

[French leader urges Lebanese parties to urgently elect new president, save country from 'drowning'](#)

BEIRUT: French President Emmanuel Macron has urged Lebanon's divided politicians to save the country from "drowning in crises" by immediately electing a new president.

The French leader made his plea following a meeting with Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros Al-Rahi.

A French presidency statement, issued on Wednesday, said: "Macron and Al-Rahi expressed their deep concerns about the crisis in Lebanon and the paralysis of institutions, which has been exacerbated by the presidential vacuum for the past seven months."

[Arab League chief meets Palestinian PM](#)

CAIRO: Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit on Wednesday met with Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh while visiting the Egyptian capital Cairo, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

During the meeting, they discussed the outcomes of a recent summit in Jeddah on issues relating to Palestine, including Arab efforts to promote international support for the recognition of the Palestinian state.

They also agreed on the importance of working diplomatically to highlight the Israeli government's approach to dealing with Palestinian issues.

[Iran further escalates breaches of 2015 deal limits: IAEA](#)

VIENNA: Iran has significantly increased its stockpile of enriched uranium in recent months, continuing its nuclear escalation, a confidential report by the UN nuclear watchdog on Wednesday seen by AFP said.

The agency, however, noted progress in its cooperation with Iran and has decided to close the file on the presence of nuclear material at one of three undeclared sites, an issue which has poisoned relations between the two

parties.

Eritrea releases 166 Yemeni fishermen held for months

AL-MUKALLA: Eritrean authorities have released 166 out of 267 detained Yemeni fishermen, but have refused to hand back their vessels or their personal belongings.

Locals said on Wednesday that the first group of 115 released fishermen arrived in the Red Sea town of Khokha on Tuesday, while a second group of 51 arrived on the same day in the coastal region south of the port city of Mocha.

The fishermen were detained by the Eritrean authorities five months ago while working in international waters.

Lebanon judge questions central bank chief over Munich arrest warrant

BEIRUT: A Lebanese judge questioned central bank chief Riad Salameh on Wednesday after Beirut received a second Interpol Red Notice targeting him, this time following an arrest warrant from Munich, a judicial official said. Salameh has been the subject of a series of judicial probes both at home and abroad into the fortune he has amassed during some three decades in the job. France earlier this month issued an arrest warrant for Salameh after he failed to appear for questioning in Paris.