

Politics

UN envoy surprised at HoR Speaker's approval of Libya election laws



The UN envoy to Libya Abdoulaye Bathily stressed in a letter addressed to the Speaker of the House of Representatives (HoR) Aqila Saleh that the electoral process should be based on enforceable electoral laws, as they constitute the core of the mandate of the United Nations mission in Libya, adding that he was surprised that the HoR approved the laws without getting UN mission's opinion and proposals as agreed before.

Bathily added that the agreement signed in Benghazi regarding informing the mission of developments in the electoral process obliged the HoR to cooperate with the UN mission and make room for Bathily to participate in the process of approving the draft laws that would be presented by the 6+6 Joint Committee once the final copies had been received.

"I was surprised when I learned the news through the press and social media that you had received the electoral laws, presented them in an HoR session, and approved them," Bathily told Saleh, adding

he was surprised that a copy of the HoR's letter to the UN Secretary-General was circulating online to inform the UN about the adoption of the laws and to request support in order to form a new government.

He called on the HoR Speaker to send the official copy of the revised electoral laws, as referred by the 6+6 Joint Committee to the House of Representatives to the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) as soon as possible. He also stressed that it became extremely urgent for Libyan leaders to join forces to reach a political settlement on electoral and other immediate issues, citing the necessity of agreeing on a workable map to improve Libya's unity, sovereignty and prosperity.

The Head of UNSMIL reiterated that the UN mission was committed to implementing its mandate to oblige Libyans to respect their pledges to give the Libyan people state institutions that are legitimate and subject to accountability.

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Libyan Mufti says HoR has approved election laws to befit Haftar



The Libyan Mufti, Sheikh Al-Sadiq Al-Gharyani, criticized the House of Representatives' (HoR) rapid, sudden and unanimous approval of the presidential and parliamentary election laws, saying that what HoR was doing was beyond astonishing, and adding on Tanasuh TV channel on Wednesday that HoR members held a session and issued a fully detailed law tailored to Haftar's needs, which stipulated that people with dual citizenship "have the right to run for the presidential elections, and if they are unsuccessful, they return to their previous jobs while retaining their citizenship, but if they succeeded in elections, they would renounce foreign citizenship."

The Mufti described this detail as something inappropriate and absurd that no one would accept, wondering whether HoR members heard about the agreement that Haftar and his family signed in Moscow with the Russian President, and adding that he was sure that many of them had not heard about it.

"If they had not heard about it, the media would now be abuzz with this agreement and people would be criticizing Libya for

how they now accepted that their country be colonized by foreign bases, not to mention the Egyptian forces with armored vehicles entering the country equipped with their weapons." He added, saying that Haftar had no objection because he previously stated that what the Egyptians and Al-Sisi were doing was acceptable to him even if it was contrary to the interests of Libya.

He added that the country was now occupied by invading Egyptian forces, and indicated that Haftar and his family went to Moscow and signed a deal called a "joint defense agreement," which was in fact an occupation agreement, wondering what kind of joint defense Haftar could undertake in order to defend Moscow or fight alongside its forces.

He explained that joint defense is between countries that are equal and close to each other in cooperating in military matters, but cooperation on Haftar's part is a provision of territory, stressing that Haftar does not have the ability to defend Russia, serve its causes, or enter into conflicts and battles.

The Mufti stressed that "Haftar's participation in this agreement was to hand over the

land of Libya as an easy prey to these criminals who fought Libyans in 2019 while they had no legitimacy. They fought as mercenaries to whom Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates pay money, but now they are soldiers and organized forces belonging to the state with an aircraft and air defense agreement and naval and air bases."

The Mufti indicated that HoR members were only able to enact laws that had been forbidden by Islamic law and issue a law granting the right to a person with foreign citizenship from a non-Muslim country to rule a Muslim country which is forbidden. He also addressed the members of HoR, saying, "The issue is that of loyalty and innocence, faith and lack of faith, so how could you enact this law that is forbidden by Islamic law, a criminal law that is not permissible to be enacted." He said, adding that he was amazed at the position of the Supreme Court judges who postponed consideration of the appeal submitted to the law called (Amendment 13) in order for this law to be published in the Official Gazette to be passed and become a fait accompli.



