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This US Navy handout photo released by US Central Command public affairs shows the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116) firing a Tomahawk land attack missile in support of Operation Epic Fury on Sunday

Trump says US 'substantially ahead' of timeline in Iran

US president doesn't rule out sending US troops into Iran

WASHINGTON/TEHRAN (AFP) — President Donald Trump said on Monday that the US attack on Iran is meeting its goals ahead of schedule but also warned the war could go “far longer” than his initial estimates of about a month. “We’re already substantially ahead of our time projections,” Trump said at the White House, adding, “From the beginning we projected four to five weeks, but we have capability to go far longer than that. We’ll do it.” He said the strikes were the “last, best chance” to hit Iran, an arch foe of the United States for decades.

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King, in call with US president, world leaders discusses regional developments

- King affirms Jordan’s ‘absolute’ rejection of Iran’s attacks on its territory, on countries in region
- His Majesty calls for intensifying international efforts to achieve comprehensive regional calm
- King reaffirms that Jordan will continue to take necessary measures to preserve its security, safety of its citizens, its sovereignty

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah received a phone call from United States President Donald Trump on Monday, according to a Royal Court statement. The call covered the recent escalations in the region and their implications for regional and global security and stability, with His Majesty affirming Jordan’s absolute rejection of Iran’s attacks on its territory and on a number of countries in the region, the statement said. The King emphasised the need to work towards achieving comprehensive and sustainable calm that would contribute to restoring stability and achieving peace in the region. His Majesty also received a phone call from President of the Swiss Confederation Guy Parmelin on Monday, during which they discussed the current escalation in the region. His Majesty called for intensifying international efforts to achieve comprehensive calm in the region, and utilising dialogue and diplomatic channels to de-escalate the situation, according to another Royal Court statement. The King reaffirmed that Jordan will continue to take the necessary measures to preserve its security, the safety of its citizens and its sovereignty. King received a phone call from India Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during which the two leaders discussed the current escalation of tensions in the region.



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Gov’t prepares alternative water plan as Israel deal expires — source

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — The government has drawn up an alternative plan to replace a water purchase agreement with Israel that provided Jordan with 50 million cubic metres annually, an official source said. The unnamed source, quoted by Al Mamlaka, said the plan was prepared in 2025 under the direction of the prime minister ahead of the agreement’s expiration to safeguard Jordan’s water security. The deal expired three months ago and has not been renewed, according to Al Mamlaka. The source stressed that Jordan’s national interest will guide any future decisions, priorities and measures related to the matter. The source added that the government is finalising the financial close of the National Water Carrier project in coordination with international and local institutions. The agreement is expected to be signed before the end of next month, paving the way for implementation later this year. Also known as the Aqaba-Amman Water Desalination and Conveyance (AAWDC) project, the National Water Carrier will, upon completion, become Jordan’s first large-scale desalination plant, one of the largest globally, and



An aerial photo taken on July 15, 2021 shows the Jordan River flowing through Bethsaida Valley into the northern part of Lake Tiberias, or the Sea of Galilee

AFP via Getty Images

the Kingdom’s largest infrastructure project to date. The project is designed to supply 300 million cubic metres of water annually to much of the country, easing pressure on existing resources and helping replenish over-extracted aquifers. The 1994 peace treaty between Jordan and Israel included a detailed water annex obligating Israel to supply Jordan with around 50 million cubic metres per year. A Joint Water Committee was established to manage shared resources, monitor water quality and coordinate additional supplies. Under the arrangement, Israel delivered water from the Sea of Galilee, while Jordan granted Israel access to the Yarmouk River and purchased surplus water during wet years.

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File photo

Jordan, six countries denounce Iran strikes as threat to regional stability

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan, the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the US on Monday issued a joint statement condemning Iran’s indiscriminate and reckless missile and drone attacks against sovereign territories across the region, according to a Foreign Ministry statement. The countries said the strikes targeted sites in Bahrain, Iraq, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, putting civilians at risk and causing damage to civilian infrastructure. In the statement, the seven nations characterised the Iranian actions as a “serious escalation” that violates the sovereignty of multiple states and poses a direct threat to regional stability. They added that targeting civilians and states not party to hostilities constitutes reckless and destabilising behaviour.

Continued on page 5

UK provides £5.3 million to support National Water Carrier project

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan and the United Kingdom on Monday signed a 5.3-million euro memorandum of understanding to support the National Water Carrier project. The agreement, signed by Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Zeina Toukan and British Ambassador to Jordan Philip Hall, falls under the UK’s Water Adaptation, Desalination and Infrastructure Programme.

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Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Planning

Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Zeina Toukan (right) and British Ambassador to Jordan Philip Hall sign a 5.3 million euro memorandum of understanding to support the National Water Carrier project

Israel strikes Beirut suburbs in response to Hizbollah attack

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — The Israeli military launched strikes on Lebanon, including the capital Beirut, to target militants, it said on Monday, after Tehran-backed Hizbollah fired rockets at Israel in response to the killing of Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei. The Israeli military said that “in response to Hizbollah’s projectile fire” Israeli forces had “begun striking targets of the Hizbollah terrorist organisation across Lebanon”. Hizbollah claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it fired rockets and drones “in retaliation for the pure blood of... Ayatollah Imam Sayyid Ali Al Hussein Khamenei... and in defence of Lebanon and its people, and in response to the repeated Israeli attacks”. This is the first attack claimed by Hizbollah on Israel since a November 2024 ceasefire agreement aimed at ending a year of war between the two sides. Israel has since carried out regular strikes on Lebanon, which it usually says

have targeted the group. An AFP journalist heard several loud explosions in Beirut early on Monday. Lebanon’s state-run



AFP photo

Smoke plumes billow following Israeli bombardment on Beirut’s southern suburbs on Monday

National News Agency (NNA) reported Israeli strikes across Lebanon, starting with Beirut’s southern suburbs where Hizbollah holds sway. The NNA also reported “major displacement” from Beirut’s southern suburbs and the south of the country as residents tried to escape the areas. The Israeli military in a later statement confirmed it had struck Hizbollah militants in the Beirut area and a militant in southern Lebanon.

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A view of Temple of Hercules in Amman. The Ministry of Tourism on Monday says that it is monitoring regional developments to ensure the continuity of the tourism sector

Tourism Ministry monitoring regional conditions to ensure visitors’ safety

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities on Monday said that it is monitoring regional developments to ensure the continuity of the tourism sector and the safety of visitors and staff.

An emergency operations room, including representatives from the tourism sector and all relevant authorities, was established, the ministry said, noting that the room remains in continuous session, coordinating with official institutions to take appropriate measures as the situation evolves.

Tourist groups currently in the Kingdom

are continuing their plans as normal, with authorities following up on flights and activity at archaeological and tourist sites, the ministry said, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The ministry warned that upcoming group bookings may be affected if conditions persist, with potential cancellations over the next three months, potentially impacting the peak tourism months of March, April and May.

Visitors are advised to follow official updates and contact the Tourist Police hotline at 117777 for emergencies or assistance.

Meanwhile, the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA) stressed that tourist activity in Petra is proceeding normally and the site continues to welcome visitors.

PDTRA Chairman of the Board of Commissioners Adnan Sawaeer said that conditions in the region are stable and secure, and all tourism facilities, including visitor centres, trail and hotels, are operating at full capacity.

He added that Petra continues to receive international visitors, with staff prepared to provide services in line with the highest safety and quality standards.

Jordan to partially close airspace amid regional tensions

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan will partially and temporarily close its airspace to all arriving, departing and transit flights starting this evening, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission Daifallah Fayeز announced on Monday.

The decision comes in response to ongoing regional developments and follows a risk assessment conducted in line with international aviation safety standards, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Under the measure, the airspace closure will be enforced daily from 6:00pm until 9:00am the following morning, Fayeز said, adding that the restrictions take ef-



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fect on Monday night and will remain in place until further notice, as part of efforts to safeguard the safety and security of civil aviation.

The commission urged passengers to

contact their airlines directly to verify flight schedules and monitor any updates or changes to their travel plans.

The biggest disruption to global air transport since the COVID-19 pandemic snarled travel for a second day on Sunday, with thousands of flights affected and busy Gulf hubs including Dubai and Doha shuttered as Iran lashed out after US-Israeli strikes, AFP reported.

Passengers were stranded around the world as airlines sought to reroute around the Middle East, where most countries had slammed their airspace shut as Iran launched retaliatory strikes on Gulf cities.

Tehran hit the Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international traffic, and Kuwait's main airport during its retaliation one day earlier, AFP added.

Iran, Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Israel had all announced at least partial closures of their skies.

Aviation analytics firm Cirium said more than 1,500 flights to the Middle East were cancelled on Sunday, more than 40 per cent of scheduled traffic.

Flight tracking website FlightAware said more than 2,700 flights had been cancelled globally and more than 12,300 delayed as of 17:20 GMT Sunday, AFP said.

Kingdom’s stockpile of essential commodities sufficient for several months — JCC

AMMAN (JT) — President of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce (JCC) Khalil Haj Tawfiق on Monday stressed that the Kingdom's stockpile of essential food commodities, basic supplies and raw materials is sufficient for several months.

Haj Tawfiق said that the commercial and services sector is prepared to deal with any regional developments that may impact trade flows and supply chains, noting that importers and traders have mul-

tipled sourcing alternatives, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The JCC president added that the chambers of commerce are working in coordination with employer associations and trade bodies as one team to monitor ongoing regional developments and respond using the private sector's expertise, in partnership with relevant ministries and official entities.

Haj Tawfiق pointed out that specialised committees have been

formed across several vital sectors, including shipping and maritime transport, customs clearance, transportation, logistics services and food security, to assess developments, evaluate the situation and adopt appropriate solutions, particularly amid uncertainty over the duration of the regional conflict.

He stressed that the private sector, in all its components, will continue to fulfil its national responsibilities in service of the country and its citizens under all circumstances, in cooperation with official authorities.

On Sunday, Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah had said that the ministry has routine emergency plans in place to address emerging regional developments in a manner that ensures the regular functioning of supply chains and the availability of goods and production inputs in the local market.

Qudah added that the Kingdom's strategic

reserves of basic food commodities are “secure and reassuring,” and sufficient to cover local market needs for “comfortable periods of time”, in light of the continued regularity of supply operations and the stability of supply chains.

He noted that the ministry monitors on a daily basis stock levels of essential commodities, including wheat, barley, rice, sugar, oils and legumes, to ensure their uninterrupted availability in local markets.

Jordan’s medicinal plants spotlighted on World Wildlife Day

By Osama Alkafri

AMMAN — World Wildlife Day, a United Nations occasion observed annually on March 3, highlights the value of wild fauna and flora.

In 2026, the theme, “Medicinal Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods”, carries particular resonance in Jordan, where botanical diversity remains striking despite largely arid and semi-arid landscapes.

