

JMC meeting concludes in Tunisia with parties adhering to putting Libya's interest first

The 5 + 5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) meeting concluded in Tunisia on Wednesday with parties expressing concurring views that the interests of Libya and its people come first before individual and partisan interests.

The session, joined by military and security leaders from the west and east, besides the UN Envoy Abdoulaye Bathily, shared their common aspiration for the country's unity and to move towards free and fair elections in Libya during the current year.

Recognizing the need to refrain from using force and acts of violence, the parties agreed to keep the channels of communication open and continue direct meetings from inside Libya, in Tripoli and Benghazi.

They underscored their rejection of all passive foreign interference in Libyan affairs, as they agreed to criminalize all acts of violence that harm civil peace or the political process.

In their final communique, the group voiced their rejection to hate speech that affects the JMC work and national reconciliation.

Furthermore, humanitarian aid and freedom of movement of persons and goods must be secured between all Libyan regions.

The statement stipulates that providing victims and family members with justice and reparations and the return of the displaced to their homes are one of the main pillars of repairing the damaged social fabric. In October 2020, UN-led mediation efforts pushed the 5+5 Joint Military Commission to reach a permanent ceasefire agreement, describing it as a "historic achievement" and an "important turning point towards peace and stability in Libya."

The commission consists of five senior military officers from the western region and five from Khalifa Haftar's forces in the east.

Politics



IAEA: Tons of uranium gone missing from Libyan site

Around 2.5 tons of natural uranium have gone missing from a Libyan site outside state control, UN nuclear watchdog cautioned in a statement Wednesday.

"The loss of knowledge about the present location of nuclear material may present a radiological risk, as well as nuclear security concerns," a statement by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi said, adding that reaching the site required "complex logistics."

Reuters quotes Grossi as saying that the finding is the result of an inspection originally planned for last year that "had to be postponed because of the security situation in the region" and was finally carried out on Tuesday.

IAEA inspectors "found that ten drums containing approximately 2.5 tons of natural uranium in the form of UOC (uranium ore concentrate) previously declared by (Libya) ... as being stored at that location were not present at the location," the statement added.

The agency noted that it would take action to determine the circumstances of the uranium's removal from the site, which it did not name, and where it is now.

In late 2003 Libya under Muammar Gaddafi voluntarily rolled back its nuclear weapons programme, which included centrifuges that can enrich uranium as well as design information for a nuclear bomb, though it remained far from achieving this goal.

Politics

UN envoy: If electoral laws are passed by June, elections can go through by year's end



The UN envoy to Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, said in a press conference in Tripoli on Saturday that if electoral laws are put in place in June, elections can be held at the end of this year, adding that he believed that the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS) would not take more than several months to devise the final draft of electoral laws, reiterating that during this period, prioritizing a security environment for elections is necessary.

Bathily added that if the 6 + 6 joint committee between the HoR and HCS worked within a reasonable time frame and came up with a reliable constitutional and legal basis for elections, confidence in those two chambers would be restored. He indicated that the success of elections is related to the freedom of movement of candidates in all regions of Libya, saying that the list of candidates would be open to everyone who wishes to run, and that the judiciary would take necessary measures against candidates.

"Libya should not be left alone in the hands of the HoR and HCS, nobody should resort to hate speech, and competition should be free among the candidates. We stress the need for a code of good conduct to be signed by the candidates. The high-level team proposed by the UN mission to assist in holding elections will work in a flexible manner so that the main parties work constructively on the main issue of holding the elections. The concerned parties on the ground would be asked to negotiate directly or through their representatives. There are no externally imposed solutions to the Libyan crisis." Bathily explained.

He also said that the high-level team would seek to involve the concerned parties to reach elections that meet the aspirations of the Libyans, stressing that giving the people an opportunity to choose their leaders is the way towards peace and stability in Libya, and that prolonging this situation would undermine the territorial integrity of Libya and the unity of its people.

Bathily further explained that temporary arrangements, ongoing transitional governments, and outgoing legislative bodies put Libya in danger, and that the regional dimensions of the Libyan crisis are clear to everyone, calling on external parties to work with one voice to support a Libyan-Libyan solution.

Politics

Menfi receives Norland in Tripoli, vows to fulfill PC's role towards elections

Muhammad Menfi, Chairman of the Presidential, has reiterated the Council's commitment to fulfilling its role in steering the country towards elections.

