



Politics Pentagon: UAE is funding Russian Wagner Group in Libya

Foreign Policy has published a report, citing the Pentagon, saying the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is apparently helping to finance the Russian mercenary group Wagner in Libya.

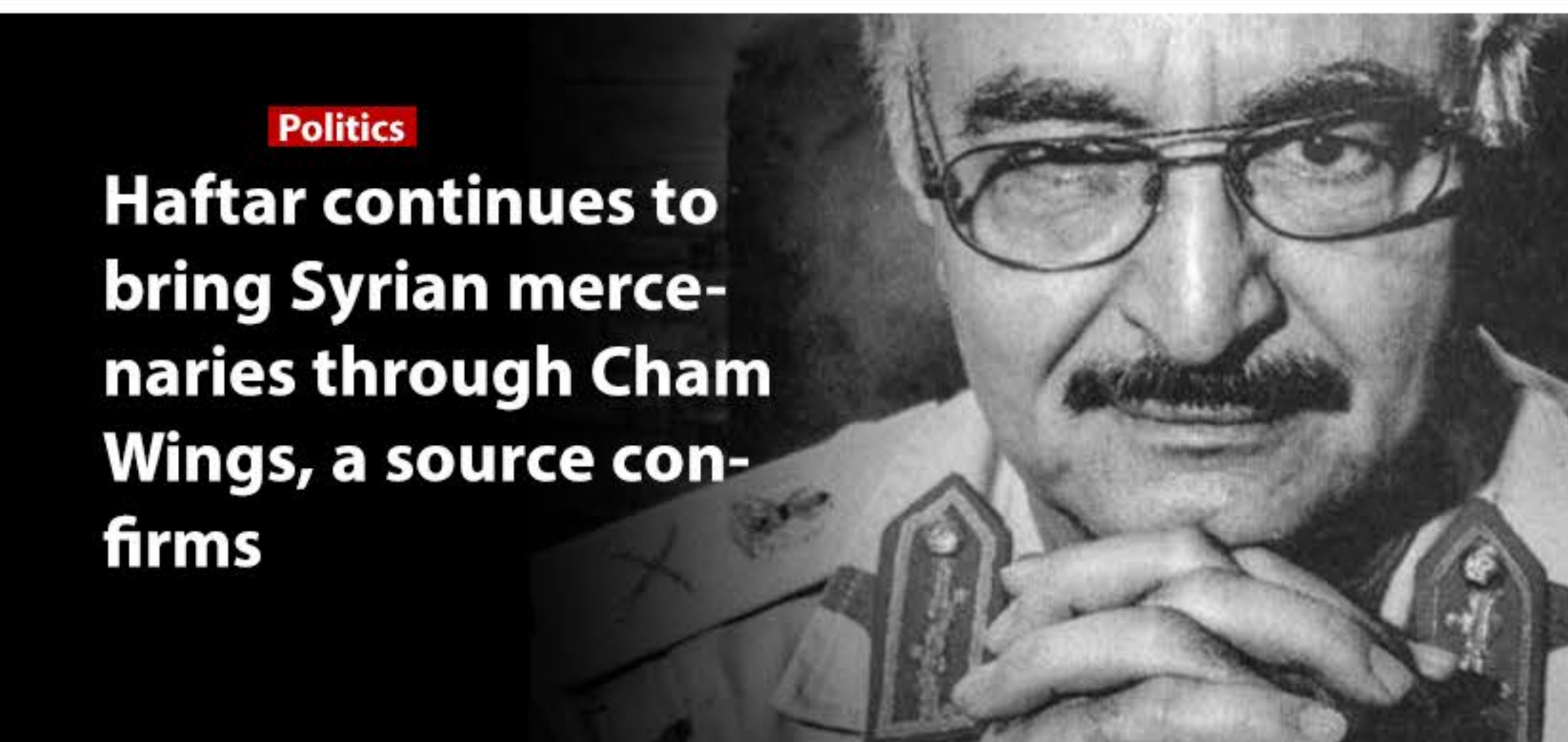
Foreign Policy said, according to a report issued last week by the Pentagon's Inspector General for counterterrorism operations in Africa, this finding is likely to complicate the United States' close relationship with Abu Dhabi, adding that in last January, there was a drastic increase in Russian and Emirati cargo planes—likely laden with weapons and ammunition—flying to eastern Libya and western Egypt.