Khaled Abulaila, consultant conservation biologist and former director of biodiversity and the National Seed Bank of Jordan, said that the Kingdom is home to more than 2,500 wild plant species.

This richness reflects the country's varied geography, from the Dead Sea, nearly 400 metres below sea level, to mountain highlands and desert ecosystems.

“Jordan is very rich in floral diversity,” Abulaila said, noting that many species are of global importance for food security and medicine. As part of the historic Fertile Crescent, the country hosts crop wild relatives, wild edible plants and numerous species known for their therapeutic properties.

Ethno pharmacological surveys have documented around 363 medicinal plant species in Jordan, nearly 20 per cent of the national flora, according to Abulaila.

For generations, communities have used herbs, shrubs and trees in traditional remedies prepared as infusions,



Photos courtesy of Khaled Abulaila

The observance boosts awareness of plant biodiversity, particularly species of medicinal value

extracts or topical applications to treat ailments ranging from respiratory conditions to skin infections.

Modern research has identified valuable phytochemicals in many of these plants, including alkaloids, flavonoids and phenolic compounds recognised for antimicrobial properties and potential therapeutic benefits, he added.

Some medicinal plants remain widespread, including *Origanum syriacum*, *Teucrium polium* and *Achillea fragrantissima*. Others are increasingly rare. Species such as *Cyclamen*, *Thymus* and *Rheum palaestinum* face growing pressure, and some plants have disappeared from the wild due to overexploitation and habitat degradation.

Abulaila warned that unsustainable harvesting, urban expansion and environmental change are placing many wild populations

at risk.

Given their resilience, with some species thriving in extreme drought, he stressed that conserving these plants is both a national and global priority, particularly as they may offer valuable genetic resources for future food and health security.

He called for an integrated conservation strategy that includes sustainable harvesting guidelines, stronger documentation and research, protection of habitats through reserves and gene banks, and reinforced legal frameworks.

Expanding cultivation initiatives, he added, could reduce pressure on wild stocks while generating income for rural communities.

Chairman of the Jordan Environmental Union Omar Shoshan emphasised that conservation must be rooted in community engagement, adding

that the 2026 theme underscores the importance of local knowledge in safeguarding biodiversity.

“For generations, Jordanians have relied on native plants for medicine, food and cultural practices,” Shoshan said. “This accumulated wisdom remains one of our most valuable tools for conservation.”

He stressed that policies alone are insufficient. Farmers, herders, educators and youth groups, those who interact daily with the land, must play an active role in managing and monitoring natural resources. When communities are empowered, biodiversity protection becomes a shared responsibility.

Civil society organisations, he added, bridge national strategies and local realities through environmental education programmes and field initiatives that foster awareness and stewardship among younger

generations.

Biodiversity expert Ehab Eid highlighted the global dimension of World Wildlife Day. The observance boosts awareness of plant biodiversity, particularly species of medicinal value, while promoting sustainable use and scientific research into new pharmaceutical discoveries.

Eid linked plant conservation to the “one health” concept, which recognises that human health is closely connected to ecosystem health. Protecting medicinal and aromatic plants, he said, is not only an environmental imperative but also a matter of public health, economic resilience and cultural heritage.

He warned that these species face mounting threats, including unregulated wild collection, habitat loss from urban and agricultural expansion, weak regulatory oversight and the effects of climate change on species distribution.

World Wildlife Day serves as a reminder that safeguarding Jordan's botanical wealth means preserving sources of medicine, protecting traditional knowledge and supporting livelihoods tied to sustainable resource use.

Enhancing national biodiversity strategies, promoting sustainable agriculture and green value chains, and expanding scientific documentation are essential steps toward ensuring that Jordan's plant heritage continues to contribute to health, identity and development, experts argued.



AFP photo

Lost artefacts and relics that represent the culture and history of Syria have now been safely recovered and brought to Damascus thanks to cooperation of Syrian and international institutions

Syrian antiquities body steps up post-war heritage protection

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — During the Syrian conflict, museums and archaeological sites have been prone to damage and looting. The very rich Syrian cultural heritage was a victim of the war and illicit trafficking.

Because of the crisis, artefacts were also kept in unsuitable places which caused damage to them.

“The department started to design an action plan to restore antiquities. And one of the first actions that the department of museums has taken was to enact a new law that will be presented to the leadership,” noted Anas Haj Zeidan, director-general of the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria.

The Department of Museums began a new structure because the old one was weak, Zeidan continued, adding that it is now prepared to protect cultural heritage of Syria.

“As a result of the co-

operation with international entities, the list of endangered sites has been created,” Haj Zeidan said.

The Interpol has contributed to these efforts by posting photos of missing artefacts and archaeological pieces, adding that in the tracking of missing objects their role played Arab and international archaeologists and experts for combating illicit trafficking.

There are few points that the Department of Museums follows: the legal framework, working on looting and establishing of the national centre for records of artefacts and archaeological sites.

“So far, the department didn't create a digital archive,” Haj Zeidan said, adding that one of the major goals of his department is to strengthen the inter-institutional coordination.

Another goal is to create conditions for the return of artefacts to Syrian museums from abroad.

“Building the network of experts by training

them is another objective,” Haj Zeidan underlined, adding that the department is boosting partnership with local communities who would protect archaeological sites.

Ministry of foreign affairs is also using its channels to coordinate with international institution the return of stolen objects to Syrian museums, the professor said, adding that ministry culture and tourism play its role in that regard.

“Although exposed by the brutal war, Syria managed to preserve significant number of its archaeological sites and monuments,” Haj Zeidan said, noting that there is a hotline to ministry of interior and governors for the report of any violation or infringement of Syrian heritage.

“I do believe that we need time, effort, resources and expertise to protect the heritage of Levant which Jordan and Syria are both an integral part,” Haj Zeidan underscored.

DIPLOMACY

Safadi condemns Iranian attacks, discusses de-escalation efforts with counterparts

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Monday warned of the severity of the ongoing regional escalation and condemned Iranian attacks on the Kingdom and Gulf countries.

Safadi held separate calls with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Dutch Foreign Minister Tom Berendsen, Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide, Bosnia and Herzegovina Foreign Minister Elmedin Konakovi, and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov to discuss the escalation and de-escalation prospects.

The discussions also



Ayman Safadi

focused on restoring calm and advancing diplomacy as a path to security and stability, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Safadi also reiterated the Kingdom's condemnation of Iranian at-

tacks against Jordan and fellow Gulf Arab states, rejecting them as an unjustified escalation and a flagrant violation of international law and state sovereignty.

He also reiterated that Jordan and its Arab partners would take all necessary and available measures to safeguard their citizens, security, stability and sovereignty.

Safadi also discussed the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, stressing the need for coordinated efforts to end the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, prevent Israel from annexing the West Bank and preserve prospects for a just peace. He called for the full implementation of all provisions of US President Donald Trump's Gaza plan.

He also condemned Israel's continued closure of the Al Aqsa Mosque and restrictions on worshippers, describing them as a blatant violation of freedom of worship and urging the international community to take effective action to stop these measures.

The foreign ministers expressed their solidarity with the Kingdom in confronting the attacks and underscored the importance of diplomacy as a means to restore stability.



Authorities respond to 133 reports of falling objects, shrapnel across Kingdom

AMMAN (JT) — Civil Defence and police personnel had responded to 133 reports of incidents caused by falling objects and shrapnel across most governorates of the Kingdom since Saturday, with no new injuries recorded, the Public Security Directorate (PSD) said on Monday.

The PSD urged citizens to adhere to safety in-

structions issued by the relevant authorities and not to hesitate to contact the unified emergency number (911) in the event of any sightings.

It reiterated the importance of refraining from approaching any suspicious object under any circumstances, warning of the serious danger such objects may pose.

Speaker condemns Iranian strikes, pledges full support to King

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi reiterated on Monday that Parliament stands firmly behind His Majesty King Abdullah in all efforts to protect Jordan and preserve its stability.

Speaking during a legislative session attended by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan and government officials, Qadi strongly condemned Iranian missile attacks on Jordan and Gulf countries, describing the strikes as a "grave violation of state sovereignty, a clear breach of international law and a threat to regional peace."

"In the midst of ongoing military confrontations involving the United States, Israel and Iran, Jordan will not tolerate any infringement on its sovereignty, nor will it allow its territory to become a battlefield," Qadi said.

He noted that Jordan



Mazen Qadi

had made every effort to pursue peaceful solutions regarding the Iranian issue, supporting all channels of dialogue and negotiation. "Yet the Iranian side violated our lands in an unacceptable act, met with courage and heroism by the Jordanian Army and the Royal Jordanian Air Force," he added.

Qadi reiterated that Jordan will not be drawn into any regional escalation and described the nation's sovereignty as a "red line". He also condemned attacks on the brotherly Gulf states, stressing that

Jordan views Gulf security as intertwined with its own and supports its neighbours in safeguarding their homelands.

The Speaker paid tribute to the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army, saying, "We salute the Arab Army for defending our skies and lands. We congratulate His Majesty on the anniversary of the Arabisation of the army leadership, a historic and courageous decision by the late King Hussein Bin Talal, which strengthened Jordan's sovereignty and ensured the army remains a lasting symbol of loyalty, discipline and sacrifice."

Qadi added that this legacy continues under the guidance of King Abdullah, who is leading the military towards further modernisation and professionalism.

The House of Representatives voted unanimously to adopt Qadi's speech as an official parliamentary statement.

Factories operating at full capacity despite regional tensions — JCI

AMMAN (JT) — President of the Jordan and Amman chambers of industry (JCI) Fathi Jaghbir on Monday said that factories across the Kingdom are operating at full capacity to meet citizens' needs despite the accelerating regional developments.

In a statement, Jaghbir said coordination with the government remains ongoing to resolve any obstacles affecting production, particularly in light of the slowdown in maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He stressed that the industrial sector has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, having benefitted from previous crises by building sufficient strategic stockpiles of raw and intermediate materials to ensure uninterrupted operations for several months.

"The national industry continues to prove

it is a safety valve in securing essential goods under the most challenging conditions," Jaghbir said, noting that the sector contributes more than 24.3 per cent to GDP, with production capacity exceeding JD17 billion and over 1,500 industrial products across various sectors.

He emphasised that industry is not a complementary sector but a central pillar of the national economy and a buffer against external shocks.

Jaghbir added that the domestic market remains stable and well-prepared to absorb potential repercussions. He noted that during previous crises, from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 to logistical disruptions linked to the closure of Bab Al Mandab, the national industry secured more than 60 per cent of essential local market needs without significant shortages.



JT file

President of the Jordan and Amman chambers of industry Fathi Jaghbir on Monday says that industrial sector has demonstrated resilience and adaptability

Beyond ensuring supply continuity, he said, those experiences strengthened consumer confidence in locally manufactured products, which have increasingly become the preferred choice over imports after demon-

strating quality, efficiency and reliability.

