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Week 09

THE LIBYA OBSERVER

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Politics

HoR Speaker says his political initiative is drafted by Russia, warns of imminent defeat in south Tripoli

The Speaker of the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) Aqila Saleh said his political road-map, which he announced on last Monday, was drafted by Russian experts working with HoR members in Libya.

In a tribal gathering to rally his supporters after Khalifa Haftar's declaration of coup on the Libyan Political Agreement, Saleh said the presence of Russians in Libya wasn't a secret, adding that they had provided him with the political initiative to endorse it as fighting in southern Tripoli became an imminent defeat for Haftar's forces.

Saleh told the tribespeople in the gathering that the political initiative of the Russians called for a politic meeting to form a new Presidential Council and a ceasefire near Tripoli as "conditions on the frontlines became very difficult".

He commented on Haftar's popular mandate for ruling Libya by saying that the mandate should be given to someone for things they own not for things they don't.

Saleh added that the Tobruk-based HoR was working as usual, calling on his eastern supporters to speak out their loyalty in publicly published statements so that the HoR members wouldn't go to join the Tripoli-based HoR, adding that if that happened, the HoR members there could take very dangerous decisions.

He said the Turkish intervention in Libya has changed the game as supplies to Haftar's forces in south Tripoli and Tarhouna had been easy targets for warplanes, adding that the only way to end this was to support the HoR and call for a humanitarian truce.

He also said that he and Haftar could hold meetings in the coming days, adding that there was nothing personal between them and that the final say in such matters would be for the "Cyrenaica community".

"Those who control Tripoli can rule Libya, so forming a government in Cyrenaica won't be valuable and won't receive any recognition." Saleh said, adding: "let him control Tripoli and form a government then ask for mandate from whomever he chooses", referring to Haftar.

Politics

Libya's Presidential Council responds to Haftar's truce: We'll continue to defend Tripoli

The Presidential Council said in a statement that the Government of National Accord's (GNA) forces will continue to defend themselves and target all threats by outlaw groups that are causing bloodshed in Libya.

The Presidential Council responded to the unilateral truce announcement by Khalifa Haftar, saying it welcomes all national stances that rejected militarization of the country and clinging to civilian and democratic state.

The statement reiterated that the Presidential Council is committed to Security Council resolutions and Berlin conference conclusions, adding that the Presidential Council signed solely in Moscow on the ceasefire as Haftar didn't and continued to shell civilians in Tripoli in violation of all agreed-upon truces.

It also said that it had become clear that Haftar wouldn't be committed to any truce in Libya in spite of all regional and international pressure as he continued his attacks even in the dire times of Coronavirus pandemic.

"There is no trust in Haftar's truce announcement as he is used to breaking his promises and the declaration of coup against the Libyan Political Agreement two days ago is a living proof that he isn't for to be a political or peace partner." The statement reads.

It adds that any ceasefire agreement should be tied to the principles of the UN-led 5+5 military commission talks in Geneva of last February.

Meanwhile, the spokesman for Haftar's forces Ahmed Al-Mismari announced Wednesday a unilateral humanitarian truce during Ramadan on Tripoli frontlines "by the efforts of friend countries".

Politics

Bashaga to European Officials: We reject Operation IRINI due to bias towards Haftar

The Minister of Interior of the Government of National Accord (GNA), Fathi Bashaga, has expressed the rejection by the GNA of Operation IRINI due to its one-sidedness.

He said that the operation is aimed solely at preventing support to the UN recognized GNA, but does not follow through with stopping arms supply to warlord Haftar, by land and air.

Bashaga, during a video meeting with officials of the European Union foreign ministries, confirmed that Haftar's onslaught on Tripoli had failed, stressing the need to stop interference by certain countries, which work to undermine a political solution in Libya.

He said that the sole aim of these countries was to cause instability in Libya, breaking international law by supplying weapons to rogue militias outside of the scope of legitimacy.

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Politics

Al-Sarraj calls for resuming Libya's political dialogue with comprehensive roadmap

The Head of the Libyan Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sarraj has welcomed the political initiatives aiming to find a solution to the Libyan conflict, whether through amending the Libyan Political Agreement or agreeing on a constitutional basis and general elections.

