

Politics

75 political parties urge UN Secretary General to push for a unified Libyan government



75 political parties issued a joint statement on Wednesday calling on the Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, to assist in forming a new unified government in the country, and to expand the circle of political dialogue away from the initiative of the UN envoy to Libya Abdoulaye Bathily.

Local media reported a copy of the letter addressed to Guterres, in which the signatories said that it was necessary to reconsider Bathily's initiative, expand the participation of Libyans in the political dialogue to produce sustainable solutions, and to expand participation outside the parties of the conflict.

The parties confirmed that the UN mission's role in Libya witnessed a clear decline and moved away from neutrality, which weakened confidence in its ability to develop an appropriate solution to the Libyan crisis.

They urged for the need to conduct a comprehensive review of the mission's work mechanisms, which worked to marginalize political parties in Libya. They also called on political parties to have a fundamental role in any work carried out by the UN mission, and to be a participating party in any political process aimed at resolving the current political impasse in Libya.

The parties stressed that holding elections required a political preparation that would seriously address the causes of the conflict, stressing that the time has come to form a new, unified and mini-government that works according to clear tasks and a specific time frame to bring Libya to the stage of parliamentary and presidential elections. They demanded that their letter addressed to the Secretary General be presented to the members of the UN Security Council, expressing their hope for progress to hold the elections that Libyans aspire to.

Politics

Interior Minister orders withdrawal of ministry units from Ras Ajdair border



The Interior Minister of the Government of National Unity Emad Al-Trabelsi announced on Wednesday the withdrawal of members working in the Security Directorate, the Police Station, and the Passports and Nationality Authority from the Ras Ajdair border to "preserve lives and property."

The ministry explained that Al-Trabelsi decided to do so "after outlaw armed groups carried out mobilizations with light and medium weapons, which posed a direct threat to the members working at the border." It explained that the Minister of the Interior informed the Attorney General, the Head of the Presidential Council, and the Prime Minister of the course of events that occurred and the

closure of the border until further notice, in addition to the transfer of three expensive automatic detection cars, within the borders of Tunisia, in coordination with the Tunisian authorities in order to preserve public funds and properties.

Al-Trabelsi's decision came hours after he confirmed the ministry's intention to regain control of the Ras Ajdair border crossing with Tunisia, "even if it was necessary to use force."

Meanwhile, Zuwara municipality threatened to organize "civil disobedience" if the Government of National Unity did not intervene quickly to put an end to the "abuses and provocations" at the Ras Ajdair border. It called in a video statement on the Presidential Council, the

government, and the High Council of State to "bear their official and moral responsibility to prevent an armed conflict in the region."

The municipality said that Zuwara was prepared to confront any emergency in the event of the continuation of what it described as explicit provocations issued by the Minister of Interior, adding that "if the government does not intervene, we will be forced to resort to all means including cutting off communication and stopping work in all facilities from Mellitah Oil Complex in the east to Ras Ajdair in the west," saying Al-Trabelsi's decisions were "ill-considered, provocative, and intended to settle tribal scores."

Politics



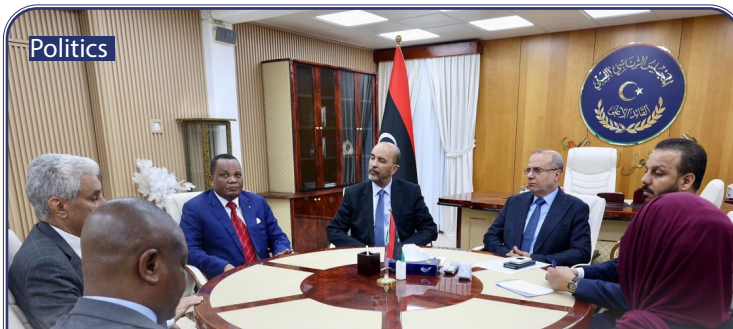
US extends sanctions on Libya, Russia, Iran for another year

The United States extended on Wednesday the sanctions imposed on Libya, Russia, and Iran for another year.

