

CA's resignation 'impractical'

Says US envoy
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador Patricia A Butenis yesterday said some political parties' demand for resignation of the president from the office of chief adviser (CA) is 'impractical'.

Adviser to the President Mokhlesur Rahman Chowdhury in a news conference disclosed Butenis' remark following a 30-minute meeting between the president and the US envoy in Bangabhaban yesterday where they discussed issues concerning the next election.

"The US ambassador told the president that the demand of some political parties for resignation of President Iajuddin Ahmed from the post of chief adviser is impractical," Mokhles told reporters.

"I have told them (the political parties) their demand is impractical," the president's adviser quoted the US envoy as telling the president.

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TOP 20 DEFAULTERS

NCBs attain 5pc of loan recovery target

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) in the first nine months of this year attained a meagre 5.37 percent of the target they set for recovering loans from their top 20 defaulters.

This was revealed at a meeting between Bangladesh Bank (BB) and the NCBs to review their performances during January-September period.

Four NCBs -- Sonali, Janata, Agrani and Rupali Bank -- had targeted to recover Tk 232 crore from their top 20 defaulters in 2006 while they have recovered only Tk 12.48 crore until September.

BB Governor Salehuddin Ahmed, who presided over yesterday's meeting, expressed discontent over the poor performance of the NCBs, meeting sources said.

Top officials of the NCBs, on the other hand, apprised the central bank governor of their helplessness in the face of the defaulters' persistent non-compliance with the banks' instructions.

They said the banks have been facing problems in recovering the outstanding loans due to court's stay orders following writ petitions filed by the defaulters.

The central bank officials asked the NCBs' top brass to appoint skilled lawyers to have the stay

orders vacated.

The BB officials suggested that the NCBs should take the advantage of the upcoming election by forcing the defaulters to reschedule their outstanding loans if they are to contest the polls.

The banks should step up their efforts to recover such loans before the election slated for January 2007, they observed.

The central bank officials also instructed the NCBs to strictly oversee the rescheduling of loans so that no defaulter could gain undue interest waiver.

Sonali Bank had a recovery target of Tk 154 crore whereas it

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Nobel hero Yunus releases music video in Oslo

AFP, Oslo

Micro-credit pioneer and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammed Yunus, who received his prestigious award in Oslo at the weekend, on Tuesday released a CD and music video to raise money for his country Bangladesh, Norwegian daily Dagbladet reported.

The song "Hear Me Now" is a collaboration with Norwegian vocalist Milla Sunde and British musician Tom Bevan, who make up the band The Green Children.

The music video is a mix of Sunde singing and scenes from Bangladesh, where Yunus visits a village and women who have benefited their lives through micro-credit loans.

Yunus and the Grameen Bank which he created have helped millions in Bangladesh extricate themselves from poverty through tiny, collateral-free loans.

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Nobel Peace Prize laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus signs the bottom of a chair as he visits the Nobel Museum in Stockholm on Tuesday. Since the museum opened in 2001, 250 signatures have been put on 50 chairs by Nobel laureates and distinguished guests.

HC rejects writ petitions on Bac staff absorption by ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday rejected two separate writ petitions filed against the decision of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) not to absorb the screened out staff belonging to former Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac).

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Hearing of graft case against Ershad starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another graft case against former president HM Ershad came into light after 14 years for hearing in the High Court (HC) following a new move by the attorney general's office.

The law officers from the attorney general's office yesterday prayed to begin its hearing before a

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RMG workers block road for 4 hrs to protest factory closure

A CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

More than 4,000 garment workers yesterday blockaded the Dhaka-Narayanganj Link Road at Fatulla Shibui Market area for nearly four hours that resulted in a severe traffic gridlock in the surrounding

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PHOTO: STAR

A soldier stands guard by an armoured vehicle on the premises of Mahanagar Natya Mancha in the capital yesterday. The vehicles were brought to ensure security at the Bangabhaban.

Delayed polls better than farcical one

Shujan roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens at a roundtable yesterday said the caretaker government lost its credibility and a delayed election participated by the major political parties is better than a 'farcical' election in the present 'confusing' political circumstances.

Suggesting change of the whole electoral system rather than mere changes in the caretaker government, they emphasised empowering the Election Commission for ensuring a free and fair election.

Shujan -- Shushashoner Janney Nagarik (citizens for good governance) -- organised the roundtable at Cirdap auditorium in the capital seeking the way of coming out from the existing political impasse.

Eminent economist Prof Muzafer Ahmed presided over the roundtable.

"Having a belated election is better than a farcical election,"

India to end fencing border next month

OUR CORRESPONDING, New Delhi

The second phase of fencing along the border with Bangladesh is expected to be completed next month, Indian Home Minister Shivraj Patil told Rajya Sabha (upper house) yesterday.

Replying to supplementary questions during question hour, Patil said barring minor aspects, the second phase of border fencing will be completed by next month.

The minister said there are areas on 4009-km border that involve huge stretches of ravines, which cannot be fenced. The first phase of fencing is already over, he said.

He clarified that the villages located on the border would not be merged with Bangladesh territory due to fencing.

The minister said the matter regarding people residing between the zero line and the proposed alignment of fencing at 150 yards from the border has been taken up with Bangladesh government at different levels with a view to arriving at a mutually acceptable solution.

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Prepare for polls alongside agitation

Says Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina has urged the people to take all-out preparations for the polls alongside the ongoing movement.

"Unilateral election cannot be allowed to be held...We'll have to take all-out preparations for participating in the election alongside the movement," she said while speaking at a discussion at the Institution

of Engineers yesterday. Bangabandhu Parishad organised the discussion to mark the Victory Day.

Hasina also asked her party men to get prepared to resist what she called vote thieves at each polling station throughout the country.

Clearing confusion about her party's participation in the election, the AL chief said, "There is confusion whether or not the

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14-party wants to boycott election

Says Khaleda, also warns against shifting polls date

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said the election must be held within the constitutional framework as there is no scope to shift the election.

"Country will face a constitutional vacuum if the election is not held within 90 days and the country will move backward and face fur-

ther problems if the election is not held within the stipulated time," she said yesterday while addressing a joining function at her Hawa Bhaban office yesterday.

A group of leaders and workers from Awami League (AL), Gono Forum and union parishad chairmen from Dhamrai upazila of Dhaka led by former upazila chairman

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Prayer Timing		
December 14		
	Azan	
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation