

Politics

Al-Sunni, UN chief review developments in Libya



Libya's Ambassador to the UN, Taher Al-Sunni, held talks with the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, on the political developments in Libya. Al-Sunni said discussions focused on the international support for an inter-Libyan solution.

"I stressed the need for Int. Com. active/positive support to the aspirations of Libyan people to achieve elections as soon as possible in order to end all transitional phases & reach stability," Al-Sunni wrote on Twitter.

He also emphasized the importance of a Libyan lead/owned solution away from any interventions.

On his part, the UN chief affirmed his interest and direct follow-up to the situation in Libya in coordination with his Special Envoy to Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, to support the political process and stability in Libya.

Politics

Libyan HoR approves 13th constitutional amendment



The Libyan House of Representatives (HoR) approved the 13th constitutional amendment that is related to defining the powers of the president and prime minister, and the structure as well as the competencies of the legislative authority, according to which a constitutional basis for holding presidential and parliamentary elections was approved.

HoR member Abdulsalam Nasiyah said on Facebook that the constitutional basis establishes the National Assembly, which consists of the House of Representatives on the basis of population and geography and its headquarters in Benghazi, and the Senate on the basis of equality among regions, saying that its headquarters will be in Tripoli.

"And an executive authority consisting of a president elected by the people, and a government whose head is appointed by the head of state and granted confidence by the House of Representatives. This step was very important in light of the current political impasse, calling on all parties to the conflict to deal with it positively in order to reach general elections as soon as possible." Nasiyah said.

He reiterated that "the Libyan solution remains the best, and farsighted as well as distanced from abhorrent personal selfishness and dependence on foreigner intervention is the closest way to restore the state and get out of the vortex of transitional stages and remove all foreign forces from the country."

Nasiyah added that regional and international countries are seeking to achieve their interests and do not pay attention to the Libyan interest, saying they don't mind making Libya an arena for regional conflict and turning it into another Syria, especially if they find selfish leaders whose only concern is settling political scores at the expense of the independence and sovereignty of the nation.

Politics

Libyan 5+5 JMC agrees in a Cairo meeting to follow up on exit of mercenaries



The final statement of the Libyan 5+5 Military Commission (JMC) meetings in Cairo, the UN envoy to Libya Abdoulaye Bathily announced the establishment of a special office for coordination and follow-up on the exit of mercenaries from Libya.

Bathily also announced that a mechanism had been reached during the meetings to implement the exit of mercenaries, stressing the need for speedy and timely implementation of this mechanism on the ground.

"What we reached during the meetings is an important step, not only for Libya, but also for the entire region. We seek to calm the situation in Libya and speed up the implementation of the mechanism that we agreed on at those meetings." He reaffirmed.

Meanwhile, the head of the Sudanese delegation participating at the JMC meetings said they would be supportive with information and analysis to implement the mechanism, while the head of the Nigerian delegation expressed his thanks and gratitude to the UN envoy for what he is doing to achieve peace in the region, pointing out that several important decisions were taken over the course of two days, and stressing the need to complete what has been achieved during the meetings and achieve what was agreed upon on the ground.



Bathily to brief UN Security Council session on Libya by end of February

President of the UN Security Council for February, Malta has announced that the Libyan situation will be discussed in an open briefing presented by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, Head of UNSMIL, Abdoulaye Bathily, on the 27th of this month.

In its preliminary report, published on its website, the UN Security Council monitored the obstacles in the Libyan scene, as the prolonged political stalemate contributes to economic and security instability in the country.

The report indicated that the progress of the national elections had faltered for more than a year, due to the postponement of the elections and the continuing stand-

off between the prime minister, Abdul Hamid Dbeibah and Fathi Bashagha. It also pointed out that little progress had been made towards agreeing on a path conducive to elections, despite the resumption of talks between the heads of House of Representative and High Council of state, Agila Saleh, and Khaled Al-Mishri respectively, as the two met in Cairo on January 5th.

