

# Obama refuses to apologise for Romney attacks

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama heads to the Midwestern state of Ohio yesterday after refusing to apologise for accusing Mitt Romney of outsourcing jobs while in charge of Bain Capital, a charge his Republican opponent has dismissed as "false."

The US presidential race has taken an acrimonious turn in the past week as the wealthy Republican candidate endures a Democratic onslaught over the Bain issue and for squirreling many of his millions away in offshore tax havens.

Romney, the former governor of Massachusetts, called Friday for an apology for the intensifying character assassination by the Obama campaign and said personal attacks against him were "beneath the dignity of the presidency."

"We won't be apologising," Obama



Barack Obama



Mitt Romney

said, according to the transcript of an interview with a local Virginia TV station airing Sunday.

"Mr Romney claims he's Mr Fix-It for the economy because of his business experience, so I think voters entirely, legitimately want to know what is exactly his business experience."

The manner in which Romney acquired his fortune at the helm of Bain, the Boston-based investment firm he founded, has emerged as a major issue during this campaign as

Obama tries to paint him as out of touch with ordinary Americans before the November vote.

Romney maintains he quit the day-to-day running of Bain in February 1999 and was not making the decisions when companies it worked with subsequently laid off US workers and "outsourced" jobs to plants in Mexico and China.

But a Boston Globe report on Thursday revealed that filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission still listed him as Bain's chief executive between 1999 and 2003.

"As the head of a private equity firm his job was to maximize profits and help investors. There is nothing wrong with that," Obama said in his interview with Virginia's WAVY-TV.

"On the other hand that company also was investing in companies that were called by the Washington Post: 'the pioneers of outsourcing.'"



PHOTO: AFP

Wives of the Red Beret, a military unit which was in charge of protecting former Malian president Amadou Toumani Toure, hold signs reading "Peace in Mali" as they march in the streets of Bamako yesterday demanding their husbands' release and the "truth" to be told on "disappearances".

## Philippines to charge ex-president for graft

AFP, Manila

The Philippine government ombudsman called for graft charges to be filed against former president Gloria Arroyo yesterday for alleged diversion of state lottery funds in the latest accusation to hit her.

Arroyo remains confined in a government hospital while facing charges of vote-rigging.

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales, whose office is in charge of investigating government officials, called on an anti-graft court to file "plunder" charges against Arroyo and nine other government officials.

In a statement, the Ombudsman said it had found Arroyo, 65, and the others, mostly former state lottery officials, had diverted about 366 million pesos (\$8.7 million) in lottery funds from 2008 to 2010.

"The respondents' series or combination of acts form a pattern... of misuse and raid of (lottery funds) from 2008-2010... all while taking advantage of their respective official



Gloria Arroyo

functions," the statement said.

It did not say what became of the money but Arroyo critics have alleged that it was used in the 2010 presidential and legislative elections.

If convicted of the crime, Arroyo, who stepped down in 2010 amid charges of graft and manipulating elections, could face 20 years in jail.

Arroyo's lawyer Anacleto Diaz said the new accusation was devoid of merit, adding it was "another dark day for the rule of law".

He said in a statement it was just part of a campaign that President Benigno Aquino had been running against Arroyo, his chief political opponent.

Aquino, who was elected in a landslide in 2010, has long accused Arroyo of massive corruption and other abuses of power and has declared his intention of seeing her jailed.

Arroyo, who was in office for nearly a decade, was arrested late last year on charges of allegedly rigging the 2007 senatorial elections.

## \$870b turnover of cross-border crime Says UN Office on Drugs and Crime

REUTERS, Vienna

Turnover of cross-border organised crime is about \$870 billion a year, more than six times the total of official development aid, and stopping this "threat to peace" is one of the greatest global challenges, a UN agency said yesterday.

The most lucrative businesses for criminals are drug trafficking and counterfeiting, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said, launching an awareness-raising campaign about the size and cost of cross-border criminal networks.

"Millions of victims are affected each year as a result of the activities of organised crime groups with human trafficking victims alone numbering 2.4 million at any one time," UNODC said in a statement.

