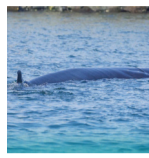




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AI authority to help create 'government of the future'

Sheikh Mohammed establishes federal body with Minister of State Al Olama as chairman

CHRIS MAXWELL

The UAE yesterday established unveiled a federal body to harness AI and public data with a mission to build "the government of the future".

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice President and Ruler of Dubai, approved the establishment of the Artificial Intelligence and Data Authority, which will report directly to the UAE Cabinet.

Omar Al Olama, Minister of State for AI, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications, will be the chairman of the

authority, Sheikh Mohammed said. Mr Al Olama has been at the forefront of the UAE's drive to unlock the potential of advanced technology since becoming the world's first AI minister in 2017.

"Our goal is a government that is faster, smarter and always one step ahead – one that uses technology to serve people and build a better future for the next generation," Sheikh Mohammed said.

"We are building the government of the future. A government that runs on data and genetic AI. One that decides

faster, delivers better and never stops improving. A government built around people, not paperwork."

The authority will gather under one mandate the functions previously carried out by three entities: the Office of AI, Digital Economy and Remote Work Applications; the Digital Government Sector at the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority; and the UAE Data Office.

It will be responsible for guiding the UAE government's wider digital and AI strategy, and

will propose national policies, legislation and strategies.

The authority will work to increase the contribution of the digital economy to the UAE's GDP and to manage government data to ensure its quality, availability and sharing between federal entities.

It will develop and operate AI-powered national data platforms to support evidence-based government decision-making.

Its mandate also covers setting standards and guidelines for data and AI management, digital transformation and government

services, ensuring compliance across federal bodies and building national capabilities in AI and digital transformation through research, development and technical advisory services.

The body will seek to support cybersecurity efforts and strengthen international partnerships in the fields of AI, data and digital government.

In the past month, the government has introduced the first wave of AI agents to boost tax auditing, procurement, customer service and technical support services, Sheikh Mohammed said at the time.

Mediators push to get US-Iran agreement over line

HAMZA HENDAWI and DAVID VUJANOVIC

US President Donald Trump yesterday claimed that an agreement with Iran was "very close", although doubts persisted over when it would be signed.

Washington and Tehran are reportedly close to agreement on a 14-point text that would set a timetable for further talks, in what would be the biggest step yet towards ending the regional war. The Strait of Hormuz could reopen immediately.

But by last night, there was no sign of an agreement being finalised, as Mr Trump had suggested it would be. Iranian pro-government media reported that views were still being exchanged through Qatari mediators.

Pakistan, Qatar, Egypt and Turkey have had vital roles in narrowing the gap in the two countries' demands, Egyptian sources told *The National* yesterday, with Islamabad and Doha playing the most active parts late in the process.

Mr Trump said the agreement would stop Tehran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and immediately reopen the Strait of Hormuz for shipping. "We are very close to a deal that will bring peace to the region," he said yesterday.

Dr Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to President Sheikh Mohamed, praised the UAE leadership for its handling of the regional crisis. The Emirates has been subjected to more Iranian attacks than any other Gulf country since the war broke out on February 28.

In a post on social media, Dr Gargash said the agreement could close the chapter on the war and open a political path that he hoped would be successful. He said the UAE leadership had demonstrated wisdom, steadfastness and flexibility in managing the repercussions of the conflict.

An Iranian official told Reuters that the agreement would involve the US waiving oil sanctions for a specified period, and refraining from imposing new restrictions until a long-term peace is reached.

Tehran has previously asked for at least \$24 billion in frozen assets to be released as part of any agreement with Washington.

Some Iranian hardliners

Continued on page 2



The site of an Israeli attack on Beirut's southern suburb of Dahieh yesterday. Israel's military said it had hit a Hezbollah command centre AFP

At least three killed as Israel strikes Beirut suburbs

AMR MOSTAFA

Israel yesterday struck Beirut in what it said was a response to cross-border rocket fire by Hezbollah.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Israel Katz said the military had attacked Hezbollah sites in Dahieh, a southern suburb of Lebanon's capital considered a stronghold for the Iran-backed militia.

"Israel will not tolerate firing into its territory," they said.

The Israeli military said it had carried out a "precise strike" on a Hezbollah command centre in the area.

Lebanon's National News Agency reported that at least three people were killed and 15 injured in the Israeli strike, which also caused significant damage to buildings and shops in the area.

The attack came hours after the Israeli military reported that Hezbollah had fired three projectiles across the Lebanese-Israeli border. The armed

group did not immediately comment on the accusation.

According to the Israeli military, the rockets landed near the communities of Shomera and Shlomi. Two other rockets were fired into Israeli territory at the weekend, the military added.

US President Donald Trump said the Israeli strike on Beirut "should not have happened" and described the Hezbollah rocket attack as "very small and meaningless".

"There should be no more attacks by Israel anywhere in

Lebanon, but there should also be no more attacks by any other party, including Hezbollah, against Israel," Mr Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform yesterday.

Israel and Hezbollah regularly exchange fire in southern Lebanon, but Beirut has mostly been spared in recent weeks, having been struck only twice since the middle of April.

Last Sunday, Israel carried out strikes on two buildings in Beirut's southern suburbs, prompting Iran to launch

attacks on Israel in one of the largest flare-ups in the regional conflict since a ceasefire took effect on April 8.

Iran has long sought to include Lebanon in any long-term agreement it reaches with the US.

Also yesterday, the Israeli military issued forced displacement orders for more than two dozen villages in southern Lebanon, where it said it was planning to strike Hezbollah targets.

Further reports, pages 2-3

