

## **UAE assumes Security Council presidency with vow to tackle ‘deep divisions, polarization’**

NEW YORK: The UAE will continue to play a constructive role in creating space for agreement and consensus on the many important issues facing the Security Council, the Gulf country’s UN ambassador pledged as she assumed the presidency of the 15-member body for the second time in the UAE’s two-year tenure.

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## **UNRWA chief warns agency will run out of funds within months unless donors step up**

NEW YORK: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is going through a “massive” financial crisis that threatens its very existence, the agency’s chief has warned.

Philippe Lazzarini said that UNRWA’s ability to “muddle through is slowly but surely coming to an end,” and predicted that by September it will have no cash to keep its schools, health centers and other critical services running.

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## **Lebanese opposition parties ‘reach consensus’ on presidential candidate**

BEIRUT: A Lebanese MP has said opposition parties have reached consensus on a presidential candidate, in an apparent breakthrough that could end a seven-month power vacuum.

Fadi Karam, of Lebanese Forces, told Arab News that “all signs were positive” that the Free Patriotic Movement, a one-time ally of Hezbollah, had agreed to endorse the nomination of Jihad Azour, currently the director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the International Monetary Fund.

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## **Blinken says US considering actions against Sudan leaders**

OSLO: Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned Thursday that the United States could take action against rival Sudanese leaders after the collapse of a US-brokered truce.

The United States is “looking at steps that we can take to make clear our views on any leaders who are moving Sudan in the wrong direction, including by perpetuating the violence and by violating cease-fires that they’ve actually committed to,” Blinken told reporters.

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## **Hezbollah accused of deliberately killing peacekeeper**

BEIRUT: Hezbollah members have been accused by a military court of intentionally killing a UNIFIL soldier and injuring others in an ambush of their vehicle in southern Lebanon.

Judge Fadi Sawan ruled in a provisional decision after concluding investigations into the incident in Al-Aqabiya on Dec. 14. The soldier, an Irishman, was shot in the head as he tried to drive his stricken vehicle to safety and four others were injured when the vehicle overturned.