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Target locked on Baghdad

Saddam snubs exile ultimatum; Bush vows to oust "tyrant"

The military build-up

Ready to cross the line

AGENCIES, undated

US troops in the Kuwaiti desert packed their gear and made final preparations yesterday for an invasion of Iraq after President Bush handed Baghdad a 48-hour warultimatum.

Some soldiers were up as early as 1:30 a.m., packing tents and kit to move to new positions in readiness for an imminent assault. Bush said this will come unless Iraqi President Saddam Hussein flees his country by 4:15 a.m. (0115 GMT) on Thursday.

Troops in full battle gear were checking their rifles, machineguns and equipment. Some units dismantled their desert camps and loaded trucks with equipment, preparing to advance close to the Iraqi border, where they will sleep in the open.

James Mattis, commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, told his troops in a letter delivered to each of them that the time had come to go to war to remove Saddam from power.

"When I give you the word, together we will cross the line of departure, close with those forces who choose to fight, and destroy them," the letter said.

"Chemical attack, treachery, and use of the innocent as human shields can be expected, as can other unethical tactics. Take it all in stride.

Some 280,000 US and British troops are massed in the SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Ruthless Australia | Blair faces biggest

(17)

method, the Australians were

day victory and it gave them a place in Sunday's final at the Wanderers

It was their 16th successive one-

As soon as Brett Lee bowled

Marvan Atapattu with the score on

21, Sri Lanka knew they were in for

a hard afternoon. It got a lot tougher when Glenn McGrath sent

back skipper Sanath Jayasuriya

a n d

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

declared the winners by 48 runs.

against either India or Kenya.

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Defending champions Australia demonstrated their ruthless ambition to hang onto their title as they stormed into the World Cup final with a brutal execution of Sri Lanka at Port Elizabeth on Tuesday.

Defending just 212-7 at St George's Park, they had Sri Lanka struggling at 123-7 off 38.1 overs when torrential rain swept across the ground.

With a revised target of 172 under the Duckworth-Lewis

255,000 US troops TURKEY ncirliko 5,000 20,000 LEBANON Two US aircraft BAGHDAD 3,000 IRAQ 10,000 SAUDI 8,000 oTaif In addition, 60,000 troops mobilised including ash. NG 3,000 1st armoured division (26,000 troops, Germany) e US aircraft Ist cavalry division 24,000 troops. Texas 2nd armoured cavalry regi (10,000 troops, Louisiana) British carrier Ark Royal, with 16 Harrier jump jets, also in Gulf 1.600 1.000 Main US bases or facilities Diego Garci Base for B2 an

INTERNET, undated

British Prime Minister Tony Blair

yesterday appealed for MPs to back

him in a key Commons vote last

night by standing firm against Iraq as military action loomed.

Facing possibly the biggest backbench rebellion of his pre-

miership, Blair admitted: "This is a

tough choice indeed. But it is also a

REUTERS, Baghdad/Washington

President Saddam Hussein rejected an ultimatum to quit Iraq and vowed yesterday to fight a US-led invasion that could start in little more than a day.

President Bush gave the Iraqi leader just 48 hours -- until early Thursday Baghdad time -- to flee or he would unleash the US and British forces massed on the frontier.

The response never seemed in doubt and 12 hours later state television showed Saddam making a rare appearance in military uniform. It quoted him telling his cabinet he would emerge the victor from a war that has opened a raw schism in world opinion.

"The meeting stressed that Iraq and all its sons were fully ready to confront the invading aggressors and repel them," the television announcer said, reading a cabinet statement.

"The wives and mothers of those Americans who will fight us will weep blood, not tears," Saddam's elder son Uday said.

"The tyrant will soon be gone," Bush said earlier in a brisk, 13-minute address from the White House on Monday night.

He urged Iraq's soldiers to surrender rather than be killed by the hightech firepower of 280,000 US and British troops, who are making final preparations for an invasion.

UN weapons inspectors left Iraq yesterday, effectively ending a period of SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

A different war brews in backyard A tall order waits on the economic front

As war sabers rattle in the Gulf, Bangladesh has a war on its own economic front.

With some 200,000 workers about to be ejected from the Gulf and exports under threat of slump, economists fear the war could play

Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury has said the government has already formed a high-powered taskforce to tackle the situation.

threat.

With the war looming in the

horizon, orders are already on the

"Buyers have become jittery and are unwilling to issue new letters of credit," said President of he Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association Kazi Moniruzzaman. Shipments are also being put on

is over.

agenda

Coastal shipping links between Bangladesh and Myanmar will top

the agenda when Prime Minister

Khaleda Zia holds talks with her

Myanmar counterpart today at

A coastal shipping deal is likely to be signed linking Chittagong,

Cox's Bazar and Teknaf to the

Myanmar ports of Yangon, Akyub

However, Dhaka is interested to make it a tripartite agreement by including Thailand. Thailand will

be included later if Bangladesh and

Myanmar signs the deal, foreign

Talks on setting up of a road link between Dhaka and Yangon are

also underway. During a trip of the

Myanmar foreign minister here at the beginning of the month, the

STAR REPORT

Yangon.

and Maungdaw.

ministry sources said.

Should the war linger, it will have a devastating effect on garment exports, he said And if the war breeds more

terrorism, as many fear, Bangladesh will be in for a prolonged downturn.

Already garment export is over 10 per cent short of the target and over three per cent behind last fiscal's performance.

Shipping links tops PM's Myanmar

are also on the rock. "We had a small but growing vegetable market," says economist

With one-fifth of workers returning from the Gulf, remit-tance flow will take a serious beathas This

two sides agreed form a taskforce

Myanmar capital today on a three-

day visit on an invitation from

Chairman of the State Peace and

Development

But this export is now at risk, he

A top shrimp exporter and

President of Bangladesh Frozen

Foods Exporters Association

Golam Mostafa said April is the

month for shrimp export. With the

war just a hairbreadth away, buyers

"Export price is depleting fast," said Mostafizur Rahman. It has

already dropped over 10 per cent in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Khaleda flies off to the

on the issue.

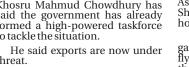
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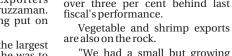
the last six months.

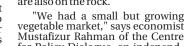
says.

ing



the US and Europe. The item also accounts for 75 per cent of its exports







Annisul Huq, one of the largest garment exporters, said he was to y to Canada to confirm orders for the next season. The buyer has asked him to stay put until the war for Policy Dialogue, an independ-

hold Bangladesh is a leading readymade garments exporter to

STAR REPORT test in Commons

Blair told the Commons that what

was at stake would determine the

pattern of international politics for

on Iraq, which is expected to last

for around 10 hours, he repeatedly

accused the Iraqi President

Saddam Hussein of failing to dis-

close full details of his weapons of

mass destruction (WMD).

Opening the key full-day debate

the next generation.

wane.

havoc with the economy.

