

Libyan fighters make Sirte gains after bitter fighting

NTC forces say they control Bani Walid airport

AGENCIES

Fighters loyal to Libya's interim government have taken the university area of Sirte, one of the strong points of the city's Gaddafi loyalists. Hundreds of fighters could be seen entering the campus after what a National Transitional Council commander called "difficult" fighting. NTC forces launched an offensive on Friday against Sirte, one of the last cities held by pro-Gaddafi forces. They came up against heavy weapons including tanks and artillery. NTC forces said yesterday they took control of the airport in Bani Walid, one of the last two bastions of fighters loyal to Gaddafi. "Our forces have taken control of the airport of Bani Walid," located in the desert town's southwest, Yunes Mussa, commander of the National Transitional Council forces in the

region, told AFP. The university area, along with the Ouagadougou conference centre and an apartment complex, saw particularly fierce resistance to the advance into Col Muammar Gaddafi's home city, reports BBC. The sprawling conference centre is also reported to have fallen to the NTC. Thousands of civilians are said to remain trapped in the city, many of them fearful of retaliation by NTC forces. Once Sirte falls, the NTC say they will declare national liberation, even if Col Gaddafi remains on the run. "We have taken the university... we have liberated the area from Gaddafi's dogs," NTC commander Nasser Zamud said yesterday. "The fighting has been difficult. There were a lot of snipers." Video showed one injured fighter at the campus, hobbling after his com-

rades with a crutch in one hand and a Kalashnikov assault rifle in the other. On Friday, NTC forces had launched what they called a final assault on Sirte, pushing pro-Gaddafi fighters back from their positions and towards the city centre. But on Saturday, their rapid advance slowed down as they fought street by street to take control of the city, Libya's symbolic second capital under Gaddafi. By the end of the day, they had taken control of a key boulevard which connects the Ouagadougou centre to the city centre. Civilians continued to leave Sirte on foot and by car over the weekend. NTC forces stopped and searched them at checkpoints. On Thursday, Col Gaddafi delivered an audio message urging Libyans to take to the streets "in their millions" to resist the interim leaders.



Forces of Libya's new regime smack a photograph of Gaddafi they take over the fortress-like Ouagadougou conference centre, constructed to host pan-African summits, in former strongman Gaddafi's hometown of Sirte from his diehards yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN brief

Mubarak party members demand right to run in polls

AFP, Cairo

Members of Egypt's former ruling party have demanded to be allowed to run in upcoming elections, as officials mull a draft law that could see them banished from politics for a decade. The plea came during a rally organised on Saturday evening by members of the now dissolved National Democratic Party -- which was headed by ousted President Hosni Mubarak -- in the Nile Delta province of Sharqiya, participants told AFP. "The honourable January 25 revolution... cannot be owned, it belongs to all the Egyptian people," former minister of social solidarity, Ali Mosehli, told the 5,000-strong crowd. "The revolution aimed to bring about freedom, dignity, democracy and social justice, not to promote some parties and exclude others, or restore dictatorship in any of its forms," Mosehli said.

Afghan MP 'critical' on eighth day of hunger strike

AFP, Kabul

An Afghan woman MP was in a critical condition yesterday, after entering the eighth day of a rare hunger strike to protest against her expulsion from parliament over alleged vote fraud. Semin Barakzai, a 30-year-old mother of three and one of nine MPs expelled from the national assembly over vote rigging claims, has refused to eat until she is reinstated to the parliamentary seat she claims to have won in 2010 polls. Her persistence comes one day after dozens of lawmakers returned to the lower house of parliament, ending a boycott over the disqualifications after a year of bitter dispute over the polls.

Fukushima children receive thyroid tests

BBC ONLINE

Japanese health workers have begun checking more than 300,000 children living near the Fukushima nuclear plant for thyroid abnormalities. Parents have expressed concern about a link between thyroid abnormalities and radiation, citing reports of a rise after Chernobyl in 1986. The Fukushima plant was crippled by the earthquake and tsunami in March which killed 20,000 people. Concerns remain high over the possible effects of any lingering contamination. The tests began after an unofficial survey which found that 10 out of 130 children evacuated from Fukushima had hormonal and other irregularities in the thyroid glands, according to AFP news agency. But those who conducted the survey said they could not establish a link between the irregularities and Japan's nuclear crisis.

