

25 hurt in Yemen clashes

AFP, Sanaa

At least 25 people were injured in fierce clashes between pro- and anti-regime protesters in Sanaa as the army deployed in force in the restive city of Aden yesterday, AFP correspondents said.

About 2,000 protesters, mostly students, had just left Sanaa University headed for central Sanaa's Tahrir Square, or Liberation Square, when they ran into regime supporters and clashes broke out for a fifth straight day.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh's loyalists were gathered and waiting near the university since early in the day and attacked the protesters with batons and stones, a reporter said.

The protesters, chanting "The people want to overthrow the regime," responded by hurling stones.



PHOTO: AFP
Yemeni regime loyalists throw stones towards anti-government protesters during clashes in central Sanaa yesterday. At least 25 people were injured while police fired warning shots during the fierce clashes, an AFP reporter said.

Bahrain police break up demonstrators

Shiite opposition to quit parliament, military vows to restore security

AGENCIES, Manama

Security forces in Bahrain have dispersed thousands of anti-government protesters in Pearl Square in the centre of the capital, Manama.

Hundreds of riot police using tear gas and batons moved in before dawn, with tanks now reported on some streets.

At least three people died in the operation, with hundreds more injured.

The protesters want wide-ranging political reforms and had been camped out since Tuesday. Officials said all chance of talks had been "exhausted".

Clashes earlier in the week left two dead and dozens injured in the country.

Ibrahim Sharif, of Bahrain's secular Waad party, told the BBC that the police had moved into Pearl Square at about 3:00am as people were sleeping.

"Throughout the day there were rumours that we would have another 24 hours, but the attack has come without warning," he said.

Mr Sharif said that he had seen at least 100 riot police on one side of the square and

hundreds of people running away down side roads.

Meanwhile, Bahrain's military warned yesterday it would take "strict measures" to restore security in Bahrain, where clashes between police and protesters have killed six people.

Bahrain's defence forces will "take all strict and preventive measures to restore security and public order," a defence ministry spokesman said in a statement.

But Bahrain's authorities defended their actions.

They said that as some "refused to submit to the law" they had to intervene to disperse them.

Meanwhile, Bahrain's largest Shiite opposition bloc intends to quit parliament, one of its MPs said yesterday after four people were killed when police violently broke up an anti-regime protest in Manama.

Al-Wefaq bloc, which occupies 18 of the 40 parliamentary seats in Bahrain, is "heading towards pulling out" from the parliament, MP Ali al-Aswad told AFP.

Iran accuses opposition chiefs of treason

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday accused opposition leaders of treason and vowed to block their ability to communicate with their supporters on the eve of a pro-regime "hatred" rally against them in Tehran.

The leaders, Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, are under de facto house arrest but have regularly issued defiant messages to their supporters through their websites, including one which led to anti-government protests on Monday that left two people dead and several wounded.

"The treason committed by the movement of sedition leaders is not hidden from anyone," Iran's chief of judiciary Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani was quoted as saying by state news agency IRNA.

6 die in Libya 'Day of Anger'

AFP, Nicosia

Six people were killed in the Libyan city of Benghazi yesterday, as Moamer Kadhafi's regime sought to overshadow an opposition "Day of Anger" with its own rally in the capital Tripoli.

Violent clashes in Benghazi have so far left six dead yesterday, the Al-Youm and Al-Manara sites reported on what was the third straight day of protests against the long-time Libyan leader.

Separately, lawyers demonstrated in front of a courthouse in Benghazi -- Libya's second city after Tripoli -- to demand a constitution for the country.

The websites, monitored in Nicosia, said at least four people were killed in the city of Al-Baida, 200 kilometres (120 miles) east of Benghazi, on Wednesday.

Sites monitored in Cyprus and a Libyan human rights group based abroad reported earlier that the anti-Kadhafi protests in Al-Baida had cost as many as 13 lives.

"Internal security forces and militias of the Revolutionary Committees used live ammunition to disperse a peaceful demonstration by the youth of Al-Baida," leaving "at least four dead and several injured," according to LibyaWatch.

Geneva-based Human Rights Solidarity, citing witnesses, said rooftop snipers in Al-Baida had killed 13 protesters and wounded dozens of others.

But the Quryna newspaper, close to Kadhafi's son Seif al-Islam, cited official sources and put the death toll at two. It traced the unrest to a police shutdown of local shops that soon escalated.

The interior ministry fired the head of security in Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar province in the aftermath of the violence, in which protesters had torched "several police cars."

Videos circulating on the Internet showed dozens of young Libyans apparently gathered on Wednesday night in Al-Baida chanting, "The people want to bring down the regime," and a building which had been set on fire.

