

Lebanese must solve presidential crisis themselves, says French envoy

BEIRUT: France's presidential envoy has told politicians in Lebanon that he will strive to help the country out of its presidential crisis but that solutions must "come from the Lebanese themselves."

Jean-Yves Le Drian said during his two-day trip to Beirut that France did "not have any proposals" on how to get a president elected but that France would "always be there to support."

His visit comes a week after parliament failed for the 12th time to elect a new head of state. It is now nearly eight months since Michel Aoun left the job with no replacement.

With West Bank in turmoil, uncertainty over Palestinian leadership intensifies

RAMALLAH: With the Israeli-occupied West Bank once again in turmoil after the latest bloodshed this week, uncertainty has deepened over the position of 87-year-old Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas with a negotiated peace looking as unlikely as ever.

A gunbattle on Monday in which seven Palestinians were killed and over 90 wounded, followed a day later by the killing of four Israelis and a rampage by Israeli settlers through Palestinian towns, again underscored the West Bank's volatility.

Qatar prime minister, Russian FM discuss bilateral relations, international issues

MOSCOW: Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani met with Russia's Foreign Affairs Minister Sergei Lavrov on Thursday, and discussed bilateral relations and international issues.

During the Qatari official's visit to Moscow, both parties discussed major issues, especially the latest developments in the Russian-Ukrainian crisis,

the Iranian nuclear file, and developments in Palestine, Yemen and Syria.

[Mideast gender-parity progress slows, claims WEF report](#)

DUBAI: The rate of achieving gender equality has returned to pre-pandemic levels, but the pace of progress has slowed, according to the World Economic Forum's 2023 Global Gender Gap Report.

The report found that the overall gender gap has closed by 0.3 percentage points compared to last year. It is expected that parity would only be achieved in the year 2154, the same forecast made by the WEF in its 2022 report.

The progress was partly due to improved education, with 117 out of 146 indexed countries now having closed at least 95 percent of the gap.

[Egypt launches major study on shark behavior](#)

Egypt's Environment Minister Yasmine Fouad on Thursday witnessed a practical training session in the city of Hurghada to study the behavior of sharks on the country's Red Sea coast.

The Nature Protection Sector team was taking part in a two-day session, described as the first of its kind in the entire Red Sea region.

Julia Spaet, an international expert specializing in the field, is supervising the program.

Fouad said that the course aims to train the team on installing monitoring devices and sensors to monitor shark behavior.