

# Gaddafi seeks UN, AU probe into unrest

## Libya refugee aid operation intensifies

AFP, Paris

Muammar Gaddafi said he wanted the United Nations or the African Union to probe the unrest rocking Libya and promised investigators free access, in an interview published yesterday.

The strongman, making his first such demand since the outbreak of violent protests against his rule and the ensuing bloody riposte, also warned that the unrest would spell disaster for Europe.

"First of all I would like that an investigatory commission of the United Nations or the African Union comes here to Libya," he told the French weekly *Le Journal du Dimanche*.

"We will let this panel work unhampered," he said, adding that he would be in favour of France "coordinating and leading" the probe body.

Shortly after the unrest broke out, Gaddafi's son Saif al-Islam, long seen as a possible successor, said he wanted an independent domestic probe into the unrest.

On February 22, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Navi Pillay also called for an independent international

investigation and an immediate halt to serious abuses committed by Libyan authorities. "Thousands of people from Libya will invade Europe," he said, "and there will be no-one to stop them."

Gaddafi repeated an oft-repeated charge that the revolt against his regime was being spearheaded by Al-Qaeda.

"There is an Islamic jihad facing you from the Mediterranean," he said. (Osama) Bin Laden will install himself in North Africa... You will have Bin Laden at your gates.

Meanwhile, Libya's neighbours Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt, mobilised to receive and repatriate a tide of refugees fleeing the unrest, with help from European countries and the United States.

At the northwestern border with Tunisia, refugees were reported to be waiting on the Libyan side in nearby towns, knowing that the border was jammed. Most Egyptians were reported to have been evacuated.

In Algeria, officials said they were reinforcing their reception capacity for refugees from Libya with a new facility at Ifri, about 2,000 kilometres southeast of Algiers.



A Libyan woman holds up an automatic rifle as she joins thousands of others as they celebrate victories over rebel forces claimed by Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Tripoli's Green Square yesterday.

## France hails rebels' 'national council'

AFP, Paris

France hailed yesterday the creation of a Libyan 'National Council' by the leaders of the armed revolt against Muammar Gaddafi, and said it supported its objectives.

In Paris, foreign minister spokesman Bernard Valero said in a statement: "France hails the creation of the Libyan National Council and pledges support for the principles that motivate it and the goals it has set itself."

Paris welcomes "the will for unity that led to the creation of this council and urges its leaders and the movements within it to continue to pursue this course," he added.

France condemns the use of force against Libyan civilians and "pays homage to the bravery of populations subjected to violence," said Valero.

## Thousands protest outside Bahrain govt HQ

### Yemen opposition pledges to intensify protests

AFP, Manama, Sanaa

Thousands of demonstrators massed yesterday at Manama's Al-Qudaibiya Palace, where Bahrain's cabinet meets, chanting slogans against the tiny but strategic Gulf state's government.

White-helmeted police with riot shields stood behind one gate, looking on as the flag-waving demonstrators chanted "Down Hamad! Down Hamad!", in reference to Bahrain's King Hamad.

"The people want to topple the regime!" the protesters roared, shaking their fists towards the light pink palace with its onion-shaped, pearl-coloured dome.

The Gulf archipelago of Bahrain, a strategic US ally and home of the US Fifth Fleet, has been shaken by demonstrations calling for political reform since February 14.

"We want the prime minister to go," said Alaa al-Nasr, a 24-year-old demonstrator.

"It's mainly against Sheikh Khalifa -- they want this government to go," agreed Nuwain, another protester, referring to the

prime minister.

Protesters also chanted for the 2002 constitution, which established an appointed upper house that has veto powers over the decisions of the elected chamber, to be scrapped.

Bahrain is ruled by the Sunni Muslim Khalifa family but has a Shiite Muslim majority which has been at the forefront of the protests.

Meanwhile, the Yemeni opposition has called for an escalation in anti-regime demonstrations to force President Ali Abdullah Saleh to leave after the embattled leader refused to quit, a spokesman said yesterday.

"We have called upon the people to widen demonstrations, and escalate the peaceful struggle in all regions until he (Saleh) is left with one option, that is to leave," said Mohammed Sabri, a leading member of the Common Forum opposition alliance.

The veteran leader, who has ruled since 1978, on Saturday dismissed an opposition proposal for a quick transition of power, saying he would serve out his current term, which expires in 2013.

## Egypt gets new foreign minister

AFP, Cairo

Egypt yesterday named its former ambassador to the United Nations, Nabil al-Arabi, as foreign minister in the latest move to purge the cabinet of members of toppled president Hosni Mubarak's regime.

"Nabil al-Arabi said he has accepted the foreign ministry portfolio during this critical time in the history of Egypt," the state-run MENA news agency reported.

Arabi replaces Ahmed Abul Gheit, who had been in the job since 2004.