The sanctions were initially imposed on Libya in March 2011 after the Qaddafi regime used force against civilians. The current sanctions regime includes an arms embargo, targeted asset freezes, travel bans, and measures to prevent illegal oil exports.

It may be worth noting that the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States are all implementing independent and UN sanctions on Libya.

Politics



Al-Lafi confirms need for holding reconciliation conference in Libya

The Deputy Head of the Presidential Council, Abdullah Al-Lafi, reiterated the necessity of holding the comprehensive reconciliation conference in one of the Libyan cities, with the participation of all parties, to ensure progress in the reconciliation file, as it is the key to the solution in Libya.

Al-Lafi and the second Deputy Head of Presidential Council Mossa Al-Koni received the Congolese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jean-Claude Gakosso, and the African Union's Advisor for National Reconciliation, Mohamed Hassan Al-Labat, to discuss developments in the national reconciliation file and preparations for holding the comprehensive conference.

Al-Koni stressed the need for holding the comprehensive reconciliation conference without postponement and urged for continuing work on the reconciliation file.

Politics



Protests in Misrata call for dismissing PM Dbeibah, HoR Speaker and Central Bank's Governor

A number of protesters gathered in front of the Martyrs' Hall in the city of Misrata, on Tuesday, to protest against the economic crisis in the country and to denounce the decision to impose a tax on the selling price of foreign exchange.

The protesters raised banners calling for the dismissal of political bodies whose legal terms had ended, mentioning the Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity, Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aqila Saleh, and the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya, Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir.

The Central Bank of Libya directed on Tuesday commercial banks to implement the Speaker of the House of Representatives' Resolution (No. 15) of 2024 regarding temporarily imposing a 27% tax on the foreign exchange rate.

Politics



Bathily meets Haftar and Hammad in Benghazi

The head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Abdoulaye Bathily, met with Khalifa Haftar to review Libya's political, security, and economic situation and explore ways to advance the political process.

On his X account on Wednesday, Bathily said they agreed to coordinate all initiatives towards enabling elections and work towards a political settlement among major actors. The UNSMIL head also met with the PM appointed by the Tobruk-based Parliament, Osama Hammad, and discussed facilitating access for humanitarian actors to benefit the population.

"I reiterated my call for all Libyan leaders to rise to their responsibility and unite for the benefit of their motherland, including in managing the reconstruction of Derna and other flood-affected areas."

Economy

Bengdara urges PM to accept UAE's proposal to sell its stake in Ras Lanuf refinery

After a series of international arbitration cases filed by the United Arab Emirates'(UAE) group Al Gharir against the Libyan Oil Corporation (NOC), most of which were lost by the Emirati group, and some were even followed by rulings to compensate Libya in the amount of millions of dollars, and after the Trasta company owned by the Emirati group obstructed the resumption of work in the Ras Lanuf refinery due to the fact that it is a partner in it, the group offered a solution to this issue by selling its stake in Ras Lanuf to an unknown third party.

According to Fawasel media platform, NOC Chairman Farhat Bengdara addressed the Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah of, and the Head of the High Energy Council, demanding that the Emirati group, which owns Trasta; the NOC's partner in the Ras Lanuf refinery, accept the offer of selling its stake to an undisclosed third party.

Bengdara added that the deal to sell the stake to a third party would be in Libya's interest because the new partner would restore the refinery's operation and resume production, which would secure the country's fuel needs, so that Libya would not be accused in arbitration cases of harming Trasta. He urged for the completion of the sale to be accompanied by the termination of the contract of Trasta company, which in turn would have to drop all lawsuits against Libya.

Ras Lanuf refinery was established in 1984 and was designed to produce all fuels in large quantities according to international specifications, with a production capacity of 220,000 barrels of crude oil per day.

It is noteworthy that the former NOC Chairman has repeatedly called for pressure on all parties to appoint the international expert according to the (fair market) price as stipulated in the shareholders' agreement and to accelerate the purchase of the stake of the Emirati partner to restore the refinery in order to carry out maintenance, and operate the Ras Lanuf complex, despite Emirati partner's opposition to the appointment of the expert for several years.

