

[Lebanon presidential nominee temporarily steps away from IMF role](#)

BEIRUT: International Monetary Fund official Jihad Azour, who has been nominated for the long-vacant Lebanese presidency, has “temporarily relinquished” his responsibilities at the lender, an official at the body said Thursday.

“In order to avoid any perception of conflict of interest, the director of the Middle East and Central Asia department has temporarily relinquished his responsibilities at the IMF,” said the organization’s director of strategic communications Julie Kozack, referring to Azour.

“He is on leave,” she added.

[Denmark signs funding deal with UN’s agency for Palestinian refugees worth \\$75.2m over 5 years](#)

LONDON: Authorities in Denmark have signed an agreement to provide the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East with funding of more than \$15 million a year between 2023 and 2027.

Danish sources said the agreement, signed on Wednesday and worth a total of \$75.2 million, builds on the existing partnership between the agency and Denmark, following a similar agreement covering 2017-2021, and reaffirms Denmark’s commitment to providing financial assistance for the agency and the country’s ongoing support for Palestinian refugees.

[Jordanian PM meets UNWTO secretary-general, Arab tourism ministers](#)

AMMAN: Jordanian Prime Minister Bisher Al-Khasawneh on Thursday welcomed UN World Tourism Organization Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili and Arab tourism ministers in Amman, Jordan News Agency reported.

The Arab ministers and Pololikashvili are taking part in the 49th meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for the Middle East, which began on Wednesday near the Dead Sea.

US vice president Kamala Harris: Israel needs 'independent judiciary'

WASHINGTON: US vice president Kamala Harris said on Tuesday that Israel's democracy requires "an independent judiciary," wading into the controversy over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposed judicial overhaul that has drawn mass protests in Israel.

"America will continue to stand for the values that have been the bedrock of the US-Israel relationship, which includes continuing to strengthen our democracies, which as the (Israeli) ambassador has said, are both built on strong institutions, checks and balances, and I'll add: an independent judiciary," Harris said.

Macron names French ex-minister Lebanon special envoy

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron has named his former foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian as his personal envoy for Lebanon, in a new bid to end the country's political crisis, the presidency said on Wednesday.

Le Drian will be charged with helping to find a "consensual and efficient" solution to the crisis which has intensified after the deadly 2020 Beirut port explosion, said a presidential official, asking not to be named.