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Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday chairs a meeting of the Investment Council

Hassan chairs Investment Council meeting, reviews programmes to enhance business environment

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday chaired a meeting of the Investment Council to review progress on the implementation of programmes aimed at enhancing the investment environment, in line with the objectives of the Economic Modernisation Vision.

During the meeting, Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh briefed attendees on the main measures taken to encourage both local and foreign investment, strengthen public-private partnerships and bolster the competitiveness of the national economy.

He also highlighted sustained efforts to enhance Jordan's standing in global indices assessing the business and investment environment.

The Council also discussed progress in improving the investor experience and updating legislation regulating the investment environment, including a proposed amendment to the Investment Environment Regulation.

The reforms aim to simplify procedures, accelerate transaction processing, and strengthen the incentives framework in line with international best practices.

The discussions also focused on the importance of accelerating digital transformation in investment services and the need to continue updating the investment opportunities map, to enhance communication, facilitate access to data, and strengthen overall investment readiness.

The meeting also addressed preparations for the Jordanian-European Investment Conference scheduled for next April, which is seen as a strategic platform to strengthen partnership with the European Union and attract high-quality investment.

King, Albania president hold talks in Amman on expanding cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah held talks with Albania President Bajram Begaj at Al Husseinia Palace on Sunday, during which they discussed ways to expand cooperation and enhance relations between Jordan and Albania.

During the talks, attended by Her Majesty Queen Rania and Albania's First Lady Armanda Begaj, His Majesty said this visit is an opportunity to further strengthen relations between the two countries, as last year saw an exchange of visits and coordination that culminated in a round of Aqaba Process meetings in Jordan on the topic of interfaith dialogue, according to a Royal Court statement.

The King expressed best wishes to the Albanian people on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, which he said serves as a reminder of the values shared by both countries and their joint efforts to promote harmony and dialogue.



His Majesty King Abdullah and Albania President Bajram Begaj hold talks on Sunday at Al Husseinia Palace to discuss ways to expand cooperation and advance friendly relations between Jordan and Albania

Speaking about the situation in the region, His Majesty commended Albania's support for efforts to restore stability, achieve peace and realise the

two-state solution, the statement said.

During the talks, attended by HRH Prince Ghazi, His Majesty's chief adviser for religious and cultural

affairs and personal envoy, the two leaders affirmed that dialogue and peaceful solutions are the only way to achieve regional calm and resolve conflicts.

The King also highlighted the need to respect the sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of states.

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Jordan, Arab, Islamic states condemn US envoy comments on Israeli Mideast expansion

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan, along with Arab and Islamic countries have condemned comments by US ambassador over Israeli control over much of the Middle East.

The condemnation and "profound concern" was expressed in a joint statement signed by the foreign ministers of Jordan, UAE, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bahrain, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Egypt together with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The foreign ministers affirm their countries' "categorical rejection of such dangerous and inflammatory remarks, which constitute a flagrant violation of the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and pose a grave threat to the security and stability of the region".



File photo

The US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee has said it would be "fine" if Israel took control of a vast swathe of the Middle East, during a recent interview with US commentator Tucker Carlson.

In the joint statement, the ministries stressed that these statements directly contradict the vision put forward by US President Donald Trump,

as well as the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict, which, they said, are based on containing escalation and creating a political horizon for a comprehensive settlement that ensures the Palestinian people have their own independent state.

They said that the plan is grounded in promoting tolerance and peace-

ful coexistence, and that remarks seeking to legitimise control over the lands of others undermine these objectives, fuel tensions, and constitute incitement rather than advancing peace.

The ministries reaffirmed that Israel has no sovereignty "whatsoever" over the Occupied Palestinian Territory or any other occupied Arab

lands".

They reiterated their "firm rejection" of any attempts to annex the West Bank or separate it from the Gaza Strip and their strong opposition to the expansion of settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

They also express their "categorical" rejection of any threat to the sovereignty of Arab states.

They also warned that the continuation of Israel's expansionist policies and unlawful measures will only inflame violence and conflict in the region and undermine the prospects for peace and called for an end to these incendiary statements.

The top diplomats underscored their countries' commitment to the "inalienable" right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of their independent state along the lines of 4 June 1967, and the end of the occupation of all Arab lands.



AFP photo

In this handout photograph released by the US Navy on February 20, 2026, and taken on February 15, 2026, shows an E-2D Hawkeye, attached to Airborne Command & Control Squadron (VAW) 117, launching from the flight deck of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) in the Arabian Sea

FM says Iran has right to self-defence if US attacks

TEHRAN/ WASHINGTON (AFP) — Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned on Sunday that his country would be forced to strike back at US interests in the

Middle East in response to any renewed attack.

"If the US attacks us, then we have every right to defend ourselves. If the US attacks us, that is the act of aggression.

What we do in response is an act of self-defence," Araghchi said in an interview with the US network CBS.

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DIPLOMACY

Jordan reaffirms it will not be launch point for military action against Iran

Analysts say Jordan's firm position aligns with its broader diplomatic line, call for dialogue to resolve disputes

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — Jordan has reaffirmed that it will not be a battlefield for any regional conflict or a launch point for military action against Iran.

Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi had earlier conveyed this position directly to his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi.

According to a Foreign Ministry statement, Safadi stressed the need to rely on diplomacy and dialogue to resolve the nuclear file.

He reaffirmed that Jordan will not be a battlefield for any regional conflict or a launch point for military action against Iran. He also underlined that the Kingdom will not allow any violation of its airspace or threat to its security.

Safadi also said that Jordan will not allow any party to violate its airspace or threaten its security and the safety of its citizens, adding that the Kingdom will respond with all available means to any attempt to breach

its airspace.

For his part, Araghchi commended Jordan's positions and efforts to promote security and stability in the region, the statement said.

The two top diplomats agreed to maintain communication and consultation on regional developments and ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at reducing tensions and activating dialogue.

The United States has reinforced its military presence in the region in recent weeks. Two aircraft

carriers remain deployed in Middle Eastern waters. Additional forces and assets have been positioned as part of deterrence measures.

Other regional states signalled similar caution. Saudi Arabia expressed a comparable stance. Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman said the Kingdom respects Iran's sovereignty and will not allow its airspace or territory to be used for any military action against Iran or for attacks by any party, regardless of



File photo

destination.

Meanwhile, a senior Iranian official told Reuters

on Sunday that Tehran and Washington hold differing views on the scope

and mechanism of easing, suspending or lifting sanctions in exchange

for restrictions on Iran's nuclear programme. The official said further talks are scheduled for early March, amid growing fears of a potential military confrontation.

Political analyst Amer Sabaileh said Jordan's position reflects its strategic position on regional disputes.

He explained that Jordan has made it clear that it will not allow the use of its territory to launch attacks against any country.

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Photo by Freda Riese

The French Institute in Amman opens a new art exhibition titled 'Searching for Suhail', as a part of the Jordan Stars Heritage Preservation Project

'Searching for Suhail' exhibition highlights Jordanian star heritage

By Freda Riese

AMMAN — The French Institute in Amman has recently opened a new art exhibition titled "Searching for Suhail", as a part of the Jordan Stars Heritage Preservation Project.

Suhail is the Arab name of the star known internationally as Canopus.

The project aims to preserve Bedouin culture and knowledge on the night sky and save the heritage and knowledge from extinction.

It was initiated by science communicator and stargazing guide Abdullah Shamali and camp owner and guide Ahmad Marayeh.

Marayeh, who runs the Rum Planet Eco Camp in Wadi Rum grew up under the clear sky in the desert, where he learnt how to use the night sky to find his way around, taking care of livestock.

Local artist Naji Abbadi brought the stories and narratives to life through his art. Through Abbadi's work, visitors are introduced to traditional tales, social practices and cultural symbols, including traditions like the "fright bowl", where the night sky was used to calm

frightened children. Another popular ancient belief claimed that a celestial whale was swallowing the moon during lunar eclipse and stealing its glow.

People rushed to the streets, banking pots and chanting to save their moon from the whale. With the spread of scientific understanding these rituals faded and the memory of it is carried by only a few elders.

The initiative focuses on three main objectives, identifying heritage holders, documenting their knowledge and oral narratives and sharing this knowledge to younger generations to ensure its continuity. Shamali described the project as "a race with time", since there are only few heritage holders left, that are the elderly.

These heritage holders, Bedouins that have lived in Wadi Rum their whole life, possess extensive knowledge of the night sky and its stories.

The way the Bedouins used the night sky differs from scientific astrology. The night sky was used for navigation purposes and timekeeping, but also for ancient beliefs and social practices. "It's

a heritage story," said Shamali.

The decline of this heritage is linked to light pollution and modern lifestyles changes including new technology like GPS that does not require the stars to find one's way in the desert.

Shamali stressed the importance of their project: "This knowledge has to be preserved and the first people that will benefit from it are the Bedouins themselves."

As an example, he names the Almiladah star "This star was a big star of Jordanian heritage, but now it's almost forgotten." It was used for navigating in the desert, but now technology like GPS has taken over this role and few people know about Almiladah star.

Shamali and Marayeh want to change that with their project and bring Bedouin heritage to life again. "The Bedouins have a long history with rich culture." The exhibition is just the start of a bigger project, to spread awareness about Jordanian heritage.

The exhibition is open until the end of the month at the French Institute in Jabal Al Luweibdeh.

Media Commission bans publishing content exploiting children, persons with disabilities

AMMAN (JT) — The Media Commission issued a circular to all licensed media outlets prohibiting the publication or broadcast of advertisements, programmes or media content that exploit humanitarian cases through emotional appeals, misuse children or persons with disabilities, or infringe on their dignity and privacy.

According to Al Mamlaka TV, the directive was issued at the request of the Ministry of Social Development and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

In its letter, the ministry said that it had monitored media practices involving fundraising and the presentation of humanitarian cases through unlawful methods, prompting a renewed emphasis on full compliance with the legal and humanitarian standards governing such content.



The ministry noted that these practices constitute clear vio-

lations of the Social Development Law, in-

fringe upon the rights of persons with disabilities and contravene the Child Rights

Law, the Cybercrime Law No. 17 of 2023 and the Penal Code No. 16 of 1960 and its amendments, as they undermine human dignity and privacy and exploit humanitarian cases for media or advertising purposes.

It stipulated that prior written approval must be obtained from the ministry before publishing or broadcasting any advertisement, programme or media material related to fundraising, whether in terms of content or format, pursuant to the Fundraising Licensing Regulation No. 24 of 2025 and in line with the Code of Ethics adopted by the Jordan Press Association.

The ministry stressed that the directive applies to all media outlets as well as social media users, warning that any violations will result in full legal accountability in accordance with the legislation in force.

KSrelief clinics at Zaatari camp continue providing health services

AMMAN (JT) — The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief), in cooperation with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO), continues to operate its clinics at Zaatari Refugee Camp as part of an integrated health intervention aimed at improving healthcare services for refugees.

According to a JHCO statement issued on Sunday, and cited by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the ongoing project underscores the sustainable humanitarian partnership between the two sides and responds to growing healthcare needs within the camp.

The initiative serves all age groups, men, women, children and youth, through a comprehensive medical system operating throughout the week.



Petra photo

The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, in cooperation with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation, continues to improve healthcare services for refugees at Zaatari Refugee Camp

The project includes a wide range of specialised clinics, covering general medicine, paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, internal medicine, ear, nose and throat, ophthalmology, dermatology, dentistry, cardiovascular diseases and physiotherapy services.

It also provides essential vaccinations for children and women of child-bearing age.

Support services are available to ensure accurate diagnosis and effective treatment, including a fully equipped laboratory and advanced medical imaging devices such

as X-ray and echocardiography machines, supervised by qualified medical staff and a specialist radiologist.

A central pharmacy provides necessary medications for patients with acute, seasonal and chronic conditions under a system designed to en-

sure continuity of care. Special emphasis is placed on patients with chronic illnesses, with treatment and follow-up services currently provided to more than 1,300 patients, representing over 45 per cent of chronic disease cases in the camp.

All services are delivered by licensed medical teams in accordance with Jordanian law, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other health actors operating in the camp.

Since the onset of the Syrian crisis in 2011, the clinics have played a key role in helping bridge healthcare gaps, expanding access to specialised services and improving living conditions for refugees through a sustainable, needs-based approach.

Who gets to keep history? The politics behind artefact returns

By Sophie Constantin

AMMAN — The Netherlands has returned an artefact to Egypt after investigators determined it had been looted and illegally exported, a case that shows both the growing international movement for repatriation and the persistent legal obstacles that continue to complicate the return of cultural property worldwide.

Dutch authorities handed over the 3,500-year-old stone head, believed to be part of a statue depicting a high-ranking official from the era of Pharaoh Thutmose III, after it was seized during an investigation into its provenance.

The object had surfaced before authorities concluded it had left Egypt unlawfully.

For Egypt, the return represents more than a symbolic gesture. It forms part of a broader state-led effort to recover antiquities smuggled abroad, particularly objects believed to have been trafficked during periods of political instability, including in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising.



Nefertiti Bust in Germany

AFP photo

ten slow, inconsistent, and heavily dependent on diplomacy rather than guaranteed legal mechanisms.

Why repatriation is rarely straightforward

Although international conventions exist to combat the illicit trade in cultural property, they do not function like automatic return systems.

The most widely cited framework, the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Pre-

venting the Illicit Import and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, encourages cooperation between states to prevent trafficking and facilitate returns, but it does not universally compel institutions to surrender objects without a legal process.

In practice, repatriation depends on a combination of evidence, political will and the laws of the country where the artefact is located.

A major obstacle is provenance: The docu-

exists, legal barriers can remain. Some countries have strict museum legislation that limits deaccessioning — meaning state museums cannot permanently remove objects from their collections, even when moral arguments for return are compelling. This is one reason iconic objects such as the Rosetta Stone remain locked in legal limbo, regardless of the growing global pressure for restitution.

A return that reflects a wider shift

The Netherlands' decision aligns with a broader European reassessment of contested collections. The Netherlands has already positioned itself as one of the active European states in the repatriation debate.

In recent years, it returned a significant group of Benin Bronzes to Nigeria — objects taken during British colonial violence in 1897 and dispersed across European museum collections.

The Egyptian case follows the same general pattern: When the evidence of illegal removal is strong and the object's appearance on the market is relatively recent, returns become easier to justify both

legally and publicly.

Moral clarity, legal ambiguity

Many of the world's most famous Egyptian antiquities in European institutions were acquired in the 19th and early 20th centuries under colonial-era conditions: Excavations controlled by foreign powers, unequal agreements and export systems that were technically legal at the time but ethically questionable by current standards.

Repatriation is often discussed as a legal or museum issue, but it is ultimately about power...

This is where repatriation debates become most divisive. Countries of origin argue that these objects were removed through coercive historical structures, even when paperwork exists.

Holding institutions often respond with legal defences, claims of long-term preservation, and the idea of "universal museums" that present world heritage in global capitals.

The result is a two-speed restitution landscape: Looted items with modern paper trails are increasingly returned, while the most iconic pieces, those tied to imperial-era collecting, remain the hardest to reclaim.

Who else is returning objects to Egypt?

Egypt has received artefacts back from several countries in recent years, often through a mix of seizures, diplomatic agreements and museum cooperation. Returns have involved objects intercepted at borders, items recovered from private collections and pieces traced to international auctions.

Countries that have been involved in recent Egyptian returns include the United States and multiple European states, reflecting the scale of the market and the reach of trafficking networks.

However, the international picture remains uneven. Some states have become more proactive in responding to claims, while

others continue to resist, especially when the objects are central to their national museums and public identity.

More than objects

Repatriation is often discussed as a legal or museum issue, but it is ultimately about power: Who has the authority to hold, interpret and profit from cultural heritage.

For Egypt, returns strengthen national narratives and reinforce cultural sovereignty, particularly at a time when the country is expanding its museum infrastructure and tourism ambitions. For European institutions, repatriation raises existential questions about how collections were built and what a museum's role should be in the 21st century.

The Netherlands' return of the statue head is therefore both a concrete act and a political message: A sign that, at least for clearly looted objects, the global direction is shifting.

But it also underscores the uncomfortable truth at the heart of the repatriation debate: The clearer the theft, the easier the return. The older and more historically entangled the acquisition, the harder the road back.

Albanian president tours Roman Theatre, Amman Citadel

AMMAN (JT) — Albanian President Bajram Begaj on Sunday toured the Roman Theatre and the Amman Citadel as part of his official visit to the Kingdom, accompanied by First Lady Armanda Begaj.

At the Roman Theatre, the Albanian president was briefed on the site's historical and touristic significance, highlighting its status as a key civilisational landmark that reflects Amman's rich cultural heritage, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

During his visit to the Amman Citadel, Begaj toured several of its archaeological landmarks and received an overview of the site's historical importance and its role in illustrating the succession of civilisations that inhabited the area over the centuries.

