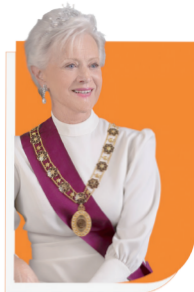


# THE JORDAN TIMES

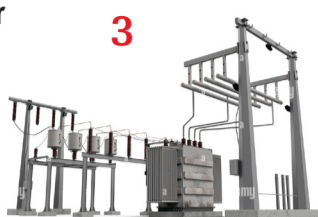
## INITIATIVE

**Princess Muna** launches **Change Day 2025** to promote **safe care for children**



## INAUGURATION

**Energy Minister** inaugurates **power substation**, service centre to boost **grid efficiency**



## FAIR

**INTERBUILD** Near East concludes **16th** exhibition on **'GREEN INTERBUILD'**



## MOTOR

**Bezzecchi wins San Marino** MotoGP sprint as **Marc Marquez** crashes out



Sunday, September 14, 2025 | Rabi 121, 1447 Hijri



Results are displayed during a General Assembly meeting to vote on the two states solution to the Palestinian question at United Nations headquarters on Friday in New York City

## Jordan welcomes UN adoption of 'New York Declaration' on two-state solution

AMMAN — Jordan has welcomed the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the "New York Declaration" on Friday, reaffirming international support for the two-state solution as the only viable path to resolving the long-running Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

In statement on Friday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs praised the resolution, which calls for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state along the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The ministry reiterated Jordan's firm position in support of the Pales-

tinian people's legitimate rights, foremost among them the right to self-determination and statehood.

The Foreign Ministry also commended Saudi Arabia and France for their efforts in organising the high-level conference on the two-state solution, held in New York in July. It

noted that the upcoming UN meeting, scheduled to take place at the organisation's headquarters, will build upon that conference and provide member states with an opportunity to collectively support recognition of a Palestinian state.

Continued on page 5

## Safadi condemns Israeli attack on Qatar in fiery UN Security Council speech

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — In a strongly worded address before an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi condemned Israel's recent military assault on the Qatari capital, Doha, calling it a "cowardly and treacherous act" and a dangerous escalation in the region.

The emergency meeting was convened following Israel's strike on Qatar, a move that has drawn sharp international criticism and raised concerns about regional stability.

"This is a rogue government, steeped in extremism and hatred, that considers itself above the law," Safadi told the Council. "It uses brute force to impose a racist ideology and achieve expansionist goals that threaten peace and security across the region and the world."

Safadi emphasised that Qatar has been working tirelessly, alongside Egypt and the United States, to broker a hostage exchange and



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi (right) addresses the United Nations Security Council's Friday meeting on the Israeli attack on Qatar

permanent ceasefire in Gaza. He accused Israel of betraying that effort through an unprovoked attack on a state committed to diplomacy and peace.

"We condemn this treacherous and brutal aggression against Qatar," Safadi said, reaffirming Jordan's full support for Doha. "Our security and Qatar's security are one. The stability of Qatar is the stability of the region." (See full speech on page 3).

The Israeli strike on Doha comes amid con-

tinued violence in Gaza, where, according to Safadi, over 65,000 Palestinians have been killed in the past 23 months.

He accused Israel of using starvation as a weapon, citing the deaths of over 400 Palestinians, including children, due to famine conditions.

Safadi painted a grim picture of life in Gaza under Israeli bombardment and blockade, describing it as a place "where killing and death have become promotional material for occupation soldiers".

He cited figures indicating that 540 humanitarian workers and 247 journalists have also been killed since the start of Israel's military campaign.

"Israel has turned Gaza into a land of death for people and for human values. It denies access to food, water, medical aid and even infant formula. More than a million people in Gaza City face either death, starvation or forced displacement."

Continued on page 5



Secretary-General of the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation Hussein Shibli says that Jordan has dispatched over 8,664 humanitarian aid trucks to Gaza despite mounting challenges and repeated efforts to obstruct relief efforts

## Jordan sends over 8,600 aid trucks to Gaza amid mounting obstacles — JHCO

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan has dispatched over 8,664 humanitarian aid trucks to the Gaza Strip despite mounting challenges and repeated efforts to obstruct relief efforts, according to the secretary-general of the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO), Hussein Shibli.

Speaking to Al Mamlaka TV on Saturday, Shibli affirmed the Kingdom's readiness to scale up its aid opera-

tions, noting Jordan's capacity to send over 150 trucks per day.

However, he said that Israeli authorities have failed to honour commitments to facilitate the entry of food and humanitarian supplies into the besieged enclave.

Shibli pointed to a range of obstacles preventing the delivery of more aid, including restrictions on essential items such as

critical medical supplies. While some baby formula has successfully reached Gaza, he stressed that the humanitarian need remains dire, with demand far exceeding current supply.

He also said that Israeli authorities have recently imposed new fees on aid trucks entering Gaza, increasing the logistical and financial burden on relief organisations.

## Israel army says over 250,000 residents have left Gaza City

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Israeli military said on Saturday that more than 250,000 people have left Gaza City for other parts of the territory over the past few weeks, since it intensified its assault on Gaza's largest urban centre.

According to the military estimates, more than a quarter of a million residents of Gaza City have moved out of the city, the army's Arabic-language spokesman said on X.

The United Nations estimates that about one million Palestinians live in and around Gaza City.

Media restrictions in Gaza and difficulties in accessing many areas mean AFP is unable to independently verify details provided by the military or tolls reported by the Palestinian territory's civil defence agency.

On Saturday, the Israeli military dropped leaflets urging residents in western districts to evacuate, as Gaza's civil defence agency reported continuous air strikes.

"The Israeli army is



A man watches as Palestinians flee south from Gaza City with their belongings, via the coastal road near the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, on Friday

operating with very intense force in your area and is determined to dismantle and defeat Hamas," the leaflet read. "For your safety, evacuate immediately via Al Rashid Street to the south of Wadi Gaza. You

have been warned."

Israel has come under mounting international pressure to halt its offensive, but says it is determined to dismantle Hamas in what it describes as one of the group's last

strongholds.

In recent weeks the military has primarily targeted high-rise buildings, saying they were being used by Hamas fighters.

Continued on page 5

## Rubio to offer Israel support despite Qatar strike

WASHINGTON (AFP) — US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will offer robust support to Israel on a trip timed before French-led moves for a Palestinian state, the State Department said on Friday, despite US unease over Israel's air strike in Qatar.

He will speak to Israel leaders about "our commitment to fight anti-Israel actions including unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state that rewards Hamas terrorism", State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said in a statement.

France will lead a UN summit on September 22 in which a number of Western countries plan to recognise a Palestinian state centered around the West Bank.

Continued on page 5

## Amman Stock Exchange hits 3,000-point high for first time Since 2008

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — The Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) has surpassed the 3,000-point mark for the first time since 2008, capping a strong performance in 2025 that saw the general index climb by more than 500 points since the start of the year.

The rally has been fueled by a combination of positive factors, including a more than 9 per cent increase in the net profits of listed companies during the first half of the year,



A general view of Amman

besides the marked improvement in key national economic

indicators.

In a statement on Thursday, the ASE also

attributed the stock value boost to government-backed measures, including the special incentives for the local bourse that have played a key role in reinforcing confidence among investors.

In remarks to the Jordan news agency, Petra, minister of state for economic affairs, Muhammad Shehadeh said that the achievement reflects the resilience of the Jordanian economy and its ability to navigate regional and global challenges, the Jordan

He attributed the rise in the general index of the financial market to the growing investor confidence and to government-led reforms that have fostered a more attractive and balanced investment environment.

Shehadeh noted that the Jordanian economy has demonstrated notable resilience in recent years, supported by a clear economic vision and comprehensive reforms across various sectors.

"These efforts have bolstered investor

trust, attracted new domestic and foreign investments, and contributed directly to the capital market's performance, which has now reached levels not witnessed in over 15 years."

He added that the market rally coincides with marked improvements in several key economic indicators. "Jordan's GDP recorded a growth rate of 2.7 per cent, exports rose by 9 per cent and tourism revenues registered significant growth. Moreover, foreign reserves

surpassed the \$23 billion mark, reflecting the economic and financial stability the Kingdom currently enjoys."

The minister also pointed to a series of government measures aimed at stimulating trading activity and enhancing market liquidity. These include permitting investors seeking Jordanian citizenship to invest through the stock exchange, exempting mutual funds from tax, reducing brokerage fees and extending trading hours, all of which have

contributed to creating a more vibrant investment environment and encouraging broader investor participation.

For his part, Mazen Wathaihi, CEO of ASE also told Petra that the "milestone achievement" was the result of close coordination between the regulatory and legislative bodies overseeing the capital market, foremost among them the Jordan Securities Commission (JSC) and the Securities Depository Centre.

Continued on page 5



صحة أطفالنا... مسؤوليتنا

يوم التغيير ١٢  
17/9/2025

## Princess Muna launches Change Day 2025 to promote safe care for children

AMMAN (JT) — Under the patronage of HRH Princess Muna Al Hussein, the Health Care Accreditation Council (HCAC) on Saturday launched the "Change Day 2025" initiative for the 12th consecutive year, coinciding with World Patient Safety Day, marked annually on September 17 by the World Health Organisation.

This year's initiative is held under the theme "Safe care for every newborn and every child", highlighting efforts and initiatives aimed at improving the safety and well-being of newborns, children and adolescents.

HCAC CEO Salma Jaouni told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the annual "Change Day" initiative is an open call for

healthcare workers, institutions, parents, and local and international communities to make pledges reflecting their commitment to the best practices in child and patient care.

HCAC CEO Salma Jaouni told the Jordan News Agency...

These pledges, she said, are translated into innovative ac-

tivities and initiatives starting on the launch date, with a positive impact on the quality of care provided to this sensitive group.

The council noted that the initiative has seen growing regional participation, expanding beyond the health sector to include educational, social and community institutions, thereby boosting its impact and turning it into a broad national and regional campaign.

Participation takes place through healthcare institutions and staff, as well as parents and local communities, making pledges before September 17 to implement creative initiatives that go beyond routine daily work, according to the HCAC.

# Ayla to host 2025 Under-23 Asia Triathlon Championship

AMMAN (JT) — Under the patronage of HRH Prince Feisal Bin Al Hussein, president of the Jordan Olympic Committee, and in the presence of President of the International Triathlon Union Antonio Aremany, Aqaba is scheduled to host the Under-23 Asia Triathlon Championship on October 31 and November 1, at Ayla Oasis in Aqaba.

This hosting comes as part of the Annual Joint Calendar of Events organised by Ayla in collaboration with the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), adding "significant" value to the city's sporting and tourism activities, according to an Ayla Oasis statement.



This hosting comes as part of the Annual Joint Calendar of Events organised by Ayla in collaboration with the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority

The championship, which will feature the participation of more than 120 athletes from across Asia, will include "elite" races for professional Asian athletes on October 31, while the open race for all age categories will take place on November 1.

This provides an opportunity for amateurs and enthusiasts of the sport from different ages and nationalities to participate.

The hosting was announced following the signing of a cooperation agreement between Ayla Oasis Development Company

and the Jordan Triathlon Association, in the presence of CEO of Ayla Sahl Dudin and President of the Jordan Triathlon Association Tareq Khayyat.