Economy

Libyan Investment Authority denies putting \$5 billion for new investments in Egypt



The Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) said that its investment situation in Egypt is good, and it was seeking to develop it, denying what was circulated by some media outlets and social media pages about putting an amount of five billion dollars for new investments in Egypt. LIA's media advisor, Louay Al-Greyo, denied that they had recently pumped five billion dollars to increase investments in Egypt. He added that LIA's existing investment activity in Egypt is good, with the hope that it will be developed in the future within the framework of the good relations between the two countries, and in a way that would serve the interests of the two peoples. He called on the media to be accurate and obtain such news from official sources.

This news circulated at a time when the Libyan Investment Authority was participating in the Cairo International Exhibition "EECA EXPO 2024", which was held during the period from February 29 to March 9, according to Egyptian media.

On March 4, the Egyptian "Yoom7" website published a statement attributed to LIA stating that it had "allocated an investment portfolio worth up to \$5 billion to invest, finance, and share investment opportunities in Egypt or LIA's branches."

Economy

British ambassador discusses economic cooperation in Benghazi



The British Ambassador to Libya, Martin Longden, has discussed arranging meetings between businessmen and chambers of commerce in Libya and the United Kingdom in order to enhance economic cooperation between the two countries.

This came during his visit to the Benghazi municipality during which he met with the head of the Benghazi Municipality's Steering Council, Al-Saqr Imran Boujwari.

The meeting discussed cooperation in the economic fields, stressing the importance of the economic aspect in creating a kind of stability, as well as the impact of the current political situation on the work of municipalities.

Economy

Libyan Central Bank instructs commercial banks to start collecting tax from currency exchange



The Central Bank of Libya (CBL) asked banks to implement the Speaker of the House of Representatives' Resolution No. 15 of 2024 regarding temporarily imposing a tax on the foreign currency exchange rate.

This came in a letter from the Deputy Director of the Banking and Monetary Control Department for Office Supervision Affairs, to the general directors of the banks. The letter stressed facilitating the procedures for dealing in foreign exchange, including opening letters of credit for all purposes, goods, services, and personal transactions in accordance with the in-

structions issued by the Central Bank of Libya, with submitting an acknowledgment paper in which the clients pledge their acceptance of the price plus the tax. Last Thursday, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aqila Saleh, issued a decision to impose a 27% tax on the official exchange rate of foreign currencies. This came after the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya, Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir, had proposed adjusting the exchange rate of the Libyan dinar against foreign currencies, and imposing a 27% tax on foreign exchange, expecting the exchange rate to range between 5.95 and 6.15 dinars

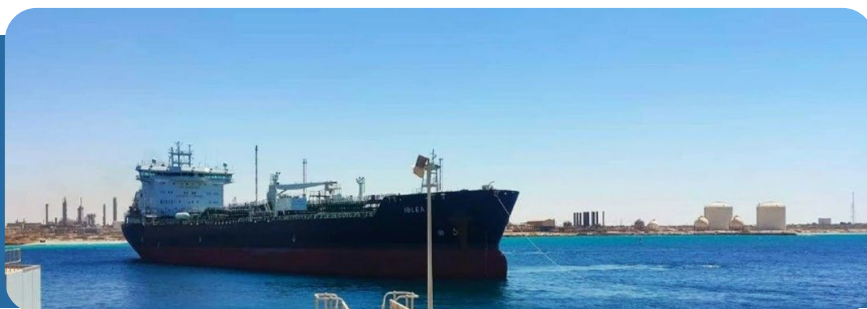
per dollar.

The decision was met with a wave of popular and official rejections, as a number of members of the House of Representatives, led by Deputy Speaker Fawzi Al-Nuwairi, announced their rejection of the decision, stressing that it had not been presented to them, while others indicated that the decision was illegitimate, and it was not issued in accordance with the approved legal mechanism.

Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah stressed the rejection of imposing a tax on the exchange rate, warning of the negative effects of the tax on Libyans.

Economy

Bu Attifel oilfield exports extraordinary crude shipment to meet demand in southeast Asia



Unipet, the trading arm of Asia's largest refiner the Chinese Sinopec, is moving a supertanker loaded with Libyan Bu Attifel crude, an unusually large shipment aimed at meeting demand in southeast Asia, according to traders and shipping data from LSEG and Kpler.

