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Reuters

■ Palestinians console each other at the site of an Israeli strike on a house in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, yesterday. The war has left 2.3 million people without proper health care.

## US threatens to block new UN Security Council vote on Gaza

UN court to weigh  
consequences of  
Israel occupation

**UNITED NATIONS**

The UN Security Council could hold a vote next week, sought by Algeria, on a resolution seeking an "immediate" ceasefire in Gaza, diplomatic sources said Saturday, although Washington again appeared set to block it.

Algeria launched discussions on a new draft after the International Court of Justice ruled in late January that Israel must do all it can to prevent genocidal acts in its war in Gaza.

The latest version of the text, "demands an immedi-

ate humanitarian ceasefire that must be respected by all parties." It also "rejects forced displacement of the Palestinian civilian population," and it "demands the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages."

**Court hearing**

Meanwhile, the UN's top court will from today hold hearings on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories since 1967, with an unprecedented 52 countries expected to give evidence.

Nations including the United States, Russia, and China will address judges in a week-long session at the Peace Palace in The Hague, seat of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

In December 2022, the UN General Assembly asked the ICJ for a non-binding "advisory opinion" on the "legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem."

While any ICJ opinion would be non-binding, it comes amid mounting international legal pressure on Israel over the war in Gaza sparked by the brutal October 7 Hamas attacks. — AFP

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**28,985**

Palestinians killed in  
Gaza since the war  
began on October 7

## Metro Blue Line to commence this year

Service to connect  
DXB with nine  
principal areas

**DUBAI**

**BY SHARMILA DHAL**  
UAE Editor

The much-awaited Dubai Metro Blue Line project will begin this year, the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) said yesterday. "The year 2024 is set to mark the commencement of the Dubai Metro Blue Line project," Mattar Al Tayer, Director General, Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors, RTA, said.

**Journey time cut**

"It integrates with the Red and Green lines of the Metro, offering a direct link between Dubai International Airport and nine principal areas situat-

ed along its route. The journey time between these destinations is expected to vary from 10 to 25 minutes," he added.

There will be two routes to the line. The first route will begin at the Creek Interchange Station on the Green Line, located in Al Jaddaf. It will pass through Dubai Festival City, Dubai Creek Harbour and Ras Al Khor, before reaching Dubai International City 1, which will have an interchange station. The route will continue towards Dubai International City 2 and 3, extending to Dubai Silicon Oasis and up to the Academic City.

The second route of the Blue Line will start from the Centrepoint Interchange Station on the Red Line in Al Rashidiya. It will pass through Mirdif and Al Warqaa, ending at the Dubai International City 1 Interchange Station.

**FULL STORY ON PAGE 2**

## UAE's non-oil foreign trade sets new mark

SEES MILESTONE HIGH OF DH3.5TR  
IN 2023 AMID GLOBAL DOWNTURN

**DUBAI**

**BY KHITAM AL AMIR**  
Chief News Editor

The UAE has achieved a historic milestone with the non-oil foreign trade of goods and services soaring to an unprecedented high of Dh3.5 trillion in 2023.

Announcing the landmark achievement, His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, yesterday tweeted: "Today marks a significant milestone as we announce the culmination of our non-oil foreign trade of goods and services, soaring to a historic high of Dh3.5 trillion in 2023."

"This achievement is a testament to our resilience amid the global downturn in international trade, as reported by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development."

He went on to say that at the beginning of 2023, the UAE foresaw a record-breaking economic year, but the country has exceeded expectations.

"Throughout 2023, the UAE forged new pathways of collab-

Today, the UAE stands as a pivotal player in the international trade arena, maintaining steadfast economic engagements with partners worldwide."

**Shaikh Mohammad Bin  
Rashid Al Maktoum**

oration through comprehensive partnership agreements, resulting in a remarkable surge in our foreign trade with our top ten trading partners," Shaikh Mohammad said.

He revealed that the trade with Turkey surged by over 103 per cent, with Hong Kong-China by 47 per cent, and with the United States by 20 per cent, all within a single year.

"Today, the UAE stands as a pivotal player in the international trade arena, maintaining steadfast economic engagements with partners worldwide. Our commitment remains unwavering, encapsulated in our steadfast motto: to speak what we do and do what we say," he added.

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