He commended the efforts undertaken to preserve Jordan's national heritage and ensure its protection for future generations.

Begaj expressed admiration for the historical sites, describing them as a testament to the Kingdom's deep-rooted civilisation and stressing the importance of safeguarding



Albanian President Bajram Begaj on Sunday tours the Roman Theatre

cultural heritage as a core component of national identity.

The visit forms part of the Albanian president's official programme in Jordan, which aims to strengthen bilateral relations and expand cooperation across various sectors.

Also on Sunday, the Albanian president visited the King Hussein Bin Talal Mosque,

a site of profound religious and cultural significance.

Upon arrival, President Begaj was received by the Imam of the Hashemite Court, Mohammad Khalaleh, and the Mosque's Imam, Hussein Horani, who provided a detailed briefing on the mosque's architectural features and its

religious and civilisational message, Petra, reported.

The visit serves as a recognition of the mosque's religious and historical status as one of the Kingdom's most prominent Islamic landmarks.

It represents a spiritual and architectural symbol of the values of moderation and tolerance inherent in Islam.

The Albanian president's tour also reflects the "deep-rooted" cultural and religious ties between the Albanian and Jordanian peoples.

It also underscores the commitment of both leaderships to strengthening bridges of civilisational communication and mutual respect in the service of bilateral friendship and cooperation.

RJ tops Oneworld Alliance in punctuality for 2025

AMMAN (JT) — Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) has ranked first among member carriers of the Oneworld Alliance in on-time departure and arrival performance for 2025, achieving an on-time performance rate of 90.9 per cent, according to data released by Cirium and officially recognised by the alliance.

The airline also maintained strong operational performance throughout the year, securing first place in the fourth quarter of 2025 with an on-time performance rate of 90.6 per cent.

The results reflect operational stability and steady improvement over the year, alongside what the carrier described as efficient management of seasonal operational challenges, according to an RJ statement.

The ranking is based on the global on-time performance standard, which measures flights that depart or arrive within 15 minutes of their scheduled time.

RJ said the achievement underscores its commitment to delivering reliable service and ensuring smooth operations across its network.

RJ Vice Chairman



Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) ranks first among member carriers of the Oneworld Alliance in on-time departure and arrival performance for 2025

and CEO Samer Majali said the milestone highlights the efficiency of the airline's operational system and the discipline of its procedures, as well as continued investment in talent and performance development in line with passenger expectations.

He added that the results place the airline among leading global carriers in both ground and air operations, particularly as it introduces a new fleet described as among the most modern in the region.

Royal Jordanian's performance also contributed to strengthening oneworld's position as the world's leading

airline alliance in on-time performance for 2025.

The carrier noted that the achievement reflects its role within the alliance as a strategic partner and a key operator in terms of efficiency and operational discipline.

According to Cirium's 2025 report, RJ also ranked second in on-time arrival performance across the Middle East and Africa region, recording a rate exceeding 90 per cent. The ranking placed the airline among the world's top five carriers in one of the air transport industry's most closely watched performance indicators.

CRIME

PSD launches CCTV link for remote child testimony in criminal cases

AMMAN (JT) — The Public Security Directorate (PSD), through its Family and Juvenile Protection Department and in cooperation with the National Council for Family Affairs, has launched a closed-circuit television (CCTV) linkage system enabling the remote hearing of testimonies from child victims and witnesses of crimes, as well as victims of domestic violence.

The initiative is being implemented in partnership with the Jordanian Judicial Council and the Ministry of Justice, with support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The introduction of the system underscores the PSD's ongoing efforts to modernise child protection



services and enhance institutional coordination among relevant entities, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for children throughout all stages of litigation,

according to a PSD statement.

Under the new mechanism, children can provide testimony in a secure setting that takes into account their psychological

well-being, shielding them from direct confrontation with the alleged perpetrator and minimising the stress associated with court proceedings.

The measure aims to safeguard the best interests of the child and strengthen protection and care frameworks in line with internationally recognised best practices.

The directorate noted that the Family and Juvenile Protection Department, in coordination with its partners, has conducted specialised training programmes on operating the system and integrating it with the Grand Criminal Court, the Public Prosecution Department and other courts and administrative bodies to ensure readiness and effective implementation across judicial procedures.

German ambassador commends Jordan's role in Gaza humanitarian operations

AMMAN (JT) — German Ambassador to Jordan Bertram von Moltke on Sunday delivered a lecture on "German Foreign Policy" to participants of the 23rd National Defence Programme at the Royal Jordanian National Defence College.

The event was attended by the College's Commandant, board members, and faculty, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

During his address, Moltke highlighted that tackling complex global and regional challenges requires sustained dialogue, coordinated international efforts, and long-term strategic planning, while safeguarding national interests to maintain regional stability and global peace.

He outlined Germany's and Europe's security and strategic challenges, the regional and international threats they face, and



German Ambassador to Jordan Bertram von Moltke on Sunday delivers a lecture on at the Royal Jordanian National Defence College

stressed the importance of international cooperation in addressing nuclear proliferation and regional conflicts. He also noted the critical role of major powers in confronting these issues.

Moltke commended Jordan's strategic role and the Jordanian-German partnership, noting that Germany's

active membership in NATO advances the shared interests of the United States and Europe and strengthens the ability to respond to global and regional crises.

He added that the partnership supports regional security, counter-terrorism efforts and moderation, while contributing to

conflict resolution.

"Jordan's humanitarian efforts during the Gaza conflict, including medical aid and organised evacuation operations, underscore the Kingdom's role as a key hub for international cooperation in addressing humanitarian and security crises," Moltke said.

SUPPLY

12,000 tonnes of Tunisian olive oil imported to meet demand — minister

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah on Sunday said that 300,000 containers of olive oil, each with a 5-litre capacity, will be supplied to the Civil and Military Consumer Corporations starting late February and throughout March.

In statements to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Qudah noted that additional quantities will be imported to meet public demand, supplemented by supplies secured by the private sector.

The minister said that the Ministry of Agriculture has granted approvals for the



Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah on Sunday says that 300,000 containers of olive oil, each with a 5-litre capacity, will be supplied to the Civil and Military Consumer Corporations

import of approximately 12,000 tonnes

of Tunisian olive oil. This move aims to

address market needs and compensate for

a shortage resulting from a decline in local production, ensuring the commodity remains available to citizens at affordable prices.

Qudah underscored that both the Civil and Military Consumer Corporations have established a mechanism to streamline the purchase of imported olive oil and prevent the overcrowding witnessed at retail outlets in recent days.

He added that importation processes are ongoing through coordinated arrangements between the Ministry of Agriculture and the private sector.

Army foils drug smuggling attempt using balloons

AMMAN (JT) — The Eastern Military Zone on Sunday foiled an attempt to smuggle a quantity of narcotics carried by electronically guided balloons across its area of responsibility.

Border Guard units detected the balloons through surveillance, intercepted them and forced the payload to drop inside Jordanian territory in coordination with security agencies and the Anti-Narcotics Department.

The seized materials were referred to the relevant authorities to take the necessary legal measures, according to an army statement.

In a separate incident, the Northern Military Zone on Sat-



The Eastern Military Zone on Sunday foils an attempt to smuggle a quantity of narcotics carried by electronically guided balloons

urday thwarted an infiltration attempt by three individuals along one of its border fronts within its area of responsibility after they tried to cross the

border illegally. Rules of engagement were applied, and the individuals were apprehended and referred to the relevant authorities.



AFP photo

Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, locked in a conflict with the regular army, said on Saturday that they had seized the town of Al Tina on the Chad border

Sudan's RSF says it took town on Chad border

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), locked in a conflict with the regular army, said on Saturday that they had seized the town of Al Tina on the Chad border.

Previously, the town was thought to have been held by the Joint Forces, allied to the army, which has been at war with the RSF since April 2023.

Alongside a statement posted to social media, the RSF shared a video of some of its

fighters celebrating under a banner reading "District of Al Tina".

The army did not immediately comment, but the pro-army governor of Darfur, Minni Minnawi, denounced what he called "repeated criminal behaviour embodying the worst offences against the innocent".

Since it broke out, Sudan's civil war has killed tens of thousands of people and forced 11 million to flee their homes, triggering what the UN

says is one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

On Thursday, The United Nations' independent fact-finding mission on Sudan said the RSF's storming of Darfur hub El Fasher last October bore "the hallmarks of genocide".

Since the fall of El Fasher, the paramilitaries have carried out several operations near the Chad border and at the end of last year two Chadian soldiers were killed.