Syria warns not to recognise opposition, vows reform

AFP, Damascus

President Bashar al-Assad renewed a pledge of reforms yesterday, as Syria threatened retaliation if countries recognise an opposition bloc increasingly active on the international scene.



"Syria is taking steps focused on two main fronts -- political reform and the dismantling of armed groups," who seek to destabilise the country, Assad told the visiting Cuban and Venezuelan foreign ministers. The embattled president said "the Syrian people had welcomed the reforms but that foreign attacks intensified just as the situation in the country began to make progress." He accused Western powers of having "little interest in reform," seeking instead to "push Syria to pay the price for its stances against foreign schemes hatched outside the region." "Despite everything, a process of reform is underway," he assured them, stressing that Syria's decisions were "sovereign and not related to foreign instructions." The foreign ministers of Venezuela and

Cuba headed a delegation of leftist Latin American countries -- including Ecuador, Nicaragua and Bolivia -- that travelled to Syria to "show support." The delegates denounced the "political and media campaign being waged against Syria," the state news agency SANA said.

The eight-member Latin American bloc's talks aim to "political destabilisation attempts by the United States and its allies," Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro said prior to the visit. "We reject all forms of interventionism that the empire is trying to apply as it did in Libya for a violent process of regime change," he said. Washington has renewed its calls for Assad to step down immediately amid escalating violence against anti-regime protesters that the United Nations says has left nearly 3,000 people dead. Turkey, meanwhile, has kept constant pressure on Damascus by hosting gatherings of Syrian dissidents and repeatedly calling on Assad's regime to introduce reforms.

S Lanka ruling coalition sweeps local elections

PTI, Colombo

Sri Lanka's ruling UPFA won a landslide securing 21 of 23 seats in local elections marred by violence that killed at least four people, including an adviser to President Mahinda Rajapaksa. The United People's Freedom Alliance headed by Rajapaksa won control of 21 of the 23 councils which went to polls on Saturday, official results announced today showed. The main opposition United National Party (UNP) managed only to retain the Colombo Municipal Council, considered the most prestigious, while losing their seat in the central town of Kandy which they had held for nearly 60 years.

Car-free Sunday for smog-struck Milan

BBC ONLINE

The northern Italian city of Milan is banning all traffic from its streets for 10 hours on Sunday in an attempt to reduce smog. The measure, first imposed on a trial basis in 2007, is triggered whenever pollution exceeds the statutory limit for 12 consecutive days. Satellite imagery shows Milan to be one of the most polluted cities in Europe. An estimated 120,000 vehicles will be affected by the move, according to the Corriere della Sera newspaper. The most polluting vehicles have been banned from driving through the city centre since Thursday. But on Sunday, there will be no traffic at all permitted between 0800 and 1800 local time (07:00-17:00 GMT). The ban is imposed when pollution exceeds 50 micrograms of particulates per cubic metre of air over 12 days. The last time the full ban was in force was in February. The move is not popular with all environmentalists, who argue that the city's public transport system should be improved to discourage people from using their cars. Local Green Party councillor Enrico Fedrighini said cars with three or four people inside should be offered free parking, for example. "One or two car-free Sundays each month won't do anything to tackle the smog crisis," he told Corriere della Sera. Public transport will be bolstered during the day, with an extra metro trains and buses operating.

China's Hu urges closer ties with rival Taiwan

AP, Beijing

China's president yesterday used the centennial of a revolution that ended imperial rule to make an appeal to further relations with Taiwan, saying they should move beyond the history that divides them and focus on common economic and cultural interests.



At a ceremony in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Hu Jintao said that China and Taiwan should end antagonisms, "heal wounds of the past and work together to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." "Achieving reunification by peaceful means best serves the fundamental interests of all Chinese, including our Taiwan compatriots," Hu said, adding that the sides should increase economic competitiveness, promote Chinese culture and build on a sense of a common national identity. President Hu has sought to move beyond the threatening rhetoric that long characterized Beijing's response to Taiwan's refusal to unify with the mainland. His government has talked of ending the state of hostility with Taiwan. Tensions have also eased as Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou facilitated several trade agreements linking Taiwan's high-tech economy to China's lucrative markets. Yesterday, a large portrait of the founding father of modern China, Sun Yat-sen, hung over the stage on which sat current and former top leaders of China including the

retired President Jiang Zemin, who made a rare public appearance months after speculation that he was close to death. The ceremony in Beijing marks the Oct. 10, 1911, armed uprising led by rebels associated with revolutionary leader Sun on a Qing dynasty garrison. The attack set in motion events that led to the overthrow of imperial rule and raised hopes that China could emerge from a century and a half of national humiliation it had endured at the hands of foreign powers.

