

Egypt in turmoil

5 more killed as protesters besiege Cairo ministry

AGENCIES

Protesters laid siege to Egypt's Interior Ministry yesterday, pushing their protest against the military-led government into a second day in a show of anger triggered by the deaths of 74 people in the country's worst soccer disaster.

Two protesters died of tear gas inhalation, medics said, as new clashes raged in central Cairo between police and protesters amid nationwide protests demanding the ruling military cede power.

The two were rushed to hospital unconscious after joining protests near the interior ministry where riot police fired tear gas and demonstrators hurled back rocks.

Thick tear gas blanketed the road leading to the interior ministry, where a makeshift barricade separated police and protesters, an AFP reporter said.

Earlier, Reuters reported that one person died in Cairo from a shotgun pellet wound and two were killed in the city of Suez as police used live rounds to hold back crowds trying to break into a police station.

The demonstrations erupted following the deaths at a football stadium in Port Said. Most of those killed were crushed to death in a stampede but protesters hold the military-

led authorities responsible.

Several thousand protesters threw rocks towards the ministry building in central Cairo through the night.

By yesterday morning, a hard core of demonstrators had heaved aside a concrete barrier blocking a main road near the ministry to take closer aim at the building. A Reuters witness heard firing and found gun pellets on the ground.

"We will stay until we get our rights. Did you see what happened in Port Said?" said 22-year-old Abu Hanafy.

Close to 400 people have been hurt in the confrontations that erupted late on Thursday, many of them suffering from inhaling tear gas.

The soccer stadium deaths have heaped new criticism on the military council, which has governed Egypt since Mubarak resigned.

At least 1,000 people were injured in the soccer violence when fans invaded the pitch after local team al-Masry beat Cairo-based AlAhli, the most successful club in Africa.

The cause of the violence has been the focus of intense speculation. Some believe it was triggered by unknown provocateurs working for remnants of the Mubarak administration who are seeking to sabotage the transition to democracy.



PHOTO: AFP
A picture taken on December 15, 2011 shows Somali refugee Fatuma Abdille, right, at the Transit Centre of Dolo Ado in Ethiopia, on December 15, 2011. Over 300,000 refugees have fled severe drought, conflict and famine in southern Somalia this year into Ethiopia and Kenya, according to the United Nations.

Famine over in Somalia

AFP, Nairobi

Famine conditions have ended in war-torn Somalia six months after they were declared, but the situation remains dire with a third of the population needing emergency aid, the UN said yesterday.

"No more region in Somalia is under famine conditions," Jose Graziano da Silva, the head of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), told reporters. "However, the good news does not mean the crisis is over."

Tens of thousands of people are believed to have died during the famine, but mortality rates remain among the highest in the world, according to the UN.

At least 2.34 million people or about a third of the country still need support across Somalia, while hunger will grow in the lean period before the next harvest in the conflict-ridden Horn of Africa nation.

Iran vows retaliation over threats

Panetta says Israel could strike Iran in spring

REUTERS, Tehran

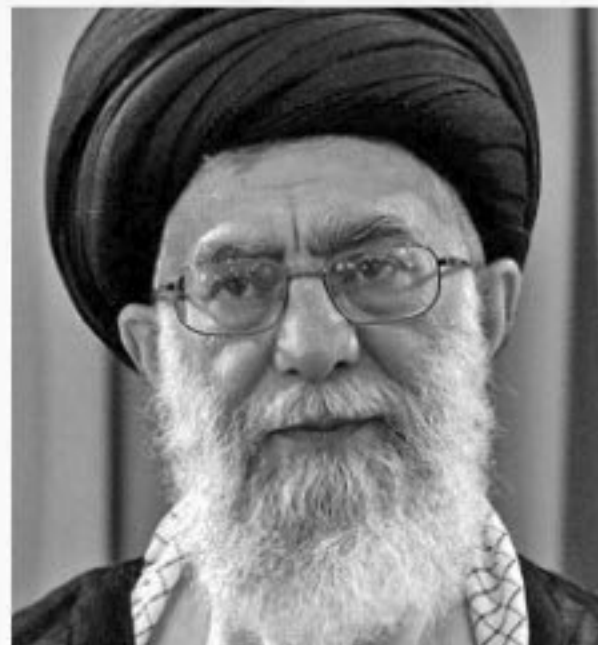
Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said yesterday Iran would retaliate over Western-backed oil sanctions and any threat of attack, after US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta was cited as saying he feared a possible Israeli strike as early as April.

