



Anger as hopes fade for Indian workers after glacier disaster

WHO expert slams US pandemic intel as curbs tightened in Europe Page 6



TRIPOLI: In this file photo taken on September 27, 2011, young Libyan Berber girls attend an Amazigh festival in the capital Tripoli. Ten years after Libya's NATO-backed uprising ousted and killed dictator Muammar Gaddafi, the country remains wracked by conflict and chaos. —AFP

Libya mired in chaos 10 years after Arab Spring

Country split in two by rival camps with militias, mercenaries and foreign backers

TRIPOLI: Ten years after Libya's NATO-backed uprising ousted and killed dictator Muammar Gaddafi, the country remains wracked by conflict and chaos, its population bled dry despite the nation's vast oil wealth. A UN-led process has raised cautious hopes that a fragile ceasefire, agreed in October, will bring lasting peace, but for now, Libya is split in two by rival camps with their own militias, mercenaries and foreign backers. The country's descent into anarchy has also turned it into North Africa's main migrant trafficking hub, from where tens of thousands have attempted dangerous boat crossings to Europe.

The horror of their many a drowning in the Mediterranean Sea has only been matched by gruesome reports of abuse and torture in militia-run migrant detention camps and the discovery of mass graves of Libyan civilians in the sands of recent battlefields.

"Ten years after the revolution, Libya is even more disfigured a state than it was under Gaddafi," said Emadeddin Badi, senior analyst at the Geneva-based non-government group Global Initiative. A decade on, it is clear that the so-called Arab Spring revolts in Libya brought carnage rather than the longed-for freedom and progress, a fate rivaled only by the suffering in war-torn Syria and Yemen.

"The situation is catastrophic for the ordinary citizen because of the repeated conflicts and divisions," said Mazen Kheirallah, 43, who lives and works in Zaouia, west of the capital Tripoli. "The

coronavirus crisis has made things worse," said the Libyan Electricity Company employee, who says his family is struggling with runaway inflation and other painful effects of an economy in tatters. "With prices continuing to rise, we can no longer live with dignity."

Decade of war

Majdi, a 36-year-old dentist, recalls the "spark" for the uprising that began in Benghazi in eastern Libya in February 2011, as a wave of pro-democracy revolts which began in neighboring Tunisia quickly swept the region. It was only then "I realized we were living in terror without knowing it," he said, requesting that his full name not be published.

Libya's popular uprising-backed by a NATO air campaign led by the United States, Britain and France-ended later that year with the death of Gaddafi, who was hunted down in a drainage tunnel and killed on the spot. The end of his 42-year dictatorship sparked chaos that destabilized the wider region by flooding it with arms and fighters and, for years, left Libya, a country of seven million, under the control of dozens of trigger-happy militias with shifting allegiances.

Jihadists also took advantage of the security vacuum, with the Islamic State group at its peak orchestrating attacks from a stronghold in the central coastal city of Sirte, killing scores of foreign tourists in Tunisia in 2015 and 2016.

Salima Younis, a 57-year-old divorcee who scrapes by as a part-time secretary at a Tripoli school, says the past decade has been spent "trying to get by day by day, literally dodging bullets". A small house she built was badly damaged by fighting three times since 2011 and, without the means to rebuild it again, she eventually sold the land and moved to an apartment.

She said that before 2011, "I worked for over 20 years, earning a decent salary, with foreign oil companies that have all left the country and never came back".

Rival power bases

Libya is now divided between two rival camps based in the key regions of Tripolitania in the west and Cyrenaica in the east, power centers long before the colonial-era creation of the Libyan state.

In the west, the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) was set up in Tripoli in 2016. It is backed militarily by Turkey, and by the small, gas-rich Gulf nation of Qatar. The east is controlled by an administration declared by the elected parliament, which does not recognize the GNA, and is backed by military strongman Khalifa Haftar, with the support of the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Russia.

Haftar's forces besieged Tripoli for 14 months but were beaten back early last year after Turkey significantly stepped up its support for the GNA. In just one of the grisly legacies of the war, more than 120 bodies have since been exhumed from mass graves

in Tarhuna, southeast of Tripoli, formerly Haftar's main staging point. US President Joe Biden's administration has called for the immediate withdrawal of Russian, Turkish and other foreign forces from Libya, in line with the ceasefire deal.

But some 20,000 mercenaries and foreign fighters remain, in breach of a January 23 deadline to pull out. Russian military contractors of the Wagner Group backing Haftar's forces have dug in, quite literally, by bulldozing extensive trenches running south from Sirte. CNN has reported, showing satellite images.

Progress?

After years of deadlock, recent months have brought what the UN calls "tangible progress"—a flurry of intra-Libyan talks and a slow rebound in crucial oil production. Last week, Libyan delegates in Switzerland agreed on a temporary new governing executive. But huge challenges remain for the process to lead to scheduled national elections on December 24.

While the UN wants Libyans to decide their own future, no settlement appears feasible without the agreement of the foreign powers that have joined the fight by sending soldiers, drones and petro-dollars. "The situation has stabilized on the surface," said Badi, speaking before the new executive was announced, cautioning however against excessive optimism in a country that has seen multiple international peace initiatives fail. —AFP

North Korea stole \$300m in crypto to fund nukes: Experts

SEOUL: North Korea has stolen more than \$300 million worth of cryptocurrencies through cyberattacks in recent months to support its banned nuclear and ballistic missile programs, a confidential UN report said. Compiled by a panel of experts monitoring sanctions on Pyongyang, the report said the country's "total theft of virtual assets from 2019 to November 2020 is valued at approximately \$316.4 million", citing a UN member state.

Financial institutions and exchanges were hacked to generate revenue for Pyongyang's nuclear and missile development, said the report, which was seen by AFP. The vast majority of the proceeds came from two thefts late last year. The North is known to operate an army of thousands of well-trained hackers who have attacked firms, institutions and researchers in South Korea and elsewhere.

It has also been accused of exploiting its cyber capabilities for financial gain. The North is under multiple sets of international sanctions over its banned nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, which have made rapid progress under leader Kim Jong Un. A summit between Kim and then-US president Donald Trump in Hanoi in February 2019 broke down over sanctions relief and what Pyongyang would be willing to give up in return.

Nuclear talks have been stalled ever since, while the North showed off several new missiles at military parades in October and last month, when Kim pledged to strengthen his nuclear arsenal. —AFP

Who's left of the Gaddafi clan 10 years after revolt?

TRIPOLI: Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi was ousted and killed in the 2011 uprising, but several of his family members survived. A decade on, what has happened to them?

Three of Gaddafi's seven sons died in the uprising, including Mutassim, who was killed by rebels in the dictator's home town of Sirte on October 20, 2011, the same day as his father. Another son, Seif Al-Arab, perished in a NATO air raid in April 2011, and his brother Khamis died in combat four months later, at the height of the revolt.

But other members of the Gaddafi clan survived, including his wife Safiya, his eldest son Mohammed—from his first marriage—and his daughter Aisha, who are known to be living in exile. Mystery, however, surrounds the whereabouts of the dictator's erstwhile heir apparent, Seif Al-Islam Gaddafi, who is wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The family

After the fall of Tripoli to rebels in August 2011, Safiya, Mohammed and Aisha escaped to neighboring Algeria. They were later granted refuge in the Gulf sultanate of Oman on condition they do not carry out political activities, the country's then foreign minister Mohammed Abdelaziz told AFP in 2013.

Aisha, a lawyer by profession and a former UN goodwill ambassador, had been part of an international defense team for Saddam Hussein after the Iraqi leader was ousted

in the 2003 US-led invasion. High-rolling son Hannibal also sought refuge in Algeria after the uprising, before trying to sneak into Lebanon to join his wife, Lebanese model Aline Skaf. But Lebanese authorities arrested and charged him in 2015 with withholding information about prominent Muslim cleric Mussa Sadr, who went missing in 1978 during a visit to Libya. Hannibal and his wife had sparked a diplomatic incident with Switzerland in 2008, when they were arrested in a luxury Geneva hotel for assaulting two former domestic employees.

Playboy son Saadi Gaddafi—once a professional footballer in Italy—fled to Niger after the uprising but was later extradited to Libya, where he was wanted for murder and repression during the revolt. He is currently held in a Tripoli prison, accused of crimes committed against protesters in 2011 and of the 2005 killing of Libyan football player Bashir Al-Rayani.

Heir apparent

Seif Al-Islam, whose name means "sword of Islam", was captured by a Libyan militia in November 2011, days after his father was killed. Four years later, a Tripoli court sentenced him in absentia to death for crimes committed during the revolt. The armed group which captured him announced in 2017 that Seif Al-Islam had been released.

The claim was never confirmed independently, and in 2019, the ICC prosecutor said there was "reliable" information that he was in Zintan, western Libya. But Seif Al-Islam has not been seen or heard from since June 2014, when he appeared via video from Zintan during his trial by the Tripoli court.

During his glory days, Gaddafi considered himself the "Leader of the Revolution" and declared Libya a "Jamahiriya", or "state of the masses" run by local committees. Thousands of his supporters, including from his



ANKARA: In this file photo taken on August 22, 2011, a portrait of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi Kadhafi and copies of his green book are set on fire by demonstrators during a protest outside the Libyan embassy in Ankara as Libyan rebels entered the heart of Tripoli in a final drive to oust Gaddafi. —AFP

own Kadhadfa tribe, fled Libya during and after the regime's fall, with many settling in Egypt and Tunisia. "Contrary to what is thought, the Kadhadfa tribe suffered under the regime of Kadhafi, and several members who had opposed him landed in jail," said Libyan law professor Amani Al-Hejrissi.

The clan also included members of Gaddafi's revolutionary guard—a paramilitary force tasked with protecting the regime against its detractors—who were not necessarily blood relatives. Some pined for home, and a group in Cairo later revived the Al-Jamahiriyah television network, Gaddafi's propaganda arm. But could Gaddafi's exiled supporters play a political role in the now divided country? "I don't think so," said Hejrissi. "Most Libyans see the fallen regime as the root of the corruption and destruction of the political system." —AFP

CONSUMER PROTECTION DEPARTMENT

RECALL INFORMATION

Mitsubishi
 Model: Outlander & ASX
 Model year: 2016
 Total Vehicles Involved: 380 (Outlander) – 65 (ASX)

RECALL REASON Inspect Rear Brake Calipers, as it may cause decreased parking brake force.

REMEDY Replace the rear brake caliper assembly if required.

CONTACT Please call to confirm recall eligibility of the vehicle to serve you better:
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This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42,43,44,45,46 and 47) of no. (39/2015) Issuing the executive by laws of law no. (39/2014) on Consumer Protection.

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