Jaghbir also pointed to Jordan's logistical flexibility, supported by diversified trade partners and the ability to shift to alternative maritime and land transport routes. He noted

that storage and industrial infrastructure can scale up operational capacity when required.

He added that relevant authorities, in coordination with the private sector, are monitoring markets daily to ensure smooth supply chains and prevent monopolistic practices or price distortions.

On exports, Jaghbir said chambers of industry are coordinating with official bodies to ensure the continued flow of Jordanian goods to global markets, while monitoring any logistical bottlenecks at border crossings or ports and seeking immediate alternatives to prevent delays that could affect international contracts.

He called for unified national efforts and stronger support for local products to enhance self-reliance, stressing that the chambers will remain in continuous session to address challenges arising from the regional crisis.

House to discuss 2026 Social Security Law amendments on Wednesday

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN (JT) — The House of Representatives on Monday placed the draft law amending the 2026 Social Security Law on its agenda for Wednesday.

On February 24, the Cabinet approved the rationale for the draft law, paving the way for its submission to Parliament, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The draft law seeks to strengthen the social

protection regulations, expand coverage to additional population groups, balance the rights of insured individuals, and enhance the long-term sustainability of the insurance system.

It also aims to reinforce the independence of the Social Security Corporation (SSC) and improve governance in its decision-making. Under the proposed amendments, the SSC will be restructured to follow a model similar to the Central

Bank. A governor will be appointed by Cabinet decision, endorsed by a Royal Decree, with clearly defined duties and powers enshrined in the law.

This amendment will end the practice of a government minister chairing the corporation's board of directors, marking a significant step towards institutional autonomy.

Regarding retirement, the draft law establishes mandatory retirement as the default, with early re-

tirement as the exception.

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan has stressed that the amendments will not affect anyone eligible for early, mandatory or optional retirement over the next four years.

He added that the law will be implemented gradually from 2030. Mandatory retirement will be phased in over the following decade, reaching full effect by 2040 for both men and women, with a 14-year transition period from enactment.

Early and optional retirement will also be introduced gradually after 2030, with full implementation by 2047 for men and 2041 for women, corresponding to transition periods of 21 years for men and 15 years for women.

Hassan said that the amendments maintain the five-year gap, or 60-contribution difference, between women and men for both early and mandatory retirement.

NCSC foils cyberattack targeting wheat silo management system

AMMAN (JT) — Specialised technical teams at the National Cybersecurity Centre (NCSC) have foiled a cyberattack targeting the wheat silo management system of Jordan Silos and Supply General Company, NCSC President Mohammad Samadi said on Monday.

Samadi said the attempted breach, traced to a source in Iran, sought to tamper with wheat storage temperature controls in a bid to damage the Kingdom's

strategic reserves, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He stressed that the attack was detected and contained immediately, causing no disruption or impact to the silo management system.

"The national moni-



المركز الوطني للأمن السيبراني National Cyber Security Center

toring system operates around the clock to detect and respond to suspicious cyber activities in accordance with international best practices and standards," Samadi said.

He added that the NCSC has alerted government institutions as well as vital and critical sectors to raise cyber readiness levels and reinforce preventive measures in light of the evolving threat landscape.

Lower House approves 75 articles of 2025 Insurance Contracts Draft law

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — The Lower House on Monday approved 75 articles of the 2025 Insurance Contracts Draft Law, during a session chaired by Speaker Mazen Qadi and attended by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan and members of the ministerial team.

The House had earlier approved 12 articles of the draft law during its session on February 23, followed by 12 more articles on February 25, bringing the total approved so far to 99 of the 101 articles in the draft law.

Article 25 of the law provides that insurance shall cover only risks that are probable to occur. In cases where multiple or consecutive risks result in a loss, the risk that has the greatest impact shall be considered, unless the parties have agreed

otherwise.

Article 26 provides that parties may agree to cover damages arising from extraordinary circumstances or force majeure, provided that any explicit exclusions are clearly stated. Deliberate illegal acts committed by the insured, however, cannot be covered by insurance.

Articles 27 to 30 regulate insurance premiums, the termination or adjustment of contracts, insured amounts and renewal procedures. These provisions also specify timelines for submitting requests and receiving responses.

Articles 31 to 45 address life and personal accident insurance, including rules on beneficiary designation, policy modification and termination, holding multiple policies on the same person and coordination with other forms of compensation.

Articles 46 to 55 cover property and civil liability insurance, including compensation procedures and the proportional distribution of claims when multiple contracts exist. Amendments within this section introduced the possibility of parametric insurance based on pre-defined indices.

Articles 56 to 69 focus on civil liability, medical insurance and marine insurance, specifying the forms of contracts, the insured property, coverage limits, and compensation rules. Adjustments were also made regarding collective medical insurance participation and individual continuation rights.

Articles 70-77 focus on maritime insurance, setting rules for voyage conditions, vessel seaworthiness and contract compliance. They define justifiable vessel deviations or delays for safety,

rescue, medical aid, or agreed circumstances, and require voyages to proceed at a reasonable speed.

Marine insurance contracts can be transferred, but insurer approval is required for ownership-based transfers and proportional premium refunds apply. Insurer liability is excluded for delays, ordinary wear, inherent defects, poor packaging or rodent/insect damage.

Articles 78-86 cover marine losses, general average and insurer responsibilities. Losses are classified as total (actual or constructive) or partial, with procedures for property relinquishment and compensation. General average losses for common benefit are compensated proportionally if underinsured, while the insurer covers salvage and preventive expenses.

Articles 91-99 address contract termination, notifications, committees, claims and penalties. Early termination by the insured triggers proportional premium returns and marine insurance rules apply to land, air and rail contracts if not conflicting.

Notifications may be delivered by personal, postal or electronic means. Committees determine downtime and disability for claims, which must use licensed adjusters and claims generally expire after three years, with special exceptions.

Unfair clauses are invalidated, but clauses granting better rights than the law remain effective. Illegal purchase of insurance rights, including vehicle insurance, is punishable by fines or imprisonment, with repeated offences doubling penalties.

Authorities search for man after allegedly fatally beating son

By Rana Hussein

AMMAM — Police on Monday said they were searching for a man who allegedly killed his son after beating him on the head in Zarqa Governorate earlier in the day.

The 16-year-old victim was struck once in the head, reportedly by his father in Ruseifeh following an argument, Police Spokesperson Lt. Col. Amer Sartawi said.

"The victim was rushed to a nearby hospital but succumbed to his wound," Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

The suspect then fled from the house and police are searching for

him, the police official added.

'The victim apparently was struck with a wooden stick once on the head...'

A postmortem conducted on the victim by a team of government pathologists at the National Institute of Forensic Medicine indicated that "the boy died

of a blunt trauma to the head", according to a senior medical source.

"The victim apparently was struck with a wooden stick once on the head, which caused a fractured skull," the senior medical source told The Jordan Times.

The government pathologists "did not detect any marks of abrasion or laceration on the victim's body and concluded that he died as a result of a brain haemorrhage", the senior medical source added.

Investigations are ongoing into the incident, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate.



Motorists block the highway as they flee their villages in southern Lebanon along the coastal road through the city of Sidon on Monday

Israeli bombardment sends Lebanese fleeing

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — As Israeli strikes shattered the nighttime quiet, Beirut cafe owner Hassan rushed home to whisk his wife and young daughter to safety in the nearby mountains outside the city.

The sound of heavy gunfire was a warning to residents that war had returned. The roads quickly clogged and the trip took Hassan, 30, and his family more than three hours.

"We rushed out without taking anything with us, no clothes and no food for my daughter," he said.

Israel has carried out a series of strikes on Lebanon since the early hours of Monday, killing at least 31 people and wounding at least 149 others, according to the health ministry.

The attacks were in retaliation for rockets launched by Iran-backed Hizbollah to "avenge the pure blood" of Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei, killed in a US-Israeli attack on Saturday.

On the outskirts of Beirut's southern suburbs, an AFP photographer witnessed crippling traffic jams as residents left in cars and on motorcycles, carrying whatever they could.

For many Lebanese leaving Beirut's densely populated southern suburbs and the country's east and south, areas where Hizbollah has a presence, it was a traumatic reminder of the 2024 war between Hezbollah and Israel, when Israeli strikes led to mass displacement.

An Israeli army spokesperson addressed the freshly displaced Lebanese on Monday, saying "air raids are continuing, so for your safety and the safety of your families, do not return to your homes".

The Lebanese authorities announced the opening of displacement shelters in dozens of schools

in Beirut, the south, and Mount Lebanon.

During the last war, the government's shelter network was wildly inadequate to the scale of the displacement.

In the coastal city of Sidon, the gateway to south Lebanon, hundreds of northbound cars piled with mattresses, blankets, and children's schoolbags crammed both sides of the two-way highway.

"We've been on the road for seven hours," said one displaced southerner who declined to give his name.

"In this country, we live only for suffering and exhaustion."

At one Sidon school-turned-shelter, Izdihar Yassine was seeking shelter with her family, having fled her village in the southern Nabatieh province.

"We were sleeping and woke up to the sound of rockets... we left just as we were," she said.

Smoke rises from US embassy, US warplanes shot by 'friendly fire' in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Black smoke rose from the US embassy in Kuwait on Monday, an AFP correspondent saw, while Kuwait mistakenly shot down US warplanes causing no casualties, as Iran pressed on with a third day of Gulf retaliation.

A US base and a power station were also targeted, in what was the most dramatic escalation for the small Gulf country in decades, after the 2003 US invasion of Iraq and Baghdad's attempt to take over Kuwait in 1990.

Blasts also rang out over the Gulf cities of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Doha and Manama as Iran targets the United States' Gulf allies after the killing of its supreme leader in US-Israeli strikes.

The embassy in Kuwait did not announce it had been hit but issued a security alert urging people to stay away.

"There is a continuing threat of missile and UAV [drone] attacks over Kuwait. Do not come to the embassy," the statement said, adding: "US embassy personnel are sheltering in place."

The Iranian attacks have so far killed five people in the Gulf, according to authorities, including one person in Kuwait.

The small, oil-rich country has a large US military presence stemming from the 1990 Iraqi invasion,



Smoke rises from a reported Iranian strike in the area where the US Embassy is located in Kuwait City on Monday

which was repelled by a US-led coalition aiding the Kuwaiti army.

Three F-15E Strike Eagles were mistakenly shot down by Kuwait air defences late on Sunday night, the US Central Command said.

"During active combat — that included attacks from Iranian aircraft, ballistic missiles, and drones, the U.S. Air Force fighter jets were mistakenly shot down by Kuwaiti air defenses," CENTCOM said on Monday, adding that all six aircrew ejected and were safe.