In terms of the security track, the Security Council recalled that the United Nations Support Mission in Libya will continue to support the work of the "5 + 5" joint military committee, including facilitating the implementation of the 2020 ceasefire agreement and reinforcing it by starting joint work between the International Team to Monitor the Ceasefire and the Libyan Observers in Sirte, since the security situation remained

tense across the country.

The main issues remain; the unstable political, economic and security situation linked to the uncertain electoral path in Libya. One of the UN Security Council's concerns will be how to consolidate common ground between the two rival governments, so that they can agree on a constitutional framework to pave the way for the long-awaited Libyan elections, according to the report. Bathily anticipated his fourth briefing to the Security Council, since assuming his duties on September 25th, by intensifying his consultations with the various Libyan parties and involving neighboring countries in efforts to mature an initiative for a political and security settlement of the crisis, which aims primarily to reach consensus on a constitutional basis on which elections will be conducted as soon as possible, as well as the removal of mercenaries and foreign forces from the country.



Trailing behind Yemen and Syria, Libya among lowest in the world for corruption perceptions

Libya has been ranked among the lowest in the world in a global corruption ranking system released on Tuesday.

In its annual report for 2022, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which measures how corrupt each country's public sector is perceived to be, gave Libya 17 out of 100.

Libya came sixth from the bottom of the chart trailing after Yemen at 16 and Syria at 13.

The index uses a range of data from external sources, including the World Bank and the World Economic Forum, and produces a relative average for each nation between 0 (highly corrupt) and 100 (very clean).

Libya's CPI ranking system remained unchanged from 2020, but Transparency International attributed this stalemate to the country's endemic instability.

The report sees no light at the end of the tunnel for Libya under the fragile security situation and the weakness of the state.

"Decades of inequality, poverty, and corruption inflamed tensions around the Arab Spring, sparking a fragile security situation and ongoing unrest," wrote Transparency International.

"Now, the state is incapacitated, allowing inequality to fester and corruption to maintain its hold."

The instability has prevented the country from holding elections, leaving no clear path forward, they said.



High Council of State selects candidates for sovereign positions

The High Council of the State (HCS) selected candidates for the state sovereign positions on Monday, in a session aimed at choosing five incumbents for state sovereign vacancies. This happened after the HCS approved last week the proposed mechanism for selecting incumbents of sovereign positions. The HCS approved seven candidates for the position of Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Libya, the Head of the High National Elections Commission, the Head of the Audit Bureau, and the Deputy Head of the Administrative Control Authority. It also approved - exceptionally - eight candidates for the position of the Deputy Head of the National Anti-Corruption Authority after two candidates got the same number of votes.

Politics

Tunisia to send economic mission to Tripoli in March in quest to enter African markets



A Tunisian government agency announced that it would send an economic mission to Libya next March as part of a special program that would explore opportunities for partnership and integration between the two countries in order to enter African markets.

The economic mission aims to hold direct meetings with Libyan economic actors in Tripoli on March 6 and 7, the Tunisian Export Promotion Center announced in a statement on Tuesday, adding that the mission included a group of corporations working in the field of food industries, as well as construction companies, general contracting, health, packaging and international trade companies.

The center proposed a special program for each institution wishing to participate

in the mission, in addition to organizing an economic forum on the topic of "partnership and economic integration between Tunisia and Libya in order to access international markets."

The mission's program includes pushing for tripartite agreements that bring together Tunisian, Libyan and African institutions, as well as organizing field visits.

On November 26, the Export Promotion Center signed a memorandum of understanding with the Libyan Export Development Center regarding defining a joint action plan program for 2023 with the aim of developing intra-trade relations and commercial exchanges between Libya and Tunisia.

Tunisia and Libya are counting on breaking into African markets through Niger, as

the head of the Tunisian-African Business Council, Anis Jaziri, said that the council will take a number of important steps, including organizing a major demonstration among Tunisia, Libya and Niger.

