

Politics

Libyan Presidential Council appoints Al-Namroush a commander of West Coast Military Zone



The Libyan Presidential Council, in the capacity of the Chief Commander of the Libyan Army, has formed the West Coast Military Zone and appointed the Defense Minister of the ex-Government of National Accord, Salah Al-Namroush, as its Chief; after promoting him exceptionally to a Major General.

The Presidential Council said in a statement Sunday that the West Coast Military Zone covers the area from Al-Ghiran roundabout in western Tripoli to Tunisian borders and from Baten Al-Jabal southward to the coastline northward, adding that it will be under the command of the Libyan Army.

On August 07, the Presidential Council ordered all military units to follow its instructions as the Chief Commander of the Libyan Army regarding forming or dissolving military units or promoting and demoting military officers, and appointing commanders of military zones.

Politics

Juwali: If some parties choose war, then war it is



The commander of Western Military Zone's Joint Operations Room, major general, Osama Juwaili, said there are signs of war and if any party thinks war is the best choice, "then war it is".

Juwaili rejected in a statement on Tuesday the letter of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) to the Presidential Council, Government of National Unity, and the UN Support Mission (UNSMIL), objecting to the demand of freezing military agreements and MoUs that were signed by the previous legitimate Government of National Accord (GNA). "Agreements with Turkey was requested by the legitimate GNA to help repel the offensive on Tripoli, while Russia and other countries which have troops on the ground in Libya have no legitimate agreements with the government. The JMC has crossed the line of its duties by the letter and by demanding the appointment of a defense minister, which is something only the Presidential Council and Government of National Unity can do." The statement reads.

It also referred to the avoidance of the JMC to talk about the party (Khalifa Haftar) that is publicly rejecting being subordinated to a civilian authority.

The Libyan 5+5 JMC has been criticized after its letter to the Presidential Council and the Government of National Unity as well as the Head of UNSMIL, calling for freezing state military agreements, and dissolving armed brigades in western Libya only, without naming any brigade under the command of Khalifa Haftar's forces.

Politics

Libyan 5+5 JMC under scrutiny for recent political meddling



The Libyan 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) has been criticized after its letter to the Presidential Council and the Government of National Unity as well as the Head of UNSMIL, calling for freezing state military agreements, and dissolving armed brigades in western Libya only, without naming any brigade under the command of Khalifa Haftar's forces.

The JMC was criticized by one of its members, Mustafa Yehya, who didn't attend the Saturday meeting for health problems. He said he didn't agree on the statement and letter of the JMC, adding that they were a deviation of the technical duties of the JMC, which would place now in a biased position.

Meanwhile, the Central Military Zone's Operations Room said the JMC has no right to interfere in politics and military as well as security agreements signed by Libya with "friend countries", adding that appointing ministers is within the Prime Minister's authorities and that it has no right to communicate with the UN Support Mission or any other international organization.

It also lashed out at the JMC's call for pressuring the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum to come up with a constitutional basis for elections in the name of "saving time to hold elections on schedule", denouncing the fact that the JMC didn't mention in its letter to the UNSMIL the need to hold accountable war criminals and those who helped wage wars and dig mass graves.

Likewise, a commander at the Anti-Terrorism Force, Mukhtar Al-Hajjawi, said while the JMC was supposed to rally local and international support to implement the ceasefire agreement in full, it issued a statement that is beyond its tasks and authorization, interfering in politics and blaming the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum for any violations of the ceasefire, denouncing its avoidance to tackle violations already done to the ceasefire, especially Haftar's threats that he wouldn't be subordinated to any civilian authority.

Al-Hijjawi also said that the appointment of a defense minister is done and given to the Prime Minister since day one of endorsement at the House of Representatives, calling on the Presidential Council and Government of National Unity to put in place a clear mechanism for the work of the JMC and a timeline for implementing the ceasefire agreement, committing it to staying away from politics.



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Norland: It is time to establish the legal framework for Libya's elections

The time had come to put in place the constitutional and legal framework so that elections can be held in Libya next December, the US Ambassador and Special Envoy to Libya Richard Norland said during his meeting with Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita in Rabat yesterday.

The two sides touched upon various issues, concentrating on matters related to the planned elections scheduled for the end of this year.