The total estimated figure of \$870 billion is equivalent to 1.5 percent of the world's gross domestic product, it said, warning that crime groups can destabilise entire regions.

"Stopping this transnational threat represents one of the international community's greatest global challenges," UNODC Executive Director Yuri Fedotov said.

A spokesman said it was the first time the agency had compiled an estimate for transnational organised crime, using internal UNODC and external sources, so there were

## India dismisses Obama concern over economy

AFP, New Delhi

Indian politicians yesterday rejected US President Barack Obama's concerns about the investment climate in the country, which has recently suffered a sharp slowdown in economic growth.

Obama, in an interview to the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency in Washington, said the American business community had told him it was "still too hard" to invest in India.

"In too many sectors, such as retail, India limits or prohibits the foreign investment that is necessary to create jobs in both our countries, and which is necessary for India to continue to grow," Obama said.

His comments were swiftly dismissed by politicians from the ruling Congress party as well as the opposition, which has been fighting to stop reforms in the retail sector.

"The government has taken enough measures and put policies in place which welcome investors," Anand Sharma, the commerce minister, said.

"For the next three years India will remain

one of the top three destinations attractive for investors."

The opposition Bharatiya Janata Party calling Obama's comments "laughable".

"We have to ensure our national interests on our own," BJP spokesman Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi was quoted as saying by PTI.

India recently posted 5.3 percent quarterly growth -- the slowest in nine years -- down from scorching nine percent-plus expansion a few years ago.

Foreign investors have expressed alarm, in particular, over India's plans for retroactive taxation of some transactions -- a step aimed partly at recouping over \$2 billion in capital gains tax from British telecoms giant Vodafone.

Veerappa Moily, the corporate affairs minister, blamed international companies for colouring Obama's views and said the Indian economy remained strong.

"Certain international lobbies like Vodafone are spreading this kind of a story and Obama was not properly informed about the things that are happening," he told reporters in Bangalore on Sunday.

## Srebrenica still haunts Int'l community

Says UN chief

AFP, Sarajevo

United Nations Chief Ban Ki-moon told a Bosnian daily yesterday that the organisation's failure to prevent the Srebrenica massacre of up to 8,000 Bosnian Muslims will stay in UN consciousness forever.

"People there suffered genocide. And ... it will really haunt the international community for a long time," Ban said, quoted by the Dnevni Avaz daily online edition.

"The United Nations were not capable of helping people there in times when they needed that help," he said in comments translated into Bosnian.

"It will remain rooted in the UN and world consciousness forever. That is why I will go there," he said, speaking to Balkans media ahead of his visit to the region due to start this week.

Ban is to arrive on Thursday in Slovenia, at the start of a week-long tour of the Balkans, the first of its kind since the region's 1990s wars. He will also visit Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia.

In Bosnia Ban will visit the Srebrenica memorial centre where victims of the 1995 massacre are buried.

## AL meet flays World Bank

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"I had heard the World Bank would cancel the loan agreement because of a particular person ... managing director of a particular bank," she said without mentioning anyone's name.

Addressing the Awami League Central Working Committee meeting at the Gono Bhaban, Hasina said by cancelling the loan agreement, the WB had caused great harm to the nation.

She said the WB had put repeated pressure on the government to award a job to a fake company. "Why did they [WB] put pressure? What are the World Bank's relations with the fake company? Whether there was any deal or corruption involved is the big question now."

Hasina, who is also president of the ruling AL, said the WB was "very powerful" and it could do many things. "But we are sure we were not involved in any wrongdoing. So why will we bow our heads?"

She, however, cautioned that anyone doing something illegal through using her or her family members' names would not be spared.

The AL chief said her government had already arranged the money that would be needed this year for the construction of the bridge.

"We have decided what will be done and when. We have liberated the country through a war ... won't we be able to build a bridge? If need be, we will do manual labour. We don't want any fight or quarrel with any-

one," she said.

"How could corruption take place when the World Bank did not disburse even a penny?" The prime minister asked.