Jaziri revealed to reporters on the sidelines of the first session of the Tunisian-Libyan Exhibition for Trade and Industry in Misrata last January that this event is expected to be organized in Niger's capital, Niamey, at the end of 2023 or the beginning of 2024 at the latest.

He said that one of the most important challenges that the Tunisian African Business Council is working to resolve on the ground is the completion of the asphalt road linking Tamanhint, Sabha and Agadez, in northern Niger, and thus securing the Libyan border with Niger.

Economy



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Government of National Unity

State Minister Jumua explains GNU's expenditure in 2022

The total expenditures of the Government of National Unity in 2022 amounted to about 93.6 billion dinars, according to the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Adel Jumua.

In a ministerial seminar entitled "Disclosure", on Tuesday, Jumua said that the GNU's expenditure rates were taken from the first chapter of the budget that is related to salaries by (47,138,265,903 dinars) at a rate of 50% of the total expenditure, while 8,958,874,64 dinars, or 19% were taken from the second chapter of management, equipment and operation expenses.

The GNU allocated last year 17,464,792,471 dinars for the third chapter on development projects and programs at a rate of 19%, while the fourth chapter on support expenditures received 20,38,15,846 dinars, or 21% of the total expenditures.

Economy



Libyan Iron and Steel Company exports reinforcing steel shipment to Albania

The Libyan Iron and Steel Company announced exporting a shipment of 17,500 tons of reinforcing steel on board the tanker "Lady Divina" to Albania.

According to the company, shipments of about 10,000 tons of hot-rolled iron have begun to be exported via the company's port, explaining that export operations continued at a good pace to several countries. It said the quantity to be exported at this period would reach 64,000 tons.

The company's marketing general manager, Walid Bleblo, said on Thursday that the company's external marketing department and a number of foreign companies had agreed to export 72,000 tons of reinforcing steel to several countries, and added that the first shipment of this agreement would be expected to be exported at the end of January: 12,000 tons, provided that the remaining quantities would be exported successively in the first week of February.

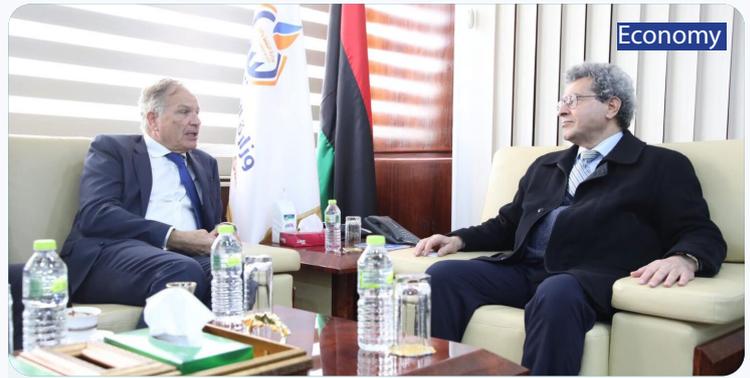
Iron and Steel Company indicated that its products reached more than 38 countries, thanks to its quality, leadership and competitive prices.

Libya's Oil Minister confirms gas and oil output will increase by end of 2023

The Libyan Minister of Oil and Gas Mohammed Oun confirmed in a meeting with the Dutch ambassador to Libya on Sunday that the oil and gas production rates will be increased by the end of this year on the condition that three factors are available for oil production to reach two million barrels.

Oun discussed in the meeting several matters, including the efforts to increase oil and gas production in cooperation with specialized international companies, underscoring the role of the Dutch oil and gas company, Shell, and the history of its work in the Libyan energy sector.

The Oil and Gas Ministry said on its Facebook page that Oun had assured the Dutch ambassador of the possibility of achieving the targets of increasing production in the coming years to two million barrels following needed efforts and work with high efficiency and in cooperation with international companies, adding that



in the short term, production will be raised by the end of 2023. It also said that the Dutch ambassador confirmed his country's interest in the Libyan market and that it would work to encourage Dutch companies to return. He reiterated their willingness to participate and cooperate in developing the oil field through advanced training programs, especially in the field of natural gas and renewable energies.



