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## King, in calls with world leaders, warns of consequences of Iran's attacks on regional peace

- King reaffirms rejection of Iran's attacks on Jordan, on countries in region
- His Majesty underlines need for intensified efforts to de-escalate ongoing situation
- King, world leaders affirm need for restraint, dialogue to resolve crises, spare region further escalation



AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah received a phone call from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Tuesday, during which they affirmed their rejection of Iran's attacks on Jordan and a number of countries in the region.

His Majesty warned of the serious consequences of these attacks on regional peace, reiterating the need to respect the sovereignty of states and the safety of their peoples, according to a Royal Court statement. The call also covered

the need to step up international efforts to de-escalate the ongoing situation, with the King underscoring the need to prevent the conflict from being exploited to impact the situation in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza.

### King receives 30 calls from world leaders over past three days to discuss regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah received 30 calls from Arab and world leaders, including heads of states and governments, over the past three days to discuss regional developments. During the conversations, the King rejected attacks on Jordan and other Arab states, describing them as a serious escalation and a violation of international

law. His Majesty affirmed that Jordan will continue to take all necessary measures to protect its citizens, safeguard national security and uphold its sovereignty. The King also urged intensified international efforts to de-escalate tensions, respect state sovereignty and restore comprehensive calm to the region.

Also on Tuesday, the King received a phone call from Indonesia President Prabowo Subianto, during which the two leaders discussed the dangerous developments in the region. His Majesty empha-

sised the need to stop Iranian attacks on countries in the region, which violate international law and infringe on the sovereignty of states, another Royal Court statement said.

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Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Ahmed Huneiti on Tuesday visits the Hawk Missile Unit, Mod/20

### Army chief visits Hawk Missile Unit, says JAF ready to defend airspace, counter threats

AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Ahmed Huneiti on Tuesday visited the Hawk Missile Unit, Mod/20, where he was received by the Royal Jordanian Air Force Commander and the unit commander. During the visit, Huneiti was briefed on the unit's technical and operational readiness, as well as on the measures recently taken to counter

missiles and drones that targeted sites and facilities across several governorates of the Kingdom. He emphasised that protecting the Kingdom's airspace is a sovereign duty that must always be upheld, noting that the JAF will safeguard the airspace and respond firmly to any threat to national security and the safety of its citizens, in accordance with precise operational

procedures. Huneiti highlighted that, under the directives of His Majesty King Abdullah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, the General Command is continuing to develop and modernise air defence systems in line with current requirements and modern technological advances.

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The gas compression plant (Jordan chlorine) that is currently under construction in the Risha region

### Gov't confirms stable energy supplies amid regional escalation

AMMAN (JT) — The Kingdom's reserves of petroleum derivatives and household gas are sufficient, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabsheh said on Tuesday, stressing that the national energy system is operating under approved operational and proactive plans. In a statement, the minister said that

technical and logistical alternatives are in place to ensure the uninterrupted supply of natural gas and petroleum products across the Kingdom under various scenarios. He confirmed that no shortages have been recorded in the local market, particularly of household gas used for cooking, noting that current supplies are

adequate to fully meet national demand. Energy facilities nationwide are operating at full capacity, he added, with alternative fuels, including heavy fuel oil and diesel, ready to support electricity generation in the event of any disruption to natural gas supplies.

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## Hassan directs industrial, service upgrades in Ajloun, Irbid

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Tuesday conducted an inspection tour of development, health and education projects in Ajloun and Irbid governorates.

Hassan began his tour in the Sakhray district with a visit to Dorat Ammon Food Industries Company, directing officials to provide the necessary support to complete the company's expansion and relocation to a new site in 2026, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The expansion aims to boost production and exports and integrate the company into the food industries incentive programme, helping to double job opportunities for local residents.

He also visited a traditional garments factory in Sakhray and instructed authorities to facilitate the establishment of a new factory in 2026, expected to create 1,200 jobs.



Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Tuesday visits to Erhaba Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls

The prime minister called for expanding health insurance coverage for employees in production branches and broadening vo-

educational training programmes, including the introduction of specialised courses in garment manufacturing to enhance workers' skills.

