

## EU migrant policy suffers blow

Italy, Libya reject proposals

AFP, Brussels

The European Union's migrant strategy suffered a major new setback Friday with Italy refusing to freely accept people rescued at sea and Libya spurning a proposal for asylum processing centres.

The salvos follow a fractious EU summit in June which agreed to set up "disembarkation platforms" outside the bloc to process migrants after Italy's new populist government said it was closing its ports.

"Italy does not want to be the only country where migrants saved at sea by its own naval units disembark," Foreign Minister Enzo Moavero Milanesi said in a letter to EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini.

The Italian position and its implications were discussed at a meeting on Friday by member states in Brussels where diplomats said countries agreed to a "strategic review" of the EU's own naval operations.

Italy commands the European military operation Sophia launched in June 2015 following a series of deadly shipwrecks in the Mediterranean.

## Key member

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testimony of widespread murder, rape and torture in violence the UN and US have branded as ethnic cleansing.

Kobsak Chutikul said his position became untenable ahead of a second full meeting of the panel with officials in Myanmar's capital Naypyidaw this week.

"I verbally gave my resignation in a staff meeting last Tuesday (10 July)," he told AFP by phone from Bangkok.

The board, he said, risks becoming a "part of the problem".

"It lulls authorities into thinking they have done enough to respond to the concerns of the international community, that they've ticked that box," he added.

"It becomes dangerous in terms of an illusion that something is being done... that they're going to do something while Rome burns."

The credibility of the advisory board was undermined early on by the resignation of veteran US diplomat Governor Bill Richardson a one-time close confidant of Suu Kyi.

He left the panel in January in a vicious war of words with the Nobel laureate.

The government insisted it had terminated his involvement but Richardson said he stepped down due to fears the committee would only "whitewash" the causes of the Rohingya crisis.

A statement by his office yesterday said that Kobsak's resignation "further reinforces the concerns" he held.

Kobsak, however, told AFP that he thought Governor Richardson's departure had been premature.

But he said the board's poor organisation and funding severely curtailed its work.

"We were winging it on the fly, not really in full grasp of the full facts and figures. Everyone was all over the place -- we don't have a permanent office anywhere," he told AFP.

Suu Kyi's reputation lies in tatters internationally for her failure to speak up on behalf of the Rohingya Muslims, a stateless group persecuted over decades in Myanmar.

There was no immediate reaction from her office or the panel.

The advisory board has so far dismayed rights groups for not mentioning the word 'Rohingya' -- a name Buddhist-majority Myanmar rejects, preferring the pejorative term 'Bengali' that implies the community are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

Kobsak Chutikul said the international community should rally around new UN special envoy Christine Schraner Burgener, who he said "offers the best hope in the circumstances".

## Tigers

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comeback and regain their confidence.

West Indies and Bangladesh have previously faced off 28 times in the fifty-over format, 19 of which were wins for the Windies while the Tigers registered victory on seven occasions, with the remaining two ending in no result.

The last time Bangladesh beat West Indies in the format was in a five-match series, which the home team clinched 3-2, back in 2012 at home.

However, after that the Tigers were whitewashed in a three-match ODI series on their tour of West Indies in 2014.

In today's encounter, West Indies skipper Jason Holder will probably bank on his pacers yet again with the likes of Alzarri Joseph, Keemo Paul and Andre Russell returning to the format. And although Chris Gayle is not in the best of form, he will surely play a big role in the series.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina waves to the people, right, gathered at the Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday to accord her a reception.



PHOTO: PTI

## Vote for AL, ensure prosperity

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Suhrawardy Udyan.

The AL accorded her the reception for her leadership in getting Bangladesh qualified to become a developing nation, launching Bangabandhu Satellite-1, and her getting the Global Women's Leadership Award and D.Litt from Kazi Nazrul University of Asansol of India's West Bengal.

The satellite was launched on May 12. On March 16, a UN panel said Bangladesh met the criteria for becoming a developing country. On April 27, Hasina was conferred with Global Women's Leadership Award for her leadership in women's education and entrepreneurship in Bangladesh. On May 26, Kazi Nazrul University authorities conferred her with the honorary D.Litt degree recognising her

outstanding contributions towards building exploitation- and disparity-free society.