"The increased Russian presence in Libya has also coincided with Emirati drawdowns, further sparking suspicions. As cargo shipments began to tick up and more Turkish troops entered the country, the UAE withdrew its equipment from the al-Khadim airbase near Benghazi and allowed Russian forces to take over the facility." The report says.

Foreign Policy reported Douglas Wise, who served as deputy director of the US Defense Intelligence Agency from 2014 to 2016, as saying he would imagine DIA has some good information on the UAE's support to Wagner, adding that throughout 2020, experts tracking the conflict in Libya have noted patterns that would indicate closer ties between the UAE and Russia.

It reported the senior fellow at the Paris-based Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, Jalel Harchaoui, as saying that there are a dozen Russian fourth-generation fighter jets operated by Wagner since May in Libya, which was part of Haftar's push to stop GNA forces from advancing further into the country.

"That moment incensed many within the Department of Defense, but the only facet that was made public back then was AFRICOM naming and shaming the Russians publicly. The other facet of course was that the Americans knew full well that part of the Wagner mission in Libya was likely paid for by Abu Dhabi." Harchaoui added.



Politics Haftar continues to bring Syrian mercenaries through Cham Wings, a source confirms

A source from Benina International Airport disclosed on Friday that Khalifa Haftar will bring in new groups of Syrian mercenaries from Damascus to Benghazi.

The source, who preferred to remain anonymous for his safety, told The Libya Observer that the flights will begin from next Sunday through Cham Wings Airlines, a private Syrian airline with its head office in Damascus.

According to a report by the United Nations committee of experts, the Cham Wings Company transported hundreds of Syrian and Russian mercenaries from a Syrian military airbase to Benghazi during the year 2019.



Politics Tunisia to keep borders with Libya and Algeria open, under any and all circumstances

The Tunisian Prime Minister, Hicham Al-Mechichi, promised to keep the borders with Libya and Algeria open, regardless of the circumstances.

Al-Mechichi stated, during a parliamentary session in Tunisia discussing the draft state budget bill for 2021, that his country is adhering to this decision, as the fate of Tunisia, Libya and Algeria is one and the same.

He said that this decision took place between Libya and Tunisia approximately two weeks ago, with the joint health protocol which led to the reopening of the land and air borders between both countries, having remained closed since March last, due to stringent measures to combat the Coronavirus pandemic.

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Politics

Turkish Defense Ministry: We have trained 2,301 soldiers in Libya

A Spokeswoman for the Turkish Defense Ministry, Pinar Kara, announced on Sunday that her country's military has completed the training of 2,301 Libyan soldiers, whilst training 264 further soldiers presently.

Kara added in a press conference that Turkey has intervened in Libya to support the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) in accordance with international law and bilateral agreements signed with the GNA.

She further indicated that the Turkish military fully supports the GNA with complex training in demining and health, along with humanitarian assistance and advisory support.



Politics

Malta: Cooperation with Libya in migration prevented monumental crisis

Maltese Minister of Foreign Affairs Evarist Bartolo revealed that 2,256 illegal immigrants arrived this year in Malta, saying "Had it not been for the good relations and strong cooperation with Libya, some 7,000 others who were intercepted would have arrived at the shores of the country."

Bartolo emphasized that cooperation between Malta and Libya has prevented what he called a "huge crisis" however, urgent and long-term issues remained to be, resolved as he put it.

In a speech on Friday during the Migration Board at the Mediterranean Forum 2020, Bartolo urged the European Union to increase its support for Libya so that it can protect its borders and ports while fighting organized crime and human trafficking.

Bartolo also stressed the need to increase cooperation with Africa, enhance economic resilience, create job opportunities, and give the asylum seekers a chance in their country.

He suggested opening more centers in Africa, such as those in Rwanda and Niger, which look into the illegal immigration applications.



Politics

UAE blocks new visas for Libyans but keeps sending weapons to Haftar to fuel conflict

The United Arab Emirates has halted issuing new visas to citizens of 13 Muslim-majority countries, including Libya, according to a document issued by Abu Dhabi seen by Reuters.