In Irbid's Northern Mazaar district, Hassan visited the Erhaba Charitable Society and directed a comprehensive rehabilitation of its

facilities, along with the provision of necessary equipment to enable the society to expand its services to a wider segment of beneficiaries.

He also ordered the upgrade of Erhaba Primary Health Centre to a comprehensive health centre operating around the clock to improve and expand medical services in the area.

During his tour, Hassan inspected Samad and Al Zaatari Primary Health Centre in Northern Mazaar, instructing officials to expedite the provision of an alternative building and carry out essential maintenance to the current premises pending relocation.

The prime minister concluded his tour with a visit to Erhaba Comprehensive Secondary School for Girls, directing a full renovation of the school, rehabilitation of its facilities and the provision of modern laboratory equipment to enhance the learning environment.

## Israel expands Lebanon front amid fears of widening regional conflict

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — Israel on Tuesday moved troops deeper into Lebanon, ordering forces to seize new positions after Hizbollah fired rockets overnight at northern Israeli territory, defence minister Israel Katz said.

Katz said prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and he had authorised the army to take control of additional strategic locations to prevent attacks on Israeli border communities. Hizbollah said the rocket fire followed the

killing of Iran's supreme leader during coordinated US-Israeli strikes. Israel responded with wide-ranging air raids across Lebanon and warned that Hizbollah would pay a "heavy price".

In a significant development, the Lebanese government announced an immediate ban on Hizbollah's security and military activities, underscoring rising domestic pressure amid the escalation.

Israeli officials said the operation does not comprise a full ground invasion. The military described

the deployments as tactical steps aimed at reinforcing forward defence positions along the border and deterring further rocket fire.

Under a November 2024 truce, only the Lebanese army and UN peacekeepers are permitted to operate south of the Litani River, roughly 30 kilometres from the Israeli border. Israel was expected to withdraw under that agreement but has retained forces in several strategic areas, citing Hizbollah's refusal to disarm.

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Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli air strike on the southern suburbs of Beirut on Tuesday

### Authorities ban media coverage of defence operations amid regional tensions

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Media Commission on Tuesday prohibited the publication of any videos or information related to the Kingdom's defence operations, warning that violations will face criminal prosecution.

The circular, signed by Commission Director General Bashir Momani, cited ongoing regional armed conflict involving external

parties and the sensitive nature of the operations of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF).

It also noted that unauthorised individuals have been filming and spreading inaccurate or misleading information, posing a threat to national security, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

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The National Cyber Security Centre on Tuesday warns the public against fraudulent messages falsely claiming to come from official bodies

## Cyber security centre warns against fake messages targeting citizens

AMMAN (JT) — The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) on Tuesday warned the public against fraudulent messages falsely claiming to come from official bodies, emphasising that it is not sending any SMS alerts to citizens at this time.

The centre said that all awareness messages or security alerts are issued exclusively through the Public Security Directorate and its spokesperson, stressing that no direct text communication is currently planned, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The warning comes amid ongoing cyberattacks targeting Jordan, some of which exploit the names of official institutions to mislead citizens via fake messages, websites, or social media platforms.

The centre urged

citizens not to engage with suspicious messages or links and treat such communications as potential cyber intrusion or phishing attempts.

The warning comes amid ongoing cyberattacks targeting Jordan...

It advised against opening links or attachments received via SMS or messag-

ing apps, particularly those claiming to offer "security updates," "prizes," or "financial assistance," and stressed never to share passwords or credit card details over messages or calls, no matter how official they appear.

The NCSC stressed that official security notices are only issued through trusted government channels and websites with the ".jo" domain.

Citizens were also advised to download apps from official app stores, activate two-factor authentication on social media and banking applications, and regularly back up important data offline.

Public awareness and adherence to these guidelines, the centre said, are key to boosting national cybersecurity.

# Jordanians celebrate Ramadan with lights, decorations

By Freda Riese

AMMAN — As soon as the sun sets and people gather in the streets after iftar, the Ramadan lights in downtown Amman light up and contribute to the vibe of the holy month in Islam.

Lights and decorations are set up next to the Hussein Mosque, along the streets in downtown and around the city. But it is not just the Greater Amman Municipality that has prepared for Ramadan with decorations.