Light sweet Libyan grade is typically sold to European refiners due to their proximity to the OPEC producer and moving such a large quantity of a single grade in a supertanker to Asian clients is rare, the traders said.

Cyan Nova conducted ship-to-ship trans-

fers off Malta with Aframax-sized tankers Calypso, Rava and Green Azure to receive Bu Attifel crude, Kpler data showed. The three smaller tankers loaded their cargoes in Libya in February, the data showed.

Cyan Nova is expected to take the Cape of Good Hope route and discharge its cargoes in Asia in May, another source said. It is currently heading to Gibraltar, shipping data on LSEG Eikon showed, where ships typically refuel before taking the longer route to Asia.

Unipet has since sold 1 million barrels of the oil to Vietnam's Binh Son refinery for

May delivery and another 400,000 barrels to Thai refiner Bangchak Petroleum BSRC. BK, the second source added. It is unclear if the remaining 500,000 barrels has been sold.

An OPEC report revealed that Libya's oil production on a monthly basis rose to 1,167 barrels of oil per day in February, compared to 1,023 million barrels per day last January, with a daily increase estimated at 144,000 barrels, making Libya record the largest increase in oil production during the month of March in Africa, surpassing Nigeria, the largest producer of the continent.

Economy



Minister of Oil chairs meeting to select African Energy Bank HQ

The Minister of Oil and Gas in the Government of National Unity, Mohamed Aoun, has chaired a meeting of the committee tasked by the African Petroleum Producers' Organization (APPO) to select the African Energy Bank HQ.

The meeting discussed the criteria for choos-

ing the country that will host the bank, during which two files submitted by Ghana and Nigeria were presented, with the rest of the applicants being contacted to send visual presentations of their proposed headquarters.



Health

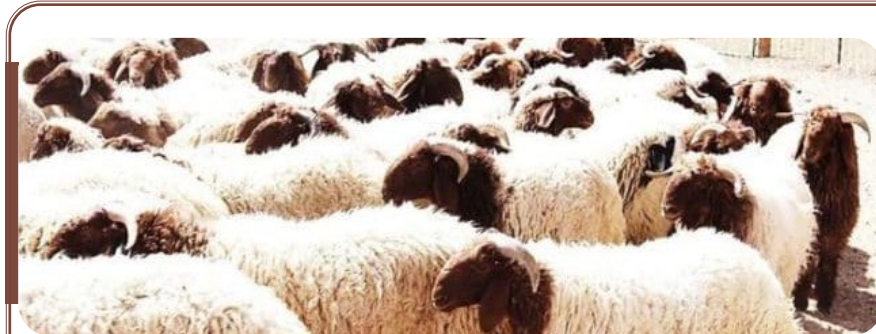
Abu Jinnah follow up on Medical Supply deliveries

Deputy Prime Minister/ Minister of Health Ramadan Abu Jinnah inspected the General Administration of Medical Supply Stores to oversee the periodic deliveries of medical supplies.

During his tour, Abu Jinnah gained insight into the operations at the warehouses, including the supplying mechanism and delivery.

The minister also reviewed state and local tender procedures with the Medical Supply Administration Committee Chairman and relevant departments.

Additionally, he undertook a follow-up on the strategic inventory of medicines and medical supplies to ensure compliance with international standards and adherence to quality systems and safety regulations.



Health

Spread of foot-and-mouth virus among animals in Libya has declined

The National Center for Animal Health announced a decline in the spread of foot-and-mouth disease among animals in the country, stressing that efforts to confront the disease are continuing to ensure its complete elimination.

The center added in a statement on Saturday that, with continued efforts to monitor and control the movement of animals, and distribute disinfectants and biosecurity materials to the regions, the spread rates have become lower than in the past.

The center confirmed that it was coordinating with international supporting bodies to obtain the diagnostic materials necessary to confront the disease, which has been detected in a large number of areas across Libya.

