

More than 4,000 migrants rescued off Libya: Italian coast guard

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Rome: Some 4,100 people were rescued off the Libyan coasts on Thursday, Italian officials said.

Overall, 22 operations were carried out to assist migrants and refugees sailing aboard overcrowded crafts in the Strait of Sicily, between Italy and Libya, a coast guard spokesman told Xinhua news agency.

The operations involved Italy's navy ships and coast guard patrol boats, along with other forces from the European Union (EU) naval mission EUNAVFOR MED and EU borders agency Frontex, according to the coast guard.

Also on Thursday, a migrant boat capsized 35 nautical miles north of the Libyan city of Zuwara, and 20 to 30 people were feared to have drowned in the incident, Italian media said.

Â Â Â **A EUNAVFOR MED reconnaissance aircraft spotted the craft, which had already capsized, with an estimated 100 people into the waters around it.**

Pictures taken from the EU plane showed migrants and refugees clinging desperately to the half-submerged boat.

Some 90 people were rescued in the operation, which was carried out by a Spanish ship, and two vessels from Italy's coast guard.

- IANS