

Kuwaitis celebrate attack

MANAMA, Jan 17: Jubilant Kuwaiti exiles poured out of their homes Thursday morning to revel in the US-led attack on the nation that conquered their Emirate.

Automobile horns blared, women danced and Kuwaitis screamed and shouted with joy upon hearing the news that war against Iraq had begun.

Edibles strewn to mosques to pray for victory, crowded hotel lobbies with television sets and embraced on the streets of this Gulf Emirate that is home to an estimated 12,000 Kuwaiti refugees.

"The people are very happy. This is a great day," said Hassan Qwad, a 27-year-old Kuwaiti policeman who fled the country two months ago with his pregnant wife.

"I want to return to Kuwait as soon as possible," he said as he and other several Kuwaitis ringed a television set blaring news reports in a Manama hotel lobby that bustled at 4 a.m.

Kuwaiti government radio, broadcasting from a secret location believed to be in Saudi Arabia, blared patriotic songs and bold pronouncements.

"Where is your voice of Saddam? Allah willed this be your end," the announcer said. "You have ended, but Kuwait lives, Kuwait the state, Kuwait the Emir, Kuwait the government, Kuwait the nation. All despots end this way."

Cairo Radio interrupted a comedy programme called "school of troublemakers" early Thursday to tell Egyptians the news, and Cairo Television, which normally shuts down at around 1 a.m., stayed on through the night relaying live US President George Bush's report on the opening of hostilities.

On hearing the news, members of the Egyptian capital's large Kuwaiti exile community formed an impromptu caravan of cars and taxis and took to the streets in a short but exuberant celebration.

Security in embassies tightened

By Staff Correspondent

US ambassador in Bangladesh William B. Milam on Thursday handed over a paper to the Foreign Office stating that his country was still prepared for peace if Iraq withdrew from Kuwait, a Foreign Office source said.

Meanwhile, security around the embassies of US and some European and Middle Eastern countries have been tightened to ensure safety of diplomats and their staff.

The US embassy, British High Commission, the embassies of West Germany, France, Saudi Arabia have also tightened their own security arrangements, and asked their staff members not to go out unless absolutely necessary.

Additional police contingents were posted around these embassies on Thursday, the source said.

Nominations valid

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Returning Officer on grounds of non-availability of permission because he has been interned.

The Election Commission yesterday heard the appeals against the decision of the Returning Officer and declared all his five nominations valid overruling the cancellation.

Ershad filed the nominations as a candidate of the Jatiya Party, of which he was the Chairman, from Rangpur 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 constituencies.

Appeals were submitted on Wednesday to the Chief Election Commissioner challenging the cancellation nominations of Ershad and some other of JP leaders.

Today the last date for appeal against cancellation of nominations as well as hearing on the same.

A total of 3,820 nominations were filed for the 300-seat parliament but 56 were rejected by the Returning Officers at different places across the country.

Nominations of former JP leaders and former ministers Nazur Rahman (Bhola-1) and Nurunnabi Chand (Rajshahi) were also declared valid. Their nominations were earlier cancelled.

Meanwhile, at Rangpur town JP activists and supporters brought out a truck procession yesterday afternoon on hearing that Ershad's nominations were found valid.

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PLO calls for worldwide response to US attack

TUNIS, Jan 17: The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) called today for a worldwide response to the US-led attack on Iraq, reports Reuter.

The PLO leadership, in a statement carried by the Palestinian news agency Wafa, accused "the US-Israeli-European coalition" of "cowardly aggression" against Iraq and said it should be op-

posed "on all levels".

The PLO addressed the call, which was relayed by an official spokesman, to "the Arab nation, the Islamic nation, the peoples of the Third World and all free and noble men and supporters of peace".

"It is a black day in the history of humanity," the PLO said.

PLO chief Yasser Arafat's political adviser Bassam Abu

Sharif said the United States had gone to war to protect Israel and its occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories.

"The US has rejected a peaceful solution because it has refused to apply UN resolution 242 on the Arab-Israeli conflict," he told Reuters, adding, "This aggression is shameful for the American administration," he added.



BNP chairperson Begum Khaleida Zia offering fateha at the mazar of Ziaur Rahman yesterday. —Star photo

Leaders call for peace

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Hasina in her statement appealed to the warring countries in the Gulf to give up hostilities and work for an honourable solution of the problem through diplomatic manoeuvres and negotiations.