She mentioned that the government had so far spent Tk 1,500 crore on land acquisition and rehabilitation of the displaced for the bridge project. "No corruption allegations had been raised there, not even by the World Bank."

Hasina said those involved in corruption in getting the consultancy job would be left out and the government would float a fresh tender, if necessary.

"We have more than \$10 billion in foreign exchange reserves and it is not a big deal to spend \$1 billion from it. Insha'Allah, we will be able to start work on the

bridge," she noted.

At the meeting, AL General Secretary and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam said the WB implemented the "political agenda" of a powerful country and it had done the same in the case of the Padma bridge loan agreement, ALCWC sources told The Daily Star.

Those who sought to destroy politics by floating a new party after the 1/11 changeover in 2007 were now conspiring against the democratic government and the prime minister, Ashraf said.

GOVT TO DISCLOSE WB LETTERS

Meanwhile, a senior minister told The Daily Star yesterday that the government would disclose the WB's documents detailing allega-

tions of corruption in the bridge project.

"In principle, our stance is to make the reports public, and we will do that because we believe no corruption has happened in the project," said the minister, asking not to be named.

The minister said relevant documents and statements about the WB's request to the government in favour of a Chinese company will also be made public.

Recently, in a written response to questions from The Daily Star, WB Country Director Ellen Goldstein said the government may disclose the reports containing "evidence of corruption" for the sake of transparency and in the public interest.

Asked about it, Finance Minister AMA Muhith yes-

terday said, "Let's see."

Earlier on Sunday, he said the government did not believe in character assassination. He was replying to journalists' queries on whether the government would make the WB reports public.

On Goldstein's interview with The Daily Star published on Sunday, he said, "Yes, I have gone through the interview. What the country director said in the interview is much better than the WB's statement (issued by the global lender on June 29 cancelling the Bank's funding for the project)."

In the interview Goldstein clearly stated what the government wanted to do regarding the WB's corruption allegations, said the finance minister.

## Up to 70 Hindus killed in one day

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About 60-70 Hindus of Unsotturpara in Rauzan in Chittagong were killed in a raid by Pakistani army on April 14, 1971, Abbas said, adding, he lost his friend in that attack.

The witness said he had heard from locals that such killings were also committed in Kundeshwari and Jagot Mollo Para and Salahuddin Quader was involved, but he did not see the BNP leader at that time.

Abbas, 62, chairman of East Gujra Union Parishad of Rauzan, used to live with his family at Unsotturpara village during the War. The majority of people of that village were Hindus in 1971.

Residents of Unsotturpara irrespective of age and race took part in the Liberation War, Abbas said, adding, he used to supply kedgerie for the freedom fighters in Chittagong.

Locals had set up a check post putting barricade on the road for checking vehicles in Unsotturpara, he added.

Abbas said the erstwhile Muslim League's chief

Fazlul Quader Chowdhury became furious over the check post while crossing the village in a Volkswagen car as he and his three sons including Salahuddin Quader and Giasuddin Quader had to get down.

"In the evening that day [April 11, 1971], Punjabis patrolled the engineering college area. That's why many people left the place in fear," said Abbas.

The next day, the then chairman of Pahartali union Mofdul Hossain asked Niranjana Dutta Gupta, who had good family relations with Abbas, to call back the Hindus, the witness continued.

Assured of no harm, Niranjana had called back the Hindus, Abbas added.

"On April 13, 1971 at about 4:00pm, Mofdul, Piaru and Burma Yousuf asked the villagers to gather at Hitoishi Mohajon's house.

"Our leader will talk with you," Abbas quoted one of the three as saying. They however did not mention the name of the leader, he added.

"My friend Babul Mali rushed to my house. He told

me that Punjabis came and asked them to gather at Hitoishi Mohajon's house. All Hindus of the village were going there," said the witness.

Abbas and Babul went to Unsotturpara School and saw Pakistani army going from north to south in a couple of cars. There were two civilians in the cars, but the witness could not identify them.

Abbas and Babul then decided to move to their respective houses.

"As I moved 200 yards further, I heard a loud bang. I looked back and saw Babul falling on the ground. A few moments later I heard the sound of rapid fire from the south," he said.

