

# US Congress under pressure to overhaul immigration laws

**REUTERS, Washington**

An unlikely mix of Hispanics, farmers and high-tech businesses has stepped up pressure on Congress to overhaul US immigration laws, boosting prospects for a bill that would allow more foreign workers into the country.

Last year, the Republican-led House of Representatives derailed an immigration bill because it would have given a path to citizenship for those who entered the country illegally.

But supporters say chances are good that the new, Democratic-led Congress will pass some form of immigration bill. President George W Bush is likely to renew his call for broad immigration legislation, including a guest worker programme, in his State of the Union address this week.

"I think prospects are good," said Assistant Senate Majority Leader Richard Durbin of Illinois.

Pressure to allow in more workers has been mounting since Congress passed a law in September to fund hundreds of miles of new fences along the border with Mexico and a series of raids against illegal workers last month by the US Department of Homeland Security.

On January 8, the League of United Latin American Citizens and the Hispanic Federation asked Democratic leaders to take action on immigration within 100 days, saying the raids "stirred further emotion and fear" in the Hispanic communities.

Swift and Co., whose meatpacking plant was raided on December 12, said this month that the raid could cost the company as much as \$30 million.

And farm groups said farmers faced millions of dollars in losses this year if a crackdown against illegal immigration continues without a balancing programme to bring in workers legally.

"There is a sense of urgency here," said Sen Larry Craig, an Idaho Republican who, along with California Democrat Sen Dianne Feinstein, introduced a bill that would create a special programme for illegal farm workers to adjust their status.

US companies are also clamouring for more H1B visas to allow foreign software engineers and other skilled workers into the country.

The 65,000 visas allotted for 2007 were taken by the end of May last year, months before the end of the fiscal year in September, said Jack Krumholtz, the head of Microsoft Corp.'s government affairs office. It is also difficult to get permanent US residency for foreign workers who would like to stay, he said.

"This is becoming for high-tech companies a huge retention issue," Krumholtz said. "We will start to see the raids 'stirred further emotion and fear' in the Hispanic communities."

Last year, a bill passed the Senate that would have provided more visas for highly skilled workers, combined tougher border enforcement measures with a guest worker programme, and given millions of illegal immigrants a chance to earn US citizenship.

But the bill was never considered by the House, where a solid group of Republicans opposed it, calling it an amnesty for people who broke US law.

Instead the House passed enforcement-only legislation that further criminalized illegal presence in the United States and tried to make tough immigration enforcement an issue in the 2006 congressional elections.

Since then, some of the more outspoken opponents of the measure, including Republican Rep. John Hostettler of Indiana and Rep. J.D. Hayworth of Arizona, lost their seats in midterm elections on November 11.

But Rep Thomas Tancredo, a Colorado Republican who led the fight against the Senate bill last year and who is exploring his chances as a potential presidential candidate, says he will push to block any similar comprehensive bill this year.

House Republican leaders, mindful of the deep split in their party over immigration, say they see a chance for broad legislation, but it will need to put tough border enforcement measures in place before any guest worker programme or other plans for the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants living in the United States.

"There is a path to a bipartisan solution and I think that there are a lot of informal bipartisan discussions going on to try to strike that balance," said Florida Rep Adam Putnam, a member of the House Republican leadership.

Proponents of a comprehensive bill, though confident of passage, still expect new battles, including whether illegal immigrants should have the chance to earn citizenship.

House Republican Whip Roy Blunt of Missouri said he would not support a bill that offered citizenship for those who entered the country illegally. But Rep Zoe Lofgren, a California Democrat who is heading the House Judiciary panel on immigration, believes differences can be worked out.

"If we stop yelling at each other and just calmly and methodically work through the issues... we'll come up with a practical bill that will work and will last," Lofgren said.



**Pedestrians suffer as Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) continues its road digging haphazardly for the last two weeks near AGB Colony at Motijheel in the city. The picture was taken yesterday.**

## Warm clothes for cold-hit people

Standard Chartered Bank employees contributed their one day's salary to Oxfam GB Bangladesh to provide winter clothes to the poor, says a press release.

Ahmed Ali Shah, Acting CEO of Standard Chartered Bank, handed over a cheque for Tk 6.41 lakh to Anil P Tambay, Country Representative of Oxfam GB Bangladesh, on January 18.