"We are against occupation of alien land and do not support aggression. We want peace, not war-we want a hunger-free world," she said.

Shikh Hasina called upon people to remain alert against the impact of the war on the country and pray to Almighty Allah for the safety of the human race.

BNP Chairman Begum Khaleida Zia expressed her grave concern at the war and said the war would endanger peace and fraternity in the Islamic world. She called for maintaining peace and amity among the countries of the

Arab world and urged all concerned for negotiations within the framework of the United Nations resolutions to establish peace in the Gulf.

The Five-Party Alliance in a meeting condemned the attack on Iraq and appealed to the world leaders to take initiative for immediate stoppage of the Gulf war. A resolution adopted at the meeting said the Gulf war will affect the whole world.

The central working committee of Jammah-Islami expressed deep concern at the Gulf war and called upon the international community, including the Muslim Ummah, to come forward to find out a negotiated and diplomatic solution of the problem.

Bakal, CPB, Workers Party, BSD (Khalequzaman), United Communist League, Muslim League, Samyabadi Dal,

Krishak-Sramik Samajbadi Dal, Jatiya Oikkyo Front, Jatiya Party and other organisations also expressed concern at the Gulf war.

Kuwait Repatriates Association expressed deep concern at the breakout of war following invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.

Mad rush

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had not been instructed to ration sales but the government might need to do so. Long queues were seen before the filling stations till late night on Thursday.

The government has plans to import oil from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia if the supply line from the Gulf is cut off, it was decided in a review meeting on the oil country. Current stock of oil can meet 40 days' requirement of the country. The government has also decided to gear up contingency plan and undertake strict austerity measures to meet the emergency situation.

Iraq can still avoid destruction : Bush

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Reuter. "We are pleased with the way things have gone so far and we are determined to finish what we've set out to do," a subdued-looking Bush told reporters at the start of a meeting with Congressional leaders.

He said the Gulf war, Operation Desert Storm, was "going forward with great success and we keep praying the loss of life will be held at an absolute minimum."

Bush, who is the American commander in chief, cautioned that there would be ups and downs in the conflict, emphasising "there will be some downs."

"There is no unwarranted optimism -- none," he said. Earlier, during a surprise 5:30 am EST (1030 GMT) visit to the White House Press Room, Bush told reporters: "Things

are going well -- exactly as you've all reported."

He said the 28-nation coalition "exhausted all reasonable efforts" to reach a peaceful diplomatic solution to the Gulf crisis sparked by Iraq's August 2 invasion on Kuwait.

Tension

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There were several rallies in city in favour of both Iraq President Saddam Hussein and US attack of Iraq. A large number of Secretariat employees brought out a rally in favour of Saddam and chanted slogans against US aggression. Another group of Secretariat employees brought out a rally supporting the US invasion of Iraq.

Throughout the day, people were seen tuning to the radio for latest information of Gulf war. Most of the people were visibly concerned. What would be our fate if the war prolongs -- a question being posed by many citizens.

In spite of government warning, a section of unscrupulous traders resorted to hoarding. Prices of many essentials marked a sharp rise. A buyer was seen purchasing a two-kg tin of powdered milk Dano with Tk 265. Only a day before, it was sold at taka 250 per tin.

Meanwhile, an oil tanker carrying 20,000 tons of petroleum has anchored at Chittagong port on Thursday. Another oil tanker is due by January 22, said a Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) source.

A city filling station manager told The Daily Star that he had already sold 6,000 litres of oil till late evening on Thursday. The normal sale is two to three thousand litres a day on an average, he added.

When asked as to why he was buying excess oil, a customer told the Star that he was buying oil for reserves.

Saudi oil platforms burning

THERAN, Jan 17: Several Saudi oil platforms in the Gulf were hit by Iraqi missiles and are burning, the official Iranian news agency (IRNA) said, reports AFP.

IRNA said it had no further details from its maritime sources. Citing Iranian military sources, Radio Tehran said Iraqi telecommunications systems have not been disturbed. The sources said Iraqi anti-aircraft batteries have not been paralysed and were active.

According to another report: Five Iraqi Scud missiles were fired at Saudi Arabia early today, the British Broadcasting Corporation reported, a report from Nicosia said.

The report could not immediately be confirmed.

Two air raid alerts took place in the kingdom soon after allied aircraft staged a massive attack on Iraq and Kuwait but both were quickly called off.