Both sides said that this milestone marks an important step in developing the sport locally and regionally, and builds on a series of successes achieved by Aqaba in hosting continental and international championships.

Dudin said: "At Ayla, we take pride in being a key partner in host-

ing a championship of this scale for the ninth time in our history. This event reflects our organisational capabilities and strengthens Aqaba's position as a sporting and tourism destination on the regional and international map."

Khayyat expressed his pride in the partnership, saying: "The championship offers our young athletes a valuable opportunity to compete with Asia's U23 high level athletes, helping to elevate their

technical level and positively represent Jordan in international forums."

This championship is a continuation of a series of events previously hosted by Ayla in 2016, 2019, 2022 and 2024, making it the preferred destination for the Asian Triathlon Confederation thanks to its exceptional infrastructure and advanced organisational capabilities, according to the statement.

The competitions will begin at Ayla's ar-

tificial lagoon in a safe and natural environment, before moving to cycling and running races on world-class tracks.

Through this hosting, Jordan further strengthens its position as a leading sports destination in the region and reaffirms Aqaba and Ayla's readiness to host major regional and international sporting events, contributing to the promotion of sports tourism, the statement added.

## Environment Ministry launches cleanup campaign along Dead Sea road

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Environment on Saturday launched a large-scale cleanup campaign along the Dead Sea road, stretching from Zara to Al Sukhna areas, with the participation of several government bodies, civil society organisations and students from schools and universities.

Held under the slogan "Our country is clean... No to random littering", the campaign sought to step up monitoring efforts and promote environmental awareness.

Around 3,000 tonnes of waste were collected from tourist and environmental sites overlooking the Dead Sea, according to the ministry.



Held under the slogan 'Our country is clean... No to random littering', the campaign seeks to step up monitoring efforts and promote environmental awareness

Participating entities included the ministries of interior, public works and housing, education, youth, agriculture, local administration, culture and

government communication, in addition to the Public Security Directorate, the Royal Department for Environment and Tourism Protection, the devel-

opment zone, the Jordan Hotels Association, youth centres and civil society organisations.

The number of participants exceeded 2,000, the ministry

said.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment Omar Arabiyat said that the initiative is part of ongoing national efforts to maintain the cleanliness of tourist sites and reflects "genuine partnership" between official and community institutions to promote positive environmental practices.

"The environment does not only need laws to deter violators, but also collective awareness that turns cleanliness into a daily habit and an ethical value," Arabiyat noted, adding that the ministry will continue to step up campaigns to raise awareness among students and encourage citizens to refrain from random littering.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

## JPA announces winners of Al Hussein Award for Journalistic Creativity

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan Press Association (JPA) President Tareq Momani on Saturday announced the results of the Al Hussein Award for Journalistic Creativity during the syndicate council's regular session.

The award committee, formed on July 28, reviewed submissions related to works produced in 2024. According to the regulations, the committee submits the list of winners to the council for its information only, Momani noted.

The award for print and online journalism went to Firihan Hassan for a column, Muna Abu Hammour for a news report, and Ahmad Tamimi and the late Montaser Gharaibeh for an interview.



In the broadcast media category, Obeida Dmour won for an investigative or documentary programme, while Shadi Shakhaneh received the award for a news story, report or radio/TV interview.

The photojournalism prize was shared by Saher Qadareh and

Nazzal Abu Kaf, while the Jerusalem Award, which recognises works highlighting the city's Arab, Islamic and international significance, went to Awda Khawaldeh.

The JPA noted that no entries were submitted for the data and mobile journalism or cartoon categories.

## Agriculture minister, Turkish ambassador talk cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khreisat on Saturday met with Turkish Ambassador to the Kingdom Yakup Caymazolu to discuss ways of enhancing cooperation between Jordan and Turkey.

During the meeting, Khreisat highlighted the "deep-rooted historical" relations between the two countries, stressing the importance of facilitating the movement of Jordanian agricultural products through Turkey to European markets, according to a ministry statement.

He also stressed the need to expand trade, capitalise on investment opportunities, and leverage the comparative advantage of Jordanian agricultural



Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khreisat on Saturday meet with Turkish Ambassador to the Kingdom Yakup Caymazolu over ways of enhancing cooperation between Jordan and Turkey

products, as well as to enhance the exchange of expertise and the transfer of technology and knowledge.

For his part, Caymazolu stressed his country's commitment to boosting trade co-

operation, encouraging private sector investment, exploring available investment opportunities in Jordan, and enhancing partnerships between the private sectors of the two countries.

## Village in Jerash reveals Early Bronze Age cult sites

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — Perched high above the Zarqa River valley, the archaeological site of Jabal Mutawwaq in Jerash is shedding light on life and ritual during the Early Bronze Age.

The settlement, occupied between the end of the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age I (circa 3,600-3,000 BC), is remarkable both for its scale and location.

While most communities of the time were established near water sources, Mutawwaq was built on a cliff more than 400 metres above the perennial Zarqa River, at the boundary between steppe and Mediterranean zones.

According to archaeologist Christophe Nicolle of France's National Centre for Scientific Research, the site stands



A ruin at Jabal Mutawwaq

out in the region: "In this period, only Umm Bteimah and Haziye were also built on heights. These features make the fourth-millennium village of Mutawwaq one of the most important excavation sites in the Wadi Zarqa region."

Spread over 18 hectares, the village was enclosed by a defensive wall constructed from blocks of varying size. In places, house walls were integrated into

the fortification, reflecting repeated phases of rebuilding.

At least two circular towers, each about 7.5 metres in diameter, have been identified. One was incorporated into the boundary wall, while the other stood inside the settlement, likely reflecting an enlargement of the village.

Access was controlled through several narrow gates. The western entrance, still well pre-

served, forced entrants along a rocky ledge before turning sharply at a tower-protected gate.

"This way, the gate is protected three times — by the cliff, the tower and a small projecting structure," Nicolle noted, adding that another gate in the south led to a steep road descending one kilometre to the Ain Kharaysin spring.

Within the settlement, three large enclosures helped define its structure. The eastern pen, 30 metres across, was bounded by a thick megalithic wall. The central pen, though heavily damaged, measured 27 metres in diameter.

The largest enclosure, a half-octagon with a radius of 32.5 metres, contained a striking feature: a massive standing stone, 1.5 metres high and over two metres wide, set on a specially

built podium.

Excavations suggest these were not animal pens but open cult spaces. "The cultic function of that installation is certain," Nicolle said.

"It belongs to the standing stone tradition widespread in Jordan and the Levant during the Early Bronze Age." Cup-marked stones, or cupules, found around the enclosures further support a ritual interpretation.

Despite later destruction, Jabal Mutawwaq still preserves significant remains, aided by low sedimentation and the absence of reoccupation after the Early Bronze Age. Alongside more than 800 surrounding dolmens, the site offers rare insight into both domestic life and spiritual practices more than 5,000 years ago.

# Safadi, UK Yvette Cooper call for ceasefire in Gaza, unaltered aid into Strip

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Saturday held a phone conversation with British Foreign Secretary and Minister for Development Yvette Cooper, during which they discussed regional developments and ways to strengthen the historic ties between Jordan and the United Kingdom.

Both ministries emphasised the need to enhance cooperation and coordination between Jordan and the UK across all sectors, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The two officials reviewed regional developments and highlighted the need to step up efforts to achieve a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire in Gaza, as well as the importance of opening all crossings to ensure the immediate and adequate delivery of humanitarian aid to the territory, which is facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis caused



Ayman Safadi



Yvette Cooper



Hakan Fidan

and worsened by the ongoing aggression, the statement said.

They also reaffirmed the continued cooperation between the two countries in delivering humanitarian assistance to Gaza, and agreed to maintain coordination on issues of mutual interest.

During the phone call, Safadi noted the "serious" deterioration of conditions in the occupied West Bank, stemming from Israel's continued

illegal actions, including settlement expansion, land confiscation, and the economic, social, and political blockade of the Palestinian people and leadership.

He also emphasised the urgent need for the international community to take immediate and decisive action to halt these measures, which threaten to undermine all prospects for the implementation of the two-state solution and the achievement of a just

and lasting peace.

Safadi reiterated Jordan's condemnation of the Israeli aggression against Qatar and affirmed the Kingdom's full support for all measures taken to safeguard its security, stability, sovereignty and the safety of its territory and citizens.

Safadi congratulated Cooper on assuming her role as UK Foreign Secretary, welcomed Britain's continued support for the two-state solution,

and commended its decision to officially recognise the Palestinian state during this month's United Nations General Assembly meetings.

Also on Saturday, Safadi held a phone call with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, according to another Foreign Ministry statement.

The two top diplomats affirmed the need to unify efforts to "immediately" stop the Israeli aggression on Gaza, reach a ceasefire agreement

and ensure the sufficient and immediate delivery of aid to the Gaza Strip.

Safadi and Fidan also discussed the serious deterioration in the occupied West Bank due to the continuation of "illegal and illegitimate Israeli measures", stressing the need for urgent and effective international action to stop these violations that undermine the foundations of achieving a just and lasting peace based on the two-state solution.

## Energy Minister inaugurates power substation, service centre to boost grid efficiency

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabsheh on Saturday inaugurated a new power substation in downtown Amman and an advanced customer service centre in Ruseifa, as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen Jordan's electricity infrastructure and improve service delivery.

Operated by the Jordan Electric Power Company (JEPCO), the projects aim to enhance grid readiness, meet growing energy demands, and expand communication channels with consumers, the Jordan news agency, Petra, reported.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, attended by Energy and Minerals Regulatory Commission (EMRC) Chief Ziad Saaydeh and JEPCO Director General Hassan Abdullah, Kharabsheh said the projects reflect the energy sector's collaborative approach to addressing public needs efficiently and ensuring the stability of the national grid.

"These initiatives are part of our broader strategy to enhance energy security and deliver reliable, high-quality services to citizens," he said. Saaydeh affirmed the EMRC's role in monitoring technical and operational plans across the sector, noting that the commission supports companies' efforts to ensure supply reliability and swiftly address challenges in electricity loads.

Abdullah highlighted JEPCO's ongoing strategic plan, which includes expanding and upgrading substations, modernizing the grid, and enhancing operational

performance. He also emphasized the importance of advanced service centers in improving customer engagement and service efficiency.

During the visit, Kharabsheh toured the newly completed "Al Maqar" substation in downtown Amman, where he was briefed on its technical capabilities and role in improving electricity service in the capital and surrounding areas.

'These initiatives are part of our broader strategy to enhance energy security and deliver reliable, high-quality services to citizens'

JEPCO has been implementing a series of infrastructure projects since last year, including the construction of 19 substations across Amman, Zarqa, Madaba, and Balqa, at a total investment of approximately JD80 million. The projects are scheduled for completion by the end of 2026.

According to JEPCO, the upgrades are expected to reduce technical losses, increase grid efficiency, and provide additional capacity to meet rising demand, particularly due to the growing use of air conditioning, heating systems, and electric vehicles.

