

MARINE SAFETY NEWS

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

LIBYA FORCES DRIVE ON CENTRE OF GADDAFI HOMETOWN

SIRTE - Libya's new regime forces were battling block by block towards the centre of Sirte on Monday, eyeing the symbolic prize of finally capturing Muammar Gaddafi's hometown after a month-long siege.

On the diplomatic front, Libya's ruling National Transitional Council (NTC) said it recognises the Syrian National Council grouping opponents of President Bashar al-Assad, becoming the first government, albeit an interim one, to do so. But Gaddafi diehards were putting up fierce resistance and in their other remaining bastion, Bani Walid, they mounted a fightback, killing 17 NTC fighters.

The interim ruling NTC has been waiting for Sirte's full capture to declare the liberation of the whole of Libya, clearing the way to draw up a timetable for elections.

UN EXPOSES TORTURE IN AFGHAN CUSTODY

KABUL - The UN said torture is practised systematically in some Afghan intelligence detention centres and that children under 18 are among those who suffered, according to a report published on Monday.

The UN mission in Afghanistan said it had "compelling evidence" that Afghan intelligence officials at five centres "systematically tortured detainees for the purpose of obtaining confessions and information."

Govt Probes Fatal Violence Between Troops, Copts

CAIRO - Ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) held on Monday an urgent meeting on Sunday's fatal clashes and commissioned Prime Minister Essam Sharaf's Cabinet to form a fact-finding committee to investigate the incident.

Offering his condolences to the families of those killed in the clashes, SCAF Chairman Hussein Tantawi said in a statement that the clashes between protestors and military forces outside the state television building in downtown Cairo were inflamed by unknown culprits who "turned a peaceful march into violence".

Tantawi affirmed the ruling military council would remain fully committed to its planned roadmap for peaceful transition of power.

The government decided to submit a draft for licensing the existing worshiping buildings to the jurisdictions committee in the Cabinet, state news agency reported.

A new item about anti-discrimination will be added to the penal code.

The National Justice Committee of the Cabinet council was assigned to quickly draw a unified law for the construction of worshipping houses,

to be approved within two weeks.

Meanwhile, the military prosecution started on Monday investigations into 25 suspects, who participated in vandalism acts, attacked armed forces personnel and set fire on Army vehicles, the agency quoted an official as saying.

On Sunday night, peaceful demonstrations turned into clashes between protesters and security forces, leaving at least 25 dead and 329 injured.

In a brief televised speech in the early hours on Monday, Sharaf urged Egyptians to keep united against plots of internal and external forces to undermine national security and relations between Army and civilians, Muslims and Copts.

Copts account for about one tenth of Egypt's total population of around 80 million.

Tensions between Christians and Muslims sometimes occur due to the construction of churches or conversions. The conflict was the most violent since the fall of former President Hosni Mubarak in February after 18 days of mass anti-government protests. It came as Egypt is bracing for the Parliamentary Elections scheduled to start on November 28. (PNA)

PNA Calls For AL Emergency Meeting

CAIRO - The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) on Monday called on the Arab League (AL) to hold an emergency meeting to discuss the hunger strike of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

The Palestinian state news agency reported that the PNA handed a memorandum to the AL headquarters in Cairo, asking for an emergency meeting to discuss the Palestinian prisoners' hunger strike.

"The memorandum aims at discussing the living conditions of around 6,000 Palestinian and Arab prisoners in Israeli jails amid the Israeli oppressive assault on them, a reason that urged them to go for a hunger strike," the report added.

An Arab diplomat said that AL probably will convene by the end of this week to discuss the prisoners' issue. The Palestine Liberation Organisation on Monday asked its representative in the UN Reyad Mansour to bring the prisoners' issue to the UN Security Council. (Xinhua)

Stocks Plummet On Unrest

CAIRO - Egypt's benchmark stock index fell sharply early Monday, dragged down by investor panic after the country's capital was engulfed by violent clashes not seen since the revolution that ousted former President Hosni Mubarak in February.

The Egyptian Exchange's EGX30 index dropped by over 5% within minutes of the start of the trading session, but rebounded slightly to a roughly 3 percent drop by 11:10am local time.

The drop was fuelled by violent clashes overnight between minority Coptic Christians, majority Muslims and security forces - an eruption of the sectarian tensions that traders feared presented the country with its gravest challenges yet since the revolution.

The declines pushed the index's year-to-date losses to over 45% so far and offered a window into the battering Egypt's economy has sustained since the start of the January 25 revolution. (AP)

 WEATHER

Cairo: 21-31c Sunny
 Alexandria: 21-27c Sunny
 Suez: 17-27c Sunny.

China Sends Equipment Aid To Egyptian School

CAIRO - China presented an Egyptian school with computers, TV sets and other teaching equipment worth USD 78,000 on Monday, to help improve conditions of the China-Egypt Friendship School in Cairo.

"We hope to help the students learn advanced technologies and keep pace with the world," Chinese Ambassador to Egypt Song Aiguo said.

The Chinese ambassador also visited the library of the school and talked with children in a Chinese language class, the first such kind of class in an Egyptian middle school.

A 14-year-old girl wrote her name on the first page of her Chinese textbook slightly with a pencil.

