



Politics  
**Libyan HCS approves 13th constitutional amendment**

The High Council of State (HCS) voted to approve the 13th constitutional amendment, which was approved by the House of Representatives (HoR) earlier and officially adopted after its publication in the Official Gazette.

The media office of the HCS said that the members voted, during an emergency session on Thursday, chaired by the Head Khalid Al-Mishri, with the approval of the majority of members after a quorum was completed on the 13th constitutional amendment.

The HCS also agreed to start forming a

committee to develop electoral laws to be approved during the next session.

A source close to the HCS said that the members who attended Thursday's session did not exceed 60 members, adding that 53 members of those present voted to approve the constitutional amendment.

Last week, 54 HCS members issued a statement affirming their rejection to pass the 13th constitutional amendment without resolving the controversial points and transferring them to laws.

The signatories said the reason for their

rejection is the failure of the amendment to include the conditions for the president's candidacy, granting the president broad powers, and not obligating the elected National Assembly to fulfill the constitutional tasks within a specified period of time, in addition to canceling the parliamentary elections in the event of the presidential failure, as stated in the amended constitutional text in Article 29. They said that it is necessary to include and resolve these issues in the text of the constitutional amendment.



Politics

**Libyan HoR says UN envoy's briefing at Security Council contains inaccuracies**

The Presidency of the House of Representatives (HoR) denounced Monday what was said in the briefing of the UN envoy to Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, at the UN Security Council, especially regarding the failure of the HoR and the Highly Council of State (HCS) to agree on a constitutional basis, saying such a statement contained inaccuracies.

The HoR said the envoy's speech contradicts the briefing paragraphs that approved the issuance of the 13th constitutional amendment, stressing at the same time the Libyan ownership of the political process, saying that it is the only guarantor for the success of any initiatives in this regard.

"Obstruction of reconciliation as well as corruption and squandering of public money are among the most important factors for disrupting the electoral process in the country. We did not find any indication in the UN envoy's briefing on these issues, which puts the UN mission in the circle of double standards, bias toward the Libyan parties." The HoR said.

It called on the international communi-

ty to support Libyan institutions in carrying out their tasks, especially those related to approving electoral laws, laws regulating public spending, and activating international sanctions against those working to seize the work of partner institutions in the political track.

The HoR said the briefing did not address the disruption of the HCS session by the force majeure that thwarted the 2021 elections, saying they completely reject the blatant interference in Libyan affairs as all institutions are working in full commitment to the regulations, in full observance of human rights, and in a manner that guarantees the protection of the higher interests of the Libyan state.

Bathily said in his Monday briefing at the Security Council that he intended to establish a high-level Libyan committee, whose aim is to activate the electoral process and enable the holding of presidential and legislative elections in 2023, referring to the failure of the HoR and HCS to agree on a constitutional basis.

Politics

## Libya: 54 HCS members reject 13th constitutional amendment

The High Council of State (HCS) has postponed - for the fourth time in a row - its session that was scheduled to be held Sunday morning to vote on the 13th constitutional amendment approved by the House of Representatives (HoR) earlier and although the HoR officially approved the amendment by publishing it in the Official Gazette before it received the approval of the HCS, the latter is still trying hard to convene a session to discuss the amendment amid disagreements among its members between a team supporting the amendment led by the Head Khalid Al-Mishri and another rejecting the amendment, saying that they are the majority in the HCS and that if a valid session is held, the amend-

ment won't pass.

After Sunday's session was postponed, 54 HCS members issued a statement affirming their rejection to pass the 13th constitutional amendment without resolving the controversial points and transferring them to laws.

The signatories said the reason for their rejection is the failure of the amendment to include the conditions for the president's candidacy, granting the president broad powers, and not obligating the elected National Assembly to fulfill the constitutional tasks within a specified period of time, in addition to canceling the parliamentary elections in the event of the presidential

failure, as stated in the amended constitutional text in Article 29. They said that it is necessary to include and resolve these issues in the text of the constitutional amendment.

In a televised statement Saturday, Al-Mishri said that more than 95% of the 13th constitutional amendment corresponds to the articles voted on by the HCS, with the exception of 3 or 4 articles. He explained that the system of government in the 13th constitutional amendment is not presidential, but rather a mixture between presidential and parliamentary, pointing out that this amendment dispels fears about the powers of the head of state.