"Kuwait has acknowledged this incident, and we are grateful for the efforts of the Kuwaiti defense forces and their support in this ongoing operation," it added.

Worried residents

In northern Kuwait, smoke billowed over a power station, three witnesses told AFP.

An energy ministry spokeswoman said a fuel container at the station had been hit by shrapnel as air defences were intercepting drones, causing a limited blaze.

Separately, Iran's army said it targeted the Ali Al Salem air base hosting US troops in Kuwait, as well as vessels in the Indian Ocean, firing 15 cruise missiles.

Also on Monday, shrapnel fell at Mina Al Ahmadi refinery, one of Kuwait's biggest, injuring two workers, but did not disrupt production, the Kuwait National Petroleum Company said.

Sirens sounded over Kuwait City on Monday to warn of incoming strikes. An unspecified number of drones was intercepted at dawn, the interior ministry said.

Dana Abbas, a Kuwait City resident and engineer, said she was worried about the escalation and had rushed to fill her car with petrol and stock up on basic necessities.

On Sunday, the UAE said fallen debris hit the facade of Etihad Towers, which houses diplomatic embassies including Israel's, causing minor injuries to a woman and a child.

Iran's unprecedented bombardment has hit military bases but also civilian infrastructure such as residential buildings, hotels, airports and sea ports, rattling a region long seen as a refuge from Middle East conflict.

Iraq's Erbil in the crossfire with drones and power cuts

ERBIL, Iraq (AFP) — As drones swarmed the skies above Iraq's Erbil and air defences streaked up to shoot them down, residents watched from below, fearing the fire would soon reach them.

Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region hosts US-led coalition troops, and its capital, Erbil, is home to a major US consulate complex, making it a target of the war in the Middle East, triggered by the joint US-Israeli strikes Saturday on Iran.

For days, loud bangs have been heard in Erbil as US air defences repeatedly intercepted drones.

Daily labourer Karwan Salim, 35, told AFP: "The United States and its allies did well with this



A plume of smoke rises near Erbil International Airport in Erbil on Sunday

effective air defence system. Without it, the situation in Erbil would be catastrophic.

"May God grant them success and let them continue," Iranian proxies in

groups who vowed not to remain neutral and claimed responsibility for drone attacks on US bases in Iraq.

"How did a war with the US reach Erbil and Dubai?" Salim asked. "To the Iranian regime, we say: surrender and end this."

Erbil's civil defence issued safety guidelines for citizens in case missile fragments or burning ordnance fall near their homes.

Shopkeeper Abdul Rahman Ismail, 72, said: "People are afraid to leave their homes during the day, and even more so at night. It is Iran and those they support behind all this."

Nurse Salar Burhan, 27, said drone attacks were an everyday occurrence and feared an escalation.

"We don't know why they're dragging us into this war," he added.

'Panic-buying'

Pro-Iran groups warned of a prolonged war of attrition and the powerful Kataeb Hizbollah faction vowed that it would not allow "any American presence in the region, especially in Iraq".

The group specifically warned the Kurdistan region against "conspiring with the enemy forces".

Kurdish authorities enjoy strong ties with the US, which led the 2003 invasion that toppled longtime Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein, who had persecuted the Kurds.

US-led coalition forces stayed in Kurdistan after withdrawing in December from bases within Iraq's federal territory.

Beyond drones, residents in Erbil are worried about power cuts.

Erbil started recently enjoying uninterrupted, round-the-clock electricity and had finally moved beyond private generators.

But the war has dragged the city backwards.

Power cuts have returned, after a major gas complex halted its supplies to power plants in the region as a preventive measure.

The Khor Mor complex, which supplies most of Kurdistan's power stations and is run by the Emirati company Dana Gas, has been hit several times in recent years in attacks blamed on pro-Iran Iraqi groups.

"Without electricity, there is no business," said shopkeeper Khalid Ahmed, 70. "When the lights are out, I have to rely on a small battery-powered lamp to keep the shop open."

The shops are full of goods but "people are terrified... and panic-buying everything", he added. "War is truly terrible for everyone."

While shopping, 37-year-old Media Aziz said: "We bought dairy and meat supplies, but we are worried they will spoil in the freezer because of the power outage."

"We can cope with everything but without electricity, life becomes difficult."

CRISIS

EU chief urges Iran de-escalation to 'stop conflict spreading'

BRUSSELS, Belgium, (AFP) — European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called Monday for urgent de-escalation to prevent the US-Israeli conflict with Iran from "spreading" across the Middle East.

The EU chief slammed "reckless and indiscriminate attacks by Iran and its proxies against sovereign territories across the region", after strikes hit a British air base in Cyprus and a Saudi oil facility.

"We must work hard to de-escalate and stop the conflict spreading," she told reporters in Brussels, warning "the stability of the region is of the utmost importance."

"The situation remains volatile," said von der Leyen, who consulted with nine Middle Eastern leaders over the weekend and was to chair a crisis meeting of the EU's college of commissioners on Monday.

"The situation remains volatile"

While the developments were "deeply concerning," von der Leyen reiterated that the killing of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei spelled "renewed hope for the oppressed people of Iran".

"We strongly support their right to determine their own future," she said, calling for a "credible transition", the halt to Iran's nuclear and ballistic programmes and "an end to destabilising activities".

Von der Leyen stressed earlier Monday the EU was solidly behind its member states after an Iranian drone crashed into a British base on Cyprus.

"While the Republic of Cyprus was not the target, let me be clear: we stand collectively, firmly and unequivocally with our Member States in the face of any threat," she wrote on X.

China backs Iran 'defending sovereignty', vows to push for peace

BELJING (AFP) — China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Iranian counterpart on a call Monday that Beijing supports Tehran defending itself against US-Israeli strikes, as war spread across the Middle East.

Hundreds have died in Iran since Saturday when the United States and Israel began striking dozens of targets in the country.

Tehran responded by launching waves of missiles and drones at Israel, Gulf states and a British base in Cyprus.

Wang told Abbas Araghchi that Beijing "cherishes the traditional friendship between China and Iran, supports Iran in defending its sovereignty, security, territorial integrity, and national dignity, and supports Iran in protecting its legitimate rights and interests", state broadcaster



Pedestrians walk next to a screen in the Jing'an district of Shanghai on Monday

CCTV reported.

China had "urged the US and Israel to immediately cease military operations, avoid further escalation of tensions and prevent the conflict from spreading to the entire Middle East region", Wang said according to CCTV.

In a separate phone call with Oman's foreign minister, also on Monday, Wang accused the United States and Israel of "violating the purposes and principles of the UN charter" by "deliberately instigating a war against Iran".

"China is also willing to play a constructive role, including upholding justice, striving for peace, and stopping the war through the platform of the UN Security Council," Wang told Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi, CCTV reported.

And in another call with France's Jean-Noel Barrot, Wang warned that the world risked "regression to the law of the jungle".

"Major powers cannot arbitrarily attack other countries based on their military superiority", Wang said, according to CCTV.

"The Iranian nuclear issue must ultimately return to the track of political and diplomatic settlement," he said.

Four US military personnel have been killed in the fighting so far, while US President Donald Trump has warned that the war with Iran could last for weeks.

UK’s Cyprus military base comes under attack amid Middle East war

AKROTIRI, Cyprus (AFP) — A British military base on Cyprus came under attack by an unmanned drone on Monday amid the US-Israeli war with Iran, as authorities issued evacuation orders for the surrounding area.

An Iranian drone hit the runway of the UK’s Akrotiri air force base just hours after UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Britain would not join the offensive against Iran.

The area around the Mediterranean island base and an airport in western Cyprus were evacuated, the Cypriot interior ministry said.

“Following information received from the National Guard, instructions were issued for the evacuation of the Akrotiri Municipal District and Paphos Airport,” the ministry said on X.

It came after two drones headed towards



A fighter jet takes off from RAF Akrotiri base following two reported drone attacks near Limassol on Monday

the Akrotiri base were also intercepted earlier on Monday.

Families of air force personnel there were evacuated, the UK Min-

istry of Defence told AFP, although the base continued to operate as normal.

The damage had been “minimal” and there

were no casualties, officials added.

Runway hit

Greece, meanwhile, said

it was sending two frigates and two F-16 fighter jets to Cyprus.

Greece would assist Cyprus in “countering threats and illegal actions on its territory”, its defence ministry said.

Defence Minister Nikos Dendias also indicated he would travel to Cyprus on Tuesday.

Britain’s Foreign Minister Yvette Cooper said the strike on the Royal Air Force base at Akrotiri, a British overseas territory near the southern coastal city of Limassol, hit the “airport runway”.

Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides said the incident just after midnight (22:00 GMT) involved “a Shahed unmanned aerial vehicle”.

UK ‘not at war’

Cooper said the government was “working on every possible op-

tion” to help its nationals in the region return home if needed.

“There’s an estimated 300,000 British citizens in Gulf countries that have now been targeted by Iran, including countries where now airspace is closed,” she told Sky News.

More than 100,000 UK nationals had so far registered their presence in the region, she said.

UK Middle East Minister Hamish Falconer insisted the nation was “not at war”.

“Let me be really clear: The UK took a deliberate decision not to be part of the first wave of strikes conducted by the United States and Israeli governments.

But in the face of reckless attacks from Iran... we took the decision, as the prime minister announced last night, to support the US’s request to use

our bases in order to conduct defensive actions,” he added.

Iraq mistakes

Starmer announced late on Sunday that he had agreed to a US request to use British bases for “specific and limited defensive purpose” having previously taken a “deliberate” decision not to be involved.

He said that the mistakes of the Iraq war had been “learned”.

The initial decision not to back the US attracted the ire of US President Donald Trump who said he had been “very disappointed” in Starmer’s reaction.

Trump, in an exclusive interview with The Daily Telegraph described the prime minister’s later decision to allow the use of bases on specific grounds as

“useful” but said it “too far too much time”.

Any potential military action in the Middle East is politically sensitive in the UK following former prime minister Tony Blair’s disastrous support for the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Rosa Freedman, an expert on international law and conflicts at the University of Reading, however, told AFP the current situation was “materially different” from the war in Iraq in 2003.

Evie Aspinall, director of the British Foreign Policy Group think-tank added that the UK would not want to be “seen as a key party in this conflict”.

“Hence allowing defensive not offensive strikes, although the difference between the two is, in practice, often very minimal,” she said.

Russian advance in Ukraine slows to almost two-year low — AFP analysis

KYIV, Ukraine (AFP) — Russia’s army recorded its slowest advance on the front line in Ukraine in nearly two years in February, AFP analysis of data from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) showed, as Kyiv’s troops scored several localised breakthroughs.

The slowdown came as Moscow’s forces at the front struggled after Elon Musk cut the Russians’ access to Starlink Internet terminals.

Russia advanced by a total of 123 square kilometres — the lowest since April 2024 — during the month, according to data from the ISW.