Dbeibah holds meeting to discuss development plan for 2023

Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah convened a meeting grouping the Head of the Audit Bureau, Khaled Shakshak, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Adel Jumaa, and the Director of the General Administration of the Sovereign Sector, Reda Qarqab, to discuss the state's development plan for the year 2023.

Major issues were on the table, such as disclosure standards, geographical distribution, and observing timelines to accomplish government projects.

Among the key projects was the government's plan to establish 500 modern schools this year and to formulate standards and specifications for their design.

The group also discussed pressing issues facing the sports sector, such as developing the two sports cities in Tripoli and Benghazi and establishing three new stadiums in 2023.

In the health sector, the government issued a decision to prevent direct contracts with the Ministry of Health and Medical Supplies, and in this context, the meeting followed up on the public tender procedures after completing the Bureau's approvals on 70% of the tender, provided the stakeholders commit to finalizing the targeted project.

For his part, the Chief of the Bureau affirmed his support for the development programs, stressing that they remain a subject of interest for his office.

Economy

PM Dbeibah urges "global oil companies" to resume work in Libya

In a speech delivered on behalf of the Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, the Minister of Finance Khalid Al-Mabrouk said at the opening of the "Supporting the Oil and Gas Sector" forum organized by the Libyan National Oil Corporation NOC in Istanbul, Turkey, that Dbeibah had called on global oil companies to resume their activities in Libya, given the current "state of stability".

The participants from Libya included the Central Bank of Libya, the Audit Bureau, a number of ministers, the Libyan Investment Authority, and the Libyan Foreign Bank, in addition to Italy's Eni, France's Total, US ConocoPhillips, Spain's Repsol,

Austria's OMV, and Germany's Wintershall. Local companies operating in the sector included Zueitina, Al-Waha, Arabian Gulf, Acacus, Mellitah, Sarir, Harouge, and Al-Mabrouk.

The statement said that Dbeibah reaffirmed in his speech the government's support for the efforts made by the NOC to support the activation of agreements and the conclusion of new ones that contribute to increasing oil and gas production.

The statement cited the Chairman of the NOC Farhat Bengdara as hailing the role of the government, the army and other state institutions in stabilizing and supporting the sector, considering that an encourag-

ing factor for the return of global companies.

The Governor of the Central Bank of Libya, Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir, said the current plan that helps state institutions provide support and assistance, and the follow-up committee for the exceptional oil budget contributed to the stability of the sector. The Istanbul forum aimed to present the NOC's tripartite plan and vision to increase production in the fields of oil and gas, support the banking sector and financial institutions for its programs and projects, and discuss partnership between the Libyan private sector and foreign companies operating in the field.



On the gas agreement with Italy

By Abdullah Alkabar, a Libyan political writer and commentator

Arrangements for the Italian Prime Minister's visit to Libya were preceded by Italian Foreign Minister, Antonio Tajani's tour of Turkey and Egypt, where he conducted consultations focusing on the Libyan crisis, and Italian government's desire to join international efforts to achieve political change through elections. In order to avoid any obstruction to Italy's efforts to access more oil and gas, by the two regional actors in Libya, the Italian government must conduct consultations with both of them.

Turkey's key issue is how to secure its share of the eastern Mediterranean gas, and therefore, it will work to obtain guarantees that Italy will not align itself with Greece, and that Eni will not invest in areas that Turkey considers within its economic zone. Italy for its part has also to work to overcome old tension with Egypt, due to the murder of the Italian researcher Giulio Regeni in Egypt, and to resume development of the two countries' relations.

Development of the offshore gas fields is a common Libyan-Italian interest that raises the volume of Libyan reserves, thus increasing production to meet domestic demand and increase revenues, and satisfy Italy's need, which seeks to compensate for the shortages of Russian gas supplies.