In front of houses, colourful light strings wind their way along the façade or brighten up windows, where families inside are breaking their fast together at iftar.

Decorations can be bought at different places, with a wide range of items being sold at the market in downtown Amman.

Prices for Ramadan decorations vary, ranging from JD0.5 to JD50. A typical decoration is the crescent moon, symbolising the duration of Ramadan as one lunar cycle.

Ramadan begins with the sighting of the crescent and ends with the next crescent. Traditionally, the start of the Muslim fasting period is determined by sighting the moon with the naked eye, meaning the beginning of the month can differ from one area to another.

Mustafa is one of the vendors selling Ramadan decorations at the market in Amman. He



Lights and decorations are set up next to the Hussein Mosque, along the streets in downtown and around the city

offers small pieces with inscriptions to hang around one's home, as well as larger items to his customers.

Although all the decorations are Ramadan-themed, the styles differ. He points to a white crescent inspired by Bedouin culture in Saudi Arabia, his favourite piece. The most expensive item is a red hanging lamp from China, with golden Chinese characters shining on it.

"Ramadan is a special and holy month for us, that is why we decorate our houses. We do it for ourselves. It is our duty to beautify Ramadan," he added.

Ruqiyah decorated her home with her family, to set the tone for the holy month.

"Like every other Jordanian home, we decorated our house with string lights, a small Ramadan tent and a Ramadan themed table for iftar. But unlike before, in the past three years Jordanian homes have been toning down the decorations and celebrations to show support for the people of Gaza," she said.

The sociology student highlighted that Ramadan is not just about fasting, but also about reflection and gratitude, especially in these chal-

lenging times, the decorations help her to keep the spirit of Ramadan alive.

"At this time when the Arab and Muslim world faces pressure on its identity, these decorations become an important way to reflect our heritage and keep our cultural spirit alive," Ruqiyah added.

Not only the lights shape the atmosphere of Amman in Ramadan, the few cafés that stay open during the day play recitations of the Quran instead of music, contributing to the month's focus on worship, mindfulness and prayer.

Ramadan is the ninth

month of the Islamic lunar calendar and, according to the tradition, the month where the Quran was first revealed to Prophet Mohammed. Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, focussing on compassion and worship.

The Ramadan lights will stay up until the end of the holy month, culminating in the Eid Al Fitr celebration.

Eid Al Fitr is expected to be celebrated on March 20 or 21, depending on the sighting of the Shawwal crescent. Families gather to celebrate the end of the fasting period with gifts and sweets.

## 60% of Jordanians either overweight or obese — HPC

AMMAN (JT) — The Higher Population Council (HPC) on Tuesday said that around 46 per cent of adult women and 32 per cent of adult men in Jordan suffer from obesity.

In a press statement marking World Obesity Day, observed on Wednesday, the council said that overweight and obesity are measured using the Body Mass Index (BMI), calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms by the square of their height in metres.

A BMI between 25 and 29 indicates overweight, while a BMI of 30 or above indicates obesity, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

According to the HPC, the Global Nutrition Report 2024 identified obesity as one of the most pressing health challenges in Jordan,

noting higher prevalence rates compared with regional averages.

The report also showed that about 60 per cent of adults are either overweight or obese, reflecting a significant burden on the national healthcare system.

Findings from the 2023 Jordan Population and Family Health Survey are consistent with global reports, showing a marked rise in overweight and obesity among women of reproductive age.

The prevalence stands at 35.4 per cent among women aged 15-19, rises to 64.1 per cent among those aged 20-49, and reaches 83.6 per cent among women aged 40-49, highlighting health risks that accumulate across life stages.

The HPC added that 10 per cent of children

whose mothers are overweight or obese are themselves obese, compared with 5 per cent of children of mothers with normal weight and 4 per cent among children of underweight mothers.

Data also show a clear economic gradient, with childhood obesity increasing from 7 per cent in the lowest wealth quintile to 13 per cent in the highest.

World Obesity Day 2026 carries the message that obesity should be recognised as a chronic disease requiring comprehensive, multi-level interventions, rather than being viewed as a personal choice or lack of willpower.

