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TUESDAY JANUARY 2, 2024
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WORLD | P10

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UAE greets New Year with 6 world records

ABU DHABI
Gulf News Report

As people around the globe welcomed 2024, the UAE broke half a dozen world records as it joined in the celebrations.

The ongoing Shaikh Zayed Festival at Abu Dhabi's Al Wathba area broke four Guinness World Records, including a fireworks display and a drone show that lasted 60 minutes.

The fireworks display lasted 40 minutes to break three records in terms of quantity, time and formation. Also, over 5,000 drones broke another Guinness World Record, for the largest aerial logo.

Ras Al Khaimah too witnessed a record-breaking eight-minute-long firework and drone display setting two new Guinness World Records along a 4.5km stretch of the RAK waterfront.

The records include the 'Longest chain of aquatic floating fireworks' for a grand total of 5.8km and the 'Longest straight-line drones display' for a total length of 2km. The show featured groundbreaking techniques using a combination of 1,050 LED drones, a 'carpet' of aquatic floating fireworks and acrobatic pyro planes display.

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NATION | RIPE MARKET

JUST PERFECT FOR THE WEATHER

The weekend bazaar at Dubai Police Academy Park, besides offering something interesting at every kiosk, is a great family picnic spot | P3



Anas Thacharpadikkal/Gulf News

Israel pulls troops from Gaza in first drawdown

COUNTRY UNDER PRESSURE TO ADOPT LOW-INTENSITY WAR

TEL AVIV

Thousands of Israeli soldiers are being shifted out of the Gaza Strip, the military said yesterday, in the first significant drawdown of troops since the war began as forces continued to bear down on the main city in the southern half of the enclave.

The troop movement could signal that fighting is being scaled back in some areas of Gaza, particularly in the northern half where the military has said it is close to assuming operational control. Israel has been under pressure from its chief ally, the United States, to begin to switch to lower-intensity fighting.

Word of the drawdown came ahead of a visit by Secretary of State Antony Blinken to the region and after the Biden administration bypassed Congress for the second time this month to approve an emergency weapons sale to Israel.

But fierce fighting continued in other areas of Gaza, especially the southern city Khan Younis and central areas of the territory. Israel has pledged to charge ahead until its war aims have been achieved, including dismantling Hamas, which has ruled Gaza for 16 years.

The military said in a statement yesterday that five brigades, or several thousand



AFP

■ Israeli soldiers in operation yesterday in the Gaza Strip. Fierce fighting continued in the southern city of Khan Younis and central areas of the territory amid plans to withdraw troops.

DEATH TOLL HITS 21,978 IN GAZA

The health ministry in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip said yesterday at least 21,978 people have been killed in the Palestinian territory since the war with Israel erupted on October 7.

The figure includes 156 deaths over the past 24 hours, health ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra said in a televised press conference. He added that 57,697 people have been wounded in Gaza since the start of the war.

—AFP

troops, will be taken out of Gaza in the coming weeks for training and rest.

In a briefing on Sunday that first announced the troop withdrawal without specifying how many forces were leaving, army spokesman Rear Adm. Dan-

iel Hagari did not say whether the decision meant Israel was launching a new phase of the war. "The objectives of the war require prolonged fighting, and we are preparing accordingly," he said.

—AP

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SPORT

ILT20 taught me to handle pressure, says UAE all-rounder Ali Naseer | P11

NATION

Protecting nature: Dubai thrives as a biodiversity hub | P4

Bundles of joy greet parents of UAE's New Year babies

13 newborns welcomed in first 4 hours of 2024 across 10 private hospitals

DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

After the clock struck 12am yesterday hospitals across the UAE welcomed several newborns, marking a double delight for their parents on the New Year's Day. In the initial four hours of the year, 10 private hospitals reported the delivery of at least 13 babies, with two births in Abu Dhabi coinciding precisely with the stroke of midnight.

Soufyan, a 3.230kg bundle

of joy, was born to Asmaa Issam Moustafa and Ebrahim Metawe from Egypt at Medeor Hospital in Abu Dhabi, while Faatiha Aayat Mishkat, weighing 2.7kg, was born to Ayesha Aktar and Shihab Eldin Abdul Khaleq at Burjeel Medical City.

Midnight joy

Just a minute after midnight, at 12.01 am, Emirati-Syrian couple, Mohammad



■ Baby Soufyan (left) and Faatiha Aayat Mishkat.

Khamis Alswaidi and Shereen Mohammad, welcomed their baby boy Zayed Alswaidi at Burjeel Hospital, Abu Dhabi.

Pakistani couple Farwa Murtaza and Gulam Murtaza and Indian couple Nafeesah and Fayis welcomed one baby girl each at 12.03am and 12.10am respectively at Thumbay University Hospital, Ajman.

Another child born within the first hour of New Year's Day was a baby girl born to Indian parents Ramya Seetharam and Santosh Kulkarni at 12.08am at Prime Hospital, Dubai.

The elated parents expressed gratitude to the medical teams and hospitals over the safe arrivals of their bundles of joy on the special occasion of the New Year's Day.

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