Shah Masud Imam, Head of Corporate Affairs; Muhiit Rahman, Head of Development Organisation of Standard Chartered Bank and Sayed Mohammad Nurul Alam, Programme Services Manager of Oxfam GB Bangladesh, were present on the occasion.

**SONARGAON HOTEL**

Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel as part of its community care programme has handed over 11 boxes of warm clothes containing 381 pieces of sweaters and jackets for the distribution to the poor people to CARC-Bangladesh, says a press release.

Paolo Randone, Acting General Manager of the hotel, handed over the boxes to Ms Stav Zotalis, Assistant Country Director of CARE.

**BANGLA TRAC LTD**

Bangla Trac Ltd. (Bangla CAT) dealer of Caterpillar Inc. in Bangladesh recently, as a part of its 'Community Charity 2007' initiative, distributed warm clothes and blankets among the cold-hit poor people, says a press release.

Warm clothes and blankets were distributed through LIPP and DWC, two local NGOs, operating in the northern and mid southern part of Bangladesh.

**ISAMOTI SOMAJ**

Isamoti Somaj Unnyan Uddog (ISUU), a social organisation based in Kazimihalla in Sathkira, distributed 200 blankets and 500 sweaters among the poor in Sathkira.

Biswajit Bhattacharjee, TNO Debhata, distributed blankets and sweaters among the cold stricken people on behalf of Isamoti Somaj Unnyan Uddog (ISUU).



**Standard Chartered Bank, top, Bangla Trac Ltd. (Bangla CAT), middle, and Isamoti Somaj Unnyan Uddog, bottom, provide money and warm clothes to the cold-hit people.**

## CA's speech reflects reasonable demands of all parties Says Pak HC

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Pakistan High Commissioner (HC) to Bangladesh Alamgir Babar paid a courtesy call on Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury at Baridhara in the city yesterday.

After the meeting, LDP Central Joint Secretary Major General (ret) Anwarul Kabir Talukder said they discussed development of bilateral relations.

The Pak HC told the journalists that the visit was aimed at strengthening friendship between the two countries.

When asked by journalists Kabir said, "Our reaction to chief adviser's address to the nation is obviously positive. We welcome the speech as it has reflected reasonable demands of all political parties."

About the resignation of the former chief election commissioner Justice MA Aziz, he said, "Aziz should have resigned long before to avert loss of lives, bloodshed and violence."

## 'Taliban chief in Afghanistan'

**AFP, Islamabad**

Pakistan said on Monday that fugitive Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar was most likely leading the Islamist movement's insurgency from Afghanistan's southern city of Kandahar.

Foreign ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam made the allegation in response to a statement by a captured Taliban spokesman that Omar was living in Pakistan's southwestern Quetta city, and to a newspaper report that Pakistani intelligence services are supporting a comeback by the militia.

# CMP sets up bus terminal to ease city traffic jam

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**

As part of continued efforts to make the port city congestion free, Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) has started setting up of a terminal for inter-district buses of Dhaka-Chittagong route on the outskirts of city.

The CMP traffic department in a letter on Sunday sought cooperation of Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) to help set up such a terminal either at Pahartali or outside the entry point of the city beside Dhaka-Chittagong highway, sources said.

The CMP identified two abandoned lands, one belonging to AK Khan industrial group at AK Khan Gate, and the other to Aroma Tea Limited near Glaxo factory at City Gate area for this purpose.

The CMP started pursuing for the terminal after it succeeded in removing all illegal bus stands that seriously hampered smooth movement of traffic and created congestion in the city.

After shifting the inter-district bus stands, the CMP is now carrying out a drive against the buses trying to depart the city from their previous bus stands.

In the drive that began on Sunday, the CMP detained around 65 buses till last evening for violating its order, sources added.

During this period some ten trucks and tempos were also detained for plying in the city streets ignoring the changes made in the routes for their movement, they said.

"The detained vehicles, kept at Dampara Police Line ground, might be released only after their owners and drivers concerned give undertakings for complying with the new order," said CMP DC Traffic Md Abu Sufian while talking to The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, to streamline the traffic movement in the city the CMP has also taken several other steps.

A meeting of the Road Transport Committee for determining the routes of city service buses will be held in the city today.

Representatives from all the authorities concerned including CDA, Chittagong City Corporation, Bangladesh City Transport Authority (BRTA), Transport Owners Association, Transport Workers Association, CMP Traffic Department and two members of the civil society will be present at the meeting to be chaired by CMP Commissioner.

