

## Happy Eid

The Jordan Times will not be published on Sunday in observance of the Eid Al Fitr feast. The next issue of the paper will be published on Monday, October 15. The Jordan Times wishes its readers a happy holiday.

### ROYAL GESTURE

## Queen supports Toys of Hope initiative

Initiative to bring immeasurable happiness and hope for thousands of underprivileged children | 2



### HOTELS



## Aqaba, Dead Sea hotels expect full occupancy

Many holidaymakers head to other nearby destinations for their vacation | 3

### ARAB CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

## Faisali host UAE's Sha'ab Sunday

Jordanian side will host Sha'ab in return leg of their first round match | 15

### WEATHER

It will be fair in the hilly areas and hot in other parts of the country with winds northeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be fair with winds northerly moderate to brisk and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.			
Amman	16/29	Jordan Valley	25/34
Aqaba	23/33	Hilly Areas	15/25
Deserts	17/33		

# Eid Al Fitr starts Friday

By Mohammad Ghazal

AMMAN — Chief Islamic Justice and Imam of the Hashemite Court Ahmad Hilayel announced that Friday was the first day of Eid Al Fitr, marking the end of 29 days of Ramadan fasting. The statement was issued following a traditional ceremony to watch the new moon of Shawwal (the 9th month of the lunar calendar) held at the King Hussein Mosque.

Hilayel said in a statement that the crescent was sighted in several Muslim countries "which makes tomorrow [Friday] the first day of the blessed Eid Al Fitr", stressing the need for Muslims to have agreement on issues related to their religion.

Nine other Arab countries announced that Eid Al Fitr starts Friday. They were: Qatar, Yemen, Lebanon, Palestine, Kuwait, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Libya.

Eid Al Fitr starts with the sighting of the new moon, in accordance with a saying by Prophet Mohammad that orders Muslims to declare the start, as well as the end, of the fasting month on the basis of the sighting.

Hayel Daoud, a professor in Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) at the University of Jordan's Sharia Faculty, said the moon sighting can be either by the naked eye or through a telescope, adding that the testimony of two persons is needed for ending the fasting month.

Asked if it is acceptable to rely on astronomical calculations in announcing the start and the end of Ramadan, Daoud said: "We do not rely on these calculations in accordance with the Prophet's saying that says the start and the end of the month is based on actual



A cleric looks into a telescope in the vicinity of King Hussein Ben Talal Mosque in Amman on Thursday, where top clerics met for the traditional sighting of Shawwal moon, marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and the start of Eid Al Fitr

sighting of the moon." On the occasion, His Majesty King Abdullah received congratulatory cables

of good wishes from leaders of Arab, Islamic and foreign countries along with senior officials and officers.

### PALESTINE

## Fateh rules out Hamas peace talks

RAMALLAH (Reuters) — Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fateh faction ruled out talks with Hamas on Thursday as Israel warned any such dialogue could "torpedo" a peace deal with the Jewish state.

Palestinian sources familiar with the matter said members of Hamas and Fateh had discussed holding peace talks, but Fateh leaders said they had not backed any meeting and rejected dialogue with Hamas unless it cedes control of the Gaza Strip, which it seized in fighting with Abbas' forces in June.

"What happened in Gaza was a military coup against legitimacy and against democracy," Abdullah Franji, who is

## King discusses Mideast peace process with Merkel, Sarkozy

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Thursday called German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy and discussed means to enhance bilateral ties. During the phone calls, King Abdullah also discussed efforts to push the peace process forward in order to

close to Abbas and a member of secular Fateh's central committee, told Reuters.

"If they retreat then we can talk. Now we cannot," Abbas dismissed the Islamist Hamas-led Pales-

stinian government in June after the violence in Gaza, ushering an easing of US and Israeli sanctions and plans for a peace conference next month.

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A Palestinian prisoner walks blindfolded on Thursday under guard by an Israeli soldier after leaving the Gaza Strip to a base in Israel, following an army operation

### POLITICS

## IAF denies leader resignation

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The Islamic Action Front (IAF), the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, said on Thursday that "its ranks are unified", dismissing as baseless reports that the party's secretary general, Zaki Bani Rsheid, resigned.

