



France to reopen embassy in Libya, Macron and Menfi agree in Paris

The Head of the Libyan Presidential Council, Mohammed Menfi, has agreed with the French President, Emmanuel Macron, to reopen Paris embassy in Tripoli next Monday.

The announcement came in a press conference between Menfi and Macron in Paris, where the latter arrived on Tuesday afternoon along with his deputy Mossa Al-Koni to discuss support for the Government of National Unity by France as Libya heads to elections.

Menfi thanked France, during the press conference, for what he said was the "support for Libya's stability, adding that the first steps of such a support would be reopening French embassy in Libya.

Macron said France would be working with international partners to ensure the defense of Libyan sovereignty, adding that "Russian and Turkish forces should leave Libya as soon as possible."

It is worth noting that Turkey signed in November 2019 MoUs with the then Government of National Accord that included defense training and military cooperation between the two countries, while Khalifa Haftar enlisted the assistance of the Russian Wagner Group to provide his forces with manpower and weapons in his war on Tripoli at the time.

Macron, who is a staunch supporter of Haftar's war endeavors and his country's military has more than once been implicated in UN reports as an accomplice of Haftar's military operations, the last of which was selling Haftar US Javelin missiles to use in his war on Tripoli back in 2019, said Paris "aims to maintain the ceasefire agreement in Libya."

He added that France would work with Libya to secure the borders with the help of neighboring countries in order to diminish operations of smuggling, human trafficking, illegal immigration and influx of terrorists to the country.

Menfi's visit to France is the first he makes after he has assumed office as the Head of the Libyan Presidential Council



UNSMIL: International community unanimously supports Libya's Unity Government

The UN envoy to Libya, Jan Kubis, has assured the Libyan Prime Minister, Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, of the unanimous support of the international community to his government to address the economic, humanitarian, security, human rights, and development challenges in

the country.

A statement by the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), said Tuesday that Kubis and Dbeibah had agreed on the importance of prioritizing the needs of the people, including the response to COVID-19, and the provision of essential services.

"They stressed the urgent need to approve the national budget to ensure service delivery, allocate resources for local governance, and to hold the national elections on 24 December 2021." The statement reads.

Kubis and Dbeibah also discussed various issues including the required UN support to expedite the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement and unification of state institutions, according to the statement.



Libyan PM says ready to support electoral commission

The Libyan Prime Minister, Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, met Tuesday with the Chairman of the High National Elections Commission, Emad Al-Sayeh, and discussed the preparations for December 24th elections, as per the UN-brokered Libyan Political Dialogue Forum.

The electoral commission said in a statement that the general elections' preparations in terms of logistics and technical issues in order to carry out the task as per international standards.

Dbeibah reiterated readiness to support the electoral commission and



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and urged the Chairman to outline the requirements for the upcoming milestone in Libya so the Government of National Unity could provide them.



Libya's Unity Government handed over authorities in eastern region

The Government of National Unity (GNU) was handed over power and all authorities in the eastern region by the Interim Government of Abdullah Al-Thinni on Tuesday in Benghazi.

The deputy prime minister of the GNU, Hussein Al-Gotrani, announced after receiving control over the authorities in eastern Libya that division had ended and the GNU would be serving all Libyans across the country.

Al-Gotrani arrived in Benghazi on Tuesday with a delegation from the GNU to attend the handover ceremony in the presence of Al-Thinni Government's ministers.

The delegation included the ministers of interior, planning, finance, youths, education, higher education, technical education and housing, building and agriculture.

Politics

EU sanctions Al-Kani militia leaders



The European Union on Monday imposed sanctions on several officials and entities in seven countries, including Libya.

The EU sanctioned two leaders in the Kaniyat militia, Muhammad al-Kani, and his brother Abdul Rahim for allegedly committing extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances between 2015 and June 2020 in the western Libyan city of Tarhouna, which was under their control for years.

