

## Italy moves African migrants to mainland

BBC Online

Italy has transferred 1,716 North African migrants - most of them Tunisian - to a temporary camp site in its south-eastern Puglia region. The migrants arrived by ship on Thursday from Lampedusa, a tiny island packed with thousands fleeing poverty and unrest in Tunisia.

A "tent city" has been set up to accommodate them in Manduria, a town in the southern heel of Italy.

Overcrowding has created unhygienic conditions on Lampedusa, officials say.

Italy's Il Giornale newspaper says Rome is planning to repatriate 100 Tunisians every day.

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi will visit Tunisia on Monday to discuss the migrant influx with the authorities.

Unrest has continued to grip Tunisia since an uprising in January toppled President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

Italy says about 20,000 migrants have arrived on its shores - mostly on Lampedusa - in the past three months, aboard overcrowded boats from Tunisia and war-torn Libya.

Bad weather has delayed further transfers from Lampedusa, but Italy has several ships at anchor off the island, ready to receive migrants.

On a visit to the island on Wednesday, Mr Berlusconi said that in "48 to 60 hours Lampedusa will be inhabited only by Lampedusans".

Italy's Foreign Minister Franco Frattini has complained about the handling of the crisis by the EU and France.

"Europe has been absolutely inactive on this," he told SkyTG24 TV, adding that "very limited funds" had been forthcoming from Brussels.

## Major boost

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than octane, the plant is producing around 10,000 tonnes of petrol, 25,000 tonnes of kerosene, and 25,000 tonnes of diesel annually.

"By June-July next, we expect to expand our capacity by fifty percent," said Tofazzal Hossain, managing director of the company.

In addition to SGFL, the Eastern Refinery Company Ltd (ERL) is also producing 40,000 tonnes of octane annually by processing imported crude oil and thus saving foreign exchange.

The remaining one-third of octane demand is met by Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation's (BPC) direct import.

Energy Secretary Mesbahuddin Ahmed said, "In future we expect that we would not need to import octane." In addition to government run Sylhet Gas Field Company, and Eastern Refinery, several private entrepreneurs are also getting involved in octane production, he added.

SGFL uses a chemical "octane booster" with the condensate to convert it into petrol or octane. Presently, it has two months of stock of this chemical and the company is processing tender for purchasing future chemical supplies.

SGFL sources say the experience of the company in supplying the petroleum products to BPC has so far been smooth and it has been following a monthly chart.

Until this venture was launched, condensate was being used for producing Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) by a government plant in Kailashtila, and some private producers.

Since the mid 1990s, thieves realised the value of condensate and repeatedly bore holes in the gas pipelines in many places between Sylhet and Ashuganj to steal condensate.

This not only drained huge resources every year, but also caused occasional huge fire and supply disruption in the gas pipeline. The most recent such incident took place in Sylhet last week.

## Internal feuds

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similar role to establish the rule of law, justice and rights of lawyers.

"We will continue to demand judges' appointment to the High Court and Supreme Court based on competence, neutrality and honesty," he added.

A Samannay Parishad leader on condition of anonymity said an influential lawyer was unhappy with Abdul Baset Majumder, defeated candidate for the post of the SCBA president, as Baset was elected the vice chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council defeating him.

The influential lawyer and his supporters did not work for Samannay Parishad candidates in the SCBA election.

Ahead of the election, a number of senior pro-AL lawyers including some former SCBA presidents attended a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gano Bhaban. The influential lawyer did not attend that meeting either.

In the meeting, the PM directed the lawyers to work together but most of the senior lawyers did not communicate with the lawyer-voters and kept from campaigning for the pro-AL panel, said the lawyer.

He further said the attorney general's office moved to the SC against a number of HC orders, and obtained stay orders, which affected a number of general lawyers. As a result, the general lawyers became unhappy with the attorney general, who is also the policymaker of Samannay Parishad.

The lawyer said the government has decided to

construct a 20-storey structure on SCBA premises to solve the accommodation crisis of lawyers. However, the decision was not implemented due to the lack of initiative from the Attorney General's Office and no objection from the Chief Justice's Office.

The existing SCBA committee led by its president and secretary, however, illegally constructed some tin-shed rooms on the roof of the SCBA building to solve the accommodation crisis, the Samannay Parishad leaders said.