The document said applications for new employment and visit visas had been suspended for nationals – those outside the UAE – of 13 countries that also included Syria and Yemen, Algeria, Kenya, Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia until further notice.

The UAE ban on Libyans comes as Abu Dhabi continues to support warlord Khalifa Haftar against the legitimate UN-recognized Government of National Accord in Libya with weapons, funding and military equipment.

Meanwhile, Russian media outlets unveiled earlier this month details about transports of heavy anti-aircraft system, Serbian LRSVM Morava system, from the UAE to warlord Khalifa Haftar in Libya.

Sputnik reported a Russian TV Channel as saying that its sources that the UAE has these modern Serbian anti-aircraft systems and it has transported them to Haftar's militias in Libya.

Russian media also pointed out that the Serbian LRSVM Morava anti-aircraft systems had been seen in military maneuvers done by the so-called Tariq bin Ziyad Brigade of warlord Haftar's militias.

The UAE has been providing Haftar with military support for years since he first started his coup on legitimacy back in 2014 and up until his last bloody offensive on Tripoli that started in April 2019 and ended in June 2020, leaving behind destruction and hundreds of deaths as well as thousands of injured and displaced people.

The US has also moved to take a stance against the UAE arms supply to Haftar, as a group of senators pressed the State Department to take action to curb widespread violations of a United Nations arms embargo on Libya and ensure that US-manufactured weaponry and equipment, especially those sold to the UAE, are not used in Libya's prolonged conflict.

US senators said they were "particularly concerned" about the UAE's support of Haftar, citing Emirati flights to areas under his control and alleged arrangements to supply more than 1000 mercenaries from Sudan.

The senators also called on the State Department to verify that no US-manufactured aircraft or equipment had been transferred to Libya or been used to transport weapons, and asked it to determine if the UAE's violations of the arms embargo precludes them from future arms sales pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act.



Economy

NOC, Eni review resuming stalled projects

Chairman of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Mustafa Sanallah has discussed with the CEO of the Italian company Eni the resumption of some significant projects that stalled because of funding shortfalls.

The meeting, which was held at the NOC's HQ, dealt with ways to maintain production rates in onshore and offshore fields and to increase its capacity, as well as supporting the Libyan energy sector at all levels.

The two parties also discussed the progress made in the offshore project A and E, which will increase the natural rates of gas production in Bahr Al-Salam in the coming years, and secure the local market's supplies of gas, according to a statement by the NOC.

For his part, Eni's CEO affirmed the commitment to its operational activities and projects in Libya, reiterating their full support for the NOC's initiatives.

Economy

Sanallah reiterates NOC will not release oil revenues, demands transparency from the CBL



The Head of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Mustafa Sanallah, reiterated on Sunday that the corporation will not release the oil revenues due to the lack of transparency and a clear mechanism from the Central Bank regarding the disbursement of the income.

Sanallah explained in a video statement that the NOC is keeping the revenues in the NOC sovereign accounts at the Libyan Foreign Bank in Tripoli, stressing that this is carried, within the legal process. Sanallah warned that Libya is going through a dangerous dilemma due to the monetary policies of the CBL governor. "Dinosaurs, fat cats, and monsters" have made fortunes out of public money," he said.

He pointed out that during recent years the Libyan state has earned around 186 billion USD of oil sales, but the living conditions for the Libyans continued to decline, according to his statement.

The NOC chair repeated more than once during his speech that "those currently arguing about the issue of oil revenues did not say a word when oil facilities were forcibly shutdown" referring to the Central Bank.



Economy

Misrata Municipality launches a project for renewable energies to qualify youth

The Misrata Municipality launched a training and rehabilitation project for the labor market in the field of renewable energies, in the presence of the Minister of Labor and Rehabilitation, Al-Mahdi Al-Amin, and members of the municipal councils of Misrata and Zliten.

The training program, which will be organized by the Renewable Energy Center at the University of Misrata, in cooperation with the Sanabel Libya Development Organization and the College of Industrial Technology, aims to prepare and train young university graduates in the field of renewable energies.

The training program will be held in its first edition in Misrata, while the second edition will be held in Zliten.

