

NEWS WRAP AGD

The union government of India has huge plans to widen its nuclear energy capacity from 4000 megawatts of installed capacity to 30,000 mw by 2020. The final step of India's 2008 civil nuclear deal with USA has been India drawing a legal framework for liabilities, for international nuclear energy companies and Indian companies, performing nuclear commerce with India. Generally countries with a large nuclear energy sector fix absolute liability on nuclear power plant operations, which are normally able to access insurance to cover their risk. Pinpointing liability in case of an accident is considered nearly impossible. Many suppliers, especially of small parts, would not afford to insure against a long accident risk.

India's draft nuclear liability law may deter global nuclear companies, such as GE, Westinghouse, Bechtel and Areva, and also domestic companies, from providing nuclear equipment or raw materials to India. The nuclear liability bill passed by the Lok Sabha, has decreed compensation at Rs 1500 crores, with liability on the operator of the nuclear installation. The Bill has dropped the word "intent", in case of any nuclear accident. India and South Korea are two countries that provide right to recourse against the supplier.

INDIA-BANGLADESH BORDER

The issues of demarcation of 6.1 km of boundary between India and Bangladesh, and a final settlement on the enclaves and areas under "adverse possession" are yet to be decided. Negotiations indicate that Bangladeshi enclaves in Indian Territory will probably go to Bangladesh, and Indian enclaves to India. The Indian union ministry of external affairs is keen to settle the issue of demarcation of the Bangladesh border, and accords priority to ties between India and Bangladesh. However, the Trinamool Congress party, led by Mamata Banerjee is delaying agreement on the India-Bangladesh border issue, in view of the forthcoming Assembly elections in West Bengal. Ms Banerjee is unwilling to risk hurting voters' sentiments before the elections.

MANUFACTURING LAND

Kolkata Port Trust desperately needs a deeper port than is currently available. Sagar Island at the tip of Sunderbans will be enlarged for building a port. Silt will be dredged from the Hooghly river for land creation. The new land will have no land losers, and hence, no obstructions and agitations. The port authorities will develop the infrastructure required for serving sea-going vessels, with a draft of nearly 11.5 m. The Sagar Island extension could handle about 60 million tons of cargo every year. Similarly another 200 acres of the land at Shalukhali (East Midnapur) will be manufactured, for extension of Haldia docks.

AFGHAN FORCES

US President Barrack Obama's ambitious goals envisage Afghan forces to fight the war on their own. The Afghan army numbers 134,000 with a goal of 171,000 by October 2011. The strength of Afghan National Police will rise from 115,500 officers, to 134,000, by October 2011. Desertions and resignations explain an attrition rate of nearly 50%. The vast majority of Afghan recruits cannot read and write in their own language, and unable to perform

basic tasks like knowing serial numbers of their weapons. United States forces have started a basic literacy programme in Afghanistan, with 27,000 recruits currently enrolled.

NEGLECT OF SOMALIA

Foreign donors in Brussels in December 2009, had pledged \$58 million to Somalia, but the Somali government has received barely \$6 million. Soldiers who have not been paid in months, have defected to the better funded al Shabaab Islamist rebels. The al-Shabaab group controls much of southern-Somalia and most of Mogadishu ; and is now the strongest armed factions in Somalia. The Islamist rebels have been exporting terrorism beyond Somalia's borders. During 2010, they have struck twin bomb attacks in Uganda's capital, Kampala (July 2010), and in August 2010, killed more than thirty people, in a raid on a hotel in Mogadishu. The islamist rebels pose a danger to the Horn of Africa region and to western countries as well.

ANTI-ROMANY

Sparked by the deaths of young travellers, one of whom was a Roma, riots broke out four months earlier in French cities of Gvenoble and Saint-Aignan. Casualties occurred in confrontations with police. As part of a reassurance to right with voters, French President Nicolas Sarkozy has launched a tough new policy on crime, which aims to eliminate all illegal gypsy camps. In 2009, around 10,000 illegal immigrants were repatriated to Romania and Bulgaria. Recently about 700 illegal Romany immigrants have been flown back to Bucharest. France has violated Europe's convention on human rights, by collectively identifying an ethnic group for expulsion numbering about 15,000 at the moment. □□□