The Republic of China was established 2 1/2 months later, but its government fled in disarray to Taiwan in 1949 following the victory of Mao Zedong's Communists over Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists in the Chinese civil war. China regards Taiwan as part of its territory and threatens to invade should it seek formal independence. In his speech, Hu said Sun was "a great national hero, a great patriot and a great leader of the Chinese democratic revolution." He also said the Communist Party is the "core power" that drives China's success. Also onstage was the 85-year-old former president Jiang, who was dressed in a dark blue suit and red tie and wore his signature large, square-rimmed glasses. His hair was slicked back as usual but was obviously thinning, and he appeared at times to be tired as he sat listening to speeches with his hands on the table in front of him.

Post Graduate Diploma in Management Consulting (PgDMC)

Institute of Management Consultants Bangladesh (IMCB), the national forum for the management consultants of Bangladesh and a member of International Council of Management Consulting Institutes (ICMI) is offering the 5th Post Graduate Diploma in Management Consulting (PgDMC) for those who are interested in building a career in management consulting. PgDMC is a recognized qualification in order to be a management consultant.

Period	: October 15, 2011 to January 12, 2012
Days and Time	: Thursday and Saturday Evening (5:30 PM to 9:00 PM)
Course Fee	: IMCB Member BDT 28,000. All Others BDT 30,000
Participants	: Master Degree in Business Studies, Economics and Social Science

For further information and registration, please call 029883281, 01716 236868

Institute of Management Consultants Bangladesh (IMCB)
House 357 (2nd Floor), Lane 27, New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka, Tel: 02-8834046, Fax: 02-8834046
E-mail: info.imcb@gmail.com, www.imcbangladesh.org

FINISHED APARTMENTS With Gas & Electricity Connections

Limited Number of Apartments at Dhanmondi, DOHS & Uttara



CALL FOR DETAILS AT
Tel: 8857230 - 4
01714 016887 01714 039847
01714 039843 01713 048556
01714 040457 01713 065055
01713 018405



ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

OPEN POSITION COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

The Asian University for Women (AUW) is an independent international institution of higher learning for women from across Asia, seeks an energetic and proactive **Communications Officer** who will assist in media outreach and fundraising efforts. This position is based in Chittagong.

Detailed information/job descriptions for this position is available at: http://asian-university.org/careers_at_AUW.htm

To apply, please send the following to tapu.barua@auw.edu.bd before October 20, 2011:

- A letter of interest (in 500 to 700 words) stating how your background and experience fit the needs of this position and why you would choose to work with AUW
- CV
- 2 professional reference letters
- A sample of writing (published or unpublished)

As an equal opportunity employer serving women, the Asian University for Women strongly encourages highly qualified women to apply.

www.asian-university.org

Yemenis shrug off Saleh's talk of stepping down

REUTERS, Sanaa

Yemeni protesters camped out in Sanaa's central square said yesterday that President Ali Abdullah Saleh's suggestion that he would step down in the coming days was another promise that they were sure would be broken. Analysts mostly agree that the vow, made three times already this year by Yemen's long-time ruler, was a stalling tactic in a succession crisis that has spread turmoil through the country. A government official said Saleh was merely indicating readiness in a speech on Saturday night to reach a deal to end months of popular unrest. "Saleh is a liar, nothing has changed since his speech," said Mohammed al-Asl, a protest organizer. "We're used to this type of thing now. He just says anything to fool his own people, the world, and everyone. We're not paying any attention to this." Protesters, camped out in tents in the area in Sanaa now dubbed as "Change Square" were going about their usual business of buying food, cooking and chewing wads of qat, a popular mild leaf stimulant common in Yemen. Saleh's foreign minister met the US ambassador for talks yesterday, part of what many expect to be a diplomatic push to deflect any action by the UN Security Council when it is briefed on the Yemen situation in the coming days.