# EU for full implementation of Iran sanctions

**AFP, Brussels**

The European Union deplored Monday Iran's lack of cooperation over Tehran's nuclear programme and called for the full implementation of United Nations sanctions.

In conclusions from their council talks in Brussels, EU foreign ministers agreed to halt trade in nuclear-related goods with the Islamic republic, freeze the assets of those linked to the programme and impose targeted travel bans.

It came as Iran said it would block 38 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors from entering the country, and a day after President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vowed not to bow to international pressure.

"The council deplored Iran's failure to take the steps repeatedly required by the IAEA board of governors and the United Nations Security Council," the ministers said in their conclusions.

They welcomed the measures in UN Security Council resolution 1737, passed on December 23, imposing sanctions on Iran for its repeated refusal to fully cooperate with the UN atomic energy watchdog or suspend uranium enrichment.

The ministers said the sanctions "are targeted against the most sensitive parts of the Iranian nuclear and missile programmes, and called on all countries to implement the measures in full and without delay."

When asked how long it would take for Britain to apply the sanctions, British Foreign Minister Margaret Beckett said: "In common with everyone else, we will implement them as speedily and as effectively as we can."

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency and is a key player in the Iran dossier, said he supported a "strict application" of the resolution.

## Cancel candidacy of corrupts in coming polls

**Human rights leaders urge Mainul BSS, Dhaka**

Leaders of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh called on Law Adviser Mainul Hossain at his office in the city yesterday.

They thanked him for taking initiative to separate the judiciary from the executive.

They demanded cancellation of candidatures of corrupts and black money holders in the coming general election and formulation of laws for their speedy trial, protecting rights for compensation of victims and investigating allegations against policemen through other organisations, taking necessary measures for annulling laws which cause suspension of fundamental rights, and filing cases against those who adulterate food and pharmaceutical products, and formation of a human rights commission.

Mainul said the main task of the present caretaker government is to hold a free, fair and neutral election.

He assured them of necessary measures for annulling laws which cause suspension of the fundamental rights soon.

The leaders are Advocate Monjil Morshed, Advocate Asaduzzaman Siddiqui, Advocate Mohammad Sarwar Ahad Chowdhury, Advocate Ekilas Uddin Bhuiyan, Advocate Mujibor Rahman and Advocate Shahin Ara Laily.

# Diplomats hope

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agenda of the new caretaker government for holding free, fair and credible elections after accomplishing necessary reforms.

"As most Bangladeshes and we are hoping that elections are going to be held as soon as possible," Butenis said, "everybody is waiting and watching and there is a lot of goodwill."

On the interim government, the US envoy said it has popular support and they want to work closely with it.

She said everyone knows the demands of political parties for a credible election and hoped that the parties would have consensus on the reconstitution of the Election Commission and other election reforms before going for the elections.

UK High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury was appreciative of Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed's address to the nation saying, "It was very comprehensive where he laid down his plan of actions."

"We are pleased with the approach that has been taken and the progress that this government seems to be making," he said, adding, "We hope that it continues that way."

When asked about his speculation about the possible time for elections, he said, "That is an issue for the interim government and the people of Bangladesh."

Being pressed about the possible timing of the election, Anwar Choudhury in his diplomatic parlance said, "I suppose when the interim government is ready it would announce the next schedule."

German Ambassador Frank Meyke, who is currently holding the EU chair, said, "We are looking forward to supporting as much as our diplomacy can the government to hold a free and fair election."

He said the timing of the next election is a kind of thing that must be discussed by experts. Election Observation Mission of European Union could be useful in this respect once they are here in action again, he added.

French Ambassador Jacques Constihes also appreciated the caretaker government's efforts to hold a credible election and said they had encouraging meeting with the foreign affairs adviser.

Earlier, Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury outlined the caretaker government's prime agenda of holding elections free from corruption and muscle power and sought support from the diplomatic community in implementing the caretaker government's agenda.

In his brief introductory remarks, Chowdhury said Bangladesh is playing a major role in the international arena including in the UN peacekeeping missions. He said the incumbent government would carry out all its normal activities and will attend the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) summit scheduled in India next April.

Acting Foreign Secretary Tuhid Hossain and senior officials of the foreign ministry were also present.