Arabi's name was among 25 proposed by a coalition of youth movements behind the uprising that overthrew Mubarak, which also included Sharaf.

## Apology 'not enough'

### Says Karzai to Petraeus

AFP, Kabul

Afghan President Hamid Karzai yesterday told General David Petraeus, the commander of US-led troops in Afghanistan, that his apology after nine children were killed in a Nato air strike was "not enough".

"President Karzai said that David Petraeus's apology is not enough," a statement from the Afghan presidency said. Karzai made the comments during a cabinet meeting at which Petraeus was present.

"The civilian casualties are a main cause of worsening the relationships between Afghanistan and the US," the statement quoted Karzai as saying.

"The people are tired of these things and apologies and condemnations are not healing any pain."

"On behalf of the people of Afghanistan I want you to stop the killings of civilians."

The 9 children were killed on Tuesday in an air raid carried out by coalition helicopters in the eastern province of Kunar. Nato's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said the children were mistaken for rebels.

Civilian casualties -- especially involving children -- are a highly sensitive issue in war-torn Afghanistan, where a Taliban-led insurgency has raged since the Islamists were ousted from power by a US-led 2001 invasion.

Karzai says deaths of civilians in military operations turn people against his delicate pro-US administration. Civilian casualties have also been a key source of tension between Kabul and its Western backers, the US and Nato.

## NEWS IN brief

### 'Al-Qaeda' attack Kills 4 Yemeni soldiers

AFP, Sanaa

Suspected Al-Qaeda gunmen killed four soldiers in Yemen yesterday.

The new violence came as both London and Washington called on their citizens to consider leaving the impoverished Arabian peninsula country and warned against all but essential travel.

The elite Republican Guard soldiers were ambushed as they delivered food near Marib about 170 kilometres east of Sanaa, a local official told AFP. "The attack was similar to others by Al-Qaeda,"

### Jacques Chirac faces trial for graft

AFP, Paris

Jacques Chirac expects to go on trial Monday (today), the first former French president to face corruption charges, as alleged murky dealings in his office when he was mayor of Paris finally catch up with him.

Now 78, Chirac has become France's most popular politician since leaving office in 2007, despite being accused of using city funds to pay ghost worker salaries to political allies while he was mayor between 1977 to 1995.

If convicted, he faces up to 10 years in jail and a fine of 210,000 dollars on charges including embezz-

### Suspected rebel killed in Russian Caucasus

AFP, Moscow

Police shot dead a suspected rebel as he resisted detention in the troubled Russian Caucasus region of Kabardino-Balkaria, investigators said yesterday.

The dead man, identified as 39-year-old Murat Kardanov, was found to be carrying a pistol and a hand grenade, investigators said.

The shoot-out came the same day as Russian Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev visited the region and said that the security situation there

### Blast in south Iraq kills 6

AFP, Basra

A roadside bomb killed six people and wounded 12 aboard a bus in Iraq's southern port city of Basra yesterday, a provincial official said.

The blast targeted a passing US military convoy but instead struck the bus and wrecked it, the head of Basra provincial council's security committee, Ali al-Ghanimi, said.

Women and children were among the casualties of the 10:00am local time attack near a train station in the al-Maakal district of north Basra, Ghanimi said, but it was unclear how many of them died or were wounded.

Sergeant Sarah Snedden, a spokeswoman for US forces in Iraq, confirmed there had been "an incident in Basra" but did not provide further details.

### Japan's FM resigns over donation row

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's Foreign Minister Seiji Maehara announced his resignation yesterday over donations received from a foreign resident in violation of the country's laws.

Maehara -- who had been seen as a likely successor to embattled Prime Minister Naoto Kan -- said he would step down after admitting he received several hundred dollars from a restaurant owner of Korean ethnicity.

"I apologise to the Japanese people for stepping down after only six months and provoking distrust over a problem with my political funding, although I have sought to pursue a clean style of politics."

## Che's motorbike companion dies

AFP, Havana

Alberto Granado, the travel companion of leftist revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara on their famed 1950s motorcycle trip through South America, died Saturday in Cuba, official media reported.

"In today's morning hours in the capital, comrade Alberto Granado, the close friend of comandante Ernest Guevara, died at age 88," an announcer read on state television.

The Argentine biochemist had lived on the communist-ruled island since 1961, and "as a faithful friend of Cuba, he contributed to the training of professionals in medicine and genetics."

Granado was a doctor and Guevara a medical student when they set out on their eight-month odyssey. They left Buenos Aires in December 1951 and traveled through much of South

America, where they witnessed poverty of local communities and lack of access to medical care of native people.

The trip was immortalized in Brazilian director Walter Salles's 1994 film "The Motorcycle Diaries," which drew from books about the

voyage by both participants, and won an Oscar for best original song.