The ISW worked with the Critical Threats Project (part of the American Enterprise In-

stitute, or AEI), another US think-tank specialising in conflict.

Russia’s gains on the frontline have come at huge cost, with hundreds of thousands of its soldiers killed since they invaded.

The four-year war has spiralled into Europe’s deadliest conflict since World War II, with several rounds of talks between the two sides having failed to break the deadlock over a potential ceasefire.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky last month insisted his country was not losing the war.

His troops managed several localised advances during February, the data showed, including a 61 square kilome-

tre gain on February 15, and gains of more than 50 square kilometres on each of February 21 and February 23.

Kyiv’s forces saw most success along the southern front line, pushing Russia’s army back in the Dnipro-petrovsk region.

Moscow, meanwhile, has been grinding forward in the east, moving closer towards the key hubs of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk in Ukraine’s eastern Donetsk region.

Russia occupies just over 19 per cent of Ukraine.

It controlled around 7 per cent before the February 2022 invasion — Crimea, annexed in 2014, and territory held by Moscow-backed separatists.

King, in call with US president, world leaders discusses regional developments

Continued from page 1

His Majesty called for an immediate end to the dangerous escalation and intensifying international efforts to contain the crisis, underscoring that Jordan will continue to take the necessary measures to ensure its security and the safety of its citizens, according to a Royal Court statement.

For his part, the Indian prime minister condemned the attacks on Jordan and affirmed his country’s support for the Kingdom, praising Jordan’s efforts to protect Indian citizens residing there, the statement said.

During a phone call

from Mauritania President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani on Monday, the King called for stepping up international efforts to reach comprehensive calm in the region.

His Majesty underscored that Iran’s continued attacks on a number of countries in the region threaten to escalate the conflict, emphasising the need to use diplomacy to resolve tensions, a Royal Court statement said.

For his part, the Mauritanian president expressed his country’s condemnation of these attacks, affirming Mauritania’s solidarity with the Kingdom and Arab countries in the

measures they are taking to protect their security and stability.

Also on Monday, His Majesty received a phone call from Chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya Mohamed Al Menfi, during which they discussed ways to de-escalate regional tensions.

His Majesty reiterated Jordan’s condemnation of Iran’s attacks on its territory and a number of Arab countries, which threaten the security and stability of the region, according to a Royal Court statement.

For his part, Chairman Al Menfi expressed Libya’s solidarity with the Kingdom, and its

rejection of any attempt to undermine its stability and the safety of its citizens.

His Majesty received a phone call from Somalia President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on Monday, and discussed the recent escalation in the region.

His Majesty underscored that ensuring the safety of Jordan’s citizens is the utmost priority, as well as preserving the Kingdom’s security and stability.

The two sides emphasised that regional tensions need to be resolved through dialogue and diplomatic channels in order to achieve comprehensive calm, according to a

Royal Court statement.

The King, during a phone call with Italy Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni on Sunday, discussed the dangerous escalation in the region.

His Majesty reaffirmed Jordan’s rejection of the attacks on its territory and a number of Arab countries, emphasising the need to utilise dialogue as a means of resolving crises, according to a Royal Court statement.

For her part, the Italian prime minister condemned the Iranian attacks, affirming her country’s commitment to working with Jordan and partners to achieve regional calm.

Trump says US ‘substantially ahead’ of timeline in Iran

Continued from page 1

“Our objectives are clear,” he told an event at the White House after US officials gave a changing variety of reasons for the US-Israeli offensive.

“First, we’re destroying Iran’s missile capabilities... Second, we’re annihilating their navy... Third, we’re ensuring that the world’s number-one sponsor of terror can never obtain a nuclear weapon.

Finally we are ensuring the Iranian regime can’t continue to arm, fund and direct terrorist armies outside of their borders,” he said.

Trump has previously justified the war saying that Iran was attempting to rebuild its nuclear programme and could soon have missiles able to strike the United States.

But he had not previously listed four reasons, including preventing Iran from supporting regional militant groups such as Hizbollah and Hamas.

US and Israeli forces have so far struck hundreds of targets across Iran, including the Islamic republic’s missiles, navy

and command-and-control sites.

Trump on Monday said he is not ruling out sending US troops into Iran, while threatening a new, “big wave” of attacks.

The 79-year-old Republican has long campaigned against decades of US military entanglements in the Middle East, but ordered a large-scale war against Iran starting Saturday.

While so far the assault has focused entirely on aerial attacks by missiles and bombs, Trump refused to rule out sending ground troops — something generally considered to be far riskier in terms of possible casualties.

“I don’t have the yips with respect to boots on the ground — like every president says, ‘There will be no boots on the ground.’ I don’t say it,” Trump told The New York Post in one of numerous brief interviews he has given since launching the Iran operation.

“I say ‘probably don’t need them’, [or] ‘if they were necessary’,” he said.

Trump also spoke to

CNN on Monday, flagging what he said would be an escalation in the assault on Iran.

“We haven’t even started hitting them hard. The big wave hasn’t even happened,” he told CNN, without elaborating. “The big one is coming soon.”

Trump’s comments came shortly after Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth also signalled that deploying troops inside Iran had not been ruled out.

Asked if there were already boots on the ground, Hegseth told a news conference: “No, but we’re not going to go into the exercise of what we will or will not do.”

“We’ll go as far as we need to go,” he said.

As for how long the war will last, Hegseth said: “Four weeks, two weeks, six weeks, it could move up. It could move back.”

“No stupid rules of engagement, no nation building quagmire, no democracy-building exercise. No politically correct wars. We fight to win and we don’t waste time or lives,” the Pentagon chief said.

“This is not Iraq. This is not endless,” Hegseth said. “Our generation knows better and so does this president. He called the last 20 years of nation building wars ‘dumb’ and he’s right.”

Gen. Dan Caine, the top US military officer, spoke alongside Hegseth, saying that air superiority had been achieved over Iran.

Strikes by American forces “resulted in the establishment of local air superiority. This air superiority will not only enhance the protection of our forces, but also allow them to continue the work over Iran,” Caine said.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guard warned on Monday that the United States “will no longer be safe”, on the third day of joint US-Israeli attacks against the Islamic republic.

“The enemy should know that their happy days are over and they will no longer be safe anywhere in the world, not even in their own homes,” the Guards’ Quds force, which oversees its foreign operations, said in a statement carried by state TV.

Iran’s retaliatory strikes

have so far targeted 500 sites linked to the United States and Israel in the Middle East, the Revolutionary Guard said on the third day of fighting Monday.

“Since the start of the conflict, the brave soldiers of the Iranian armed forces have attacked 600 strategic targets and 500 American military targets and targets of the Zionist regime [Israel],” the Guard said in a statement. It added they had launched more than 700 drones and hundreds of missiles.

The Revolutionary Guards also said on Monday that they had attacked an allegedly US-linked oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz as part of a wave of strikes retaliating against a US-Israeli assault.

“The ATHE NOVA tanker, one of the American allies in the Strait of Hormuz, is still on fire after being hit by two drones,” the Guard said in a statement.

On Saturday, the Guard said they had closed the waterway, which is vital for oil and gas shipments, after the start of US and Israeli attacks.

UK provides £5.3 million to support National Water Carrier project

Continued from page 1

The ministry said the funding will help strengthen sustainable water resource management in Jordan, improve resilience to climate change and ensure a safe and continuous water supply.

Toukan described the project as a strategic initiative aligned with the Economic Modernisation Vision, emphasising that water infrastructure is essential for sustainable

growth and long-term adaptation, according to a statement from the Ministry of Planning.

The British envoy highlighted that the memorandum reaffirms the Jordanian-British partnership and their shared commitment to enhancing water resilience, governance and sustainable infrastructure across Jordan, the statement said.

In addition to the grant, the UK has established a risk management facility to

provide technical support to the National Water Carrier Project Management Unit. The facility is designed to help the unit anticipate, assess and manage emerging risks, ensuring more effective project implementation and optimal use of resources, Petra added.

Earlier the day, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation said that negotiations were still under way with relevant stakeholders to complete the financial closure of the National Water Carrier

project, which is expected to be finalised soon.

Spokesperson Omar Salameh said that once the financial closure is achieved, implementation work on the project will commence.

The Aqaba-Amman Water Desalination and Conveyance Project, also known as the National Carrier Project, will desalinate water from the Red Sea starting from the Gulf of Aqaba, ensuring drinking water supply to Amman

and Aqaba while serving other governorates along the pipeline route, including Maan, Tafileh, Karak and Madaba.

The project will provide a reliable water supply of 300 million cubic metres annually to much of the Kingdom, improving water distribution, alleviating pressure on existing resources, and helping to replenish over-extracted aquifers to ensure a sustainable and reliable water supply for Jordan’s future.

Jordan, six countries denounce Iran strikes as threat to regional stability

Continued from page 1

The signatories affirmed that they stand united in defence of their citizens, sovereignty and territories,

They also praised

reiterating their right to self-defence in response to the attacks and their commitment to maintaining regional security.

They also praised

what they described as effective cooperation in air and missile defence, saying it had prevented greater loss of life and wider destruction.

Gov’t prepares alternative water plan as Israel deal expires — source

Continued from page 1

In October 2021, the two sides agreed to increase annual supplies to 50 million cubic metres beyond the quantities stipulated in the 1994 treaty.

In November 2022, Jordan and Israel signed a memorandum of understanding to advance a water-for-energy initiative. Under the proposed deal, Jordan would build 600 megawatts of solar power capacity for export to Israel in exchange for 200 million cubic metres of desalinated water annually.

Jordan later abandoned the agreement following the Israeli war on Gaza.

Jordan-Syria Water Cooperation

Jordan has also sought

to revitalise water cooperation with Syria.

The two countries signed water agreements in 1953 and 1987, though both sides have said the accords were never fully implemented.

Jordan has long cited the construction of dams and the drilling of illegal wells on the Syrian side as factors contributing to declining flows from the Yarmouk River.

However, following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, the two neighbours reopened discussions on shared water resources.

High-level Syrian delegations have visited the Kingdom to discuss practical steps to address joint water challenges. In September 2025, the two coun-

tries launched the Jordanian-Syrian Joint Water Platform to enhance cooperation and information exchange.

At the time, Ministry of Water Spokesperson Omar Salameh told The Jordan Times that Syria had expressed readiness to address the issue of illegally drilled wells in recent years.

He added that Jordan plans to present a study on cloud seeding in the Yarmouk Basin to help bolster regional water supplies.

Salameh also said the Syrian side showed interest in preserving Jordan’s allocated share at the Wihdeh Dam and in exploring the possibility of providing additional water during the summer months to ease seasonal shortages.

Israel strikes Beirut suburbs in response to Hizbollah attack

Continued from page 1

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the attacks on Israel were “irresponsible and suspicious”.

