

Pakistan an important ally in war on terror: US

AFP, Kabul

Pakistan is an important ally in the "war on terrorism" and committed to the fight, a top US official said Thursday amid disquiet in Afghanistan about its neighbours' efforts against militants.

The United States supported the efforts of governments on both sides of the border to defeat extremism and boost development, the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Richard Boucher, said.

"Pakistan is a very important ally in the fight against terrorism," he said.

"There are successes on both sides of the border, there are strong commitments on both sides of the border to deal with extremism ... there are also challenges on both sides of the border," he said.

"It is clear to me none of us will be safe unless we deal with both sides of the border... we are all in this together."

Boucher met Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Nato military

commanders during his visit to Afghanistan. He was due to leave for Pakistan later Thursday for similar talks.

The diplomat refused to comment on the latest row between the neighbours over Pakistan's plan to mine and fence parts of the shared frontier to stop the crossborder movement of fighters feeding a Taliban-led insurgency here.

Afghanistan has strongly objected, telling Pakistan to instead do more against the training camps and circles supporting extremist rebels.

Relations between the countries plummeted last year amid similar bickering over the insurgency, which was its bloodiest in 2006 with more than 4,000 people left dead, most of them rebels.

Boucher said he understood the border mining issue was "still under discussion" in Pakistan, which he said was committed to improving control of its tribally administered areas along the border through military, government and development means.

Emergency declared

FROM PAGE 1
proclamation of emergency can be revoked by the president by a subsequent proclamation.

Although the president in the proclamation did not specify the timeframe for the enforcement of the emergency, it shall cease to operate at the expiry of 120 days unless it is approved by a resolution of parliament before the expiry.

The state of emergency was last declared on November 27, 1990 during the regime of autocratic military ruler HM Ershad and it was in effect until December 6, the day Ershad resigned from presidency following a mass uprising.

POLITICAL CRISIS

The political crisis started to deteriorate from January 3 after the AL-led grand alliance's declaration to boycott and resist the January 22 elections. The grand alliance, at a public meeting on Wednesday, announced a series of agitation programmes including blockades, hartals and besiege programmes.

Donor agencies and diplomats continued to mount pressure on the caretaker government and the political parties to resolve the ongoing crisis. They also warned that the elections would not be acceptable without the participation of all political parties.

Seven envoys yesterday restarted their effort, which had failed earlier, to end the political crisis. The envoys who are collectively known as the Tuesday Group met Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil and his counterpart Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan separately.

US Ambassador Patricia Butenis and British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury were among the envoys who joined a meeting at the Canadian High Commissioner Barbara Richardson's house in Baridhara.

CONSTITUTION ON PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY

14/1. Proclamation of Emergency:

If the president is satisfied that a grave emergency exists in which the security or economic life of Bangladesh, or any part thereof, is threatened by war or external aggression or internal disturbance, he may issue a Proclamation of Emergency:

Provided that such proclamation shall require for its validity the prior counter signature of the prime minister:

2. A Proclamation of Emergency:

(a) May be revoked by a subsequent proclamation;

(b) Shall be laid before parliament;

(c) Shall cease to operate at the expiration of one hundred and twenty days, unless before the expiration of that period it has been approved by a resolution of the parliament:

Provided that if any such proclamation is issued at a time when parlia-

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