Menfi said, "as a neutral party," the PC seeks to advance the country towards parliamentary and presidential elections under a national consensus with a participatory and national reconciliation approach.

Menfi's remarks came during a meeting with US Ambassador to Libya, Richard Norland, and Chargé d'Affairs, Leslie Ordman,

on Thursday.

Over and above the political and military developments, represented in the work of the Joint Military Committee (5 + 5), the meeting discussed financial arrangements, besides resource management and distribution.

Norland began his visit last Tuesday from Benghazi, where he discussed with the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aqilah Saleh, the political situation and the planned elections for 2023.



On Wednesday, Norland attended a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah in Tripoli, grouping special envoys and ambassadors of the United States, Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. Following the meeting, representatives of the US, France, Germany, Italy, and the UK issued a joint statement urging Libyan leaders to make the necessary concessions to hold elections and enable the Libyan people to choose their leadership.

Politics



Menfi receives Intl Huma Rights Working Group on Libya

Muhammad Menfi, Head of the Presidential Council, received, on Wednesday, the International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Working Group.

The group is affiliated with the International Working Group on Libya emanated from the Berlin Conference in 2020.

Menfi received the results of the dialogues that the international rights team facilitated for more than 500 Libyan participants from different societal segments. The PC head stressed that his government "attaches the utmost importance to enhancing human rights in Libya and welcomes the team's efforts which must be complementary to national efforts and based on the foundations of participation and inclusiveness."

The Working Group on International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law consists of the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Libya, Dolf Hoogewoning, and the Director of the Department of Human Rights, Transitional Justice and the Rule of Law at the UN Mission to Libya, Suki Nagra.

Politics

Libyan Interior Minister plans to "contain" revolutionaries



The Libyan designated Minister of the Interior Emad Al-Trabelsi said that the security plan to secure the capital has begun to show its impact on the ground, and that the security directorates in Greater Tripoli Municipality are operating more effectively.

Al-Trabelsi added in a press conference that they had achieved important steps in implementing the security plan, which targeted all violations without exception, saying that the security situation in the last period was bad due to the corruption left by the wars and conflicts in Libya. He indicated that there was a significant improvement in the financial and administrative situation of the ministry.

Al-Trabelsi said that 9,000 security personnel had been rehired and that his ministry was working on containing the revolutionaries and armed factions to integrate them into the country's security forces. He added that he had agreed with a number of leaders of the security factions - whom he described as revolutionaries - to give the Ministry of Interior an opportunity to carry out its duties, stressing the need for lifting the social cover on "criminals," and handing them over to police stations. Trabelsi stressed that his ministry would ensure their legal rights.

Al-Trabelsi reiterated his ministry's support for holding elections, stressing their role in securing the electoral process and ending the war and saying they would work to combat illegal immigration in the coming period, through a strategic plan. He also called on international organizations and the European Union to support his ministry in combating illegal immigration by providing training and equipment programs.

Meanwhile, officers at the Ministry of Interior explained that the total number of cases referred to the Public Prosecution Office was more than 4,000, and that the arrest warrants were more than 1,300.



Economy

Shakshak discusses with experts from World Bank public finance development project in Libya

The head of the Audit Bureau, Khaled Shakshak, has met a delegation of World Bank experts, headed by a specialist in public finance management, Winston Percy, within the framework of the experts' visit to a number of Libyan institutions to introduce the stages of the public finance development project in Libya.

During the meeting, which was attended by the Undersecretary of the Bureau, Alaeddin Al-Musallati, Shakshak stressed the importance of such projects towards enhancing the fight against corruption.

Winston Percy pointed to the advantages and technical aspects that the project provides by obtaining more accurate data and information, according to the Audit Bureau's Facebook page.

IMF collects economic and financial information on Libya

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is collecting the necessary economic and financial information to the reality of the Libyan economy to make proposals regarding its local economy, according to the IMF website.

This came after a team from the Central Bank of Libya and the IMF resumed the consultations of Article 4 of the agreement establishing the fund in the Tunisian capital, after they had been suspended since 2013.

It is expected that the IMF's mission will issue a statement at the end of the consultations that will take place throughout the current week, in which it will put its recommendations to improve the financial and economic prospects in the country.

Daewoo signs contact worth \$790 million to build power plants in Libya

South Korean engineering and construction giant Daewoo announced signing a contract with the General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) to build gas-fired power plants in Libya.