## Army foils 'multiple' smuggling attempts on southern-eastern borders

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Armed Forces- Arab Army (JAF) on Friday said that Border Guards have thwarted multiple smuggling attempts along the Kingdom's southern, and eastern borders.

JAF source said in a statement that Southern Military Zone, in coordination with military security agencies, intercepted a drone along

the western border of its operational area.

The border guards applied rules of engagement after tracking the drone, ultimately downing it inside Jordanian territory and referred it to the competent authorities.

In a separate incident, the Eastern Military Zone foiled two attempts to smuggle large quantities of narcotics

along its border using balloons operated by primitive devices, the source said.

According to a military source, the border guard units, working in coordination with relevant security agencies and the Anti-Narcotics Department, spotted and intercepted the balloons within Jordanian territory. Upon inspection, they were found to

be carrying illegal narcotics. The seized materials were turned over to the proper authorities, the source added.

The source stressed that the JAF remain fully committed to using all available resources and capabilities to prevent infiltration and smuggling attempts in order to safeguard the Kingdom's security and stability.



Jordan Armed Forces- Arab Army (JAF) on Friday says that Border Guards have thwarted multiple smuggling attempts along the Kingdom's southern, and eastern borders

## Nationwide clean-up campaign unites Jordanians in environmental drive

By Maria Weldali

AMMAN — A nationwide environmental campaign has stirred a remarkable wave of civic engagement, uniting government institutions, civil society, and citizens under the banner of public responsibility and environmental stewardship.

Launched under the slogan "With Our Efforts: We Protect Our Environment," the campaign was led by the Ministry of Environment, in coordination with several government bodies including the Ministries of Interior, Public Works and Housing, Education, Youth, Agriculture, Local Administration, Culture and Government Communication.

Local municipalities, the Public Security Directorate, the Royal Department for Environmental Protection, and development zones also participated in the initiative, according to a statement from the Ministry of Government Communication.

What distinguished this campaign, however, was its broad grassroots participation. Thousands of Jordanians, including school and university students, hotel associations, youth centres, and civil society organisations, joined forces with officials to clean public spaces and raise environmental awareness.

The Jordanian Free and Development Zones Group told The Jordan Times that the campaign "reflected a shared awareness of the importance of environmental responsibility", and underscored how such initiatives "strengthen the culture of public cleanliness and serve as

reminders that environmental care is part of Jordan's identity".

More than just a clean-up effort, the campaign evolved into a nationwide social event. Families, youth groups, and local businesses participated actively, emphasising a sense of collective responsibility.

"This isn't just about cleaning," said Sameh Kharabsheh, a university student. "It's about showing that responsibility for our country doesn't rest with officials alone, it belongs to all of us."

Youth educators and environmental activists echoed the sentiment. Ahmad Ousai, a youth centre leader, noted that students gained hands-on experience in responsibility and teamwork. "They see that small actions, like collecting rubbish or raising awareness—can lead to visible, positive change," he said.

Environmental activist Leena Bani Hani stressed the broader impact: "Sustainability isn't only about nature, it is about the stability of society. Campaigns like this foster cooperation that benefits both the environment and the economy."

Observers praised the campaign's inclusive approach, highlighting that genuine community involvement, rather than top-down directives, was key to its success.

Encouraged by the campaign's momentum, discussions are underway to expand similar initiatives nationwide. Citizens, municipalities, and private sector groups have expressed interest in making community clean-up drives a regular part of Jordan's environmental agenda.

## 'Injustice has gone too far. End it before it's too late' — Safadi

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi has called for an international action to end Israel's war on Gaza and its destabilising actions in Lebanon and Syria.

Addressing the UN Security Council's meeting on Friday, Safadi condemned Israel's "genocidal campaign in Gaza", describing Israeli far-right government as "rogue", stained with the blood of innocents.

*Following is the translation of the Safadi's full speech:*

**In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful Mr. President,**

I congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and thank the undersecretary-general for her briefing.

Dear colleagues,

A rogue government stained with the blood of innocents and steeped in extremism and hatred, continues to show no regard for international law, and is not deterred by human values. It considers itself above the law and uses violence to impose a racist ideology and achieve expansionist goals that threaten peace and security across the region and the world.

This is the reality of the Israeli government, a reality the international community must now urgently confront, with resolve effectiveness, to curb its arrogance and protect the entire region from the catastrophic consequences of its actions.

Over the past 23 months, Israel has killed more than 65,000

Palestinians in Gaza, including 540 humanitarian workers and 247 journalists.

It has used starvation as a weapon, leading to the deaths of 411 Palestinians, including 142 children, due to the famine it has deliberately created in Gaza.

Israel has turned Gaza into a land of death, death for both its people and death for humanitarian values. Killing has become promotional material for occupation forces. The daily slaughter of over 100 Palestinians has become so normalised that it no longer draws attention.

This government uses every means to escalate tensions, ignite violence, deepen conflict, and drive the region into chaos.

'We condemn this treacherous and brutal aggression against Qatar'

Its genocidal campaign in Gaza continues, with over a million resilient residents of Gaza City facing death, by starvation, killing, or forced displacement into camps where Israel has destroyed the lives of those it forced to flee. These are camps in barren lands with no basic conditions for sus-

taining life. Israel blocks humanitarian and medical aid, even denying entry of bread, water, and infant formula.

In the West Bank, Israel continues to expand illegal settlements, shields settler terrorism, which now averages four terrorist attacks per day against Palestinians, seizes more Palestinian land, and economically and socially strangles the Palestinian people and their legitimate leadership, thus killing every opportunity for a just and lasting peace.

Just hours before this session, the Israeli prime minister boasted about authorising a new illegal settlement on Palestinian land, bragging about preventing the establishment of a Palestinian state and killing every opportunity for peace, holding the future of all peoples in the region, including his own, hostage to further wars and conflicts.

Israel is also destabilising Lebanon, occupying additional Syrian territory, and sowing sedition aimed at plunging Syria into chaos and conflict.

And now, in a dangerous and flagrant new violation of international law, Israel has attacked the State of Qatar, launching a cowardly assault on its capital, Doha, a blatant act of treachery against a nation that has been working tirelessly, in partnership with Egypt and the US, to broker a hostage exchange agreement that could lead to a permanent ceasefire, end the suffering and open the door to diplomacy and peace for all.

We condemn this treacherous and brutal aggression against Qatar. As His Majesty King Abdullah and His Royal



Highness Crown Prince Hussein affirmed to His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Jordan fully supports Qatar in every step it takes to protect its security, sovereignty, and the safety of its citizens.

Our security and Qatar's security are one. The stability of Qatar is the stability of the region. We share a common vision. Qatar's choice is our choice.

Our vision and our choice are for a safe, stable Middle East, enjoying just, lasting, and comprehensive peace. A peace that fulfils the Palestinian people's right to life, liberty, and statehood. A peace that ensures the security of Palestinians and Israelis alike and that replaces conflict with cooperation and despair with hope.

The Israeli government and its extremists lie with every claim they make to justify their betrayal of Qatar, despite all its efforts to achieve a hostage exchange and end the war.

They also lie when they claim they are surrounded by those who seek their destruction. All Arab countries are committed to a just and lasting peace, one that ensures Israel's security and enables it to have normal relations in the

Dear colleagues,

This Council bears the responsibility for maintaining peace and security, and it holds the tools to do so. Use those tools. Implement international law and the UN Charter, which form the basis of your legitimacy.

Use them to enforce the hostage exchange agreement mediated by Qatar, Egypt and the US. Use them to stop the aggression on Gaza, to end the famine, to allow the entry of humanitarian aid, to preserve what remains of the credibility of international law and international humanitarian law. Affirm that human values and international law are meant to be applied universally, without bias or selectivity, make it clear that there is no immunity for aggressors and no state is above the law, and to revive hope that conflict is not the region's destiny, and that just peace is achievable, and a shared goal we are all capable of realising, if the will exists.

Honourable colleagues,

The message Israel sent through its aggression on Qatar is that it intends to continue its aggression, to continue violating the sovereignty of states, to continue violating international law, to continue killing innocents, to continue imposing famine on Gaza, and to continue depriving over 600,000 students in Gaza of their right to education, because it enjoys immunity that shields it from accountability, and has allowed it to get away with all these crimes.

The injustice has gone too far. End it, end it before it is too late.



AFP photo

Food is distributed by World Food Programme (WFP) at Adre camp for Sudanese refugees in Chad

## US, Saudi, UAE, Egypt call for Sudan truce, transition to civilian rule

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt called on Friday for a three-month humanitarian truce in Sudan, to be followed by a permanent ceasefire and a nine-month transition towards civilian rule.

In a joint statement issued by the US State Department, the four countries said the transition should "meet the aspirations of the Sudanese people towards smoothly establishing an independent, civilian-led government with broad-based legitimacy and accountability".

Since April 2023, Sudan has been torn apart by war between its army — which maintains control over most state institutions — and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The conflict has killed tens of thousands, displaced millions and cre-

ated what the United Nations describes as one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

"Sudan's future governance is for the Sudanese people to decide through an inclusive and transparent transition process, not controlled by any warring party," Friday's statement said.

The statement appeared to have been released in lieu of a meeting involving the foreign ministers of the four countries that had originally been scheduled for July in Washington but was postponed due to disagreements between Egypt and the UAE.

Diplomatic sources told AFP that Cairo objected to earlier language barring both the army and the RSF from taking part in the transition.

The final language appears to reflect a compromise, avoiding specific mention of either side while insisting Sudan's

next government be decided by the people.

It also explicitly excludes the involvement of "violent extremist groups part of or evidently linked to the Muslim Brotherhood" in the transition process — a clause seen as reflecting long-standing concerns from the UAE.

The army currently controls Sudan's east, north and centre, while the RSF holds parts of the south and nearly all of the western Darfur region — where it recently declared a parallel government, fuelling fears of the country's fragmentation.

Both sides have repeatedly vowed to continue fighting until securing outright military victory.

Friday's joint statement, however, maintained "there is no viable military solution to the conflict, and the status quo creates unacceptable suffering and risks to peace and security".

# President says Syria in talks with Israel on security deal

DAMASCUS (AFP) — President Ahmed Al Sharaa said on Friday that Syria was negotiating with Israel to reach a security agreement that would see Israel leave areas it occupied after the December overthrow of Bashar Assad.

As Islamist-led forces toppled Assad on December 8, Israel deployed troops to the UN-patrolled buffer zone on the Golan Heights which has separated Israeli and Syrian forces since an armistice that followed the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

Israel has also launched hundreds of air strikes on targets in Syria and carried out incursions deeper into the south. Syria's new authorities have not responded to the attacks.

"We are now in a state of negotiations and dialogue on the issue of a security agreement," Sharaa said in an interview with state television channel Alekhabariah.

He said that Israel believed that Syria had "quit" the 1974 disengagement agreement after Assad's fall, "even though Syria, from the first moment, expressed its commitment" to the accord.

"Now, negotiations are under way on a security agreement to return Israel to where it



AFP photo

A handout photo released by the official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) shows Syria's interim President Ahmad Al Sharaa meeting with a US delegation lead by the new head of the US military's Central Command in the Syrian capital Damascus on Friday

was before December 8," Sharaa said.

Israel and Syria have no diplomatic relations, with the two countries technically at war since 1948.

