

[Hamas-backed bloc wins student elections at Bir Zeit University](#)

RAMALLAH: The Islamic bloc affiliated with Hamas won the Bir Zeit University student council's annual election on Wednesday, defeating their Fatah-backed rivals.

With a voter turnout of 76.7 percent, the Hamas-backed bloc won 25 seats with 4,481 votes, while the Fatah-supported bloc claimed just 20 seats with 3,539 votes.

The leftist students' bloc gained 942 votes, winning six seats.

Deep divisions between Fatah and Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were highlighted by harsh criticism of each other's policies during intense debates on May 23.

[Oman's sultan to embark on two-day visit to Iran](#)

MUSCAT: Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will embark on a two-day visit to Iran this week, Omani state media said Wednesday.

The visit which will kick off on Sunday follows a Chinese-brokered rapprochement deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran announced in March.

"Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will go on an official two-day visit to Iran... in response to an invitation from the Iranian president," the official Oman News Agency said.

"The visit will also touch on means of promoting cooperation between Oman and Iran in different spheres."

[Israel says it retaliated against shots fired from Syria at military drone](#)

JERUSALEM: Israel retaliated against shots from fired Syria at a surveillance drone, the Israeli military said in a statement on Wednesday.

"IDF Machine Gun fire was directed toward the originating area of the shots in Syria," a statement from the military said. "The drone successfully completed its mission and no damage was caused."

Israel has for years been carrying out attacks against what it has described as Iran-linked targets in Syria, where Tehran's influence has grown since it began supporting President Bashar Assad in the civil war that started in 2011.

Clashes erupt in Sudan's capital threatening to shatter cease-fire deal

DUBAI: Clashes between rival military factions broke out on Wednesday in Sudan's capital, residents said, threatening to shatter a fragile cease-fire designed to allow for the delivery of aid and lay the ground for a more lasting truce.

The cease-fire deal, which is being monitored by Saudi Arabia and the United States as well as the warring parties, comes after five weeks of intensive warfare in the capital Khartoum and outbursts of violence in other areas of the country, including the western region of Darfur.

UAE's campaign for gender equity in private sector attracts 64 firms

DUBAI: Sheikha Manal bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, president of the UAE Gender Balance Council, said that equity is becoming more deeply rooted in various sectors of the nation as a result of the government's progressive policies, Emirates News Agency reported on Wednesday.

The UAE GBC announced that eight major national and international companies operating in a variety of fields in the country have now joined the "SDG 5 Pledge to Accelerate Gender Balance in the UAE Private Sector" initiative. This falls under the auspices of the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5.