

Israel signs three-billion-euro arms export deal with Greece

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel's defence ministry announced yesterday it had signed a deal with Athens worth approximately three billion euros (almost \$3.5 billion) to set up the "Achilles Shield" aerial defence system for Greece.

"Under the deal, Israel will build Greece a comprehensive, multi-layered air defence array, drawing entirely on Israeli-made systems and on the extensive operational experience Israel's defence establishment has gained during the war," the ministry said in a statement.

"This is the largest defence

export deal in the history of Israel-Greece relations, and one of the largest in the history of the State of Israel," it added.

The deal was signed by the Israeli defence ministry's director general, Major General (Res.) Amir Baram, and his Greek counterpart, Ioannis Bouras, in Tel Aviv.

A Greek defence ministry source had told AFP in late July about an upcoming purchase of Israeli-made anti-missile, anti-aircraft and anti-drone systems, part of a broader defence investment for the Achilles Shield of 4.2 billion euro (\$4.8 billion).

India growth beats forecasts, defying Mideast turmoil



AFP | New Delhi, India

India's economy grew at a faster pace than expected in the April to June quarter, official data showed yesterday, quelling fears that the Iran war would derail growth in Asia's third-largest economy.

Gross domestic product rose 7.8% in the three months through June from the same period a year earlier, helped by a robust services sector, according to data from the statistics ministry.

While this was down from a revised 8.6% recorded in the previous quarter, it was still above market expectations of 7.3% growth.

"Growth was led by services,

but a key upside surprise came from manufacturing, which grew 9.2%," Teresa John of Nirmal Bang Institutional Equities told AFP.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the figures a "herculean feat", noting that it came despite "oil price shocks and supply chain issues".

"Doomsayers were doomed and India bloomed... yet again!" the premier said in a post on X.

Monday's reading cements India as the world's fastest growing major economy, and is a shot in the arm for Modi's government, which has been grappling with political setbacks and a series of delicate policy challenges.

Swiss man arrested over deadly rave shooting: police

AFP | Zurich, Switzerland

A 43-year-old Swiss man was arrested yesterday on "strong suspicion" of being behind a rare deadly gun attack at a rave in Switzerland, police said.

Gunfire erupted in the early hours of Sunday morning as an annual rave was winding down at the racecourse in Aarau, capital of Switzerland's northern canton of Aargau.

The attack triggered an international manhunt for the shooter, who left an Italian woman dead and wounded five others, some seriously.

"A 43-year-old Swiss man was apprehended shortly before 1:00 am Monday (2300 GMT Sunday)," Aargau police

said in a statement.

"The man was subsequently arrested on strong suspicion of having committed the crime.

"Investigations into the exact sequence of events, the background, and the possible motive are currently under way.

"At this stage, it is believed a lone perpetrator was involved."

In a statement earlier Monday, the cantonal police said that partygoers were preparing to go home when several shots were fired "at a group of people".

A 22-year-old Italian woman was killed. "She died instantly, despite attempts to resuscitate her," said the police, adding that five others were injured.

Nobel laureate Jelinek condemns 'land grabbing' in Gaza, W. Bank

● She argued that history should not prevent criticism, calling for European Union sanctions over Israeli settler violence against Palestinians and land confiscations.

AFP | Vienna, Austria

Austrian Nobel laureate Elfriede Jelinek has condemned "land grabbing" in the West Bank,



Gaza and Jerusalem, arguing that Western discourse on a two-state solution in the Middle East amounts to a "lie".

The 79-year-old writer, a major German-language intellectual figure, has previously spoken out against Israel's war in

Gaza.

In the text, entitled "In a promised land", Jelinek criticised talk about a Palestinian state "as though one did not know that it can never exist along the current path".

"Yet with this unspoken lie, thought itself also collapses; it shatters against the circumstances, against the land grabbing" of the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem, she wrote in the text published on her website last Friday and seen by AFP on Monday.

She added she feared "ethnic cleansing" because "where the land is lacking, people themselves become meaningless".

She also referred to "plans" for the land, "perhaps a famous resort straight from the brains of (US President Donald) Trump

and (his son-in-law Jared) Kushner".

Trump has described Gaza -- which Israel invaded in retaliation to Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas's attack in October 2023 -- as "beautiful piece of property".

In her text, Jelinek, whose Jewish father survived the Holocaust, evoked her "love for the Jewish state, which also took in several of my ancestors".

But she argued that history should not prevent criticism, calling for European Union sanctions over Israeli settler violence against Palestinians and land confiscations.

Jelinek received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2004.

EU member Austria is a staunch supporter of Israel.

Trump vows to hit back 'hard'

First exchange of fire with Iran in weeks

AFP | Tehran, Iran

US denies Iran claim that oil tanker hit mines near Strait of Hormuz

AFP | Washington, United States

The US military yesterday denied Iran's claim that an oil tanker trying pass through the southern stretch of the Strait of Hormuz hit mines, caught fire and came to a halt.



Iran responded by with missile and drone attacks aimed at Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, saying they targeted US forces there, but President Masoud

Pezeshkian later on Monday called for dialogue.

"We continue to strive for a path of agreement and understanding, and we believe that continuing the war is neither in our interest, nor in the interest of the region," he said at a summit in Kyrgyzstan, adding "the solution to the existing problems is dialogue and cooperation".

State media reported that two people were killed in the US attack on Larak, with several others wounded.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said the ballistic missile attack on two US air bases in Jordan caused "heavy damage".

Jordan's army said it had intercepted eight missiles, without stating their origin. Trump also told Fox that all the missiles fired at US forces had been shot down, except for one that was determined not to pose a threat.

Iran also said it targeted US personnel at an air base in the UAE and shot down an American drone over Hormuz.

Abu Dhabi said it intercepted a drone over the country's waters, but dismissed claims that Al Minhad Air Base had been targeted as "baseless".



Before the conflict, more than 100 ships a day passed through the Strait of Hormuz. During the war, that collapsed to an average of just seven vessels a day over the first six months.

US vows to keep economic pressure on Iran as G20 finance talks begin

AFP | Asheville, United States

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent vowed yesterday to persist with economic pressure on Iran, saying a turning point could be near as G20 finance leaders opened talks clouded by war and trade

tensions.

"We are going to continue exerting pressure, and we've had very good discussions here already," Bessent told reporters before starting meetings with Group of 20 finance ministers and central bank

governors.

He said a turning point in this US pressure campaign could come "within weeks or months," adding that Iran's economy need not collapse in the Middle East war to achieve this.

President Donald Trump's administration is working to rally G20 partners to ramp up economic pressure on Iran during the talks in Asheville, North Carolina, through Tuesday -- amid a renewed exchange of fire with Tehran.