THE WORLD

Nepalese celebrate new era of republic

Flag of Shah dynasty taken down

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal celebrated a new era as the world's youngest republic yesterday after consigning its centuriesold monarchy to the history books and ordering god-king Gyanendra to quit his palace in two weeks.

In an unprecedented vote capping a peace accord between Maoists and mainstream parties, a new constitutional assembly voted just before midnight on Wednesday to abolish the 240-year-old monarchy and establish a republic.

of the Shah dynasty was taken down from the main palace in Kathmandu, which will now be turned into a national museum.

"The royal flag was replaced by Nepal's national flag inside the palace," a palace official said on condition of anonymity.

"The flag has been changed as part of the government decision to been freed from centuries of feudal implement a republic."

Thursday and Friday were declared national holidays in the new republic, where supporters sang and danced on Kathmandu's streets after waiting all day for the

The Maoists, clear winners of last month's elections, waged a On Thursday morning, the flag decade of war to overthrow what they view as a backward, casteridden structure that kept most of Prateek Pradhan in a letter to readers. Nepal's 29 million people living in dire poverty.

They have repeatedly warned dour, unpopular king as well as his King Gyanendra he faces "strong punishment" if he refuses to bow out gracefully.

"The Nepalese people have tradition and the doors have now opened for a radical social and economic transformation," Maoist spokesman Krishna Bahadur Mahara told AFP after the vote.

The country's press hailed the republic. "Turning Nepal into a republic is

the biggest achievement of the people in the history of this country," wrote Kathmandu Post editor Many ordinary Nepalese are

delighted to see the back of the CaseysaidinWashington.

son and would-be heir, Crown Prince Paras -- notorious for his playboy lifestyle. "There was no development under

the monarchy," said Prakash Karki, 26, a businessman, as he bought a newspaper. "There will be now that the people will run the country." United Nations chief Ban Ki-

moon welcomed the vote, saying

Nepalese "have clearly spoken for

peace and change." The United States, which continues to list the former rebels as a foreign "terrorist" organisation, urged "forward political developments" in Nepal, US State

Department spokesman Tom

Nepalese gather to celebrate outside the royal palace in Kathmandu yesterday, a day after the constituent assembly abolished the monarchy and declared Nepal a republic. Nepal celebrated a new era as the world's youngest republic after consigning its centuries-old monarchy to the history books and ordering god-king Gyanendra to quit his palace in two weeks.

Musharraf loyalist army commander replaced

PTI, Islamabad

Amid speculation that President Pervez Musharraf may step down, a top Pakistan army commander seen as his protege has been

Brig Asim Bajwa, the top officer of the army's 111 Brigade, which has played a key role in military coups in the past, was replaced but a military spokesman said this was part of routine transfers and postings.

The 111 Brigade is responsible for the security of the President as well as the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Brigadier Faheem Rao has now taken over its com-

Brig Bajwa, who earlier served as Musharraf's military secretary, was appointed commander of the Brigade by Musharraf before he gave up office of army chief in November last year.



Pakistani lawyers and political activists shout slogans as they march during an anti-Musharraf protest rally in Lahore yesterday demanding reinstatement of Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry and other judges.

to call it a day?

PTI, Islamabad

Political circles in the Pakistani capital were today abuzz with reports that President Pervez Musharraf might opt to step down in the wake of a meeting with the army chief though the Presidency said he had no plans to quit.

Musharraf held a meeting with army chief Gen Ashfaq Parvez Kayani at the Army House in Rawalpindi late last night that lasted over three-andhalf hours. The meeting came in the wake of Kayani's consultations with key commanders.