Al-Sarraj called, in a statement posted by his media office, for unity to defeat the aggressor and end his dream of seizing power by force, referring to Khalifa Haftar, reiterating that he welcomes all political initiatives that call for peaceful solutions to the crisis away from force and military conflict in order to avoid bloodshed.

He also called on political parties to take up their responsibilities to end the division in Libya, urging for swift resumption of the UN-led political process to enter a new phase and agree on a comprehensive roadmap that brings together all Libyans.

"Be it by amending the Political Agreement and forming a new Presidential Council of a Head and two Deputies as well as a separate Prime Minister, or by agreeing on a constitutional basis that paves the way for general elections." Al-Sarraj added.

He said the call comes at a time when the state is being divided and some individuals in state institutions are monopolizing decisions outside the scope of their authorities, thus worsening economic and financial conditions of Libyans, especially after the outbreak of Coronavirus and the ongoing offensive on Tripoli and other districts.

Al-Sarraj's remarks came one day after the statement of the governor of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir who rejected reopening the foreign currency transactions' system for individuals for the third time, saying opening it now at a time when the oil production is under a blockade will lead to draining the Libyan finances and send the country into poverty.

"The hike in foreign currency exchange rates to Libyan dinar on the black market resulted from a structural deficit in the economy and would need radical solutions. State of emergency measures are only legal when they are essentially necessary for confronting the reasons that led to the emergency announcement." The governor of the CBL added in a statement to Al-Sarraj on Monday.

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Politics

UN report: Haftar's forces responsible for 81% of civilian war casualties in Libya

A report by UNSMIL has blamed Khalifa Haftar's forces for 81% of the civilian casualties of war in Libya in the first quarter of 2020, adding that the Government of National Accord is responsible for 5% and 14% of the casualties is unidentified.

UNSMIL said in a statement that between January 01 and March 31 2020, UNSMIL documented at least 131 civilian casualties (64 deaths and 67 injuries).

"This figure represents an overall increase in civilian casualties of 45% compared to the preceding period in the fourth quarter of 2019." UNSMIL said.

It added that ground fighting was the leading cause of civilian casualties, followed by targeted killings, airstrikes, and improvised explosive devices.

Haftar's forces killed two civilians and injured others in rocket attack on Zanata in Tripoli one day after the UNSMIL report.

Politics

Africa Intelligence: France monitors ships heading to Libya outside Operation IRINI

The French website Africa Intelligence said "CAE" firm from France, specialized in aviation surveillance, has been shriveling the Turkish ships heading to Libya.

France is doing this mission without waiting for the start of the European Union's Operation IRINI, adding that CAE firm is also involved on supporting Khalifa Haftar's military operations in Derna two years ago, according to the report.

Africa Intelligence added that the surveillance of ships should be done by Operation IRINI, which didn't get the needed resources to start work.

EU's High Representative Josep Borrell hinted last month that IRINI was a failure as it didn't have the needed capabilities to kick off work despite being launched early in the same month in an attempt to monitor the implementation of arms embargo in Libya, yet it came under fire by Libyan officials of the Government of National Accord as it didn't include monitoring the eastern region's borders, from which arms are being provided to Haftar's forces.

The Head of the Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sarraj rejected Operation IRINI on April 23 in a letter to the Security Council and European Parliament.

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Economy

Al-Sarraj calls on Governor of CBL to pave the way to selling 'hard currency' to citizens

The President of the Presidential Council (PC), Fayez Al-Sarraj, has called on the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL), Sadiq Al-Kabir, to restart the sale of individual allowances to citizens at the approved rate to the value of $5,000 per person annually.

Not only did Al-Sarraj outline the need for action in this situation, but he warned that taking no precautionary steps, may well result in serious repercussions on the national economy and livelihood of Libyan citizens.

There is a great need, according to popular demand, to stabilize the Libyan dinar against foreign currencies and exchange rates in the parallel market, which, if not dealt with threatens to destabilize economic reforms, as he put it.

