

Egypt press hails 'revival' of revolution

CAIRO: Egypt's press on Thursday, 26 January 2012, hailed the "revival" of the revolution after massive crowds took to the streets to demand democratic changes, a year after the start of the uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak.

"The revolution continues," trumpeted the independent daily *Al-Shorouq*, saying millions of Egyptians wanted to see "the end of military rule."

"The people want the continuation of the revolution," proclaimed the state-owned *Al-Ahram*, above a large picture of massive crowds thronging Tahrir Square - the symbolic heart of the Egyptian protests.

On January 25 last year, nationwide rallies kicked off the uprising that would change the course of the Arab world's most populous nation, bringing closer ambitions for democratic change. But a year later, many are disenchanted and even angry at the ruling military, who protesters accuse of reneging on promises of reform and of rights abuses.

Protesters spent a peaceful night in Tahrir Square, despite weeks of warnings by the military council and state media of possible trouble on the day.

Several pro-democracy groups have called a sit-in in the square until Friday when another rally is planned.

Egyptian share prices were 6.4% higher half-way through trading on Wednesday, after the peaceful and orderly rallies, with the main EGX-30 index reaching 4 401.27 points.

"There was general optimism in the market after the peaceful demonstrations, with expectations of stability on the political and security fronts likely to affect investors positively in the coming phase," said financial analyst, Eissa Fathy Eissa.

On Wednesday, Egyptians poured into the main squares of cities across the country, vowing to re-ignite their unfinished revolution, in a day billed as a celebration by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces that took power when Mubarak was ousted on February 11.

Formal celebrations remained discreet on the day, with the overwhelming demand of rallies focused on working for the goals of the revolution.

The independent *Al-Tahrir* newspaper listed the goals on its front page, including an immediate handover of power to civilian rule, the election of a president, justice for those killed during the uprising, an end to military trials for civilians, as well as social justice and the guarantee of freedoms.

In Cairo, massive marches snaked through towards Tahrir, with the chant of "Down with military rule!" ringing across the capital.

By late afternoon, the rally had occupied surrounding streets and bridges, in scenes reminiscent of the 2011 protests in which hundreds of protesters were killed and thousands injured.

Tens of thousands also packed the main squares in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, the canal city of Suez and in the Nile Delta and the Sinai peninsula.

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