Asked in an interview a few years ago about his friendship and time on the road with "Che," Granado said: "We hit it off well."

"When there was talk about politics, disease and what not, we almost always shared a similar view," he added.

Granado's body was taken to a funeral home in Havana and, "according to his wishes," his remains will be cremated and the ashes spread across parts of Argentina, Cuba and Venezuela.

## Blast kills 12 civilians in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

A Taliban-style roadside bomb tore through a car in eastern Afghanistan's Paktika province yesterday, killing 12 civilians and wounding five others, the provincial administration said.

The dead included five children, two women and five men. They were on their way from neighbouring Pakistan, the Paktika provincial administration said in a statement.

Mohibullah Samim, the provincial governor, blamed the bombing on Taliban who are engaged in a campaign aimed at toppling the pro-US government of President Hamid Karzai.

The rebels loyal to Taliban and other militant groups often use improvised bombs in attacks against Afghan security forces and their Western military backers.

There are about 140,000 foreign military forces operating in Afghanistan under the command of the United States.

## India stave off Ireland

FROM PAGE 20 did not have any effect on his batting though, as he and Yuvraj completed the chase in a flurry of fours and sixes.

Earlier, part-time spinner Yuvraj bagged a maiden five-wicket haul as India dismissed Ireland for 207 despite skipper William Porterfield's half-century.

The left-arm spinner's victims included Kevin O'Brien (9), who hammered the fastest century in World Cup history in his team's upset victory over England, as Ireland lost their last eight wickets for 85 runs.

Yuvraj (5-31) gave the capacity crowd plenty to cheer about after left-arm pacesman Zaheer Khan had

rocked Ireland with two early wickets in the day-night match in Bangalore. Zaheer finished with 3-30.

Porterfield (75), dropped on nought by Pathan in the slips off Zaheer, went on to complete an impressive half-century, his fifth in one-dayers, before being caught in the covers off Yuvraj. He hit one six and six fours.

Ireland were on course to post a challenging total following a 113-run stand for the third wicket between Porterfield and Niall O'Brien (46) before they slipped from a healthy 122-2.

They suffered a crucial blow when well-set Niall was

run out after completing 1,000 runs in one-day internationals. His brother, Kevin, failed to repeat his heroics from the last match as he offered a return catch to Yuvraj.

There was no hint of the slide when Porterfield and Niall were steadying the innings after Zaheer's double strike.

The Irish pair never looked in trouble, comfortably gathering runs against both pace and spin. They initially relied on singles and twos before Porterfield swung leg-spinner Piyush Chawla over square-leg for a six.

Zaheer earlier struck with

the fourth delivery of the match when he bowled Paul Stirling for a duck before having Ed Joyce caught behind for four.

**SCOREBOARD**  
Scoreboard of the World Cup Group B match between India and Ireland at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore on Sunday:

**IRELAND**  
Porterfield c Harbhajan b Yuvraj 75  
Stirling b Zaheer 0  
Joyce c Dhoni b Zaheer 4  
N O'Brien run out 46  
White c Dhoni b Yuvraj 5  
K O'Brien c & b Yuvraj 9  
Cusack lbw b Yuvraj 24  
Mooney lbw b Yuvraj 5  
Johnston lbw b Patel 17

Dockrell c Dhoni b Zaheer 3  
Rankin not out 1  
Extras: (lb-4, nb-6, w-8) 18  
**Total:** (All out in 47.5 overs) 207  
**Fall of wickets:** 1-1, 2-9, 3-122, 4-129, 5-147, 6-160, 7-178, 8-184, 9-201

**Bowler** O M R W  
Zaheer 9 1 30 3  
Patel 4.5 0 25 1  
Pathan 7 1 32 0  
Harbhajan 9 1 29 0  
Chawla 8 0 56 0  
Yuvraj 10 0 31 5  
**INDIA**  
Sehwag c & b Johnston 5  
Tendulkar lbw b Dockrell 38  
Gambhir c Cusack  
b Johnston 10  
Kohli run out 34  
Yuvraj not out 50

Dhoni lbw b Dockrell 34  
Pathan not out 30  
Extras: (lb-4, w-5) 9  
**Total:** (For five wickets in 46 overs) 210  
**Did not bat:** Harbhajan, Chawla, Zaheer, Patel  
**Fall of wickets:** 1-9, 2-24, 3-87, 4-100, 5-167

**Bowler** O M R W  
Rankin 10 1 34 0  
Johnston 5 1 16 2  
Dockrell 10 0 49 2  
Mooney 2 0 18 0  
Stirling 10 0 45 0  
White 5 0 23 0  
Kevin O'Brien 1 0 3 0  
Cusack 3 0 18 0  
**Result:** India won by five wickets.  
**Man-of-the-match:** Yuvraj Singh.