Obesity increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, respiratory problems and certain cancers, and

can negatively affect mental health, leading to depression and low self-esteem, as well as impacting fertility and reproductive health for both women and men.

In Jordan, studies link rising obesity rates to social and economic factors such as urbanisation, reduced physical activity, widespread availability of high-calorie foods and modern work patterns.

The increase in obesity has coincided with a rise in non-communicable diseases, including diabetes and hypertension, reinforcing the view of obesity as a key public health determinant rather than an isolated condition.

The HPC noted that global studies also point to links between obesity and environmental impact, citing higher food consumption, increased

metabolic rates and greater fuel use due to reduced physical activity as contributing factors to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

It stressed that rising obesity rates represent a challenge that extends beyond the health sector to broader developmental and social dimensions, affecting productivity, healthcare costs and quality of life.

In this regard, the HPC underscored the importance of integrating nutrition and health issues into national sustainable development strategies, linking health indicators to the broader demographic context to support evidence-based policymaking and more comprehensive responses that take into account age, gender, geographic location and socioeconomic disparities.



The National Aid Fund and Al Hussein Bin Talal University on Tuesday sign a cooperation agreement to train the fund beneficiaries' family members

## NAF, Al Hussein University sign training agreement

AMMAN (JT) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) and Al Hussein Bin Talal University on Tuesday signed a cooperation agreement to train the fund beneficiaries' family members, equipping them with skills needed to enter the labour market and enhance their employment and self-employment prospects.

Under the agreement, signed at the university premises, NAF Director General Khitam Shneikat and University President Atef Kharabshah outlined a framework for providing vocational and practical training in fields aligned with labour market needs, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The agreement is based on the updated National Social Protection Strategy 2023-2033 and the fund's 2023-2026 strategy, reflecting efforts to shift from cash assistance to economic empowerment by investing in beneficiaries' capacities and enhancing the develop-

mental role of public universities in serving local communities.

The partnership aims to offer specialised training programmes, including courses tailored for persons with disabilities...

The partnership aims to offer specialised training programmes, including courses tailored for persons with disabilities, while providing trainees with practical knowledge and skills, boosting their personal and professional capacities and contributing to reducing

unemployment among beneficiaries' families.

It also seeks to reinforce cooperation among government institutions.

Shneikat described the agreement as a "practical step" towards transitioning from direct financial aid to sustainable economic empowerment through skills development aligned with actual labour market demands.

She noted that NAF is focused on building effective partnerships with higher education institutions to expand quality training programmes that promote self-reliance and help curb poverty and unemployment.

For his part, Kharabshah stressed the university's readiness to implement the agreed training programmes through its academic and administrative capabilities, ensuring the effective delivery of training and the achievement of the partnership's objectives.

## Aqaba Port operations continue normally amid regional tensions

AMMAN (JT) — Operations at the Aqaba Port are running smoothly and without disruption, Aqaba Company for Ports Operation and Management Director-General Mahmoud Khleifat said on Tuesday, reassuring traders and shipping lines amid regional and international developments.

Khleifat noted that six vessels are currently docked at the port, carrying a range of key commodities, including barley, coal and iron, underscoring the steady flow of maritime traffic,



Aqaba Company for Ports Operation and Management Director General Mahmoud Khleifat on Tuesday says that six vessels are docked at the Aqaba Port, carrying a range of key commodities

according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra. He stressed that Aqaba

Port remains a safe and reliable trade hub, known locally and internation-

ally for its strategic location and stable security environment, noting that

additional vessels, carrying vehicles and livestock, are scheduled to arrive in the coming days.

He noted that shipping movements to the port have not been affected by recent international events.

Highlighting that recent international events have not affected shipping movements to the port, he said that the port has a comprehensive emergency and contingency plan in place to ensure the secure and uninterrupted entry of supply chains into Jordan.

# Safadi condemns Iranian attacks on Jordanian territory, reaffirms solidarity with Gulf states

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi on Tuesday reiterated the Kingdom's condemnation of Iranian attacks on Jordanian territory and Arab Gulf countries.