He said the selection of some candidates from Samannay Parishad was poor, as they were picked by a lawyer-cum-cabinet member, defying the prime minister's choice. Meanwhile, many lawyers who did not get facilities from the government were not spontaneous during the election and even some of them opposed the Samannay Parishad candidates indirectly. The intelligence had informed the prime minister about this prior to the election, he added.

The Samannay Parishad leader said the Oikya Parishad panel has properly exploited these dissatisfactions and acted seriously under direct leadership of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

He alleged that the Oikya Parishad panel, which had been leading the SCBA for the last one year, took money from a Jamaat-run institution and purchased 10 air coolers and an ambulance for SCBA. This might have encouraged the lawyers to vote for the panel.

## Egyptians rally in Cairo to 'save the revolution'

AFP, Cairo

Tens of thousands of Egyptians gathered in Cairo's Tahrir Square yesterday, issuing calls to "save the revolution" that ousted president Hosni Mubarak and to rid of the country of the old regime.

The Youth Coalition Movement, an umbrella grouping those who launched the uprising against Mubarak, called this week for a new demonstration to demand judgement of the corrupt and those who fired live rounds on protesters.

The young pro-democracy activists also want the country's institutions purged of members of the former ruling National Democratic Party as well as the restitution of "the millions stolen from the people".

Protesters chanted "The people want to purify the country" and "Marshal, Marshal, legitimacy stems from Tahrir."

They were referring to Field Marshal Hussein Tantawi, the head of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces who is de facto head of state since 18 days of popular protests forced Mubarak to resign on February 11.

Friday's weekly Muslim prayers in Tahrir Square were attended by 15,000 people, according to state news agency MENA, but in the afternoon twice as many protesters thronged the central Cairo plaza.

Egyptian courts have forbidden several former ministers, politicians and businessmen from leaving the country, as well as freezing their assets pending the findings of an enquiry into corruption and embezzlement.

## Protesters

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protesting the government's move to ban fatwa (religious edict), and demanding cancellation of the proposed Education Policy and National Women Development Policy, sources said.

The violence began at about 2:00pm when police obstructed an attempt of the organisation to bring out a procession from Jame Masjid minutes after Friday prayers, witnesses said.

The agitating activists also vandalised six vehicles and threw brickbats and stones at the law enforcers.

Police charged truncheons and lobbed tear gas canisters to disperse the demonstrators.

Assistant Commissioner of Kotwali Police Station Jedan Al Musa and Patrol Inspector Nazrul Islam suffered injuries during the clash.

Hundreds of people, who went to say their prayers, became trapped in the mosque as the chase and counter-chase between police and protesters lasted for about an hour.

Police detained five men of the organisation during the clash. Later, they showed two of them arrested releasing the others.

Abul Kalam Azad, officer-in-charge of the police station, said the activists first started throwing stones and bricks from Anderkilla Jame Mosque.

They also beat up a police man and tried to snatch his shotgun, police sources said.

A large number of madrasa students from Hathajari and Rangunia took part in the protest of the Islamist organisation.

Earlier around 12:30pm, police tried to prevent the madrasa students at Amanbazar from going to the rally in three vehicles.

The angry madrasa students put blockade on the Hathazari road for three hours, sources said.

They also vandalised at least three vehicles there at that time.

Patrol Inspector Nazrul said they are going to file a case against the activists.

Mufti Ahmed Safi, director of Hathazari Madrasa; and Mufti Ijharul Islam, chairman of a faction of Islami Oikya Jote, established 'Hefazatu Islami Bangladesh' in January 2010.

## Libyan rebels battle

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"We agree on a ceasefire on the condition that our brothers in the western cities have freedom of expression and also that the forces that are besieging the cities withdraw," Jalil told reporters in Benghazi after meeting Abdul Ilah Khatib, the UN special envoy to Libya.

Khatib said "We don't want announcements of a ceasefire, we want a real ceasefire." He added it must be "credible, effective and verifiable."

It was clear, however, that the rebels were intent on cleaning up their act -- keeping civilians and raw recruits away from the frontline.

After weeks of near-anarchy, the Benghazi-based leaders of the insurrection seem to be putting their house in order in an attempt to combat the better-organised forces loyal to Gaddafi.

At the western entrance to Ajdabiya, a 54-year-old reservist, Abdelkarim Mansouri, explained: "We're implementing a new tactic. We don't want any more kids to die. War is not a game. These are the orders of the military council."