According to the decision, individuals and entities included in the sanctions list will be subject to an asset freeze and a travel ban to the EU member states.

The decision prohibits persons and entities in the European Union from dealing with those on the sanctions list, directly or indirectly, the EU statement said.

Last year, the US Treasury Department sanctioned the Kaniyat militia and its two leaders, Muhammad and Abdul-Rahim, for the same crimes.

Economy

Libya, Spain agree to continue exporting livestock



The Libyan embassy in Madrid agreed on Monday with the competent authorities in Spain, to continue exporting livestock from Spanish ports to Libyan ports directly and under the supervision of the competent authorities.

The embassy explained on its Facebook page that this agreement came during an extended meeting held in Madrid and in cooperation with the National Center for Animal Health in Tripoli, adding that the agreements were concluded with precise protocols that included facilitating procedures and safety of exports.

It also added that this step will contribute to reducing the prices of livestock and meat for citizens in Libya, as this agreement will meet the needs of the Libyan market of meat, especially during the month of Ramadan.

All merchants can initiate export procedures, by obtaining the necessary permissions from the National Center for Animal Health in Tripoli, the Libyan embassy said.



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Economy

GNU, Eni discuss energy cooperation



Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah has discussed with the CEO of Italian Energy company Eni Claudio Descalzi ways to promote the company's social responsibility in certain vital areas in Libya, such as health, education, vocational training and electricity.

"We have a privileged relationship with Eni, and we are keen to keep it that way," Dbeibah said on Sunday during a meeting with Eni's CEO in Tripoli.

The meeting focused on ways to spin the wheel of Libya's economy and bolster cooperation in the field of renewable energy in response to the rising global demand for energy, taking into account the escalating environmental challenges.

Meanwhile, Eni's head expressed the company's full commitment with regard to the activities and operational projects in the country, with a focus on natural gas and minimizing the use of carbon-intensive energy sources.

Economy

CBL, GNU discuss relaunching economy



The Governor of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL), Sadiq Al-Kabir, met on Monday, with the Minister of Planning, Fakhri Muftah Boufrana, the Minister of Transport, Muhammad Salem Al-Shahoubi, and the Minister of Finance, Khaled Al-Mabrouk Abdullah.

The meeting came within the framework of cooperation and coordination to unify efforts to succeed the government program, drive the economic growth, and enhance coherence of financial, commercial, monetary and economic policies, according to the CBL official Facebook page.

Economy

Tripoli hosts non-oil exports conference



Tripoli hosted on Tuesday the second scientific conference for non-oil exports under the supervision of the Libyan Export Development Center, with the participation of heads of oil and industrial companies, institutions, researchers, and stakeholders.

The conference aims to shed light on the obstacles and difficulties facing non-oil exports, such as dates, olive oil, and fruits, and to discuss coordination to find a mechanism for accessing global markets.

Panelists included representatives from Australia and Tunisia who presented research papers through the Zoom platform.

The event featured an exhibition to introduce Libyan industries, with the participation of the Iron and Steel Company, the Misrata Free Zone, and products of other food and agricultural processing factories.

Economy

Sanallah discusses plans to maintain sustainability of oil production



Chairman of the National Oil Corporation, Mustafa Sanallah, discussed with the new Minister of Transport and government budget official Muhammad al-Shahoubi, plans to boost and maintain sustainable production in order to enhance the state's income and support the national economy.

Al-Shahoubi emphasized full support to the NOC, as it is the pillar of Libya's economy and a key driver of the state's general budget.

Meanwhile, Sanallah said "The NOC and its companies, with the determination of all those working in the oil sector, will spare no effort to bolster the national economy, and secure and preserve its wealth for the sake of future generations."