Bangladeshis trapped

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Besides Bangladeshis, there are 13,000 Americans working in Aramco (oil company). Most of them have moved to Bahrain through the causeway, a bridge over the Gulf. The distance from Dahrn to Bahrain is only 27 kilometres. Many of the Bangladeshis have also gone to Bahrain, according to informed sources. There are a few hundred Bangladeshis in Jordan, which is also a vulnerable zone.

There are over two lakh Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia, one lakh in the United Arab Emirates, 65,000 in Oman, 35,000 in Qatar, 25,000 in Bahrain, 10,000 in Iran, 8,000 in Lebanon and 3,000 in Kuwait

and 500 in Baghdad. There is no report about the situation in other Gulf states. But available reports said the Bangladeshis are panicky in those states except Oman which is far away from the war zone. Adequate arrangements have been made by our missions in those countries to keep them informed of the latest situation.

The relatives of the Bangladeshis working in the Arab states are worried about their fate. They are making enquiry about their near and dear ones over telephone to newspaper offices. Foreign Office has opened a cell to monitor the developments in the Gulf round the clock.



A procession was brought out in city yesterday in support of Saddam after US attack on Iraq. —Star photo

Help sought to implement gas pipeline project

The Government sought the cooperation of the people of Sylhet in the implementation of several projects including North-South Gas pipeline in deference to their demand, reports BSS.

Responding to the memorandum submitted by the Eight Party, Seven-Party and Five-Party alliances and All Party Students Unity of Golapganj and Beani Bazar areas of Sylhet on January 16, the Ministry of Power and Energy in a Press Note outlined the steps for the installation of LPG plant and pipe line.

It said a big dehydration plant and LPG fractionation plant having an annual capacity of 5,000 ton/s will be established at Kailashtila. The projects also include installation of North-South Pipe line, it added.

ton capacity established at Kailashtila. Petrol and diesel processed from this plant are being marketed in Sylhet areas, it said.

It said, "Dehydration plant and fractionation plant to be constructed are closely linked with the installation of North-South Pipe line. The task to begin the work will be hampered if the work of the saipem entrusted with the responsibility of laying the pipe line remains stopped." As a result it will not be possible to take effective steps to meet other demands.

"It is necessary to take up the repair work of the Number One well at Kailashtila to meet the shortage in the supply of gas in Sylhet district. Gas is now being supplied to Sylhet region from this well. It will be possible to maintain uninterrupted supply of gas by bringing gas from the other well

through the Golapganj portion of North-South Pipe line. Otherwise, there might be shortage in the supply of gas in Sylhet and it will not be possible to supply it to new areas. Moreover, installation of the North-South Pipe line is indispensable if decision is to be taken for the establishment of a fertilizer factory in Sylhet region under economic-technical consideration. Besides, the need for the North South Pipe line is immense to meet the requirement of additional gas for the modernisation of Fenchuganj Fertilizer Factory.

Considering the whole situation it appears that work of the saipem should be started immediately to fulfil the demands of the people of this region. The Government hopes that the people of the region will come forward to extend their cooperation realising the importance of the situation.

The Midnight File

Iran won't support any side

NICOSIA, Jan 17: Iran said Thursday it would allow neither side in the Gulf war to use its airspace or territory and sources in Tehran said the Iranian armed forces were planning war games off the southern Gulf coast. Tehran television, monitored in Nicosia, said a statement issued by the General Command Headquarters of the Armed Forces warned that the military was prepared to thwart any incursions into Iranian territory, reports AP.

NATO ships in mediterranean

BRUSSELS, Jan 17: NATO announced Thursday it was ordering eight ships in its quick-reaction force to resume surveillance in the Mediterranean Sea. It also said in a statement that it was sending minesweepers to the Central Mediterranean to protect the safety of shipping and freedom of navigation in this vital area, reports AP.

Steps against war backlash

BERLIN, Jan 17: Bonn police armed with submachine guns patrolled outside the American community as Iraqi President Saddam Hussein threatened to stage terrorist actions. US skiers pulled out of weekend World Cup races and numerous schools for the children of American soldiers in Germany were closed Thursday, after the outbreak of fighting in the Gulf, reports AP.

War was expected : Reagan

LOS ANGELES, Jan 17: Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan was at his Santa Barbara ranch watching TV when he learned that the bombing of Baghdad had begun. "We had done everything we could do," Reagan said in a statement released by his Century City office. "Warnings were given that we would resort to armed action to free Kuwait. This was to be expected," reports AP.

