

Politics

After Dbeibah's statement, Malta denies any problems with Libya

Malta has denied having any problems with Libya in response to the comments made by the newly elected Prime Minister Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah who said he wouldn't meet with Maltese counterpart, Robert Abela until Malta respects Libyans.

The Maltese Foreign Minister, Evarist Bartolo, said his country has no problems with Libya and they are both planning to work on several projects, according to the Times of Malta newspaper.

Dbeibah said last Saturday that Malta wasn't respecting Libya and the Libyan passport over the last years, adding that he had expelled the Maltese PM because he didn't respect the Libyan passport, without naming the time and place of the incident.

Bartolo said Monday that he had called the UN envoy to Libya, Jan Kubis, and reiterated support for holding a House of Representatives session to grant confidence to the Government of National Unity that would take Libya to December elections.

Politics

Tobruk parliament: Preparations underway for Sirte session



The Spokesperson for the House of Representatives (HoR), meeting in Tobruk, Abdullah Belhaq, confirmed the onset of preparations for a session of the HoR, which is scheduled to be held in the city of Sirte.

Belhaq clarified in a virtual video statement on Sunday that the 5+5 Military Committee was consulted regarding the security of the city.

Politics

No personal demands in Tobruk's meeting, new govt says



Spokesman of the National Unity Government, Muhammad Hammouda has confirmed that Prime Minister Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah did not discuss any personal demands during his meeting with the Tobruk-based House of Representatives' (HoR) head Aqila Saleh.

PM Dabaiba, arrived in Tobruk on Friday coming from Egypt, on his first visit to eastern Libya since his election two weeks ago.

In a brief statement, Hammouda indicated that the meeting which took place in Tobruk focused on mechanisms of granting confidence to the new government, denying discussing any other issues.

Dbeibah was received by the Mayor of Tobruk and several of the city's elders before meeting with Saleh and other members of the HoR.

Politics

Operation IRINI conducts searches on two merchant ships bound for Libya



Greek naval personnel conducted searches on two commercial ships whilst heading to Libya over the past two days, within the auspices of Operation IRINI.

Operation IRINI published photographs of the inspections and veri-

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verification of the cargo of both vessels, confirming that the search was carried out smoothly and without difficulty and the manoeuvre was carried out as part of the monitoring of the arms embargo, which has been imposed on Libya.

A German News Agency recently reported that the European Union (EU) intends to extend the maritime surveillance mission IRINI for at least an extra two years, beginning in early April.

The Libyan Interior Minister, Fathi Bashagha, was caught Sunday afternoon in an exchange of fire between his security guards and a vehicle of Stability Support Apparatus personnel in Janzour, Tripoli, according to a statement by the Apparatus after the incident.

Politics

Libya's Interior Minister caught in exchange of fire in Tripoli



The Interior Ministry claimed, on the other hand, that Bashagha had escaped an assassination attempt in Janzour, adding that his motorcade came under fire when he was being driven home in Janzour.

However, the Stability Support Apparatus, which operates under the Government of National Accord just like the Interior Ministry, said the incident was caused by a lack of coordination between the two security forces, accusing Bashagha's security personnel of an illegal shootout.

Security sources, meanwhile, confirmed that Bashagha's convoy was not attacked and there was no assassination attempt, adding that the incident was a collision between Bashagha's motorcade and a security car belonging to the Stability Support Apparatus which led Bashagha's guards to open fire, killing one of the three personnel on the car.

In the meantime, the Stability Support Apparatus stressed that the vehicle that was shot at by Bashagha's security personnel was coming back from a regular work task and it happened to pass through the motorcade of Bashagha, vowing to bring to justice those involved in shooting the apparatus personnel.

Politics

Maiteeq meets HoR Speaker amid efforts to adopt unified budget



The deputy head of the outgoing Presidential Council, Ahmed Mitig, met the Speaker of the House of Representatives (HoR),

Aqila Saleh, in Tobruk as part of the latter's work on approving a unified budget for 2021 to end financial division.

Mitig said Saturday on Facebook that the meeting was a step forward in paving the way for the Government of National Unity to work with a unified budget.

