

Press politicians for dialogue, acceptable polls

US envoy urges businessmen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Patricia A Butenis yesterday urged the business community to mount pressure on the political leaderships so that they sit and resolve differences on political issues to hold an election acceptable to all.

"All political parties are expected to participate in the next general election" because it is essential for the sake of democracy, Butenis said at a meeting with the leaders of Federation of Bangladesh

Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) at its office in Dhaka.

"I take the opportunity of promoting your efforts to arrange a dialogue between the two political parties to resolve their concerns about the differences on political issues," she said.

The ruling party and the opposition should sit across the table and discuss the electoral reform proposals and how the election can be held in a credible manner, the US envoy added.

Urging the business leaders to continue their efforts to bring the ruling party and the opposition to the negotiation table for talks, Butenis said she will extend support to the FBCCI in this regard.

Responding to an FBCCI director's apprehension of "media coup" in the next election since most of the electronic media belong to ruling party men, the US ambassador said she will discuss the matter with appropriate authorities prior to the election.

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NDI team due tomorrow to assess election atmosphere

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A delegation of Washington-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) is to visit Bangladesh from September 8 to 11 to assess the preparations and observe the electoral atmosphere leading up to the upcoming parliamentary elections.

The delegation will meet the Election Commission, leaders of the political parties, representatives of domestic monitoring groups and other civic organisations, journalists, academics, diplomats and others involved in electoral activities.

The delegation includes Tom Daschle, former Majority and Minority Leader of the US Senate, Mike Moore, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mu Sochua, former Minister of Women's and Veteran's Affairs in Cambodia, Thomas Barry, NDI

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Last-ditch EU talks on Iran postponed

AGENCIES, Vienna, Austria

Talks meant to give Tehran a last chance to avoid UN sanctions over its nuclear defiance were postponed yesterday, with a senior Iranian envoy saying "a procedural matter" had caused a delay of several days.

"We will not have the meeting today in Vienna," Ali Ashgar Soltanieh, the chief Iranian envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency told The Associated Press. "Both sides are arranging for a couple of days later."

The talks had been tentatively set for yesterday in Vienna as a final attempt to see if there was common ground to start negotiations between Iran and the six nations that have been trying to persuade Iran to curtail its nuclear program.

But while the European Union's Javier Solana had been ready to fly to the Austrian capital at short notice, the talks had been left hanging by uncertainty over whether Iranian nuclear envoy Ali Larjani would come.

There was no immediate comment from Solana's office in Brussels. Although Soltanieh said the decision to postpone any meeting had been mutual, it appeared that Iranian reluctance to attend had scuttled the chance of Wednesday talks.

Soltanieh said "a procedural matter" had led to the postponement, but offered no details. In Tehran, Foreign Minister Manoucher Mottaki said only the time and place of any meeting was still "under discussion by both sides."

Iran defied an August 31 deadline by the UN Security Council to freeze uranium enrichment.

Still, the five permanent council members and Germany the six powers attempting to entice Iran

into negotiating on its nuclear program had decided to hold off work on imposing sanctions until the outcome of any talks between Solana and Larjani.

Senior negotiators of those six countries were to meet in Berlin on Thursday to plan their further Iran strategy.

Late Tuesday US President George W. Bush stepped up his war of words against Tehran, lashing out at Iran's leaders dubbing them tyrants and comparing them to the Al-Qaeda terror network.

"The world's free nations will not allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon," Bush said, adding the world was working to stop Iran "acquiring the tools of mass murder."

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad hit back saying Bush was "nothing" compared to God's will.

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Door still open for talks on reforms

Says Bhuiyan

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said the government offer for discussion on reform proposals is still there and talks can be held any time if the opposition comes along.

"The door is open for discussion... the proposal for dialogue is still there. If the opposition comes along, dialogue can be held any time," he told reporters at his Secretariat office.

Bhuiyan, also the LGRD minister, reiterated his call for the opposition to sit across the table, giving up their agitation programme.

About the opposition's Election

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Polls very crucial for continuation of democracy : Khaleda

BSS, Kotchandpur, Jhenaidah

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has urged people to get prepared for the next general elections to be held under a caretaker government and said the polls will be very important for continuation of democracy and development.

"As per constitutional provision, a caretaker government will take over on expiry of our tenure in October and it will arrange a free and fair election," she told a public meeting at Kotchandpur Pilot High School ground yesterday.