Meanwhile, Benghazi Municipal Guard reported that it had controlled the spread of the foot-and-mouth virus, which infected a large number of animals in the city and its suburbs. The Guard also announced in a statement on Saturday the lifting of

restrictions placed on the movement of livestock, and their markets, provided that there is a veterinary health certificate from the Animal Health Office.

Since last January, cases of foot-and-mouth virus have been recorded among cows, goats, and sheep, and the total number of deaths reached about a thousand animals, while the total number of infections was more than 3,600, according to what the Animal Health Center announced.



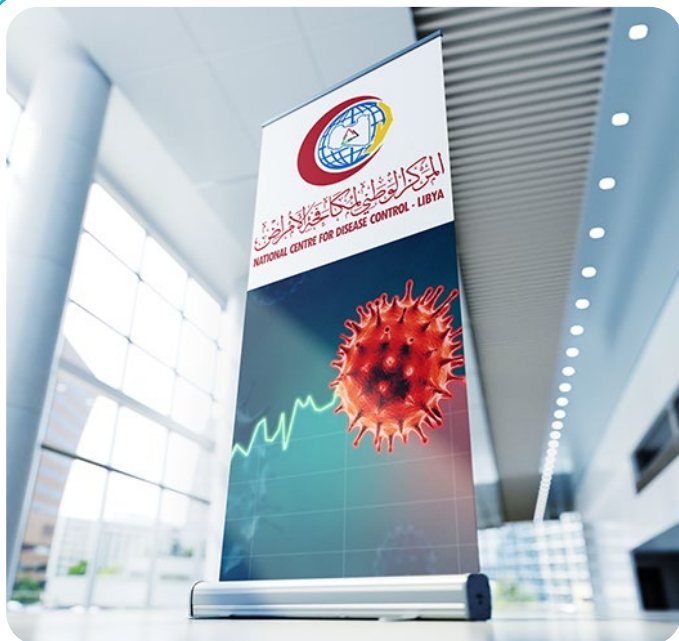
Al-Sayeh announces PET scan screening initiative for cancer patients

The Head of the National Cancer Control Authority, Haider Al-Sayeh, has announced the implementation of the Positron emission tomography (PET) scans for 160 cases, mostly from Tripoli.

Al-Sayeh urged residents of eastern and southern cities to undergo PET scans in the capital to benefit from foreign experts and modern equipment, affirming that the authority will cover the travel and accommodation expenses for cancer patients.

Furthermore, Al-Sayeh indicated that the Cancer Control Authority is working towards establishing two PET scan centres in the eastern and southern regions.

It may be worth noting that a PET scan is an imaging test that uses a special dye containing radioactive tracers to check for diseases in the body, creating 3D pictures and highlighting areas where cells are more active than normal, which can be a sign of cancer.



Health

NCDC: Reports of hepatitis C spread in the south exaggerated

The National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) says it is closely monitoring developments regarding reports of the spread of the hepatitis C virus in some areas of southern Libya at high rates, emphasizing that the reported spread rates are "far from reality."

In a statement, the centre stressed that it is working diligently to provide testing kits and treatments for carriers of this type of virus.

According to the NCDC, the virus can be cured and completely eradicated through a simple treatment program with orally administered medications, adding that it is the type of virus that does not exhibit rapid spread and transmission through everyday social contact.

The centre highlighted its efforts to eliminate hepatitis C in southern Libya by providing enough treatments for all cases within the annual work plan of the national program for combating viral hepatitis.



Sports

Libyan football team starts training camp in Morocco

The Libyan national football team left Benina International Airport in Benghazi Sunday to Morocco to start a training camp, including two friendly matches against the teams of Burkina Faso and Togo. According to the Knights of the Mediterranean's program, they will face Burkina Faso on Friday,

March 22, and then Togo on Tuesday, March 26.

These two friendly matches are part of Libya's preparations for the resumption of the African qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup. The national team is awaiting important matches next June, as

it will play against Mauritius on June 03 at the Tripoli International Stadium, then away against Cape Verde on June 10.

Meanwhile, the Serbian coach Micho chose a list of 27 players to enter the camp, including a number of new faces in the Knights' squad.