"You must be organised if you want to chase Gaddafi. Our army is now in control of the fighting."

Since the start of the fighting, the rebel ranks have been a motley crew of undisciplined brawlers, held together only by the lone desert highway.

Hamad Dahda hopes such indiscipline is over. "Since the start of the fighting, we've made mistakes and paid a heavy price," said the 36-year old banker from Tobruk.

A French journalist who specialises in military matters insists he saw a column of 10 "Stalin's Organs" -- Russian-made BM 21 Grad multiple rocket-launchers -- heading for Brega on Thursday night.

Rebel commanders called for air strikes by coalition forces enforcing a UN-mandated no-fly zone over Libya but the US military's top officer said bad weather was hampering the air campaign.

"The biggest problem the last three or four days has been weather," Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told senators in Washington, as correspondents at the front reported light cloud cover.

"We have not been able to see through the weather or get through the weather to be able to do this kind of identification" of targets, Mullen said.

Without air support, the ill-equipped rebels were on Wednesday pushed back 200 kilometres from the key oil hub Ras Lanuf all the way east of Brega, where they regrouped on

Thursday for the counter-offensive.

As the rebels called for heavy armaments to match the superior firepower of Gaddafi's army, US Defence Secretary Robert Gates asserted they needed training more than guns but suggested other nations do that job.

His French counterpart Gerard Longuet said providing weapons was not part of the UN mandate while Nato chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen too ruled out such a move.

"We are there to protect the Libyan people, not to arm people," Rasmussen told reporters.

Grilled by US lawmakers, Gates described the rebels as a "disparate," improvised force that had a supply of small arms seized at regime depots but sorely lacked military leadership.

"What they really need is training, command and control and some coherent organisation," the Pentagon chief told the House Armed Services Committee in Washington.

He said the military mission did not call for deposing Gaddafi and suggested ultimately it would be economic and political pressure and Libya's people -- not coalition air strikes -- that would topple him.

Earlier on Thursday, International Crimes Tribunal granted conditional bail to him. The three-judge panel, headed by Justice Nizamul Huq, in its order said the accused will have to stay at his son's residence and must not move from there without its permission.

The court also ordered Alim, a member of late president Ziaur Rahman's cabinet, to surrender his passport to the registrar of the tribunal.

The accused was asked to submit a bail bond of Tk 1 lakh and also was prohibited from contacting any political leader, party and the victims and witnesses of war crimes.

He will have to provide the mobile phone number to the court if he wishes to use any, mentioned the tribunal adding, Alim must not make any statement to the print or electronic media and must co-operate with the investigation agency.

The bail order will be cancelled instantly if he violates any of the conditions, stated the order. The tribunal on March 28 asked police to keep him in Dhaka Central Jail till Thursday.

The order came in response to a petition filed by tribunal prosecutors seeking permission to keep Alim detained till completion of the probe into allegations made against him.

Law enforcers picked him up from his Joypurhat residence on March 27 after the court issued an arrest warrant.

chanting or shouting.

"There were pools of blood on the streets. You will not find anything now. It's been hosed down and cleaned by the fire trucks," said one Tripoli resident.

## BNP-backed

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From npage alliance government, won the post of treasurer.

Asadullah and AHM Kamruzzaman Mamun, of Oikya Parishad, were elected to vice-president and assistant secretary posts.

ASM Muktar Kabir Khan, Marzina Raihan (Madina), Begum Delwara Habib, ABM Rafiqul Haque Talukdar Raja, Shawkat Ara Begum Dulali and Shahidul Islam from the BNP backed panel were elected executive members.

From the AL-backed panel, AKM Jaglul Hayder Afric was elected vice-president, SM Masud Hossain Dolon assistant secretary and Jesmin Akter Keya executive member.

Bodruddoza Badal got 1219 votes, the highest, in the elections.

## War crimes

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Alim, received him. He was driven in a car to Faisal's Banani residence in compliance with a court order.

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## Libya air raid 'killed civilians'

BBC ONLINE

Seven civilians died and 25 were hurt in a coalition air strike on a pro-Gaddafi convoy in eastern Libya, a doctor there has told the BBC.

Dr Suleiman Refardi said Wednesday's raid happened in the village of Zawia el Argobe, 15km (9 miles) from Brega.

The strike hit a truck carrying ammunition, and the resulting explosion destroyed two nearby homes.