Without naming Hizbollah, Salam said his government would “take all necessary measures to stop the perpetrators and protect the Lebanese people”.

Lebanese authorities had repeatedly said they do not wish to involve their country in the outbreak of conflict in the region, which started after a US-Israeli attack on Iran.

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Jordan and the coming energy shocks

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

The Strait of Hormuz does not merely move ships. It moves the global economy. Any tension or closure is quickly reflected in energy prices, shipping and insurance costs, and overall market confidence. Located between the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, the strait is only 33 kilometres wide at its narrowest point, making it the world's most critical chokepoint for energy trade.

Around 21 million barrels of oil pass through the Strait of Hormuz every day, according to 2025 estimates. This represents roughly 25 per cent of global seaborne oil trade. Its importance goes beyond oil. Nearly 20 percent of global liquefied natural gas trade also flows through this corridor. With the Middle East holding close to half of the world's proven oil reserves, the strait stands as a central pillar of global energy security.

Asia's dependence on this route is striking. More than 80 per cent of exports moving through the strait are directed toward Asian markets. China imports approximately 5.4 million barrels per day of oil transiting the strait. India imports around 2.1 million barrels per day, while Japan receives about 1.6 million barrels per day. South Korea also relies heavily on supplies passing through this narrow waterway.

This geographic concentration of demand means that any disruption would not remain a regional issue. It would quickly become a global shock. Oil markets react sharply to geopolitical risk, often pricing in fear before actual shortages occur. Even the threat of disruption can drive prices higher.

The consequences would extend beyond crude oil. About 11 per cent of global trade passes through the strait. Any interruption would create supply chain bottlenecks, increase shipping costs, raise insurance premiums and push up the prices of goods linked to energy, including food and transportation.

If the strait were partially or fully closed, some exports could be redirected through alternative land pipelines in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. However, these routes cannot fully replace the daily volumes that normally pass through Hormuz. A portion of global supply would temporarily leave the market. In a tightly balanced energy system, even a modest supply gap can trigger sharp price spikes, placing heavy pressure on energy importing economies.

Major industrial nations maintain strategic petroleum reserves that can be released to cushion short term shocks. Yet this solution is temporary. If disruptions persist, the economic impact would deepen, leading to imported inflation, slower growth, and widening trade deficits across energy dependent countries.

For Jordan, the risks are clear. As a net energy importer, any sharp increase in oil prices would directly raise the national import bill. This would strain the trade balance and foreign currency reserves. Higher energy prices would also increase electricity, transportation and industrial production costs. In a period of sustained political tension, these pressures could intensify.

Jordan also depends on stable regional supply chains. Broader instability could slow trade flows, affect exports and re-exports, and weaken logistics activity.

Strategic hedging, therefore, is not optional for Jordan. It is essential. In a volatile regional environment, economic resilience requires proactive risk management. Diversifying energy sources and expanding reliance on natural gas and renewable energy must remain a priority. Every additional unit of electricity generated from solar or wind reduces exposure to external shocks.

Building adequate strategic reserves of petroleum products provides decision makers with valuable time during crises. Financial hedging tools, including long term supply contracts when market conditions are favourable, can help stabilise part of the energy bill and reduce volatility. Improving energy efficiency across industry, transport, and buildings further strengthens resilience by lowering overall consumption.

In a world where a 33 kilometre waterway can reshape global markets, preparation is the only rational strategy. For Jordan, managing energy risk is not simply an economic policy choice. It is a cornerstone of national stability.

Israeli-US war on Iran: Scenarios and future pathways

By Hasan Dajah

The events of the first day of the US-Israeli confrontation with Iran demonstrate that the conflict has entered an unprecedented phase in terms of the scale of the strikes and the speed of political and military developments. This makes an analysis of future scenarios essential for understanding the direction of the crisis. The extensive military operations, the targeting of command and military sites, and the Iranian responses on multiple fronts all indicate that the course of the war is not yet decided and depends on a set of conditions that will determine whether the escalation remains limited or transforms into a wider regional conflict. Based on the available data, three main scenarios can be formulated, each with its own objective conditions and varying chances of realisation.

The first scenario involves a limited and calculated escalation, with continued US and Israeli air strikes against military and strategic targets inside Iran, met with measured Iranian responses that do not exceed certain limits. This scenario is based on the premise that all parties are aware of the cost of a full-scale war and are therefore attempting to achieve political and military gains without sliding into open confrontation. One of the conditions for this scenario to materialise is that the strikes remain focused on military targets and that the parties avoid targeting areas that would result in massive civilian casualties or direct attacks on US forces, as such casualties could trigger a political escalation that would be difficult to contain.

It also requires the continuation of indirect communication channels between the major powers, allowing for tacit understandings that prevent the crossing of red lines. The

chances of this scenario materialising are relatively high in the short term, because the first day showed that, despite the intensity of the strikes, the Iranian responses, although extensive, remained within the framework of mutual deterrence and did not escalate into a full-blown confrontation. Furthermore, there are indications that some parties are willing to keep the door open for political solutions later.

One indicator that might support this scenario is that some political statements hint at a new leadership or a desire for dialogue, meaning that the diplomatic door is not completely closed

The second scenario is the outbreak of a wider regional war, a scenario based on a gradual loss of control over the escalation. As Iranian attacks expand to include US bases and interests in the Gulf, and as missiles and drones are launched at several countries, the risk of new parties becoming involved increases. The conditions for this scenario are primarily linked to a major strike resulting in a large number of casualties among US forces or civilians in the Gulf States or Israel, which would prompt Washington to

significantly expand its military operations. This is also linked to Iran taking strategic steps such as disrupting navigation in the Strait of Hormuz or targeting energy infrastructure, which could prompt a broader coalition to intervene. Furthermore, a prolonged escalation of strikes without decisive results could push the parties to further escalate in search of a political or military gain. The chances of this scenario are moderate, as its elements are already present, especially given the conflict's expansion to multiple countries. However, there are still clear international efforts to prevent a full-blown conflagration due to its serious economic and humanitarian repercussions for the region and the world.

The third scenario involves a return to negotiations after a period of escalation. This scenario may seem contradictory to the reality of war, but historically, it often occurs after intense rounds of violence. This scenario assumes that the parties reach the conclusion that the military and political costs are too high and that achieving their objectives by force alone is impossible. The conditions for this path to materialise include, firstly, the preservation of Iran's core military capabilities despite the strikes, rendering the idea of a swift victory unrealistic. It also requires international pressure from major powers to reopen channels of negotiation, in addition to an internal desire among the warring parties to avoid a protracted war of attrition.

One indicator that might support this scenario is that some political statements hint at a new leadership or a desire for dialogue, meaning that the diplomatic door is not completely closed. The chances of this scenario materialising are moderate to high in the medium term, especially if military operations fail to achieve clear strategic

objectives or if global economic costs rise due to disruptions in energy and trade markets.

When comparing the three scenarios, it becomes clear that the decisive factor is not only military strength, but also the parties' ability to manage risks and assess consequences. Modern wars often begin with limited plans and then expand due to hasty decisions or miscalculations. Furthermore, the complex regional environment and the multiplicity of actors increase the likelihood of misunderstandings or unintended escalation. Therefore, the conditions for realisation are not fixed, but rather change daily depending on developments on the ground and political reactions.

In conclusion, the most likely scenario in the near term appears to be a continuation of the pattern of limited escalation, with the parties attempting to achieve military and political gains without reaching the point of no return that would trigger a full-scale war. However, this path remains fragile, as any miscalculation or a strike causing significant casualties could quickly lead to a wider escalation, opening the door to a regional war that would be difficult to contain.

Conversely, a return to negotiations remains a realistic possibility in the longer term, especially if the economic, humanitarian, and political costs of war prove to be higher than the parties can bear, or if military operations fail to achieve decisive objectives. Therefore, examining these scenarios does not constitute definitive predictions, but rather aims to understand potential trends by analysing the conditions and opportunities for their realisation within a highly complex and rapidly evolving regional context that remains open to multiple paths.

Hasan Dajah — professor of Strategic Studies at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University

Sovereignty measured in cubic meters: Northern Jordan at the frontline of regional risk

By Mohammad Najeeb

In northern Jordan, water is no longer a routine public service. It is a strategic variable that directly reflects the state's resilience in a volatile region. In Irbid, Ajloun, Jerash and Mafrqa, supply cycles are shaped not only by rainfall and infrastructure conditions, but also by the realities of trans boundary hydrology and regional politics. In this context, every cubic meter delivered reliably to households and businesses represents more than operational efficiency. It represents sovereign control.

Jordan remains one of the most water-scarce countries in the world. Per capita water availability is far below international scarcity thresholds, and structural demand continues to rise due to demographic pressures, urban expansion and economic growth. Nowhere is this tension more visible than in the north, where dependence on shared surface resources such as the Yarmouk River and storage at the Al Wehda Dam exposes supply to fluctuations beyond direct national control.

Regional instability and climate variability compound this exposure. Variations in upstream flows, operational decisions outside Jordan's borders, and shifting geopolitical dynamics can quickly affect available volumes. Under such conditions, water policy becomes inseparable from national security planning. Sovereignty is tested not only at diplomatic tables but also in distribution networks.

Yet, external risk is only part of the equation. Internal structural inefficiencies can magnify vulnerability. Non-revenue water remains a central challenge in parts of the north, where aging infrastructure, pressure imbalances and illegal connections result in significant losses before water reaches the consumer. Each lost cubic meter represents not only wasted supply but also wasted energy, increased financial strain and

diminished public trust. Reducing these losses is therefore not a technical exercise alone. It is a strategic act of resource recovery.

This is where management reform becomes pivotal. The operational model implemented at Yarmouk Water Company through structured management contracts reflects a deliberate policy choice. These contracts are designed to move the sector from process-oriented administration to measurable performance governance. Targets such as reducing non-revenue water, improving continuity of supply, strengthening billing efficiency and accelerating response times create accountability anchored in data rather than routine.

However, management contracts are not self-executing solutions. Their effectiveness depends on an enabling framework. Clear governance architecture must distinguish ownership, regulation and operation to prevent decision bottlenecks. Operators must have sufficient operational autonomy to implement corrective measures swiftly, while remaining subject to transparent performance monitoring. Establishing a high-level oversight mechanism with defined escalation authority can strengthen coherence and reduce institutional friction.

Equally important is the alignment between operational targets and capital investment. Operators can optimise performance within existing networks, but structural deficiencies require coordinated capital expenditure. Investment planning should therefore be directly informed by performance diagnostics. High loss districts should receive priority rehabilitation, and capital allocation should be sequenced to reinforce measurable outcomes. Linking capital programs to contractual performance objectives transforms investment from reactive maintenance into strategic modernisation.

