make livable, as a house
 - 27 Meager
 - 29 Grab greedily
 - 32 Floor cover
 - 33 USO audience
 - 34 That lass
 - 35 Outback bird
 - 36 Tiny worker
 - 37 Shooting marble
 - 38 Polo in Asia
 - 40 As -- (generally)
 - 42 Shaq of the NBA
 - 43 Permanent con
 - 44 Kicks back
 - 45 Hay sites
- 1 Agree to**
- 2 Singer Twain**
- 3 2016 NASA movie**
- 4 Genesis name**
- 5 Homesteader**
- 6 Sired**
- 7 Salt Lake City player**
- 8 1983 NASA movie**
- 9 Prof protector**
- 10 Brightens**
- 17 Intrudes**
- 23 Convent resident**
- 24 Simile center**
- 26 Load, as software**
- 27 Small quake**
- 28 Compassionate**
- 30 Alpine home**
- 31 Ax wielders**

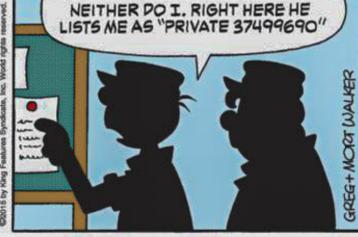
YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

W	A	T	E	R	D	I	A	N	A
A	L	I	V	E	I	N	G	O	T
R	E	M	A	P	S	T	O	W	E
D	E	L	E	S	S	L	A	B	
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W	A	S	A	B	I				
L	A	P	A	Z	T	A	N	G	O
A	L	I	K	E	I	M	E	A	N
M	I	X	E	D	C	A	S	T	E

BEETLE BAILEY



BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES



BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