All the dead were between the ages of 12 and 20, Dr Refardi said. Nato says it is investigating the claim.

The news comes as opposition leader Mustafa Abdul Jalil said the rebels would agree to a ceasefire if Col Muammar Gaddafi's troops withdrew from cities.

"We agree on a ceasefire on the condition that our brothers in the western cities have freedom of expression and also that the forces that are besieging the cities withdraw," he told a news conference in the eastern rebel stronghold of Benghazi.

## 5 injured

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around 9:30pm four people came there on two motor-bikes and hurled two bombs at the store, said witnesses.

Besides the councillors, three employees of the shop - Nurul Islam, Nayan and Milon - sustained injuries in the attack.

The injured were taken to Meherpur General Hospital where doctors referred Mizanur and Nayan to Dhaka Medical College Hospital since their condition was critical.

The police rushed to the spot and recovered splinters of the bombs.

Mizanur is also general secretary of municipality unit Jubo League. The police picked up general secretary of district unit Jubo League Abdullah Al Mamun Bipul soon after the incident.

The police, however, could not ascertain the reason behind the incident.

## Hizbut Tawhid

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holding a secret meeting, Maj Anwar Ali, commanding officer of Railway Colony Camp, told The Daily Star.

The arrestees are Mozaffar Hossain Lala, 65, Mizanur Rahman Mithu, 28, Razon Ali, 21, Sharif Hossain, 35, Moniruzzaman Milon, 25, Manik Hossain, 29, Nabizul Islam, 35, Ashraf Ali, 24, Moriam Khatun, 24, and Mina Begum, 25.

Rab officials said all the arrestees confessed to their involvement with the outfit and claimed that their outfit is not banned.

## Khaleda

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fronts and associate bodies to submit reports outlining the present situation in their respective fields.

Following the direction, Jatiyatabadi Tanti Dal has submitted a report on the country's handloom industry.

Other associate organisations including Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, Krishok Dal and Chhatra Dal are now working to prepare their reports.

Party leaders said these reports will be taken into consideration while chalking out the anti-government programmes.

"The initiative has been taken to know the actual situation of the important sectors in the country. Hundreds of handloom industries were shut due to the non-cooperation of the government," a BNP leader said wishing anonymity.

The last meeting of the party's standing committee in October last year decided that the BNP chief will also visit around 20 districts to attend public meetings and sit with the party leaders to ensure their participation in the anti-government programmes after the Cricket World Cup.

The BNP chief's advisory council recently sat to lay down a strategy to strengthen the party before going for a tougher movement against the government.

## Glass tower gets

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tower in the second phase.

But the succeeding BNP government cut back on both the project area and the budget. An expert team formed at that time suggested reducing the tower's height and the use of glass.

The BNP government later postponed the project for three years on grounds of anomaly and corruption, and finally abandoned it.

On assumption of power, the present AL-led government approved Tk 181 crore for the project that include Tk 135 crore for the 256 square feet glass tower.

Shahbuddin Ahmed, project manager and executive engineer of the Public Works Department, said they asked the contractor to create a model of the tower by April.

But the tower's construction depends on the success of a viability test of its ten-foot model, said experts involved in the project.

constructing the tower, if the model gets through the viability tests involving weather pattern, the strength of glass structure and maintenance, said Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, who headed an expert committee on the project. Prof Reza with five others resigned on January 30 following a remark by the state minister for liberation war affairs.

Prof Syed Fakrul Ameen, member of a technical sub-committee on the project, said the technique for fixing glass on steel frames and refraction of light on glass was not clearly mentioned in the drawing.

"We will examine it along with the model," he said.

The task of constructing the tower has been awarded to a consortium of a Greek firm Novum and National Development Engineers Ltd, a local firm.

It is surely a tough task to build a glass tower of that height, said a top official of

the Department of Architecture, wishing anonymity.

The High Court in 2009 directed the government to identify and conserve historic sites and remove any obstacles for general public to accessing those places.

But a police control room, Shahbagh Police Station, Shishu Park and flower shops still stand in the project area.

The sites where Bangabandhu gave the speech and the Pakistani forces surrendered fall inside the Shishu Park enclosure, said Prof Muntasir Mamun, former member of the expert committee.

Shikha Chirantan (eternal flame) at the complex was built in 1997 and inaugurated in presence of three world leaders -- South African leader Nelson Mandela, Turkish politician Süleyman Demirel and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.