Khaleda, also the BNP chairperson, said the main opposition party does not want to participate in the elections under the caretaker government as per constitutional provision, but in the past it had taken part in the elections under an undemocratic government.

"They (opposition) actually want to foil the democratic process as they do not believe in multi-party democracy. They had introduced one-party Baksal system, banning

all political parties in the country," she added.

The prime minister said the opposition does not want to abide by the constitution, Election Commission, caretaker government and the democratic process as well.

She said the next election is very important for the nation since it will determine whether the present constitution with the name of Allah will remain intact, or be changed.

"The opposition said it will reintroduce the constitution of 1972, which means that it will drop 'Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim' and from the constitution, the prime minister said.

"Therefore, you have to take judicious decision in the 2007 polls to protect democracy and the constitution," she told the rally.

The people did not make any mistake in taking the right decision in 2001 and they will vote the BNP-led alliance to power with two-thirds majority again in the next polls, she hoped.

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DHAKA SUBWAY Ministry asked to go ahead with proposal

STAR REPORT

The Private Infrastructure Ministry (PICOM) yesterday enlisted a proposal for constructing a metro rail system in Dhaka city on build, operate and transfer (BOT) basis.

The meeting also asked the Ministry of Communications to go ahead with the proposal for an international bidding after final approval.

Principal secretary to the prime minister's office Kamal Uddin Siddiqui chaired the meeting, which also enlisted another proposal for constructing a multipurpose complex by Rajuk at Karwan Bazar near Hotel Sonargaon, according to sources.

Rajuk was also asked to conduct a detailed study on the project before its kick-off.

The proposal for constructing the subway in the capital would now go to the cabinet committee for economic affairs (CCEA) for final approval. After the CCEA approval, an official gazette would be published in this regard.

After that a contractual agreement would be signed between the government and the implementing agencies, according to the rules.

The PICOM has also asked the communications ministry to conduct a feasibility study on constructing subway in Dhaka. The feasibility study is necessary for details planning of relocation of utility services which would be affected by the project, according to sources.

The ministry had sent a proposal to the planning commission for feasibility study on subway seeking Tk 7 crore.

But the planning commission did not respond to the proposal.

Earlier, Contech Limited, a local firm pre-qualified in the technical evaluation for constructing the subway. The firm has proposed to construct a 52-kilometre long underground rail system in Dhaka spending Tk 5,200 crore with financial assistance from the Japan Bank

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A motorbike rider fails to get fuel at the filling station near Matsya Bhaban in the capital as the station ran short of supply due to a strike by petroleum dealers. The strike however was called off yesterday.

DEEP-SEA PORT Japanese experts in Mongla for study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A 13-member team including eight Japanese experts arrived at Mongla today to study the feasibility of establishing a deep-sea port at Akram point.

During their four-day stay at Mongla, members of the team will meet with the port authority and later visit the site for the feasibility study.

Akram point is 68 kilometres away from Mongla port and 62 kilometres from the shore into the Bay of Bengal.

State Minister for Shipping Maj (Retd) Kamrul Islam also arrived at Mongla today and visited the

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1. Police drag a woman onto a van from the gathering of the 14-party opposition during the EC Secretariat siege programme yesterday. 2. Opposition workers rescue an injured fellow activist. 3. Police beat up a female activist. 4. A policeman injured in clashes with opposition men. 5. Cops boot an opposition activist. The pictures were taken from near Dhanmondi Road-27 in the capital.

HSC results today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Results of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations and its equivalent Alim, HSC (BM) and HSC (Vocational) examinations will be published today, a press release of the education ministry said yesterday.

The examinees have been advised to collect their results from respective examination centres or institutions from 4:00pm.

Results will also be available on websites-www.educationboard.gov.bd and http://result.tbte.gov.bd.

BSF kills 1 in Dinajpur

UNB, Dinajpur

Indian border guards gunned down a Bangladeshi on their territory along the border here on Tuesday night.

Locals said the BSF (Border Security Force) members of Bhimpur camp sprayed bullets on Rashidul Islam, 18, a cattle trader, when he entered Srirampur village near border pillar no 291/2 at about 11:00pm.

The BSF men then took away the body.

BDR yesterday sent a letter to its Indian counterpart demanding immediate return of Rashidul's body.

Another report from Thakurgaon said an unknown man was killed in BSF firing on Indian territory at Buzruk border point in Haripur upzila Tuesday morning.

BDR sources said the BSF personnel requested them to receive the body of the unknown person but they did not accept it, as the deceased was not a Bangladeshi.

Prayer Timing		
September 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation