

Politics



Menfi, El Sisi discuss support for Libyan political process

The Head of the Presidential Council, Mohammed Al-Menfi, discussed with the President of Egypt, Abdel Fattah El Sisi, the importance of continuing joint work to strengthen cooperation in various fields, especially in politics and security.

According to the Presidential Council, the two sides discussed on Thursday morning in Cairo the importance of supporting the political process in Libya, as Menfi praised the depth of the historical relations between the two neighboring countries, appreciating the Egyptian role in supporting Libya at all levels, and stressing the continuation of work to complete the election process. El Sisi reaffirmed Egypt's support for all efforts aimed at protecting Libya's territorial integrity, and supporting state institutions to enable them to play their role to achieve the goal of holding presidential and parliamentary elections, thus advancing the path of stability and development in Libya, according to the Egyptian presidential spokesman.

The spokesman, Ahmed Fahmy, explained that the meeting saw an emphasis on the importance of working to consolidate the unity and security of the Libyan state, and the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya.

The spokesman pointed to the two parties' reiteration on continuing to work to strengthen the capabilities of Libyan state institutions to carry out their role and complete the election process, ensuring the activation of the will of the Libyan people and the preservation of their capabilities and best interests.

Politics



Prime Minister: Libya is at war with human traffickers

Libya is at war with human traffickers, Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah said, according to an interview on the sidelines of the Italian-African summit in Rome with Italian Nova news agency, which added that he had indicated that Libya was in a state of war against human traffickers, who send migrants to die at sea.

Dbeibah also said Libya was against "criminals involved in smuggling oil, fuel, and drugs," adding that the Libyan executive authority recognized by the United Nations, in reference to his government, launched a campaign in 2023 against human traffickers and fuel smugglers who operated along the coast of Tripoli, and used drones to combat those activities.

He said he believed that "this is an ongoing war against human trafficking and also against other criminals. Let us stop fuel trafficking, along with other trafficking such as cocaine," describing it as a "complex issue."

"Libya does not export immigrants, but it is a transit country. We are just a route from Africa to Europe. Libya is just a center, or the last stop before the sea," he said, pointing out that Libya's capacity is limited, and calling on the Europeans to cooperate and assist, especially the Italian government, to combat this phenomenon.

In his speech, Monday, during his participation in the Italian-African Summit in Rome, Dbeibah called for a move away from the security-based approach in dealing between Africa and Europe, stressing that the time has come to make a qualitative shift and recognize African countries as true partners in international development.

He added that "there are approaches that can address important issues such as immigration, political stability, and security," calling for moving towards a development approach that aims to enhance relations with the African countries to create a new reality.

Dbeibah also indicated that Libya held an energy and economic summit in Tripoli to enhance its vision for production for the benefit of African and European countries, pointing out that the importance of Africa does not lie only in the fact that it is a continent rich in various natural resources and wealth.

Politics

Italy fears Russia is planning to establish nuclear base in Libya

"The Times" newspaper revealed that fears have begun to increase in Italy that Russia will install nuclear submarines in a base that it hopes to establish in eastern Libya, which will greatly strengthen Russian influence in the central Mediterranean and place nuclear weapons on the southern side of Europe.

Russian Deputy Defense Minister Yunus Bek Yevkurov made his fourth visit to Benghazi last Monday. He began last Au-

gust his visits to meet with military commander Khalifa Haftar.

The two men reportedly discussed establishing a Russian naval base in Tobruk, which could add to Moscow's two existing bases in the eastern Mediterranean, in Tartus and Latakia, Syria.

Vincenzo Camporini, who formerly headed the Italian Armed Forces, said he believed that the Russians will give priority to placing nuclear submarines in Tobruk

before surface ships.

On Sunday, Khalifa Haftar received at the headquarters of his forces in Rajma, Benghazi, Russian Deputy Defense Minister Yunus Bek Yevkurov, whose visits to Benghazi have become frequent over the past period, especially with the receipt of identical reports about Moscow's intention to create an African Legion for its forces to replace the Wagner Group to be initially active in five countries, including Libya.

Politics

Dbeibah calls for a shift from security-focused approach in Africa-Europe relations

Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah advocated for a shift from a security-focused approach to a developmental approach in dealings between Africa and Europe during his participation in the Italy-Africa Summit held in Rome.

He emphasised recognising African countries as true partners in international development, which he said would help address critical issues such as migration, political stability, and security, thereby creating a new reality.

Dbeibah underscored that Libya held the Energy and Economy Summit in Tripoli to enhance its vision for production, a move that would benefit African and European countries.

The PM highlighted that Africa's significance lies not only in its abundance of natural resources and wealth. To this end, he called for a developmental approach aimed at improving relations with the countries of the continent.

On the sidelines of the summit, Dbeibah met with his Italian counterpart, Giorgia Meloni, where they discussed economic cooperation, focusing on oil and gas and bilateral trade.

The leaders reviewed developments regarding activating the Friendship Treaty between Libya and Italy, supporting the efforts of the joint committees to resume work on the treaty's terms and to implement projects previously committed to by Italy in Libya.

Furthermore, the two parties discussed developments in security and illegal immigration, ways to enhance Italian interest in the African continent, and coordination to organise more international events in Libya.

Politics

UN envoy holds meeting with security, military leaders in Libyan capital

The UN envoy to Libya Abdoulaye Bathily held a meeting on Sunday at the Rixos Hotel's Hall in Tripoli with leaders of armed factions in Tripoli and the western region, most of which are affiliated with the Ministries of Interior and Defense of the Government of National Unity.

Sources close to the attendees said that the meeting focused on Bathily's initiative to bring together what he described as the main parties in Libya at a five-party negotiating table, confirming that the leaders of the armed factions expressed their dismay at the House of Representatives' Speaker Aqila Saleh and Khalifa Haftar's insistence that Dbeibah withdraws from the negotiations or the UN must invite the PM of the parallel government, Osama Hammad.

The sources added that the leaders of the armed factions called for the exclusion of Khalifa Haftar from the negotiations or the invitation of a representative for them, given that they collectively represent the same weight as Haftar in the eastern region.

According to a statement published by the UN Support Mission in Libya, Bathily reminded the attendees of the need to perform their duty to bring peace and stability to Libya and "heal the wounds of the past and rebuild the country," stressing that Libya belongs to all Libyans, and it should not be "a hostage to any group or group of individuals".

"After 13 years of conflict and instability in Libya, the people of Libya deserve a better life and the time has come to embrace a vision that allows the youth of this country to realize their full potential," Bathily said. The UN mission indicated that Bathily was working to facilitate a comprehensive peace process that would lead to a solution "led and owned by the Libyans", and to take the necessary measures to prevent the eruption of conflict again, including efforts aimed at unifying security and military institutions.

It stressed that Bathily would continue to engage all concerned Libyan parties, including various security and military actors across Libya, to ensure support for reaching a comprehensive peaceful solution to the current political impasse and to revive the electoral process.

Politics

Biden administration disturbed by Libya's positions in support of Palestinian case

An official Libyan source revealed to Al Jazeera Net that the American administration is disturbed by the positions of the Libyan Presidential Council and the Government of National Unity (GNU) in support of the Palestinian resistance.

The source indicated that diplomats from the American embassy in Libya expressed to GNU officials their rejection of Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah's descrip-

tion of what is happening in Gaza as "war crimes and genocide."

The official confirmed that the US administration's current priorities in Libya are combating terrorism, ensuring the continued flow of oil and the absence of new wars, and monitoring Russian expansion in the east of the country, according to statements to Al Jazeera Net.



The Central Bank of Libya has adopted the new regulatory framework for the credit usage system in a step geared toward developing the credit information center and enhancing transparency and availability of data, conducive to the improvement of the business environment in Libya.

This step opens new doors for small and medium-sized companies in Libya to secure financial support with their accreditation from the Central Bank of Libya, with a contribution from France Experts Institution through the EU-funded E-Nable project.

For this purpose, the institution organized several workshops and training courses,

which played a major role in ensuring that the regulatory framework is compatible with international best practices and addressing the specific needs of the Libyan financial system.

The Director of the Libyan Credit Information Center, Nabil Abu Jannah, said, "We welcome the Central Bank of Libya's approval of the new legal framework for the Libyan Credit Information Center and recognize its ability to bring about positive change."

"We affirm our commitment to working with our international partners to facilitate fair access to financing and strengthen the financial system throughout Libya." He added.

For his part, Nicolas Orlando, the European Union Ambassador to Libya, said: "It is another important contribution from the European Union to Libya's efforts to develop a sound and effective business environment for all."

"The center's operations are important for improving credit risk management. The workshops dedicated to capacity building have provided the center's employees with experience in information management." He went on to say.

He also said we will continue to build on this important achievement through a new program that strengthens the Libyan financial sector, in cooperation with the Central Bank of Libya.



Economy

Hweij meets Egyptian companies at Libya Food Expo to discuss business challenges

Minister of Economy and Trade Mohamed Hweij met with Egyptian companies participating in the Libya Food Exhibition, which is currently being held at the Tripoli International Fairgrounds from January 28 to 31, 2024.

The meeting grouped the Chairman of the General Authority for Investment Promotion and Privatization Affairs, the Chairman of the General Authority for Exhibitions, the Minister's advisor, and the head of the Libyan-Egyptian Chamber of Commerce.

The parties discussed difficulties faced by business owners and investors from both countries in terms of movement and transportation.



Economy

Al-Kabir, Bathily discuss economic situation in Libya

The head of the United Nations support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) Abdoulaye Bathily, has reviewed with the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya, Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir, economic and financial situation in Libya.

Through his X platform page, Bathily said that he agreed with Al-Kabir on the need to ensure accountable public spending, adding "I also impressed upon the need for distributing resources equitably for the benefit of all Libyans".



Central Bank of Libya hosts meeting to support projects aimed at increasing oil production

The Governor of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL), Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir, the Head of the Audit Bureau, Khalid Shakshak, and the Head of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Farhat Bengdara, reviewed in a meeting held Wednesday at the headquarters of the CBL in Tripoli; projects to increase oil production and their financial needs. The attendees reaffirmed their support for the efforts of the NOC and its encouraged it to raise production rates, and to establish a clear mechanism for financing the development projects presented by the NOC, in addition to presenting solutions to address the fuel supply mechanism, its payment methods, and the existing

challenges.

They also agreed to raise the rates of disclosure and transparency, and to strengthen the review and auditing process carried out by the Audit Bureau as well as the relevant regulatory authorities. The meeting reviewed the water crisis in the city of Zliten, support for the government's efforts, and the National Oil Corporation's contribution to addressing this crisis. Last Sunday, Al-Kabir met with Bengdara and discussed support of the National Oil Corporation to increase production of oil and gas according to the NOC's plans, in addition to increasing coordination as regards to transparency and disclosure.

Economy



Dbeibah announces major oil sector investment plans

GNU PM Dbeibah says that more than 70% of petroleum products consumed domestically in Libya are imported.

During his recent appearance on CNBC Arabia's "Hawar Al-Usbu" program, Dbeibah highlighted that the oil sector generated a revenue of \$25 billion, constituting the country's highest income.

He highlighted the government's investment plans for the oil industry, with a proposed budget of over \$30 billion set for 2024.

The PM invited companies interested in investing in Libya, emphasizing that nationality would not be a barrier, as he affirmed that the government would not rely on external debt markets for financial support.

Regarding the N70 field, Dbeibah noted that Italy's Eni has the freedom to participate in any capacity it deems fit, as it is the company that invited Total, Adnoc, and a Turkish company to partake in the project, as per his statements.

Economy



Egyptian Maridive secures oil exploration contract in Libya

Maridive, an Egyptian public company specializing in navigational and oil services, has disclosed to the Egyptian Stock Exchange that it has awarded a three-year oil exploration contract worth 29.72 million euros to its subsidiary, Mez Oil and Gas Services.

The contract is for the benefit of Mellitah Oil and Gas Company and will support exploration and petroleum production activities at the Bourri Field and the Sea of Salam in Libya.

Mez Oil and Gas Services, which is being established in Libya, is 49% owned by Maridive. The implementation of the contract is scheduled to begin in the first quarter of this year, as per the statement.

Established in March 1978, Maridive has been listed on the Egyptian Stock Exchange since April 1992. The company operates in the transportation sector, focusing on ports and maritime services.

Health



Government of National Unity takes measures to support cancer patients

The Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah stressed the need to stop issuing treatment letters until the recommendation is issued by the National Cancer Control Authority, and to work seriously to provide oncology drugs and their supplements.

This call came in a meeting held by Dbeibah, on Thursday to follow up on the Cancer patients' file, with the Head of the Audit Bureau, Khalid Shakshak, the Head of the National Cancer Control Authority, Haider Al-Sayeh, the Director General of Oversight of Service Sectors at the Audit Bureau, and the directors of Patient Affairs and the Planning Department of the Treatment Services Support and Development Authority.

Dbeibah stressed the need to support the Authority's plan to provide the necessary services to oncology patients, unify the efforts of state institutions to organize this file, limit the waste of financial allocations due to its lack of regulation, and establish the necessary control measures that contribute to supporting treatment inside Libya.

Shakshak stressed the necessity of activating private pharmacies to provide medicines to patients according to the rules contained in the public tender, while Al-Sayeh pointed out that a system will be installed in local oncology centers and hospitals to link them together, and issue electronic cards to all patients. Al-Sayeh said the Public Tender Committee and the Medical Supply Authority will provide specialized medicines and identify the shortages of medicines to all patients, stressing the launching of radiotherapy in a number of local oncology centers to contribute to the localization of oncology treatment.

The Director of the Patient Affairs Department at the Treatment Services Authority said that coordination is continuing to localize treatment in Libya, and to return about 45 patients, especially those that require chemotherapy and radiation treatment, after ensuring that medications are available and radiotherapy is activated in local centers.

Health



Ministry of Health signs agreement with Slovak company to operate physical therapy department at Abu Salim Hospital

The head of the Therapeutic Services Support and Development Agency of the Ministry of Health, Ahmed Militan, has signed a partnership agreement with the Slovak company "AX15" to operate the physical therapy department at Abu Salim Hospital.

The agreement also includes training medical personnel, in implementation of the Government of National Unity Council of Ministers Resolution No. 31 of 2024, according to a statement by the agency's Facebook page.

This is the second agreement to be signed with the same company, as last October, the "AX15" company contracted with the agency to operate the Misrata Physical Therapy Center for muscular dystrophy patients and train national cadres.

Health



US medical team conducts 35 Life-saving heart surgeries for children in Benghazi

An American medical team has conducted 35 complex open-heart surgeries for children at the Benghazi Medical Center.

The team, specializing in surgeries for congenital heart defects in children and newborns, visited the centre for a total of 21 days, concluding their work on Monday, a statement by the Medical Services Support and Development Agency noted on Tuesday.

The Agency highlighted that the arrival of the medical team from the American NOVICK Association is part of its plan to localize treatment within the country.

Health



Italian medical team performs surgeries on muscular dystrophy patients

An Italian medical visiting team has begun performing the first surgeries on patients with muscular dystrophy in the Misrata Medical Center.

The center reported in a statement on its Facebook page that the operation, which is first performed in the center was successful, waiting for the case to fully recover, after undergoing appropriate treatment for a period of time.

The Therapeutic Services Support and Development Agency explained that these operations come within the government's plan to localize treatment inside the country.

Health

Outbreak of nodular dermatitis threatens livestock in Al Bayda

The Livestock Department in Al Bayda has reported an alarming increase in the number of animals dying due to nodular dermatitis, reaching 103, including 81 cows and 34 calves.

The department attributed the rising number of infections, which now stands at 910, to a shortage of vaccinations, disease-specific insecticides, and disinfectants. They also cited governmental negligence in providing urgent necessities for the operation of the animal health office. In a statement, the department expressed concern over the dwindling livestock population due to neglect, particularly after Storm Daniel struck the eastern region.

They urged appropriate measures to combat the scourge and provide the necessary pesticides, disinfectants,

and materials to control the disease. Furthermore, the department raised the issue of the potential consumption of meat that may be infected with the disease and could endanger human lives, calling for immediate action to curb its spread in the city and surrounding areas. Nodular dermatitis is a viral disease that affects cattle and bulls, causing skin nodules and other symptoms. It can be transmitted from one infected animal to another through insects or direct contact. The disease does not affect humans, but consuming meat from infected animals can cause harm. Isolation, antibiotics, and vaccination are required for treatment, but the disease can lead to serious health issues and even death.

Health

Libyan delegation visits the US to review healthcare cooperation

A delegation from the Ministry of Health of the Government of National Unity visited Washington, DC. to discuss cooperation in the field of healthcare.

The United States (US) Special Envoy to Libya, Richard Norland, participated in a virtual discussion via video that brought together the Libyan delegation and American officials, according to a post on his account on X platform.

"Thank you to US-Libya Chamber of Commerce Director Debbie Hurst for hosting today's virtual discussion with Libyan Ministry of Health officials who are visiting the United States to meet with healthcare providers and hospitals in New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.," Norland said.

The American envoy continued welcomed the visit and supported efforts aimed at promoting sustainable and ongoing improvements to health systems and healthcare in Libya and around the world.

Sports

Libyan PM follows up on Tripoli International Stadium's maintenance

The Libyan Prime Minister inspected the maintenance and development work at the Tripoli International Stadium, as workers continued to work on the seats and the pitch of the stadium during the visit, as work on the hybrid turf for the stadium's pitch began three days ago.

According to footage published by Hakomitna, Dbeibah asked the technical officials about preparing the stadium and about the accomplished work, stressing "the need to take care of the stadium so that it does not consume the grass, for the sake of Libyan youth, and the need for the stadium to be on a global level and to allow Libyans to attend matches like those they watch for major world clubs."

Officials at the stadium said that the turf being installed is the best in the world, and is similar to that found in the Bernabeu Stadium owned by Real Madrid, in the Spanish capital.

Last December, the Administrative Centers and Development Authority announced that the completion rate of the Tripoli International Stadium project had reached about 75%. Yet, maintenance started more than two years ago, and Dbeibah's government announced dates for the opening of the stadium on more than one occasion to no result.

Sports

LFF opens doors for Sudanese and Palestinian players in 2023-2024 season

The Libyan Football Federation (LFF) on Thursday issued a decision allowing Libyan clubs to include Sudanese and Palestinian players in the 2023-2024 football season.

Resolution No. 7, stated that both Sudan and Palestine are currently facing difficult circumstances that have prevented their official sports competitions and led to the migration of a significant number of players from both countries abroad.

The decision was made based on a request from the Sudanese Football Federation, allowing each club to register players holding Sudanese and Palestinian nationality in their team lists for the sports season 2023-2024, subject to certain conditions.

The LFF clarified that clubs in various divisions of the league, including the Premier, First, Second, and Third divisions, will have the right to register two players with Sudanese nationality, along with two players with Palestinian nationality.

As for youth categories, each club will be allowed to register one Sudanese player and one Palestinian player, as specified in the decision.

Furthermore, the Libyan FFF decided to treat Sudanese and Palestinian players in terms of registration and participation numbers the same as Libyan players.

The registration will be conducted according to the regulations and conditions specified in the players' status rules and the supplementary decisions.





Opinions

Political stability prerequisite for economic reform

By Abdullah Alkabir, a Libyan political writer and commentator

The Head of Government of National Unity has retracted the decision to lift fuel subsidies, even though the video circulating of the government meeting showed him saying that the decision was irreversible. The main reason for this retraction is the popular rejection of the step, which would have reversed the economic situation and raised prices to frightening levels, because prices of the service sector are linked to low fuel prices.