Migration

65 bodies of immigrants recovered in Al-Shuwayrif area

The Criminal Investigation Agency has announced the recovery of 65 bodies belonging to illegal immigrants from Wadi Al-Jahriya in the Al-Shuwayrif area, southwest of Libya.

The agency pointed out that a specialized team took DNA samples from the bodies, explaining that the team buried the bodies in the designated cemetery in the presence of the relevant authorities.



Opinions

Failure is the fate of unilateral initiatives

By Abdullah Alkabar,
a Libyan political writer and commentator

The United Nations Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has not commented substantially on the outcome of the tripartite meeting that brought together the Head of the Presidential Council, Mohamed Menfi, the Head of the High Council of State, Mohamed Takala, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Agila Saleh, in Cairo recently. Following his meeting with Menfi, UN envoy, Abdoulaye Bathily, issued only a brief statement, saying that he took note of the meeting and its outcomes.

Likewise, none of the embassies of countries active in the Libyan scene commented on the meeting. As for the European Union Ambassador, Nicola Orlando, announced that "the Union welcomes efforts of UNSMIL," which is a clear indication of the EU's continued support for Bathily's initiative, and an implicit indication of rejection of the Egyptian attempts to undermine approaches for a political solution. In the same statement, he warned against uncoordinated political initiatives, as they could lead to deepening divisions.

This international position explicitly underscores the position not to interact with any unilateral initiatives, whether local, regional or international, because the intensity of the conflict at all these levels, combined with an international climate full of divisions and conflicts, does not help to reach a settlement acceptable to all parties involved in the Libyan crisis.

Continued support for the UNSMIL position, signals a clear message to everyone that the accepted proposals and solutions must be satisfactory to everyone. Given that UNSMIL will take into account the interests and concerns of all parties, while unilateral initiatives

will serve the interests of the party behind and indeed promote them.

Perhaps this European position and certainly the US stance, even if it is not expressed in a clear statement, will undermine a French attempt to table a new initiative, which is only expected to fail, like previous initiatives sponsored by the French presidency, which never refrained from putting forward initiatives despite expected failure as usual. Given the French contribution to deepening the conflict by supporting one of the parties, and its direct responsibility for the bloodshed and lives lost during Haftar's recent wars.

What is the fate of Bathily's initiative? This is the question of which answer will compromise all unilateral initiatives. The response of the five parties invited to negotiate and meet at the Bathily table is the only way to agree to end the current crisis, by heading to elections. However, this response will not be forthcoming without an explicit threat to bypass those who reject it and move to form a broad political forum similar to the previous Tunis-Geneva Forum. As waiting for the consent of those who want to remain in power will not be conducive to any progress.

Meanwhile, engaging the parties currently out of power, who see elections as the only way to achieve their dream, is the best available option to transcend the current stage. Therefore, UNSMIL is called upon to break the current stalemate, by starting preparation for a new political forum, in which all political, military and social forces will participate. This forum will gain strong legitimacy if it is formed through elections.