Economy

Misrata Chamber of Commerce looking to expand relations with Morocco



The President of the Misrata Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture held discussions with the President of the Moroccan Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services on methods to develop cooperation in economic partnership relations between the two countries.

This came during a working session at the Chamber's headquarters in Morocco, where they discussed methods to encourage initiatives to develop trade exchanges between businessmen and women and merchants in both countries.

There was also a consensus to sign an agreement between the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services in Tangier, Tetouan and Al-Hoceima and the Misrata Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture with the aim of strengthening cooperation between both countries.

Opinions

For a hint of Biden's foreign policy plans, look to Libya

By **Ellen Laipson**, director of the international security program at the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University in Virginia

Credit: This article was first published by Asia Times on November 9, 2020



The Biden administration could have an opportunity to demonstrate that the US will provide more support for multilateral efforts. US President-elect Joe Biden is no novice when it comes to the Middle East, or to foreign policy in general. He would probably relish the opportunity to re-establish friendly relations with world leaders, even those in Jerusalem and Riyadh who may believe they have the most to lose from Donald Trump's defeat.

But his advisers warn that he will spend 80% of his time on domestic issues. It should be no surprise: He faces the daunting challenges of Covid-19, the devastating economic fallout from the disease, and deep social and political wounds from polarization and racial injustice. Restoring American credibility in the world was mentioned, but only briefly, in his gracious acceptance remarks on November 7.

Maybe the Middle East will leave him alone for a while, without presenting any acute crises that can quickly dominate a president's daily schedule.

It remains to be seen if Trump will try to advance any initiatives in the region during the transition period from now to January 20. He may hope to seal one more agreement for an Arab state to recognize Israel, for example.

But if Trump remains focused on blaming others for his defeat, foreign policy won't provide much solace, because it was not a major factor in determining how 150 million Americans voted.

In a normal, healthy transition, should an international crisis occur, the outgoing president would engage his successor, who would already have access to intelligence briefings. But that seems alien to Trump's character and modus operandi.

In the 2016-17 transition, outgoing president Barack Obama's team was eager to assist the new administration in learning about institutions and issues, but the Trump folks brushed off this well-established ritual in presidential transitions.

In this election, Biden was very disciplined and careful to avoid contact with foreign officials during the campaign; in transition, he can accept their congratulations but must work to avoid any appearance of undermining the incumbent president by making plans or conducting deep policy exchanges with other countries. The US holds dear the principle that it has only one president at a time.

So it's probably best to focus on spring 2021 for any concrete signs of Biden's Middle East policy priorities. Recall that it always takes a few weeks to name proposed cabinet members, and with a Republican-controlled Senate (still to be finally determined), Biden may not have his team in place for several weeks or more.

Biden may have an opportunity to start out on a positive note by helping along multilateral diplomacy on Libya. That internal struggle seems to be on a path to resolution, thanks to the persistent work of diplomats Ghassan Salamé and his deputy, Stephanie Williams, of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

They worked from 2018 to early 2020 to launch a process for political reconciliation, only to be undermined by permanent members of the Security Council and by regional powers including Egypt, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Those parties had turned the internal Libyan struggle into a proxy war for their larger regional power competition.

But with the help of key European states, Salamé and Williams established the parameters of an agreement to end the violence, remove foreign fighters, resume oil production and build a political process for new elections and a new government.

Despite the odds, the ceasefire is holding and Salamé – who stepped down in the spring for health reasons – said recently that prospects for ending the war are better than ever.

For the Biden administration, it could be a lucky opportunity to support the UN and demonstrate that the US will provide more attention and political support for multilateral efforts. It might also find it propitious to reopen the US Embassy in Tripoli, after security conditions forced the US to relocate its diplomats to Malta and then Tunis.

A more stable Libya would make it easier for the new administration to engage the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean over the larger issues of gas exploration and exploitation that have pitted Israel, Egypt, Cyprus and Greece against Turkey, which has taken a very assertive position on its maritime claims, and has included Libya in its sphere of influence.

Should the regional states scale back their intervention in Libya and support the UN process, it could show that new forms of regional cooperation are possible.

Follow next page

Without knowing who the next US secretary of state will be, one can still assume that US diplomacy will be conducted with more attention to the long-term interests of the parties, more willingness to facilitate regional problem-solving, and more predictable and productive engagement with Mediterranean governments and institutions.