Mitig arrived in Tobruk with the Minister of Finance of the GNA Faraj Bumtari after the Ministry's announcement that the joint committee of east and west financial authorities started work via Zoom as per the understandings of Brega meetings.

The agreement on approving the unified budget came on February 08 in an announcement by the UNSMIL, saying the budget would be for two months to make room for the new executive authority to work on endorsing a 2021 budget later. The agreement on a unified budget was the first since 2014.

Economy

Algeria opens border crossing with Libya for commercial trade



Algeria has agreed to open the "Deb-deb" border crossing point with Libya in front of commercial traffic by setting a commodity exchange point at 0 km.

Algerian Prime Minister Abdelaziz Jarad confirmed that his country is studying avenues to allow Algerian merchants to enter the war-torn neighbouring country, following the improvement of security conditions in Libya, according to the Algerian newspaper, "Al-Bilad".

The Libyan security and military authorities had held intensive meetings with the local authorities in the Municipality of Ghadames to develop a plan to secure the Ghadames-Deb-deb border crossing point with Algeria.

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Economy
Eni Group attributes decline in production in Libya to compelling reasons



The Italian Eni Oil Group has attributed the decrease in its production in Libya to compelling reasons, leading to a decline in the production of some of its oil fields.

The Italian Eni Group clarified, in its annual report, that the decrease in its production in Libya led to a sharp decline in its financial returns for contractual reasons, however the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic and the OPEC + agreement to reduce production also had a strong impact on the Group's annual outcome.

Economy
CBL introduces new five-dinar banknote



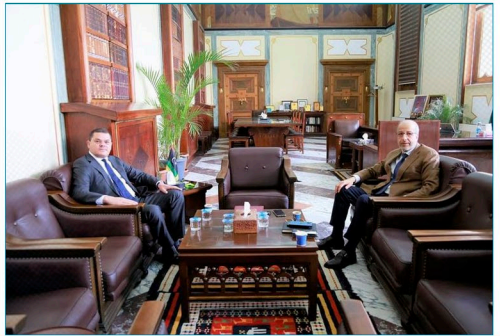
The Libya Observer

The Central Bank of Libya (CBL) introduced on Monday a new polymer banknote of LYD 5 dinar domination.

The CBL said that the introduction of the new banknote comes in celebration of the 10th anniversary of February 17th revolution.

Meanwhile, the Governor of the CBL, Sadiq Al-Kabir, met on Sunday with the Prime Minister-designate of the National Unity Government, Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, and discussed efforts to ensure the financial and monetary stability of the state and unify institutions.

Economy
Dbeibah, Al-Kabir discuss financial stability, unifying state institutions



The Prime Minister of the new executive authority elected by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum under the auspices of UNSMIL, Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, met Sunday with the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL), Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir, in Tripoli.

CBL said on Facebook that Dbeibah and Al-Kabir had reviewed efforts to ensure financial and monetary stability as well as the unification of state institutions to achieve national goals.

Dbeibah said Saturday on Twitter that he was carrying out consultations to form a national unity government and present it in the coming days to the House of Representatives for confidence.

Economy
CBL rejects Global Witness report regarding its performance



global witness

The Central Bank of Libya (CBL) expressed its rejection on Sunday of what it described "the inaccuracies and errors" that were mentioned in the report of Global Witness regarding the bank's performance and accounts.

The CBL said in a statement that it had previously provided the Global Witness with all the necessary explanations and data, as part of its commitment to the principle of transparency.

It also condemned the ignorance of the organization for those clarifications in its recent report, which confirms the report's lack of professionalism, objectivity and impartiality, according to the statement.

Earlier, Global Witness claimed that Libya appears to be losing millions of dollars a year through fraudulent use of its Letters of Credit system, run by the Central Bank of Libya.

Opinions

Libya's new interim government pressed hard to deliver national elections

By Sasha Toperich, senior executive vice president of the Transatlantic Leadership Network



Acting head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and career U.S. diplomat Stephanie Williams, recently announced a new unified executive authority in Libya, tasked with preparing the country for national elections, scheduled for Dec. 24, 2021. This is a major success, as Williams managed to jump start political dialogue through a newly formed Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) after Khalifa Haftar's disastrous military campaign that only further complicated an already complex political landscape.