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HCS dissolves team in 6+6 Committee, says will stick to Bouznika outcomes

The High Council of State has declared its adherence to the 6+6 committee outcome, which was signed in Bouznika of Morocco, announcing the dissolving of its team after “completing its mission.”

The HCS made the announcement on Wednesday, shortly after the House of Representatives (HoR) approved a set of voting laws submitted by the joint 6+6 committee of HCS and HoR members.

“The HCS decided today, in its 91st closed session, to adhere to the outcomes of the 6+6 committee signed unanimously by its members in Bouznika, the Kingdom of Morocco, on June 3, 2023,” the Council stated on Wednesday.

In May 2023, Bouznika hosted the 6+6 meetings for over two weeks to agree on electoral laws for parliamentary and presidential elections in 2023.

The statement said the meetings in Morocco led to “unprecedented understandings” of the electoral laws, including disapproving the candidacy of dual nationals for the presidency post.

The HCS statement came in parallel with the Parliament’s approval of relevant laws, which the latter then referred to the High National Elections Commission, as announced by the HoR spokesman, Abdullah Belhaq, on Monday.

Observers deemed the HCS affirmation of the 6+6 committee outcomes an implicit rejection of the amendments adopted by the HoR last Monday.

HoR Speaker Aqila Saleh signed the amendments on Wednesday and announced his intention to send them to the Electoral Commission to work on their basis.



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Libyan HoR Speaker asks UNSG to rally international support around unified government

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, (HoR) Aqila Saleh, sent a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UNSG), Antonio Guterres, in which he requested to mobilize international support to form a unified government whose mission is to hold presidential and parliamentary elections.

Saleh reiterated HoR’s fulfillment of its obligations to hold presidential and parliamentary elections by unanimously approving the issuance of the laws for electing the Head of the State and the National Assembly (Ummah Council), after the laws were completed by the 6+6 Committee, based on the 13th constitutional amendment.

Saleh pointed to the consensus between the HoR and the High Council of State (HCS), indicating the necessity of forming a unified government whose mission is to hold presidential and parliamentary elections in accordance with the text of Article 86 of the Law on Election of the Head of State, and Article 90 of the Law on Election of the Ummah Council, to ensure the holding of free and fair elections under a unified government across the country.

The spokesman for the HoR, Abdullah Blehiq, announced Monday the unanimous approval of the members to issue the law to elect the Head of the State and the law to elect the Ummah Council, after being completed by the 6+6 Committee.

The Speaker said, during the HoR session in Benghazi, that the law that was approved in accordance with the constitutional amendment did not exclude anyone who would meet the conditions for candidacy, adding that every citizen had the right to run as a civilian or military candidate for elections, saying that “those who don’t win elections return to their previous job.”

However, the HCS, which held its 91st plenary session headed by Mohammed Takala also on Monday, had so far avoided commenting on the issuance of the election laws, but only pointed out that its session had discussed the election laws reached by the 6+6 Committee.

Bathily reviews Libya’s political developments with Qatari official



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The UN Envoy to Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, on Wednesday, met the Minister of State at the Qatari Foreign Ministry in Doha to discuss developments in the Libyan political process.

The two parties emphasized the necessity of maintaining coherence and agreeing on election rules that would secure the reunification of Libyan institutions.

They urged regional and international partners to continue their individual and collective support for the UN mission’s efforts to organize elections and advance the political process.

Bathily expressed his gratitude for the assistance provided by Qatar to the victims of Derna, which was recently affected by floods.

He also renewed the call for Libyan leaders to unite efforts and cooperate in confronting the flood crisis.



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US ex-embassy to Libya says Putin has proposed to Haftar joint defense deal

The United States (US) ex-embassy to Libya, Jonathan Winer, said on X platform that the Russian President Vladimir Putin had proposed to Khalifa Haftar a plan for Libya-Russia joint defense deal.

Winer explained that with the deal, Russia would supply advanced air defense systems to "Libyan National Army", Haftar's forces basically based in the eastern region, in addition to training Haftar forces' pilots, developing joint Russian-Libyan air bases in east and south of the country, and setting up joint naval bases.