The commander of the army's 111 Brigade, a brigadier perceived as being loyal to Musharraf, was replaced but a military spokesman said this was part of routine transfers and postings. The 111 Brigade is responsible for the security of the President as well as the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

People around the world have

reached deep into their pockets to

help survivors of China's devastat-

ing earthquake, but fears are grow-

ing corruption will mean not all

donations reach the millions in

quake that rocked southwestern

Sichuan province, leaving more

than 87,000 people dead or miss-

ing, a staggering 34.79 billion yuan

(five billion dollars) in donations

has been collected at home and

In the two weeks since the

Corruption fears as

world gives billions

for China quake

saying that Musharraf has "made up his mind to call it a day" and that he could make an announcement in this regard "at any time".

Musharraf's closest aides were quoted as saying that the President has made up his mind to lead a retired life "after losing all hope of survival in power".

Maj Gen (retired) Rashid Qureshi dismissed reports about Musharraf's plans to quit this morning. He told reporters that such speculation was "just rumours". Qureshi had denied reports about Musharraf stepping downyesterdaytoo.

Military spokesman Maj Gen Athar Abbas described yesterday's meeting between Musharraf and Kayani as "routine".

Pointing out that Kayani frequently meets Musharraf, Qureshi said the President and the army chief had discussed "prevailing The News quoted sources as security and political situation".

Is Musharraf planning Tigers kill 13 in Lankan navy camp raid

AFP, Colombo

Separatist Tamil fighters launched a pre-dawn attack early yesterday against a naval camp on an island off northern Sri Lanka, killing at However, presidential spokesman | least 13 sailors, a pro-rebel website

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil heavy artillery attacks towards the Eelam (LTTE) said its Sea Tiger wing also seized weapons, including a radar, from the camp on Chiraththivu islet, close to the Jaffna peninsula.

"At least 13 Sri Lanka navy personnel were killed and many sailors wounded in the raid carried out by a special marine wing of the Sea Tigers," the Tamilnet.com when the LTTE fired 20 rounds of reported, quoting the LTTE.

"There were no LTTE casualties in the operation," the report said, adding that the rebels "safely

returned to their base" after civilians were killed and six injured destroying the navy camp.

However, Sri Lanka's defence LTTE artillery attack." ministry said army and navy personnel successfully repulsed the rebels, killing at least 16 LTTE cadres and destroying three enemy boats.

fleeing terrorists as enemy fatalities were expected to soar," the ministry said.

sides in the conflict vary wildly and cannot be verified independently. Elsewhere, according to the military, six civilians were killed and 12 others seriously wounded since 1972.

in the pre-dawn "indiscriminate In the northern town of

Vavuniya, three policemen were

injured when the LTTE triggered off a roadside mine targeting police "Troops have also mounted vehicles, the ministry said. It said air force planes stepped up attacks against suspected rebel

positions in the north, providing air cover for ground troops and Casualty figures given by both bombing a rebel training facility. The LTTE campaign for a separate state for minority Tamils from the majority Sinhalese community has left tens of thousands dead

Meanwhile, A Sri Lankan jourheavy artillery shells towards two nalist working in the war-torn densely populated areas of Jaffna northern region and his friend have been hacked to death, a The military earlier said four media rights group said Thursday.

40 survivors rescued 16 days after quake

AFP, Beijing

Forty half-starved earthquake survivors have been rescued from a remote area in southwestern China a full 16 days after the disaster, state press reported on Thursday.

They were flown out by helicopter on Wednesday from the quakeshattered village of Yangjiagou in Sichuan province, the West China Metropolitan Daily said.

The survivors had been prevented from escaping by landslides triggered by the 8.0-magnitude earthquake on May 12, which had blocked roads in the rugged region, it said.

The village is 20 kilometres (12 miles) from the nearest town.

The survivors, who included local villagers and a group of mining company workers, were flown to a nearby temporary camp for earthquake survivors.

Myanmar approves visas for UN aid workers

AP, Yangon

Myanmar's military rulers have approved visas for dozens of international relief workers and were allowing more foreigners into areas devastated by a cyclone that left millions in need of aid, the United Nations said yesterday.

