

Lebanon aid drive in Paris raises \$1 billion

PARIS

A Paris conference yesterday on aid for conflict-stricken Lebanon raised around \$800 million for humanitarian aid and a further \$200 million to support the country's armed forces, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said.

"We have risen to the occasion," Barrot told participants as the conference closed, while adding that "we cannot limit ourselves to a humanitarian and security response... we have to bring about a diplomatic solution" as fighting between Israel and Hezbollah continues.

French President Emmanuel Macron earlier said his country would support Lebanon with 100 million euros, as the conference got under way. "The war must end as soon as possible, there must be a ceasefire in Lebanon," Macron said sitting alongside Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati.

Mikati in turn called on "the international community to hold together and support efforts... to implement an immediate ceasefire".

France had set a target of raising half a billion euros (\$540 million) in aid for Lebanon, 100 million more than an initial UN appeal. —AFP

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MOHAMMAD VISITS WINNING SCHOOL OF ARAB READING CHALLENGE

His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, yesterday visited Al Ebdaa Model School, which won first place in the Arab Reading Challenge. During the visit, he thanked the school's team led by Laila Al Mannai, the school principal and Amna Al Shehhi, supervisor of the reading project.

DXB to link check-in with immigration

Dubai Airports CEO Paul Griffiths reveals trials are under way

DUBAI
BY DHANUSHA GOKULAN
Chief Reporter

Dubai Airports and the General Directorate of Residency and Foreign Affairs (GDRFA) are currently trialling a system that would integrate check-in processes with immigration, Airports CEO Paul Griffiths has revealed.

"GDRFA is working on integrating the check-in process with airlines, particularly Emirates and flydubai, along with the immigration process," said Griffiths.

"When we capture data at check-in, that data is automatically translated into the records necessary to facilitate a smooth departure. This allows us to eliminate the need for a separate immigration process," he told *Gulf News*.

Will the system be implemented at Dubai International Airport (DXB)? "I know that

operational trials are currently happening in the UAE, but as for implementation, we'll need to see the results and address any issues before rolling it out at scale. Once we are ready, I can assure you that we'll move quickly," he said.

Plans are under way to make the security process "much smoother and less intrusive" as well. "The idea that travellers are subjected to a sort of military-style interrogation at airport security is something we need to move away from."

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Putin: Mideast on brink of full-scale war

SAYS VIOLENCE WILL NOT END UNTIL CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE

DUBAI
BY ALEX ABRAHAM
Senior Associate Editor

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned the Brics summit yesterday that the Middle East was on the verge of a full-scale war that could only be averted by the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

"The military action that started a year ago in Gaza has now spread to Lebanon. Other countries in the region are also affected," Putin told a meeting in Kazan attended by several world leaders.

"The level of confrontation between Israel and Iran has sharply risen. This is all reminiscent of a chain reaction and puts the whole Middle East on the verge of full-scale war," Putin said, adding violence in the Middle East will not end until the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

Serious challenges

In his address, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said Israel aims to "empty" the Gaza Strip of Palestinians, especially

UAE CALLS FOR GAZA CEASEFIRE

UAE Foreign Minister Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan has called for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, along with unconditional humanitarian aid access for all civilians in the strip, during his address at the Brics summit in Kazan, Russia.

—Khitam Al Amir,
Chief News Editor

in the northern part where it launched a sweeping assault.

Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping told Brics leaders that the world was facing "serious challenges" and urged the group to be a "stabilising force".

United Nations leader Antonio Guterres pleaded for a "just peace" in Ukraine, calling in a speech in front of Putin for an end to more than two years of fighting. He also demanded an "immediate ceasefire" in Gaza, the release of hostages and an "immediate cessation of hostilities" in Lebanon.

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DUBAI TEL: +971 4 2651 313

SHARJAH TEL: +971 6 5353 123

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