"House of Representatives (HoR) will be asked to vote yes," Winer said, adding that in Moscow, Haftar met with Russian President Putin who personally instructed Russian Foreign Ministry and ambassador in Tripoli to push proposed joint defense agreement through Libyan HoR as soon as possible after Derna crisis, reiterating that it was hard to believe "Libya would agree to become a Russian colony."

Haftar visited Moscow last Tuesday and met with a number of officials, including President Putin and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

The US warned Haftar, and other leaders of armed groups in Libya, against "relying on Russian President Vladimir Putin," according to a White House spokesperson cited by Al-Arabiya TV Channel.

"Libyan leaders must unite during the crisis and Washington is in the meantime in contact with the Libyan government to provide any necessary support." The US official said.

The Russian embassy in Libya commented sarcastically on reports that the US had warned Haftar and other Libyan leaders against rapprochement with Russia, saying in a comment on its Telegram channel: "Washington is still entertaining us. We laughed all night."

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Libyan think tank: Political activist Al-Baja and others detained on "toppling army" charges

The Libya Center for Strategic and Future Studies said that the Internal Security Apparatus had detained university professor Fathi Al-Baja, the director of the center's branch in Benghazi, Siraj Daghaman, and political activist Tariq Al-Bashari last Sunday, after asking them to go to one of its offices for investigation.

"The investigation was following a report that they met at the center's headquarters in Benghazi with the intention of making a change that could lead to the overthrow of the army," the center said, adding that the allegations were untrue.

The center added that the meeting was to discuss the general situation in Libya, following the floods in Derna and the rest of the cities of Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar, and explained that, since its establishment in 2011, the center had been urging all Libyan and international officials not to underestimate their responsibilities and the danger of negligence, indifference, and failure to observe the principles and rules of public work in managing

the country's affairs.

"The center has done so by expressing its opinion objectively and responsibly and presenting studies and alternative plans to get the country out of its successive crises." The statement said, calling on the security and relevant authorities to release Al-Baja and the other detained persons, and saying "it's not in the interest of any party for them to remain in detention, as they are people of thought, opinion, and politics, and dealing with them is through dialogue, discussion, and the exchange of ideas and opinions, especially since everyone's goal is the stability of Libya, its security and territorial unity."

Several political parties previously called for, in a joint statement, the immediate release of the three detainees, denouncing "all forms of detentions and arrests outside the legal framework as a blatant violation of political and civil rights and a crime that cannot be justified under any pretext."



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High-level meeting discusses problems facing southern regions of Libya

The head of the Presidential Council, Mohammed Menfi, and his two deputies, Mussa Al-Koni and Abdullah Al-Lafi, accompanied by the head of the High Council of State, Mohammed Takala, and his deputy, Masoud Obaid, held a meeting on Tuesday with ministers and representatives of the Government of National Unity, and a group of experts and advisors from the southern regions.

The meeting discussed the problems and difficulties that hinder the provision of services to the southern region and ways to overcome them.

The participants stressed the importance of the South as the strategic depth of the nation, the necessity of giving it priority in completing service projects, and paying attention to service facilities and security institutions for their contribution to achieving stability that guarantees the success of the national reconciliation project.



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Russian ambassador discusses with HCS latest political developments in Libya

The First Deputy Head of the High Council of State (HCS), Masoud Obaid, has met with the Russian Ambassador to Libya, Haider Rashid Aghanen, at the HCS headquarters in the capital, Tripoli.

The two sides discussed the latest situation in the city of Derna, exchanging views on the latest political developments in Libya, according to the HCS media office.

For his part, Obaid thanked Russia for the assistance it provided to the city.

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Libyan court postpones Al-Senussi sentencing hearing till November

The lawyer of Abdullah Al-Senussi, head of the intelligence agency in the Gaddafi regime, Ahmed Nashad, said that his client's sentencing hearing had been postponed to November 06, telling reporters that this postponement was attributed to the failure to bring Al-Senussi to trial on last Monday.

