

12.05 hrs.

**STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION
ARISING OUT OF ESCALATION OF
IRAQ-IRAN WAR**

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI) : Hon. Member are no doubt aware of the extremely serious escalation that has taken place in the past few weeks in the tragic conflict which has been going on between two fellow non-aligned countries, Iran and Iraq, for more than four and a half years. The most unfortunate recent development has been the extension of the hostile operations by both countries to civilian targets and residential areas, with direct attacks even on the capital cities and many other urban centres, resulting in the loss of civilian lives and properties. There are even allegations of the use of chemical weapons.

We, as India and as Chairman of NAM, are deeply concerned and alarmed at these developments. Our endeavour, from the beginning of this conflict has been to persuade the two countries, with both of whom we have traditional and friendly relations, to cease the hostilities and settle their differences through negotiation and peaceful means. Such large scale military operations can only benefit those outside forces which do not want the region to enjoy peace and stability. Last week, I sent a personal appeal to their Excellencies, the Presidents of Iran and Iraq, for cessations of hostilities and, as a first step, to stop attacking civilian targets as they had both agreed to do in their agreement with the UN Secretary-General of 12th June, 1984. I followed it up by sending special emissaries at Secretary level to the two capitals on Sunday, the 17th March, who have delivered my personal messages to the two Presidents.

On Tuesday, the 19th, I had a long discussion with a Special Envoy from Iran who brought me a message from his President. I have also received a reply from President Saddam Hussain.

Since the hostilities showed no signs of abatement, I have sent a high-level delegation to Baghdad and Tehran. Shri Khurshid Alam Khan, MOS in MFA, left yesterday, accompanied by Shri Romesh Bhandari, Foreign Secretary. He will visit the two capitals and convey to the two Presidents the grave concern of the entire NAM. He will urge them, in India's name and in the names of all fellow non-aligned members, to immediately agree, on reciprocal basis, to cease hostile attacks against civilian targets as a first step to complete cessation of hostilities, to exchange Prisoners of war, and not to attack civilian ships in the Gulf.

I know the House will join me in sending good wishes to the mission of Shri Khurshid Alam Khan.

12.10 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

Annual Report of and Review on University Grants Commission for 1983-84 etc. and Annual Accounts of and Audit Reports on Malviya Regional Engineering College, Jaipur, Maulana Azad College of Technology, Bhopal and Karnatka Regional Engineering College Surathkal for 1983-84

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (SHRI B. SHANKARA NAND) : On behalf of Shri K. C. Pant I beg to lay on the Table :

1. (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi, for the year 1983-84, under section 18 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956.
- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government on the working of University Grants Commission, New Delhi, for the year 1983-84.