According to the Korea Herald, the value of the construction deal is \$790 million. Under the agreement, Daewoo will build gas-fired power plants in Mellitah and Misurata.

The company said in a statement on Friday that the recent signing of the construction of these stations was important and it became possible thanks to the company's efforts and strategy to support its close relations with Libya and contribute to expanding work in Libya as well as neighboring countries.

Daewoo entered the Libyan market in 1978, even before the establishment of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Libya, and since then, the company has completed 163 projects across the country, with an estimated total value of \$11 billion.



Economy



Economy

Dbeibah says businesspersons are the most important class in Libyan economy



The Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah said businesspersons should be supported because they make up the most important class in Libyan economy, adding in his speech at the first gathering of Libyan businesspersons and industrialists organized by the Chamber of Industry, Agriculture and Commerce in coordination with Zliten municipal council on Saturday - that facilitating work of the small traders who have licenses was necessary.

Dbeibah said there are those who cannot find foreign currency, and some businesspersons that have been accused and imprisoned in other countries because of currency exchange, adding that some of them transfer currencies through foreign companies, "while they are under the intelligence microscope."

He also stressed the need for the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) to facilitate availability of foreign currency for businesspersons, adding that some of his friends told him that letters of credit are

more expensive than buying from the black market, saying that he called on the Governor of the CBL Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir to start a dialogue aimed to overcome these difficulties.

Dbeibah stressed the importance of adhering to the government's decisions related to the provision of basic commodities during the month of Ramadan, saying his government wouldn't allow speculation of prices.

The forum was attended by Al-Kabir, the Head of the Audit Bureau, Khalid Shakshak, a number of ministers, the Board of Directors of the National Council for Economic and Social Development, and the Head of the Chamber of Industry, Agriculture and Commerce. Al-Kabir spoke about the CBL's readiness to cooperate with the government to support the private sector and facilitate its work, referring to the need to take into account some of the international restrictions that the country is experiencing.

Economy

Libya prepares for 2024 oil and gas licensing round

The Chairman of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Farhat Bengdara, said that Libya was preparing to conduct the oil and gas licensing round for 2024, adding that if Libya succeeded in conducting the licensing round next year, it would be the first in nearly two decades.

Bengdara added that the licensing would help reach oil production of two million barrels per day (bpd) over the next three years, referring as well to the possibility of establishing a natural gas liquefaction plant and a gas pipeline to Egypt with links to the Edku facility and the Damietta terminals.

According to OPEC indicators for January, oil production rate in Libya had decreased to 1.148 million bpd, after it averaged 1.153 million bpd in the last quarter of 2023.

The African Chamber of Energy said in a report last month, Libya's oil production could reach a maximum of 1.8 million bpd by 2024.

Libyan gas production currently stands at 1.3 billion cubic feet per day, with the potential to export 250 million cubic feet per day through the Green Stream pipeline.

Economy

NOC Chief reiterates the need for US oil companies' return to Libya

The Chairman the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Farhat Bengdara, stressed the need for US companies to return to work in the oil and gas sector in Libya, adding in his meeting with US Deputy Secretary of Energy David Turk, on the sidelines of the CERAWEK conference.

The US Deputy Secretary of Energy hailed the increase in oil production and its stability under the new management of the NOC, according to a statement issued by the NOC, adding that the Director of the North Africa Department at the US State Department, Victoria Taylor, expressed her support for the NOC Board of Directors in its efforts that contributed to raising oil and gas production rates, developing oil industries and improving the environment. She also reaffirmed her country's support for the NOC to implement its strategic plans to increase production and build capacities.

The NOC delegation held meetings with US officials on the sidelines of its participation in CERAWEK conference, which is considered the most important annual event for international oil, gas and energy companies and institutions in Houston, USA.

The US Assistant Secretary of State Geoffrey Pyatt has also confirmed in his meeting with Bengdara in Washington, DC. support for the NOC to implement its strategy to build capacities and raise oil and gas production.

Opinions



February Revolution's interest is with reconciliation

By Fathi Salem Abuzakhar,
a Libyan writer

February Revolution triumphed over injustices of the dictatorship's security in 2011, with the help of the UN Security Council resolution, though employed to serve vested interests and not to save the Libyan people. With the force of the triumphant movement, February was hardly able to continue for two years, due to existence of malicious pockets of opposition on the Libya soil.