Economy

Al-Kabir: Al-Sarraj has no right to demand hard currency selling to citizens

The Governor of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL), Sadiq Al-Kabir, said that the reliance of the chairman of the Presidential Council (PC), Fayaz Al-Sarraj, on the use of the 'emergency law', in demanding the CBL to restart selling dollar to citizens, was unjustified.

Al-Kabir explained in a letter to the President of the Supreme Judicial Council that according to his understanding, this 'emergency law', was specifically passed in order to combat the COVID-19 Pandemic.

He said that the 'emergency law' should not be used for purposes other than that for which it was designed, in order to preserve the basic principles of the state system, the rule of law and the separation of power, indicating that misuse of it, may digress from its original purpose.

Economy

NOC: Loss of oil export amounts to $4.3 billion

The National Oil Corporation (NOC) has declared that the financial loss due to the stoppage of oil production and export amounted to $4.3 billion, calling for the necessity to resume oil production to support the national economy.

The NOC explained in a statement that the daily loss of production amounted to more than 1.1 million barrels per day, which amounted to more than $15 million.

Armed thugs, loyal to Haftar militias, have closed the oil fields and ports under their control on January 18, 2020.

Economy

Tripolitanian Society considers establishing water desalination plant in Tripoli

Tripolitanian Society said it is considering establishing a water desalination plant in Tripoli, to be funded by businessmen from the city and private sector investors.

The authority said on its Facebook page that the step came as a result of the repeated use of water supplies as a weapon against the city by outlaw groups.

"Tripolitanian Society has repeatedly urged the Presidential Council to find a durable solution for the water crisis and proposed building a desalination plant, as it failed to stop the acts of vandalism against the water system," Tripolitanian Society said.

The executive committee assigned to supervise the project held a preliminary meeting on Wednesday with experts and engineers in the field of planning, civil engineering, water, soil, and environment and agreed to set up an advisory committee to embark on the implementation of the project, according to the Tripolitanian Society.

THE LIBYA OBSERVER

Opinions

Creating New Economic Activities For No One Left Behind

By Mohammad Amar Ma'ruf, Charge d'affaires of the Embassy of Indonesia in Libya

Recently, in the series of Libyan Businessmen and Technical Stakeholders visit to Indonesia for Trade Expo Indonesia 2019, held on October 16-20, 2019, there are many activities and programmes being done in promoting bilateral and peoples to people contacts between Libya and Indonesia. The visit reflects a strong commitment of both to create sustainable and beneficial cooperation for both peoples in guarding the world against artificial destruction.

Indonesia as an archipelagic and tropical forests countries is demanded to keep its environment with its sustainable development ways as being committed to the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 for protecting not only for its peoples but also to the surrounding region or even to the world. Indonesia feels obliged to share its best practices and get transfer of technology to each other. Therefore in any measures of Internation al interaction, Indonesia always respects the way of sustainable development in order to get positive effects for its nations and peoples.

During the visit of Libyan delegate and technical stakeholders to the above event, Libyan and Indonesia focus on the public aspects and products that creating a multi-effect of sustainable economic activities for both countries and peoples. Considering the complementary needs between two countries and peoples and also the third participation, Libyan and Indonesian keep their way to empowering the existing assets, including its natural and human resources.

Both countries are geographically located in different regions. But, the needs for both peoples seem beyond the geographical obstacles. It is proven since the era of independence of two countries, Libyan got their independence during 1950 and Indonesia during 1945, the Libyan and Indonesian and also other leaders from every continent of the world (Asia and Africa) sat together in defending their right to be independence and leash out from any colonial acts that may be encroaching their unity from inside or outside. That event is strongly recorded in the journey of two countries relations until now.

The closeness of the two countries (Libya and Indonesia) now to be enlarged in many aspects that encouraging two peoples interactions in trading and technical activities that may contribute to the creation of new sentra economic from the grassroots to the industrial ones that may give positive development of the two countries and peoples.

Libya is well-known as the oil exporters' countries and also the biggest oil reserve in Africa is facing a challenging situation that may arise the new dimension and awareness of the related stakeholders to more contribute positively to the sustainable development goals. This situation also being faced by Indonesia with its 250 million populations. The sustainable development goals are becoming our effort to at least reduce the worse impacts of climate and temperature changes.