This is the eighth time in a row that the sentencing hearings for Al-Senussi have been postponed due to his failure to appear at the headquarters of the Tripoli Court of Appeal, where his trial is taking place.

Nashad accuses the security authorities that are detaining Al-Senussi of deliberately making him miss the sentencing hearings, saying the responsibility falls on the Attorney General as "he is responsible for the public case and for implementing the court's decision to bring Al-Senussi to the trial session."

Al-Senussi is facing several charges, including suppressing demonstrators during the revolution of February 17, 2011. He is also convicted of being behind the Abu Salim prison massacre that took place in 1996, when more than 1,200

people were killed.

Al-Senussi fled Libya after the fall of Gaddafi's regime, and then he was arrested in 2012 after arriving from Morocco to Mauritania carrying a false passport. He was then returned to Libya.

A death sentence was issued against Al-Senussi in 2015 in the Abu Salim massacre case, but the court ruled at the end of 2019 to drop charges against all defendants in the case, before the Supreme Court overturned the ruling and put the case back for a retrial.



Opinions

The Exposing Derna Tragedy

By Youssef Lutfi, political writer

The city of Derna was struck by one of the largest natural disasters that the world has witnessed during the last decade, as the collapse of the two dams in the Derna Valley (the Al-Belad Dam with a capacity of 15 million cubic metres, and the Bu Mansour Dam with a capacity of 22 million cubic meters) led to a huge flood - estimated to be three times its capacity. The Dams have bulldozed the nearby areas and neighborhoods adjacent to the valley, throwing them into the sea and changing the features of the city forever.

The old city and the shrines of the graves of the conquering Prophet Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, represent a witness to the extent of the change that has affected features of the city. These historical monuments withstood the floods that the city witnessed throughout its history, but this flood led to their complete destruction and indeed reducing them to nothing. The flood was like a reverse tsunami that swept away all the neighborhoods and residences in its path. It also destroyed the northern roads leading to the city and connecting its western and eastern parts. The widespread pictures and videos show the scale of the disaster that befell the city, as floods swept away and submerged more than a third of the city.

Preliminary estimates of the number of deaths indicate that they may exceed 20,000, according to Al-Bayda Medical Center's estimates. The number of confirmed deaths has exceeded 11,000 cases as of September 13, with the numbers rising with the continued arrival of rescue teams and international civil defense teams. As for the number of missing persons, the Libyan Red Crescent has recorded about 12,000 confirmed missing cases, while the number of displaced people has reached about 30,000 in a city of 120,000 people! State corruption and society's role:

The collapsed dams are approximately fifty years old. They were built in the early 1970s and have not witnessed any maintenance or restoration for more than 20 years. Scientific studies and symposiums over the past years have warned of the danger posed to Derna Valley, its dams and the roads, including a doctorate thesis published in 2022, by Dr. Abdel-Wanis Ashour which concluded the following:

"The current situation in the Wadi Derna basin necessitates that officials take immediate measures by conducting periodic maintenance operations on the existing dams, because in the event of a huge flood, the result will be disastrous for the residents of the valley and the city. A way must also be found to increase the vegetation cover so that the soil is not allowed to drift, erode and to reduce the phenomenon of "desertification"

"During the field visit to Wadi Derna, we found some dwellings in the valley's course, which requires educating residents about the danger of

floods and taking all necessary measures and procedures to maintain their safety."

While Libyans from all cities, east, west, and south, are busy in volunteer rescue operations and providing the necessary relief to help the people of Derna, the scenes of the collapse of infrastructure in a number of cities in the east of Libya and the huge losses it has caused in lives and material, the disruption of public life, and the burden on citizens. Huge material and moral losses, death tolls and the extent of catastrophic damage in the city of Derna prompted the world to wonder about the extent of corruption and laxity in state agencies and institutions, which led to the absence of minimum security and safety measures, as well as primitive services and rights that would preserve the safety of citizens.

The National Audit Bureau's 2021 report, provides part of the answer, as the report reveals in the second chapter many aspects of corruption that have ravaged and are ravaging the Ministry of Water Resources. The report states under the heading "Transformation Budget" the "Ministry's failure to take the necessary measures regarding the stalled projects," the most important of which is the project for the maintenance and rehabilitation of the Derna Dam, for the amount of about 15 million dinars.

