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Nepali king sacks govt, slaps emergency

India voices grave concern, airlines suspend flights

AFP, Kathmandu

King Gyanendra dismissed Nepal's coalition government yesterday and enforced an indefinite emergency, igniting charges he had staged a coup in the Himalayan outpost battling a Maoist revolt. "I have exercised the rights given to the crown under the present constitution and dissolved the government in the larger interests of the people," the king said in an address on nationwide television.

"A state of emergency has been enforced across the country," suspending all fundamental rights of



King Gyanendra



Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba

Rice calls Khaleda, wants 'transparent, open' probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday made a phone call to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and discussed the Habiganj grenade attack among other issues.

Rice said the crime of the January 27 incident in Habiganj needs to be solved in an 'open and transparent' manner, a US embassy spokesman told The Daily Star last night.

The US secretary of state soon after assuming her office called Khaleda and said the US is considering Bangladesh's request for aid in the investigation of the incident.

Rice also said she was pleased to hear that the Bangladesh govern-

ment is working to solve the crime, a US embassy spokesman told The Daily Star last night.

UNB adds: The US secretary of state praised Bangladesh's stand against terrorism and expressed sorrow at the recent incident that killed former minister Shah AMS Kibria.

"This is a very sad and condemnable incident. We have strongly condemned the incident and expressed sorrow," the prime minister told Rice.

As Khaleda hoped that the US would extend co-operation in the investigation of the incident, Rice assured her of "all-out co-operation".

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Saarc Summit escapes Nepal turmoil

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 13th Saarc Summit will be held on schedule despite the emergency declared in Nepal yesterday by King Gyanendra who dissolved the coalition government of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan last night told UNB that the uncertainty over the February 6-7 summit was over as Nepalese officials confirmed the participation of King Gyanendra in the high-profile seven-nation meet.

Nepalese Ambassador in Dhaka Bhagirat Barne called on the foreign minister at his residence at 10:30pm and conveyed him the message from the Nepalese Palace.

Nepal's foreign secretary arrives in Dhaka today while the new

Nepalese foreign minister is due on February 4, he told the minister. Morshed Khan told the news agency that a fresh invitation from Dhaka would be sent to the Nepalese monarch.

Meanwhile, a high-level security team arrived here yesterday from India to ensure the security of the Indian delegation, especially Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Dhaka termed it a 'routine' visit ahead of such a big event.

Earlier, Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury at a press briefing said that they were optimistic that the summit will go ahead as scheduled despite the attempt to contact the Nepalese authorities failed.

"All arrangements have been made to host this summit, and we

see no reason to change anything as yet," Chowdhury added.

Chowdhury said Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan called his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri yesterday, when Kasuri told him that Pakistan too could not contact Kathmandu.

Chowdhury also said that the Nepalese embassy in Dhaka itself could not contact its government and he was also unable to contact his Nepalese counterpart and the Bangladeshi mission there.

Asked if the visit by the high-level Indian security team is related to a serious threat to the Indian prime minister, Chowdhury said, "These security matters are routine." Security teams are always sent by