The visit of Libyan trade and technical delegate to Indonesia performs the good wiling of both to think about the peoples of both countries in the field of environment protection and friendly products that once again in line with the existing asset and resources of both countries. Several programmes that were done that create possible and continued trading activities and give ample room for emerging interrelated and beneficial effect from the availability of raw material, technology, human resources and other management and services.

One of the best-related issues is how to avoid waste plastic become toxic to the environment meanwhile our existing asset is potential to create derivative products that attach to the public needs and use in their daily life. In this context, the World forum has been aware of the danger of impact of the plastics waste but seems the world could not avoid their life with this kind of products. Any countries give variant level of measures toward reducing their use toward plastics.

In the case of Indonesia, plastic waste almost reaches 14 % from the total of daily waste that amounts almost 8000 tonnages per day (it is only the figure in Special Region of Jakarta City as the State Capital). Indonesia thinks and does hard and integrative to reduce this burden. There are many efforts involving interrelated sectors and stakeholders from individuals, groups, communities and industrial stakeholders to optimize their capabilities in recycling and forming the plastic raw material becoming reuse safely.

For Libya seems the same. As the Indonesian diplomat in Tripoli, I met some public figures and government officials discussing at a glance or deeply regarding this issue. Thank God, It seems both peoples feel the same and feel need to work together in line with our respective duties to support the protection of the environment from plastic waste and create interrelated economic activities that based on the existing assets of the two countries and peoples.

One example that has begun is the cooperation with the Libyan Education Institution, Kuliyatul Da'wah Islamiyah (KDI) in Tripoli and with Environment and Sanitary Agency of the Special Region of Jakarta City under collaboration with Indonesian Creative Community living in Indonesia and Indonesian Student that still exist in this campus. The way of communication and cooperation that is promoted and done is through Digital and Virtual Communication and Conference to educate students living in the Kuliyatul Da'wah Islamiyah that coming from 30 countries.

Follow next page

Opinions

This kind of cooperation is one of the ways of our approach to overcome the real situation that still happen in Libya that may endanger the peace of Libyan peoples itself. The main aims of this cooperation among other are to support the social unity of the Libyan that everybody sure is the key of success in building the stronger Libya and to prepare more ready human resources of Libyan to achieve their economic vision as being proclaimed by the Libyan Leader to normalize their economic and social cohesion.

For Indonesia and also sure for others, Libyan people are part of development partners in creating more prosperous for our respective countries and event for the regions. As the Sustainable Development Goals Vision "No one left behind", every peoples living in the world should take a proper profit and benefit for their welfare and well-being. Therefore, Indonesia through his mission in Tripoli would like to be bridger and facilitator for the happening of these kinds of activities.

Relating to above regards, the Indonesian Mission in Tripoli gives appreciation for All Libyan sides who have given and show their strong continued commitment in creating their own countries to be festive for good and supporting the emerging of news Sentra of economic in the regions that uphold the vision of "No one Left behind".

Once again, the member of international communities, Libya and Indonesia are obliged to work together in keeping the countries strong and support the region of Mediterranean become festive for good and doing bilateral and international cooperation.

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

University Hospital of Tripoli performs successful surgery, restores eyesight to patient

The University Hospital of Tripoli has managed to restore the eyesight of a 30-year-old woman who lost her vision as a result of health complications.

The hospital administration explained that the patient suffers from high blood pressure, which led to vision loss, during which the pituitary gland was removed.

The surgery which took more than two hours to perform was carried out by specialists from the Neuro and Spine Surgery Department of the hospital.

"The operation was a success and the patient had regained vision," the hospital said in a statement on Facebook.

The hospital considered the process as a medical success in the realm of advanced surgery, and an achievement for the hospital, especially in the current circumstances, whether related to the Coronavirus pandemic or to the unrest the country is experiencing.

The University Hospital of Tripoli has previously performed several advanced surgical operations, including a stent implant within the aorta. Such operations which cost around 120 thousand dinars abroad are being conducted free of charge at the hospital.

