

## [Jordan foreign minister, Assad discuss Syria refugees, drug smuggling](#)

DAMASCUS: Syrian President Bashar Assad and Jordan's top diplomat Ayman Safadi met Monday in Damascus and discussed war refugees and a crackdown on cross-border drug smuggling, Amman's foreign ministry said. Safadi's visit comes at a time of increasing regional engagement with the Assad regime, peaking with Damascus's return to the Arab League after years of isolation since Syria's war began in 2011.

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## [Erdogan signals Turkiye isn't ready to ratify Sweden NATO membership, saying there's more work to do](#)

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signaled Monday that his country is not ready to ratify Sweden's membership in NATO, saying Stockholm had to work harder on the "homework" it needs to complete. Speaking after a Cabinet meeting, Erdogan also renewed his condemnation of a Qur'an-burning protest that took place in Sweden last week, describing the action as a hate crime against Muslims.

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## [Palestinian Authority losing favor in West Bank, Israeli study shows](#)

GAZA CITY: The popularity of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank has fallen sharply, while support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad has grown, according to an Israeli study.

The report, carried out by the Institute for National Security Studies at the Israeli Tel Aviv University, urged the Israeli government to strengthen the PA's security services and boost its economy, describing it as being in the "Israeli interest."

The research team comprised a retired major general and two academics from the University of Wales in the UK.

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## **Arab nations, OIC lead condemnation of West Bank violence**

LONDON: Israel has been criticized after it used drones to strike targets in a militant stronghold in the occupied West Bank early Monday and deployed hundreds of troops in an incursion that resembled the broad attacks carried out during the second Palestinian uprising two decades ago.

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## **Aden's security forces in clampdown on unlicensed guns**

AL-MUKALLA: Security forces in Aden, Yemen's interim capital, have launched a campaign against the sale of weapons and the carrying of firearms, in the wake of a series of deadly shootings that have claimed several lives.

Dozens of armed security personnel and vehicles have been stationed at the city's entrances, intersections, and roads to enforce the ban on civilians, military, and security personnel carrying unlicensed firearms.