

Biden, Qatari emir discuss Gaza, agree all hostages must be released

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden spoke on Sunday with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani about developments in Gaza and "urgent ongoing efforts" to secure the release of hostages being held by the Hamas militant group, the White House said.

Biden "unequivocally" condemned the holding of hostages by Hamas, including many young children, one of whom is a 3-year old American citizen whose parents were killed by the group on October 7th, the White House said in a statement.

US carries out two air strikes in Syria against Iran-aligned groups

WASHINGTON: The United States carried out strikes against two Iran-linked sites in Syria on Sunday in response to attacks on American personnel, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said.

It is the third time in less than three weeks that the US military has targeted locations in Syria it said were tied to Iran, which supports various armed groups that Washington blames for a spike in attacks on its forces in the Middle East.

Lebanon says seized 800 kilos of Kuwait-bound drugs

BEIRUT: Lebanon has seized more than half a ton of drugs destined for Kuwait, authorities said Sunday, as Beirut seeks to combat narcotics trafficking, particularly to Gulf countries.

Authorities "seized around 800 kilogrammes (1,760 pounds) of drugs" bound for Kuwait via the Netherlands, the office of Interior Minister Bassam Mawlawi said in a statement carried by Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA). The drugs were "professionally" concealed in wooden figures inside a bulletproof box, the statement said, without specifying the type of narcotics seized.

EU warns of 'another genocide' in Darfur

BRUSSELS: The EU has condemned an escalation of violence in Sudan's Darfur region, warning of the danger of "another genocide" after the conflict there between 2003-2008 killed some 300,000 people and displaced more than 2 million.

More Gaza hospitals suspend operations as Israel hunts Hamas

GAZA/JERUSALEM: Two more major hospitals in Gaza closed to new patients on Sunday, with staff saying that Israeli bombardment plus lack of fuel and medicine meant more babies and others could die. Hospitals in the north of the Palestinian enclave are blockaded by Israeli forces and barely able to care for those inside, medical staff said. Israel says it is homing in on Hamas militants in the area and the hospitals should be evacuated.