Health

Misrata crisis committee declares the city covid-19 free

Spokesman for the anti-Covid-19 crisis committee in Misurata, Fathi Al-Zawawi has confirmed that test results of the last three coronavirus cases in the city have come out negative.

"According to these results the committee can confirm that Misurata is free from the Covid-19 now," he added.

"On behalf of the committee, I thank all of our citizens for their commitment to the curfew order," Al-Zawawi stated, urging them to continue their cooperation and to adhere to the preventive measures, as they are "the safety valve that would lead us out of the crisis", as he put it.

Ghat receives equipment to establish isolation sites

Health

The Municipal Council of Ghat has received essential items for setting up and equipping isolation places as a proactive measure to reduce the spread of Covid-19 among its community.

The supplies also include ventilators and sterilizers to be used in these facilities and at the General Hospital of Ghat.

Meanwhile, a new ambulance will also be put into service to assist medical staff in the new service "Your doctor at your home", which the municipality intends to launch.

Among the supplies, the municipality received a vehicle for spraying sterilization and disinfection solutions in public places, the Municipal Council added.

For his part, Mayor of Ghat, Qumani Muhammad said that this achievement is the result of continuous efforts for more than a month, in light of the current difficult circumstances, stressing that these conditions will not discourage the Municipal Council from providing the best services to its citizens.

Health

Isolation site in Tazirbu suffers key equipment to deal with Covid-19

Mayor of the Municipal Council of Tazirbu near Kufra district, southeastern Libya, has conducted a visit to the National Center for Disease Control of Tazirbu branch, where he toured the new isolation place set in the centre to house the coronavirus patients who will need special care.

The director of Tazirbu Hospital also joined the mayor in his inspection visit to take stock of the work accomplished and the challenges facing the medical teams.

Officials at the centre reaffirmed their readiness to receive any cases, in cooperation with the anti-Covid-19 consultative medical committee based in the city, the Municipal Council, and the Tazirbu Hospital.

However, they did point out that the isolation site suffers key equipment needed to care for Covid-19 patients, including ventilators as well as the sampling device.

Health

Italian Hospital delivers medical supplies to the Coronavirus Control Committee in Misrata

The Italian Field Hospital in Misrata has handed over a number of protective body suits and other medical equipment to the Coronavirus Control Committee on Thursday, to assist in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Committee's official Facebook page, the hospital is due to deliver essential protective clothing over the coming days, along with anti-viral drugs used to counter the COVID-19 pandemic, which has now reached the figure of 61 in Libya, 18 of whom have fully recovered, however, the death toll has recently doubled to two.

Culture

International film festival to screen a documentary on Libyan archaeological sites

A documentary film about Libyan archaeological sites will be among other films to be screened at the 17th Archaeological Channel Film Festival (TAC) in the US, said the Libyan General Authority for Tourism.

The film will highlight the diverse cultural and architectural heritage of archaeological cities in Libya, as seen by Italian filmmaker, Lucio Rosa.

Viewers will explore during the 33-minute film, the country's archaeological and historical sites, and monuments, as well as its architecture and building methods that characterize Libya's historical era.

The festival will kick off on the 13th of May with only online screening films due to the Coronavirus crisis. The documentary film on Libya will be presented on the second day of the event, according to a statement by the General Authority for Tourism.

The annual film festival TAC will be screening this year around 26 films from different countries, in support of the theme of archaeology, anthropology, and cultural heritage, according to TAC website.

Sport

Libyan Bowling Federation holds online competition as shutdown continues

The online Libyan Bowling Championship is still on, in its third week, as player Abdul-Malik Al-Qumati from Tripoli won the latest title among 43 other participants representing different regions across Libya.

The online championship was launched late March by the Libyan Bowling Federation under the slogan "Stay at Home and be a Championship".

Those taking part will need to answer specific questions about the history of the game and its laws and categories, while tests might become more challenging as they qualify for the next stages, according to the organizers, noting that the answers will be reviewed by specialists in this field.

The Libyan Bowling Federation said on Facebook that it hopes its initiative would help people through these difficult days of quarantine and provide some kind of entertainment and knowledge.

