



Nepali students protest against king

AFP, Kathmandu

Maoist rebels injured four people when they detonated a powerful bomb yesterday on the outskirts of Kathmandu, the second in the Nepal capital area in two days, police said.

The blast came amid large street protests by student unions and activists who oppose a meeting of an advisory council to King Gyanendra. The council is expected to call for greater powers for the king.

Several thousand protesters swarmed through the streets of the ancient capital for a second day, shouting "Down with the state council, down with the king! Long live the republic!"

Friday's blast, blamed by police on Maoists fighting to overthrow the monarchy, wrecked the ground floor of the state-run agricultural research plant at Lalitpur and injured four people.

It followed an explosion at a government building Thursday, also blamed on the rebels, that caused damage but no casualties.

PHOTO: AFP

Nepalese students set a tyre on fire during a protest against King Gyanendra's advisory council in front of the royal palace in Kathmandu yesterday. The street protests called by seven student unions and political activists opposed a meeting of King Gyanendra's advisory council that was expected to call for giving greater power to the monarch to play a "more active role" in running the impoverished Himalayan nation.

Iraqi Shias launch united polls front

REUTERS, Baghdad

Iraq's most powerful-looking electoral bloc unveiled a slate of candidates for its election campaign on Thursday, throwing down a gauntlet to minority Sunni Arabs who complain next month's vote will be marred by violence.

The coalition of 22 parties and groups, calling itself the United Iraqi Alliance, includes leaders of the long-oppressed 60-percent Shia Muslim majority. Formed under the auspices of the country's most influential cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, it also involves figures from other sectarian and ethnic groups.

Major Sunni and Kurdish parties have yet to begin campaigns. US and Iraqi security officials admitted, on a day that saw only limited attacks on their forces, that despite a major US offensive on the

rebel city of Falluja last month there was no way to prevent mainly Sunni insurgents shedding blood during an election that should consolidate new power for the Shias.

But interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi disowned a suggestion that the Jan. 30 vote, intended to be Iraq's first truly democratic election, might in fact be spread over several days or weeks to allow people to cast their ballots in more safety.

Citing a UN deadline of the end of January for electing a national assembly, aides said Allawi had been misquoted by a Swiss newspaper and said: "The Iraqi government... is very well aware of the importance of holding elections on time."

The US-backed interim president complained neighboring Syria was helping former allies of Saddam Hussein to foment rebellion but expressed confidence the insurgency would fail.

US EXPERT SAYS Bush manipulated N Korean intelligence like he did in Iraq

AFP, Beijing

The United States manipulated intelligence on North Korea's nuclear programme in a similar fashion to its use of weapons of mass destruction to justify the war on Iraq, a US foreign policy expert said in an article.

"Relying on sketchy data, the Bush administration presented a worst-case scenario as an incontrovertible truth and distorted its intelligence on North Korea (much as it did in Iraq), seriously exaggerating the danger that Pyongyang is secretly making uranium-based nuclear weapons," Selig Harrison said in Foreign Affairs magazine.

Harrison, from the Washington-based Center for International Policy, chairs the Task Force on Korean Policy, a grouping of former senior

US military officials, diplomats and Korean specialists.

The Task Force, which includes a former joint chiefs of staff head and ex-US ambassadors, on Friday issued a report calling on the US immediately to back down on its insistence that North Korea come clean on its alleged uranium program.

Instead, they should first negotiate the dismantling of Pyongyang's plutonium facilities, it said.

Harrison said his claims were based on South Korean and Japanese intelligence sources who participated with the Central Intelligence Agency on the issue.

He blames the US insistence on a uranium program for the stalling of six-party talks while Pyongyang moves closer to producing an atomic bomb with its plutonium program.

Sharon moves to form new nat'l unity govt

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon moved swiftly yesterday to forge a national unity government after winning approval to reshape his coalition and crushing internal opposition to his Gaza pullout plan.

Sharon, who has been bereft of a parliamentary majority for the last six months, was given a major boost in Tel Aviv Thursday night when the central committee of his own Likud party finally approved his plans to bring the main opposition Labour faction into government.