Despite the report's revelation in terms of forms of financial corruption in the ministry, it remains part of the overall scene. Responsibility cannot be limited to a single ministry or municipality, nor can it be summed up in the corruption of a few years. Lack of competence or preparedness is a general characteristic of all parties concerned with the crisis, starting from the central government, passing through the National Safety Authority and Civil Defense, and ending with the municipality and local agencies. Parliament holding its emergency session four days after the disaster occurred, reflects the extent of insensitivity and the absence of the slightest sense of responsibility. Statements of Parliament Speaker, Agila Saleh, which revolved around disclaiming their responsibility for what happened, also reveal the extent of the recklessness of these parties despite the enormity of the mistake and the catastrophic consequences. In fact, Parliament's inaction reached such an extent that the doors of its headquarters, which is less than 30 km away from Derna and which has a capacity of about 1,000 people, and equipped with a helicopter landing pad and equipped health facilities, the doors of this headquarters, which belongs to the people of this country, remained closed in the face of the largest humanitarian disaster in the country's history.

Derna is a city that has suffered from floods throughout its modern history. It is an "estuary" city surrounded by highlands. According to assessments by experts and specialists, large parts

of the city are unfit for habitation and residence, and the roads leading to it and surrounding the valley are dilapidated. In addition to the absence of necessary equipment, procedures and systems for warning in emergency situations or the existence of evacuation plans and other primitive and necessary procedures are the responsibility of the central and local authorities, ministries and bodies, and finally the military authorities that tighten their grip on institutions in the east of the country, whose annual allocations reach relatively record levels.

The municipality of Derna, is headed by Abdul Moneim Al-Ghaithi, Aqila's nephew. Saleh allocated 400 million dinars to the municipality, while about half a billion dinars were allocated to the Ministry of Water Resources, in addition to the budgets allocated to the rest of the sectors and responsible bodies, without this being reflected in the performance of these bodies of their tasks and duties.

On the other hand, the movement of spontaneous popular campaigns first to save the city and provide relief to its people represents the greatest evidence not only of the failure and corruption of the state apparatus, but also of the failure of civil society institutions and civil relief organizations. The failure of civil society institutions represents a dangerous indicator of confusion in the values guiding the work of these institutions and their disconnection from community's pressing and pivotal issues. Community and humanitarian issues that are urgent and central to people's lives. The tragedy of Derna exposes what is far deeper than just financial corruption in an administration, institution, or ministry. It unveils a story of moral decay and loss of values - which is approaching its end levels - thus turning corruption into a natural part of political practice, the collapse of the public sense of responsibility, and the absence of civil institutions from public affairs in the country. The absence of any signs of reform on the horizon continues to point to one of two directions: implosion or collapse.

The absence of a clear collective moral position on the Libyan street regarding issues of corruption, injustice and tyranny is the basis on which the corruption of political authority and the decline of the societal sense of responsibility towards the nation are based. All administrative and legal solutions proposed to address the corruption rooted in the body of the state will remain weak solutions that revolve in the orbit of bureaucracy of the state which is targeted for remedy!

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

Libya signs MoU with Spanish NGO to establish village hospital in flood-hit areas

Libya's Minister of Local Government, Badr-aldin Al-Toumi on Monday signed a memorandum of understanding with the Spanish Remar organization to establish a village hospital in the flood-affected cities. Under the agreement, the Spanish NGO, specialized in relief and development programs, will set up and operate a village hospital in municipalities affected by floods and torrents, in cooperation with Libya's Ministry of Health and the local authorities. The ministry said the initiative is part of the

government's efforts to enhance cooperation programs with Libya's partners, in the wake of the flood crisis. The memorandum primarily targets health and local development projects, including providing medical equipment and training local medical and paramedical personnel. The project was signed under the supervision of the Libyan Embassy in Spain and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the embassy, the Spanish side will assume the expenses related to

the project, expressing its appreciation to the Oil Investments Company for providing logistical support and to the Libyan-Spanish Cultural Center for its cooperation in making the project a success. The project is expected to be completed within one year, after which the hospital will be handed over to the local authorities in Al-Bayda and Derna, along with all equipment, operation, and medical elements.