Norland praised Morocco's role in supporting the political dialogue in Libya and its efforts to bring together disputing parties to compromise on the challenging issues before them, in the interests of the Libyan people, according to the US Embassy in Libya.



Al-Manqoush, Egyptian ambassador discuss reopening of Egyptian embassy and consulate

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of National Unity, Najlaa Al-Manqoush, discussed on Monday with the Chargé d'Affaires at the Egyptian embassy, Tamer Mustafa, the return of work at the Egyptian embassy in Tripoli and the consulate in Benghazi.

Mustafa confirmed during the meeting that the Egyptian embassy and consulate headquarters in Tripoli and Benghazi will be ready and reopened to provide services, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting also touched on the prospects for cooperation between the two countries, and ways to develop them to include all fields, foremost of which is health, judicial and economic cooperation, as well as organizing the presence of Egyptian labour in Libya.

For her part, Al-Manqoush expressed her gratitude to Egypt for its solidarity with the Libyan people in addressing the Coronavirus pandemic, pointing out to the oxygen shipments that Cairo recently sent to Libya.



Turkey, Algeria review number of regional issues, especially Libya

Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu has affirmed that there is a consensus of views between Turkey and Algeria on a number of regional issues, especially Libya.

This came during a joint press statement by Çavuşoğlu and his Algerian counterpart, Ramtane Lamamra on Saturday, after talks they held in the Algerian capital on regional and international issues such as Libya, Tunisia and the Sahel region.

In his speech, Çavuşoğlu affirmed that he had made, in cooperation with his Algerian counterpart, important contributions to achieving peace and stability in the region, stressing the importance of Algeria's role to achieve this.



Aqilah Saleh: There is ready initiative if elections fail to take place on time

The Speaker of the House of Representatives (HoR), Aqilah Saleh, has revealed that there is a ready initiative that will be put forward if the elections fail to take place on time, saying that "there is an alternative plan that will be presented at that time".

Saleh confirmed in a statement on Friday that HoR will unilaterally issue a law to elect the president and the new HoR in the next few days, adding that he is a well-known supporter of what he called the Libyan army (i.e. Haftar's armed groups) and that no one will be excluded from the scene except through the law and the constitution.

He considered that the role of the UN mission in Libya is not clear, and it does not have anything of its own and that it does not have the right to issue instructions and decisions, as he put it



Oil and Gas minister: Increasing crude production depends on parliament agreeing on spending plan



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Economy

Libya is seeking to boost its oil production from 1.3 million barrels per day to 1.5 million by the end of this year, says Minister of Oil and Gas Mohamed Oun.

The Oil and Gas minister indicated in an interview with Bloomberg published Monday that this would depend on the parliament's approval of the budget amendments for the year 2021, which, according to him, had politicians at odds for at least four months.

"If the budget is not approved, there will be an impact and perhaps great difficulties in maintaining oil production rates," Oun said.

The oil ministry has requested 7 billion dinars (\$1.5 billion) for projects to develop the oil sector, but only 3 billion dinars have been earmarked in the draft budget, according to Oun, who underscored that the National Oil Corporation has long complained it needs more money to fix Libya's aging infrastructure.

He confirmed that Libya is studying offers by foreign companies to invest in refining-related projects without naming them.

Economy

Libya's PM says unified state salary chart to be finished in 2 months



The Libyan Prime Minister Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah said they are working on a unified state employees' salary chart and it will be finished in 60 days and then presented for evaluation and approval to the cabinet and then to the House of Representatives, citing unjust salary gaps in the country.

In a meeting Monday with the relevant committee members, Dbeibah said the step aims to achieve social justice in using the first chapter of the state budget, adding that the unified state salary chart will achieve equal pay for employees, some of whom haven't gotten paid for years.

Dbeibah said the new chart wouldn't refer the government back to Law (15) which was a source of suffering for Libyans over the past years, indicating that employees' salaries should be raised and government spending on salaries should be decreased with new methods and systems put in place to make work environment more comfortable at all state institutions.

"The bureaucracy measures should be eased to unfreeze the salaries of employees," Dbeibah added.

Economy

Deputy Minister of Oil denies links to reshuffling order of Libya's NOC



The Deputy Minister of Oil and Gas Refat Al-Abbar said he wasn't aware of the letter sent by the Minister Mohammed Oun to the Prime Minister Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah about reshuffling the board of directors of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), saying the step is against his agreement with the Minister.