Hamas official says group in final stage of choosing new chief

CAIRO (AFP) — A senior Hamas official told AFP on Sunday that the Palestinian Islamist movement was in the final phase of selecting a new leader, with two prominent figures competing for the position.

Hamas recently completed the formation of a new Shura Council, a consultative body largely composed of religious scholars, as well as a new political bureau, the official said.

Since the war in Gaza began following Hamas's October 7, 2023 surprise attack on Israel, Israeli forces have killed several of the movement's leaders, including two former chiefs.

"The movement has completed its internal elections in the three regions and has reached the final stage of selecting the head of the political bureau," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to speak publicly.

He added that the race for the group's leadership is now between Khaled Meshaal and Khalil Al Hayya.

A second Hamas source confirmed the development.

Despite a US-brokered ceasefire that entered its second phase last month, violence has continued in Gaza, with Israel and Hamas blaming each other for violating the agreement.



AFP photo

Tents are erected to house displaced Palestinian families in the Al Zahara neighbourhood, north of the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central of Gaza Strip on Saturday

Members of the council are elected every four years by representatives from Hamas's three branches: The Gaza Strip, the occupied West Bank and the movement's external leadership.

Hamas prisoners in Israeli jails are also eligible to vote.

The council subsequently elects the political bureau, which in turn selects the head of the movement.

A third Hamas source said the new leader will serve for only "one year... a transitional period".

Thousands of Hamas members voted to choose the council and the political bureau, the source added, without specifying

how the vote was conducted.

"The primary goal of the process was to renew internal legitimacy and fill leadership vacancies," the source added.

The new leader will need to navigate between international calls, led by the United States and Israel, for the group to disarm and resistance to that demand from its armed wing, which fought Israeli forces in Gaza.

Hamas, however, said it would surrender its weapons to a Palestinian authority in Gaza under certain conditions.

Both Meshaal and Hayya have years of experience within the movement.

Hayya, 65, a Gaza native

and Hamas's chief negotiator in ceasefire talks, has held senior roles since at least 2006, according to the US-based NGO the Counter Extremism Project (CEP).

Meshaal, who led the political bureau from 2004 to 2017, has never lived in Gaza. He was born in the West Bank in 1956.

He joined Hamas in Kuwait and later lived in Jordan, Syria and Qatar. The CEP says he oversaw Hamas's evolution into a political-military hybrid.

He currently heads the movement's diaspora office.

Last month, a Hamas source told AFP that Hayya enjoys backing from the group's armed wing,

the Ezzedine Al Qassem Brigades.

After Israel killed former Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in July 2024, the group chose its then-Gaza chief Yahya Sinwar as his successor.

Israel accused Sinwar of masterminding the October 7 attack.

He too was killed by Israeli forces in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, three months after Haniyeh's assassination.

Hamas then opted for an interim five-member leadership committee based in Qatar, postponing the appointment of a single leader until elections, given the risk of the new chief being targeted by Israel.

Brazil's Lula urges Trump to treat all countries equally

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Sunday urged Donald Trump to treat all countries equally after the US leader imposed a 15 per cent tariff on imports following an adverse Supreme Court ruling.

"I want to tell the US President Donald Trump that we don't want a new Cold War. We don't want interference in any other country, we want all countries to be treated equally," Lula told reporters in New Delhi.

The conservative-majority Supreme Court on Friday ruled six to three that a 1977 law Trump has relied on to slap sudden levies on individual countries, upending global trade, "does not authorise the president to impose tariffs".

Lula said he would not like to react to Su-



AFP photo

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva addresses a press conference in New Delhi on Sunday

preme Court decisions of another country, but hoped that Brazil's relations with the United States "will go back to normalcy" soon.

The veteran leftist Brazilian leader is expected to travel to Washington next month for a meeting with Trump.

"I am convinced that Brazil-US relation will go back to normalcy after our conversation," Lula, 80, said, adding Brazil only wanted to

"live in peace, generate jobs and improve lives of our people".

Ties between Brazil and the United States appear to be on the mend after months of animosity between Washington and Brasilia.

As a result, Trump's administration has exempted key Brazilian exports from 40 per cent tariffs that had been imposed on the South American country last year.

"The world doesn't need more turbulence, it needs peace," said Lula who arrived in India on Wednesday to attend a summit on artificial intelligence.

On Saturday, India and Brazil agreed to boost cooperation on critical minerals and rare earths and signed a raft of other deals after a meeting between Lula and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



AFP photo

Afghan residents dig mass graves for the victims, killed in an overnight Pakistani air strike, during a funeral ceremony at the Girdi Kas village in Bihud district, Nangarhar province on Sunday

Pakistan launches deadly strikes in Afghanistan

BIHSUD, Afghanistan (AFP) — Pakistan said Sunday it launched multiple air strikes targeting militants in neighbouring Afghanistan, where the government reported children were among dozens of people killed and wounded.

The overnight attacks were the most extensive since border clashes in October killed more than 70 people on both sides and wounded hundreds.

Islamabad said it hit seven sites along the border region targeting Afghanistan-based militant groups "in the aftermath of recent suicide bombing incidents in Pakistan".

The military targeted the Pakistani Taliban and its associates, as well as an affiliate of the Daesh group, a statement by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said.

Afghanistan's defence ministry said "dozens of innocent civilians, including women and children, were martyred and wounded" when strikes hit a madrassa and homes in Nangarhar and Paktika provinces.

An AFP journalist in Nangarhar's Bihud district said residents from around the remote and

mountainous area joined rescuers in one village, using a digger and shovels to search for bodies under the rubble.

"People here are ordinary people. The residents of this village are our relatives. When the bombing happened, one person who survived was shouting for help," said neighbour Amin Gul Amin, 37.

Nangarhar police told AFP the bombardment started at around midnight and hit three districts.

"Civilians were killed. In one house, there were 23 family members. Five wounded people were taken out," said police spokesperson Sayed Tayeeb Hammad.

'Calculated response'

Afghanistan's defence ministry said it will "deliver an appropriate and calculated response" to the Pakistani strikes.

The two countries have been locked in an increasingly bitter dispute since the Taliban authorities retook control of Afghanistan in 2021.

Pakistani military action killed 70 Afghan civilians between October and December, according to the UN mission in

Afghanistan. Several rounds of negotiations followed an initial ceasefire brokered by Qatar and Turkey, but they have failed to produce a lasting agreement.

Saudi Arabia intervened this month, mediating the release of three Pakistani soldiers captured by Afghanistan in October.

The deteriorating relationship has hit people in both countries, with the land border largely shut for months.

Pakistan said on Sunday that despite repeated urging by Islamabad, the Taliban authorities have failed to act against militant groups using Afghan territory to carry out attacks in Pakistan.

The Afghan government has denied harbouring militants.

Islamabad launched the strikes after a suicide blast at a Shiite mosque in Islamabad two weeks ago and other such attacks more recently in northwestern Pakistan.

The Daesh group had claimed responsibility for the mosque bombing, which killed at least 40 people and wounded more than 160 in the deadliest attack in Islamabad since 2008.

More than 1,500 request amnesty under new Venezuela law

CARACAS (AFP) — More than 1,500 political prisoners in Venezuela have applied for amnesty under a new law, the head of the country's legislature said on Saturday, two days after the measure, enacted under pressure from Washington, came into effect.

"A total of 1,557 cases are being addressed immediately, and hundreds of people deprived of their freedom are already being released under the amnesty law," National Assembly chief Jorge Rodriguez told a press conference.

Amnesty is not automatic under the law: Petitioners must ask the court handling their cases.

On Saturday alone, 80 prisoners had been freed from detention in the capital Caracas, Rodriguez told AFP.

On Friday, the lawmak-

er overseeing the amnesty process, Jorge Arreaza, announced that prosecutors had asked courts to free 379 prisoners.

Venezuela's interim president Delcy Rodriguez, the sister of the top lawmaker, pushed for the legislation after she rose to power following the capture of leftist leader Nicolas Maduro during a US military raid on January 3.

The legislature unanimously adopted the landmark amnesty law on Thursday and Delcy Rodriguez hailed its passage, describing it as a step toward "a more democratic, fairer, freer Venezuela".

Opposition figures have criticised the new legislation, which appears to include carveouts for some offenses previously used by authorities to tar-

get Maduro's political opponents.

It explicitly does not apply to those prosecuted for "promoting" or "facilitating... armed or forceful actions" against Venezuela's sovereignty by foreign actors.

