

Gadhafi's Forces Launch Counterattack

ZAWIYA, Libya (AP) — Moammar Gadhafi's forces launched a fierce counterattack in a strategic western city on Friday, firing rockets, mortar shells and anti-aircraft guns in a bid to keep the rebels from gaining complete control and advancing toward the capital, only 30 miles away.

NATO's bombing campaign has made it difficult for the regime to send massive reinforcements to Zawiya, enabling the rebels to maintain a foothold in their biggest prize in months. But Friday's fierce onslaught by regime forces signaled an opposition push toward Tripoli, Gadhafi's main stronghold, would be arduous and bloody.

Dealing another blow to the increasingly isolated leader, Libyan rebels said Friday that Abdel-Salam Jalloud, a close Gadhafi associate who was once the No. 2 top regime official, has defected.

Jalloud helped Gadhafi stage the 1969 coup that propelled him to power and transformed Libya from a monarchy to a republic. He was Gadhafi's most trusted deputy for two decades but began to clash with the leader starting in the 1990s.

Rebel spokesman Mahmoud Shammam said that Jalloud had fled to a rebel-held area in the western mountains and was on his way to Europe. Pictures showing Jalloud in the western town of Zintan appeared on rebel Facebook pages. Jalloud did not issue any statements, but Shammam said he had confirmed the defection on the telephone.

N.M. Hero Says Getting Residency Is Too Hard

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — The man who chased down a suspected child abductor and saved a 6-year-old girl from what could have been a horrible fate was honored as a hero Friday. But he is also gaining a new kind of celebrity: as a poster child of sorts for immigration rights in state and national immigration debates.

Antonio Diaz Chacon, 23, is married to an American and has been in the country for four years. But Chacon says he abandoned attempts to get legal residency because the process was difficult and expensive.

Diaz Chacon revealed his immigration status to Univision this week and confirmed to The Associated Press that he is illegal, prompting chatter on the Internet and social networking sites that his case underscored immigrant rights positions in two ongoing political debates.

Some argue he is an example of the kind of immigrant the federal government will now largely leave alone. The Department of Homeland Security announced Thursday that deportations would focus on criminals.

"As exceptional as his story is," said Christina Parker, a spokeswoman for Border Network for Human Rights in El Paso, Texas, "it points to the fact that most undocumented immigrants living in the United States are not criminals. He's more than not a criminal now. He's a hero."

Firms Propose Trip For Student Protesters

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Companies involved in employing foreign students who walked off their jobs in protest at a plant that serves the Hershey chocolate manufacturer have developed a plan to send the students on a trip to see some of the United States' cultural and historical landmarks, although a spokesman for the students reacted coolly to the idea.

Rick Anaya, chief executive of the Council for Educational Travel USA, the nonprofit that helped bring the students to the U.S., said the plan emerged Friday after a two-hour conference call with representatives of the other three companies involved in their employment at a chocolate distribution center just outside Hershey.

"We're actually doing this on our dime," Anaya said, including paid time off for the student-workers. "We're paying for this trip. We're just fleshing out the details."

Students walked off the job at an Exel Inc.-run facility on Wednesday, saying the work was so strenuous and low-paying that they were unable to see very much of the country they came to visit. Exel said it doesn't intend to have students who hold J-1 visas, which supply resorts and other businesses with cheap seasonal labor as part of a program aimed at fostering cultural understanding, work at the facility after the current group finishes in about a month.

Online Terms Enter Oxford English Dictionary

LONDON (AP) — Woot! The online expression of enthusiasm is now in the dictionary. So are textspeak, sexting — and, less happily, cyberbullying.

They are among 400 new entries in the 12th edition of the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, published this month.

Another newcomer to the reference book's 24,000 entries is retweet — to repost another Twitter user's message.

Editor Angus Stevenson revealed some of the new entries in a blog post Thursday.

Some of the new words describe forms of behavior and communication created by technology. There's cyberbullying, a form of online abuse, and textspeak, the abbreviated language used in cell phone messages. And, of course, sexting — sending explicit photos or messages by mobile phone.

20 Killed In Syria Despite Assad's Pledge

BY ZEINA KARAM
Associated Press

BEIRUT — Syrian security forces killed at least 20 protesters Friday despite promises by President Bashar Assad that the military operations against the 5-month-old uprising are over.

The killings, which came as thousands poured into the streets across Syria, suggest the autocratic leader is either unwilling to stop the violence — or not fully in control of his own regime.

Assad, who inherited power from his father in 2000, is facing the most serious international isolation of his rule. On Thursday, the United States and its European allies demanded he step down.

Military operations have subsided in the past few days, following a fresh crackdown on major flashpoint cities that started at the beginning of the month to root out anti-government protesters.

But persistent gunfire and shootings, along with Friday's killings, underscore the difficulty of any kind of diplomatic pressure

achieving results in the absence of any appetite for military intervention.

Human rights groups said Assad's forces have killed nearly 2,000 people since the uprising erupted in mid-March. A high-level U.N. team recommended Thursday that the violence in Syria be referred to the International Criminal Court over possible crimes against humanity.

"Bye, bye Bashar, see you in The Hague!" protesters shouted Friday in the central city of Homs as crowds filled the streets, spurred on by the international condemnation.

ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said he has received reports of atrocities in Syria but has no jurisdiction "at this stage" to open an investigation because Damascus does not recognize the court.

He said he could begin investigating at the request of the U.N. Security Council. Syria's U.N. ambassador said a U.N. humanitarian assessment team will arrive in Damascus on Saturday.

The International Committee of the Red Cross also said it is optimistic Syrian authorities will grant the humanitarian organization

access to all detainees in the country "within weeks."

The number of protesters Friday appeared to be markedly lower than in previous weeks, largely due to the crackdown and security presence. But amateur video posted online by activists showed thousands of protesters in various areas, some calling for Assad's departure, others for his execution.

"We will not sell the blood of our martyrs," read a banner in Hilfaya, near Hama.

The unrest has laid bare old resentments in Syria, a mostly Sunni Muslim country with a potentially explosive sectarian mix. Beseet by popular upheaval, Assad is increasingly relying on a coterie of relatives from his tiny Alawite sect, leading to speculation about how much power he commands over them.

His younger brother, Maher, is key, believed to be in command of much of the current bloody crackdown. Chief of Syria's elite forces and reputed to have once shot a brother-in-law in the stomach in a family feud, Maher's recent tactics have been denounced as inhumane by the prime minister of neighboring Turkey.

Doctors Question Gov. Perry's Stem Cell Treatment

BY MARILYNN MARCHIONE
AP Medical Writer

He calls it innovative. Others call it a big risk. In any case, the stem cell procedure that Texas Gov. Rick Perry had last month was an unusual experiment to fix a common malady: a bad back.

Perry, the newest GOP presidential candidate, has access to the best possible care and advice. Yet he and his doctor chose a treatment beyond mainstream medicine: He had stem cells taken from fat in his own body, grown in a lab and then injected into his back and his bloodstream during a July 1 operation to fuse part of his spine.

The treatment carries potential risks ranging from blood clots to infection to cancer and may even run afoul of federal rules, doctors say. At least one patient died of a clot hours after an infusion of fat-derived stem cells outside the United States. It's not clear how much of this Perry might have known.

His doctor and friend, orthopedist Dr. Stanley Jones, could not be reached for comment despite repeated requests to the spokeswoman for his Houston-area hospital. Jones told the Texas Tribune that he went to Japan for a stem cell treatment that helped his arthritis and that he had never before tried the procedure he



Gov. Rick Perry speaks to medical professionals during a campaign stop at Carolinas Hospital System in Florence, South Carolina, Friday, August 19, 2011.

used on Perry. He also said it had no side effects or risks.

However, some top scientists are questioning the safety and wisdom of Perry's treatment, especially because it was not part of a clinical trial in which unproven

therapies are tested in a way that helps protect patients and advances medical knowledge.

Perry "exercised poor judgment" to try it, said Dr. George Q. Daley, of Children's Hospital Boston and the Harvard Stem Cell

Institute. "As a highly influential person of power, Perry's actions have the unfortunate potential to push desperate patients into the clinics of quacks," who are selling unproven treatments "for everything from Alzheimer's to autism."

Missouri Teachers Union Challenges New Social Networking Law

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — A teachers union is challenging a new Missouri law that limits teachers' contact with students on social networks.

The Missouri Teachers Association said it filed suit Friday against the state and two officials seeking an injunction to block enforcement of the new measures, which take effect Aug. 28.

The law prohibits private communication through websites such as Facebook between teachers and current students or for-

mer students who are still minors.

The lawsuit asserts the restrictions are so vague and overbroad that it would be difficult to know what is allowed. It contends teachers' free speech and association rights would be restricted.

State Sen. Jane Cunningham, who sponsored the proposal, is confident it will withstand legal scrutiny. She says critics misunderstand the restrictions and that only private communication is banned.

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