

The Daily Star WEEKEND MAGAZINE

My being in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War was a matter of choice. I had perfect reasons not to go back to Riyadh just then...

Witness to History Gulf War - My Days under Siege

by Kohinoor Dastagir

Many people saw the Gulf War from different perspectives, from inside Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion and from parts of Saudi Arabia where the conflict cast its long shadow over lives of people, locals and foreigners.



American troops participating in operation "Desert Shield".



Life as usual in the city of Riyadh.

When I landed in Riyadh on 28th December, my husband was not at the airport to greet me. My daughter Ayesha informed that he was busy in a conference. I understood. Everywhere I could see signs of something unusual. Only three weeks back I had left this city. It had been a peaceful city with all its normal activities then.

My initial reaction to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was very impersonal. I was taking interest, but not enough to force me into any action. But this attitude changed abruptly when US troops landed on Saudi Arabian soil. The real implications of this hit me with a force.

of course, his gas mask - standard precaution against any possible chemical fallout. 19th January - The first Scud attack on Riyadh. At 11pm again Mr Shaif rang up - this time to inform us that air raid siren was going on.

war is on, why isn't he retaliating enough? From what we hear, it is now a one way traffic - only the US and its allies are active. Iraqis are mostly quiet now.

11th February - Jane (American) and Margaret (British) and I decide to visit the antique souk in old Riyadh area. It was a big surprise for me to see Jane not wearing her abaya at all. These days you hear stories of overactive Mutawass - but maybe Jane being an American, things are different with her these days.

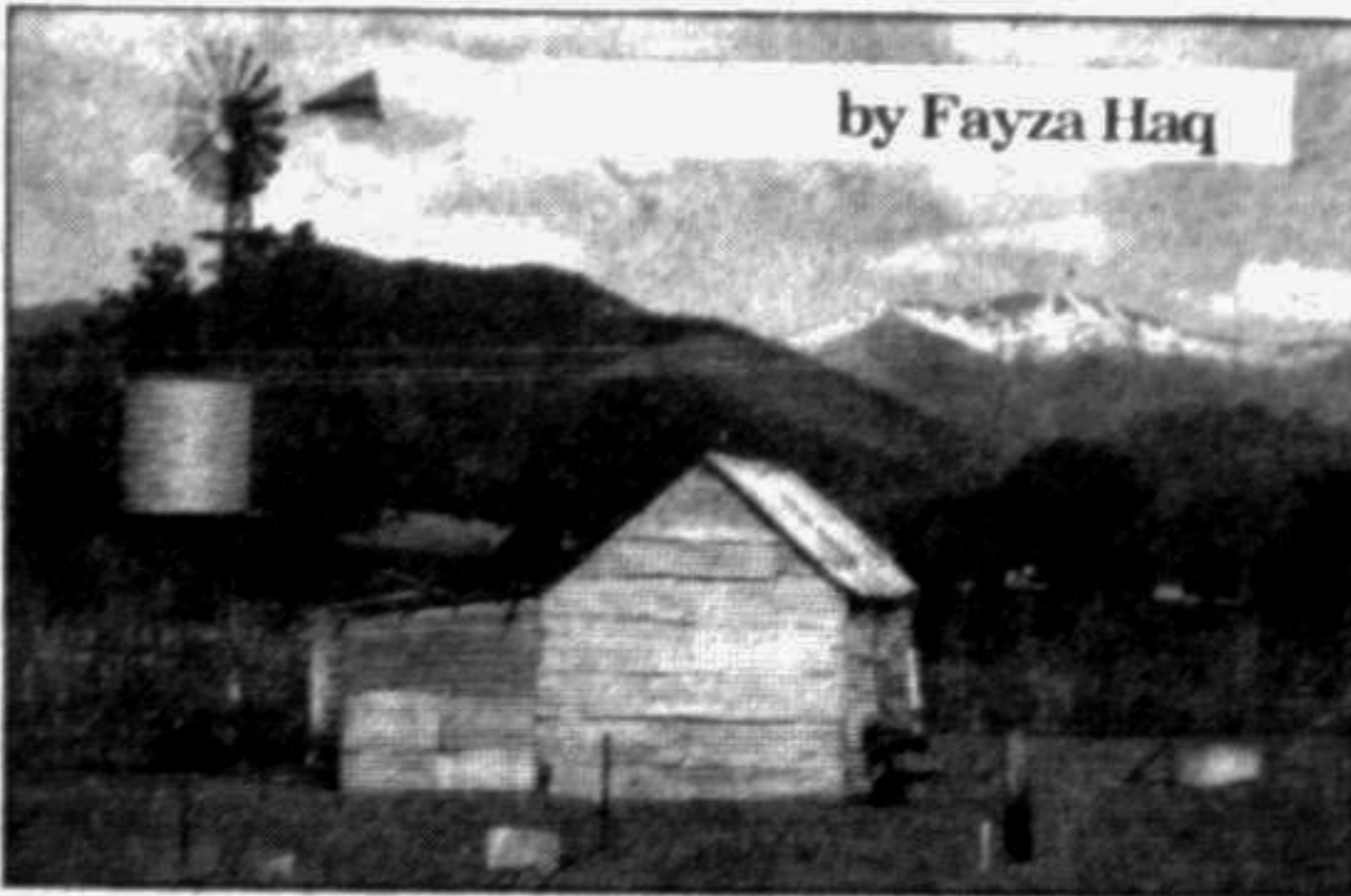
any scandalous incident involving poor me - not me - no. 12th February - we had lunch at Chinese Embassy. Lunch - because nights are not safe enough for dinners. A very welcome break from our monotonous existence. How long can one refrain from normal activities? Now that the Chinese have taken lead, we will all follow.