In calls with counterparts, Safadi reiterated the Kingdom's solidarity with Gulf countries in all steps they take to protect their citizens, security, stability and sovereignty, and to exercise



Ayman Safadi

their legitimate right to self-defence, according to a Foreign

Ministry statement. He also stressed that focusing on the war with Iran and its repercussions should not overshadow the humanitarian disaster in Gaza, highlighting the importance of advancing the implementation of US President Donald Trump's peace plan.

Safadi also warned of Israel's illegal actions in the occupied West Bank, noting that continued annexation plans undermine the prospects for a two-

state solution, the only path to achieving a just peace. He also condemned restrictions on freedom of worship and the prevention of worshippers from accessing Al Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan, describing these actions as clear violations of international law.

He also highlighted the risks of escalation in Lebanon and reaffirmed Jordan's support for the Lebanese government in safeguarding its security,

sovereignty and institutional functionality. On Ukraine, Safadi reaffirmed Jordan's stance on respecting international law and state sovereignty, supporting diplomatic efforts to resolve the war in accordance with international law and principles that protect the rights of all parties.

The ministers agreed on the importance of diplomacy to reduce regional tensions and restore calm, underscoring the need for

continued cooperation to ensure security, stability and the protection of civilians. Safadi held phone calls with Montenegro's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ervin Ibrahimovic, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto, Slovak Foreign Minister Juraj Blazar, Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, and Romanian Foreign Minister Oana Tautu.

## AT A GLANCE

**Authorities handle 157 reports of falling objects across Kingdom**



AMMAN (JT) — The Public Security Directorate (PSD) said on Tuesday its Civil Defence and police personnel had dealt with 157 reports of incidents caused by falling objects and debris across most governorates of the Kingdom from Saturday morning, with no new injuries recorded. The PSD urged citizens to adhere to instructions issued by the directorate and relevant authorities and not to hesitate to call 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 due to the serious danger it may pose.

**Jordan expresses solidarity after killing two Kuwaiti soldiers**



AMMAN (JT) — The Foreign Ministry on Tuesday expressed its condolences to Kuwait over the killing of two members of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces while carrying out their national duties. A ministry statement affirmed the Kingdom's full solidarity with Kuwait, expressing support for all measures taken to protect citizens and maintain security and stability. The ministry also wished the injured a speedy recovery.

# Airspace reopened to all civil aviation traffic — CARC

AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Jordan Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission (CARC) Captain Dheifallah Farajat announced on Tuesday the reopening of Jordanian airspace to all civil aviation traffic, arrivals, departures and overflights, and the cancellation of the partial closure that had been in effect since Monday evening.

This decision follows a thorough review and comprehensive assessment of operational and security conditions in light of current

regional developments, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. Farajat confirmed that the decision to reopen the airspace was made after an in-depth risk assessment in coordination with all relevant authorities, emphasising that it fully complies with the highest international standards in civil aviation safety and security.

He explained that the commission prioritises the safety of passengers and flight crews, as well as the protection of the Kingdom's airspace. He



Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Jordan Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission Captain Dheifallah Farajat announces on Tuesday the reopening of Jordanian airspace to all civil aviation traffic

noted that the commission's technical teams will continue to closely monitor regional developments around the clock and

take any precautionary measures necessary to ensure the safe and orderly continuation of air operations. In this context, the commission urged passengers to stay in continuous contact with airlines to follow operational updates and any adjustments to flight schedules resulting from the reopening.

The commission reaffirmed its commitment to providing a safe and stable aviation environment, enhancing Jordan's position as a vital regional air navigation hub.

# SSIF denies reports of financing diplomatic missions abroad

AMMAN (JT) — The Social Security Investment Fund (SSIF) on Monday "firmly" denied reports circulating on social media alleging that it financed the purchase or construction of Jordanian diplomatic mission buildings abroad, stressing that the claims are inaccurate and based on an outdated proposal that was never approved.

In a statement, the Fund clarified that the circulated document dates back approximately 13 years and pertains to an investment concept that was studied at the time but did not progress beyond the evaluation stage.

According to the SSIF, the proposal was structured under a financial leasing model whereby the Fund would have acquired ownership of certain properties and leased them to the government, generating stable long-term returns consistent with its investment mandate.