Financial sustainability must also be addressed. Persistent gaps between production costs

and average tariffs constrain long-term resilience. Improving collection efficiency, introducing digital billing tools and gradually refining tariff structures with targeted protection for vulnerable groups can reduce pressure on public finances while reinforcing sector stability. Fiscal prudence in the water sector is inseparable from national budgetary discipline.

Water security in northern Jordan is therefore not a peripheral utility matter. It is a frontline test of strategic governance. And the outcome of that test will shape not only supply cycles, but the broader resilience of the state itself

The forthcoming National Water Carrier Project further elevates the strategic stakes. By diversifying supply through desalination and conveyance, Jordan aims to reduce reliance on volatile surface sources. Yet, the success of this initiative will depend on network readiness in receiving regions, particularly the north. Hydraulic modelling, pressure management upgrades, reservoir reinforcement and full integration of monitoring systems must precede large scale injection of new volumes. Without such preparation, additional supply could exacerbate technical losses or strain aging infrastructure.

Government foresight is there-

fore critical. Preparing northern networks in parallel with the development of new supply is not merely an engineering detail. It signals strategic awareness that infrastructure expansion must be matched by institutional and operational readiness. Integrating readiness indicators into management contracts, allocating phased rehabilitation budgets and coordinating technical standards across agencies reflect mature statecraft in resource governance.

Capacity development should remain a cornerstone of reform. Management contracts must embed structured knowledge transfer and measurable local capacity building to ensure long term sustainability. Sovereignty in water management ultimately depends on domestic expertise capable of sustaining performance beyond any single contractual cycle.

Northern Jordan today stands at the intersection of hydrology and geopolitics. Climate uncertainty, demographic pressure and regional volatility form a complex risk environment. In such an environment, resilience is not achieved solely by adding new supplies. It is achieved by strengthening governance, modernizing infrastructure, ensuring financial viability and embedding performance culture across institutions.

In the twenty first century, sovereignty is increasingly defined by a state's ability to secure essential resources under shifting external conditions. For Jordan, and particularly for the north, that sovereignty is measured in cubic meters. Every unit saved through loss reduction, every network upgraded before crisis, every performance benchmark met under a transparent framework reinforces national stability.

Water security in northern Jordan is therefore not a peripheral utility matter. It is a frontline test of strategic governance. And the outcome of that test will shape not only supply cycles, but the broader resilience of the state itself.

BUSINESS



A general view shows Ras Tannura's oil production plant near Damman in Saudi Arabia's eastern province, 27 December 2004

Mideast war risks sending global economy into stagflation

PARIS, France (AFP) - An extended conflict in the Middle East after the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran could trigger global stagflation — a troublesome blend of high inflation and anaemic growth — due to spiking oil and gas prices, economists warned.

Will there be an oil shock ?

The conflict has nearly halted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, through which around 20 percent of global seaborne oil passes, with several ships attacked.

Global oil prices shot higher on Monday, with the Brent crude international reference oil contract up nearly nine per cent at \$79.30 per barrel at 1410 GMT.

It briefly surpassed \$80 per barrel earlier in the day, and was up considerably from the \$61 per barrel at the start of the year.

Economist Sylvain Bersinger said the war risks "creating a third oil shock after those in 1973 and 1979 and the 2022 gas shock".

Europe's benchmark gas price shot more than 50 percent higher on Monday.

He said the price of oil could rise to \$110 per barrel, but added that was no longer exceptional as oil prices had risen over \$140 in 2008 and were above \$100 in the 2010s.

Adam Hetts at asset manager Janus Henderson said that while oil prices would certainly rise, the increase should remain "at reasonable levels".

What impact on global trade?

The conflict could act

as a shock to trade "at the worst possible moment", said economists at ING bank.

The global trading system is already under stress from US President Donald Trump's tariff offensive as well as the fragmentation of supply chains since Covid and the war in Ukraine.

Moreover the closure of the Gulf airspace is disrupting aviation between European and Asia, they noted.

For Ruben Nizard, head of political risk research at Coface, a trade credit insurance company, this crisis could also "throw another wrench into the works by driving up maritime freight costs" and pushing up inflation.

"At the global level, this would open the door to an economic scenario of stagflation," he added, referring to a situation with high inflation and weak or non-existent growth.

What impact on the global economy?

According to economists at Natixis bank, a prolonged disruption of traffic in the Strait of Hormuz "would have major implications for markets, but also for inflation dynamics and overall economic stability".

They added that "China would be particularly affected by this war."

Cyrille Poirier-Coutansais, director of the research department at the French Navy's Centre for Strategic Studies, agreed that China is particularly dependent upon oil shipped through the Strait of Hormuz.

"The question is

whether there will be enough fuel to keep the world's factory running," he told AFP.

For the economist Sylvain Bersinger the impact on Europe will likely be less than the 2022 gas shock, which would help France in particular to avoid a recession.

In a sign of declining investor confidence, the interest rate on European sovereign bonds climbed on Monday.

The yield on 10-year German government bonds, the benchmark in the eurozone, stood at 2.70 percent in afternoon trading, compared with 2.64 percent on Friday.

What risks in a long war?

The intensity and duration of the conflict will be key in determining its impact.

"In a prolonged conflict, the combination of higher energy costs, disrupted logistics, and a generalised confidence shock would constitute a meaningful drag on global trade volumes at precisely the moment the world economy was still digesting the inflationary and growth consequences of the tariff shock," said economists at ING bank.

Coface's Nizard said they estimated that "an increase of roughly 15 dollars in the price of Brent over a prolonged period could shave about 0.2 percentage points off global growth and add almost half a point to inflation."

These are "not insignificant" effects in a context of "fairly fragile global economic growth", he added.

QatarEnergy halts LNG production over Iran attacks — statement

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar's state-run energy firm said on Monday it had halted liquefied natural gas production following Iranian attacks on facilities at two of its main gas processing bases.

"Due to military attacks on QatarEnergy's operating facilities in Ras Laffan Industrial City and Mesaieed Industrial City in the State of Qatar, QatarEnergy has ceased production of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and associated products," the company said in a statement.

Earlier, Qatar's defence ministry said one Iranian drone "targeted an energy facility in Ras Laffan Industrial City, belonging to QatarEnergy", referring to the firm's onshore gas processing base 80 kilometres north of Doha.

Another "targeted a water tank belonging to a power plant in Mesaieed", the statement said, referring to an area 40 kilometres south of the Qatari capital, which is also a key site for Qatar's natural gas production.

There were no reports of casualties,



This handout photo released by QatarEnergy's Public Relations and Communication office shows the headquarters of the Gulf state's main energy facility in the capital Doha on November 6, 2022

the defence ministry

added.

The Gulf state is one of the world's top liquefied natural gas producers, alongside the United States, Aus-

tralia and Russia.

Qatar shares the world's largest natural gas reservoir with Iran.

State-run QatarEnergy estimates the Gulf

state's portion of the reservoir, the North Field, holds about 10 per cent of the world's known natural gas reserves.

In recent years, Qa-

tar has inked a series of long-term LNG deals with France's Total, Britain's Shell, India's Petronet, China's Sinopec and Italy's Eni among others.

Irbid industry exports rise to \$92m, up 18.3% in February

Leather, textiles sector accounted for 'largest' share with 834 certificates

IRBID (JT) — Exports registered by the Irbid Chamber of Industry (ICI) rose 18.3 per cent in February to \$92 million, up from \$78 million in the same period of 2025, ICI President Hani Abu Hassan said on Monday.

He added that ICI exports in the first two months of 2026 reached around \$179 million, compared with \$151 million a year earlier, marking an 18.4 per cent increase and signalling a "stronger" export performance at the start of the year.

The leather and textiles sector remained the leading export driver, with shipments rising to \$75.1 million in February from \$67.3 million in February 2025, up 12 per cent, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The sector accounted for 86.4per cent of to-



Exports registered by the Irbid Chamber of Industry rise by 18.3 per cent in February to \$92 million in 2026

tal exports, supported by higher external demand.

Exports of the food and agriculture industries climbed from \$4.1 million to \$6.4 million,

a 54 per cent increase, while chemical industries exports grew 36 per cent to \$1.6 million, up from \$1.1 million in February last year.

Abu Hassan said the chamber issued 1,260 certificates of origin in February, compared with 1,017 in the same month of 2025, up 24 per cent.

The leather and textiles sector accounted for the largest share with 834 certificates, followed by food and agriculture with 117 and construction industries with 114.

The United States topped the list of importing destinations at \$62.8 million, followed by Arab countries at a combined \$8.8 million and European markets at about \$8.3 million, reflecting broader geographic diversification for the governorate's exports.

He noted that Al Hassan Industrial Estate generated about 95 per cent of the chamber's February exports, totalling nearly \$88 million, followed by the Cyber City office at 4 per cent (\$3.5 million), while main exports amounted to about \$645,000, Petra reported.

Dubai airports to resume 'limited' flights Monday evening — statement

DUBAI (AFP) — Dubai Airports said "limited" flights would resume on Monday evening, three days after they were cancelled as Iran began striking targets in the Gulf, including Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports.

"Dubai Airports announces a limited resumption of flights from Dubai International Airport [DXB] and Dubai World Central - Al Maktoum International Airport (DWC) starting this evening, Monday, March 2, 2026," it said in a statement.

Emirates and low-cost carrier flydubai both said they would resume some flights Monday evening.

Dubai's main airport [DXB] ranks as the second-busiest worldwide...

Eihad Airways, which operates flights from Abu Dhabi, said it

would resume flights on Tuesday.

Iran's unprecedented bombardment in the Gulf states has hit military bases but also civilian infrastructure such as residential buildings, hotels, airports and sea ports, rattling a region long seen as a refuge from Middle East conflict.

Since Iran launched its campaign on Saturday, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait and Manama airports were targeted.

Authorities reported one death in the Emirati capital Abu Dhabi in the "incident" at the

facility.

On Saturday, the UAE announced it had closed its airspace "temporarily and partially" as an exceptional precautionary measure.

Dubai's main airport (DXB) ranks as the second-busiest worldwide, behind Atlanta in the United States, according to Airports Council International.

The airspace closures hit a vital sector for the city, with Dubai's air industry accounting for about a third of the emirate's economy.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Monday amounted to JD8.2 million spread over 3.2 million shares that traded through 2,468 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.14 per cent, closing at 3553.40 points.

Out of 87 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 29 companies rose while the share price of another 38 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Mediterranean and Gulf Insurance Company in Jordan Plc. by 9.09 per cent, Jordan Insurance by 6.84 per cent, Arab Pesticides and Veterinary Drugs Manufacturing Company by 5.56 per cent, Injaz for Development and Projects by 4.55 per cent, and Al-Tajamout for Catering and Housing Company Plc. by 3.39 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Union Investment Corporation by 11.11 per cent, Professional Company for Real Estate Investment and Housing by 4.82 per cent, Arab East Investment by 4.55 per cent, Al-Amal Financial Investments Company by 4.21 per cent and First Jordan Investment Company Plc. by 3.45 per cent.



THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↓ 3553.40 0.14% March 02, 2026

Live Data

Historical Data

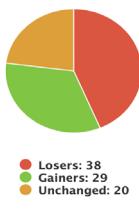


DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market

Trading Value (JDs)	8,162,001
Trading volume	3,215,988
No. of Transactions	2,468
No. of Securities	87

OTC Market



ATHLETICS

Kenya suspends 27 athletes for doping violations

NAIROBI (AFP) — Disgraced Kenyan marathon runner Rita Jeptoo, national 400m hurdles champion Wiseman Were and 25 other athletes have been provisionally suspended for doping violations, the country's anti-doping agency announced on Monday. Jeptoo, 45, a former Boston and Chicago Marathon winner, was banned for four years in 2014 after testing positive for a banned substance and only returned to racing three years ago. She has now been suspended again following a test that found the presence of prohibited anabolic androgenic steroids, the national anti-doping body (ADAK) said. She will remain suspended until her hearing, but ADAK did not say when that would take place. ADAK said Were, 28, a Commonwealth 4x400m relay bronze medallist, had been suspended for missing three tests since August 2025. His ban runs from February 14 and he will be unable to compete until his case is heard. It is not clear when that may be. The list also includes football and basketball players who have been provisionally suspended for varying doping offences.

FOOTBALL

Real Madrid superstar Mbappe in Paris for treatment on knee injury

PARIS, France (AFP) — France captain Kylian Mbappe was in Paris on Monday for treatment on a knee injury but no surgery is planned, the Real Madrid superstar's entourage told AFP. Mbappe was "in Paris accompanied by members of the Real Madrid medical staff", the striker's camp said in a statement. "In agreement with the club, he is undergoing further tests on his knee," it continued, "with the aim of optimising his follow-up care and preparing for his comeback. No surgical intervention is being planned at the moment". Mbappe has been struggling with an injury to the external ligament of his left knee since the end of 2025 and missed last week's Champions League play-off second leg against Benfica due to "persistent pain" in training, sources close to the player said. His entourage insisted there was no disagreement regarding the treatment required by the player between his club and the French national team, who will be desperate to have Mbappe fully fit for the upcoming World Cup.

Knicks halt Spurs' 11-game NBA winning streak

LOS ANGELES, United States (AFP) — Jalen Brunson scored 25 points as the New York Knicks' halted San Antonio's 11-game NBA winning streak with an emphatic 114-89 victory at Madison Square Garden on Monday.

Victor Wembanyama and the Spurs arrived in New York brimming with confidence after going undefeated February, building their longest winning streak since a 13-0 run in the 2015-16 season.

Wembanyama, who had struggled in the Spurs' last two wins, came out firing, but the French superstar's 25 points, 13 rebounds and four blocked shots weren't enough. Devin Vassell with 18 points and Stephon Castle with 13 were the only other Spurs players to score in double figures.

They hit just nine of 34 from three-point range and were harried into their season-high 22 turnovers that the Knicks parlayed into 24 points. Bridges came up big on the defensive end with five steals.

"Good win by our guys," Knicks coach Mike Brown said. "[San Antonio] is a really good team. They obviously missed some shots, but I thought our weak side defence was really good. For them to shoot 26, 27 per cent from [three-point range], our activity on the weak side was really good."

San Antonio got off to a quick start and led by as many as 12 in the first quarter, but the Knicks were up by one at the end



LeBron James #23 of the Los Angeles Lakers makes a slam dunk against the Sacramento Kings in the second half at Crypto.com Arena on Monday in Los Angeles, California

of the first period and never trailed again, using a 26-2 scoring run spanning the first and second quarters to seize control.

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 12 points and grabbed 14 rebounds for the Knicks, who had six players score in double figures and held the Spurs to their season-low in points.

Thunder, Pistons march on

Second-placed San An-

tonio's defeat saw them lose ground in their pursuit of the Oklahoma City Thunder at the top of the Western Conference.

Oklahoma City, the reigning NBA champions, improved to 47-15 after a 100-87 victory over the Dallas Mavericks in Texas.

The returning Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the OKC scoring with 30 points, edging closer to Wilt Chamberlain's record for the most consecutive games of 20 points or more.

Sunday's performance was Gilgeous-Alexander's 123rd consecutive 20-point game, leaving him three adrift of matching Chamberlain's historic mark of 126 set between 1961 and 1963.

The Minnesota Timberwolves meanwhile remain firmly in the playoff hunt after scoring an impressive 117-108 defeat of the Denver Nuggets in Colorado.

An upset looked on the cards after Orlando led throughout the first half to edge into a 57-50 lead at the break.

But Detroit outscored Orlando 56-35 in the final two quarters to seal a win which lifts the Pistons to 45-14 in the East.

The Pistons have a healthy lead over the second-placed Boston Celtics, who improved to 40-20 on Sunday with a 114-98 defeat of the Philadelphia 76ers.



Visitors look at Indian tech Aeroarc's AI powered robotic spider gun, displayed at their booth during the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi on February 17

Indian professor's robot dog claim at AI summit sparks uproar

NEW DELHI (AFP) — An Indian professor has sparked ridicule after falsely suggesting a Chinese-made robot dog displayed at a major AI summit in New Delhi was developed by her university.

The silver mechanical dog — a model sold by Chinese startup Unitree — appeared at a booth run by the private Galgotias University at this week's AI Impact Summit.

Following online uproar over the professor's claim in a televised interview on Tuesday, Galgotias said that while it did not build the machine, "what we are building are minds that will soon design, engineer and manufacture such technologies".

"You need to meet Orion," the professor, Neha Singh, told an Indian TV reporter as the dog performed tricks such as waving at the camera and springing up on its hind legs.

"This has been developed by the centres of excellence at the Galgotias

University," Singh said, touting the institution's investments in artificial intelligence technology.

"As you can see, it can take all shapes and sizes... it's quite naughty also," she said.

In a statement posted on social media platform X, the university said: "Let us be clear — Galgotias has not built this robodog, neither have we claimed."

The "recently acquired" Unitree robodog is a "classroom in motion" and "our students are experimenting with it, testing its limits", it said.

Under fire for her comments, Singh told reporters on Wednesday that "things may not have been expressed clearly".

"I did not communicate it properly," said Singh, a professor of communications.

Galgotias student Vaidik Mishra said the controversy was uncalled for.

"We were so hopeful that this summit will give us a platform to talk about our start-up. But

now it is all about us lying about the robot, which is not even true. It was just a misunderstanding," he told AFP.

India's opposition Congress party used the incident to attack Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is hosting nearly 20 world leaders and dozens more national delegations at the five-day summit.

"The Modi government has made a laughing stock of India globally, with regard to AI. In the ongoing AI summit, Chinese robots are being displayed as our own," the party wrote in a post on X.

"This is truly embarrassing for India," it added, calling the incident "brazenly shameless".

The TV reporter who had conducted the interview, Tapas Bhattachary, urged viewers to take a broader perspective.

"If one out of hundreds of exhibitors wasn't being upfront about their innovation, I would not give up on the entire India's youth who are very innovative," Bhattachary said.

By Melda Gungoroglu
Agence France-Presse

ISTANBUL — It's 3:30am and lights are slowly coming on in the homes lining a narrow Istanbul street as people are woken up by the rhythmic thump of a drum.

Emerging onto a balcony, Sibel Savas and her grandson look down as the drummer — or davulcu in Turkish — wanders through the Ayvan-saray neighbourhood, his drumbeat waking the faithful for a last meal before the daily Ramadan fast begins at sunrise.

For the past 55 years, Hakan Ozbingol has got up at 3:00am every day during Ramadan to play his davul, a large double-headed drum carried with a strap and played while walking through the streets.

He inherited the role from his father, with whom he started venturing out when he was 10.

Although their nightly sortie is purely voluntary, local residents traditionally give a tip at the end of the month, says Ozbingol, who is now 65.

If once this amounted to enough to buy the children a nice gift, these days it's barely enough "to buy them clothes or to cover the bills", he sighs, as people struggle to cope with Turkey's bitter economic crisis.

But for him, it's not a job but more of a sacred duty.

"As long as it's to do with Allah, this drum will never fall silent. We're doing Allah's work, it's our duty," he



Turkish drummer Hakan Ozbingol plays drum and sings traditional songs in the streets of Istanbul, to wake Muslims up for the sahur, the Ramadan meal eaten at night, on February 24

said hoarsely, trudging with bent back through the winding streets.

Ottoman roots

According to Harun Korkmaz, a music historian at Istanbul University, the Ramadan drum rite "dates back to the end of the 19th century" when the Ottoman military bands or mehters, performed several times a day, setting the pace of daily life.

"The davulcu are continuing this tradition," he told AFP of a tradition that began in Istanbul and spread to the rest of the country.

As well as drumming, "real" davulcu will also

chant "mani", or short rhythmic poems, under people's windows to flatter a sleepy audience, Ozbingol explained.

"In Turkey, there are few davulcus who know how to sing mani. It's not enough to pick up the drum and bang on it while walking around," he said, proudly tapping his temple to show where he keeps this knowledge.

The tradition began in the Fatih district near Istanbul's historic peninsula and most of today's Ramadan drummers come from Turkey's Roma community, who today number around 2.7 million, research figures show.

As the davulcu walks the street where washing lines vie for space with Turkish flags draped from the high facades of the buildings, he is warmly greeted by a pensioner called Zafer, who is also a musician.

"If the Roma weren't here there would be nothing. They are the musicians and Istanbul's Ramadan drummers," the 71-year-old told AFP.

'A tradition that must not die'

Still holding her grandson, Sibal Savas says she has no alarm clock and relies on the early-morning drum rite to wake

her up.

"This tradition is important to us. It comes from our ancestors," she told AFP.

In a nearby street, another drummer, 58-year-old Yurdaer, is trying to play a little more quietly as he passes the home of an elderly neighbour who has heart problems.

Across Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, there are a total of 3,000 davulcus who go out nightly to wake the faithful in 961 neighbourhoods, explains Selami Aykut, who heads an organisation representing the megacity's local mayors.

Since the pandemic, when the nightly rite was briefly halted, the authorities doubled the number of accredited drummers.

"We have increased the number we work with in order to better pass on our Ottoman traditions to young people, so that they can feel the excitement of Ramadan," Aykut told AFP.

With street vendors hawking traditional foods increasingly scarce across the city's streets, their services replaced by supermarkets, the davulcu is one rare tradition not at risk of disappearing due to his unique role at Ramadan.

"There are no more people selling boza [a fermented cereal-based drink], no more yoghurt sellers, nor other street vendors — they've almost all disappeared," said Ozbingol.

"Only the davulcu are left," he murmurs, wandering off up the street.