The hidden struggle of the international community on the Libyan soil, played a major role in transforming February's victory into a competition to win over a larger number of armed and civilian groups to serve hidden agendas. Instead of employing civil and military capacities in support of February Revolution and further its noble goals, they were deployed to fuel inter-Libyan conflict, especially after creating the appropriate conditions for the infiltration of the vindictive elements of the Jamahiriya system against February Revolution, due to the power and wealth wielded from the deep state, and further empowered by the information network as well as internal and international relations.

The February ranks were cracked due to the absence of a well-defined project with well-known literature and leadership, enabling the counter-revolution to lay hurdles and obstacles on the path of February Revolution, thereby derailing its quest to realize the aspirations of the people for building state of justice and law.

However, the military offensive against February Revolution in April 2019, with internal and international betrayal, unified the ranks and efforts of February supporters, from all Libyan cities, who rallied their forces in the capital, as they did in 2011. Indeed, they defended the capital and withstood the aggression of Wagner and Janjaweed militias and others. Furthermore, with the divine intervention, international calculations changed overnight and intervened in support of fighters of February Revolution to defeat the aggression and word them off beyond the safe borders of the capital and the western region as a whole. Today, there is an opportunity for the supporters of February Revolution to assess what has happened and work hard to achieve reconciliation.

With a thorough reading of the February march, it is possible to identify important stages for achieving national reconciliation, which the author presents as follows:

First: Despite complete missing of clear literature and a well-known leadership, the February uprising was popular in the real sense of the word. It was led by free intellectuals, academics, together with all other segments of society that were suppressed by the dictator's security services and his revolutionary committees.

The euphoria of victory had negative feedback after succumbing to the Political Isolation Law with all its flaws, and which hampered national reconciliation.

Second: With February's need for supporters, the door was wide-opened for all experienced opportunists of the Jamahiriya regime, with access to many political prisons, thereby striking profitable financial deals related to the smuggling of leaders of the Jamahiriya, and foremost Saif al-Islam, providing them with the opportunity to work against national reconciliation.

Third: The international conspiracy against the uprisings of the Liberation Spring employed several methods to restore dictatorship and at any cost, even by sacrificing principles of freedom, human rights, justice and democracy. This is further deepened the national wound, causing a setback to transitional justice and national reconciliation.

Fourth: The escalating global conspiracy to abort the revolution of liberation, by enabling pro-Daesh military leaders, to stage a coup against the popular aspirations for a civilian state. Therefore, there was a proclamation freezing the Constitutional Declaration in 2014, followed by military maneuvers and clashes leading to the great preparation and rallying of conspiracy efforts in 2019 with a fierce military offensive on the capital, Tripoli. This is further deepened the national wound by employing the despicable and backward regionalism and tribalism, which further frozen the reconciliation processes up to the end of the war on October 23, 2020.

Fifth: Emergence of formal reconciliation calls, mostly geared to make political gains, and win key state positions to finalize pillars of the conspiracy and derail national reconciliation process.

Sixth: In addition to wars, there were malicious programmes designed to distract the people from national reconciliation by creating crises of fuel, liquidity, electricity, and even bread for the country's population that number less than population of capitals of neighboring countries, yet in a country with great revenues and resources that exceed the revenues of countries of those capitals.

Seventh: Some of February's supporters fell into the traps of power and money, enabling enemies of February Revolution to challenge the very values advocated by February Revolution. As a result, the national reconciliation project was also delayed.

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

Successful implantation of aortic valve without surgery for the first time in Libya

The Ministry of Health said that a team of doctors in Al-Khadra General Hospital had succeeded in implanting an aortic valve for a patient using "TAVI" procedure, which is considered a world modern technology.

The director of the hospital, Mohammed Al-Rajehi, said that this type of procedure is being conducted for the first time in the public sector in Libya, and it is considered one of the advanced medical techniques that are used to perform the operation of changing, amending, or replacing the damaged or narrowed aortic valve through cardiac catheterization without any surgery.

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, Saad Al-Deen Abdelwakeel, hailed the efforts of the medical team that performed the procedure, expressing his confidence in the ability of national cadres to harness medical technology to serve and treat patients with international technologies.

"TAVI" allows oxygen-rich blood to flow to the rest of the body by replacing the damaged valve with an artificial one. It is a good alternative to open-heart surgery, especially for patients who suffer from narrowing or calcification of the aortic valve.



