

Butenis meets Khaleda

Discusses political situation

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador Patricia Butenis met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Banani office yesterday evening and discussed the issues concerning the Election Commission, caretaker government and the latest political situation.

Reaz Rahman, adviser to the BNP chairperson, told reporters that they informed the US envoy of the BNP and four-party alliance's stand for free and fair general elections with participation of all political parties.

He said the Election Commission, advisers' activities and current political situation came up during the meeting that lasted for about an hour from 7:10 pm.

Butenis told reporters that the BNP leadership had reassured her about the party's peaceful political stand.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and former foreign minister Morshed Khan were present.

Education files pile up as CA pressed for time

Teachers urge handing over charge to another adviser

SURANJITH DEABNATH

The country's education sector is stagnating as President and Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government Iajuddin Ahmed, also in charge of the education ministry, is too busy dealing with the political crisis and the running of 10 other ministries.

Several thousand files from the education ministry have piled up at Bangabhaban as the President has no time to sign them, education ministry sources said.

One month after the caretaker government took over, Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed and Education Secretary Momtazul Islam are yet to initiate measures to solve pressing issues, the sources added.

Teachers, officials of government bodies related to education and the staff of the education ministry feel that charge of the education ministry should be handed over to another adviser of the caretaker government until the next govern-

ment takes office after the general elections.

"The education minister or chief of the education ministry usually has to sign around 100 to 150 documents and look at 200 to 250 files daily, but at this moment officials of the ministry cannot carry out the daily routine works as the education chief is not available," an education ministry official said.

The situation has become acute as Education Secretary Momtazul Islam is not attending his office due to illness. Before this, he was not available due to a tour of Vietnam from November 16 to 24, ministry sources said.

"With the huge responsibilities of 11 ministries, President Iajuddin has become overburdened. He cannot do his duties properly in any ministry. Now he should handover the education ministry to another adviser of the caretaker government as the chief adviser has to deal with a lot of other problems," said Prof Quazi Farruque, chief coordinator and convener of the

National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE), a platform of 11 organisations of teachers and employees.

Some serious problems have already been created which need to be solved immediately. These include the failure to resolve the conflict around a circular published on October 31 that awarded teachers of non-government educational institutions 100 per cent basic salary from government coffers. The circular also placed the condition that tuition fees collected from students be deposited in government funds.

Teachers under three platforms have held rallies, brought out processions and submitted memorandums to the chief adviser demanding cancellation of the circular.

Bangladesh Shikshak Karmachari Oikya Parishad, a platform of eight organisations of teachers and employees, said the

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Gono Forum man stabbed to death

UNB, Keraniganj

A local leader of Gono Forum was killed in an attack by unidentified criminals at Pakindi here yesterday evening.

The victim was identified as Parvez, 32, president of Gono Forum Pakindi Union unit in Keraniganj.

Witnesses said Parvez, son of Anwar Hossain, came under attack while he was returning home at village Barisor by a motorcycle from Kanindi at about 7:30pm.

"Suddenly, a gang of miscreants swooped on Parvez charging bombs. As he stopped his motorcycle, the gang stabbed him in the chest and abdomen and fled the scene," says a spot account of the incident.

Parvez was rushed to Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Parvez's father filed a case with Keraniganj Police Station accusing three people named Panna, Dipu and Shaheen of the killing.

Gazipur people observe first anniversary of bomb attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People in Gazipur yesterday observed the first anniversary of the gruesome bomb attack on the court premises amid the frustrations of the victims' families still waiting for the charge framing against the accused.

To observe the day, Gazipur Zila Lawyers' Association brought out a procession from the association's office in the morning that paraded the main thoroughfares of the town and ended at the association hall no 2 followed by a mourning meeting.

The suicide bomb attack by the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) killed seven people, including two lawyers and injured some 60 others.

A case was filed with Joydebpur Police Station the same day under

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Arrest of ex-BCL leader sparks violent protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a former leader of the Sylhet district unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of Awami League (AL), at a restaurant in the city's Rikabi Bazar at 5:30pm yesterday.

The arrestee, Bidhan Kumar Saha, a former organising secretary of the Sylhet district unit of BCL and a former general secretary of Madan Mohan College Students Union was attending the restaurant along with others after a rally of the 14-party combine at the city's Court Point.

After the incident, agitated BCL and Juba League activists took out a procession at Rikabi Bazar and vandalised at least three private vehicles.

At a rally with Sylhet city AL General Secretary Misbahuddin

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PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Rifles personnel keep watch on Thakurgaon frontier yesterday following heavy gunfight with Indian Border Security Force on Tuesday.

CTG CONTAINER TERMINAL Operations resume after 17-day stalemate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Ending a 17-day stalemate, container handling with sophisticated gantry cranes resumed at Chittagong Container Terminal (CCT) from 8:00pm yesterday after Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) had accepted an alternative proposal from City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Dockworkers led by Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury have been demanding immediate cancellation of the agreement with a private company Saif Powertec Ltd, for operating the four cranes.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) decided to operate the gantry cranes by its own operators temporarily instead of the private com-

pany.