Health

WHO delivers medical aid to health centre in Derna

The World Health Organization office in Libya on Monday delivered medical aid to the Omar Al-Mukhtar Health Centre in Derna, which was hit by the floods. The head of the WHO mission, Ahmed Zuwaiten toured the centre. During the handover process, the WHO team and its head of mission in Libya toured the centre's departments. During the handover process, Ahmed Zuwaiten, the head of the WHO mission in Libya, visited the health centre and toured its various departments. The aid included emergency supplies and common medications that would be used by patients with chronic diseases and some psychological disorders. The organization noted that the shipment would only be sufficient to cover the treatment of 10,000 people for three months.



Sports

Libyan football league to kick off in November

The member of the Executive Office of the Libyan Football Federation, Adel Al-Ojali, confirmed that the Libyan Premier Football League will begin its fixtures next November, with a two-group system. This confirmation came in media statements by Al-Ojali who was responding to what he described as rumors by media figures who "did not want good for Libyan football," stressing that the delay in the start of the league was due to several reasons, including the country's preoccupation with the flood disaster in the eastern region that delayed the qualification results of clubs. Al-Ojali also denied what was being said about the Football Federation's intention to cancel the relegation mechanism in the new season 2023/24, stressing the Federation's insistence on holding the championship competitions in a two-group system due to the circumstances that the country had been going through, including political division and disruption of transportation among cities. The next season will be held with the participation of 22 teams, including the 18 teams that avoided relegation last season, in addition to the teams of Al-Murooj, Al-Anwar, Al-Bashayer, and Al-Malab Al-Leebi, which got promoted this season.



Al-Ahly Benghazi wins bronze medal in Doha International Basketball Championship

Al-Ahly Benghazi basketball team won a bronze medal in the Doha International Basketball Championship, after defeating Egyptian Zamalek with a score of (82-79) in the third and fourth place match.

The match was held at the Qatari Al-Gharafa Hall on Saturday. With this victory, Al-Ahly Benghazi also took revenge for its loss to Zamalek (72-65) in the second group of the international tournament.

Al-Ahly had failed to reach the final after losing to Beirut of Lebanon in the semi-final with a score of (65-79).



Al-Hilal and Abu Salim clubs qualify to group stage of CAF Confederation Cup

Abu Salim football club qualified to group stage of the CAF Confederation Cup despite losing a second leg match 2-3 to Ugandan KCCA on Saturday as it aggregated a 5-4 following the first leg match win 3-1.

By going through to the CAF Confederation Cup, Abu Salim team has made history as it is the first time this Libyan team has ever played in this continental competition. Meanwhile, Al-Hilal club also qualified to group stage after beating Rwandan Rayon Sports 4-2 on penalty shootouts following a 1-1 draw in the first and second leg matches.



Telecommunications Holding Company: A cut in one of the routes affected Al-Madar network services

The Telecommunications Holding Company has reported that the services of Al-Madar Al-Jadeed mobile network in the city of Tripoli were affected due to a cut in the link path to the Libya Telephone Company.

The company explained in a statement that this cut caused the stoppage of a node in the Salah al-Din area and damaged 25 other stations belonging to the node in the Salah al-Din and al-Khalah areas.

The company also confirmed that its maintenance teams are working to fix the fault and restore the stations to work again.

The company called on everyone carrying out drilling work to obtain approvals and verify the plans so as not to cause damage to the infrastructure networks.



Desert and African locusts detected on farms southern Libya

Farmers in the Municipality of Brak Al-Shati, south of Libya, have reported the presence of two types of locusts, Desert and African green, on multiple farms in the area. A statement by the Department of Environmental Sanitation Affairs said the Agricultural Pest Control Unit investigated the sites after receiving complaints about the locust infestation, which caused damage to the crops of over ten farmers and continues to spread.

The department noted that it had summoned a team to scrutinize the pest and initiated procedures in collaboration with the Office of Agriculture and Animal Health to address the issue.



Photo of the Week

Tripoli Weather Forecast



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