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UAE, US TO BOLSTER SECURITY ALLIANCE

Biden designates UAE as second 'major defence partner'

WASHINGTON

The UAE and United States have reaffirmed their commitment to a strong bilateral security and defence relationship, and also to bolster joint defence capabilities against external threats.

This came as President His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, met US President Joe Biden at the White House on Monday. Biden strongly affirmed the United States' commitment to the UAE's security and territorial defence, and to facilitating its ability to obtain necessary capabilities to defend its people and territory against external threats.

Combating regional threats

The leaders reviewed ongoing initiatives and investments in advanced systems that have made the UAE one of the most capable US military partners in the region. They underscored the importance of strengthening efforts to combat regional threats, advance counterterrorism initiatives, reinforce maritime security and counter-piracy efforts, increase security cooperation, and intercept illicit shipments of weaponry and technology.

Major defence partner

Acknowledging the US and UAE's deepening security,



■ Shaikh Mohammad greets a child during his visit to the National Children's Hospital in Washington DC yesterday. WAM

President Biden recognised the UAE as a major defence partner of the United States, joined by only India, to further enhance defence cooperation and security in the Middle East, East Africa, and the Indian Ocean regions.

War in Gaza

The leaders discussed the war in Gaza. They underscored their commitment to continue working together towards ending the conflict, calling for a lasting and sustainable ceasefire and the release of hostages,

and affirmed that all sides to the conflict must adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law.

President Biden commended the UAE's extraordinary humanitarian efforts in Gaza, which have been critical in address-

ing the humanitarian crisis, including through the launch of a maritime corridor for movement of aid, opening a field hospital in Gaza, and supporting evacuations of wounded civilians and cancer patients.

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South Lebanon deaths top 558 as Israel strikes Beirut killing 6

UAE expresses
deep concern, calls
for protection of
civilians

BEIRUT

Lebanon said six people were killed yesterday in an Israeli strike on Hezbollah's southern Beirut stronghold, with the Israeli army confirming it had hit the capital for the second time in as many days.

The "Israeli enemy raid on Ghobeiri in Beirut's southern suburbs killed six people and injured 15," Lebanon's health ministry said in a statement.

"An Israeli strike targeted two floors in a residential building in the Ghobeiri area,"

a Lebanese security source told AFP, adding it killed Hezbollah military commander Ibrahim Kobeissi.

Earlier, Israel announced dozens of new air strikes on Hezbollah strongholds in Lebanon yesterday, a day after 558 people, including 50 children, were killed in the deadliest bombardment since a devastating war in 2006.

Hezbollah said it had launched volleys of missiles yesterday at Israeli military bases, hours after 180 of its projectiles and an unmanned aerial vehicle crossed into Israeli airspace, sending people in the city of Haifa running for shelter.

UAE's appeal

The UAE has expressed deep concern over Israeli at-

tacks on southern Lebanon, the continued escalation, and its repercussions on regional security and stability.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) affirmed the necessity of strengthening international endeavours aiming to halt conflict and prevent further loss of life. The Ministry stressed the importance of providing full protection to civilians according to international law and international treaties.

Meanwhile, several airlines have suspended flights or extended existing suspension of flights to Lebanon as tensions rose between Hezbollah and Israel. The airlines include Emirates, Etihad Airways, flydubai, Air France, Lufthansa, EgyptAir and Jordanian airlines.

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