Politics

## Fresh clashes in Zawiya kills two people injures another

Two people were killed and another injured when two armed factions exchanged fire in the Mutrad area, west of Al-Zawiya, on Monday.

A spokesman for the Ambulance and Emergency Service, Osama Ali, said these figures are an initial outcome subject to change.

The wounded victim was hit by a stray bullet while passing near the clash zone, Ali explained.

Since Monday evening, the Motard district has seen clashes between two armed groups who exchanged fire with light and medium weapons. No party revealed its identity or affiliation. The Red Crescent branch of Zawiya urged the relevant authorities to open a safe passage for the families caught up in the conflict area.

Politics

## Al-Mishri: 13th constitutional amendment makes upcoming elections immune to appeals



The Head of the High Council of State (HCS) Khalid Al-Mishri, said that the 13th amendment to the constitutional declaration issued by the House of Representatives (HoR) recently did not come overnight, but rather, it was the result of lengthy consultations between the two chambers, pointing out that this amendment "immunizes the upcoming elections against any constitutional appeals".

Al-Mishri added in a televised statement on Saturday that the HCS had already voted on this amendment article by article, stressing that it did not cancel other constitutional amendments as some claimed, but it only went in line with the articles of Chapter III of the draft constitution: the system of government.

The Head of the HCS explained that the proposal for the direct election of the president is one of the proposals of the February 2014 committee, as well as the Libyan political agreement, and the outputs of the Political Dialogue Forum in Geneva, where parties agreed that presidential and parliamentary elections should be held.

Al-Mishri added that some of those who now reject the presidential system ran for office during the presidential elections that were scheduled for December 24, 2021, asking, "Does the momentum accompanying these elections not signify popular acceptance?"

He also indicated that the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, proposed that the UN Support Mission in Libya forms a high-level committee for elections concerned with completing electoral laws. He also revealed that the proposed committee consists of a maximum of thirty to forty members and includes representatives of relevant institutions, key political figures, leaders of influential tribal and cultural components, civil society organizations, security agencies, representatives from the south and west, and of women and youth.

Al-Mishri warned that "what is dangerous in the UN envoy's proposal is that the decision to form the committee stipulates that its decisions will not be binding except after the approval of Bathily," and added "that this proposal is unacceptable, because it affects the national sovereignty of the state."

The HoR published last Thursday the 13th amendment to the Constitutional Declaration in the fourth issue of the Official Gazette, including 34 articles, after it had approved it on February 07. By doing so, the HoR did not pay any attention to the political agreement that requires the parliament to agree with the HCS when making any constitutional amendments, knowing that the latter was unable to hold a session to discuss the amendment.

Politics

## UN envoy proposes new initiative for holding Libya elections in 2023



The UN envoy to Libya Abdoulaye Bathily said in his briefing on Monday at the Security Council that he decided to launch an initiative aimed at enabling the organization and holding of presidential and legislative elections in 2023, saying he was planning to establish a High-level Steering Panel for Libya to that end.

Bathily said the proposed mechanism will bring together all relevant Libyan stakeholders, including representatives of political institutions, major political figures, tribal leaders, civil society organisations, security actors, women, and youth representatives.

“In addition to the facilitation of the adoption of the legal framework and time-bound roadmap to the holding of elections in 2023, the proposed Panel will also provide a platform to advance consensus around related matters, such as election security and the adoption of a Code of Conduct for all candidates.” He added.

He said the House of Representatives adopted the 13th Constitutional Amendment to the 2011 Constitutional Declaration, which was published in the Official Gazette and the amendment was yet to be endorsed by the High State Council, adding that despite repeated attempts by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Head of the High State Council and their delegations to agree on a constitutional basis for elections, disagreements persist.

“The 13th Constitutional amendment is controversial within the Libyan political class and general citizenry. Moreover, it does not address key contentious issues such as the eligibility criteria for presidential candidates, does not stipulate a clear road map and timelines to realize inclusive elections in 2023, and adds additional contentious issues such as the regional representation in the Senate.” He said.

Bathily explained that Libya’s political class is going through a major legitimacy crisis: “One could say that most institutions lost their legitimacy years ago. Solving this legitimacy crisis should therefore be priority for all political actors willing to change the status quo. To date, the House of Representatives and the High State Council

have not been able to agree on a consensual constitutional basis for elections.”