He said he had agreed with the Minister not to change anything at the NOC without prior consultation and that the current board of directors had been successful over the last few years amid difficult security and economic conditions.

Al-Abbar added that the NOC board of directors remained unified despite all the previous challenges and carried on with exporting the most important source of revenue for Libyans in hard times.

The Minister of Oil and Gas asked the Government of National Unity to form a new board of directors for the NOC and recommended the appointment of Tariq Al-Gatani, as a new Chairman and Al-Abbar his as his deputy.

NEWS

Economy

Delegation from Egyptian Industries Federation visits Libya

The head of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Mohammed Al-Raeed, has said that a delegation from the Federation of Egyptian Industries will visit Tripoli soon, pointing out that the delegation was scheduled to arrive on Sunday, but the visit was postponed due to the lockdown imposed by the government in the past few days.

Ayman Al-Qarra, a member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Food Industries in the Federation of Egyptian Industries said that the delegation will discuss with Libyan businessmen and institutions concerned with the economic file the possibility of Egyptian companies participating in reconstruction and other investment projects, including food industries, according to Egyptian media.



After 10 years of hiatus, final stages of reoperating ethylene plant began

Ras Lanuf Oil and Gas Company has announced the start of the final stages of reoperating the ethylene plant after a hiatus of more than 10 years.

The company confirmed on its Facebook page that as part of the implementation of the final stages of reoperating the ethylene plant, the single operation of the plant's main turbines has actually begun.

It also indicated the success of the first single-running tests, and the rest of the main turbines are scheduled to be tested successively this week

Opinions

The US must step up and prevent a return to chaos in Libya

By Fathi Bashagha

The Biden administration's engagement has given hope that free elections can be held later this year. At an international conference in Berlin less than two months ago, US secretary of state Antony Blinken delivered an urgent message about the future of Libya, which has been roiled by a decade of political unrest.

"A sovereign, stable, unified, secure Libya free from foreign interference is critical to regional security," he declared. "For that to happen, national elections need to go forward in December."

Blinken's statement provided fresh hope for a nation whose 7m inhabitants have been looking forward to voting in presidential and parliamentary elections on December 24, as part of a UN-backed peace process.

It signalled that President Joe Biden and his colleagues would abandon the Trump administration's hands-off approach to Libya. It also showed that all 17 nations that attended the Berlin conference were ready to do their part in helping Libya realise its potential as a democracy.

But there are rising fears that this promise will once again be broken, as a small group in Libya attempts a last-ditch effort to cancel the election because they know they are unlikely to hold on to their positions if voters have their say.

Libyans are doing their part to prevent these bad actors from running roughshod over the UN-approved electoral timeline. Emad al-Sayeh of Libya's High National Elections Commission is courageously preparing for the poll, and more than 2.7m voters have been registered.

Countless activists are following in the example of Salwa Bughaighis, the heroic Libyan human rights lawyer who challenged the role of militias in the aftermath of the revolution and was tragically assassinated in 2014.

But we Libyans cannot do it alone. The US can help by enforcing stiff and immediate sanctions against anyone who tries to obstruct the country's electoral process, even if those individuals currently hold positions in the Libyan state.

To be sure, free and fair elections are just the beginning of a process that will take years — and one that will require leaders who can secure and unify a country that has been marred by deep divisions.

But I know from my time as the minister of interior in Libya's Government of National Accord that Libyans are ready to challenge corruption, stamp out terrorism, attract foreign investment and rebuild our country's healthcare system.

One immediate priority must be to resolve the differences between the western and eastern parts of our country. A first positive step is the reopening of the coastal road between Misurata and Sirte, thanks to the efforts of the UN-backed 5+5 committee.

We must also ensure an equitable distribution of oil revenues, root out corruption at the national central bank and restore trust among international businesses that it is safe to return to the country.

Then there is the vital importance of building a modern, inclusive society that recognises the rights of all Libyans. I know first-hand that having a diversity of voices at the table leads to better decisions.

Libyans recognise that lasting progress will not be achieved overnight. But elections are a necessary first step in the challenge of removing foreign fighters from Libyan soil, addressing the public health crisis caused by the global pandemic and providing much-needed economic relief to those in need.

As someone who has devoted my life to building a fully sovereign Libyan state, I draw inspiration and optimism from the support our effort has garnered, both at home and abroad.