There is another far-reaching benefit that has not been drawn attention to in the futile debate about the agreement, its legitimacy and benefits, which is the impact of this economic development on strengthening national unity. For the great part of the crisis is related to the fair distribution of energy revenues to all regions of the country. The main argument of the leaders of the Libyan east since the emergence of Ibrahim Jadhran was that the Libya's west dominates the largest part of the revenues, and marginalization of the east, though most of the fields and ports are located within the geographical scope of the latter, which is a false argument, because marginalization affected most of the regions of the country, and the organized corruption and embezzlement engulfed a significant part of the revenues.

Using the language of figures, all municipalities receive their share according to standard criteria even during the time of the former regime, but mismanagement, corruption of many officials, and weak or neglected oversight due to social factor, led to poor services, eroding infrastructure and stalling development.

No doubt, Dbeibah's government benefited from activation of the old agreement, as it reinforced its strength and presence in the face of its opponents, by the visit of the high-level Italian delegation. Moreover, Italian involvement in international efforts aimed at conducting the elections, will reduce the chances of its removal, and the formation of another government that extends the transitional period and postpones elections. The Italian side will push to prevent the conflict from escalating and re-occurrence of unrest and wars, because development of production through joint venture between the National Oil Corporation and Eni requires a relatively stable and secure environment.

Irregular immigration an issue, that is worrisome to the Italian authorities, and it was among the files that were discussed with Dbeibah's government, because the rates of migration access to the shores of the Italian islands increased last year by 50%, and much is required to reduce the rate, not mere the provision of a couple of speed boats, and training of Libyan Coast Guard. As there will be no real European effort to help African countries develop their capabilities and establish good governance that provides livelihood opportunities for the population to grant them some hope for future, so that they stop risking their lives in search of a decent and stable life overseas.

The challenge to the gas agreement was expected by political parties opposing Dbeibah's government, as all government's steps are subject to criticism, objection and skepticism, which is a normal practice by any opposition in a democratic system.

However, the objective in this case is different, as the opposition in a hybrid system aims to overthrow and replace the government, no matter how high its performance or how sound its positions are.

In sound governance systems, supreme national interests prevail over domestic politics. Moreover, oil experts confirmed the integrity of the agreement, in which Libya has a vested interest, and therefore objections to the agreement did go almost unechoed.

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



No EVD cases have been recorded in Libya, NCDC says

The Director of the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC), Haider Al-Sayeh, has confirmed that there is no evidence about the presence of Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever in Libya, stressing that the center did not record any cases.

The NCDC publication of the information card about Ebola, after the outbreak of the disease in Uganda, comes within the framework of raising awareness among citizens and protecting the country's national health security, Al-Sayeh said in a visual statement posted by the Ministry of Health on its Facebook page.

The NCDC recalled on its monitoring and response teams to take preventive measures to prevent the spread of the virus by training medical personnel to deal with any infection with this disease.

Sports



Libyan boxing team off to a good start at International Championship in Morocco

The Libyan boxing team has made a successful start at the Boxing International Championship being held in Morocco, even though it was the first experience for some of the team members in an international competition.

In the 16th round of the 63 kg category, boxer Abdelbaset Belkhair took the win over his Swiss opponent Sarmiento with a 4-1 score, according to the results published by the Libyan Olympic Committee.

His team-mate, Osama Berko, took over Guinean Al-Hassan, 3-2, in the 80 kg group in the same round.

On the other hand, Assem Doku lost his fight against Italian boxer Salvatore 5-0 in the quarter-finals of the 75 kg group.

The Libyan team consists of five young boxers, among other athletes from 53 countries competing for the Moroccan International Championship title supervised by the International Boxing Federation.

Education



39 new educational institutions and classrooms established during the past year

The Ministry of Education announced that it had established 39 educational institutions and classrooms for the basic and secondary education stage, distributed over 32 various regions of the country, during the past year.

