

## Nepal bans rallies in Kathmandu

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BBC News, Kathmandu

### **Authorities in the Nepalese capital, Kathmandu, have banned rallies and mass meetings in strategic areas.**

The prohibition comes into force two days before Nepal's newly-elected assembly is expected to meet to declare the country a republic.

Venues covered by the ban include the palace of King Gyanendra, the hall where the assembly will sit, and the residence of the prime minister.

The aim is to frustrate protests planned before the vote.

### **Widespread dismay**

Historic change is approaching in Nepal, but with surprisingly little fanfare.

Very little of the constitutional detail has been worked out; and continuing violence from the biggest elected party, the Maoist former rebels, has created widespread dismay.

The assembly elected last month is instructed under the constitution to implement a republic, spelling the end of the centuries-old monarchy.

But the mechanism has not been determined.

Nor has a new government been formed, which many here say will have to happen before any motion on a republic can be drawn up.

Up to now there is not even any indication of whether King Gyanendra will move out of the Royal Palace into one of the other residences which - at least for now - are still available to him.

Despite all this there is a general belief that a republic will be declared on Wednesday when the assembly first sits.

Perhaps fearing a confrontation or an attempt to storm the palace, the Kathmandu district government has banned rallies, mass meetings and protest programmes around the Royal Palace, the Crown Prince's house, the hall where the assembly will sit, and the prime minister's residence.

The ban, which the government says is to maintain security, will confound some of the plans by political and civil society activists to march to the assembly venue or the palace on Wednesday.

Story from BBC NEWS:  
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