Several months of hard work resulted in the election of Mohammed al-Menfi as Head of Presidential Council and Abdulhamid Dbeibeh as interim prime minister of a new unified Libyan authority. The UN broadcast images of signed pledges by all candidates to hold presidential and parliamentary elections on Dec. 24 and to appoint 30 percent of women to senior government posts. Dbeibeh is a successful businessman from Misrata while al-Menfi served as Libyan ambassador to Greece.

The new interim government comes with a heavy burden. Libyans fear it will fail to deliver, repeating the pattern of Sarraj's government when in 2015, rival political parties signed a political agreement in Shkirat, Morocco, and pledged to organize both a national referendum on a new constitution and full parliamentary elections within two years. The then-appointed and internationally-backed GNA, led by Fayeze al-Sarraj, remained in power almost six years on. No national referendum was organized, no constitution adopted, no elections held — while the lives of ordinary Libyans further deteriorated.

Sarraj failed to manage the affairs of State, including a botched handling of Khalifa Haftar's war on Tripoli. Reminiscent of the Gaddafi era, Sarraj's closest advisors became more powerful than any minister or members of the Presidential Council, limiting access to Sarraj while numerous projects, initiatives, and requests piled up on his desk without answer.

Sarraj's legacy can be viewed through his attempt to bring warring factions together. He doesn't bear the brunt of responsibility for the failure; that tribute goes to Khalifa Haftar, who rejected a fair power sharing agreement secretly negotiated with Sarraj. An agreement was to be made public at the Libyan National Conference, scheduled to take place in Ghadames mid-April of 2019, announcing general elections so Libyan people could finally select their own representatives. Haftar realized this would mean the end of his ambition to become an absolute ruler and a de facto "new Gadhafi." For Haftar's key backers, such as Russia, it meant a political defeat, loss of invested money, and no lucrative commercial deals struck with Haftar, who hastily launched an all-out military attack on Tripoli, just days before Ghadames conference.

A year later, after the GNA government in Tripoli called for Turkish military support, Haftar suffered a colossal defeat, leaving behind thousands dead and wounded, mass-graves in Tarhuna, and a shattered, torn, and worn-out Libyan society. To support his war effort, Haftar brought in Russia's Wagner Group. A growing Russian military presence prompted AFRICOM to alert Washington. Haftar's failure forced his backers to accept the renewed UN political track as Libya's only solution. However, it seems countries like Russia will continue to support a Wagner Group presence, as recent construction of huge trenches by Wagner mercenaries around Sirte and Al-Jufra suggests.

Due to a heavy Russian military presence, Washington is forced to pay more attention. Last November, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the "Libya Stabilization Act," paving the way for the Biden administration to sanction any foreign party obstructing Libya's political and electoral process. The U.S. Treasury Department recently sanctioned Mohamed al-Kani and the Kaniyat militia, responsible for the murder and torture of civilians in Tarhuna. The list likely will not stop there.

The UNSMIL effort brought a renewed hope for Libya. Moreover, with the new administration in Washington, Libyan people who have waited so long to finally get a chance to elect their leadership now have a valuable friend ready to help. Libya's new interim government is not about "dividing the cake," as Williams warned, but holds the immense responsibility to create conditions to ensure the scheduled December elections.

Credit: This article was first published by The Hill on February 15, 2021

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

Coronavirus infection rates expected to rocket in Libya



The Director of the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC), Badr Al-Din Al-Najjar, said that he expects a marked increase in the rates of Coronavirus infection, following overcrowding and mixing, which occurred in most cities in Libya in recent days.

It is expected that this will greatly affect the isolation centers which already complain of stress, regarding the lack of capabilities at their facilities.

Al-Najjar confirmed, in a press statement on Saturday, that testing of Coronavirus at the present time was limited to high-priority cases, due to the lack of operators in the testing laboratories, noting that additional PCR devices are urgently required to accommodate the increasing number of testing needed.