Health

Medical team to conduct 40 corneal transplants in Sabha

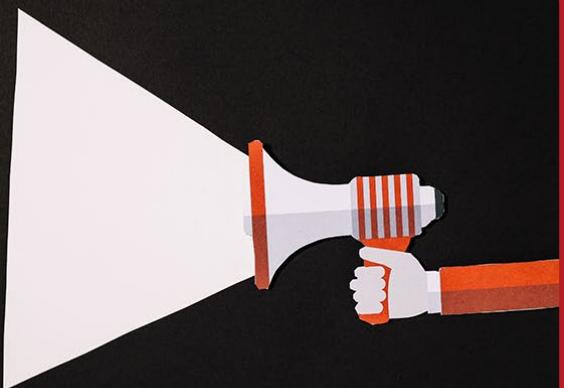
The Libyan Ministry of Health said the Eye Hospital of Tripoli and the Corneal Transplantation Department's team arrived in Sabha to conduct 40 corneal transplants, adding on Tuesday that the team's visit to Sabha came as a continuation of the Ministry of Health's program to localize treatment.

The acting Minister of Health, Ramadan Abu Janah, praised the efforts of the Tripoli Eye Hospital's teams, headed by the hospital director, Rania Al-Khawja, in the process of localizing treatment.

Al-Khawja said that the medical team would conduct 40 corneal transplants after having done 20 corneal transplants in Shahat city for the first time, saying that this work came as part of a program for targeted cities in the eastern region, along with the cities of Al-Bayda, Benghazi and Tobruk. She confirmed that all the patients who underwent surgery were in good health, reiterating that the work of medical cadres would continue until all of patients get treated across Libya.

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Travel



Libyan-Algerian border crossing ready to reopen

The Technical Committee of the Ministry of Interior has confirmed the readiness of the Al-Debdeb-Ghadames border crossing in preparation for its reopening.

According to the Ministry of the Interior, the committee discussed, in its meeting on Tuesday, the mechanism of communication with the Algerian side to reopen the crossing for commercial exchange and resume the movement of citizens between the two countries.

The committee suggested holding an initial meeting from the Algerian side in the coming days to study the final arrangements.

Sports



Libya football cup final: Al-Ahly Tripoli V.S. Al-Akhdar

Al-Ahly won 2-0 against Al-Madina on Wednesday in the semifinal match played in Al-Zawiya stadium and went through to the Libya cup final to play Al-Akhdar.

Nigerian John Iboka scored the first goal for Al-Ahly at the minute 45 and Ahmed Al-Terbi scored the second from a header at the minute 46.

Al-Akhdar went through to the final after beating Al-Ahly Benghazi on shootouts 5-3 after finishing the match 1-1.

The Competitions Committee of the Libyan Football Federation has not yet determined the date or place for the final match, which the tournament regulations stipulate to be held in a neutral city. It is likely to be Benina Martyrs Stadium in Benghazi. The last tournament of the Libyan football cup was held in 2018, when the Al-Ittihad won the title after defeating Al-Hilal 2-0.

crimes

Chadian migrants appear beating two Libyans, police arrest them after video goes viral

A video showing two Libyan young men being beaten by African migrants went viral on Tuesday for its apparent cruelty; security services said the attackers are now in police custody.

The Tajoura Security Directorate said it took action after the men attacked were identified to be from Tajoura Municipality.

Footage posted to social media showed the two men handcuffed, shackled, and severely beaten by a group of Chadian migrants.

Following the incident, security services in Tajoura initiated an investigation and search operation, which ended up having 15 Chadian migrants in prison.

The young men who were photographed while being assaulted and beaten identified their assailants at the police station.

The Africans were arrested on a farm in a remote area between Tajoura and Tarhuna, while another Libyan national who was among the gang fled the scene, police said, confirming that action is being taken to bring him in.

The security directorate said it is digging to unveil the truth and bring the guilty party to account, noting that both parties have been referred to the Public Prosecution for investigations.