He also indicated that the realization of presidential and legislative elections requires a broad national consensus, which involves the buy-in and participation of a wider range of stakeholders, including national institutions, political figures, security actors, tribal forces and other stakeholders. “Since my last briefing on December 17, 2022, I continued my extensive consultations with Libyans throughout the country with all the stakeholders from different segments of society, as well as regional and international partners on ways to overcome the current political impasse. My consultations in Libya included all key political and security figures, civil society representatives including women, and youth, representatives of cultural components, and tribal leaders as well as with senior government officials and members of the House of Representatives and the High State Council. I have also received and reviewed many oral and written proposals from Libyans on ways to address the political impasse. Before traveling to New York, I engaged with the President of the Presidential Council, Prime Minister Dbeibeh, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the High State Council, as well as Field Marshall Haftar.” Bathily further explained.

In an effort to expand the scope of his consultations, Bathily said he undertook, again after his first December tour in the region, a new tour of regions and also European capitals and met with partners in Algiers, Tunis, Brazzaville, Rabat, Rome, Cairo, Paris, London, Berlin, Moscow and Washington. He consulted with the Deputy Permanent Representative of China. He shared my concerns about the current state of the political process and stressed the need to put an end to the repeated transitional arrangements, which only serve the interests of the proponents of the status quo.

Bathily also said he had encouraged all his interlocutors to speak with one voice and recalled that their respective interests could only be met through a peaceful, stable and prosperous Libya, reporting to the

Security Council that by and large, all regional and international partners agreed on the necessity to hold inclusive and transparent elections in 2023.

On the economic track, management of the country’s resources remains a serious concern for all Libyans, Bathily said, adding that the use of Libya’s resources particularly prioritization of expenditures, continued lack of basic services, the absence of accountability, and demands for equitable distribution of resources need to be fully addressed.

He said he reiterated the importance, and urgency, of establishing a Libyan-led mechanism that brings together stakeholders from across the country to agree on spending priorities and ensure that oil and gas revenues are managed in a transparent and equitable manner, in line with Security Council Resolution 2656.

“Central Bank reunification and reform are also key to maintaining accountability and promoting the economic welfare of the country.

To this end, the co-chairs of the Economic Working Group of the Berlin International Follow-up Committee continue to engage with Libyan institutions to advance discussions on an agreement for a temporary expenditure and oversight mechanism. To achieve sustainable progress, advancing the economic track must remain an integral part of the political dialogue with Libyan stakeholders and the Libyan people.” Bathily said.

“On 7 and 8 February, I chaired a two-day meeting in Cairo bringing together the 5+5 JMC and the Liaison Committees of Libya, Sudan, and Niger. With the support of UNSMIL advisors, participants developed and endorsed an integrated mechanism for joint coordination and information exchange between the three countries, to facilitate the process of withdrawal of mercenaries and foreign fighters. I am planning to conduct visits to these two neighboring countries and Chad, which was not able to attend the last meeting, to discuss and encourage their authorities to further support implementation of the action plan for withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries.” He added.



Economy

## OPEC Secretary General: Libya is one of our major partners

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Haitham Al-Ghais, who visited Tripoli Wednesday, discussed issues related to the oil and gas sector, hailing Libya as one of the most important major partners in OPEC.

The Libyan Minister of Oil and Gas, Mohammed Oun, and the Head of Presidential Council Mohammed Menfi met with Al-Ghais, who praised Libya's keenness to preserve OPEC's unity. Menfi reiterated the need for sustained role of OPEC in maintaining cooperation with Libya in the oil and gas sector.

According to the monthly report by OPEC, Libya topped the African list in oil production with one million and 163 thousand barrels per day (bpd), followed by Angola with one million and 67 thousand bpd, then Algeria with one million and 60 thousand bpd, while Nigeria fell to fourth place with one million and 24 thousand bpd. OPEC exempted Libya from the decision to reduce production in exporting countries by two million bpd.

Statistics issued by international institutions specialized in monitoring oil production showed that OPEC had pumped 28.97 million barrels per day (bpd) in February, an increase of 150 thousand bpd compared to January. According to the se data, Libya's oil production remained unchanged in February, as the agreement to reduce oil production to maintain price stability exempted Venezuela, Libya and Iran from reducing oil production.