It was an apparent sign that the isolationist regime planned to keep its promise to allow in humanitarian workers from all countries and give that landed May 2.

The problem becomes acute as

purchasing capacity of the general

people has tremendously reduced,

while prices of education materials

and different types of fees have

families of the low-income group are

forced to reduce their children's

educational expense thanks to

persisting skyrocketing prices of

Secondary Education Board

Chairman Prof Manirul Islam said a

huge number of HSC students

financial inability, poor results in the

test examinations, marriage of girl

students, fear in English, forging

registration, going abroad, involve-

ment in politics and in some cases,

students carelessness," Manirul

become a commodity where invest-

ment gets maximum priority, but

most of the people have lost their

rural areas don't have sufficient

teachers, especially for English and

math, and the students don't do well

students now have to take help from

private tuition, but most families in

rural areas cannot afford this," a

private tuition because schools have

failed to provide proper education. For

this reason students from poor fami-

lies, especially in rural areas, are being

deprived of education," said renowned

academician Prof Dr Zillur Rahman

Siddique, former vice-chancellor of

teacher told The Daily Star.

"To do well in English and math,

"Students have to depend on

They also say most schools in

previous purchasing capacity.

Academicians say education has

dropped out this year.

Islam told The Daily Star.

in these subjects.

Dhaka Secondary and Higher

"The main causes are family

essentials.

Academicians observe that most

sharply shot up in the last two years.

ers in recent days into the delta region, a UN statement said.

Japan, which has so far donated \$13 million in aid, sent a 23member medical team to the country Thursday, the Foreign Ministry said in Tokyo.

"I went to some areas where no international relief personnel had been to, and the priorities for these people are food and shelter. We're going to be working very hard to deliver these items to them," Tony Banbury, regional head of the UN World Food Programme, told AP Television News Thursday.

The storm left an estimated 2.4 million people in desperate need of food, shelter and medical care, according to the UN Myanmar's government says the cyclone killed 78,000 people and left 56,000 missing.

Myanmar's leaders are leery of foreign aid workers and international agencies, worrying they could weakened the junta's grip on power. The generals also don't want their people to see aid coming directly from countries like the US that the junta has

long treated as a hostile power. They only allowed foreign aid workers in after UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with junta leader Senior Gen. Than Shwe last weekend.

But state-run media took a swipe at the foreign aid on Thursday, saying that people in the delta could survive on "fresh vegetables that grow wild in the fields and on protein-rich fish from the rivers" if they could not get "bars of chocolate donated by the international community.

However, reports have already emerged of diverted aid supplies or harshly.

scams being launched to grab a piece of the largesse.

Corruption is rampant in China, both in government ranks and throughout society, as the country ploughs through its development boom without a free press or an independent judiciary.

President Hu Jintao has repeatedly warned that corruption is one of the biggest threats to the legitimacy of the ruling Communist

With the eyes of the world on China's relief effort, the government has repeatedly warned that any corruption involving the relief money would be dealt with

Nato airstrikes on a militant fort kill 30

3 Afghans die in suicide blast

AFP, Kabul

AFP, Beijing

A suicide attack targeting US-led troops killed three Afghans here yesterday, as officials reported that Nato airstrikes on a militant fort in the remote southwest of Afghanistan left 30 Taliban dead.

The insurgent Taliban movement claimed responsibility for the car bombing in the capital, which also damaged vehicles carrying soldiers from the US-led military coalition helping Afghanistan defeat an extremist insurgency.

The blast, which happened during the morning rush hour, blew a big crater into the road, which was littered with pieces of mangled reporter at the scene said.

"Three of our compatriots were soldiers.

martyred and two were wounded," a Kabul police chief, General Alishah Paktiawal, told reporters at the site. Another policeman said earlier the dead included a truck driver and

"It was busy and all I heard was a big explosion," said Mir Khan, a road construction worker. "I came out and saw civilian vehicles rushing bloodied people away from the

Lieutenant Colonel Dave Johnson from the US-led coalition confirmed the attack and said it had damaged two vehicles, but the four occupants were not badly hurt.