After suffering the embarrassment of a defeat in a similar vote back in August, victory by a resounding 1,410 to 857 vote margin was particularly sweet for Sharon.

A source close to the prime minister said Sharon had already phoned veteran Labour leader Shimon Peres to start talks on joining the government.

"Negotiations should begin at

the beginning of next week after the Labour leadership gives them the green light Saturday evening," he told AFP.

The source added that Sharon was also Friday to invite the two ultra-Orthodox parties Shas and United Torah Judaism to join the government.

While Shas, opposed to the withdrawal from Gaza, is likely to stay outside the government, the five deputies of the UTJ are expected to come on board.

The 81-year-old Peres, keen to taste power for possibly one last time, reiterated that he would welcome the opportunity to enter a new coalition in order to ensure the implementation of the so-called disengagement plan.

"We support Ariel Sharon's proposition" to forge a new coalition, he told public radio.

"We hope that this decision represents a step forward in the peace process and we will act to

support the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank," added the former premier and Nobel peace prize winner.

Sharon warned ahead of the vote that he would have no option but to call new elections if he was not given room for maneuver to bring about a new coalition.

After losing three coalition partners in little more than six months, Sharon can currently rely on the support of only 40 of the 120 members of the Israeli parliament.

While Labour has been giving him support on votes related to the Gaza pullout, Sharon has been unable to win support for other key policies such as his 2005 state budget.

Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said that the formation of a new cabinet "will allow us to bring about significant change".

"The disengagement plan is the key to improving our international position, both politically and economically," he added.

Japan okays overhaul of military policy

AFP, Tokyo

Japan has approved an overhaul of its military policy to take account of threats from China and North Korea and to allow defence exports to the United States.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's cabinet approved both a revised set of guidelines for military planners and a five-year blueprint for defence procurement.

"The cabinet approved them in the meeting this morning," a spokeswoman for the prime minister said.

A copy of the document obtained by AFP said: "China, which has a great impact on security in this region, is pushing ahead with enhancing its nuclear and missile capabilities in modernising its navy and air force while expanding marine activities."

"We need to continue to watch these moves in the future," it said.

The guidelines said North Korea was "developing, deploying and proliferating weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles and maintains large-scale special units."

US critics revive charges of poor Iraq war planning

Bush, Rumsfeld try to tame troops

AP, Washington

Critics of the war in Iraq seized on charges that US troops there don't have enough armoured vehicles as another example of poor planning by the Pentagon.

President Bush and Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld tried Thursday to tamp down the firestorm, which was ignited a day earlier when an Iraq-bound soldier publicly complained to Rumsfeld that the Army wasn't properly armoring vehicles for the campaign.

Traveling in India, Rumsfeld said he expects the Army to do its best to resolve the problem. In Washington, Bush said the soldier's concerns "are being addressed and that is we expect our troops to have the best possible equipment."

Close to three-quarters of the Humvees in the Iraq war theater now have upgraded armor protection, but many larger trucks and tractor-trailer rigs do not, according to congressional figures.

Military officials said armoring Humvees has been the top priority because they are used to patrol areas where attacks are likely. The heavy haulers, meanwhile, usually travel convoy routes that are more frequently swept for guerillas and bombs.

Critics questioned why the Pentagon has been unable to send enough armored equipment 21 months into the war. They said war planners had too rosy a picture of how the campaign would unfold and so didn't think so many troops and so much armor would be

needed for so long.

"This is about faulty analysis and a failed strategy," said Rep. Ellen Tauscher, a California Democrat who sits on the House Armed Services Committee. "We've never had enough troops on the ground since the fall of Saddam Hussein's government to deal with the insurgency because we didn't expect one."

Loren Thompson, a defence industry analyst with the Lexington Institute think tank, agreed.

"We have pretty much miscalculated every step along the way why we went, how we should do it, what we needed, what support we would have, how long it would last we pretty much got it all wrong," he said.

US soldier found guilty of killing unarmed Iraqi

AFP, Baghdad

A US soldier who said he shot dead an unarmed and wounded Iraqi civilian to "put him out of his misery" was found guilty of murder at a court martial in Baghdad yesterday.