## Recognition for noble work

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

As recognition to the noble work of a transport agency, police gave cash money, certificates and crests to the employees of the agency for saving the lives of the policemen critically injured during a drive to arrest criminals in Norail-Magura highway on Friday, says a press release.

A police pick-up van while chasing a criminal gang around 2:30am accidentally turned upside down leaving constable Abdul Barek, Abdul Qader, Mohammad Rezaul Karim and Tawhidul Islam critically injured on the spot.

The drivers and helpers of 'Eagle Paribahan', who were passing the area at that moment, took the injured to local hospital and handed over arms and ammunition of the police to the nearby police station.

Police gave Tk 5000 each to Driver Md Ruhul Amin, Supervisor Syed Alam Chunnun and Helpers Robinud Roy and Md Akbar and extended their deep gratitude to Eagle Paribahan employees and authorities for their support and assistance.

# Hillary Clinton has big name and big baggage

**REUTERS, Washington**

As Hillary Clinton launches the most viable bid so far to a woman to become US president, she brings with her advantages of a stellar political name and drawbacks of decades of political baggage.

The Democratic US senator from New York and the first wife of a US president elected to public office, Clinton, 59, is considered one of the nation's most polarising politicians.

Conservatives, still bitter from the presidency of Bill Clinton, revile her as a big-government liberal. Many liberal Democrats denide her as calculating and opportunistic -- particularly because of her early support for the Iraq war and cautious evolution as a critic of President George W Bush's war policies.

But Clinton's backers cite her years of experience, grasp of policy detail, and solid record since she was elected to the US Senate in 2000 where she developed working relationships with lawmakers, even though a number of Republicans had tried to remove her husband from the White House.

They also point to the political

arsenal she has in her husband, who rose from governor of the small southern state of Arkansas to the White House.

But memories linger of her soap opera-like ordeals during her husband's presidency, which was marred by rumors of his marital infidelities including the sex scandal with White House intern Monica Lewinsky that led to his impeachment by the US House of Representatives. The Senate then did not remove him from office.

She also was tarred by a major failure of her husband's presidency when the health care reforms she spearheaded floundered in Congress.

As her husband's second presidential term neared a close, she declared New York her home. She bought a house in a New York City suburb, and ran for an open Senate seat and won, overcoming charges of "carpetbagging" -- or pulling up roots to move to a state with an available seat.

**SEPT 11 AND IRAQ WAR**

Her first term was shaped by the September 11 attacks on New York, and she fought for money and aid, became a fierce advocate of tighter



**Hillary Clinton**

homeland security, and an early supporter of the Iraq war.

Serving on the Armed Services Committee, she initially surprised supporters with somewhat hawkish views, but she became increasingly critical of the Bush administration's handling of the war and eventually called for former Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's resignation.

She opposes Bush's plan to send 21,500 more US troops to Iraq, partly because she said it would siphon off US military strength in Afghanistan where

Taliban attacks have intensified. She visited Baghdad and Afghanistan earlier this month.

Clinton arrived at the Senate with star power and the aura of a presidential contender. In 2004, she campaigned for Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry, and although he lost, she was one of her party's most effective fundraisers and popular figures.

But with her love-her-or-hate-her persona, Republicans routinely inject her name in their own fund-raising letters while portraying her as among the most dangerous liberal Democrats.

People see her in different ways -- as an aggrieved wife, overbearing feminist, outstanding lawyer, charismatic politician, independent thinker, pragmatic moderate, radical liberal, inflexible bureaucrat, and child crusader.

She wrote the book "It Takes a Village" on child-raising and donated the proceeds to children's hospitals. But in 2000 she was roundly criticised for signing a book deal for \$8 million for her memoirs

about her White House years, "Living History."

The Lewinsky scandal led a list of controversies that drew probes by the Republican-led Congress or independent counsels during her husband's presidency, including the firing of the White House's travel office workers and accusations about the couple's Whitewater real estate deals in Arkansas.

Raised in a Chicago suburb in a Republican home, she attended Wellesley College and became a Democrat during the political turbulence of 1968. She then attended Yale Law School where she met fellow student Bill Clinton.

After a stint in Washington, where she worked on the House of Representatives committee on the impeachment of President Richard Nixon, she followed Bill Clinton to Little Rock, Arkansas, where she was a lawyer, mother and political wife.

Clinton was born on October 26, 1947, married Bill Clinton in 1975, and they have one daughter, Chelsea.