Meanwhile, a key US Senate panel adopted a sweeping package of tough new sanctions Thursday aimed at forcing Iran to freeze its suspect nuclear program amid escalating worries of a military confrontation.

The legislation targets Iran's national oil and tanker firms, its elite Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), and would for the first time widen sanctions on Iran's energy sector to any joint venture anywhere in the world where Iran's government is a substantial partner or investor.

Khamenei's defiant speech to mark the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution was the first direct response to tighter sanctions imposed by the West in recent weeks to force Tehran to abandon a nuclear programme it says has purely peaceful ends.

"Threatening Iran and attacking Iran will harm America



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei



Leon Panetta

... Sanctions will not have any impact on our determination to continue our nuclear course ... In response to threats of oil embargo and war, we have our own threats to impose at the right time," Khamenei told worshippers in a speech broadcast live on state television.

"I have no fear of saying that we will back and help any nation or group that wants to confront and fight against the Zionist regime (Israel)."

US media reports said US Defence Secretary Panetta believed there was a growing possibility Israel would attack Iran as early as April to stop it building a nuclear bomb.

The Washington Post first reported on Thursday that Panetta was concerned about an increased likelihood Israel would launch an attack over the next few months. CNN said it confirmed the report, citing a senior Obama administration official, who declined to be identified.

The Post said the postponement of a joint US-Israeli military exercise that had been scheduled for this spring may have signalled the prospect of an Israeli attack soon.

Meanwhile, Iran yesterday launched an observation satellite into orbit above Earth, its third since 2009, the official IRNA news agency reported.

Libya's ex-envoy to France dies in custody

AFP, Tripoli

Libya's ex-ambassador to France, Omar Brebesh, has died in the custody of a militia from possible torture, less than 24 hours after he was detained by the armed group, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said yesterday.

HRW said a Tripoli-based militia from the town of Zintan detained Brebesh on January 19 and that a preliminary autopsy found the cause of death included "multiple bodily injuries and fractured ribs."

"Photos of Brebesh's body, seen by HRW, show welts, cuts and the apparent removal of toenails, indicating that he was tortured prior to death," the rights watchdog said in a statement.

FALKLANDS DISPUTE Prince William arrives in disputed island

AFP, London

Prince William arrived in the Falkland Islands on Thursday for a six-week mission with the Royal Air Force (RAF), British officials said, a move Argentina has condemned as a "provocation".

The 29-year-old, who is second in line to the British throne, has been sent to the disputed South Atlantic archipelago as a routine part of his work as an RAF search and rescue pilot, the Ministry of Defence said.

But the timing of the deployment has stoked tensions ahead of the 30th anniversary of the start of the war between Britain and Argentina over the Falklands, which London controls but Buenos Aires claims as its own.

When William's deployment was announced in November, Argentina said it was a "provocative act", and this week the foreign ministry in Buenos Aires said the prince would be arriving in a "conqueror's uniform".

Tensions have not been helped by the announcement this week that Britain is sending HMS Dauntless, a state-of-the-art warship, to the region, although defence officials insisted the move was a purely routine deployment.



Islamists sweep Kuwait polls

AFP, Kuwait City

Kuwait's Islamist-led opposition has won a landslide majority in Kuwait's snap polls by securing 34 seats in the 50-member parliament, with women and liberals the big losers, results showed yesterday.