Migration



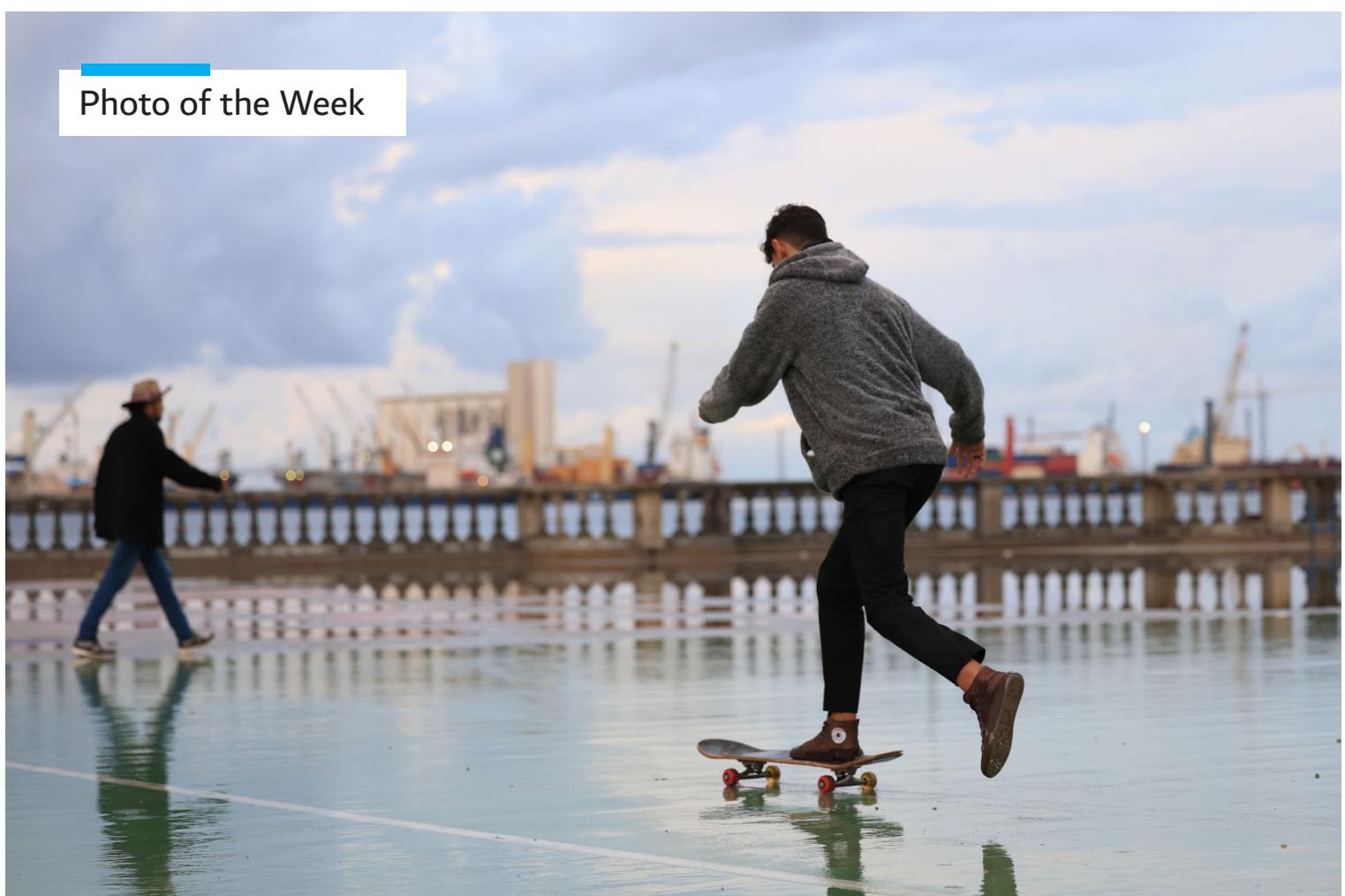
Boats of immigrants coming from Tunisia more than those coming from Libya

The Italian Ministry of the Interior revealed statistics showing that Libya ranks second after Tunisia in the number of boats of illegal immigrants sailing to Italy, Italian Nova News Agency has reported.

Nova added that the statistics showed that no less than 12,083 people had left the Tunisian coast since the beginning of this year, an average of more than 170 immigrants per day.

The News Agency pointed out that the same statistics indicated that the number of illegal immigrants leaving Italian coasts toward European countries via the Libyan shores amounted to about 7057 people, a decline that put Tunisia at the top of the list.

Photo of the Week



Tripoli Weather Forecast



TODAY

24°
18°

TUE

22°/17°



WED

20°/14°



THU

20°/12°



FRI

26°/14°



SAT

27°/14°



SUN

29°/16°

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