Rodriguez has leveled such accusations against opposition leader and Nobel peace laureate Maria Corina Machado, who hopes to return to Venezuela at some point from the United States.

The law also excludes members of the security forces convicted of "terrorism"-related activities.

But the amnesty extends to 11,000 political prisoners who, over nearly three decades, were paroled or placed under house arrest.

"The law provides for those substitute measures to be lifted so that

these people can enjoy full freedom," Rodriguez told reporters.

'Let's hope it's true'

Outside a national police facility in Caracas known as Zone 7, relatives, some of them on site for weeks, patiently waited.

"Let's hope it's true," Genesis Rojas told AFP. A group of relatives who have been camped out for days chanted: "We want to go home!"

A row of police officers with riot shields stood watch.

"They're the ones who should ask us for forgiveness. For kidnapping us, for robbing us, for having violated all our human rights," said Yessy Orozco, whose father is imprisoned in Zone 7.

A group of 10 women went on a hunger strike



A resident greets Syrian government forces south of Hasakah, in north-eastern Syria, on January 20

JHCO bakeries sustain Gaza's daily bread lifeline

By Enad Abbadi

AMMAN — In Gaza, where markets buckle, kitchens fall silent and fuel supplies vanish without warning, bread has become survival currency. Under the pressure of the Israeli war on the besieged Strip, Jordanian-run bakeries are no longer a supplementary relief effort but a daily lifeline sustaining tens of thousands of displaced families.

Speaking to The Jordan Times, Hussein Shibli, secretary-general of the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO), described Jordanian bakery operations in Gaza as a "life-support system" rather than a "nice-to-have" service.

"When flour is scarce, markets collapse and families cannot reliably access cooked food, bread becomes the fastest, most scalable daily calorie source," Shibli said. Sustaining bakery production, he added, directly reduces hunger pressure on shelters, displacement sites and overstretched community kitchens.

High output under extreme constraints

Despite severe operational challenges, JHCO-supported bakeries continue to deliver large-scale daily output.

According to Shibli, the fixed daily bakery model launched in southern Gaza with the Jordanian Campaign produces between 35,000 and 40,000 loaves per day. In parallel, the Jordanian mobile bakery model, operating with international



The Jordanian mobile bakery, operating with international partners including the World Central Kitchen, produces approximately 70,000 loaves per day per kitchen at peak capacity

partners including the World Central Kitchen, has reached approximately 70,000 loaves per day per kitchen at peak capacity.

Distribution prioritises displacement sites and the most vulnerable households, with thousands of families reached daily.

Whether bread exists tomorrow

Shibli identified three decisive factors governing the continuity of bread production: Flour availability, fuel and power stability, and movement access.

Flour shortages and entry constraints can sharply reduce output regardless of technical capacity, he said. Fuel and electricity remain critical for ovens, mixing

systems and transport, while evacuation orders, shifting frontlines and route risks frequently force operational adjustments.

"Production capacities means little without supply continuity and safe access," Shibli noted.

Coordination under fire

JHCO operates as both a coordination and delivery platform, mobilising Jordan's relief pipeline while aligning with humanitarian partners and implementing operations through teams on the ground.

"This means joint planning for what enters Gaza, where it goes, and who receives it," Shibli said.

To ensure efficiency and fairness, JHCO ap-

plies strict distribution controls, including a single daily allocation plan per area, vulnerability-based targeting, cross-checking to prevent duplication and post-distribution verification where conditions allow.

Roles among partners are clearly defined, Shibli stressed, dividing responsibilities between production, transport and last-mile delivery. "So we do not all do the same job."

Throughout the Israeli war on the besieged Strip, JHCO's Gaza response has focused on assistance that cannot be postponed: Bread production, hot meals, food parcels, water supplies, medical shipments

and essential shelter items such as tarpaulins, blankets and basic household survival items. "Our response in Gaza has focused on life-sustaining interventions people simply cannot delay," Shibli said. Noting that even during temporary lulls in hostilities, humanitarian needs persist, shifting from immediate survival to short-term stabilisation, Shibli said: "The response moves from survive today to stabilise this week."

Under these conditions, JHCO has scaled up flour and commodity inputs to sustain bakeries and support food parcel assembly, while expanding hot meal provision in areas where markets and kitchens remain non-functional.

Keep the line alive

Amid volatile security and access conditions, bread production remains one of the few interventions capable of delivering immediate, daily impact.

To protect continuity, JHCO has adopted what Shibli described as a "keep the line alive" strategy, prioritising flour allocation to bakeries, maintaining fuel contingencies, deploying operational redundancy through multiple bakery points where feasible and leveraging partnered management models.

Bread, Shibli emphasised, has become more than food aid. "It is one of the last stable lifelines still functioning at scale."

Daesh urges members to fight Syria's new government

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — The Daesh terror group on Saturday urged its fighters to confront Syria's new authorities, in its spokesperson's first audio message in two years.

In a recording posted online, Abu Huzaifa Al Ansari said Daesh members in Syria must fight "the new Syrian regime, with its secular government and national army" and "make that their priority".

The last time Al Ansari posted an audio message was in January 2024, when he urged Daesh supporters to kill Jews around the world in revenge for Israeli attacks in Gaza.

Since ousting long-time ruler Bashar Assad in December 2024, Syria's new authorities, who had links to the Al Qaeda extremist group, have sought to break from their radi-

cal past and present a moderate image.

Amid lingering doubts about security, Washington transferred more than 5,700 Daesh detainees from Syria to Iraqi prisons

Last year, Syria joined the US-led coalition against Daesh and has been coordinating attacks against the group's remnants in the country.

Daesh swept across Syria and Iraq in 2014, committing massacres and forcing women and girls into sexual slavery.

Backed by US-led forces, Iraq proclaimed the defeat of Daesh in 2017, followed two years later by its defeat to Kurdish-led forces in Syria.

Last month, Syrian troops advanced against Kurdish forces, sparking questions over the fate of the Daesh prisoners held in Kurdish-run facilities.

Amid lingering doubts about security, Washington transferred more than 5,700 Daesh detainees from Syria to Iraqi prisons.

A camp that once held relatives of Daesh fighters has now been emptied — residents either left or were moved to a new location by the Syrian authorities.

King, Albania president hold talks in Amman on expanding cooperation

Continued from page 1

For his part, the Albanian president affirmed that his visit to Jordan would contribute to strengthening partnership in the areas of investment, security, tourism and

development, pointing to the significant potential for enhancing joint economic activity, according to the statement.

President Begaj noted that his visit to the Kingdom included a number of religious

and tourism sites, pointing to the need to strengthen relations between the two peoples and encourage exchanges of visits by establishing a direct flight route between Jordan and Albania.

The Albanian presi-

dent expressed his country's commitment to increasing stability and prosperity in the region and the world, praising His Majesty's leadership and efforts to achieve stability and peace in the region through the two-state

solution.

The talks also covered the overall situation in the region, with His Majesty stressing the need to step up international efforts to stop illegal measures aimed at consolidating settlements and impos-

ing Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank.

The King warned of the danger of increasing violations of Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, the statement said.

His Majesty reiterated the need for all par-

ties to commit to implementing the agreement to end the war on Gaza, and ensuring the flow of humanitarian aid to all areas of the Strip.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Director of the Office

of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh, Health Minister and Escort of Honour Ibrahim Bdour, Jordan's non-resident Ambassador to Albania Zuheir Nsour and Albania's Ambassador to Jordan Sami Shiba attended the talks.

FM says Iran has right to self-defence if US attacks

Continued from page 1

"It is justified, legitimate. So our missiles cannot hit the American soil. So obviously we have to do something else. We have to hit, you know, the American base in the region."

Araghchi said that he thought there was still a "good chance" his country's stand-off with the United States over its nuclear programme could be resolved through diplomacy.

"I believe that still there is a good chance to have a diplomatic solution which is based on a win-win game," Araghchi said, adding negotiators were "working on the elements of a deal and draft of the text".

As for Iran's uranium enrichment, which the US opposes, Araghchi said: "As a sovereign country, we have every right to decide for ourselves, by ourselves."

US Envoy Steve Witkoff said on Saturday that President Donald Trump is questioning why Iran has not "capitulated" in the face of Washington's military build-up aimed at pressuring them into a nuclear deal.

The United States and Iran this week resumed Oman-mediated talks in Geneva aimed at averting the possibility of military action, after Washington dispatched two aircraft carriers, jets and weaponry to the region to back its warnings.

'I believe that still there is a good chance to have a diplomatic solution which is based on a win-win game'

In a Fox News interview with Trump's daughter-in-law Lara, Witkoff said the president was "curious" about Iran's position after he had warned them of severe consequences in the event they failed to strike a deal.