As many sports associations around the world, the General Authority for Youth and Sports in Libya has suspended all sporting activities in the country, as part of the efforts to halt the spread of the Coronavirus in the country.

Life

Authorities take further steps to restore normal conditions in Tawergha

The Youth and Sports Authority has launched a campaign to deliver food packages on the occasion of Ramadan in several municipalities. The campaign kicks off Friday from the Great Hall of the Sports City in Tripoli, the media head of the Youth and Sports Authority, Hamza Al Mahdi said.

He explained that their action team of volunteers will distribute around 700 baskets containing foodstuffs in several municipalities. A committee was set up within the Youth and Sports Authority, especially for this purpose to ensure the sustained provision of food baskets to those in need, in cooperation with the Scouts Movement.

Sport

LFF head attends FIFA meeting with UNAF

The CEO of the Libyan Football Federation (LFF) took part in the FIFA meeting with presidents of the federations of North African states via Skype service.

The meeting chaired by Matthias Grafstrom, Assistant Secretary-General, and Veron Musingo Umba, Director of the African and Caribbean Federations discussed the effects of the measures brought in to limit the spread of coronavirus on the sporting fixtures and players.

The talks covered several aspects related to the current quarantine stage and beyond and how to address the situation from a legal perspective.

FIFA reassured the Union of North African Football Federations (UNAF) that action will be taken to help them overcome the negative effects of this epidemic on football events.

Sporting activities within UNAF have been suspended at the local and continental level, as various governments implemented precautionary measures to protect their people from Covid-19.