Amid clapping of thousands of people, the PM yesterday criticised the people behind the "prevent boat" campaign ahead of the general elections slated for December.

"There is a quarter in the country who doesn't see any development and some are saying that the boat will have to be resisted... those who want to thwart boat, want to bring the Rajakars and war criminals to power."

Hasina, also the Awami League president, said the "oust boat" campaign did not suit those who believe in democracy and independence; but "these words suit those who grew up eating leftovers of military rulers".

The PM in her around an hour-long speech said she was not ready to die before her actual death and that she wants to work for the people and fulfil Bangabandhu's dream of a hunger- and poverty-free Bangladesh.

"Death will come in its own way and time, but I'm not ready to embrace it before it comes," she said, adding that she would serve the people and work to change their fate until her death.

"I'm a servant of the people. My concern is what the people are getting. I don't need receptions."

"My father's soul will be in peace... I know from the heaven he will see the people of his country are now in a good shape... positive changes have come to their lives... I want just that."

Hasina said she wants to see a hunger- and poverty-free Sonar Bangla (Golden

Bangla), the dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"My only aim is to fulfil my father's dream," she said.

Hasina said she sleeps only five hours a day and spends every other moment for the welfare of Bangladesh's and its people's development.

"I have no work other than this. I don't go to any festivals. I work all the time...," she said.

AL General Secretary and Road Transport Minister Obaidul Quader read out a letter of felicitations and handed it over to Hasina.

In the letter, Quader praised the PM for her leadership. "You've made us stand taller, you've made us look brighter, you've made us feel safer, you've made us feel stronger."

Since 11:00am, leaders and activists

of the AL and its front organisations were seen carrying colourful banners and playing drums and trumpets on the thoroughfares of the capital on their way to the venue.

Nomination seekers of the 2018 general elections from Dhaka and its adjacent districts staged a show of their popularity to woo party highups.

The entire park was decorated and illuminated. A huge L-shaped podium was set up.

Before the premier started her speech at 4:40pm, a cultural programme highlighted the country's achievements and development under Hasina's leadership.

AL's Senior Presidium Member and Deputy Leader of Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury presided over the reception.

## Civil society

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About 371,000 troops will spread out across Pakistan to guard the election, about three times the number during the last election in 2013. In a notice this month, the Election Commission gave soldiers the authority of a "magistrate", to hold on-the-spot trials of anyone breaking election laws and sentence them.

Former Senate chairman and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) stalwart Raza Rabbani yesterday slammed at the ECP's "criminal silence" over perceived irregularities in the run-up to the polls, warning of "dire consequences" for the government if the elections are "engineered".

Senator Rabbani, while addressing the Upper House, raised questions over the role of the armed forces in the polling process.

"At first, the ECP kept saying that soldiers would be deployed outside polling stations. Now it's saying they will also be deployed inside. What is the reason for their being stationed inside?" he asked.

He drew the Senate's attention towards restrictions being placed on the media by disruptions to the circulation of certain newspapers and instructions to television channels not to air certain programmes.

"Is the ECP sleeping?" he asked, wondering if the ECP had failed to notice that "two major parties of the country are being targeted".

He referred to stoppage of Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's convoy at various points, as well as an incident of stone pelting at a meeting held by former premier and PML-N leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi.

The former Senate chairman also criticised the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for summoning election candidates and interrupting their campaigns.

Rabbani lambasted both the ECP and the caretaker government, saying they had "failed to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities".

"How is this leading to free and fair elections?" he asked, adding that "if the elections are being engineered, there will be dire consequences."

His concerns were echoed by senators belonging to the embattled PML-N on Friday.

Expressing serious reservations about the electoral process, Senator Muhammad Javed Abbasi warned that "dark clouds are looming over the elections" and that the nation would have to bear a "heavy loss" if the situation didn't change.

Abbasi claimed that political parties are not being allowed opportunities to conduct their election campaigns; that "filters are being installed" before the elections and that police personnel are hounding PML-N leaders.

"(We) don't see free and fair elections taking place in Pakistan," he said, adding that the PML-N's link with voters could not be broken by imprisoning its leader Nawaz Sharif.