Uganda goes to polls

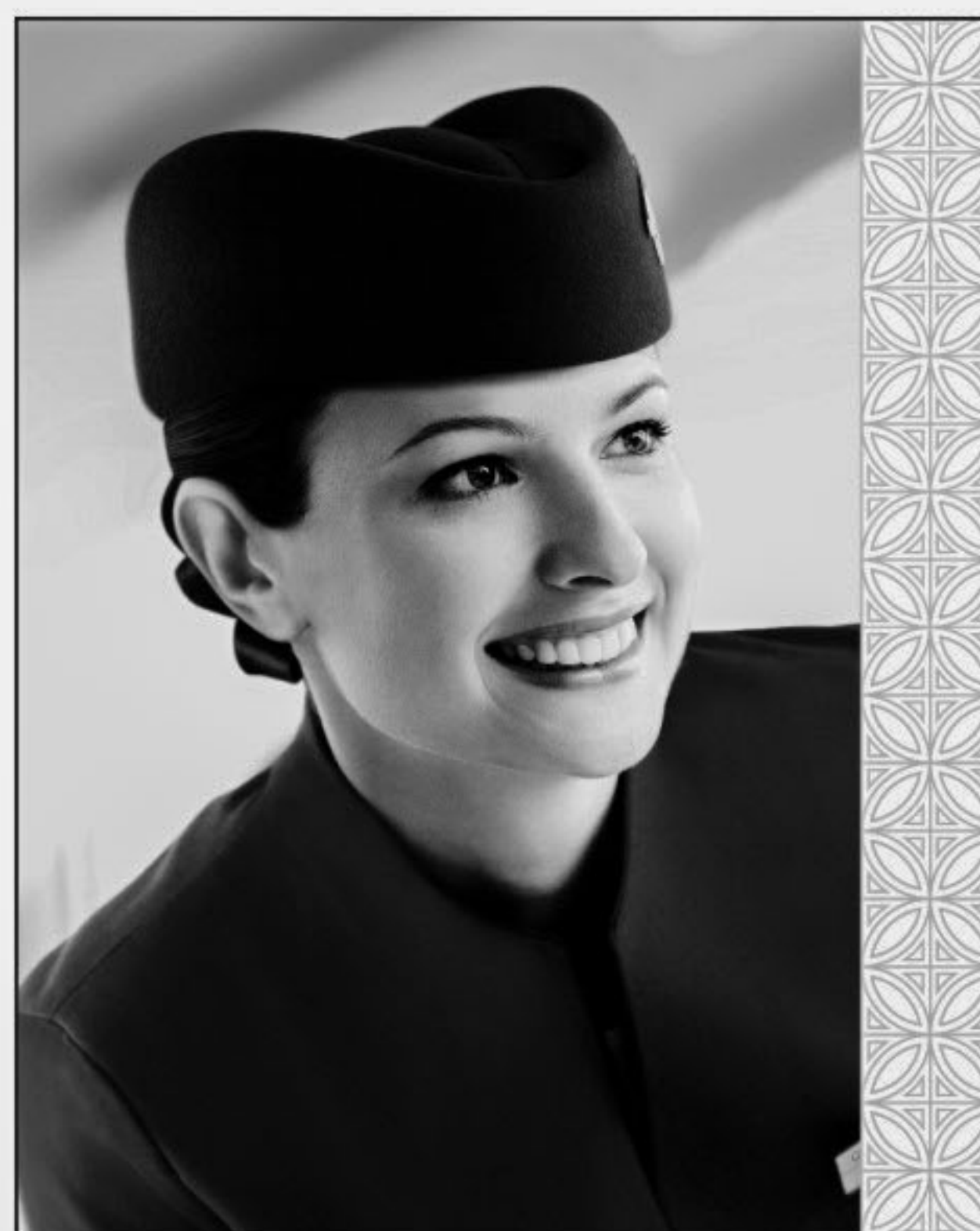
Election commission warns opposition off results plan

AFP, Kampala

Uganda's election commission warned the opposition not to go ahead with plans to publish its own results from today's polls, saying it unacceptable.

"Any attempt by individuals and organisations to assume such powers shall be a violation of the constitution, which is not acceptable," the organisation's head, Badru Kiggundu, told journalists yesterday.

Nearly 14 million Ugandans are registered to elect their MPs and their president in today's contest.



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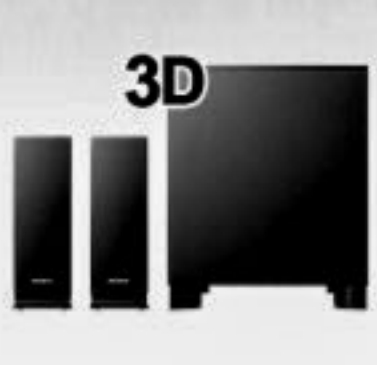
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