The argument that the government is relying on to lift fuel subsidies, and to standardize fuel prices with that of the neighbouring countries, is to cut off the smuggling trail, as about 30% of gasoline and diesel are smuggled east, west and south across the sea and desert, and because of the large difference in prices, smuggling gangs reap huge sums of money. This is so, despite the large allocations to security agencies from the public budget, according to Central Bank data, as smuggling operations continue at approximately the same pace.

There is no doubt that the best way to eliminate smuggling and the parallel market, whether for fuel or any other commodity, is to eliminate the double price of the same commodity. By removing the subsidy, the price will be determined according to the market formula, so there will no longer be a difference that tempts risk and smuggling. Undoubtedly, the smuggling mafias, and after having established an integrated base for smuggling, and having accumulated huge wealth by practicing this activity for nearly a decade, it will thwart any step that would rob it of this easy and guaranteed source, to continue seizing and smuggling cheap fuel.

However, confronting it will not pose a dilemma for this government or others, if the decision to end the subsidy is implemented and the risk of smuggling becomes futile, but the repercussions of this step on the people and on the market in the current situation are very serious, as Libyans depend on their transportation on private cars, for Public transportation is not availa-

ble in most Libyan cities, with the exception of limited buses in some cities, that operate without organization or a stable network with clear lines and schedule, in addition to the fact that the Libyan citizen is not accustomed to it, because it is not part of the public system of movement. As for the market, the result will be a huge jump in prices, which will not be matched by the citizen's ability to confront and adapt to it.

The controversy over this issue ended quickly after the government retreated, but some facts have emerged that require careful consideration.

First, there is a real need to lift fuel subsidies, but this step can only be implemented within an integrated package of economic reforms, so that lifting subsidies does not have any consequences detrimental to the people and therefore increase their burden.

Secondly, economic reforms cannot be random or makeshift ones. Economists must be consulted so that reforms are scientific and take into account all relevant aspects.

Thirdly, it is impossible to achieve any reforms in any field without ending the political crisis. The political and institutional division, imposed by some political and regional parties, is the main disaster that was like a locomotive that pulled all sectors behind it. The education, health, or services sectors were not spared, in addition to the economic ills, as political stability is the basis for organizing society and addressing any imbalance or failures in the remaining branches, such as the main tributary of the river that feeds the other branches and streams.

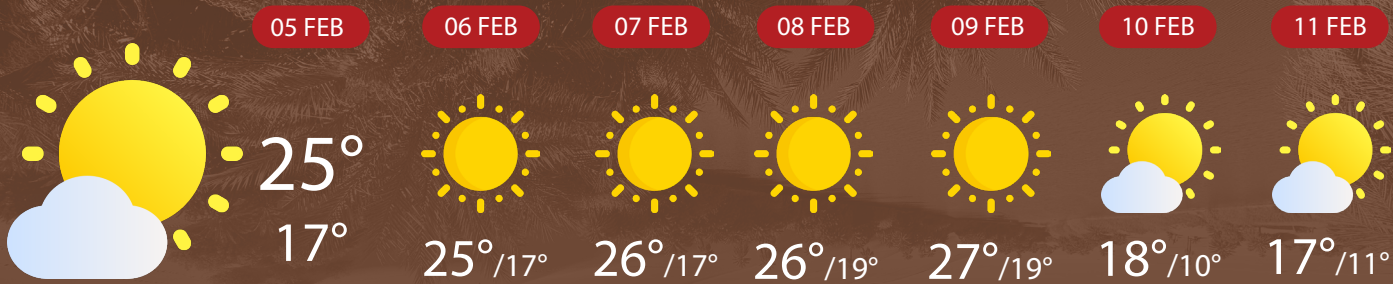
Political stability cannot be achieved by the current political class, and change requires conducting elections that are disrupted by this very class to preserve its influence and privileges, and the appropriate moment has not yet come to impose elections under international or local pressure.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Libya Observer

Photo of the Week



Tripoli Weather Forecast



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