But Libya also has some downsides for the Biden team. It was when Obama and Biden were in the White House that things fell apart, from the decision to intervene in 2011 but not to stay to establish stability after the overthrow of Gaddafi, to the tragic loss of four American diplomats in Benghazi in 2012.

Just as Obama was reluctant to overcommit the US in a conflict he saw as more important for Europe, today's Biden also is considered quite cautious about new interventions.

Nonetheless, the virtue of an active Biden policy on Libya is that the conflict is in a diplomatic phase now, where the US can use its rediscovered leadership to advance that diplomatic process, with little or no risk of a costlier military entanglement.

Compared with other MENA (Middle East and North Africa) trouble spots, such as Syria or Yemen, Libya may be the low-hanging fruit. Those other conflicts are more complicated because of the roles of Russia, Iran and Saudi Arabia. It would take a greater effort and more time for the new administration to prepare to re-engage on those civil wars.

Unforeseen and often tragic events in the Middle East can demand a US response. But absent any major crisis, the new administration will try to shape its Middle East policies around Biden's global themes of revalidating alliances, strengthening democracies as the best antidote to rising authoritarianism, and supporting multilateral efforts to end conflicts and to address the great transnational threats from climate change, terrorism and pandemic health crises.

Libya would be a good place to underscore those broad principles.

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

Health

University Hospital of Tripoli mourns loss of x-ray technician to Covid-19



The University Hospital of Tripoli has mourned one of its staff, "Abu Bakr Abu Al-Azoum," who died of coronavirus on Saturday.

"Abu Baker was an x-ray technician and one of the most active members in his profession. He was loved and respected by all his colleagues as well as patients," a statement by the hospital said on Facebook.

Social media users commenting on the hospital's post, most who say they know him, expressed their grief for his loss, saying that despite the pressure of work at the hospital, he always had a smile on his face and was an absolute pleasure to know.

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus in Libya last March, the Health Ministry mourned several doctors who lost their lives after contracting Covid-19 while treating infected people at hospitals.

The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed last August that eight health workers in southern Libya had contracted the Covid-19 in the first two weeks of that month, expressing concern about the rapid spread of the coronavirus in Libya.

Health

Libya to import two million vaccines for the Coronavirus



The Head of the Advisory Committee to Confront the Coronavirus Pandemic, Khalifa Al-Bakoush, confirmed that Libya had signed a contract with the COVAX Facility to acquire two million doses of the Coronavirus vaccine.

Al-Bakoush said that the vaccine is expected to arrive in Libya during the first few months of next year.

He also announced that stage one of the vaccine distribution would be for those groups most vulnerable to the Coronavirus pandemic, such as medical staff and general paramedic teams, the elderly and people with chronic illnesses.

COVAX Facility is a global plan co-led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the World Health Organization (WHO).



Health

Health Services Department in Bani Walid receives a shipment of medicines

The central pharmacy stores in Bani Walid received on Tuesday a shipment of medicines, sent by the Ministry of Health of the Government of National Accord.

"The shipment includes hypertension and diabetes medication in addition to cold and flu medicines and antibiotics", the director of the Health Services Department in Bani Walid, Sami Al-Wadani said, indicating that most of the medicines are currently available in the central pharmacy.

Al-Wadani stressed that the support will not stop at the central pharmacy to reduce the burden on the citizen, pledging to provide good health services to all citizens.

Sport

Libya to participate in FIFA Arab Cup 2021 in Qatar



FIFA has announced that 22 national teams from the Arab region have signed up to participate in the FIFA Arab Cup, including Libya. FIFA President Gianni Infantino expressed hope that the tournament, which will be staged from 1 to 18 December next year would unite the people across the region.

"We are delighted that all 22 teams from across the Arab world have agreed to take part in the FIFA Arab Cup 2021," Infantino said during a visit to Lusail Stadium that will host the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Final.

Football fans from across the Middle East and Arab world will enjoy a total of 32 matches, which will be held over 18 days, in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 stadiums.

Nations from the Confederation of African Football to compete in the tournament are Libya, Sudan, Algeria, Morocco, Somalia, Tunisia, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, and Mauritania.

Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates will be representing the Confederation of Asian Football.

Qatar FA President, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Bin Ahmed AlThani expressed his country's readiness to host the teams and their fans, emphasizing that they will be treated to the same world-class experience that awaits fans from around the world when they flock to Qatar for the FIFA World Cup in 2022.

It may be important to note that the last tournament of the Arab Cup was held in 2012. The final match brought together Morocco and Libya and ended with a Moroccan victory.

Sport

Al-Ittihad wins 4-1 against Somalia's Horseed at CAF Confederation Cup



Libya's Al-Ittihad football club won 4-1 Saturday at the first-leg match of the first preliminary stage of the CAF Confederation Cup at Al-Salam Stadium in Egyptian capital, Cairo.

Horseed scored first and then Libya's Al-Ittihad tied the score by Ali Madi's equalizer before the end of the first half.

In the second half, Al-Ittihad players Rabea Shadi, Omran Salim and Ali Madi scored three more goals, with Madi scoring two out of the four for the Libyan side.

By this win against the Somalian team, the Libyan Al-Ittihad football club boosted its chance for moving on to the round of 32. The second-leg match will be also played in Cairo next week.



Sport

Al-Ahly Benghazi qualifies for the 32 round of the African Champions League

Al-Ahly Benghazi has officially qualified for the 32 round of the African Champions League competition, after their opponents; the Ethiopian team Mekelle Kenema did not turn out in the match which was scheduled to take place on Saturday.

Al-Ahly, the referees, and all officials concerned attended the stadium ready for the match, but the rival team did not turn out.

After the legal time ended, the referee blew his whistle, declaring Al-Ahly the winners of the match, therefore, qualifies for the 32nd round.

Al-Ahly Benghazi will play the Tunisian Espérance Sportive de Tunis in the next round, as the first leg will take place on 22 or 23 December in Egypt and the return match in Tunisia on 5 or 6 January 2021.



Culture

New book center opened in Tajoura, east Tripoli

Sheikh Ali Al-Gharyani Book Center was opened in Tajoura district of Tripoli on Saturday, which will serve as a comprehensive national library.

The opening ceremony varied between speeches and poems, headed by the speech of the Grand Mufti of Libya, Sheikh Al-Sadeq Al-Gharyani.

In his speech, the Grand Mufti praised the role of those in charge of the center which provides students and researchers with their knowledge needs.

Sheikh Ali Al-Gharyani Book Center contains more than 7,200 volumes in various specializations, providing services such as printing, photocopying and borrowing books, with the possibility of electronic searches within the database of the center, in addition to free internet and café services.

weather



Tripoli Weather Forecast

Fri 04	20°/13°	Sunny	0%	SW 14 km/h
Sat 05	24°/13°	Sunny	0%	SW 16 km/h
Sun 06	19°/9°	Sunny	10%	W 28 km/h
Mon 07	17°/10°	Sunny	0%	WSW 24 km/h
Tue 08	18°/10°	Sunny	0%	WSW 23 km/h
Wed 09	19°/11°	Mostly Sunny	0%	SW 20 km/h
Thu 10	20°/13°	Partly Cloudy	10%	WSW 23 km/h

Photo of the Week: Young football players during a training session in Gharyan, November 2020





Features

In Libya.. Art continues despite pain and fear

The Iskandar House of Arts in the Old City of Tripoli organized on Wednesday an exhibition to highlight the harrowing experience the Libyan people went through during the last period due to the spread of Covid-19 and the war waged by warlord Khalifa Haftar on the region.

The exhibition, entitled "Persistence" brought together professional photographers and artists who wanted to prove through their pieces of work that an artist could keep going and continue to create despite pain and suffering.

Director of the Technical Affairs Department of the General Authority for Culture Muhammad Shalash and one of the artists who took part in the exhibition explained to The Libya Observer that the artworks reflected the specter of war that haunted thousands of people at a time the Covid-19 was spreading and continuing to create pain and separation because of the social distancing. His photograph was entitled "Both have one thing in common.. Death".

Shalash clarified that the General Authority for Culture is planning to hold an exhibition on the sidelines of the Independence Festival, scheduled to take place on the 24th of December, emphasizing the public's need for such artistic events.

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