"Ownership would have transferred to the



The Social Security Investment Fund denies claims it financed Jordanian diplomatic missions abroad

government upon the completion of lease payments," the statement said. "Following comprehensive technical, legal and procedural assessments, the necessary conditions to proceed with a final investment decision were not met under the prevailing circumstances. As a result, the proposal was neither approved nor implemented."

The SSIF reiterated that all investment decisions are made within a clearly defined institutional

# Princess Basma distributes aid in Amman

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal, chairperson of the Higher Committee of the Al Birr and Al Ihsan Campaign, on Tuesday distributed campaign assistance to targeted beneficiaries in Amman.

At Jordan Secondary School for Boys, Princess Basma handed out food parcels to around 100 women heading households and distributed winter clothing to 50 children in the area.

During a visit to the Orphan Charity Association in Jabal Al Nuzha, Princess Basma met women working at the association's tailoring workshop and was briefed on its activities. She announced campaign support for the workshop through the provision of equipment and supplies aimed at enhancing and sustaining its operations.

At the Al Siraj Al Muneer Charity Association in Hashemi Al Shamali, she reviewed the association's pro-



HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal on Tuesday distributes aid assistance to targeted beneficiaries in Amman

ductive kitchen project and announced support through the provision of modern equipment and supplies, in addition to assistance to provide 100 breakfast meals for distribution to underprivileged families benefiting from the association's programmes.

Princess Basma reaffirmed the campaign's commitment, in line with its humanitarian objectives and in cooperation with partners, to directing programmes and

initiatives towards improving the living conditions of vulnerable families and securing their basic needs under various circumstances, while supporting national efforts in this regard. Accompanied by Assistant Amman Governor Saleh Kilani and members of the campaign's Higher Committee, she praised the initiatives implemented by the associations, commending their role in supporting underprivileged families and

creating employment opportunities through income-generating projects. She stressed that economic empowerment remains a key factor in supporting Jordanian women and strengthening their role in the development process, underscoring the campaign's commitment to backing such initiatives and contributing to the creation of decent job opportunities aligned with women's abilities and aspirations.

President of the Orphan Charity Association Yasser Abu Salem and President of Al Siraj Al Muneer Charity Association Wijdan Abdallah expressed pride in their partnership with the Al Birr and Al Ihsan Campaign, praising its efforts to support vulnerable families and empower women through sustainable productive projects. Founded in 2009, the Orphan Charity Association provides services to around 150 orphans through monthly sponsorships and in-kind assistance to 420 families. It also operates a tailoring workshop employing five women, with products marketed locally and on a made-to-order basis. Al Siraj Al Muneer Charity Association supports 620 orphan families through monthly assistance programmes and implements a feeding initiative for underprivileged families through its productive kitchen project.

# ICRC president warns widening regional hostilities put civilians in 'grave danger'

AMMAN (JT) — Widening hostilities across the Middle East are putting civilian lives in "grave danger", President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Mirjana Spoljaric said on Tuesday.

In a statement, Spoljaric warned that the scale of major military operations flaring across the region risks embroiling the Middle East, and beyond, in another large-scale armed conflict that would overwhelm any humanitarian response.

"Without urgent steps to de-escalate the situation and respect the rules of war, further civilian lives



will be lost," she said. Spoljaric stressed that civilians are already suffering the consequences of war, reminding all parties to armed conflict of their obligation to uphold international humanitarian law.

"Civilians and ci-

vilian infrastructure must be spared from hostilities. Schools must remain sanctuaries for learning where children can feel safe and protected from attacks, and hospitals must remain sanctuaries for saving lives," she said.

She also underscored that medical personnel and first responders, including Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, must be protected in all circumstances and allowed to carry out their work safely. "All parties must allow and facilitate safe and unrestricted access for impartial humanitarian assistance to reach those in need," Spoljaric added.

The International Committee of the Red Cross is a neutral, impartial and independent organisation with an exclusively humanitarian mandate stemming from the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

## TRADE JPMC highlights record production, exports, efficiency in 2025

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) CEO Abdel Wahab Rawad on Tuesday described 2025 as a pivotal year for the company, strengthening its position both regionally and internationally in the phosphate and phosphate fertiliser sector.