Earlier this week, the IAF announced a list of its candidates for the parliamentary elections at a press conference held in the absence of Bani Rsheid, who was scheduled to speak to journalists, raising speculations of a rift within the movement.

The IAF said in a statement Thursday that Bani Rsheid was not able to attend "for personal reasons".

News reports suggested that Bani Rsheid submitted his resignation and refused to attend the press confer-

ence as a result of a growing rift within the ranks of the Islamists.

Quoting sources within the movement, local newspapers said Bani Rsheid strongly objected to the list of 22 candidates selected by the IAF's executive bureau and the mother group, highlighting a "struggle" between the moderate "doves" and hardline "hawks" within the ranks of the two groups.

The new list included former Lower House speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat, one of the main pillars of the Islamist movement, and former IAF secretary general Hamzeh Mansour, both known as moderates.

Other reports went as far as claiming Bani Rsheid was forming a splinter group within the Islamist movement aimed at "defeating the IAF party list" by supporting

rival Islamists.

In the statement, the party called on its members to "abide by the decision" regarding the nominees' selection.

"The executive office stresses that every group member, regardless of rank, must abide by the decision and ignore rumours," said the statement, quoting Bani Rsheid and the executive bureau.

Bani Rsheid was not available for comment. But IAF spokesperson Rheil Gharaybeh reiterated that the reports in question are baseless.

"Bani Rsheid is still in his post performing his duties. We held a meeting yesterday and agreed on how to move forward after this difficult period," Gharaybeh told The Jordan Times on Thursday.

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## 'Ramadan enhances cultural identity, revives sense of community'

By Mahmoud Al Abed

AMMAN — On Tuesday, several classrooms around the Kingdom were empty. School buses were bringing back the few students who went to school earlier than usual. Mass absence from schools was reported all over the country. The reason: Lailat Al Qadr, which marks the anniversary of Koran revelation to Prophet Mohammad. The children were with their parents and other adults in marking the holy night at packed mosques, praying, reciting the Koran and listening until the early morning hours to casual sermons from clerics. In some mosques, a full programme of prayers and sermons, in addition to a sohour (pre-

dawn) meal, was arranged beforehand.

Education expert and a top administrator at the International Academy School, Yazan Abdo, said he noted the "unprecedented absence" of children in his school on that morning, adding he was aware of a similar situation in several schools in Amman.

Lailat Al Qadr was the peak of the fasting month, which has also seen more than tens of thousands of Jordanians perform umra (lesser pilgrimage) in Mecca.

The embassy of Saudi Arabia in Jordan said it had processed more than 80,000 umra visas during Shaban, the eighth month in the lunar calendar that precedes Ramadan. The figure is dou-

ble the number reported since the lunar year began.

Ramadan witnesses a revival of the religious spirit among Muslims, said researcher in Islamism Mohammad Abu Rumman.

"Ramadan is emblematic of the religious identity," he said, adding: "What we have is a month awash in religious activities which renew faith and enhance the cultural identity of Muslims."

Columnists in Arabic dailies spoke of "the power of Ramadan", which is about rituals that are uniformly performed, starting with fasting, taraweeh prayers (special prayers performed at mosques on Ramadan evenings) and umra.

According to Abu Rumman, for the past years, the

political situation and threats to the cultural identity of Muslims have led to a rise in the number of mosque-goers, especially during Ramadan.

"Yet there are setbacks this year," he said. "We cannot say that the Muslim umma [nation] is heading towards more unity when we witness inter-Palestinian strife and sectarian violence in Iraq."

With more than two million Muslims praying in Mecca this week, watched on TV by millions around the world, the imam was praying for unity in Iraq and Palestine and for the oppressed Muslims in Afghanistan and other countries.

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On the occasion of  
**Eid El-Fitr**  
Arab Bank is honoured to convey to  
His Majesty  
**King Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein**  
and to the Arab and Islamic nations its felicitations and best wishes




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