Economy

## Al-Hawij reviews strategic plan of the General Authority for Exhibitions

The Minister of Economy, Mohammed Al-Hawij, has held an expanded meeting that included the undersecretaries of the ministry and officials of its affiliated bodies, to discuss the strategic plan of the General Authority for Exhibitions.

The participants discussed the implementation of the new Tripoli exhibition with a total area of 450,000 square meters as part of the "Return to Life" initiative launched by the Government of National Unity.

We are seeking to make the Libyan exhibition among the competing exhibitions globally through the development of existing exhibitions and the establishment of new ones, Al-Hawij said, indicating that the exhibitions witnessed a quantum leap despite the weakness of the capabilities.



Economy

## Menfi, Dbeibah discuss 2023 spending priorities

The Head of the Presidential Council, Mohammed Menfi, his deputy Abdullah al-Lafi, discussed with the Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah on Tuesday spending priorities for 2023, according to the government's media office, which added that the meeting was attended by the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya, Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir, the Head of the Audit Bureau, Khalid Shakshak, the Minister of Finance, Khalid Al-Mabrouk, and the Minister-designate of Planning, Mohammed Al-Zaidani, in addition to the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Adel Jumua.

The meeting discussed government spending during the first quarter of this year, reviewing the measures taken by the Ministry of Finance regarding increasing disclosure and transparency rates, matching monthly data with the Central Bank and ensuring fair distribution to regions and municipalities in accordance with approved standards.

The meeting also reviewed the development chapter for 2023, so that it is according to specific projects that meet the contractual conditions and ensure transparency in them. The attendees also agreed on the need to hold periodic meetings to follow up on government spending and to ensure the fair distribution of revenues in accordance with transparency standards.



Economy

## Oil minister receives OPEC's head in Tripoli

Minister Mohamed Aoun of Oil and Gas received on Tuesday OPEC's Secretary General, Haitham Faisal Al-Ghais.

The visit comes at the invitation of the Ministry of Oil and Gas to discuss issues related to the oil sector, given that Libya is a key partner for the organization, a readout by the ministry said.

It may be worth noting that Kuwaiti's Haitham Al-Ghais was unanimously picked by member nations for a three-year term at a meeting in January 2022.

He succeeded Nigerian-born Sanusi Barkindo, who later died while on a visit to his homeland in July 2022.

Economy



## Ministry of Economy discusses economic cooperation with African Development Bank

The Minister of Economy and Trade, Mohammed Al-Hawij, has discussed with the Director of the Regional Office of the African Development Bank, Mohammed Al-Azizi, cooperation to define priorities, plans and projects that will be included in the work of the African Bank during the period from 2023 to 2024.

Both sides also discussed projects and programs that contribute to economic and social development, as well as supporting the process of economic integration among member states.

Al-Hawij stressed the importance of financing for infrastructure projects and transit trade, especially the Misrata-Niger road and its connection through Algeria and the Sudan-Darfur road and its connection through Egypt.

He also stressed that the priority is to achieve food security through financing food security projects in southern Libya, reviewing the targeted projects in the fisheries sector, which estimated to \$2.4 billion, and the 22,000 job opportunities they provide for Libyans.

Economy



## Italian contractor: Libya is more promising than Egypt for Italy's companies

The CEO of the Italian contracting company Bonatti, Andrea Colombo, said that Libya is a promising market for Italian companies operating in the onshore oil and gas supply chain, pointing out that Libya is likely to be more promising than Egypt for Italian companies in this field.

Colombo told the Italian news agency "NOVA" that Egypt has good local state-owned companies, such as Petrojet, which monopolizes land construction, while it relies on international companies for marine construction work, while the Libyan industrial system is still in early stage that may be more promising.

He indicated that the \$8 billion gas agreement signed on January 28 in Tripoli between Eni and the Libyan National Oil Corporation, in the presence of Italy's Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni, could serve as an access to other "Made in Italy" brands, saying that Bonatti never gave up on Libya.

"Our contracts have already increased 3 times, and we are still on the sidelines to seize any new opportunities resulting from the gas agreements signed between the Libyan National Oil Corporation and Eni. Bonatti's presence in Libya has been constant over the years. This fact was not recognized by the previous regime. We have always been in Libya, even during the war." Colombo said.