Staff Sergeant Johnny Horne was convicted of the unpremeditated murder of a severely wounded Iraqi civilian in Baghdad's deprived Sadr City district on August 18.

A pre-trial agreement limits sentencing to 10 years, without which the charge carried a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

The murder of Kassim Hassan took place when US soldiers spotted a garbage truck apparently dropping homemade bombs in Sadr City, the capital's most populous Shia Muslim neighbourhood.

The soldiers started shooting at the truck, which caught fire, and a severely wounded Hassan pulled himself out of the truck and fell to the ground, according to previous testimony.

Legal Notice
In the Supreme Court of Bangladesh
High Court Division
(Original Civil Jurisdiction)
Matter No. 145 of 2004
Liberty Garments Industries Ltd. represented by Mozammel Huq, Managing Director, Gulshan Grace, Apartment No-5E, CWS(C)-8, South Avenue Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212 and another.
-Versus- Petitioners.
The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms, 24-25, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka Respondent.
Notice is hereby given for all concerned that an application under sections 228 and 229 of the Companies Act, 1994 was moved before the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon preliminary hearing, Mr. Justice Md. Imman Ali was pleased to admit the said application on 24-11-2004 and fixed the same for hearing on 04-01-2005.
Any one desirous of opposing the said application, may appear before the Hon'ble Court at the time of hearing either personally or through duly authorized advocate by filing Affidavit-in-opposition.
Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of necessary charges.
Akhtar Imam, Barrister-at-Law
Senior Advocate
Supreme Court of Bangladesh
A. Imam & Associates, Barristers & Advocates
House # 51A, Road # 6A, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1209.
Tel: 8115777, 8110982

Smoking is bad for brain too
AFP, Paris
Smoking has long been known to cause cancer, heart disease, impotence and so on - now, damage to your IQ can be added to the list.
Researchers in Scotland assessed the mental abilities of 465 people who had been enrolled in an IQ test at the age of 11 in 1947.
The volunteers were tested again between 2000 and 2002, when they were 64 years old. Roughly half of them were smokers.
"Smokers performed significantly worse in five different cognitive tests than did both former smokers and those who had never smoked," the British weekly New Scientist reports in next Saturday's issue.
"When social and health factors such as education, occupation and alcohol consumption were taken into account, smoking still appeared to contribute to a drop in cognitive function of just under one percent."
The study, published in full in a specialist journal, Addictive Behaviours, was led by Lawrence Whalley of the University of Aberdeen.
Why smoking could affect cognitive ability is unclear. One possible reason is that, in later life, brain cells are more susceptible to damage by rogue atoms called free radicals, which could be unleashed by the chemicals in tobacco smoke.

Sri Lankan women shout slogans during protest demanding peace talks between the government and Tamil Tiger rebels in Colombo yesterday. The demonstrators, marking the International Human Rights Day, staged the protest demanding that stalled peace talks be revived to find a permanent solution to Sri Lanka's drawn out ethnic conflict which has claimed over 60,000 lives since 1972.
PHOTO: AFP

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION)
MATTER NO. 147 OF 2004
LEGAL NOTICE
Fahad Builders (Pvt.) Ltd. Petitioner
Versus
Registrar, Joint Stock Companies & Firms Respondent
Notice is hereby given that an application under Section 12 read with Section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed before the High Court Division of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of Bangladesh for confirmation of the amendment of object clause of the Memorandum of Association of the petitioner company upon preliminary hearing. Mr. Justice Md. Imman Ali was pleased to admit the same on 27.11.2004 fixing 05.01.2005 for hearing. Anyone desirous of opposing the said application may appear before the Hon'ble Court either personally or through an authorized advocate on the date fixed. Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed charges.
(M. Ziaul Hasan)
Barrister-at-Law
DCCI Building (6th Floor)
65-66, Motijheel C/A
Dhaka-1000.

Heartiest Welcome to the distinguished Delegates from home and abroad at Bangladesh Chemical Congress '2004 on their visit to the Global Heavy Chemicals Plant Hasnabad, Keranigonj, Dhaka.
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