Sunni Islamists, including Salafists, took 23 seats compared with just nine in the dissolved parliament, while liberals claimed only two places against five previously, according to the official results.

And no women were elected, with the four female MPs of the previous parliament all losing their seats.

Voters punished pro-government MPs during Thursday's parliamentary election, reducing them to a small minority, the results showed.

NEWS IN brief

Anonymous hacks into FBI

AFP, Washington

Hacker group Anonymous released a recording yesterday of what appears to be a conference call between the FBI and Scotland Yard held last month to discuss operations against the group.

The audio of the nearly 17-minute conference call was posted on YouTube along with an email invitation from a Federal Bureau of Investigation agent setting up the call for January 17.

The email invites members of European law enforcement agencies to take part in a conference call to discuss the on-going investigations related to Anonymous, Lulzsec, Antisec, and other associated splinter groups.

The email with details for accessing the call was sent to law enforcement officials in Britain, France, the Netherlands and others but the only people who identify themselves on the call are from the FBI and

Dozens feared trapped in PNG ferry

AFP, Port Moresby

More than 100 missing passengers were feared trapped inside an overloaded ferry when it sank off Papua New Guinea, a maritime official said yesterday as rescuers scoured the ocean for more survivors.

So far, 246 people have been plucked to safety in a joint rescue operation conducted by PNG and neighbouring Australia after the MV Rabaul Queen sank on Thursday morning.

Australia's Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) said the ship went down about nine nautical miles off the coast and the survivors reached the eastern town of Lae in the early hours of yesterday morning.

"Updated reports from the five rescue vessels indicate there were approximately 246 survivors

Anti-tank mine kills 8 in Cambodia

AFP, Phnom Penh

Eight Cambodian farmers were killed and one was critically injured yesterday after their truck hit two old anti-tank mines in north-western Cambodia.

"Seven people died on the spot. One man passed away later in hospital. The driver is in critical condition," Malai district police said.

"Because of heavy rainfall recently, the land became soft and when they drove across the farm they hit two anti-tank mines stacked on top of each other," he told AFP, adding that two other landmines

High drama as Donald Trump endorses Romney

Gingrich to challenge Florida polls result

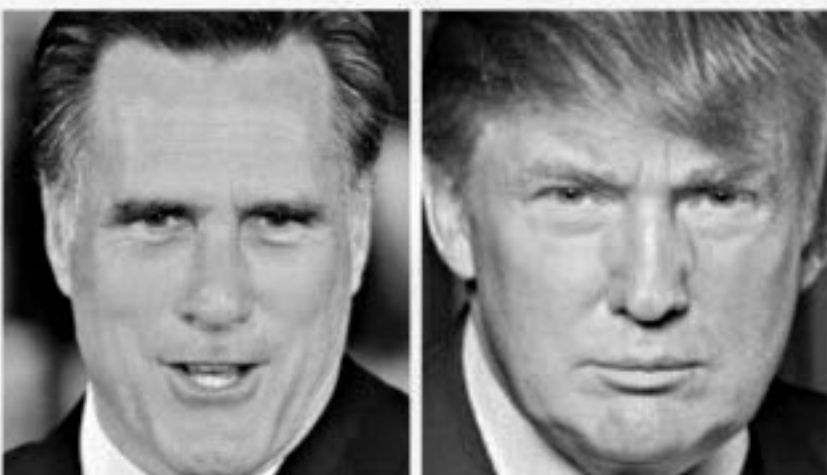
AFP, Las Vegas

Mitt Romney himself admitted it was an unlikely endorsement: flamboyant real estate mogul Donald Trump backing the buttoned-up Republican presidential hopeful, who he has repeatedly criticised.

In trademark Trump style, he had kept poll-watchers guessing until the last moment; as late as Wednesday evening, a senior official in Newt Gingrich's campaign claimed the multi-millionaire would endorse the former House speaker.