Opinions

Movement of December 24 Elections

By Abdullah Al-Kabir, a Libyan writer



Setting the date for the general elections on December 24 of this year is the most prominent outcome of the political forum dialogues. It is true that the other terms of the agreement are important and constitute the necessary basis for preparing for the elections, but including the date in the forum document and obligating all candidates and political forces to pledge in writing to respect all the terms of the agreement is the first step towards achieving this entitlement on time without delay. The political parties at the forefront of the scene do not want elections that are certain to oust them from power, and they realize that their chances of returning to power if they run for the elections are almost non-existent. The majority of the people are sure that these entities and personalities are one of the main reasons for this degradation in which the country has declined.

But is it sufficient to agree on the date of implementation of this entitlement, with what was granted and confirming it in statements issued by the major international powers and the Security Council? Of course not, our experience brought us back from 2014 until today that the current entities, especially the House of Representatives and the Supreme Council of State, do not want to leave, without ignoring the exception in the President of the Presidential Council welcoming the new authority and his readiness to hand over tasks and duties to it. But it is the exception that proves the rule.

The next and decisive step is the popular movement organized and legally framed by civil society organizations, so the Prime Minister's pledge to adhere to the election date is not enough, and even if the intentions are good, we should expect some personalities or entities to set up obstacles and push towards postponing the date to a later date that may not come. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare to move through demonstrations, civil disobedience and media outlets in an organized manner if there are signs of disruption or obstruction.

The good news came from Tripoli a few days ago with the announcement of a gathering that included civil society institutions and political activists to declare the December 24 elections party, which aims to adhere to holding the elections on time, to enshrine the citizen's right to choose who will manage his affairs, and to block any attempt to obstruct or delay.

The launch of this movement from Tripoli is a very important step waiting for it to extend to the rest of the near and distant cities. The spread throughout the country with unity of purpose facilitates coordination to move simultaneously, by going to the streets and squares and asking everyone to adhere to the election date if any party tries to set obstacles that prevent them, or the parliament and the State Council continue to disrupt the constitutional process that organizes the elections.

The lust for power is rampant among most of the figures that emerged after the February Revolution, despite their lack of political experience and their lack of leadership talent, confirmed that the willingness to face it peacefully through activating the mechanisms recognized in the democratic culture should start now. The majority, and perhaps everyone, will leave involuntary under the weight of streets and squares as they vibrate demanding change.

Elections remain a means and not an end, and we should not raise the ceiling of expectations high, as what has accumulated over the past years and decades, as well as the old structural problems, need a long time beyond the current generation to deal with it, but the road begins with regaining sovereignty, strengthening control over national decisions, and curbing this waste of national wealth.

The restoration of the homeland begins with the dropping of these flabby entities and emaciated personalities crouched on our chests through the ballot boxes peacefully. And the establishment of a culture that directs the candidate for any position to the voters to present his vision and project and strive to convince them and obtain their approval, not to travel abroad in search of recommendations from international and regional capitals.

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 epicenter discovered in Jufra



The head of the executive medical committee to confront the Coronavirus epidemic in the municipality of Jufra, Abd Al-Rahman Munisi, has revealed that the infections are steadily increasing, with the discovery of an epicenter for the spread of infection in a residential neighborhood.

Munisi explained to the Libyan News Agency that the number of deaths has reached 42 so far, out of 123 that have been admitted to the isolation center at Waddan General Hospital since its opening.

He also added that there are currently eight cases inside the center, four of them under intensive care, 73 cases of recovery, and 13 suspected cases in the filtration department of Afia Hospital in Houn, indicating that cases are increasing daily.

Munisi called on the medical personnel in Jufra to join their colleagues in the isolation center to support them in dealing with this epidemic.

Health

Minister of Health issues urgent instructions to provide cancer medications



The Health Minister, Ali Al-Zinati, has given the green light to the Pharmacy Administration and the National Program on Cancer Control to import the countries' needs of chemo and radiotherapy, urging them to act with the utmost urgency.

"Our patients have the right to get the best medications from the best companies," the Health Minister said.