"The four suffered no serious injuries. The vehicles were both disabled and are being evacuated, metal and shattered glass, an AFP he told AFP. He could not immediately give the nationalities of the

US was 'not alone' in belief Iraq had WMDs

Says Rice

Asked about missing files of | Rice said yesterday the Bush administration was "not alone" in believing

former chief spokesman that the war Iranians," Rice said.

that knew Saddam Hussein used comment on charges in a harsh new weapons of mass destruction against book by President George W. Bush's his own people and against the

MBA ADMISSION TEST

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Chinese medical personnel carry an earthquake survivor arriving at the

railway station in Beijing yesterday. The death toll from China's earthquake

rose to 68,109 with another 19,851 missing, a government spokesman said.

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was unnecessary. AFP, Stockholm But she reiterated the administration's defence against a long litany of US Secretary of State Condoleezza such charges. "It was not the United States of America alone that believed he had Saddam Hussein had weapons of weapons of mass destruction," Rice told mass destruction as she fended off a press conference with Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, whose country is organising the conference. Speaking before the start of a "It was not the United States alone

Jahangimagar University. Education Watch Report-2006, a survey conducted by Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), also points finger at the tendency for depots in Dhaka and Chittagong.

them access to the Irrawaddy delta, which took the brunt of the cyclone The last 45 pending visas were granted to UN staffers, while Save the Children, Doctors Without

Borders and the UN Children's Fund have sent more than 14 work-

HSC exams

depending on private tuition. According to the report, 88 percent students of government institutions and 78 percent of nongovernment institutions in urban areas have private coaching or tutors. Parents spend Tk 16,894 on an average annually on a child's private

Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman said some steps and efforts are being taken to cut the dropout rate down to zero. "We are trying to review related matters and introduce the clustering

Expressing deep anxiety,

efforts to reduce the dropout rate," he said. He however said achievement in checking dropout would not be seen overnight and all officials and people concerned should take additional

efforts to that end. Dropout rate under the technical education board is the highest among all the boards -- 41.4 percent. On the other hand, Barisal has the highest dropout rate among the seven education boards, the board

statistics say. In Dhaka Board, the highest number dropout occurred in Shariatpur, insiders say.

Gatco Case

The accused in the case also include former ministers of the four-party coalition government Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, M Saifur Rahman, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on May 13 pressed charges against Khaleda Zia and the 23. The ACC filed the case with

Tejgaon Police Station on September 2 last year against 13 people, including Khaleda and her son, for corruption in awarding Gatco container handling work at

DCC typists

FROM PAGE 1 individuals involved in the anomalies.

The DCC, in order to hire new typists, arranged written examination on March 11, 2006 and oral examination on April 28 the same year, the sources said adding that 131 candidates took the oral exam and 88 among them were awarded employ-

However, in the tests given by the taskforce, all but one of these recruits failed to prove themselves qualified for the job, said the taskforce sources. Although five of them typed over 30wpm in Bangla, they could not pass the English

typing test, they added. When DCC officials were asked to present the exam sheets from the written exam given by the DCC in 2006, the taskforce was told that the exam sheets have gone missing, said taskforce officials.

The taskforce officials contemplate that the DCC officials who took bribe from the recruits must have destroyed or disposed of the exam sheets. The Daily Star Wednesday contacted DCC Mayor Sadeque

Hossain Khoka for his comments

over the findings of the taskforce.

He said he was not aware of the

exam sheets, he said, "I do not [personally] preserve the files. And therefore, it is not possible for me to know whether any file has gone missing." Regarding the re-

examination of typists, Khoka

said, "I don't recall whether the

taskforce officials have arranged

any examination."

new charges about the reasons for invading Iraq. conference on Iraq in Stockholm, Rice said she would not specifically