He added that the monitoring and investigation teams, along with the workers in the isolation centers, have not received any of their financial remunerations, calling of government officials to pay them their due urgently.

Health

Anti-Coronavirus committee: We are ready to implement Covid-19 vaccination campaign



The Scientific Advisory Committee to Combat the Coronavirus Pandemic has said that the field vaccination teams are ready to implement the Covid-19 vaccination campaign.

The committee discussed the preparations in terms of the side effects of the vaccine, confirming that a registration system for the vaccination campaign will be announced in the coming days.

It also indicated that it would hold training courses on how to dispose of medical waste, adding that they will be at the level of all municipalities and vaccination centers.

Health

Libya's GNA allocates 600 million dinars to tackle Covid-19



The Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) allocated 600 million dinars as an emergency fund to provide Covid-19 vaccines to Libyans and to bring the needed medical equipment to the county.

The allocation decision came in a meeting of the GNA presidency in Tripoli on Monday. The meeting was chaired by Head of Presidential Council, Fayez Al-Sarraj, and was attended by members Ahmed Mitig, Abdelsalam Kajman, Mohammed Emmari, and Ahmed Hamza, among other officials.

The Head of the advisory committee of fighting Coronavirus, Dr. Khalifa Al-Bakoush, attended the meeting and explained the dire epidemiological situation, especially the funding problems related to the Central Bank's reluctance to give the 600 million budget allocated earlier by the Presidential Council.

The GNA approved in the meeting an emergency fund of 600 million dinars to get Covid-19 vaccines as well as the necessary medical equipment, saying the fund would be covered by the bank account of the Libyan General Medical Insurance.

The meeting saw a discussion about the 2021 budget amid the ongoing economic and political situation, saying it would be a unified budget as per the agreement made in eastern Libya upon the visit of the Minister of Finance Faraj Buntari and Presidential Council member, Ahmed Mitig.

It also went over the unification of state institutions and the proposed geographical division of administrative and economic institutions in the state: 12 administrative districts with some space of independence in terms of finances among other points, which will be discussed later, according to the media office of Al-Sarraj.

Sports

Al-Ahly Benghazi wins on penalties against Motema, qualifies for Caf CC group stage



Al Ahly Benghazi has advanced to the group stage of the Caf Confederation Cup (Caf CC) after holding their Congolese opponents Motema Pembe on a 1-1 draw on Sunday.

Al Ahly Benghazi faced the Motema Pembe in the second-round match at Pentecost Martyrs Stadium in the Congolese capital, while the first match, which also ended with a thrilled 1-1 draw, was held in the Egyptian capital Cairo due to the continued ban on Libyan stadiums.

With this match, Al Ahly Benghazi -Libya's only representative in the African championships- book their place in the group stage of the 2020-21 Caf Confederation Cup by winning on penalties 8-7.

Travel

Misrata Marine Terminal plans special ceremony to mark opening of station



The director of the basic education office at the Ministry of Education, Salem Al-Barghathi, confirmed that adult education schools will be a top priority for his office this year.

This came during his meeting today with the administrators of schools for primary education of adults affiliated with the Education Inspectorate of Greater Tripoli.

The meeting dealt with many files and topics related to adult education, most notably means to overcome challenges and difficulties facing adult education schools.

Al-Barghathi stressed the need to focus more on this sector as the operation of such schools marks an important stage in the development of national education.



Local

Maiteeq discusses local government issues

Vice President of the Presidential Council (PC), Ahmed Maiteeq,

on Sunday, held a meeting with the Minister of Local Government Abdul-Bari Shinbaru, and Planning Minister Muhammad al-Zaidani to discuss the end-state vision for the geographical, administrative, and economic divisions for municipalities.

The meeting which took place at the Prime Minister's Office also considered the future of the Public Services Company said a statement by the PC's deputy head media office on Facebook.

The statement explained that talks come in the framework of activating the Local Administration System Law No. 59 of 2011 AD and the transition to the administrative decentralization system.