This came during his meeting with Laila Al-Arabi, Director of the Pharmacy, Equipment and Medical Supplies Department, and Hussein Kamuka, head of the National Program for Cancer Control.

He emphasized that the medication must be imported from major European countries, such as Germany, Britain, France, and the United States, which have the US Food and Drug Administration and IMO certification.

Health

Ministry of Health to unify Covid-19-related committees



Minister of Health Ali Al-Zanati on Sunday convened an expanded meeting of committees and bodies concerned with combating the coronavirus pandemic from the eastern and western regions to discuss establishing a joint working mechanism among all sectors for implementing a unified plan.

Al-Zanati emphasized the need to activate the isolation and filtration centers that were set up by the ministry under the relevant departments.

For his part, Chairman of the eastern Advisory Committee for combating Covid-19, Salihin Majeed, stressed the necessity of disbursing salaries and remuneration for those serving in isolation centers.

He also called for recruiting international trainers to train medical personnel and establish a unified system for exchanging experiences and providing updates and information on the virus developments.

According to the Health Ministry's Information Office, the officials agreed to unify the east and western advisory committees, noting that the Minister of Health has taken measures to start consolidating both committees under one unified Supreme Committee, which he would announce very soon.



Health

Ministry of Health to dispatch medical convey to the south

The Ministry of Health on Monday said it will dispatch a medical convoy to cities of the southern region.

The convoy, organized by the International Cooperation Office and the International Relief Committee, is composed of nine medical teams, Dr. Abdel Moneim Al-Kumishi said, noting that the number of doctors in each team varies from one area to another depending on the population density of each region.

According to Al-Kumishi, the teams will offer services to all inhabited areas along the southwest and southeast line, from Bint Baya to Ubari, in addition to Adri, Al-Uwainat, Ghat, Murzuq, Hamira, Kufra, and other villages.

He indicated that the convoy will continue throughout March, hoping the period will be sufficient to cover the entire swath of the southern region.

The Ministry of Health indicated that its goal is to remedy the medical staff shortage in remote districts and spare the inhabitants of these areas the long journey to hospitals.

Meanwhile, the Director of the Health Services Department in the Shura Administrative District in Kufra city southeast of the country has confirmed that a team of six doctors had arrived in the city and were already at work.

Sports

Libyana signs Libyan bodybuilder champion Al-Garqni



Libyana Mobile Phone Company has signed a sponsorship deal with the Libyan world bodybuilding champion Kamal Al-Garqni who is preparing for his third consecutive participation in "Mr. Olympia Championship", scheduled to take place in Florida, this fall.

The signing ceremony took place on Tuesday at the company's HQ between the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Libyana Mobile Phone Company, Abdel-Moneim Al-Hajjaji, and the Libyan International Champion, Kamal Al-Garqni.

Al-Garqni has an extremely successful record in this sport and is now widely regarded as one of the top bodybuilders worldwide. Last year, Al-Garqni won the silver medal in "Mr. Olympia" which is considered one of the most bodybuilding toughest championships. He also topped the podium in the 2019 version and took the bronze in 2018 in the same championship.

Education

Reports of scientific committee in educational institutions are reassuring, Minister of Education confirms

The Ministers of the National Unity Government of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research, and Technical Education, have held an expanded meeting to discuss following up the progress of the school year and implementing preventive and precautionary measures to combat the Coronavirus to protect our students.

The Minister of Education, Musa Mohammed Al-Maqrif stated that the Scientific Advisory Committee to confront the Coronavirus pandemic will continue its work and will be unified between the three ministries, in order to concerted efforts, confirming that the reports of the scientific committee in educational institutions so far are reassuring.

In turn, the head of the Scientific Advisory Committee, Abdul-Moneim Abu Laiha explained the importance of paying attention to the executive side and following up the work of the field teams.