The Biden administration must help Libya by sending a clear message that those who stand in the way of free elections will be punished, and that the US stands for peace and democracy in a country that has been devastated by war and corruption.

Fathi Bashagha is the former minister of interior in Libya's Government of National Accord

Credit: This article was first published by The Financial Times on August 10, 2021

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

Malta supports Libya with 40,000 doses of Coronavirus vaccine

The Maltese government decided to provide Libya with 40,000 doses of the Coronavirus vaccine and an unspecified number of tests, to support it combating the Coronavirus, according to the Maltese newspaper "Times of Malta".

The Maltese newspaper pointed out that the shipment will be sent to Tripoli on a government-chartered plane, adding that this step comes after donating test kits to Tunisia, last week.



Health

Libya receives new batch of AstraZeneca from Greece

Libya has received the second consignment of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine donated by Greece, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

The batch, containing 200,000 doses of the vaccine, arrived at the Maitiga International Airport, where the Head of the National Centre for Disease Control, Haydar Al-Sayeh, was there in person to receive it.

Al-Sayeh said that the new vaccine consignment would target those awaiting their second jab, noting that the vaccine will be delivered once approved by the regulating authorities.

He assured that the vaccine imports would continue to arrive successively until fulfilling the country's needs.

Last Thursday, the Food and Drug Control Center announced the release of 110,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine after undergoing the necessary procedures.



Health

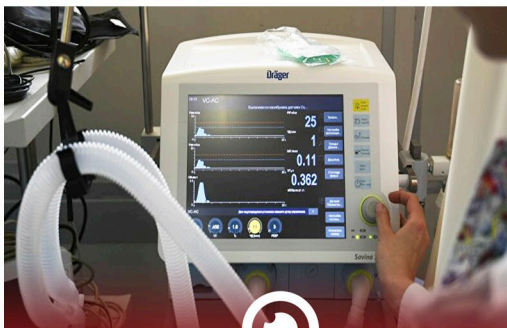
Drug regulatory authority okays 20,000 doses of scorpion serum

The Food and Drug Control Center confirmed on Sunday the release of a shipment of scorpion vaccines, estimated at 20 thousand doses, after undergoing the necessary procedures that ensure the safety and effectiveness of their use.

The head of the Administrative Control Authority, Suleiman Al-Shanti, had called in a letter addressed to Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, to urgently intervene and instruct the Ministry of Health to provide the scorpion serum in the southern region as soon as possible, to preserve the life and safety of citizens.

According to Al-Shanti, at least two children have died in the southern region because of scorpion stings and the lack of antidotes in various health facilities in the area.

Sources from the Sabha Medical Center had confirmed the killing of seven people, including two children, due to scorpion stings since the beginning of August



Health

UNDP provides Libya with 20 ventilators

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has provided the health sector in Libya with 20 ventilators with support from 13 international partners and the Government of Libya.

This came as part of a joint initiative between UNDP and the Libyan Ministry of Health, the Stabilization Facility for Libya, according to the UNDP official Facebook page.

"The equipments will help to provide better services to patients affected by COVID-19 and save lives in several municipalities across Libya", UNDP stated.



Health

Libya, Malta discuss health cooperation

The Minister of Health, Ali Al-Zanati, has inaugurated a mass vaccination center at the Sports Complex in Tripoli on Wednesday, announcing the start of the exceptional national campaign for vaccination against the Coronavirus.

Al-Zanati stressed the intensification of vaccination operations, and work to expand it, in order to facilitate obtaining it easily, according to a statement by the Ministry of Health.

He added that the campaign will target all Libyan citizens and foreign residents, stressing the importance of immunization against the virus to create community immunity that contributes to eliminating the epidemic.

Migration



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

UNHCR: More than 42,000 refugees are registered in Libya

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has announced that there are currently more than 42,000 refugees and asylum-seekers registered in Libya.

UNHCR stated in a statement that the Libyan Coast Guard has rescued 10,977 refugees and irregular migrants at sea and returned them to Libya from the beginning of 2021 until now. 360 migrants have died and 570 others have gone missing off the Libyan coast in the same period.

UNHCR added that the number of people who returned to Libya in July more than tripled compared to the same period last year, which may be attributed to the easing of restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 epidemic, as well as calmer sea conditions.