Migration

Libyan Coast Guard rescues 210 migrants



The Libyan Coast Guard managed to save the lives of 210 immigrants on Saturday, following the sinking of their boat off the Libyan coast.

The Spokesman for the Naval Forces, Masoud Abdul Samad, stated that a rescue boat had saved 210 migrants and retrieved one body

All rescued migrants were handed over to the Illegal Immigration Agency, to pursue all relevant legal measures in their cases.

Local

Families of Tarhouna graves' victims identify their relatives



The Ministry of Justice has confirmed that several families of missing persons have identified their relatives among the bodies recovered from Tarhouna mass graves after displaying the pictures of the remains and matching other identification marks.

Among them were four male bodies belonging to the "Jaballah" family from Tarhouna, the ministry said on Facebook Saturday.

The committee assigned by the Minister of Justice will continue work until identifying all the bodies recovered from the mass graves in Tarhouna, the statement added.

weather

The Weather Channel

Tripoli Weather Forecast


Fri 26	19°/10°		Cloudy	 6%	 E 18 km/h
Sat 27	19°/9°		Mostly Sunny	 7%	 ENE 12 km/h
Sun 28	19°/10°		Mostly Sunny	 11%	 ENE 15 km/h
Mon 01	21°/11°		Mostly Sunny	 8%	 ESE 18 km/h
Tue 02	21°/12°		Mostly Sunny	 10%	 ESE 22 km/h
Wed 03	21°/12°		Mostly Sunny	 10%	 ESE 19 km/h
Thu 04	21°/12°		Mostly Sunny	 14%	 E 16 km/h

Photo of the Week





Zuwara is a coastal Berber-speaking city in Libya. It has a population of about 32,893 people. It is famous for its beaches and seafood. It is situated 102 km west of Tripoli and 60 km from the Tunisian border. It is the capital of the Nuqat Al-Khams district. Its people speaks Zuwara Berber, a Zenati Berber language.

History:

The city dates back to the second century BC, that is, during the reign of Massinisa, and its name in that era was Casas, and it was famous for exporting salt (Ticent) as the city's residents call it, as its geographical location is surrounded by many large saltpans, and most of the economy was based on salt and the extraction of limestone from the adjacent springs, which are the main building material. Most of the old buildings existing so far were built with gypsum and the salt stone known to the population as Uls gypsum stone. The settlement was first mentioned by the traveller Al-Tidjani in the years 1306-1309 as Zuwara Al-Saghirah (Little Zuwara). In a Catalan sailing manual (1375). The town is mentioned by Leo Africanus in the 16th century. It later served as the western outpost of Italian Libya (1912–43), being the terminus of the now-defunct Italian Libya Railway from Tripoli 105 kilometres to the east. Its artificial harbour shelters a motorized fishing fleet.

Population activity:

The activity of the population in the past was represented in agriculture, grazing and fishing, with the manufacture of lime, gypsum and salt, and in the first Karamanli era, a number of treaties were concluded with a number of Italian republics regarding the export of salt, and in the past its port, known as the port of (Tiboda), was one of the most famous ports in the field of salt export. Currently, it has a fishing port and a commercial port that was established in the Turkish era, then it was destroyed in World War II by Italian forces and after the Italian occupation it was restored by the invading forces. Italy also built the Libyan railway line, which extended from Zuwara to Tripoli, with a distance of 110 km. Finally, the largest Berber cemetery in its western borders was discovered in it.

Cereals, dates, and esparto grass (used to make cordage, shoes, and paper) are local products.

Farwa Island in Zuwara city:

A Libyan island in the Mediterranean Sea, about 40 kilometers west of Zuwara, with an area of about 470 hectares, it contains a lighthouse that was rebuilt in 2002 and there are some springs in it, it also contains most of the wild animals such as the hare, the fox, the night hunting and other animals, and different kinds of birds, especially the marine birds, such as the ducks, the gull, the flamingo, and there is a type of migratory and endemic falcons in it.

Farwa is the only peninsula in Libya and one of the must-see sites in it. If you value your privacy and love fresh air, then Farwa could be a life-time opportunity to enjoy the exotic atmosphere of the unspoiled Mediterranean paradise.

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