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

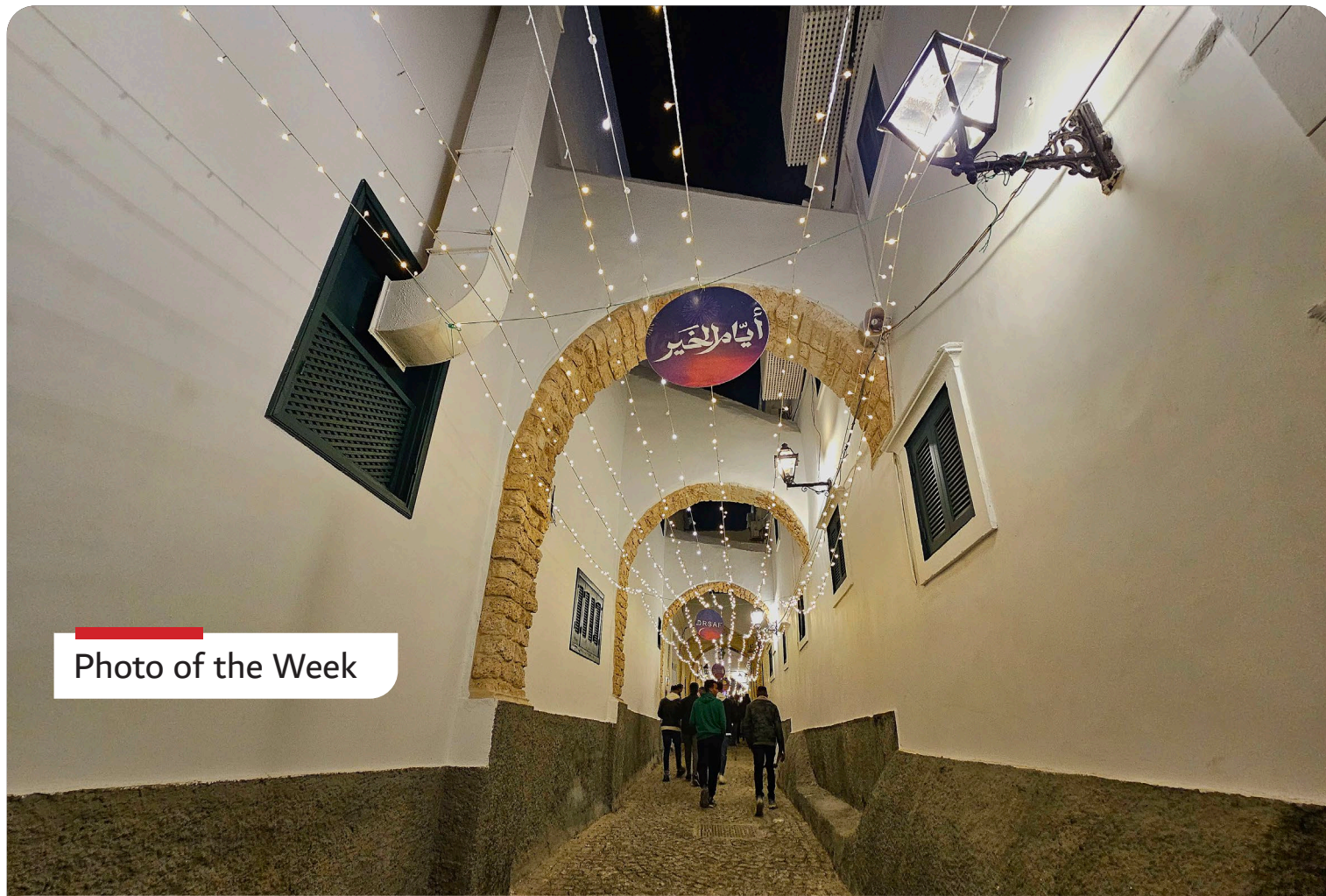
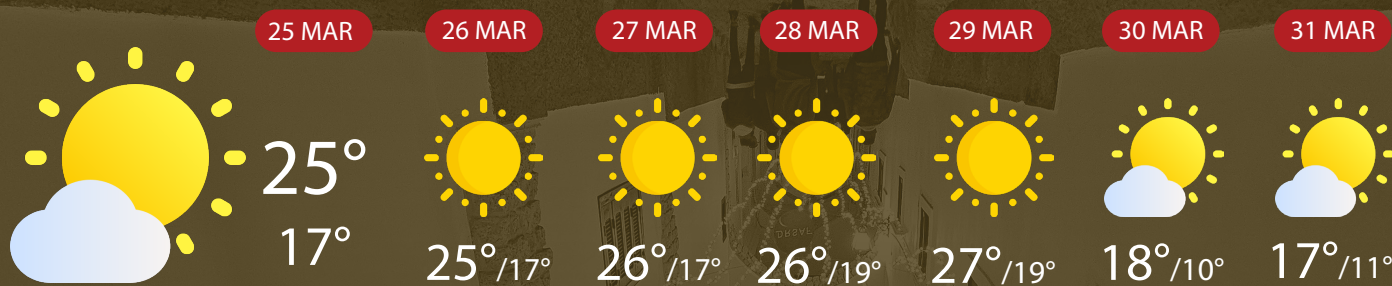


Photo of the Week

Tripoli Weather Forecast



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