Rawad highlighted that the year reinforced JPMC's "responsible mining" approach, which combines sustainable practices with maximising economic returns, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He noted that the company achieved significant growth in production, exports,

and operational efficiency through the adoption of advanced smart mining technologies and automation systems. These measures allowed JPMC to expand production capacity, reduce operational costs and enhance the global presence of Jordanian products despite challenging international economic conditions.

"The company's financial performance reflects the success of our strategy to diversify revenue streams, streamline the supply chain and enter new strategic markets," Rawad said. "This approach has helped maintain healthy profit margins, boost

shareholder value, contribute to the state treasury and support the national economy." Rawad described 2025 as a year of "green transformation" for JPMC, citing expanded industrial water recycling projects and initiatives to green Jabal Al Jibs in the Aqaba Industrial Complex. He said these efforts align with high environmental sustainability standards, demonstrating the company's commitment to environmental responsibility alongside strong financial results and in line with the Kingdom's economic modernisation vision.

He added that JPMC remains committed to

social responsibility, supporting local communities and fostering sustainable development in the areas surrounding its projects, reflecting a balance between robust economic performance and service to society. Rawad also announced the signing of strategic agreements to establish new processing plants, aimed at increasing the value of raw phosphate and expanding the company's range of specialised fertiliser products. The move is intended to drive sustainable growth while strengthening JPMC's presence in domestic and international markets.



A member of Iraqi security forces mans a turret in an armoured vehicle in Baghdad on Monday

## Drone strikes blamed on Iran hit Iranian Kurdish camp in Iraq

ERBIL, Iraq (AFP) — Drone strikes blamed on Iran hit on Tuesday a camp hosting Iranian Kurdish fighters and family members in northern Iraq, a local official and an exiled opposition group said. Iraq's northern autonomous Kurdish region hosts camps and rear-bases operated by several Iranian Kurdish rebel groups, which have repeatedly faced cross-border strikes from Iran.

A local official in the Koysinjaq district, Tareq Al Haidari, told AFP "three Iranian drones targeted the Azadi camp, which belongs to Iranian Kurd-

ish opposition parties in the district".

One drone directly hit the camp's hospital, wounding one person, said Haidari and a commander from the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI).

PDKI commander Mohammed Nazif Kader told AFP "drones and missiles attacked the camp", blaming the attack on Iran.

For decades, the Koysinjaq district, known as Koya to Kurds, has been home to the PDKI. Iran has designated Kurdish opposition groups as terrorist organisations and has

accused them of serving Western or Israeli interests in the past.

These groups have previously fought Iranian security forces in Kurdish-majority areas along the border. But in recent years, they have largely refrained from armed activity, although they continue to actively campaign from exile against the Islamic republic.

Last week, five groups, including the PDKI, announced a political coalition to seek the overthrow of Iran's Islamic republic and ultimately to secure Kurdish self-determination.

## Flights to evacuate stranded travellers in Middle East

PARIS, France (AFP) — Evacuation flights are set to rescue tens of thousands of travellers stranded in the Middle East even as some airlines resumed on Tuesday a limited number of scheduled flights.

The situation remains dangerous in the region, with Qatar saying it had blocked Iranian attacks on its airport, one of the major hubs in the region.

The US and Israeli attacks on Iran which began on Saturday, followed by Iranian counterattacks on Gulf states and Israel, have prompted several countries to shut their airspace.

At least 12,903 flights were cancelled between Saturday and Monday as a result, representing 40 per cent of planned flights, according to aviation data analysis firm Cirium.

The firm estimates that flights in the region account for around 900,000 seats each day, so the number of affected travellers could easily already be more than 1 million.

### Slow resumption

On Sunday, nearly all flights were cancelled out of the United Arab Emirates, home to Dubai airport, the second-largest in the world in terms of passengers.

That fell to 93.5 per cent on Monday. Dubai and Abu Dhabi's airport resumed limited operations on Monday.

Several Emirates flights took off Tuesday morning, according to the Flightradar24 flight tracking website.

The aircraft immediately flew south out of



An Emirates airliner sits parked at Los Angeles International Airport in Los Angeles, California on Monday

the Gulf region.

The vast majority of flights in and out of Dubai remain cancelled.

