

Reverse power grab or face blockade

Maoists warn Nepali king

AFP, New Delhi

Nepal's Maoist rebels warned King Gyanendra yesterday to reverse his power grab in the Himalayan kingdom or face an indefinite country-wide blockade from February 13.

A statement from Maoist leader Prachanda urged citizens to stock up with vital provisions and come out "in strong resistance" to what it said was "Nazi-style repression" by the king's forces.

"Our party challenges Gyanendra ... to withdraw his retro-

gressive steps immediately," his statement said.

"If he fails to withdraw ... our party will be compelled to come out for countrywide blockade and traffic strike for uncertain time, from 13 February," it said.

In December, Maoist rebels enforced a week-long transport blockade that virtually cut off over-land routes into the country's capital for a week, severely disrupting food and fuel supplies to the Kathmandu valley.

In August, the Maoists staged a

week-long blockade of the capital, spreading fear among the inhabitants and sending produce prices soaring.

Gyanendra on Tuesday fired the government led by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba for failing to organise elections or quell the insurgency by Maoists, who want to topple the monarchy and install a communist republic.

He also named a loyalist cabinet under his "chairmanship", declared a state of emergency and pledged to restore multi-party democracy in

three years.

Prachanda said the king's actions were the "final writhing of the feudal autocracy" and appealed to all political parties in the world's only Hindu kingdom to form a united front against the monarch.

He appealed to "all the political forces, civil society, intellectual community, journalists and all the level and sections of people to store daily most necessary consumption stuffs and support our movement ... to make (the blockade) successful."



PHOTO: STAR

Three Oman-bound passengers, who went to Zia International Airport Friday night to avoid the 36-hour hartal, wait on the airport compound for their flight yesterday afternoon.

BSF kills 357 Bangladeshis in 5 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 357 Bangladeshi nationals were killed by Border Security Force (BSF) and Indian criminals in last five years, according to a report of Odhikar, a rights organisation.

The report also said 1,774 Bangladeshis fell victim to human rights violation in different forms by the BSF and Indian nationals during the period.

On the atrocities, it added that 453 people were injured, 467 arrested, 462 kidnapped, five women raped, 37 including eight children went missing, while 48 cases of extortion were reported

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Dhaka peacekeepers may start for Sudan next month

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Bangladesh is likely to start sending troops to the UN peacekeeping mission in Sudan from the next month, sources in the army said.

Over 1,600 troops, the biggest number of Bangladeshi troops to be sent to any mission, would at first be stationed in southern Sudan. Then they would be dispatched to different points across the country, highly placed sources in the army said.

The United Nations (UN) had informed the Bangladesh Army headquarters that by this month it would pass a resolution regarding

deployment of peacekeepers in Sudan.

"After passage of the resolution, we will have the UN mandate and have to send our troops in 45 days," a top army official on condition of anonymity told The Daily Star yesterday. "As we have been informed by the UN that the resolution will be passed this month, we hope we will start sending troops from March."

Considering the growing demand for Dhaka's contribution to the peacekeeping operations worldwide, the Armed Forces Division has taken initiatives to buy sophisticated equipment required

for effective participation.

Bangladesh Army has got the commanding post of peacekeepers in Sudan. Major General Fazle Elahi Akbar, who had been appointed the force commander, is now closely looking at various aspects of the deployment, said sources.

Sources said Major General Akbar is now in Dhaka. He will go back to Sudan tomorrow. During his stay in Dhaka, he has met the prime minister who is in charge of the defence ministry and co-ordinates the activities of the armed forces through the Armed Forces Division.

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Road crash kills 1 in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was killed in a road accident near Asad Gate in the city during hartal hours yesterday.

Mamunur Rashid, 40, employee of an NGO, was crossing Mirpur Road with a female colleague when a speeding bus knocked them at around 4:00pm.

Rashid was rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) where he was pronounced dead at arrival. His colleague, whose name could not be known immediately, was admitted to a local clinic.

Locals held the driver of the bus, Awlad Hossain, 20, beat up him and handed him over to police.

Police seized the bus and admitted injured Awlad to the DMCH.

Burn injury patients in distress

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Treatment of patients with burns is being greatly impeded due to poor facilities in the public hospitals, and Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH), which alone has an exclusive burn unit, is also facing a serious problem to cope with the increasing rush of burn cases particularly in winter.

The DMCH admitted 151 burn

cases in one month until mid-January as against 56 in October last. Of the 151 patients, 30 died. About 70 percent of the patients are refused admission due to lack of accommodation, hospital sources said.

The 50-bed burn unit at the DMCH is always crowded with around 75 patients admitted.

The increase in the number of

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AFGHAN PLANE CRASH None of 104 passengers survives

REUTERS, Kabul

A Dutch military helicopter yesterday found the wreckage of an Afghan passenger plane that went missing two days ago with 104 people on board after turning away from the capital Kabul in a snow storm.

An Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman said there were no survivors.

"There are no survivors from the crash," he said "We will begin to evacuate and retrieve the bodies," he said.

The Boeing 737 aircraft operated by private Afghan airline Kam Air went missing on a flight from the western city of Herat after it turned away from Kabul airport on Thursday in a snow storm. It disappeared off radar screens shortly after.

"Dutch AH-64 Apache helicopters that were searching for the missing Kam Air Boeing 737 have found the wreckage at 1:37 p.m. The wreckage was spotted in the Shaperi Ghar area approximately 30km south, southeast of Kabul city," said a statement from Nato peacekeepers in Kabul.

"The tail of the aircraft was spotted with other debris," it said.

The Nato-led International Security Assistance Force has sent

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Prayer Timing		
February 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-52	5-56
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		