weather

TRIPOLI WEATHER FORECAST

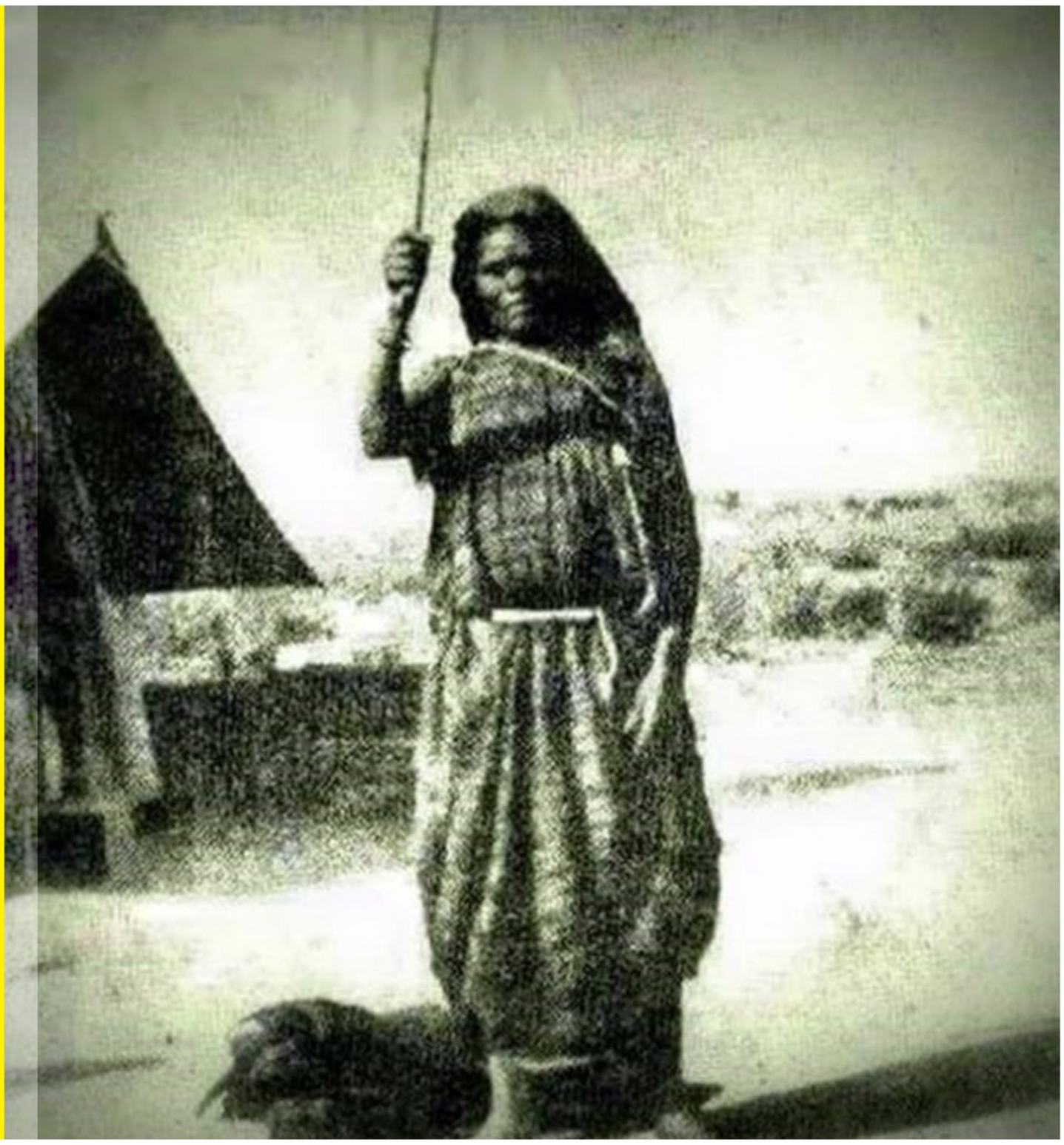
The Weather Channel

DAY	DESCRIPTION	HIGH / LOW	PRECIP	WIND	HUMIDITY
FRI MAY 8	Mostly Sunny/Wind	27°/18°	0%	E 32 km/h	49%
SAT MAY 9	Partly Cloudy	35°/24°	0%	ESE 19 km/h	35%
SUN MAY 10	Mostly Cloudy	35°/28°	0%	ENE 16 km/h	30%
MON MAY 11	Mostly Sunny	33°/18°	0%	WNW 19 km/h	39%
TUE MAY 12	Partly Cloudy	28°/20°	10%	NNE 22 km/h	58%
WED MAY 13	Partly Cloudy	36°/27°	0%	E 21 km/h	37%
THU MAY 14	Partly Cloudy	38°/27°	0%	SSE 24 km/h	22%
FRI MAY 15	Mostly Sunny	38°/26°	0%	SSE 24 km/h	23%

Photo of the Week

Features

Freedom fighter Bint al-Muqwas



The Libyan people have a history of fierce resistance against foreign intervention. Heroic stories of men and woman symbolized in Sheikh of martyrs Omar al-Mukhtar set a great inspiration to the rest of the world and a school for Libyan generation to come.

Amongst them was a spirited woman who demonstrated remarkable bravery in resisting the Italian invaders in her own unique way. Salima Bint al-Muqwas, a woman from the Nuwayl tribe in southern Libya in Fezzan region, was well known to the Europeans and French in particular as Joan of Arc of the Arabs.

She became famous in February 1912 after her legendary participation in the battle of Girgarish against the Italian occupiers. Her courageous performance in the battle had amazed the French reporter Paul Tristan of French newspaper La Marseille, who was struck by her character that he presented her a sword.

From her small town in the south, she made her way to Tripoli, trekking for miles through a large arid desert and under the scorching sun. She was forced to walk half the journey with 12 other women who set off with her to heed the nation's call to fight the Italian occupiers.

Armed with a long stick and firm belief, she attended all battles against the Italian occupation in Tripoli, moving around the battle ground to instill courage among the Mujahidin and put fear into the heart of the enemy, chanting and singing with an enthusiastic spirit, reminding resistance fighters of the immutable truth taught by history that victory and independence always belong to the right holders.

Alan Ostler, an English journalist, mentioned her in his book "The Arabs in Tripoli." He told how she would run in the direction of the battle in a hurry to advance the men. At one time she was hit by a fragment of cannon on her hand; she kept on waving it while blood ran out in all directions, calling men into the battle. He described her as an African war goddess.

She was always keen on being in the right place at the right time during the colonial period, which made her a model of commitment and dedication.

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