Last month, Syrian state media said Foreign Minister Asaad Al Shaibani and Israeli Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer had met in Paris to discuss de-escalation and the

situation in Druze-majority Sweida province after deadly sectarian violence.

Also last month, prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledged that Israel was holding talks aimed at the demilitarisation of southern Syria.

In the interview, Sharaa revealed that Syrian forces entered secret negotiations with

key Assad ally Russia during the offensive that eventually toppled the longtime ruler.

"When we reached Hama in the battle of liberation, there were negotiations between us and Russia," Sharaa said.

When forces arrived in Homs further south, Russia "stayed away from the battle... as part of an agreement

reached between us," he said.

Sharaa also noted how his forces avoided attacking Russia's Hmeimim air base on Syria's Mediterranean coast.

Russia's naval base in Tartus and its air base at Hmeimim are Moscow's only official military outposts outside the former Soviet Union.

Assad fled to Russia from Hmeimim.

## Russia says Ukraine peace talks frozen as NATO bolsters defences

KYIV, Ukraine (AFP) — Russia said on Friday that peace talks with Kyiv were on "pause" as President Volodymyr Zelensky warned that his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin still wanted to capture the whole of Ukraine.

US President Donald Trump meanwhile warned that he was running out of patience with Putin, and the NATO alliance said it would bolster its eastern front after Russian drones were shot down in Polish airspace this week.

The latest blow to faltering diplomacy came as Russia's army staged major military drills with its key ally Belarus.

Despite Trump forcing the warring sides to hold direct talks and hosting Putin in Alaska, there has been no significant progress towards ending the war launched by Russia's February 2022 invasion.

Russia's army has gained territory and Pu-



AFP photo

A video grab made on Saturday from images provided by the French Armed Forces General Staff shows one of the three Rafale fighter jets deployed at an unspecified location in Poland

tin has vowed to carry on fighting if his peace demands — including Ukraine ceding yet more land — are not met.

"Our negotiators have the opportunity to communicate through channels. But for now, it is probably more accurate to talk about a pause" in

talks, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"You can't wear rose-tinted glasses and expect that the negotiation process will yield immediate results," he added.

Speaking at a conference in Kyiv, Zelensky

said the West should not trust Putin.

"Putin's goal is to occupy all of Ukraine. And no matter what he tells anyone, it is clear that he has set the war machine in motion to such an extent that he simply cannot stop it unless he is forced to fundamen-

tally change his personal goals," Zelensky said.

The Ukrainian leader also called on allies to encourage China to use its leverage with Russia to stop Moscow's offensive.

Trump has repeatedly threatened Russia with additional sanctions if it does not halt the assault, but has failed to follow through, frustrating Ukraine.

"It's sort of running out and running out fast, but it does take two to tango," Trump told Fox television when asked if his patience was being taxed by Russia's refusal to end the conflict.

"It's amazing. When Putin wants to do it, Zelensky didn't. When Zelensky wanted to do it, Putin didn't. Now Zelensky wants to do it and Putin is a question mark. We're going to have to come down very, very strong," he added.

Ukraine has ruled out making territorial concessions in exchange for a deal, and is calling for a Putin-Zelensky summit to break the deadlock.

Poland and about 40 of its allies denounced the intrusion on Friday, calling on Moscow to avoid further "provocations".

"Russia's reckless actions represent... a destabilising escalation," Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Marcin Bosacki said before an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council requested by his country.

NATO chief Mark Rutte said the alliance would reinforce its eastern flank following the incident, with Denmark, France, Britain and Germany contributing "assets" in coming days.

Britain announced new sanctions against Russia targeting weapons, equipment suppliers and its "shadow fleet" of sanction-dodging ships.

The European Union meanwhile extended sanctions against more than 2,500 Russian officials and entities for six months.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said it was not a "mistake" that the drones flew over his country, rejecting Trump's suggestion it could have been an accident.

Tusk warned this

week that Poland was now closer to "open conflict" than at any point since World War II.

Russia has denied targeting Poland and said the country had failed to present any evidence the drones were Russian.

The military drills between Russia and neighbouring Belarus, which started on Friday, have further ratcheted up tensions.

The drills include exercises close to the border with Poland and Lithuania and in the Baltic and Barents seas.

Russia's defence ministry posted a video showing heavy military equipment — including armoured vehicles, helicopters and navy ships — taking part in the drills.

Russia and Belarus have rejected accusations they pose a danger.

But Poland said it would station around 40,000 troops near the Belarus border for the duration of the drills.

## Trump demands NATO halt Russia oil purchases before US sanctions

WASHINGTON (AFP) — US President Donald Trump said on Saturday he was ready to sanction Moscow, but on the condition that all NATO allies agree to completely halt purchases of Russian oil and implement their own sanctions.

He also suggested members of the transatlantic alliance consider slapping tariffs of 50 per cent to 100 per cent on China as a way to help end Russia's war in Ukraine.

"I am ready to do major Sanctions on Russia when all NATO Nations have agreed, and started, to do the same thing, and when all NATO Nations STOP BUYING OIL FROM RUSSIA," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform, which he described as a letter to all



AFP photo

US President Donald Trump is seen aboard Marine One before departing from the Wall Street landing zone in New York on Friday

NATO nations and the world.

Trump has repeatedly threatened Russia with additional sanctions — including last weekend after the Kremlin unleashed its biggest-ever aerial barrage against Ukraine — as a way to hit at revenue Moscow needs for its grinding war.

But so far he has failed to follow through, frus-

trating Kyiv.

The president, who met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin last month at a summit in Alaska, branded NATO nations' purchase of Russian oil "shocking" and said it weakens their bargaining power over Moscow.

"Anyway, I am ready to 'go' when you are. Just say when?"

Trump also raised the

prospect of NATO imposing tariffs on China, which is believed to have boosted strategic cooperation with Moscow and held a high-profile summit with Putin recently in Beijing.

"I believe that [NATO sanctions on Russia], plus NATO, as a group, placing 50% to 100% TARIFFS ON CHINA, to be fully withdrawn after the WAR with Russia and Ukraine is ended, will also be of great help in ENDING this deadly, but RIDICULOUS, WAR," Trump said.

"China has a strong control, and even grip, over Russia, and these powerful Tariffs will break that grip."

If the 32-member alliance "does as I say, the WAR will end quickly," Trump said. "If not, you are just wasting my time."

## الرأي

### تنويه هام جداً

#### صادر عن صحيفة الرأي اليومية المحلية

الى كافة الوزارات والجهات الحكومية وغير الحكومية والمؤسسات العامة والخاصة والبلديات

وكلاء الاعلانات والمواطنين وعملاء صحيفة الرأي عامة

تعلن صحيفة الرأي بان مكتب الغد للدعاية والاعلان شركة الربيع الذهبي للاستشارات التقنية قد انتهت علاقته مع الصحيفة، ولم تعد تربطه معها أية رابطة تعاقدية، وانه لم يعد مخولاً بالنشر فيها، وليس له أية صفة قانونية لبنوب عنها، او وكيل اعلانات لها، او ممثلاً للصحيفة لنشر الاعلانات بمختلف انواعها في صحيفتي الرأي او الجورن تايمز (THE JORDAN TIMES)، وذلك في كافة محافظات المملكة الاردنية الهاشمية. وعلى كافة الاشخاص والجهات الراغبة بنشر اعلاناتها في صحيفتي الرأي او الجورن تايمز (THE JORDAN TIMES)، او على الموقع الالكتروني الخاصة بالصحيفتين، التواصل مع دائرة الاعلانات في الصحيفة، او على البريد الالكتروني الخاص بها، او عبر ارقام الهواتف المعلنه ادناه.

معلومات التواصل المعتمدة لاعلاناتكم في صحيفتي الرأي والجورن تايمز

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# 110,000 turn out for far-right rally in London

LONDON (AFP) — More than 100,000 people massed on Saturday in central London for a march and rally organised by far-right activist Tommy Robinson, as anti-racism campaigners held a smaller counter-protest.

Huge crowds, many draped in English and British flags, gathered through the morning just south of Westminster Bridge before rallying near Downing Street for speeches by far-right figures from across Europe and North America.

His latest "Unite the Kingdom" event saw attendees march over Westminster Bridge before rallying near Downing Street for speeches by far-right figures from across Europe and North America. "The silent majority will be silent no longer," Robinson told the crowd. "Today is the spark of a cultural revolution."

UK police said an estimated 110,000 people attended, noting it used a combination of CCTV and police helicopter footage for its estimate.

Around 5,000 people attended a Stand Up to Racism march a mile or so to the north, as police deployed about 1,000 police to keep the rival groups apart.

The duelling demonstrations come amid growing anti-immi-



British far-right activist Tommy Robinson (centre), whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, addresses supporters as they walk with Union and St George's cross flags through central London during a 'Free speech' march, on Saturday

gration sentiment, as Brexit supporter Nigel Farage's hard-right Reform UK leads in polls and protesters target hotels used to house asylum seekers.

Robinson, 42, who has a string of criminal convictions and a big online following after years spearheading a fervent anti-Muslim

and anti-migrant agenda, increasingly fuses those themes with claims that Britain is now hostile to free speech.

"Everyday in the papers you read things and you're being left stunned — arresting people because they dared to talk about immigration or gender

issues," Philip Dodge, a retired baker from Sheffield, central England, told AFP.

He had travelled with his wife to the event, which was also being watched by hundreds of thousands of viewers on livestreams.

"I'm very concerned. I never thought I'd see this in this country."

Other attendees, which included women and young people, said they were more worried about migration.

"It's an invasion," 28-year-old Ritchie, who only gave his first name, said of the record levels of UK immigration in recent years, including tens of thousands of asylum

seekers arriving annually on small boats across the Channel.

"They don't understand we want our country back," he said of the ruling centre-left Labour government and its Conservative predecessors, calling Robinson "a hero".

At the anti-racism event, veteran Labour

lawmaker Diane Abbott accused Robinson and his allies of spreading "nonsense" and "dangerous" lies that asylum seekers were a threat.

"We need to be in solidarity with asylum seekers and we need to show that we are united," she told Sky News. London police, who drafted in officers from other forces to manage the crowds, have placed conditions on the protest routes and timings, insisting they end at different times and that both conclude by evening.

Some at Robinson's event attached to their placards photos of Charlie Kirk, the right-wing American activist and ally of Donald Trump who was shot to death this week.

Other signs included slogans like "stop the boats" and derided Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

## 'Culture wars'

Planned speakers include French politician Eric Zemmour, controversial Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson and Petr Bystron of the Alternative for Germany Party.

Reports said former White House strategist Steve Bannon would also address the crowds.

The event comes just over a year after anti-immigration ri-

ots swept several cities, which Robinson was accused of fueling with incendiary online posts, and as free speech concerns become more mainstream.

The government has faced widespread criticism after banning the Palestine Action group in July. Police have since arrested under anti-terror laws hundreds of peaceful protesters holding up signs supporting the group.

Meanwhile, the recent arrest of an award-winning comedy writer for allegedly insulting transgender people online prompted widespread derision.

After Irish writer Graham Linehan was detained, Prime Minister Keir Starmer urged police to "focus on the most serious issues".