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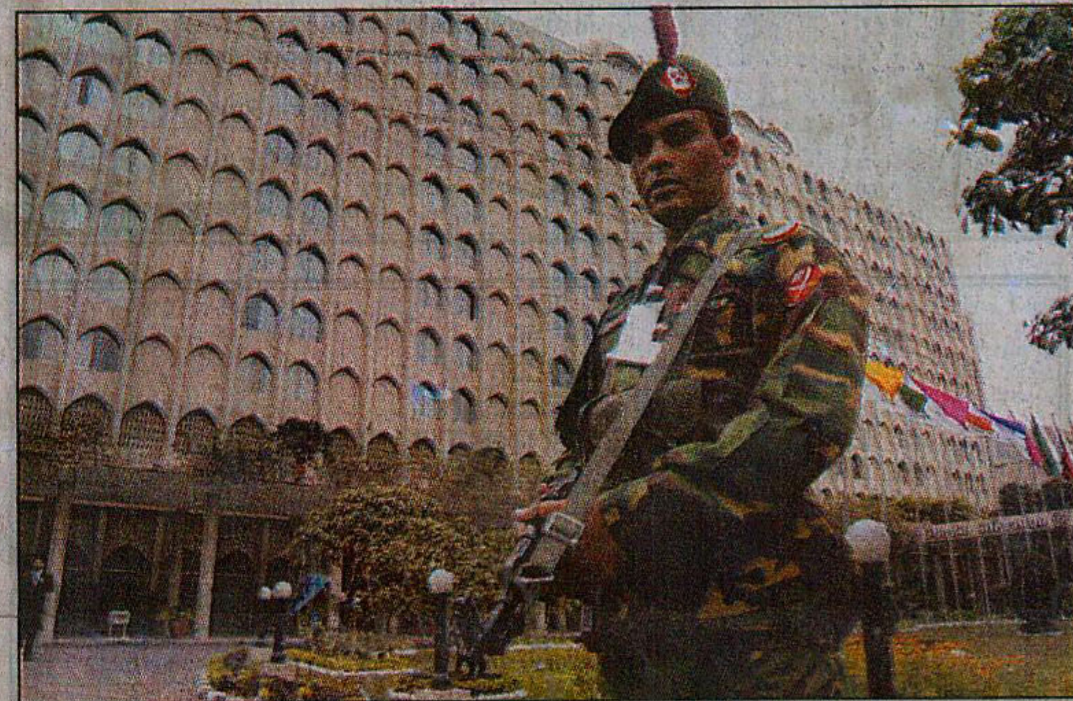


PHOTO: STAR

An army man on alert in front of the Dhaka Sheraton hotel yesterday as the government beefed up security ahead of the Saarc Summit.

Spread the mantra of love against hatred

PM urges writers, opens Ekushey Book Fair

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday gave a clarion call for upholding the ideals of peace, harmony, fraternity and friendship to outweigh animosity, hatred, disparity and conflict in society.

"Spread the mantra of love against hatred," she told her audience of writers, litterateurs, poets,

teachers and intellectuals at the inaugural ceremony of a month-long book fair and programme at Bangla Academy in commemoration of the historic Language Movement martyrs.

"Measures can be taken against criminals and the corrupt through enacting laws. At the same time, you can work to prevent the breeding of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

EU concerned at street violence

Calls for national confidence-building dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The heads of mission of the European Union (EU) yesterday expressed concern at the current state of violence on the streets in Bangladesh and called for a national 'confidence-building' dialogue to avoid deterioration of the situation.

They reiterated that the government must ensure swift action and a

thorough and transparent investigation into the killings in the January 27 grenade attack.

The European envoys urged all parties to exercise restraint and refrain themselves from actions that can deteriorate the situation.

The call came from the EU mission chiefs after they met with Leader of the Opposition and Awami

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Kibria's family to start non-violent movement for killers' punishment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family of Shah AMS Kibria will launch a 'non-violent movement' involving people from all walks of life to demand punishment to the killers of Kibria and an end to such violence.

"My mother Asma Kibria will lead the movement and she will urge the countrymen to protest the killing by taking to the streets for half an hour on Friday afternoon," Dr Reza Kibria, son of the slain lawmaker, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"This would be our first step towards

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No portrait of president in JS offices of PM, Speaker

SHAKHAWAT LITON

In a clear non-compliance of the constitution, the speaker and the prime minister do not display the portrait of the president in their offices at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia have not been complying with the constitutional provision since its introduction in May last year by the coalition government through amending the constitution, sources said.

The speaker and the prime

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Clarification

Prof Mahmudur Rahman, Director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (ledcr), has sent a clarification to The Daily Star regarding a report headlined 'Nationwide alert against Nipah epidemic fear,' published in The Daily Star on January 26.

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GRAND OPENING RATAN'S HEALTH CLUB



Former cricketer and TV commentator of ESPN, STAR sports Ravi Shastri inaugurates the Ratan's Health Club as the chief guest at Gulshan-1 on February 1, 2005 while Dav Whatmore, the coach of the Bangladesh National Cricket Team and Managing Director of the City Bank Limited Md. Abbas Uddin Ahmed were present as special guests. Chairman of the club Bithi Chowdhury and Managing Director Dr. Syed T. Ahsan Ratan, among others, were present the function.

45, Navana Tower (6th floor), Gulshan - 1, Dhaka. Phone: 8828854, 8813955, Mobile: 0171-823382

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