**YOUR  
ADVERTISING  
HERE**



✉ ad@libyaobserver.ly  
☎ +218 94 42 46928

Opinions



## Episode one of the end of HoR and HCS

By **Abdullah Alkabir**,  
a Libyan political writer and commentator

Closing the curtain on maneuvers of Aqila Saleh, Speaker of House of Representatives (HoR) and Khaled Al-Mishri, Head of the High Council of State (HCS), the UN Special Envoy to Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily has announced his intention to form a high-level committee as the legal basis for the upcoming elections. That is together with a road map with specific and binding dates for steps of the electoral process. The deadline made by Bathily to both HoR and HCS ended with his briefing to the UN Security Council, after failing to reach any consensus, as expected given their stark differences over candidacy conditions for presidential elections, besides their desire to continue in the political scene to the maximum extent possible.

Even the constitutional amendment presented by Aqila Saleh on behalf of HoR, which HCS has yet to vote on, has neither convinced Bathily nor countries supporting the elections.

Bathily pointed out in his briefing that the constitutional amendment is controversial among political circles because it does not address candidacy criteria for the presidential elections and does not set a timetable to conduct elections. These are sufficient reasons to transcend the two houses, and not to waste more time on waiting that will lead to nowhere.

The committee, Bathily intends to form will bring together 30 to 40 figures from stakeholders, institutions, tribal leaders, women and youth. It will bring together a wide political and social spectrum, and the number is likely to pass the 40 figures, to involve the maximum number possible of those with vested interest in the elections, such as political parties.

However, Bathily did not disclose any details about the mechanisms and standards that he will adopt in the selection process, which in any case, will be subject to controversy and criticism, as not everyone can be satisfied.

Bathily Initiative was widely welcomed by most UN Security Council members, except as expected, a Russian reservation. Internally, it was welcomed by political parties, but criticized by HoR's presidency and its affiliated government. HCS did not comment and its president called for a session on Thursday in an attempt to approve the 3rd constitutional amendment. Among the popular circles, the initiative was met with relief because it transcends the two houses, how-

ever with cautious optimism, as whether the plan could lead to a solution, ending the state of the political impasse. The path to implementing the initiative and formation of the high committee for elections will not be paved with flowers, as the international consensus is still missing, even with the agreement that the way to the solution is through elections. The French representative spoke of the formation of a unified government before going to elections, while the USA and Britain welcomed the initiative, and both want to go directly to elections.

Russia knows that its presence in Libya is the main target of this American-British move, and therefore, its representative warned against rushing things, promising to study Bathily's initiative seriously. While Egypt is still committed to the constitutional path that it sponsored and content with HoR and HCS leading the political process, however, its influence will be weak in the face of the international and local desire to conduct elections.

As all international and regional parties have local proxies, whom are keen to continue in the political scene. The progress in implementing the initiative to achieve its goals, requires continued support of international actors to the UN envoy, and the situation may require using serious threats of applying international sanctions against obstructers.

HoR and HCS will not be completely excluded from the political process, but their representation in the new committee will not enable them its control. The constitutional amendment will be among the foundations upon which the constitutional bases will be built, that is based on consensus among members of the committee, and finalizing election law and conditions for candidacy for the presidential elections, with preparedness to only conduct legislative elections, if dispute over presidential elections persisted. Nevertheless, the mere presentation of the initiative itself, wrote the first chapter of their end, and with their disappearance, the country will embrace a new political stage.

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



Sports

## Equestrian Showjumping Championship concludes in Zuwara

The Salam Equestrian Showjumping Championship wrapped up on Tuesday in Zuwara. The three-day event saw 170 Libyan equestrians fray for the title, besides competitors from Tunisia, Algeria, Italy, and Croatia. Libya's Muhammad Al-Baawi emerged victorious in the battle for the Grand Prize, winning the title in the (1.35 m) jump. The competition, which kicked off on 24 February, was locally the second edition and the first at the international level.