However London's Metropolitan Police chief Mark Rowley said the law needed changing and that he did not believe his officers "should be policing toxic culture wars debates".

The influence of Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, was thought to be waning after various legal and other woes.

But his profile has rocketed since his X account was reinstated in November 2023, following billionaire Elon Musk's purchase of the platform.

## Jordan welcomes UN adoption of 'New York Declaration' on two-state solution

Continued from page 1

The General Assembly voted Friday to back the "New York Declaration", which seeks to breathe new life into the two-state solution between Israel and Palestine, without the involvement of Hamas.

The text was adopted

by 142 votes in favour, 10 against, including Israel and key ally the United States and 12 abstentions, AFP reported.

The declaration also calls on Hamas to "end its rule in Gaza and hand over its weapons to the Palestinian Authority, with international engagement and

support, in line with the objective of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State".

Israel said a "disgraceful" vote by the UN General Assembly on Friday in favour of a Hamas-free Palestinian state would encourage the fighters group to continue the Gaza war.

Foreign ministry spokesman Oren Marmorstein said in a post on X that Israel "utterly rejects" the declaration, calling it evidence that the General Assembly had become "a political circus detached from reality".

"There is no reference to the simple fact that

Hamas is solely responsible for the continuation of the war, through its refusal to return the hostages and disarm," Marmorstein said.

"The resolution does not advance a solution of peace — on the contrary, it encourages Hamas to continue the war," he added.

## Rubio to offer Israel support despite Qatar strike

Continued from page 1

France, exasperated over Israel's massive offensive in Gaza, has rejected US and Israeli criticism and says there must be a new path for the Palestinians.

France, Britain and Germany on Friday also called for an "immediate" halt to a new Israeli offensive in which it aims to seize Gaza City, with the Europeans warning of mass civilian displacement and casualties in a territory which is already mostly in rubble.

The State Department said only that Rubio would discuss "operational goals and objectives" with Israel and show "the US commitment to Israeli security".

"He will also emphasise our shared goals: Ensuring Hamas never rules over Gaza again and bringing all the hostages home," Pigott said, adding that Rubio will meet families of hostages.

The statement made no mention of the strikes in Qatar, in which Israel targeted Hamas leaders gathering to discuss a new ceasefire proposal put forward by the Trump administration.

Trump called the attack unfortunate and said that the United States found out too late to stop it.

Trump has repeatedly offered strong backing to prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, doing away with most of the public

concerns, however cautiously expressed, of his predecessor Joe Biden.

The State Department did not immediately confirm reports that Rubio would take part in the inauguration of a new tunnel in Jerusalem's Old City for visitors approaching the Temple Mount, the holiest site for Jews, which is also sacred for Muslims as the Al Aqsa compound.

Jerusalem's Holy Basin, contradicting Washington's long-standing position since 1967, anti-settlement advocacy group Peace Now said in a statement.

Israel seized East Jerusalem in the 1967 war and later annexed it and declared Jerusalem its indivisible capital, a step not recognised by most of the world.

But Trump during his first term bucked the international consensus and moved the US embassy to Jerusalem.

The Trump administration has declined to criticise ramped-up Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank. Netanyahu vowed on Thursday there would be no Palestinian state and "this place belongs to us" at a signing ceremony for a major settlement project.

Israel launched an all-out offensive in Gaza in October 2023 following a massive attack launched from the territory by Hamas.

Hamas also took 251 hostages during the attack, 47 of whom remain in Gaza, including 25 the Israeli military says are dead.

Israel's offensive has killed more than 64,000 Palestinians, most of them civilians, according to figures from the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza that the United Nations considers reliable.

The UN has declared famine in parts of Gaza, which Israel contests.

'He will also emphasise our shared goals: Ensuring Hamas never rules over Gaza again and bringing all the hostages home'

## Safadi condemns Israeli attack on Qatar in fiery UN Security Council speech

Continued from page 1

He also condemned on-going Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank and rising settler violence, accusing Israel of "killing every opportunity for a just and lasting peace."

Reiterating Jordan's commitment to a two-state solution, Safadi expressed deep frustration with Israel's current leadership, accusing prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu of deliberately undermining the peace process.

"The Israeli prime minister boasts about authorising new illegal settlements and blocking the creation of a Pal-

stinian state," Safadi said. "He brags about killing peace and trapping the entire region in a cycle of war."

Safadi challenged Israeli claims of existential threat, arguing that all Arab states remain committed to a just and comprehensive peace, one that guarantees Israel's security and establishes a sovereign Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In a direct appeal to the Security Council, Safadi urged immediate action.

"Use the tools at your disposal. Enforce international law. End the assault on Gaza. End the famine. Reaffirm that no

state is above the law and that aggressors will be held accountable."

He also called for international recognition of the State of Palestine as a concrete step toward a two-state solution.

"We want just peace. But the truth is: There is no Israeli partner today willing to work toward achieving it."

In closing, Safadi warned that Israel's attack on Qatar was not an isolated event, but a message that it would continue its aggression across the region with impunity, unless the international community acts decisively.

"The injustice has gone too far," he said, adding,

"End it, end it before it is too late."

Safadi's remarks drew broad approval, particularly among Qataris.

On the X platform, user matar\_ib (Ibrahim Matar) described the address as "a speech for history... congratulations to Jordan and the Arabs for having a foreign minister of this caliber".

Another user, @abdulrahmanmagh (Abdul Rahman Al Maghrabi), called Safadi "a shrewd politician whose words are powerful," while noting that "Jordan also maintains a strong relationship with Israel".

@BusidiNaser also hailed Safadi's speech as the "strongest address

against Israeli" at the (Security) Council.

Same was said by ameeraal alfroukh who described Safadi's address as a "strong and political speech for history. The strongest, most truthful and bravest speech presented by a representative".

For @matar\_ib, Safadi's address was a "word for history. Congratulations to Jordan and the Arabs for having a foreign minister of this caliber".

Khadija Benganna, of Al Jazeera network, quoted remarks from Safadi's speech, saying on her Facebook account, "a strong, sincere and impactful speech by Jordanian foreign minister."

## Amman Stock Exchange hits 3,000-point high for first time Since 2008

Continued from page 1

He highlighted that recent amendments to related legislation and regulations have improved market transparency and boosted investor appeal. "These changes have strengthened market participants' confidence and introduced new, quality liquidity into trading activity."

He also said that these developments have "positively impacted the performance of listed companies, with share prices of 96 firms rising since the beginning of the 2025.

Market analysts and economists credited the rally to a combina-

tion of targeted regulatory reforms, improved corporate transparency and strong performances by a handful of leading companies, primarily in the mining, phosphate, potash and banking sectors, notably Arab Bank.

The return of the ASE to this level is not a coincidence," said Essam Qadamani, economic columnist.

"There are five leading companies whose solid performance attracted strong demand for their shares. But more importantly, we are seeing the effects of real reforms, not just speculation".

While the rally is seen as a positive development, Qadama-

nipointed out to the discrepancy in performance across listed firms, suggesting the market upswing is not yet comprehensive.

"It is supposed to be a market-wide movement, but most gains are concentrated in a few dominant players," he added.

Unlike the speculative-driven spikes seen in 2008, the current gains are reportedly based on fundamentals, including higher profits, government-backed reforms and greater market transparency.

Raad Tal, head of the Economics Department at the University of Jordan, said JSC has been instrumental in pushing these chang-

es, including steps to reduce trading costs, enhance digital infrastructure and introduce more diverse financial instruments.

"As the main regulatory body, the JSC can and must play a central role in reshaping the capital market through bold reforms," Al Tal said, highlighting several structural issues that have historically constrained the market.

"Jordan's capital market is flexible, but it still faces many challenges that prevent it from reaching its full potential," he said.

"Few investors are active, and the market lacks a variety of instruments. Without

derivatives, ETFs or Islamic sukuk, investment and risk management options remain very limited."

He also warned of concentrated ownership within many listed firms.

"A small number of major shareholders control large portions of many companies, which lowers the number of shares available for public trading and reduces liquidity," Al Tal said.

## Israel army says over 250,000 residents have left Gaza City

Continued from page 1

The United Nations and members of the international community have warned against the military's assault for fear it will worsen the already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza City, where the UN has

declared a famine.

According to the civil defence agency, Israeli strikes killed five people since dawn Saturday.

On Friday, at least 50 people were killed across the territory, the civil defence agency said.

"Every night we go

to sleep not knowing if we will wake up alive," Gaza City resident Umm Anas Al Ashqar told AFP.

"The bombing around us never stops... We stayed in our house because we have nowhere else to go... This is not life. Death would be easier than this."

## THE JORDAN TIMES

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## Making Jordan's capital market more attractive

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

Jordan's capital market is flexible, but it still faces many challenges that prevent it from reaching its full potential. As the main regulatory body, the Jordan Securities Commission (JSC) can play a key role in addressing these challenges.

The market suffers from low liquidity and trading volumes. Few investors are active, making it hard to buy or sell large amounts of shares without affecting prices. The market also lacks variety in financial products. Stocks and bonds dominate, while other options like derivatives, exchange-traded funds (ETFs), and Islamic sukuk are limited. This reduces investment opportunities and makes managing risks harder.

Ownership concentration is another issue. A small number of major shareholders control large portions of many companies, which lowers the number of shares available for public trading and reduces liquidity. The market also lacks depth, with only a few large, well-known companies, limiting choices for investors and the ability to handle large capital flows.

Foreign investors are still cautious. Despite progress, Jordan's market struggles to attract large foreign investments due to perceived risks or lack of familiarity. Digital infrastructure is also slow to develop, limiting online trading and automated processes.

Many investors, especially individuals and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), lack knowledge about investing, the risks involved, and the products available. Corporate governance and transparency also need improvement to build investor confidence.

The market also lacks venture capital for SMEs and startups. Many companies rely entirely on bank loans, which can be restrictive. Jordan faces strong competition from more developed regional markets like Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

To address these challenges, the Securities Commission can take several steps. First, it can increase market liquidity by introducing market-making activities and reviewing regulations to lower trading costs. Second, it can expand financial products by enabling new instruments like ETFs, derivatives and more diverse bonds.

The Commission can also protect investors and increase transparency by enforcing rules on insider trading, requiring timely disclosures, and improving corporate governance standards. Improving digital infrastructure in cooperation with the Amman Stock Exchange and the Securities Depository Centre, including full digital registration for investors, is another key step.

Educating investors is also important. The Commission can run campaigns to teach the public about investment benefits, risks, available products, and how to use digital platforms. Supporting startups through simplified listing rules and creating a market segment for SMEs can further enhance market participation.

Additional measures include encouraging private companies to go public through incentives, allowing banks to increase investments in securities, introducing legislation requiring public companies to invest a small portion of retained earnings in securities, and reducing trading fees and capital gains taxes under defined limits.

Jordan's capital market stands at a crossroads. It has a strong regulatory system and a long history, but it needs bold reforms in liquidity, diversity, governance and digital transformation. If the Securities Commission successfully implements these changes, the market can become more than just a trading platform, it can be a real driver of economic growth and attract both domestic and foreign investment.

Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal is head of Economics Department, The University of Jordan

# Jordan's aviation future: A bold step toward becoming a regional hub

With over four decades of experience in aircraft electrical engineering at the Jordan Aircraft Maintenance Company (JORAMCO), I have witnessed Jordan's aviation sector grow from modest beginnings into a respected regional leader. The sector today stands on the strength of its skilled workforce, strategic location and a proven record of safety and reliability.

His Majesty King Abdullah's recent visit to Queen Alia International Airport (QAIA) highlighted Jordan's ongoing progress in aviation. During the visit, His Majesty inaugurated two major projects set to shape the Kingdom's role as a regional aviation hub: the opening of JORAMCO's state-of-the-art Hangar 7, expanding maintenance capacity to 22 lines, and the laying of the foundation stone for Royal Jordanian's new air cargo operations centre. Together, these initiatives underscore Jordan's ambition to become a leading centre for logistics, training and aircraft maintenance in the Middle East.

His Majesty King Abdullah's wise leadership in ensuring that Jordan remains a safe and secure haven for all has encouraged airlines worldwide to bring their aircraft to the Kingdom, even during times of regional instability. This environment provided JORAMCO with a valuable advantage and the opportunity to expand globally. **Building a cargo and logistics powerhouse**

Air cargo is one of the fastest-growing sectors in global avia-



Zeid Sharafeddin

tion, driven by the boom in e-commerce, just-in-time supply chain and the demand for quick delivery of high-value goods. Royal Jordanian's new \$40 million Cargo operations centre is a strategic response to this trend. Currently, Royal Jordanian provides airfreight services to 54 destinations, particularly for sensitive cargo such as pharmaceuticals, perishables and electronics.

The expansion of this centre will not only strengthen Jordan's position as a logistics hub, but also enhance the Kingdom's role as a strategic transit point. With the support of modern customs systems, integrated logistics solutions and a focus on sustainability and customer service, this project is set to elevate Jordan's standing in the global logistics and air cargo sector.

### JORAMCO: A model of execution and excellence

The aviation sector's achievements extend beyond cargo. Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) has become one of Jordan's greatest strengths. JORAMCO, in particular, has transformed itself from a regional provider into a globally recognised brand.

At the heart of this transfor-

mation is leadership. The vision and relentless efforts of CEO of DAE Engineering Jeffrey Wilkinson in promoting excellence have given JORAMCO a clear edge over its competitors. Under his leadership, the company has expanded capacity, introduced advanced technologies and nurtured a high-performance culture. Today, JORAMCO serves more than 60 international airlines and lessors, proving itself as a trusted partner in quality and reliability.

The new Hangar 7 facility, built with a \$30 million investment, expands JORAMCO's annual maintenance capacity to 240 aircraft of different sizes. Combined with JORAMCO Academy's Bachelor's programme in partnership with the University of Jordan, these developments create opportunities for young engineers and technicians to build long-term careers in the sector. JORAMCO Academy, a well-established academic hub in the area is also one of the latest contributions to JORAMCO's bright future.

### Challenges and opportunities

The region is dynamic, with neighbouring countries making significant investments in aviation infrastructure and attracting global operators. Jordan's continued focus on delivering world-class services, maintaining competitive costs, and supporting a robust regulatory environment will further strengthen its position as a regional aviation hub.

Equally important is the focus on sustainability. As the avia-

tion sector worldwide moves towards reducing its environmental footprint, integrating green technologies, energy-efficient facilities and sustainable aviation fuels will help ensure Jordan remains aligned with international standards.

### A national strategy with global reach

The projects inaugurated by His Majesty the King are part of a broader strategy to position Jordan as a regional hub, not just for passenger traffic, but also for maintenance, training, logistics and trade. For young professionals, this translates into valuable career opportunities. For businesses, it means access to new markets. As for Jordan, it demonstrates resilience, adaptability and diversification of the economy.

As someone who has dedicated a lifetime to the aviation sector, I view these new investments as both a continuation of Jordan's progress and a signal of its future. Jordan has the expertise, the location and the infrastructure. What matters now is consistent execution, international collaboration and continued commitment to quality and sustainability.

With these elements in place, Jordan is poised to secure its place as a true regional hub—where QAIA serves not just as an airport, but as a gateway to opportunity, growth, and global connectivity.

Zeid Sharafeddin is an electrical engineer and aviation maintenance expert

## Arabs and America: Economy versus bias towards Israel

By Hamed Kasasbeh

The United States faces a sensitive equation in the Middle East. On one side, a strong strategic alliance with Israel, built on military and intelligence superiority. On the other, a deep economic and security partnership with Arab states, which control oil, gas, key waterways, and sovereign wealth funds. Yet, Washington still treats Arabs as financial and energy suppliers, while granting Israel unconditional superiority. The question is: how long can this continue before America pays a strategic price?

Since the 1970s, oil has been tied to the US dollar through the petrodollar system. This made the dollar the backbone of the global financial order and allowed Washington to finance deficits while keeping global dominance. But the landscape is shifting. BRICS seeks to reduce reliance on the dollar. With Saudi Arabia and the UAE joining, Arabs now have direct influence on the future of global

finance. Any move to price oil in other currencies could shake the foundations of US power.

Meanwhile, Israel—backed by open US support—pushes Netanyahu's vision of a "New Middle East". The plan is clear: destroy Gaza, swallow the West Bank, fund the displacement of Palestinians and strike Lebanon, Syria, Qatar and Yemen. Even Gulf states are no longer outside the danger zone, as Israeli threats expand across the region.

Israel has little economic weight compared to the Arabs, but it enjoys political and military privileges that make it a forward base for Washington. Arabs, by contrast, hold powerful cards: Oil and gas, the Suez Canal, Bab Al Mandab, the Strait of Hormuz, and sovereign funds with hundreds of billions in US markets. Used together within a united stance, these cards can rebalance US policy towards Israel.

The pressure is not only economic. The US operates dozens of military bases in the Gulf, Jordan, and Turkey. If Arabs

link these facilities to Washington's position on the conflict, the cost of bias will rise. At the same time, Arabs are no longer just oil producers. They are key players in renewable energy and green hydrogen, shaping the future of global energy markets.

Inside the US, the Israeli narrative no longer dominates unchallenged. A growing movement among youth, universities, and independent media rejects blind support for Israel, especially after the humanitarian disaster in Gaza. This has fueled mass protests, political pressure, and divisions inside the Democratic Party between the old guard and a younger generation more critical of Israel. Arabs can build on this by engaging think tanks, universities, and Arab-American communities.

In Europe, the EU cannot ignore its vital interests with the Arab world in energy, trade and investment. Public anger over Gaza is rising. Arabs have an opportunity to unify their message and push Europe toward greater independence from

Washington. Linking access to Arab markets with balanced political positions could turn sympathy into official pressure on Israel from within its Western allies.

At the international level, Israeli actions no longer pass without scrutiny. The UN Security Council has issued repeated condemnations, despite Washington's vetoes. The latest vote reaffirmed the two-state solution as the only path to peace, highlighting Israel's growing isolation. A united Arab stance could transform this consensus into real leverage, combining international legitimacy with Arab economic power.

In the end, the ball is in the Arabs' court. They hold the tools to impose a new balance and secure a fair solution for Palestine. If they act with unity and resolve, they can curb Israeli arrogance and reshape the region. If not, the cost will fall on Arab citizens — through weaker economies, shrinking wages, and eroded sovereignty — while the future of the Middle East is written without them.

## Trump's push for peace prize won't sway us, says Nobel committee

By Pierre-Henry Deshayes  
Agence France-Presse

OSLO — Donald Trump's obsession with winning the Nobel Peace Prize next month may have hit a hitch, the stubborn independence of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, which insisted to AFP that it cannot be swayed.

Since returning to the White House in January, Trump has made it clear he wants the prestigious accolade, which his Democratic rival Barack Obama won to the surprise of many shortly after taking office in 2009.

The 79-year-old billionaire has taken every opportunity to say he "deserves it", claiming to have ended six wars, even though those in Gaza and Ukraine, which he says he wants to resolve, continue to rage.

"Of course, we do notice that there is a lot of media attention towards

particular candidates," the secretary of the committee, Kristian Berg Harpviken, told AFP in an interview in Oslo.

"But that really has no impact on the discussions that are going on in the committee."

"The committee considers each individual nominee on his or her own merits," he said.

This year's laureate will be announced on October 10.

Trump has backed up his claim that he deserves the prize by pointing out that several foreign leaders, from Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu to Azerbaijan's Ilham Aliyev, have either nominated him or backed his nomination.

after Trump took office.

### Phone call

"To be nominated is not necessarily a great achievement. The great achievement is to become a laureate," Berg Harpviken said.

"You know, the list of individuals who can nominate is quite long."

Those eligible include members of parliament and Cabinet ministers from every country in the world, former laureates and some university professors. Thousands or even tens of thousands of people are therefore able to put a name forward.

This year the committee will pick the winner from a longlist of 338 individuals and organizations. The list is kept secret for 50 years.

The most worthy candidates make it onto a shortlist, with each name then evaluated by an ex-

pert.

"When the committee discusses, it's that knowledge base that frames the discussion. It's not whatever media report has received the most attention in the last 24 hours," said Berg Harpviken, who guides the committee but doesn't vote.

"We are very aware that every year there are a number of campaigns, and we do our utmost to structure the process and the meetings in such a way that we are not unduly influenced by any campaign," he said.

Trump raised the issue of the Peace Prize with Norway's Finance Minister Jens Stoltenberg — the former NATO secretary general, during a phone call about tariffs at the end of July, according to financial daily Dagens Naeringsliv.

The finance ministry confirmed the call

had taken place but not whether the two had discussed the Nobel.

### Unlikely laureate?

While the five members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee are nominated by Norway's parliament, the committee insists its decisions are taken independently of party politics and the sitting government.

A case in point is that it ignored the Norwegian government's discreet warnings and awarded the 2010 prize to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, sparking a diplomatic deep freeze between Beijing and Oslo that lasted for years.

"The Nobel Committee acts entirely independently and cannot allow itself to take those considerations into account when it discusses individual candidates," Berg Harpviken said.

# BUSINESS

Sunday, September 14, 2025

## INTERBUILD Near East concludes 16th exhibition on 'GREEN INTERBUILD'

By Ilham Darwazah

AMMAN — The Jordan Green Building Council (GBC) on Thursday concluded the GREEN INTERBUILD exhibition and forum to introduce sustainable building, smart innovative solutions, environment-friendly and more green future in the industry sector.

International and national companies had took part in the four-day exhibition, as well as The Jordan Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund, and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources attended the event, which was held at the international exhibition halls in Mecca Mall.

Among the countries, there were 20 companies only from China, while there were companies and factories from Oman, Iraq, France, Italy, the US and other countries, that have their factories either based in Jordan or from all over the world.

During the event, there were dialogues including topics of sustainability and reconstruction of Gaza, conducted by relevant associations and unions.

The participant booths show their green and sustainable products and materials for the construction and



GREEN INTERBUILD Exhibition and Forum is concluded on Thursday on sustainable building at Mecca Mall in Amman

engineering projects as follows:

Eco Stone, a company that has been a pioneer in Jordan for 19 years, is turning heads with its "eco-friendly" synthetic stone. Imad Masri, a company representative, explained the philosophy behind the name.