Soviets reject Baltic conference

VIENNA (Austria), Jan 17: The Soviet Union on Thursday rejected a proposal supported by the United States, Canada and all other European countries for an international conference on the Kremlin's violent intervention in the Baltics. A diplomat said the proposal for the gathering came from six delegations at an expert meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, a 34-nation forum on military security and respect of human rights from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountains, reports AP.

Kohl re-elected Chancellor

BONN, Jan 17: The German parliament re-elected Helmut Kohl as Chancellor of the newly united nation today, six weeks after his centre-right coalition won landslide victory in elections on December. The Christian Democratic leader won the support of 378 members of the 662-member Bundestag (Lower House), while 257 opposition deputies voted against him, reports Reuter.

33 Tamil rebels killed

COLOMBO, Jan 17: Government troops have shot and killed 33 Tamil rebels since Sunday, Deputy Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne said Thursday.

Thirteen other rebels drowned Wednesday when troops riddled their boat with bullets at Toppigala in Batticaloa district, he said. The killings brought the rebel death toll to 60 since last Friday when the government ended a 10-day official truce, reports AP.

Siddiky convict, says govt

The Government on Thursday night issued a handwritten order on Abdul Kader Siddiky, who was arrested by the police in Jenidah on Thursday morning, reports BSS.

The handout issued by the Home Ministry said Kader Siddiky was tried on July 24, 1978 in absentia under MLR by Martial Law Court No 1 of Dhaka for Tangle police station's case no 15 of 14-04-76. He was found guilty by Martial Law Court and sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Taka three lakh in lieu thereof of a further rigorous imprisonment of three years.

Kader Siddiky was given a landing permit when he flew in at Zia International Airport from India on December 16 last with an identity certificate issued by the Government of India. The tenure of his landing permit expired on Tuesday last. He has been arrested by the police as he is a convict who is yet to undergo his sentence.

Hasina demands unconditional release

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in a statement yesterday demanded the unconditional release of Kader Siddiky.

Expressing her deep concern she said, Kader Siddiky fought the War of Liberation and engaged himself in rebuilding the nation under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Siddiky had to spend 15 years in exile in protest against the killing of Bangabandhu, she said.

Sheikh Hasina said after the fall of the autocratic government Kader Siddiky returned from India and started his normal political activities.

She said when the killers of Bangabandhu were at large, the arrest of Kader Siddiky was a matter of great regret. She said the democratic people of the country wanted Kader Siddiky back among them.

Kader Siddiky

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arrest Kader Siddiky. The police team raided the local WAPDA rest house in the early hours and took him into custody before dawn. He has been sent to Jessore jail detained for 120 days under the Special Powers Act.

Before his arrest police showed him the necessary documents for his arrest. The notice served on him mentioned that he was arrested for 120 days for public security and safety.

Kader Siddiky was staying at the rest house after attending a reception on Wednesday by the local unit of Kader Siddiky Repatriation Committee.

Siddiky, who was convicted by a Martial Law tribunal during the BNP regime for high treason and sentenced to seven years R.I. crossed into India in 1975 after the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He formed 'Kaderia Bahini' there to take revenge against the killers of Sheikh Mujib.

According to the Home Ministry, there are now two criminal cases against Kader Siddiky one with Motijheel Thana and the other with Kalihati Thana.

Kader Siddiky filed nomination from Tangail-8 as an independent candidate. Awami League did not nominate him, neither he sought nomination from the Awami League.

He told a public meeting that he did not seek nomination from Awami League be-

cause he would have to face interview with some party leaders who were involved in the killing of Sheikh Mujib.

In Jhenidah, he said Awami League might show clemency to the killers of Sheikh Mujib but he would not let them go without trial.

Our Jhenidah correspondent adds: Before he was taken into custody Kader Siddiky in a written statement urged his followers to raise protest against his arrest. He said he did not want that the on-going democratic process was hampered.

Later in a press conference local Awami Jubo League and Chhatra League leaders condemned the arrest and demanded his unconditional release. They also brought out several processions in protest against his arrest.

Safe

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Meanwhile Fakhruddin Ahmed, Adviser for Foreign Affairs, said Bangladesh regrets the outbreak of the war, adding since steps are under way to resolve the present crisis an international peace conference should be convened immediately to achieve the rights of the Palestinian people.

The adviser urged both sides to avoid civilian targets and end the war immediately after achievement of the objectives set forth by the UN Security Council.