Sports

## Difficult task awaits Al-Akhdar after losing to Congolese Lupopo in African Confederation Cup

Libya's Al-Akhdar succumbed to a 1-0 defeat to the Congolese Saint Eloy Lupopo in the third round of the African Confederation Cup Group A match at Levy Mwanawasa Stadium on Sunday. The Congolese scored the only goal of the match after an insane shot on the stroke of halftime. After the break, Al-Akhdar pressed hard to find an equalizer, but their offensive efforts weren't enough to overcome Saint Eloy Lubobo. As a result, South African Marumo Gallants leads the group with six points ahead of USM Alger with four points, third comes the Congolese with three points, and USM Alger with four points, while Al-Akhdar trails behind at the bottom of the chart with just one point.

Culture

## Benghazi is Islamic Culture Capital for 2023

2023 **بنغازي**  
**Benghazi**  
عاصمة الثقافة في العالم الإسلامي  
CAPITAL OF CULTURE IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

The city of Benghazi in eastern Libya is preparing to be named: "The Capital of Islamic Culture for the year 2023", which will include cultural, Islamic, literary, artistic and other events with the Libyan identity, after about 16 years of choosing Tripoli as the capital of Islamic Culture for the year 2007. The Minister of Education of the Government of National Unity, Musa Al-Magreg, issued a decision to form a committee for the technical and financial preparation of the program to celebrate the city of Benghazi, whose mayor, Al-Saqr Bojwari, reaffirmed the city's readiness to celebrate "Benghazi, the Capital of Islamic Culture for the year 2023". During the second meeting held by the newly-formed committee in Benghazi, Bojwari explained that the municipality will seek to initiate urgent maintenance of the infrastructure of the cultural centers and headquarters that will be used in the celebration. The meeting also dealt with several proposals for the celebration, such as holding festivals or theatrical acts, in addition to a festival of Libyan songs and religious chantings, in addition to other cultural events.

Education

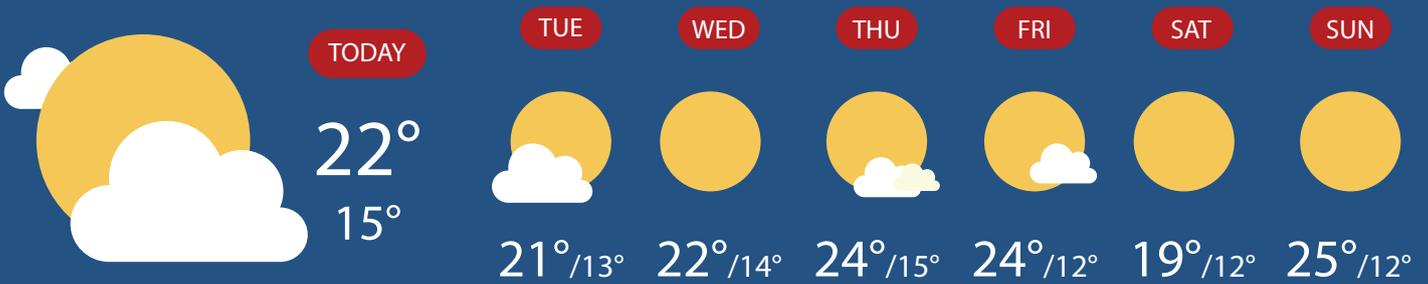
## Libyan academy signs cooperation agreement with leading French university

The Libyan Academy for Postgraduate Studies has signed an agreement for academic and research cooperation with the University of Grenoble Alpes (UGA) in France. The agreement was signed by the academy president, Dr. Ramadan Al-Madani, and the Vice president of Grenoble University, Lazine Lakhnish. A statement by the academy said the cooperation will focus on developing the outcomes of the Libyan academy. As a first stage, the deal targets students of the French Language Department. Under the agreement, the University of Grenoble will host top students from the academy for a whole semester. The applicants would be accepted on a competitive basis, depending on their results in the admission exams. The agreement also supports doctorate students in the French Language Department by providing four seats at Grenoble University. The Libyan Academy said it looks forward to expanding its cooperation in other scientific departments, especially in medical science.

Photo of the Week



### Tripoli Weather Forecast



- +218 94 424 69 28
- libyaobserver.ly
- lyobserver
- info@libyaobserver.ly
- lyobserver
- ar.libyaobserver.ly
- lyobserver.ar
- lyobserver.arabic
- libyaobserver
- thelibyaobserver

### Contact Information