"We call it eco-stone because it's a recycling of materials," Masri said. "Its components are cement, sand, crushed marble, and silica. This product is a perfect alternative to natural stone."

He highlighted the product's durability and efficiency, offering

a lifetime warranty on colour and a low water absorption rate of less than 2 per cent. Masri also pointed out a key benefit for builders: "The weight is lighter than natural stone, which helps reduce the load on the building — a positive thing."

Another company making waves is SICO Tiles. Bakr Hamdi, from the company, emphasised that all their products are "completely eco-friendly and sustainable because they are all recycled."

He noted that they use marble powder, a by-product of the marble industry, which is fil-

tered and reused.

"We use natural minerals, weather, humidity, or anything, which is why it's an eco-friendly material." The focus on sustainability extends beyond traditional building materials. The Consultants for Water and Environmental Technology presented solutions for waste management and water recycling.

Mahmoud Shehadeh, representing the company, displayed two key products. The first is a food waste disposer that grinds food scraps into a slurry, which can then be de-watered and



used as fertiliser. The second is a "grey water" system. "We take water from showers and sinks, put it in a device, and make it suitable for agriculture," he explained.

In the energy sector, EVER GREEN is tackling the challenge of power consumption.

Farah Qaqish, from the company, discussed their focus on renewable energy and energy efficiency contracts. She mentioned a "win-win" model where they replace old appliances at their own expense and recoup the cost from the energy savings.

However, Qaqish noted that recent governmental changes to energy legislation have impacted the industry. She cited a new law that has significantly increased fees for using the national grid, which has limited the financial incentive for businesses to install renewable energy systems.

"Jordan has reached approximately 27 per cent of its energy from renewable sources," Qaqish said, noting that this is a remarkable figure for the region. "But we've reached a point where the state has decided to slow down

a bit by reducing the incentives."

International players are also part of Jordan's green transformation. Tarkett Group, a French company with a global presence, is showcasing its commitment to sustainable flooring.

Raina Farhat, a representative for the group, stated that all of their 35 factories are focused on being "eco-friendly and sustainable". She noted that their products contain a minimum of 30 per cent recycled content and are made using clean energy.

"We use natural materials," Farhat said, "and we have both post-consumer and pre-consumer recycling. This means we take back materials after they've been used and recycle them to be used again."

She also highlighted an innovative use of a by-product from water purification to create the backing for their carpets, further demonstrating the circular economy in action.

The GREEN INTERBUILD Exhibition proves that Jordan is not just adopting green technologies but is actively innovating and leading in the region, with local and international companies collaborating to build a more sustainable future.

## Fitch downgrades France's credit rating in new debt blow

PARIS (AFP) — French politicians sounded the alarm after the Fitch agency downgraded the country's credit rating, with the outgoing interior minister on Saturday blaming the move on "decades of fiscal mismanagement".

The US ratings agency, one of the top global institutions gauging the financial solidity of sovereign borrowers, downgraded France late Friday on its ability to pay back debts, from "AA-" to "A+".

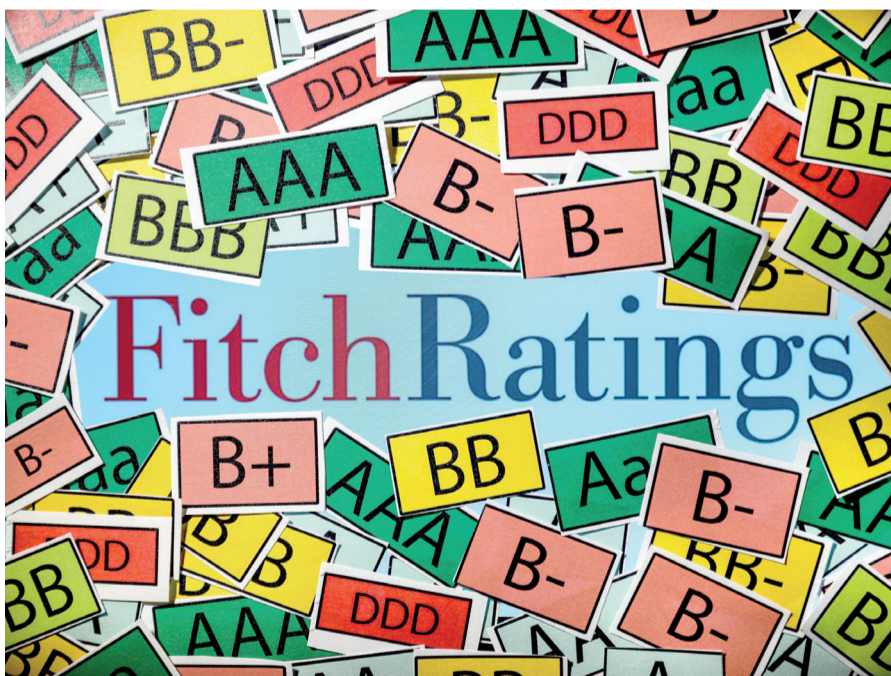
It also said France's debt mountain would keep rising until 2027 unless urgent action was taken.

The downgrade comes just days after Francois Bayrou resigned as prime minister after losing a parliamentary confidence vote over disagreements on how to put the country's strained public finances in order.

Outgoing Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau said on Saturday France needs to "get back on track", or the situation will be more painful in future.

"The downgrade of France's credit rating is a punishment not only for the chronic instability sought by the architects of chaos, but also for decades of fiscal mismanagement and social-statist policies," Retailleau said on X.

Following the an-



This illustration photo taken in Toulouse on March 18, shows a screen displaying the logo of the rating agency Fitch Ratings and signs of the ratings used by rating agencies

nouncement late Friday evening, Bayrou said on X that France was "a country whose 'elites' lead it to reject the truth [and] is condemned to pay the price".

Bayrou lost a parliamentary confidence vote over an attempt to get an austerity budget adopted.

He had sought major spending cuts in a bid to cut the French deficit and debt.

The downgrade will further complicate the task of new Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu, probably heading a minority government, of drawing up a budget for next year.

"The government's defeat in a confidence

vote illustrates the increased fragmentation and polarisation of domestic politics," Fitch said in a statement.

"This instability weakens the political system's capacity to deliver substantial fiscal consolidation," it added, saying it was unlikely the fiscal deficit would be cut to three per cent of GDP by 2029, as the outgoing government had wanted.

Outgoing Economy Minister Eric Lombard acknowledged the agency's move, but insisted on the "solidity" of the French economy.

A rating downgrade typically raises the risk premium investors demand of a

government to buy sovereign bonds — although some financial experts had suggested the debt market had already priced in an expected downgrade for France.

On Tuesday, the return on French 10-year government bonds, known as the yield, rose to 3.47 per cent, close to that of Italy, one of the eurozone's worst performers.

### Unclear horizon

Rising yields would translate into higher costs for servicing France's debt, which Bayrou warned was already at an "unbearable" level.

Since French Presi-

dent Emmanuel Macron's allies in parliament have no overall majority, they will likely have to make compromises that could undermine any drive to slash spending and raise taxes — with Lecornu's job potentially also on the line.

France's budget deficit represented 5.8 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) last year, and its debt 113 per cent of GDP.

This compares with eurozone ceilings of three per cent for the deficit, and 60 per cent for debt.

"Fitch projects debt to increase to 121 per cent of GDP in 2027 from 113.2 per cent in 2024, without a clear horizon for debt stabilisation in subsequent years," the agency said.

"France's rising public indebtedness constrains the capacity to respond to new shocks without further deterioration of public finances."

France is still cautiously targeting economic growth this year.

The INSEE national statistics bureau said Thursday that GDP was projected to grow by 0.8 per cent for 2025, 0.1 points more than the previous government's estimate.

Rival agency S&P Global is due to update its own sovereign rating for France in November.

## AstraZeneca pauses £200m UK research site expansion

LONDON (AFP) — British pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca has paused a planned £200-million (\$271-million) expansion of its research site in Cambridge, eastern England, in the latest blow for inward investment in the UK.

It follows the company in January abandoning plans to build a £450-million vaccine plant in north-west England and comes days after US pharma group Merck dropped plans to build a \$1.4-billion research centre in Britain.

Merck blamed the country's "lack of investment" in the sector

and its drugs prices.

An AstraZeneca spokesperson said in a short statement late on Friday that the firm's management "constantly reassesses the investment needs of our company and can confirm our expansion in Cambridge is paused".

"We have no further comment to make," the spokesperson added.

The decision is a fresh blow to Prime Minister Keir Starmer's embattled centre-left Labour government, as it struggles to boost Britain's sluggish economy.

Critics argue high taxes and a lack of subsidies and invest-

ment are hindering foreign investment across various sectors.

However, the world's biggest pharmaceutical groups have this year come under intense pressure from US President Donald Trump to invest in America or see their production in other countries hit with swingeing tariffs.

AstraZeneca announced in July it would invest \$50 billion in the United States by 2030, with plans to boost its manufacturing and research operations there, including by building a multi-billion-dollar factory in Virginia.

### MARKET

## US stocks mixed as investors look forward to Fed meeting

NEW YORK (AFP) — Wall Street stocks closed mixed on Friday as investors look ahead to the Federal Reserve's interest rate decision next week, with strong expectations of a rate cut.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.6 per cent to 45,834.22, while the broad-based S&P 500 Index was flat at 6,584.29.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite Index climbed 0.5 per cent to 22,141.10.

A University of Michigan survey showed on

Friday that consumer sentiment retreated in early September, particularly among lower and middle income consumers.

The report came on the heels of inflation data that met analysts' expectations, alongside numbers signaling weakening in the employment market.

All of these have added to conviction that the US central bank will opt for a rate reduction of 25 basis points at the end of its two-day meeting on Wednesday, bolstering markets.

"It really is all about the Fed" next week, said Christopher Low of FHN Financial.

While investors have priced in a rate cut, all eyes are on guidance from the central bank and how much the Fed is shifting its focus from curbing inflation to supporting the cooling jobs market.

"In addition to that, we will have a new Fed economic forecast," Low said. "We're going to want to try to gauge how many cuts they're thinking of in the future."

# Bezzecchi wins San Marino MotoGP sprint as Marc Marquez crashes out

## TENNIS

### Collignon stuns De Minaur as Belgium take 2-0 Davis Cup lead over Australia

SYDNEY (AFP) — Raphael Collignon stunned World No.8 Alex De Minaur on Saturday for the biggest win of his career as Belgium took a 2-0 lead over Australia in their Davis Cup second round qualifier. The 23-year-old, ranked 91, overcame severe cramping at Ken Rosewall Arena in Sydney to score a 7-5, 3-6, 6-3 upset after a 3hr 12min epic. Belgium number one Zizou Bergs then beat Jordan Thompson 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 in the other singles rubber. It leaves 28-time champions Australia, who were runners-up in 2022 and 2023 and semifinalists last year, needing to win both reverse singles and the doubles on Sunday. Collignon was always going to be a tricky proposition for De Minaur after posting a career-best win over world number 12 Casper Ruud at the just-completed US Open en route to the third round. Beating the Australian was his biggest scalp so far. "It feels amazing, I thought I wouldn't be able to finish the match because I got cramp so bad at the beginning of the third," said Collignon.

