

Nato strikes 8 Gaddafi warships in ports

AFP, Tripoli

Nato said yesterday its warplanes hit eight vessels of Moamer Gaddafi's navy, after US President Barack Obama predicted the veteran Libyan strongman would "inevitably" leave or be forced from power.

The authorities in Tripoli slammed the US president's comments as "delusional" while strongly denying reports that Gaddafi's wife and daughter had fled to Tunisia and that Oil Minister Shukri Ghanem had defected.

"Nato and coalition air assets continued their precision air strikes against pro-Gaddafi regime forces overnight with a coordinated strike against pro-Gaddafi forces in the ports of Tripoli, Al-Khums and Sirte," the Western alliance said.

"Overnight, Nato aircraft hit pro-Gaddafi warships, striking eight vessels," it added.

"Given the escalating use of naval assets, Nato had no choice but to take decisive action to protect the civilian population of Libya and Nato forces at sea," said Rear Admiral Russell Harding, deputy head of the

Nato-led air war.

Fresh explosions were heard in the Libyan capital early yesterday, hours after the air strikes targeted the city's port, with a ship still ablaze from the raid.

Harding insisted that all of the targets hit were military but Libyan government spokesman Mussa Ibrahim accused the Western alliance of seeking to scare international shipping firms into steering clear of government-held ports.

"Whatever the ship that has been hit, it is clearly a message sent by Nato to the international maritime companies not to send any more vessels to Libya," Ibrahim told reporters in Tripoli.

British aircraft targeted Al-Khums, the nearest naval base under the control of Gaddafi forces to the rebel-held city of Misrata, Britain's defence staff spokesman Major General John Lorimer said.

"The destruction last night of the facility and a significant stockpile of the boats will reduce the regime's ability to sustain such tactics," he added.



Pakistan's Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani (L) shakes hands with China's President Hu Jintao during a meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Jamaat to play safe

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Talking to The Daily Star, a top IOJ leader admitted that several Jamaat leaders are giving them full support for the movement, especially on the women development policy issue. He, however, declined to elaborate further in this regard.

Since its inception in 1979, Jamaat-e-Islami has never undergone such a disaster as it happened after the arrests of its top leaders, including the party's Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami and Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, on charge of crime against humanity, said party leaders.

A number of Jamaat leaders said they would follow the go-slow policy for one or two more years before waging any movement against the government.

"We will toughen our movement by the last or second-last years of the government's tenure as this is the trend of our country's politics," said ATM Azharul Islam, acting secretary general of Jamaat, adding,

"We are not sitting idle as we are observing programmes to press home the demand for releasing our arrested leaders.

A number of Jamaat leaders echoed Azharul saying

that fearing another blow from the government and considering the party's organising strength they are likely to wait another year or two before going tough on the government.

Meanwhile, they would focus on reviving the party's image.

Jamaat's recent anti-government activities are evolving around issuing of statements, discussions and small scale rallies, most of which are organised in front of the its party office and auditorium.

The party's top and mid-level leaders were not seen active in the streets during the last three hartals on June

27 and November 30 in 2010 and April 4 this year called by its alliance partners BNP and IOJ.

Instead, they issued releases supporting the hartals and criticised the government for "evicting" Khaleda Zia from cantonment house, its failure in controlling price hike of essentials and formulating "anti-Islam" women development policy.

Meanwhile, BNP is avoiding its ally Jamaat and following go-alone policy in waging anti-government movement due to the debacle in the Islamist party and arrest of its top leaders.

TELECOM SCANDAL Indian MP held

APP, New Delhi

An Indian MP and daughter of a political kingmaker yesterday became the latest powerful figure to be remanded custody over a telecom scandal that may have cost the country up to \$39 billion.