Following a series of meetings from afternoon among Shipping Secretary Sheikh Enayetullah and dockworkers' leaders, CPA officials, and representatives of Saif Power and different port users including CCCI, BGMEA, Bangladesh Masters Stevedor Association (BMSA) and Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association (BSAA) the decision finally came at 7:30pm, sources said.

Under the interim arrangement, the CPA will unload 11 gearless vessels, which have been lying idle for the last 17 days due to the deadlock at CCT, using its own operators.

"The unloading may take ten days or more," said CPA Secretary Farhaduddin Ahmed last night.

Within half-an hour of the deci-

sion, CPA's own operators and dockworkers have joined the work resuming operations at CCT. Operations at CCT came to a halt since November 12 as dockworkers, loyal to the city mayor refrained from their work, demanding cancellation of an agreement for the gantry cranes to be operated by Saif Powertec.

Earlier in the day, hundreds of dockworkers led by Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury laid siege to Bandar Bhaban, the headquarters of CPA, where the mayor placed a demand to the authorities to engage CPA's own operators to the task of operating the gantry cranes for at least 10 days to examine their skill.

Robbers shoot 2 members of a family dead

UNB, Ctg

Two members of a family were shot dead and another was injured by a gang of robbers at Mirzarkhil village in Sattkania upazila early yesterday.

Police said the villagers encircled the robbers while they were fleeing after looting valuables from eight houses at about 4:00am.

Having failed to escape, the gang opened fire on the villagers, killing Korban Ali, 52, and his nephew Hakim, 32, on the spot and injuring another.

The injured, Nizamuddin, was admitted to the upazila health complex in a critical condition.

In another incident, a gang of unidentified miscreants picked up Patiya Jubo Dal Vice-President Jasimuddin, 32, from his house at Hitaon early yesterday and hacked him to death.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Chittagong Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Lady mugged of Tk 3 lakh in Mohammadpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of muggers snatched Tk 3 lakh from a lady in Mohammadpur area in the capital yesterday.

Locals chased and caught one of the criminals fleeing on a motorbike but failed to recover the money. They set fire on the bike after giving a severe beating to the mugger.

The incident occurred on Razia Sultana Road of Mohammadpur at around 12:45 in the afternoon when the victim, Rokeya Rob, was returning home on a rickshaw after withdrawing the money from National Bank Ltd Sat Masjid Road branch.

According to eyewitnesses, four muggers on two motorbikes threatened the lady with weapons, snatched her purse and sped away.

"Locals rushed in to help the lady and captured one of the muggers after she screamed out for help," added police sources.

The captured, Alamgir Hussain, 32, was handed over to the police while his accomplices managed to flee with the money.



PHOTO: STAR

Heavy traffic jam in front of Engineers' Institution in the capital as roads around Bangladesh Secretariat were closed due to Jubo Sangram Parishad's secretariat besiege programme yesterday.

35 hurt as AL, Jamaat clash

UNB, Sirajganj

At least 35 people were injured in a clash between the activists of Awami League (AL) and Jamaat-e-Islami on Tarash Upazila Parishad premises yesterday.

Police said the clash ensued at about 11:00am when the Jamaat men attacked a rally of local Awami League at the upazila auditorium.

On information, police rushed to the spot dispersed the feuding groups.

The injured are now undergoing treatment at the upazila health complex and local clinics.

Prayer Timing		
November 30		
	Azan	
Fair	5-10	5-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Pakistan tests nuke-capable missile

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan test launched a nuclear-capable medium range missile on Wednesday, two days after South Asian rival India conducted its first trial of a new ballistic intercept system.

The Pakistani Hatf 4 or Shaheen-1 missile -- Shaheen means "eagle" in Urdu -- has a range of 700 kilometres (437 miles) meaning it can hit targets deep inside neighbouring India.

"Pakistani troops today conducted a successful launch of the medium range Hatf 4 or Shaheen-1 missile," the military said in a statement.

The test came as part of a continuing exercise by Pakistan's Army Strategic Force Command. On November 16 Pakistan test fired a Ghauri missile with a longer range of 1,300 kilometres (812 miles) away.

"The event marked the culmination phase of the training exercise and validated the operational readiness of the strategic missile group equipped with Shaheen-1 Missiles," the statement said.

Pakistan's Chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff General Ehsan Ul Haq witnessed the launch exercise at an undisclosed location.

He hailed "the high standards achieved during training which was reflected in the successful launch and the accuracy of the missile in reaching the target," the statement said.

"Pakistan can be justifiably proud of its defence capability and the reliability of its nuclear deterrence," he added.

Neighbouring India announced on Monday that its first test of a missile designed to intercept other missiles had been a success.

The test saw a surface-to-surface Prithvi-II (earth) missile, which has a range up to 250 kilometres (156 miles), shot down over the Bay of Bengal by a similar missile fired seconds later.

Regional rivals Pakistan and India have routinely conducted missile tests since carrying out tit-for-tat nuclear detonations in May 1998, alarming the world.

Top Indian and Pakistani diplomats at a meeting in New Delhi this

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PHOTO: STAR

Wastes dumped in this marsh at Matuail on the outskirts of the capital have polluted the environment.