

# Bush calls on Musharraf to move towards democracy

Rice had talks with Pak president amid talk of possible emergency

AFP, Washington

US President George W Bush urged Pervez Musharraf to move toward democracy after the embattled Pakistani leader pulled back from declaring a state of emergency.

At the same time, Bush renewed US calls for full cooperation from its key anti-terror ally in the hunt for al-Qaeda leaders believed to be holed up in remote tribal lands along the Pakistan-Afghan border.

Bush's comments at a White House press conference late Thursday came after Musharraf, against the advice of his aides, decided not to impose a state of emergency despite rampant instability.

Any such move would have automatically extended the current parliament for another 12 months, meaning a delay in elections due by early 2008.

US Secretary of State

Condoleezza Rice had earlier spoken to Musharraf by telephone to press home Washington's concerns amid talk of possible emergency rule and following his decision to pull out of a key tribal council in Kabul aimed at ending Taliban and al-Qaeda-sponsored terrorism.

Bush said he had called on Musharraf to move toward democracy. "My focus in terms of the domestic scene is they have a free and fair election," he said.

"That is what we have been talking about, and hopefully, they will."

The Pakistani leader had earlier huddled with key aides worried about the threat of violence from Islamic extremists as well as a series of other issues, which have left him facing the greatest challenge yet to his leadership.

Mass protests over the

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PHOTO: STAR

Awami League acting president Zillur Rahman, flanked by Abdur Razzak and Tofail Ahmed, distributes relief materials to flood victims at Satarkul of Badda in the capital yesterday.

## This CG took power with a political goal, says Mainul

UNB, Dhaka

Law and Information Adviser Mainul Hosen yesterday said the incumbent caretaker government assumed power with a political goal to restore democracy with honest people.

"Unlike previous caretaker governments, we are not merely to hold elections within three months," he told the news agency.

Explaining his point, Mainul said the incumbent caretaker government is not politically neutral as it has a certain political mission. "We want clean politics."

He said the mission of the present caretaker government is to restore corruption-free politics.

"We shall restore democracy through honest people, he said.

The adviser said Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed also spelt out the same thing to restore democracy through honest people.

# 'Take independent and labour-friendly policy'

Roundtable suggests revival of jute sector

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urging a more practical jute policy, speakers at a roundtable yesterday came down heavily on the government for its jute sector policy, terming it the "worst-ever oppressor" of jute mill workers.

They urged the government to adopt a labour-friendly and independent jute policy in order to revive the jute sector and protect labourers. They demanded that the government formulate a more practical jute policy ignoring donors' suggestions.

The roundtable discussion on "Formulation of a practical jute policy", decided to form an alliance between all concerned with the jute sector to protect the sector as well as to protect interest of the workers of the sector.

Thousands of workers and their families across the country have been passing hard days but the caretaker government is not paying any attention to their problems, they said.

"Like its predecessors, this government is also not doing anything to develop the sector,"

jute sector labour leader Shahidullah Chowdhury said at the roundtable organised by citizens platform Nagorik Sanghati at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium in the capital.

The speakers at the roundtable said the plan to procure jute in the current season is impractical now as the season is close to its end but the fund for procurement of jute is yet to be released.

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## Robbery on 'Karnaphuli Express'

UNB, Dhaka

Armed robbers swooped on the passengers of an inter-city train near Tejgaon Railway Station in the city on Thursday night and looted cash and valuables from them.

Railway sources said a gang of eight got into a compartment of "Karnaphuli Express" from Chittagong as the train slowly moved out of the station at about 10:00pm.

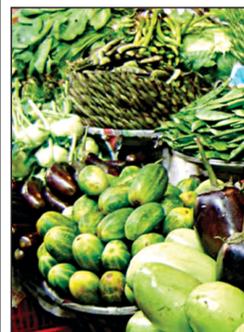
The robbers then looted cash, mobile phone sets and other valuables worth about Tk 1.5 lakh from the passengers of the compartment at gunpoint. They also beat up the passengers, leaving eight of them seriously injured.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Sheltered at Rajarbagh Government Primary School at Basabo in the capital, flood victim Falani Begum, 80, complaining to journalists about irregularities in relief distribution yesterday. Several others at the shelter also said many people in dire needs are deprived due to favoritism in relief work.



## Vegetable prices double

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of vegetables, especially leafy ones, have almost doubled in a week due to shortage of supply to the capital as floodwaters have wrecked havoc on vegetables in the affected areas.

Traders and wholesalers in the capital yesterday said the price of vegetables will see further rise in the days ahead as most of the cultivable lands are under floodwater and the leafy vegetables get rotten quickly.

Prices of lal shak, mula shak, pui

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## Little headway in investigation of rocket projectiles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Investigators are yet to find a clue to smuggling of the 29 'rocket projectiles' recovered in the capital on Wednesday night and they could not also say yesterday if those are powerful explosives or not.

Probe into the incident made little headway as regards who brought the projectiles and from where and whether those were meant for use in Bangladesh or the smugglers were using the country as a transit route only.

A top official of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday said, "It seems to us that the projectiles are not so powerful explosives."

Explosives experts were still to examine those, CID chief Foni Bhushan Chowdhury said when contacted last night.

"We are working to find out the source and destination of the projectiles and the persons involved in bringing those," said Abdullah Aref, additional special superintendent of CID, who led the team that recovered those.

The recovery of such a consignment of explosives has made the government concerned as those were smuggled into Dhaka despite tight security, sources noted.

Several teams of intelligence agencies primarily examined the

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PHOTO: STAR

Detective Branch of police seizes a bomb-like material at the entrance of Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital yesterday.

# 5-nation war games in Bay from Sept 4

India to host the biggest ever event joined by US

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The largest ever five-nation naval exercise in the region is set to begin on September 4 in the waters of the Bay of Bengal where an armada of warships and nuclear submarines from the US, India and Australia will take part.

Other two nations participating in the exercise are Japan and Singapore.

The 6-day complex naval war games hosted by India titled 'Malabar Multilateral Exercise' will by far be the biggest such exercise held in the strategic location of the Bay of Bengal that is situated among India, Bangladesh, and the western shores of Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia.

Bangladesh Defence officials, however, refused to make any comment on the five-nation exercise.

The September exercise will undoubtedly be dramatically different, said a highly placed intelligence official on condition of anonymity. He added that Bangladesh will not allow any warship to enter its maritime border during the exercise.

According to official websites of Executive Intelligence Review and the Indian Defence Ministry, some 20 warships including two nuclear aircraft carriers from the United

States, USS Nimitz and USS Kitty Hawk, missile cruisers USS Princeton and USS Higgins, guided missile destroyers Chaffe, Pickney, Curtis Wilbur, Mustin and John Paul Jones, tankers Ericsson and Rainer and LA class nuclear-powered submarine USS Chicago will participate in the at-sea exercise.

The Indian Navy will be joining with its lone carrier INS Viraat, Russian acquired Kashin class missile destroyers INS Ranvijay and INS Ranjit, indigenous Brahmaputra class frigates and guided missile corvette INS Kurmak and Kuthar and tanker Aditya.

The Australian Navy will bring out its US acquired Oliver Hazard

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Prayer Timing		
August 11		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-41	6-44
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation