

Gaddafi conditionally ready to step down

Nato sees leading UN role in future Libya

AFP, Moscow

Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi is ready to cede power in exchange for security guarantees, an unnamed senior Russian official was quoted as saying in Tuesday's edition of the Kommersant business daily.

The press report came one day after Nato chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen discussed Libya in Russia with President Dmitry Medvedev.

"The colonel is sending signals that he is ready to cede power in exchange for security guarantees," the respected business daily quoted the unnamed Russian official as saying.

The Russian source added that France appeared the country most willing to play a part by unfreezing some of the Gaddafi family's accounts and promising to help him avoid trial at the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

The Russian official's comments came one day after Nato chiefs and Medvedev clashed over Libya during a scheduled sum-

mit in the Black Sea resort town of Sochi.

Meanwhile, Nato chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen said yesterday that the alliance want the United Nations assume the leading role in Libya's transition to democracy once Gaddafi leaves power.

"It is necessary to ensure a transition to democracy. I would like to stress that we do not foresee a leading Nato role in a post-Gaddafi period," he told reporters in Russia's second city.

"We want the United Nations to take the lead in this effort, to assist the Libyan people in their transition to democracy," Rasmussen said.

His comments came as the Libyan rebels prepared for a push into territories around Gaddafi's stronghold capital Tripoli.

A top official for the rebels' National Transitional Council said on Monday that the opposition had rejected a brief offer for Gaddafi to step down and remain in internal exile in Libya.



Indian students clash with police in front of the state assembly in Hyderabad yesterday. Police arrested more than two dozen state lawmakers in south Indian state of Andhra Pradesh and tear gassed students who were demonstrating in support of a plan to create a new state, namely Telangana.

Indian court bans anti-Maoist militia

AFP, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court yesterday ordered the central state of Chhattisgarh to disband a militia force founded to combat Maoist guerrillas who control large areas of the country.

Salwa Judum, or Peace March, was set up in 2005 as a civil society movement to campaign against left-wing violence in Chhattisgarh, but some members were later armed by state authorities.

Chhattisgarh administrators were criticised for encouraging vigilantes to operate outside the law, after they also recruited about 3,000 so-called special police officers to take on the rebels.

They said the Salwa Judum militia violated the Indian constitution and that such groups should be disbanded and not given further funding.

JOURNALIST KILLING US finds Pak ISI connection

AFP, Washington

US officials believe Pakistan's spy agency was behind the killing of a Pakistani journalist who reported that Islamist militants had infiltrated the military, the New York Times reported Monday.

The newspaper reported Pakistan's ISI agency ordered the killing of Saleem Shahzad, who worked for an Italian news agency and a Hong Kong-registered news site, to muzzle criticism.

It quoted a senior official as saying: "Every indication is that this was a deliberate, targeted killing that was most likely meant to send shock waves through Pakistan's journalist community and civil society."

NEWS IN brief

Yemen arrests head of Shia opposition party

AFP, Sanaa

Yemeni authorities arrested the head of a Shiite opposition party, Hassan Zaid, at Sanaa airport as he was headed for the Saudi city of Jeddah, his son said.

Mohammed Hassan Zaid, son of the arrested leader, said the whereabouts of his father, leader of the party Al-Haq, remained unknown although "every-

Belarus convicts 140 over protests

AFP, Minsk

Belarus has convicted at least 140 people of involvement in protests against the regime of President Alexander Lukashenko that were violently broken up by police, rights groups said yesterday.

The protesters were handed sentences of between two and 15 days while others escaped jail but received fines of up to a million Belarussian rubles (\$200).

Israeli shelling kills 2 in Gaza

AFP, Gaza City

Israeli shelling killed two Palestinians and wounded another in the central Gaza Strip yesterday, Palestinian medics said.

"Two people were killed and one was injured in an artillery shelling east of the Al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip," an emergency services spokesman told AFP, adding the incident occurred near the border fence with Israel.

Only Quran recited

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given the same status and rights, recitation only from the holy Quran undermines and negates the new constitutional provision."

He said the parliament, which brought the new changes to the constitution, should not act in violation of this provision.

The 15th amendment came into effect on Sunday with President Zillur Rahman signing the bill into law.

A number of senior officials of the parliament secretariat said after the latest amendment to the constitution, followers of other religions may demand that recitations be done from

their holy books as well, at the beginning of the parliament's sittings.

Speaker Abdul Hamid said the constitution was amended just a few days ago.

"It will take some time to take preparations to begin recitations from other holy books. We will have to appoint some people who will recite from the Geeta and Tripitok," said Hamid, who presided over the sitting at the beginning of yesterday's proceedings.

The speaker said the current session might be prorogued this week after having two more sittings. "So, recitations from other holy books may begin from next session," he added.

ADB boost for primary

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assessment system that will result in a more effective, relevant and child-friendly learning environment.

To reduce current access and participation gaps, targeted assistance will be given to disadvantaged groups such as tribal children, ethnic minorities and children living with disabilities.

The project will also expand support for early learning by providing funds for one year of pre-primary education and for non-formal and second chance primary schooling.

ADB's loan from its concessional Asian Development Fund has a 32-year term, including a grace period of eight years, with an interest charge of 1%, rising to 1.5% for the balance of the term.

The ADB's latest initiative is a part of earlier reforms

that have helped Bangladesh, which has one of the world's largest primary school systems, increase net enrolment to almost 96% in 2010 and to achieve gender parity.

The total project cost for improvement of primary education system is \$8.3 billion with the government contributing \$7.3 billion equivalent.

The nine development partners ADB, World Bank, EU, the UK's Department for International Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Canadian International Development Agency, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Australian Agency for International Development, and the United Nations Children's Fund are providing \$1.05 billion in assistance.

Forces kill 10 in Syrian protest city

AFP, Damascus

Security forces killed at least ten people yesterday in Hama as residents mobilised to keep the Syrian army out of the flashpoint city at the hub of an anti-regime revolt, activists said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, quoting medical sources, said the casualty toll had risen to ten dead and many wounded in the city, which has been surrounded by the military.

"Heavy gunfire has been heard in several districts" of Hama, it said.

The group said the body of one of those killed was dumped in the Orontes river of Hama, which is famous for its ancient watermills.

Embattled Strauss-Kahn to face new sex allegation

US charges against ex-IMF chief to be dropped

AGENCIES

French writer Tristane Banon is to file a complaint for attempted rape against former IMF chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn, her lawyer said on Monday.

Banon accuses Strauss-Kahn of trying to assault her as she tried to interview him in a Paris flat in 2003.

Strauss-Kahn said he would sue Ms Banon for making false statements.

He was recently freed from house arrest in New York in a separate alleged case. He denies sexually assaulting a hotel maid in the city on 14 May.

Meanwhile, prosecutors of the New York sex assault case are going to drop all sex assault charges against the former IMF chief in the coming weeks because of doubts about his accuser's credibility, the New York Post reported



Strauss-Kahn Tristane Banon

yesterday.

"We all know this case is not sustainable," the newspaper quoted a top investigator in the case as saying.

However, the new sexual assault allegations in France are unlikely to affect his New York trial, experts have opined.

It was shortly after Strauss-Kahn was arrested in New York that Banon came forward to say that he had tried to

assault her.

She did not go to the police at the time, but did raise the allegation in a TV chat show in 2007, when Strauss-Kahn's name was bleeped out.

Banon's lawyer, David Koubbi, said on Monday that she had instructed him "to file a formal criminal complaint for attempted rape" against Mr Strauss-Kahn. He said the complaint would be filed yesterday to a Paris prosecutor.

He said the alleged incident took place in February 2003, and not in 2002 as previously reported.

Banon, 32, has claimed that during the interview, Strauss-Kahn said he would only speak to her if she held his hand.

According to her version of events, she eventually had to fight him off as they wrestled on the floor and he undid her bra and pulled open her jeans.

China probes Conoco-Phillips over oil spill

AFP, Beijing

China said yesterday it was investigating US oil giant ConocoPhillips' role in a spill off its eastern coast that authorities kept hidden from the public for nearly a month.

ConocoPhillips's China unit in a partnership with the state-owned China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) operates the oil field in Bohai Bay, where the spill was detected on June 4 but only made public on Friday.

"The legal and supervisory maritime departments have opened a case on this oil spill and placed ConocoPhillips under investigation," the State Oceanic Administration said in a statement, noting that evidence was being collected.

An area measuring 840 square kilometres (336 square miles) had been badly polluted due to the spill, the statement said.

Yesterday at the government's first news conference about the spill, Li Xiaoming, head of the ocean administration's Marine Environmental Protection Division, said the slick was discovered on June 4, the state-run China News Agency reported.

Li said oil had seriously contaminated ocean waters, with the quality of water in the spill area now at the worst level on the administration's four-grade pollution scale.

ConocoPhillips, which operates the Penglai 19-3 oil field where the leak originated, had been ordered to halt operations on June 13, Li said.

The spill has been controlled, but "small leaking points" continued to discharge oil into the ocean, Li said. The total amount of oil spilled is still being calculated, he added.

Dead seaweed and rotting fish could be seen in waters around Nanhuangcheng Island in Shandong province near the site of an oil spill, the China Daily said.

Air strikes kill 10 in Yemen

AFP, Aden

Four civilians and six gunmen were killed in a series of air raids yesterday that targeted extremists who have taken control of most of Yemen's southern city of Zinjibar, sources told AFP.

Yemen's military aircraft carried out several strikes yesterday against positions held by Islamists linked to al-Qaeda in Zinjibar and its outskirts, an official in Jaar said.

Three of the civilians were killed when an air strike hit the home of a top Yemeni official on the outskirts of Zinjibar, an official in Jaar Mohsen Saeed told AFP.

A medical official said one civilian was killed and three others were wounded in the raids on Zinjibar.

Meanwhile, four fighters were killed in an air raid that targeted them in the nearby town of Jaar, a source on the ground in the town said.

The official in Jaar said another raid on the road linking Jaar to Zinjibar killed two other militants.

Suicide blasts kill 35 in Iraq

AFP, Baghdad

Twin suicide attacks ripped through the city of Taji north of Baghdad yesterday, killing at least 35 people, officials said, after Iraq suffered its deadliest month so far this year in June.

"Thirty-five people were killed and 28 wounded when a car bomb and an improvised bomb exploded simultaneously outside a government office where national identification cards are issued, and the provincial council offices," the official said.

A police officer in Taji said that one suicide bomber in a car and a second with an explosives belt had caused the carnage.

"A car bomb exploded at the entrance of the identity-cards office, which is next to the provincial council building.

"When people gathered, a suicide bomber in their midst exploded his belt," he said.

He added that the mayor of Taji, security officials from the city and tribal leaders were in a meeting at the provincial council offices when the bombers struck. The blasts struck at 12 noon.

He also said that at least five people were killed by a rocket strike on the grounds of Baghdad's Al-Rasheed hotel late on Monday.

The violence came after June saw the highest monthly death toll for Iraqis so far this year. A total of 271 were killed in attacks, according to government figures.

The spike in violence comes as US officials have repeatedly asked Baghdad if it wants some troops to stay beyond the scheduled pullout deadline.

SOUTH CHINA SEA ROW Philippine leader to visit China

AFP, Manila

Philippine President Benigno Aquino said yesterday he would go ahead with a trip to China this year despite heightened tensions over territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Aquino said that during his visit he would focus on trying to resolve disputes over the strategic waters.

The Philippine foreign minister said last week he would travel to China to help prepare for the president's visit, for which a date has not yet been set.

The Philippines and China, along with Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan, all claim all or part of the South China Sea, believed to sit on vast mineral resources.

BOSNIA GENOCIDE Dutch blamed for Srebrenica deaths

BBC ONLINE

A court in the Netherlands ruled the Dutch state responsible yesterday for the deaths of three Bosnian Muslims in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre.

The Dutch were in charge of the UN "safe area" when Bosnian Serb forces overran it in 1995 and killed 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys.

The court in The Hague ruled that the Dutch troops should not have handed the three men over to Bosnian Serb forces.

The case centred on three Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) who were working for the Dutch force, Dutchbat, during the 1992-1995 Bosnian war and were among thousands who took shelter in the UN compound as Bosnian Serb forces commanded by Gen Ratko Mladic overran Srebrenica on 11 July 1995.

Two days later, Dutch peacekeepers forced the Bosniaks out of the compound.

The ruling was unexpected, and may open the way for other compensation claims.

The appeals court's judges have ordered the government to pay compensation to the dead men's relatives in a ruling that could have implications for similar cases against the Dutch state, says the BBC's Lauren Comiteau at the court.

A court had previously ruled in 2008 that the Dutch state was not responsible for the deaths of Bosnian.



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