The Director of the Secondary Education Department at the Ministry, Chairman of the Committee for the Study of Requests for the Establishment and Development of Educational Institutions, Mohammed Al-Maghrabi, explained that 11 educational institutions were established during the past year.

While new classes for the secondary education stage were in 21 schools and for basic education stage were in 3 schools, in addition to one kindergarten and one educational institution, Al-Maghrabi added.

Education

Ministry of Education sends Italian language graduates to Rome for training



The Ministry of Education has sent a number of graduates of the Italian Language Department to the Italian capital, Rome, as part of a training program on methods of teaching. The ministry indicated on its Facebook page that the 30 trainees had received intensive closed-circuit training before joining the Italian university. The Italian ambassador to Libya, Giuseppe Buccino, had indicated, in a meeting with the Minister of Education, Mussa al-Maqrif, last November, the role of the Italian side and its seriousness in teaching the Italian language to Libyan students, stressing his country's intention to launch training programs to qualify teachers of the Italian language.

Crimes



269 kg of cocaine seized in Khums

The Anti-Drug and Smuggling Department of the Khums Customs Authority, in cooperation with the Customs Center of Khums Sea Port, have managed to seize a shipment of cocaine estimated at 269 kilograms. This came after receiving information on suspicion of the presence of prohibited items inside a 40-foot container loaded with frozen chicken of Brazilian origin via the shipping line Brazil, Spain, Italy. The Customs Authority said that this shipment is considered one of the largest seizures in North Africa and in the history of Libyan customs.

Travel



Sabha and Misrata airports return to work after air transport workers strike over pay

Workers of the Libyan Company for Handling and Ground Services at Misrata and Sabha International Airports have resumed work after announcing a general strike earlier, in order to respond to their demands regarding the payment of their late salaries. This came after a meeting held by the Minister of Transport, Mohammed Al-Shahoubi, with representatives of the company at Sabha and Misrata airports, on Sunday, to discuss the demands of the protesters, according to the ministry. The workers explained that their salaries have been stopped for 19 months, demanding to continue including company's salaries in the Ministry of Transport as it was in the past.

Travel



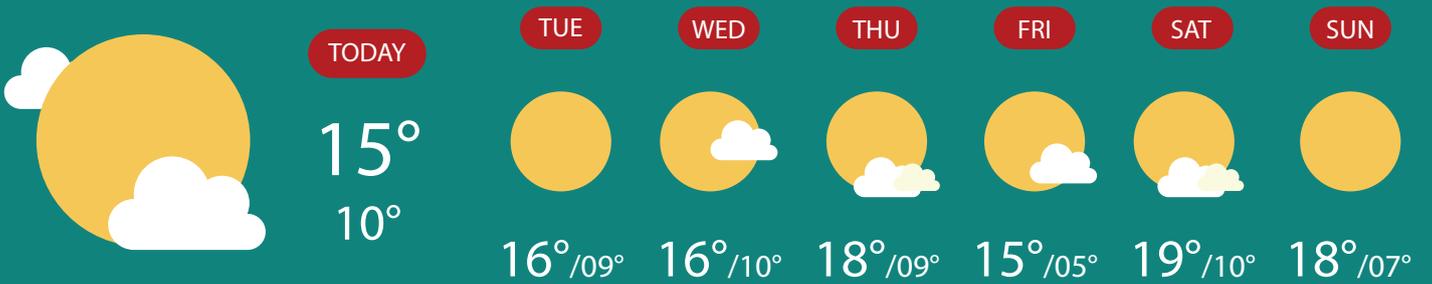
Libyan Airlines denies going bankrupt

The Libyan Airlines has denied what was circulated on social media regarding stopping its flights permanently due to bankruptcy. The company indicated in a statement that the suspension was exceptional to complete routine procedures, confirming that it has resumed operating flights on Monday. This news coincided with the strike of ground services and handling staff at a number of airports, which affected air traffic.

Photo of the Week



Tripoli Weather Forecast



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