The next day Abbas learned that Niranjana had committed suicide as he could not bear the remorse that the Hindus, who were killed the previous day, had returned home at his request.

On April 15, Abbas along with some of his friends went to Unsotturpara.

Abbas said, "At first I saw the body of my friend Babul

and his father in a stream. I went to the house of Hitoishi Mohajon where I saw 60-70 bodies."

He said he buried the bodies with the help of some locals in a burrow.

As his deposition was made, the tribunal asked the defence to cross-examine the witness.

Defence counsel Ahsanul Huq Hena completed his cross-examination by asking two questions.

Ahsanul Huq asked him if it was true that Fazlul Quader and his sons did not go to Unsotturpara.

That is not true, replied Abbas.

"Is it not true that you did not hear people saying that Salahuddin Quader was involved in the killing?" asked Ahsanul.

Abbas again said that it is not true.

Salahuddin Quader, who is facing 23 specific charges of crimes against humanity during the Liberation War, was present at the tribunal.

The proceeding of the case was adjourned until July 23.

Earlier, the prosecution

read out the opening statement in another war crimes case against Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami at the tribunal.

Prosecutors Golam Arif Tipu and Altaf Uddin Ahmed read out the statement.

In the statement, Altaf said Nizami who was chief of Al-Badr, incited people to join the anti-liberation force by holding rallies during the War.

Following completion of the opening statement, the tribunal fixed July 22 for recording deposition of witnesses against Nizami.

The Jamaat leader was also present at the dock of the tribunal.

On May 28, the tribunal framed 16 charges against Nizami for his alleged involvement in murders and torture of unarmed people during the War.

Correction  
In our yesterday's report headlined "Thousands killed in Chupnagar", we had inadvertently mentioned 'Chupnagar'. Actually, it would be 'Chuknagar'. We stand corrected.

FROM PAGE 20

The university may plunge into further crisis if unelected persons remained in the top administrative positions, he added.

A well-known Dhaka University teacher belonging to the pro-Awami League Blue panel, Anwar Hossain was appointed JUV on May 20 following teacher-student agitations that forced the then VC Shariff Enamul Kabir to quit.

Anwar Hossain is still the president of DU Teachers Association (DUTA).

He noted there had been no election to the VC post at Dhaka University as well for over last three years, which was a clear violation of the 1973 ordinance.

Though appointed for four years, Prof Anwar has chosen to go for election to the post in line with the university act only to restore a democratic process as well as bring an end to longstanding crises, he said.

The Jahangirnagar University Act, 1973, says "The Vice-Chancellor shall be appointed by the Chancellor for a period of

four years from a panel of three persons to be nominated by the Senate on such terms and conditions as may be determined by the Chancellor, and shall be eligible for re-appointment for a further period of four years."

In reply to a question, Prof Anwar said, "It is not important whether I will be a candidate for the VC's post or not. But I will not withdraw if anyone proposes my name as a VC candidate at the special senate session on July 20."

On another question, he termed illogical the opposition of a section of teachers to the election.

Under the banner of Sammilito Shikhhak Parishad, a group of teachers maintained a siege to the administrative building for the fourth straight day yesterday to press for the senate election before the VC panel polls.

"The July 20 election will be held at any cost and it will not be deferred under any circumstances," the VC said, urging the teachers to call off their agitation in the interest

of the university.

Asked why he had not called the senate election first, Prof Anwar said some complexities had arisen as no elections of registered graduate representatives had taken place over the past 14 years following a court injunction. Additionally, the Jahangirnagar University Central Students Union (JUCSU) has been stalled for years.

Meanwhile, a statement of the Sammilito Shikhhak Parishad yesterday said the tenures of 55 out of 92 senate members had already expired and thus the senate polls had become essential.

The VC, ignoring all the "logical" demands, announced the VC panel election date, it added.

"The move by the VC to hold the VC election in a hurried manner, bypassing the senate election, is apparently a deep-rooted conspiracy to cover up the irregularities and corruption of the former VC and his associates as well as to re-establish them in authority."