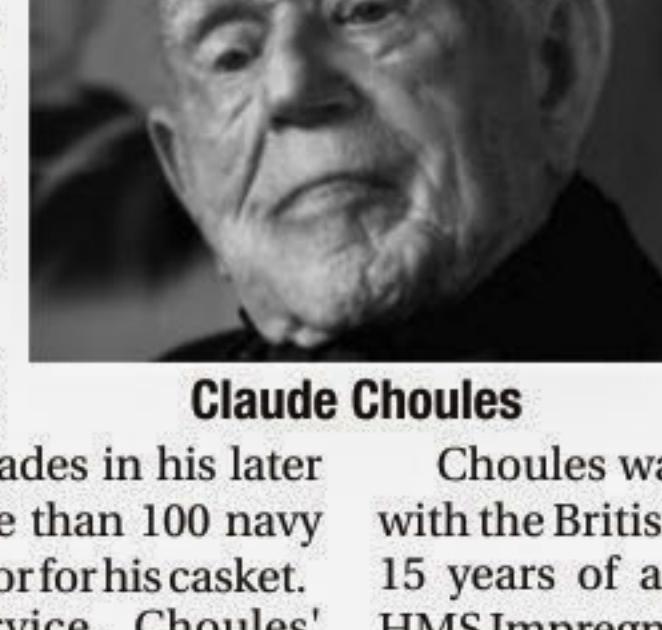
A New Delhi court ordered that Kanimozi, who uses one name, "be taken into custody forthwith" in connection with the scandal, after her bail application was rejected.

The daughter of M. Karunanidhi -- supremo of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) regional party of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu -- appeared stunned at the order and broke down in tears, local media reported.

Police have accused her of accepting bribes totalling two billion rupees (\$45 million) channelled through a television station she partly owns.

Last WWI veteran laid to rest in funeral

REUTERS, Fremantle, Australia



Claude Choules

"Now is the time not to be sad, but to celebrate. It was a very long life and a very wonderful life," he said.

Choules, nicknamed "Chuckles" by his comrades, was the last of more than 70 million military personnel who served during World War One, known as the Great War and the war that was supposed to end all wars.

Choules was born in 1901 and signed up with the British Navy for the Great War at just 15 years of age, serving first onboard the HMS Impregnable.

He joined the battleship HMS Revenge in 1917 and witnessed the surrender of the German Fleet near Firth of Forth in Scotland in 1918.

After the war, he moved to Perth and joined the Australian Navy, working as a demolition officer at the Fremantle Harbor during World War Two, making him the last veteran who served in both World Wars.

The only other surviving World War I veteran is believed to be Britain's Florence Green, also 110, who served with the Royal Air Force in a non-combat role.

In 2009, Choules published a book about his life, *The Last of the Last*.

Community clinics

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diseases, distribution of vitamin A, collection of sputum for tuberculosis test and providing family planning services and other services related to mother and child health.

However, before its tenure ended in 2001, the AL government could set up only several thousand of those, but were all kept unutilised by the successive BNP-led four-party government.

Assuming office in 2009, the AL government relaunched the project.

So far, 10,500 clinics have been set up while construction of the rest 3,000 is underway.

At present, the clinics are run by the staff of the health and family welfare ministries. They are working in the clinics in addition to their assigned duties.

Under the situation, the clinics cannot function properly for lack of permanent manpower. Even drugs supplied by the government cannot be properly distributed among the patients.

US drone strike kills four in Pakistan

APP, Miranshah, Pakistan

A US drone strike destroyed a vehicle in Pakistan's Taliban-infested North Waziristan district on the Afghan border yesterday, killing four suspected militants, local officials said.

The two missiles struck the Tappi area, 10 kilometres (six miles) east of Miranshah, the main town of North Waziristan, where US officials want Pakistan to launch an offensive against networks fighting in neighbouring Afghanistan.

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Pakistan PM meets China's Hu to end visit

AFP, Beijing

Chinese President Hu Jintao yesterday saluted Pakistan's prime minister as an "old friend" of Beijing, extending more warm words to Islamabad as it faces US pressure after Osama bin Laden's killing.

Yousuf Raza Gilani has spent much of his visit to China lauding Pakistan's close ties with Beijing, as pressure mounts following the raid that led to bin Laden's death and US lawmakers demand a review of aid to Islamabad.

"Our all-weather friendship and strategic cooperative partnership has stood the test of time and the changes in the international and regional situation," Gilani said in a speech at Peking University on Thursday.

"We have stood by each other at all times and under all circumstances," he said.

On yesterday, before their talks at the Great Hall of the People, Hu said Gilani's visit would "certainly give a strong boost to the good neighbourly friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation" between the two countries.

Islamabad has highlighted that relationship in the wake of the May 2 killing of the al-Qaeda leader by US special forces on Pakistani soil -- an operation that has thrown US-Pakistan ties into turmoil.

US Senator John Kerry and US special envoy Marc Grossman were both in Islamabad this week to try to stem the damage done to relations that are key to a decade-long US-led fight to end the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan.

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