"I don't want to use the word 'frustrated', because he understands he has plenty of alternatives, but he's curious as to why they haven't... I don't want to use the word 'capitulated', but why they haven't capitulated," he said.

"Why, under this pressure, with the amount of seapower and naval power over there, why haven't they come to us and said, 'We profess we don't want a weapon, so here's what we're prepared to do?' And yet it's sort of hard to get them to that place."

The US envoy also confirmed in the interview that he had met with Reza Pahlavi, the exiled son of Iran's last shah and a critic of the current authorities, who has not returned to the country since before the 1979 Islamic Revolution that ousted the monarchy.

"I met him at the direction of the president," Witkoff said, without providing further details.

"I think he's strong for his country, cares about his country. But this is going to be about President Trump's policies."

US-based Pahlavi last week told a crowd in Mu-

nich that he was ready to lead the country to a "secular democratic future" after Trump said regime change would be best for the country.

Witkoff's comments come after Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said a draft proposal for an agreement with Washington would be ready in a matter of days.

Trump said on Thursday that Iran had at most 15 days to make a deal on concerns starting with its nuclear programme.

As talks between the two nations continued in Geneva, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Tuesday said that Trump would not succeed in destroying the Islamic republic.

Western countries accuse the Islamic Republic of seeking to acquire nuclear weapons, which Tehran denies, though it insists on its right to enrichment for civilian purposes.

Iran, for its part, is seeking to negotiate an end to sanctions that have proven to be a massive drag on its economy, which played a role in sparking anti-government protests in December.

Jordan reaffirms it will not be launch point for military action against Iran

Continued from page 1

Echoing similar remarks, political analyst Abdul Hakim Qaraleh said Jordan's foreign policy is built on balance and moderation.

"Jordan consistently favours political settlements and the consolidation of peace over direct military confrontation."

He said this approach reinforces the Kingdom's credibility.

"Jordan enjoys trust from regional and international parties. It remains a cornerstone of regional stability and avoids sharp polarisation."

Qaraleh added that preventive diplomacy remains central to Amman's strategy.

"The Kingdom prioritises dialogue and comprehensive peace as the only path to lasting regional stability."

The New York Times has quoted Jordanian officials as saying that the US military presence in the Kingdom comes within the framework of defense agreements between the United States and Jordan.

The newspaper cited a Jordanian official

who confirmed that Jordan's territory will not be used to launch an attack against Iran. He added that Jordan hopes the current negotiations between the United States and Iran will lead to a political agreement that spares the region from war.

The newspaper explained that other countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have supported the negotiations to avoid war and reach a diplomatic solution, affirming that they do not want their territories to be used as a launching point for any military action against Tehran.

The New York Times reported on Friday that the US military has significantly reinforced its presence in the Middle East amid potential escalation with Iran.

The newspaper indicated that the US movement in the region includes deploying additional air defence batteries to protect American forces from any potential Iranian response.

It also noted previous movements at bases such as Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar and the US

Naval Support Activity Bahrain (NSA Bahrain) as part of a repositioning of American forces in preparation for any possible developments.

In another report, the newspaper said that US Central Command is keeping two aircraft carriers deployed in the Middle East at a considerable distance from Iran to protect them

from becoming targets.

It added that Pentagon officials reported the evacuation of hundreds of soldiers from Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar and from NSA Bahrain, which hosts the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, while American forces remain stationed at bases in Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

تمديد إغلاق عطاء

(عطاء شراء التجهيزات الطبية لمستشفى معان)

والممول من منحة صندوق ابو ظبي للتنمية

١. تعلن القيادة العامة للقوات المسلحة الأردنية - الجيش العربي / مديرية الخدمات الطبية الملكية عن تمديد طرح عطاء رقم (ش / ٢٠٢٥ / ٥٠٠) (لشراء التجهيزات الطبية لمستشفى معان) والممول من منحة صندوق ابو ظبي للتنمية
٢. على المتقدمين الراغبين بالاشتراك في هذا العطاء مراجعة مديرية الخدمات الطبية الملكية / شعبة المشتريات المركزية لشراء نسخة العطاء مقابل دفع مبلغ (٢٣٠٠) أذنان وثلاثمائة دينار اردني غير مستردة مصطحبين معهم السجل التجاري ورخصة المهن سارية المفعول او صور عنها وان يكون التعهد مسجل في نظام الفوترة الوطني الالكتروني.
٣. يتم بيع دعوة العطاء يومياً ولغاية الساعة (الثالثة) من بعد ظهر كل يوم باستثناء أيام العطل الرسمية ويكون يوم (الاربعاء) الموافق ٢٠٢٦/٤/١ الساعة (الواحدة) ظهراً آخر موعد لبيع المناقصات.
٤. تعاد المناقصات بواسطة الطرف المختوم الى مديرية الخدمات الطبية الملكية/ شعبة المشتريات المركزية قبل الساعة (الواحدة) ظهراً من يوم (الخميس) الموافق ٢٠٢٦/٤/٢ معرزة بتأمين مالي مصدق بقيمة (٣٠٠) ثلاثة بالمائة من قيمة المناقصة وكل مناقصة ترد بعد هذا التاريخ او غير مرفق بها التأمين المالي تهمل ولا ينظر بها.
٥. (أجور الإعلان في الصحف المحلية على من يرسل عليه العطاء مهما تكثر) موقعنا على الإنترنت هو www.jrms.mil.jo (للاطلاع على المواصفات الطولية).

BUSINESS

Monday, February 23, 2026

Audit Bureau launches first 'Peer Review' mission in its history with UK NAO

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — The Audit Bureau announced on Sunday the launch of the first "peer review" mission, marking a milestone in its history. This initiative is part of the Bureau's ongoing efforts to promote transparency, accountability and institutional efficiency.

This mission is considered one of the best practices among supreme audit institutions worldwide and is being carried out in co-operation with the UK National Audit Office (UK NAO).

The launch of the mission is part of the Bureau's strategic plan for 2024-2027, aligning with its objectives of developing the oversight system and enhancing its performance in accordance with the international standards set by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), as well as best practices.

The Bureau recently announced the results of its institutional self-assessment, conducted under the Supreme Audit Institutions Performance Measurement Framework (SAI



Audit Bureau launches first 'Peer Review' mission in its history with UK National Audit Office

PMF), ahead of the peer review mission, in co-operation with the UK NAO.

During a meeting, the President of the Audit Bureau, Radhi Hamadin, stated, "The launch of this mission is a qualitative precedent since the establishment of the Bureau more than 70 years ago."

He added, "It also embodies the depth of the institutional partnership with the UK National Audit Office,

in implementation of the memorandum of understanding [MoU] signed between the two parties, with the participation of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office."

Assessment

The "peer review" mission aims to conduct an independent and comprehensive institutional assessment of the Bureau's work, covering areas such as gov-

ernance frameworks, audit methodologies, planning procedures for audit engagement, and quality assurance systems.

The assessment will also examine human resource development and professional capacity-building practices, the Bureau's relationships with key stakeholders, including the community, legislative, and executive authorities, as well as the impact measurement of oversight reports,



promoting a "gradual" shift towards performance oversight.

The Bureau stated that the mission has been assigned to a team of international experts with over 30 years of experience in auditing and institutional performance monitoring.

Mission Details

The week-long mission, comprising 25 intensive working hours, will include field visits involving meetings

with senior management and audit teams.

Separate sessions will be held with representatives of legislative and executive authorities, several supervised entities and civil society organisations.

The assignment will also include reviewing samples of previous performance audits and holding daily analysis sessions among the expert team members to assess progress, analyse existing practic-

es and evaluate their outcomes.

Results

The Audit Bureau confirmed that the outcomes of this mission will contribute to developing the legal and regulatory framework for its work, enhancing the credibility of its reports before the public, legislative bodies and international donors.

The results will also strengthen the Bureau's position and support

its role in protecting public funds and improving financial management efficiency, in line with global developments in oversight practices.

The SAI PMF is a voluntary international framework adopted by INTOSAI to measure the performance of supreme audit institutions in a comprehensive, evidence-based manner by assessing compliance with international professional standards and best practices.

Jordan's financial inclusion rate rises to 62% in 2024 — WB

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan has recorded "marked" progress in expanding access to financial services, according to the Global Financial Inclusion Index 2025 issued by the World Bank, with 62 per cent of adults hold a bank account or electronic wallet in 2024.