Libya to recruit 3000 Tunisian teachers

Libya is seeking to recruit 3000 Tunisian teachers through international cooperation, said the head of the Supreme Council of Tunisian and Libyan Businessmen, Abdulhafid Al-Sakroufi.

Al-Sakroufi, said in statements to Tunisian Radio "Shams" FM last Thursday that the procedures, which are pending formal adoption, will be implemented through the International Cooperation Program. "The council is working on establishing a Tunisian-Libyan fund for the reconstruction of Libya, with Tunisian, Libyan and international financing," Al-Sakroufi explained.

However, he pointed out the need to amend the investment laws in order to boost and develop investment between the two countries.

Local

Baby girl found in carton box in the street finds a home

A baby girl who was found in a carton box near an apartment block has found a home after no one reported her.

Saleh Al-Maghribi found the baby near the block where he lives and carried her back home. He decided to keep the child and raise her as his daughter.

That evening, Saleh's friends surprised him with a dinner party, and the baby girl was offered an "Aqiqa" which Libyans usually perform within the first week of the child's birth.

"Aqiqa" involves the sacrifice of a sheep with some of the meat being distributed to people in need.

However, a couple approached Saleh and offered to raise the infant as they had no children from their 15-years of marriage.



Crimes

Libya: Brigade 444 arrests 16 smugglers and frees 85 abductees



Brigade 444 said its forces had neutralized criminals' hideouts in Nessma area - about 200km from Tripoli - arresting 16 smugglers, whom it said were criminals wanted by the authorities but had never been apprehended.

The brigade added on Facebook that during the delicate "combat operation", its forces had freed 85 African abductees, in addition to ending the smugglers' kidnap, looting, and banditry in the area that were burdening the residents for a long time, seizing weapons and vehicles they were using.

"Our forces are still working on ending such crimes in order to exact justice and reach every criminal hideout in the country." The brigade, which did similar operations earlier near Bani Walid, said.

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
Fri 26	19°/10°		Sunny	8%	WNW 10 km/h
Sat 27	23°/14°		Partly Cloudy	3%	SE 13 km/h
Sun 28	25°/14°		Partly Cloudy	0%	ESE 16 km/h
Mon 29	24°/13°		Mostly Sunny	1%	E 19 km/h
Tue 30	23°/13°		Mostly Sunny	5%	E 25 km/h
Wed 31	22°/13°		Mostly Sunny	5%	E 26 km/h
Thu 01	23°/15°		Mostly Sunny	5%	E 25 km/h

Photo of the Week





The School of Arts and Crafts

The Islamic Arts and Crafts School was established in Tripoli in 1895, its area is about 24,000 square meters, and it received the first batch of students in 1901.

It included many crafts and arts, including carpentry, metal engraving, embroidery, paint, leather dyeing, metal engraving, and others.

The school was closed in 1911 due to the Italian invasion of Libya, but it resumed its activities in 1913.

It is located on '24th December' Street, which is one of the main streets of Tripoli, and is about 900 meters long. The school is about 300 meters away from Martyrs Square.

It was established within a group of industrial schools that constituted one of the distinct landmarks in the education system at the end of the second Ottoman rule, whereas citizens and philanthropists contributed to establishing it with the donations they collected.

Tripoli was at that time had a few inhabitants and scarce resources, and extreme poverty striking it.

The project was supported by the governor, Namik Pasha, who imposed a tax on olive oil production for this purpose. On the other hand, the municipality of Al-Hadara donated a large plot of land on Al-Hamidiyah Street (24th December).

Many changes have occurred in the Libyan society that diminished the role of the school, however, the Islamic Arts & Crafts School remains a live example of the compassion, caring and belonging the city and its citizens had shown to their little brothers and sisters in their time of need almost a century ago.

The Islamic World Heritage Committee approved the inclusion of the School of Arts and Crafts in Tripoli on its permanent list of Islamic heritage sites, among the five sites of Islamic heritage in 2019.



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