With Bruce Ruxton and his over-enthusiastic followers flexing their muscles against the non-white migrants in Australia, and the sporadic display of rabid racial neo-Nazi type intolerance.

People and Places

Migrants Making it in Aussieland

by Fayza Haq



readers. Mary Kostikedes and George Denikian are easily acknowledged as superior to the rest. Similarly Peta Topano and Carla Zampetti are great names in Australia.

Babar and Lucy Ahad, if they had stayed back in Bangladesh, would still have had considerable success behind them.

Not all Bangladeshis are as well adjusted as Babar and Lucy. But most manage to do well for themselves, like the "Telecom" worker who was once kind enough to give me a lift home with his wife and family.

souffle and spoke in a smug manner about her frequent trips to the local mosque. The Indian doctor, like many Muslims leaving India, put unusual emphasis on his interpretation of Islam, and was ready to dictate terms, as regards religious beliefs, to a total stranger like me.

Another successful migrant couple that I know are the Malaysian Chinese, Audrey and Eddy Tan, from Chelsea Heights.

Pat Heynsbuergh is a Burger from Sri Lanka, who migrated to Australia eighteen years ago. She has a beautiful home in Chelsea, with a husband and two delightful children to share her life.

Some immigrants do enjoy good housing facility in Australia.

but Audrey admits to being middle-class. The husband does as many as three jobs a week, working in supermarkets and pizza huts after his nine-to-five white-collar job.

Andre, the older Tan child, is as robust and intelligent as any other boy of his age in Melbourne. With his mother a trained teacher, he was goned on with books and children's educational programme on TV since the time he landed as an infant in Australia.



A South Asian immigrant with a friend at a Melbourne cafe.

parents' charm and wit. Valery was born with a defective heart and her parents have had to struggle and sacrifice a lot before she is the bundle of joy she is today.

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been extremely Europeanised like the fair-skinned Anglo-Indians in the Subcontinent. If Pat and her husband Tony had stayed behind in Sri Lanka, they would have stood out like sore thumbs among the Tamils and Sinhalese.

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Andrey Tan, of Chinese-Malaysian origin, with her family at amusement park near Chelsea Heights, Melbourne.

their unvaried bellydance restaurants, and the dark-haired Greeks and Italians, once treated with great

the Hollywood and local productions available in the other four popular channels of TV. Even its English news