"It's my honour, real honour and privilege to endorse Mitt Romney," Trump said. "Mitt is tough, he's smart, he's sharp, he's not going to allow bad things to continue to happen to this country that we all love."

"Governor Romney, go out and get 'em, you can do it," he added, before the two multi-millionaires shook



Mitt Romney

Donald Trump

hands for the cameras.

Some observers had thought it more likely that Trump would endorse the less straight-laced Gingrich to be the Republican nominee to face off against Democratic President Barack Obama in the November election.

Gingrich's camp -- whose main spokesman had kept reporters guessing barely an hour before the announcement -- was quick to point out that Romney and Trump had hardly always seen eye to eye.

"Mitt Romney is a basically small

business guy. He was a hedge fund guy, a fund guy, he walked away with some money from a very good company that he didn't create," they cited Trump as having told CNN last April.

Meanwhile, Gingrich announced Thursday a challenge to how many delegates were won in the Republican Party's Florida primary, in which he was soundly beaten by frontrunner Mitt Romney.

Gingrich campaign officials said the appeal questions whether all of Florida's 50 delegates to the Republican convention in August should go to Romney, under the winner-takes-all system.

A new poll Thursday gave Romney a clear lead over Gingrich in the western battleground state of Nevada, with 45 percent to the former House speaker's 25 percent -- possibly another reason that Trump ended up betting on Romney.



PHOTO: AFP

Plants covered in ice and snow stand on the banks of the Bodensee (Lake Constance) yesterday in Immenstaad, southern Germany. Temperatures plunged to new lows in Europe where a week-long cold snap has now claimed more than 218 lives as forecasters warned that the big freeze would tighten its grip at the weekend.

Gaddafi's wedding ring to go up for auction

DAILYMAIL ONLINE

The wedding ring and shirt worn by former Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi when he was killed by rebels last October have reportedly been put up for sale for \$2million.

The disgraced dictator was wearing the silver ring and bloodied beige shirt when he was dragged from a drainpipe near his home town of Sirte before being beaten and shot.

Libyan national Ahmed Warfali is apparently asking for \$2million for the items after somehow coming into their possession.

He believes he could have attracted a higher value if he had been selling them in Europe.

A picture of what appears to be the ring has been uploaded to website ArabsToday.net and shows an engraving representing the date Gaddafi married his wife, Safia, on September 10, 1970, it was reported on ABC News.

But critics say Mr Warfali should not be selling his possessions.

"The ring does not belong to Gaddafi. It's Libyan money and this guy should not sell the ring," said one person, who posted their comments on a Facebook wall for residents of the town of Zintan, where Gaddafi's son Saif al-Islam is being held.

Saif was arrested in November, but has not yet been handed over to the transitional government or the International Criminal Court for trial.

Another Facebook poster said: "Well you can sell Saif for 20 billion dollars, if you do not want the guy to sell the ring."

There remains tensions in the country in the wake of Gaddafi's death as militias continue to jostle for power.



INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH VACANCY for ELECTRICAL ENGINEER

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) invites applications from suitable candidates for a position of **Senior Electrical Engineer** in the **Dept of Operations & Maintenance** at the University.

Graduate Electrical Engineers from reputed universities with at least 10 years practical experience in electrical engineering works, of which at least 5 years experience in supervision of electrical works of high rise buildings with installation/maintenance of substations, central air conditioning system and lifts are invited to apply. Computer literacy, proficiency in English and affiliation with professional bodies are desirable.

In case of otherwise suitable candidates, any of the above criteria may be relaxed.

Interested candidates may please send their applications along with their updated resume mentioning names of three referees and a recent passport sized photograph by **February 20, 2012** to:

Deputy Director, Human Resources, Independent University, Bangladesh
16 Aftabuddin Ahmed Road, Bashundhara, Dhaka
E-mail: hrdept@iub.edu.bd