Education

Ministry of Higher Education launches electronic registration system in several universities



The universities of Omar Al-Mukhtar, Muhammad bin Ali Al-Senussi, Derna, and Tobruk have received the electronic registration system within the national plan for bringing the universities system together to better support the educational process.

The Omar Al-Mukhtar University in Al-Bayda hosted Wednesday the handover ceremony in the presence of the Director of the Communication and Information Office at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Ali Ahmed Salem, and officials from the concerned universities.

Dr. Salem reiterated the ministry's keenness to complete the e-transformation shifting in all educational institutions, underscoring that it would ensure proper planning and competent implementation of decisions.

The ceremony concluded with an agreement to start using the new system on Thursday after establishing an e-room consisting of the teamwork that designed the system and university officials responsible for data input

Migration

Libya deports 84 Nigerian prisoners to their country



The Ministry of Justice deported Saturday 84 Nigerian male and female prisoners to their country, accompanied by their children.

The deportees included illegal immigrants and others charged with criminal cases including 22 families of former ISIS fighters killed in Libya.

The deportation process was attended by the Nigerian ambassador to Libya and a number of embassy staff.

The embassy reported that another 100 Nigerians are scheduled to be sent back home within 10 days.



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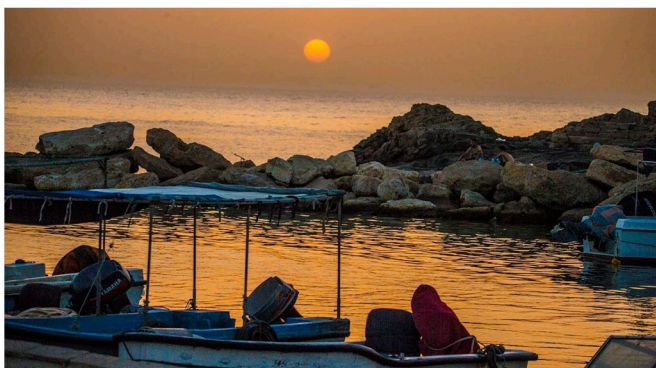
Fri 20	35°/25°		Sunny	8%	ENE 21 km/h
Sat 21	33°/24°		Sunny	7%	NE 21 km/h
Sun 22	33°/24°		Sunny	8%	ENE 22 km/h
Mon 23	33°/24°		Sunny	4%	ENE 22 km/h
Tue 24	33°/24°		Sunny	4%	ENE 22 km/h
Wed 25	35°/26°		Sunny	2%	E 22 km/h
Thu 26	36°/27°		Sunny	0%	E 20 km/h

Cartoon

Libyan parliament
and
the state budget



Photo of the Week





Features

The Town of Tokra

It is a city in the district of Nuqat Al-Khams of northwestern Libya. It has a population of around 17,700 (2009), it is on the Mediterranean coast. It is located around 140 kilometres west of Tripoli.

It is bordered by the city of Zuwara to the east, the Tunisian border to the west, the Mediterranean Sea to the north, and the city of Riqdalin to the south.

It is a pastoral land famous for the presence of multiple water wells, amounting to more than a hundred wells, the most famous of which are Al-Aweeniya - Shtiwa - Al-Zawkiyah.

History

The town has been in existence since, at least, Roman times. Archaeological excavations have uncovered, not only parts of the old town, but also Roman olive presses.

At the beginning of the Italian invasion, it was the headquarters of the Mujahideen during the Battle of Sidi Said.

Many of the city's sons were martyred against the Italian invasion, the most famous of which are "Al-Salami Abu Taima" who was executed in front of people in Tripoli by the Italians in 1942 AD, and "Abu Derbala", "Al-Hashani", "Al-Aaib" and "Al-Rahhal" in the "Battle of Sidi Said", North Zelten after great resistance from the Mujahideen in 1911 AD.

Economy

The surrounding area is dryland farming with barley, wheat, olives, dates, citrus fruits, figs, and grapes raised for export.

There is a secondary trade in livestock, primarily sheep, goats and camels, brought in from outlying communities.

Salt has been collected in pans since Roman times.

Zelten's closeness to the Tunisian border has made Zelten a regional center for trade.

Culture

There is a small museum in Zelten displaying some of the local archaeological finds, and there is an annual poetry festival.



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