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AFP

PUTIN SWORN IN FOR RECORD FIFTH TERM AS RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

Russian president-elect Vladimir Putin walks prior to his inauguration ceremony at the Kremlin in Moscow yesterday. He was sworn into office at a lavish Kremlin ceremony for a record-breaking fifth term with more power than ever before. **SEE ALSO P10**

Israeli forces seize Rafah crossing

Mediators to meet in
Cairo in latest push
for Gaza ceasefire

RAFAH

Israel sent tanks into Rafah in southern Gaza, seizing control of the border crossing with Egypt yesterday, an operation the UN said denied it access to the key humanitarian passage.

The thrust into the eastern sector of Rafah, packed with displaced civilians, came with

negotiators and mediators due in Cairo in the latest effort towards a hostage release and ceasefire in the seven-month-old war.

Hamas warning

A senior Hamas official, requesting anonymity, warned this would be Israel's "last chance" to free the estimated 128 captives still held in the Palestinian territory, including 35 the military says are dead.

A Hamas delegation was headed "shortly" to Egypt, the official said, and mediator

Qatar announced it was also dispatching a team. An Israeli delegation was already in Cairo, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, after weekend talks took place with no Israeli representatives present.

In a statement, Netanyahu's office said he had told negotiators to "stand firm" on conditions for hostage release and "essential requirements" for Israel's security. Israel's close ally the United States said it was hopeful the two sides can "close the remaining gaps". —AFP

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Emirates won't split operations in airport shift

SHAIKH AHMAD EXPLAINS HOW AIRLINE
WILL MOVE BASE FROM DXB TO DWC

DUBAI

BY DHANUSHA GOKULAN
Chief Reporter

When the new Dh128 billion terminal at the Dubai World Central (DWC) becomes operational in 2034, there is "no split of operations" for Emirates, confirmed Shaikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive of the Dubai's flagship carrier.

Speaking at the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) yesterday, Shaikh Ahmad detailed how Emirates will move from its current home base at Dubai International Airport (DXB) to Al Maktoum International – also known as DWC – "in one go", operating "from one airport" during this transition period.

"I think you will wake up one day, the terminal is open and tested, and you will see your Emirates flights from Al Maktoum. As of next year, flydubai will increase its operations out of the existing terminal [at DWC], proving that we are going in that direction," he said.

Shortly after plans to ex-

pand DWC operations were announced, the two carriers confirmed it would be moving their operations to the proposed passenger terminal. However, one obstacle for Emirates and flydubai was the delays it faced after placing massive orders for widebody aircraft in 2023.

"I am not happy. I hope the new Boeing management will put all its efforts into delivering the new 777X," Shaikh Ahmad reassured at the ATM event, while adding the delays put a "lot of pressure" on its flight and seat capacity. Emirates is Boeing's biggest customer for the widebody aircraft.

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Shaikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al Maktoum

75% of Dubai
Airports' legal
affairs staff
are women

DUBAI

BY SHARMILA DHAL
UAE Editor

When pioneering Emirati aviation lawyer Dr Mona Al Abdoli got her PhD in private international law last year, the thesis she successfully defended was on the "Challenges facing airport operators and the obligations of the air carrier".



■ Dr Mona Al Abdoli

As Senior Vice-President - Enterprise Assurance at Dubai Airports, she is credited with setting up the world's busiest airport's legal department, which also happens to be 75 per cent represented by women.

Ask her what inspired her to venture into the male-dominated fields of law and aviation, and she says it was her passion for the principle of justice, her commitment to serving the UAE and her interest in aviation.

"Additionally, my love for challenges, penchant for finding solutions amidst adversity, and choosing unconventional paths in our society have been my driving forces," she told *Gulf News* in an exclusive interview.

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