The figure represents a steady increase from 47 per cent in 2021 and just 25 per cent in 2011, underscoring "significant" strides made over the past decade, according to Al Mamlaka TV.

The report highlights the "pivotal" role of digital technology in driving this transformation. Mobile phone penetration among adults has reached 92 per cent, while 84 per cent use

the internet regularly. This widespread digital access has translated into changing financial behaviour, with 54 per cent of Jordanians sending or receiving digital payments in 2024.

Government transfers have also become increasingly digitised. Some 15 per cent of adults receive payments from the government, including salaries and social assistance, and 75 per cent of these payments are deposited directly into bank accounts or electronic wallets.

Despite the gains, a gender gap persists. The report indicates that 68 per cent of men hold financial accounts, compared with 56 per cent of women, a 12-percentage-point

difference.

Formal saving and borrowing remain relatively modest.

The report highlights the 'pivotal' role of digital technology in driving this transformation

Only 11 per cent of adults reported saving money through formal

financial institutions, while 16 per cent said they had borrowed from banks or other regulated financial entities.

Meanwhile, 44 per cent of Jordanians said they would be able to raise emergency funds within 30 days without significant difficulty, suggesting a degree of financial resilience among a sizeable segment of the population.

Among the 38 per cent of adults who remain unbanked, the leading reason cited was insufficient funds (77 per cent). A further 26 per cent said they rely on a family member's account, while 24 per cent pointed to the high cost of financial services as a barrier, Al Mamlaka reported.

Trump hikes US global tariff rate to 15%

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — President Donald Trump raised the global duty on imports into the United States to 15 per cent on Saturday, doubling down on his promise to maintain his tariff policy a day after the Supreme Court ruled much of it illegal.

Shortly after the court's 6-3 ruling that rejected the president's authority to impose tariffs under a 1977 economic emergency powers act, Trump had initially announced a new 10 per cent global levy by invoking a different legal avenue.

The ruling was a stunning rebuke by the high court, which has largely sided with the president since he returned to office, and marked a major political setback in striking down Trump's sig-

nature economic policy that has roiled the global trade order.

It is the latest move in a process that has seen a multitude of tariff levels for countries sending goods into the United States set and then altered or revoked by Trump's team over the past year.

The new duty by law is only temporary — allowable for 150 days. According to a White House fact sheet, exemptions remain for sectors that are under separate probes, including pharma, and goods entering the US under the US-Mexico-Canada agreement.

On Friday, the White House said US trading partners that reached separate tariff deals with Trump's administration would also face the new global tariff.

Friday's court ruling did not impact sector-specific duties Trump separately imposed on steel, aluminium and various other goods. Government probes still under way could lead to additional sectorial tariffs.

But it nevertheless marked Trump's biggest defeat at the Supreme Court since returning to the White House 13 months ago. The court has generally expanded his power.

The president alleged the majority of six justices, including two nominated during his first term, had been "swayed by foreign interests".

"I think that foreign interests are represented by people that I believe have undue influence," he said.

Shares on Wall Street

— a metric closely watched by Trump — rose modestly on Friday after the decision, which had been expected.

Business groups largely cheered the ruling, with the National Retail Federation saying this "provides much-needed certainty" for companies.

In court arguments, the Trump administration said companies would receive refunds if the tariffs were deemed unlawful. But the Supreme Court's ruling did not address the issue.

Trump said he expected years of litigation on whether to provide refunds. Kavanaugh noted the refund process could be a "mess".

Several countries have said they are studying the Supreme Court ruling and Trump's subsequent tariff announcements.

US trade partners cautiously welcome court tariff ruling

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US trading partners last week cautiously welcomed a Supreme Court ruling striking down Trump's global tariffs, with hard-hit Canada saying the levies were always "unjustified".

Governments were weighing how the highly anticipated decision would impact commerce with the world's largest economy upended through Trump's use of executive authority to shape global trade since he took office a year ago.

Here is a look at how governments around the world reacted.

While the conservative-majority Supreme Court found by a 6-3 majority that Trump was not authorized by the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to impose tariffs, the ruling does not impact sector-specific duties that Trump has separately imposed on imports of steel, aluminium and various

other goods.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce cautioned against viewing it as "a reset of US trade policy".

"Canada should prepare for new, blunter mechanisms to be used to reassert trade pressure, potentially with broader and more disruptive effects," the chamber's president, Candace Laing, said in a statement.

Canada International Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc said the ruling reinforces its position that the levies were "unjustified".

But he noted that tariffs cause the most pain in Canada — sector-specific measures affecting the steel, aluminium and auto industries — remained in force.

EU trade spokesman Olof Gill said that the 27-nation bloc took note of the ruling and was "analysing it carefully".

"We remain in close contact with the US Ad-

ministration as we seek clarity on the steps they intend to take in response to this ruling," he added. "Businesses on both sides of the Atlantic depend on stability and predictability in the trading relationship."

German industry group BDI was upbeat, saying it sent a "strong signal for the rules-based trading system".

"The verdict is clear proof that the separation of powers in the USA still going strong," BDI board member Wolfgang Niedermark said in a statement.

UK expects its "privileged trading position with the US to continue".

The close allies agreed a trade deal in May that lifted tariffs on UK steel and aluminium products and slashed levies on British car exports from 27.5 per cent to 10 per cent.

While Trump has long used tariffs as a lever for pressure and negotiations, he made unprecedented use of emergency economic powers under IEEPA upon returning to the presidency last year to slap new duties on virtually all US trading partners.

These included "reciprocal" tariffs over trade practices that Washington deemed unfair, alongside separate sets of duties targeting major partners Mexico, Canada and China over illicit drug flows and immigration.

The tariffs have sent nations scrambling to negotiate quick trade deals with Washington to

mitigate the impact of the levies and often pledging more investment in the US economy.

In the latest example, the United States and Indonesia finalised a trade deal on Thursday that

set a 19-per cent tariff on Indonesian goods entering the United States. The Southeast Asian

country had been threatened with a potential 32-per cent levy prior to the agreement.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

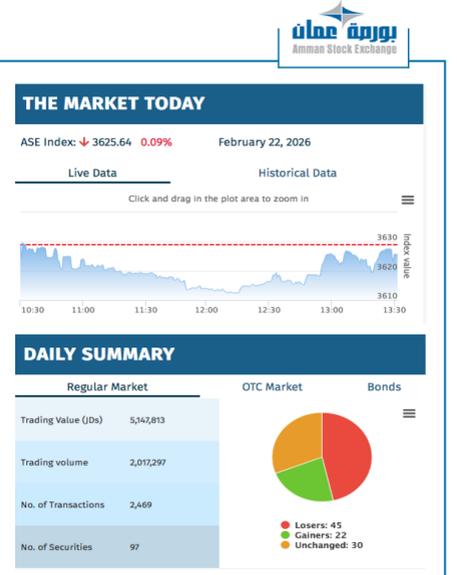
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Sunday amounted to JD5.1 million spread over 2 million shares that traded through 2,469 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.09 per cent, closing at 3625.64 points.

Out of 97 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 22 companies rose while the share price of another 45 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Philadelphia International Educational Investment Company by 5.16 per cent, Arab International Hotels by 4.11 per cent, Jordan International Investment Company by 2.9 per cent, Jordanian Expatriates Investment Holding by 2.78 per cent and Arab Phoenix Holdings by 2.56 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Union Tobacco and Cigarette Industries by 9.09 per cent, Jordan Hotels and Tourism by 4.95 per cent, Jordanian Real Estate Company for Development by 4.94 per cent, Al Sharq Investments Projects (holding) by 4.55 per cent and First Finance by 4.41 per cent.



Eileen Gu switches slopes for catwalk after Olympic flourish

HOCKEY

USA beats Canada to win men's Olympic ice hockey gold

MILAN, Italy (AFP) — The United States beat Canada 2-1 to win men's ice hockey gold at the Winter Olympics on Sunday, the last medal up for grabs at the Milan-Cortina Games. Jack Hughes scored the winning goal in overtime to hand the US men their first Olympic triumph since the 1980 "Miracle on Ice" win over the Soviet Union in Lake Placid. The tone for the high-stakes games was set early on when the Americans were booed when they came out for the warm-up by a crowd that appeared to be two-thirds Canadian. But chants of "USA, USA" soon rang out and they got louder when Matt Boldy gave the Americans a 1-0 lead in the first period. Boldy skilfully evaded the challenge of a pair of Canadian defenders and scored past goaltender Jordan Binnington. Having stopped the first 24 shots he faced, USA goaltender Connor Hellebuyck was finally beaten in the second period by Cale Makar's wrist shot that squeezed over his pad and into the back of the net. The Americans came close to re-taking the lead at the end of the second period when Brock Faber's slap shot deflected off both posts but somehow didn't go in. Once the game went into the three-on-three overtime, Hughes applied the golden touch to send his teammates and the US supporters into raptures.