The three-time prime minister was arrested earlier in the month on graft charges which is widely regarded as a

conspiracy by many in Pakistan ahead of the polls.

Referring to Imran Khan, Abbasi also alleged that an atmosphere was being created for "one leader" to run his election campaign and urged the ECP to "open its eyes".

Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq expressed reservations over the decision to give magisterial powers to military personnel during elections.

Meanwhile, Pakistan civil rights groups condemned 'large scale' interference in electoral process by undemocratic elements.

Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research director Karamat Ali said that alongside "increasing interference in the electoral process which is anti-democratic, onslaught on the independent press is also a matter of grave concern. These attacks and this kind of interference have never witnessed before on such a large scale in the political history of the country."

He spoke about how different media houses and television anchors were being targeted and an environment of self-censorship was being imposed; political engineering by some state institutions to give benefit to a particular political party, he explained, had become a serious issue. He labelled these as attacks against freedom of expression.

"If this situation does not change, smooth elections do not seem likely, with an overwhelming presence and interference of undemocratic elements in the elections. This will have very negative long-term implications for the country," he added.

"There is chaos and anarchy in this country and this will continue even after the election," said Nasir Mansoor of National Trade Union Federation.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has also predicted that the coming general elections will be the dirtiest, most micromanaged and most intensively participated polls in the country's history.

Highlighting the alleged interference by 'a state within state' in Pakistan, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) last Wednesday explicitly asked the army chief and the top spymaster to stop meddling in affairs of other departments.

IHC's Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui directed the secretaries of the ministry of interior and defence to place the court's order before the chief of army staff (COAS) and director-general of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), wherein he emphasised that secret agencies need to realise that they have to confine themselves within the boundaries of the constitution.

## Paving in the rain!

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Ratan Kanti Dutta, general secretary of Brahmanbaria Nagorik Forum, a civil society platform, echoed the locals' view on the matter.

Ehtesham, however, refuted the allegation of using poor quality materials for road repairs.

## Govt hospitals run short of free saline

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The ACC conducted the raid based on a tip-off on its hotline (106) that the IPH suspended production on purpose to give private companies a chance to profit.

Interestingly, production resumed almost immediately after the drive, coordinated by ACC Director General Muhammad Munir Chowdhury.

ACC's findings were not immediately available, but sources said that IPH officials admitted to the ACC that production had remained suspended for a year.

The very next day, the IPH ran an advertisement where it said that the transfer of five directors between May 30, 2017 and April 26, 2018, delayed the purchase of the required raw materials. The current stock was also finished.

In the advertisement, however, it said production had stopped six months ago, and not a year ago as they told the ACC team.

"After assuming the charge of director of IPH [on April 24, 2018], he [Abul Kalam Md Azad] has taken various initiatives to keep the production of saline stable. As a result, the stock of raw materials has increased. And within the next seven days, the production of various saline will return to normalcy," reads the advertisement.

Asked about the allegations of foul-play, Azad remained tight-lipped and asked to go through the advertisement instead.

Speaking to The Daily Star by phone yesterday, Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services Abul Kalam Azad provided another timeframe.

"The production at IPH was halted for about one month due to complexities in buying raw materials," he claimed.

He also added that IPH alone could not meet the total demand for saline and that was why hospitals had to buy these from private companies.

IPH documents show that before June 30, it had a stock of 1,198 single blood bags. Between, July 1, 2018 and July 17, 2018, it produced only 2,205 single blood bags and supplied all of them.

There was also no stock of double,

triple, quadruple and baby blood bags. About 3,900 transfusion sets were in stock on June 30 but all of them had been supplied.

The IPH did not manufacture any more of these and the production of infusion sets also stopped.

Between July 5 and July 16, the IPH manufactured only 7,000 pieces of glucose saline, 3,650 glucose aqueous, 7,700 normal saline, 5,030 cholera saline, 7,010 Hartmann's solution and 6,000 baby saline.

The production of peritoneal dialysis (PD) fluid, hemodialysis and 3% sodium chloride, used during dialysis, during this period was zero.

