

## WHO warns Covid pandemic still volatile

GENEVA: The World Health Organization on Tuesday warned the Covid pandemic was still volatile, saying there could be further trouble before the virus settles into a predictable pattern.

In the last 28 days, more than 23,000 deaths and three million new cases have been reported to the WHO, in the context of much-reduced testing.

While the numbers are decreasing, "that's still a lot of people dying and that's still a lot of people getting sick," WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan told a press conference.

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## Miseries pile up following strike by UNRWA in West Bank

RAMALLAH: The disastrous consequences of an ongoing strike by UN Relief and Work Agency's 3,600 employees in the West Bank are showing in the health and education sectors and other services provided by the UNRWA for the million Palestinian refugees in the West Bank.

UNRWA sources say that the employees union in the West Bank has been on strike for two months, demanding a pay hike. But the agency is in a challenging financial situation and cannot raise wages.

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## Lebanon's Parliament postpones municipal elections for a second time

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Parliament on Tuesday voted to extend the terms of municipal council members and other local officials, delaying elections to avoid further political paralysis in the country.

Some members of the parliament, including from the Lebanese Forces party, boycotted the vote, saying elections were a right.

The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections described the approval of the extension as "undermining the democratic process and the principles of good governance."

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## **Prague to send repaired art damaged by Daesh home to Syria**

PRAGUE: Twenty artefacts repaired by Czech art restorers after being damaged during the civil war in Syria are on display at Prague's National Museum before their return back home next month.

The objects include three limestone funerary portraits from the UNESCO-listed ancient site of Palmyra, which were damaged by Daesh group militants who took the city by force in 2015.

"Things get damaged by fighting, on purpose for ideological reasons, or by local people looking for something to sell," National Museum director Michal Lukes told AFP.

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## **COP28 president-designate concludes two-day visit to China**

DUBAI: Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, COP28 president-designate, has returned from a two-day visit to Beijing, where he held a series of bilateral meetings with Chinese officials, Emirates News Agency reported on Tuesday.

Discussions centered around Emirati-Chinese partnerships in the run-up to climate conference COP28. Given China's leadership position in advancing clean technologies, the country has significant opportunities to promote low-carbon economic growth.