"I like my Chinese class and the book. I only use pencil to write on it so that the junior students could reuse it," said the girl. The school was built by a Chinese company and comprises a kindergarten, primary school and middle school. Since its opening in 2009, it has enrolled in more than 1,000 students. (PNA)

Arab Foreign Ministers To Meet Again On Syria

KUWAIT CITY - Kuwait's foreign minister told reporters Tuesday that the Arab world's foreign ministers are to meet to discuss developments in Syria.

"There will be a meeting of Arab foreign ministers to study the events in Syria," Sheikh Mohammad al-Sabah told a news conference in Kuwait's capital, without specifying the date for the gathering. "Consultations are under way to set a date," he said.

The ministers first met on September 13 in Cairo where they called on the Syrian authorities to "immediately stop the bloodshed." According to UN and human rights figures, more than 2,900 civilians have been killed in Syria since mid-March, when a nation-wide protest movement calling for President Bashar al-Assad's resignation erupted. (AFP)

 SPORTS NEWS

Pastor Upsets Nigeria, Rules Anger South Africa

JOHANNESBURG - Only two of the six 2010 World Cup qualifiers from Africa will be in Gabon and Equatorial Guinea next January for the Cup of Nations with Nigeria blaming a faith healer and South Africa the head-to-head rule for missing out.

Ghana, eliminated by Uruguay after a quarter-final shoot-out, and neighbours Ivory Coast made it while Algeria, Cameroon, Nigeria and the first African World Cup hosts South Africa fell by the wayside.

The Black Stars of Ghana were impressive 2-0 away winners over Sudan in a near 40-degree celsius Omdurman furnace as the 14-month qualifying competition drew to a close at the weekend and 14 teams survived to join the co-hosts.

Ivory Coast finished with the only perfect record by snatching a stoppage-time 2-1 victory over Burundi thanks to a goal from Manchester City midfielder Yaya Toure, whose older brother Kolo had opened the scoring in Abidjan.

West Bromwich Albion midfielder Osaze Odemwingie said the predictions of a leading faith healer had unnerved Nigeria ahead of a dramatic 2-2 draw with Guinea, who levelled at the death to top the table and rob Nigeria of a slot as one of the best runners-up.

Pastor TB Joshua foresaw last weekend during a church service that the Super Eagles would not make the Cup of Nations for the first time since 1998, when they were suspended for failing to defend the title two years earlier because of political differences with South Africa. (AFP)

SAFA Takes Legal Route After Team Relegation

JOHANNESBURG - The South African Football Association (SAFA) on Sunday lodged an appeal with the continental football governing body, Confederation of African Football (CAF) regarding the outcome of qualification for the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations tournament to be held in Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

South Africa finished top of Group G on goal difference, followed by Sierra Leone and Niger - all tied on nine points, with Egypt in fourth place four points adrift. But according to CAF rules, Bafana Bafana misses out while Niger proceeds to the finals next year.

"We have noted that CAF has announced that Niger has qualified in our group, despite South Africa finishing on top of the group in terms of goal difference, which is the universally recognised means of separating teams who are equal on points," reads part a letter addressed to CAF.

Playing from backyard, South Africa played to a goalless draw against Sierra Leone at the Mbombela Stadium, while Egypt defeated Niger by three goals to nil (3-0).

"We understand that you are using rule 14.1 to make your determination. However, we believe that the team finishing top of the log at the end of the competition is automatically determined at the end of 90 minutes play, and that the second place is determined by the other rules," SAFA states.

"We will lay out our objection more fully shortly, but in the meantime wish to signal that we intend to challenge this interpretation and application of the rules," says the letter. (Xinhua)

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 FINANCIAL NEWS

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

USD 1 = EGP 5.9674

GBP 1 = EGP 9.3303

EUR 1 = EGP 8.1147.

China, Iraq Face 'Critical' Clash

SINGAPORE - China and Iraq face a "critical" World Cup qualifying clash on Tuesday as Asia's big powers look set to step closer to the 2014 tournament in Brazil. Australia host Oman, Japan entertain Tajikistan and South Korea are at home to UAE in games the 'Big Three' should win easily as they march towards the fourth round. But China's match-up with Iraq is shaping up as a tense affair after Zico, coach of the 2007 Asian champions, called it a must-win.

The teams are level on points in Group A behind leaders Jordan with four rounds to play.

"The situation of Iraq in the qualifiers is critical, we have no choice other than victory against China. China is good and well prepared team and will be playing at home. We have to be cautious but the players' confidence is sky-high," the Brazilian legend warned.

China Coach Jose Antonio Camacho blasted his team as "lazy" and threatened to banish some players from his squad after last week's friendly against UAE, when they were forced to hang on for a 2-1 win. (AFP)

 ?! THAT'S ODD

No Turkeys Fall On Arkansas Festival This Year

YELLEVILLE - Turns out turkeys don't fly. The "Baxter Bulletin" reports that attendees at the Turkey Trot festival in Yellville were disappointed when no turkeys dropped from planes on Friday or Saturday. The turkey drop is a mainstay of the event in northern Arkansas, though organisers don't sanction it. Supporters say the turkeys can fly just enough to descend safely, but animal-rights advocates call it cruel.