**PATIENTS BEARING THE BRUNT**

Ibrahim Ahmed was admitted to the gastroenterology department of Mugda General Hospital in the capital with severe abdomen pain on Thursday. The on-duty doctor administered intravenous glucose saline to improve his weak health condition.

The saline was supposed to be provided by the hospital free of cost, but Ibrahim's relatives were asked to buy the saline of a private company.

Unaware of the fact that they were entitled to get free saline, Ibrahim's mother Amena Begum bought it from a pharmacy adjacent to the hospital. "I had no option but to rush to the pharmacy to buy the saline and infusion sets," she said.

The crisis is affecting many other patients.

Chandu Sheikh was admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) with a stomach disorder on July 14 and needed saline as he was dehydrated.

But the hospital could not provide him with it. Chandu said he had spent Tk 667 on saline and other medications.

The extent of the crisis was clear during our visits to over half a dozen government hospitals.

Ajay Ray, director of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, said they were getting supply of saline bags lesser than their daily demand. The hospital authorities were in touch with government high officials over the crisis and they were expecting an improvement in supply soon.

A similar situation was seen at M

Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital in Dinajpur, Pabna General Hospital, Pirojpur Sadar Hospital, Tangail General Hospital and Moulvibazar District Sadar Hospital.

Due to IPH's suspension of production, doctors in some hospitals suggested the patients buy saline from local pharmacies while in some hospitals saline was procured from private companies.

Mugda General Hospital's director Faruk Ahmed Bhuiyan said there was a supply shortfall. "But we're not dependent on the IPH only. We also buy saline from private companies and provide those to the patients for free," he said.

Replying to a question, Faruk said sometimes doctors prescribed saline of private companies thinking those would be better. "In such cases, there is little scope to interfere. However, there is a common guideline given to doctors to administer free medicine to patients."

Apart from saline, there is also a dearth in blood bags in government hospitals around the country.

At Dhaka Medical College Hospital, this correspondent saw patients buying blood bags from pharmacies outside the hospital.

"Since the supply has stopped, we ask patients to buy blood bags from outside," said Shahjahan, a staff member at the DMCH Blood Bank.

[Our Dinajpur, Moulvibazar, Pirojpur, Pabna and Tangail correspondents contributed to the report.]

## BSF shooting kills

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rescue the boy and bring him inside Bangladeshi territory. They rushed him to Rangpur Medical College Hospital but he died on the way.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

An unnatural death case was filed with Haripur Police Station in this connection, said OC Ruhul Quddus.

A battalion commander-level flag meeting was held on the same border yesterday afternoon. At the meeting, BGB officials strongly protested the killing of an innocent civilian by BSF, officials said.

## Eyeglasses to prevent motion sickness!

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the wearer can just take them off and enjoy the rest of the journey.

So how do Seetroën cure the annoying condition that has been plaguing mankind for centuries? Well, the secret is literally in those goofy plastic frames. That blue liquid in the rings around the eyes, both along the frontal axis and sagittal axis recreate the horizon line to resolve the conflict between the signals sent to the brain by the eyes and inner ear.

Motion sickness occurs when our brain perceives conflicting reports about perceived motion from the eyes and the inner ear. It's usually not a problem when a person is looking out

the window because then both organs perceive motion similarly, but when you're looking down at a phone or a book, the eyes don't perceive the motion the same way, and the reports sent to your brain contradict those from the inner ear, and the confusion results in motion sickness.

The liquid in the Seetroën rings simulate the angle and movements of the horizon so that the movement detected by the eyes matches that detected by the inner ear; no more conflicting signals, no more motion sickness, apparently.

Since Seetroën glasses are actually glasses, they can be worn by anyone, even over actual eyeglasses. You only

need to wear them for 10 to 12 minutes after the symptoms of motion sickness set in, to make them go away.

Even though Citroën claims to have collaborated with 5.5, a French collective design studio in order to come up with a "fresh, simple and ergonomic style" for Seetroën, these are definitely not the best looking glasses money can buy. But hey, if they really work as advertised - Citroën claims that Boarding Ring technology has an efficacy of 95% - there's really no room for complaining.

One thing that may keep people from using Seetroën eyeglasses is the price. They cost €99 (\$115) and can be purchased from Citroën's online store.