FOOTBALL

Liverpool late show floors Nottingham Forest

NOTTINGHAM, United Kingdom (AFP) — Alexis Mac Allister's 97th-minute goal rescued Liverpool from a lacklustre performance to beat struggling Nottingham Forest 1-0 on Sunday in a huge boost to their chances of Champions League football next season. Forest's fourth manager of the season, Vitor Pereira, was taking charge for the first time in the league and his side looked set to earn a deserved point until a dramatic finale. Mac Allister had a goal ruled out when he charged down Ola Aina's clearance in the closing stages. The ball was deemed to have struck the Argentine midfielder on the arm. However, to Pereira's fury, Forest did not heed the warning as they slipped to within two points of the Premier League relegation zone. Mac Allister swept home a rebound after Virgil van Dijk's header was saved. After another lengthy VAR review, this time the call went in Liverpool's favour despite Hugo Ekitike standing in an offside position. Liverpool remain in sixth but climb level on points with Chelsea and Manchester United and within six points of Aston Villa.

LIVIGNO, Italy (AFP) — Eileen Gu crowned her Olympic Games with a gold medal on Sunday, saving her best until last. Now she is all set for Milan Fashion Week.

China's freeski superstar started Sunday's women's halfpipe final with two silvers under her belt in Italy but yet to top the podium.

After fluffing her first run in dazzling sunshine in Livigno, Gu upped her game, soaring to gold.

Gu's sixth Olympic medal means she is now the most decorated freestyle skier in the history of the Winter Games, taking her clear of a tie with Canada's Mikael Kingsbury and Chinese teammate Xu Mengtao.

The 22-year-old was the darling of the Beijing Olympics four years ago, where she won two gold medals and a silver medal, and she came to the Milan-Cortina Games seeking a clean sweep.

Gu came up just short in slopestyle and big air before finally clinching top spot in the Italian Alps on Sunday.

The US-born freeskier said she was proud of her achievements after taking a "gamble" by entering three events — she had not competed in big air for four years.

"I have done something that I took a big risk in trusting myself and I'm glad that I did," she said at her



Gold medalist China's Eileen Gu celebrates with her three Olympic medals (two silver and one gold medal) at Livigno Snow Park, in Livigno (Valtellina), on Sunday

post-competition press conference

"I walk away as the most decorated freeskier of all time, male or female. I have the most gold medals of any freeskier ever, male or female.

"And that is something that I'm so, so proud of. It's unbelievable to me. It's still surreal."

When asked what sets her apart, Gu said she is "not afraid to try".

"I take big risks," she said. "And for the last two Olympics, it's

worked out. But even if it hadn't, I think I left nothing on the table."

Gu is one of the few athletes at the Winter Games who transcends her sport, placing her on a similar level to US alpine star Lindsey Vonn.

Her impact in Beijing was such that she featured in Time magazine's 100 most influential people in the world in 2022.

Last year she was fourth on the list of the highest-earning woman athletes, according to Forbes — the vast

majority of that earned through endorsement deals.

Gu's social media numbers confirm her global reach — three million Instagram followers and 14 million likes on TikTok.

And the posts also give an insight into a dizzying, action-packed life that features skiing, studying at Stanford and a fashion career.

Now that competition is over, it's time for a change of gear.

"It's fashion week in Milan," Gu said. "I have

the other job, the other fashion thing.

"I'm really excited to just explore some other avenues, be creative, and explore my femininity through fashion, which is something I've always loved, and to kind of put that in juxtaposition with skiing and with sports.

"And I think they co-exist so beautifully and so I hope to represent that next week in Milan."

Long term, her aim is to do something with "global beneficial impact".

"Right now, I'm young, I'm energetic," she said. "My body is like physically as capable as it can be compared to, you know, 30 years down the line.

"So it makes the most sense for me to do that through the avenues that I'm exploring now, fashion, sport and skiing."

Despite her success, Gu is no stranger to controversy.

She started her sporting career representing the United States, only to switch allegiance to China — where her mother is from — in 2019.

That decision has divided opinion in her country of birth.

The athlete gave an interesting insight into the pressure she is under earlier at the Milan-Cortina Games, saying she feels she is "carrying the weight of two countries on my shoulders".

But she is confident that representing China gives her the platform to achieve her goals, pointing to a huge growth of interest in snow sports.

"There are kids in China, there are girls in China whose lives are going to be touched by the beautiful and wonderful power of sport," she said.

"So that in and of itself is absolutely measured impact that I think I had always wanted. I reached that goal and I exceeded it."

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

The power of the pause

By Sonia Salfity,

Desperate Dieter, expert contributor/family flavours magazine

One of the most valuable tools we possess is the ability to choose our battles wisely. It requires intentionality, perseverance and self-discipline, yet the outcome is often a sense of calm, clarity and strength that makes the effort worthwhile.

But what does choosing our battles truly look like in everyday life when it comes to food? How does it translate from a thoughtful concept into practical action?

For Desperate Dieters like myself, it appears in the small, ordinary moments; the pause before reacting, the decision to let something go, or the courage to address what genuinely matters.

Here's a glimpse of how that plays out in

my daily life.

Scenario #1

It's been a long day at work and I can't wait to get home. All I want to do is put my feet up and watch my favourite television show.

I'm far too tired to cook, so perhaps I should stop at that fast-food place on the way. Yes, that's what I'll do. I won't even feel guilty; after all, I've gone all day without eating!

Versus

Scenario #2

I'm so glad I packed that protein shake this morning. A little planning has made all the difference! I'm not starving on my way home. Stopping at the fast-food place doesn't even cross my mind. It feels liberating.

Instead, I can pop the

salmon into the oven and enjoy a nourishing, protein-rich dinner. My husband will be pleased too; we needed to cook that fish before it spoils! Top of Form

Scenario #3

I can't believe Samia brought chocolate cake to the office. So much for my promise to eat healthily! Since I've already given in and had a slice, I may as well forget the plan altogether and eat whatever I like for the rest of the day—let's hope tomorrow goes better!

Versus

Scenario #4

I've had Samia's chocolate cake before and, truthfully, I could take it or leave it.

It's not a 10 out of 10 for me, so I'm going to pass this time. Thankfully, I started the day

with a balanced breakfast and enough protein otherwise, resisting might have been far more difficult.

Scenario #5

I can't believe I forgot to drink any water today. I guess I'll just have to wait after this Palates class.

I wonder why I'm feeling so tired and lightheaded. I think I'm also getting a migraine! This is not what I envisioned my day to look like!

Versus

Scenario #6

I'm so glad I filled my water bottle last night. It makes it so much easier in the morning when I'm rushing out of the house on time. Grab and go! This is my new motto.

Grab the water bottle, protein shake, yoghurt and almonds.

I think I'll set an alarm on my phone to remind me to get these ready before I go to sleep.

Would a soldier go to battle without his armor and weapons? Of course not! So why would I send myself 'unarmed' into a world that is designed to destroy me?!

Positive visualisation One of the most powerful tools we have is positive visualisation which goes hand in hand with choosing your battles.

You literally have a better chance to succeed if you can take a moment to picture



yourself succeeding.

Let's make it a habit to see ourselves in the different scenarios and envision what it would look like for us to choose the better version.

You are strong



Take it a step further and envision what you would feel like if you made the poor choice. Would you feel bloated, uncomfortable, or depressed? Would you feel

energetic enough to get off that couch to finish that project that's way past due?

Would you have enough clarity of mind to have that tough conversation you need to have with that friend, or will your brain fog

Discovering better ways

You and I both know that we do have it in us to get up right after losing a battle, and dust ourselves off and reemerge stronger because of it.

We also have it in us to stop using the strategies

last time you did that? If only we took as much care of our bodies as we do our cars, we'd not only be more mindful of what fuel we're feeding ourselves, but we'd also make sure it was pure and not watered down!

Life-giving thoughts

Here's to positive, life-giving thoughts that we can tap into to help us not only choose our battles, but also to win most of them!

Remember, we don't have to win every single battle. That wouldn't even be realistic because, let's face it, life happens! We all have days where we're so overwhelmed.

The point is to learn from our mistakes and get up and fight for ourselves.

Trust me, if we don't, no one else will and the last time I checked, we only get this one body. Let's take care of it!

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