## RUGBY

### Carreras boots Argentina to nervy 28-26 win over Australia

SYDNEY (AFP) — Santiago Carreras landed 23 points with the boot to drive Argentina past Australia 28-26 Saturday as the resilient Pumas hung on to avenge a last-gasp defeat a week ago. In a pressure-cooker Sydney atmosphere, the hosts rallied from 28-7 down with three late tries to set up a grandstand Rugby Championship finish before running out of time. Julian Montoya, in his 112th Test, and 50th as skipper, dotted down for Argentina's only try with the nerveless Carreras nailing the conversion and seven penalties. "I'm just grateful to play with this jersey," said Montoya. "This time we won, but I think we make it tough for ourselves sometimes. Australia is a great team and I'm really proud with the way that we fought. Still a lot of things to improve, but we need to enjoy winning as well." Argentina fully deserved victory, with ill-discipline costing Australia. The hosts conceded seven penalties in a sloppy first-half, and 14 overall, while giving away far too many turnovers, before the late tries ensured a tense finale.

MISANO ADRIATICO, Italy (AFP) — Marco Bezzecchi won the San Marino MotoGP sprint race on Saturday after Marc Marquez crashed out just as he looked like further extending his massive championship lead.

Aprilia rider Bezzecchi completed a perfect day on his home Marco Simoncelli circuit in Misano Adriatico by winning from pole position and bringing joy to the Italian crowd, before celebrating with motorcycling icon Valentino Rossi and Formula One star Lando Norris.

He took to the podium with a wooden leg given to him by a fan, a reference to cult Italian comedy film "Three Men and a Leg" which Bezzecchi also referenced on his helmet.

But the 26-year-old claimed maximum 12 points for the win thanks to Marc Marquez sliding off the track on lap six, only moments after the six-time MotoGP champion had taken the race lead.

The Spaniard had already charged past Fabio Quartararo and his brother Alex Marquez from fourth on the grid in the opening moments of the race, and once he was ahead it looked like a matter of time before he claimed his 15th win from 16 of this season's sprint races.

"It was a fantastic Saturday, very happy to grab the sprint win, I don't really remember my last one, so very happy,



Aprilia Racing team's Italian MotoGP rider Marco Bezzecchi (right) celebrates after winning the San Marino MotoGP Sprint Race at the Misano World Circuit Marco Simoncelli, in Misano Adriatico, northern Italy, on Saturday

very happy," said Bezzecchi, whose last sprint win came at Assen in 2023.

"The race was not perfect because we had some issues during the race, but even having these problems I was able to have a good pace and I knew that Marco was on the limit, so very happy, very happy, I gave my all."

However, regardless of what happens in Sunday's GP Marc Marquez

will have a chance to win the title at the Japan MotoGP in a fortnight and move level on seven championship triumphs with his great rival Rossi.

### Alex Marquez cuts gap

His crash most benefited Alex Marquez who finished second and cut his sibling's lead at the top of the standings to 174 points.

He also moved 77 ahead of Marc Marquez's

struggling teammate Francesco Bagnaia who finished over 16 seconds off the pace in 13th and is looking over his shoulder in third place in the championship as Bezzecchi now trails him by 28 points.

"I lost the victory on the start, I was not aggressive enough. And at that point I lost a little bit the way, but later on, you know, I was there behind Marco," said Alex Mar-

quez. "They were slightly faster than me, I should say, to be fair. But I was keeping the lap time quite constant, quite good, so happy for that."

"And yeah, tomorrow we'll try a little bit harder, a little bit better."

Marc Marquez's crash brought cheers from a chunk of the crowd even though he rides for Ducati as many Italian motorcycling fans have refused to forgive

him for, as they see it, from actively working to stop Rossi from winning what would have been his eighth MotoGP title in 2015.

Rossi has openly called Marquez a "dirty" rider for crashing into him in that year's penultimate Malaysian MotoGP, after which Rossi was punished by having to start the final race of that year at the back of the grid, virtually guaranteeing Jorge Lorenzo the title.

# LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

# Gravitational waves from black hole smash confirm Hawking theory

By Frédéric Bourigault  
Agence France-Presse

PARIS — Ripples in spacetime sent hurtling through the universe when two black holes smash into each other — a phenomenon predicted by Albert Einstein — have confirmed a theory proposed by fellow physicist Stephen Hawking over 50 years ago, scientists announced on Wednesday.

These ripples, which are called gravitational waves, were detected for the first time in 2015 by the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) in the United States.

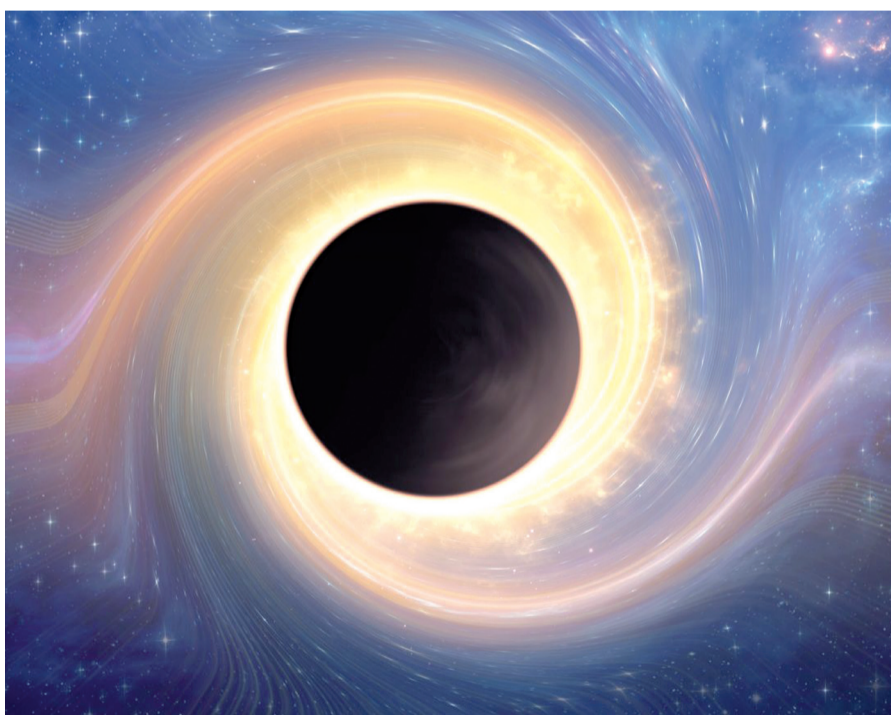
In his 1916 theory of general relativity, Einstein predicted that the cataclysmic merger of two black holes would produce gravitational waves that would ripple across the universe and eventually arrive at Earth.

On January 14 this year, LIGO detected another of these signals from the distant universe.

### That is no longer such a surprise.

Scientists in the LVC collaboration — a vast network of scientists whose facilities includes gravitational wave detectors in Italy and Japan — now record a new black hole merger roughly once every three days.

However January was "the loudest gravitational wave event



Gravitational waves are now spotted routinely

we have detected to date," LIGO member Geraint Pratten of the University of Birmingham, England, said in a statement.

### From a whisper to a shout

"It was like a whisper becoming a shout," added the co-author of a new study in the Physical Review Letters.

The latest event bore striking similarities to the first one detected a decade ago.

Both involved collisions of black holes with masses of between 30-40 times that of our Sun. And both smash-ups occurred around 1.3 billion light years away.

But thanks to techno-

logical improvements over the years, scientists are now able to greatly reduce the background noise, giving them far clearer data.

This allowed the researchers to confirm a theory by another great physicist.

In 1971, Stephen Hawking predicted that a black hole's event horizon — the area from which nothing including light can escape — cannot shrink.

This means that when two black holes merge, the new monster they create must have the same or larger surface area than the pair started out with.

Scientists analysing January's merger, called GW250114, were able to show that Hawking was

right.

### Ringing like a struck bell

The black holes collectively started out at 240,000 square kilometres wide, which is roughly the size of the United Kingdom.

But after the collision, the resulting mega-black hole took up 400,000 square kilometres — about the size of Sweden.

The California Institute of Technology said that working out the final merged surface area was "the trickiest part of this type of analysis".

"The surface areas of pre-merger black holes can be more readily gleaned as the pair spiral together, roiling space-time and produc-

ing gravitational waves," it said in a statement.

But the signal gets muddier once the black holes start combining into a single new monster.

This period is called the "ringdown phase", because the merged black hole rings like a struck bell — a phenomenon that Einstein also predicted.

The scientists were able to measure different frequencies emanating from this rung bell, allowing them to determine the size of the new post-merger black hole.

### Kerr theory vindicated

This also enabled them to confirm the event aligned with another theory, made by New Zealand mathematician Roy Kerr in 1963.

Kerr predicted that "two black holes with the same mass and spin are mathematically identical", a feature unique to black holes, Maximiliano Isi of Columbia University said in a statement.

Gregorio Carullo of the University of Birmingham said that "given the clarity of the signal produced by GW250114, for the first time we could pick out two 'tones' from the black hole voices and confirm that they behave according to Kerr's prediction."

Scientists are working to find out more about black hole mergers, with several new gravitational wave detectors planned for the coming years — including one in India.



Vienna State Opera building

# Vienna State Opera opens season with free, all-star gala concert

VIENNA, (AFP) — No dress code, no stiff atmosphere and no entry fees: Thousands flocked to a Viennese park as the Vienna State Opera opened its 2025-26 season with a star-studded open-air gala concert for the first time.

The free, open-air concert was the state opera's latest effort to "open the house to all — especially new listeners", it said in a statement.

Among the world-class singers performing were Latvian mezzo-soprano Elna Garanca, German tenor Jonas Kaufmann, Finnish soprano Camilla Nylund and French tenor Benjamin Bernheim.

"I'm very happy that I can be a part of such an event because our goal is to communicate with people, regardless their race, nationality, the political situation, and the cultural differenc-

es," Garanca told AFP.

"I find it really great that the house makes a step towards the audience instead of all the time waiting for them," said the world-renowned mezzo. She hoped the gala concert would become a "yearly tradition", she said.

Many visitors sat on picnic blankets or chairs as they enjoyed the concert with friends and family.

### 'Eager to learn'

"We have no clue who is performing tonight, but we're eager to learn — and I like classical music, I played when I was a kid," Jeremy Greoire, a Canadian ice hockey player who recently moved to Vienna, told AFP ahead of the concert.

Embassy employee Thanthida Helbardt, 43, who originally hails from Thailand, told

AFP she learned about the concert online and decided to give it a try.

Even before the concert began, the packed park was closed to more visitors meaning many would be concert-goers were turned away for security reasons.

The concert included audience favourites from famous operas such as Puccini's "Tosca", Wagner and Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro" as well as Strauss pieces.

Austrian broadcaster ORF aired the concert with a one-hour delay Sunday evening.

The gala also marks the Vienna State Opera's 70th anniversary.

In recent years, opera houses across the globe have tried different measures to draw in new opera-goers to a world that is often considered high-brow and old-fashioned.