Only some flights by flag carrier Emirates, low-cost flydubai and Russia's Aeroflot were operating.

Numerous Royal Jordanian flights took off and landed at Amman's airport, but flew via the south of the country to avoid Israeli airspace.

Flights continue to come in and out of Saudi Arabia and Oman, and their airspace is being used by long-haul flights between Europe and Asia.

No civilian flights were circulating in the airspace above Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Libya or Qatar, however.

### Evacuation flights planned

Several countries have organised evacuation

flights to repatriate their nationals.

Two evacuation flights with 200 passengers each landed in the Czech capital Prague on Tuesday morning.

"We are preparing to charter flights so that the most vulnerable people... can benefit," French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot.

He said some 400,000 French nationals were located in the dozen countries affected by the conflict.

Germany had announced on Monday it would send aircraft to Saudi Arabia and Oman as soon as possible to evacuate the most vulnerable travellers.

There are around 30,000 Germans stranded in the region, according to the German Tourism Association.

Travel firm TUI said on Tuesday it would

begin flying home 5,000 clients stranded on two of its cruise ships in the Gulf via Dubai.

Three Indian airlines — IndiGo, Air India Express and Akasa Air — announced a limited number of evacuation flights to the Middle East.

Three flights evacuating Italian nationals were expected to land in Rome and Milan later Tuesday, according to the airports.

British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper said on Tuesday a UK government charter flight would bring home British nationals from Oman in the coming days.

British Airways said it had scheduled a flight from Oman on Thursday.

Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares said Spain was also organising evacuation

flights, and an Etihad flight carrying Spanish nationals was set to land in Madrid on Tuesday evening.

The European Union has begun helping member countries Italy, Austria and Slovakia repatriate their citizens, the bloc's crisis management chief told AFP Tuesday.

Commissioner Hadja Lahbib said the three countries were the first so far to ask Brussels to assist in funding flights from the region.

### Suspended operations

Airlines including Air France, British Airways, LOT, Norwegian and SAS have all announced suspensions of flights to the Middle East for the coming days.

Finnair has halted flights to Doha and Dubai until nearly the end of the month.

## Paramilitary drone strike causes blackout in Sudan's El Obeid

KHARTOUM (AFP) — A paramilitary drone strike on a power plant on Tuesday caused a blackout in Sudan's key Kordofan city of El Obeid, a local official and an eyewitness told AFP.

"A drone belonging to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) bombed the city's power station early this morning, causing a fire," an official with the state electricity company said, requesting anonymity because they were not authorised to brief the media.

El Obeid is the largest city in Sudan's Kordofan region, currently the fiercest battlefield in the war raging between the RSF and the regular army since April 2023.

"I heard an explosion at 2:00am then saw flames coming from the direction of the station," city resident Awad Ali told AFP.

"It's now past 9:00am and power isn't back."

North Kordofan state capital El Obeid lies on a key crossroads that connects RSF-controlled Darfur in the west with the army-controlled east, including the



A paramilitary drone strike on a power plant on Tuesday caused a blackout in Sudan's key Kordofan city of El Obeid, a local official and an eyewitness told AFP

capital Khartoum.

For a year, since the army broke a long-running RSF siege, the paramilitary has been trying to encircle the city, including by launching drone strikes and attacking nearby towns.

Recent weeks have seen the army mount a counteroffensive, managing to break the siege on Kordofan's two other major cities: Dilling and Kadugli, where hundreds of

thousands faced mass starvation.

Since it began, the war has killed tens of thousands and left around 11 million people displaced, creating the world's largest hunger and displacement crises.

It has also effectively split the country in two, with the army holding the north, centre and east while the RSF and its allies control the west and parts of the south.

### TALKS

## Putin and Orban discuss Hungarian POWs captured fighting for Ukraine

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Tuesday discussed the issue of Hungarians captured while fighting for Kyiv, the Kremlin said.

Ukraine is home to a large Hungarian minority, mostly living in the western Zakarpattia region.

Orban is one of the few European leaders to maintain close ties

with Russia amid the war in Ukraine, and has publicly criticised Kyiv for drafting ethnic Hungarians into its army.

"Vladimir Putin held a telephone conversation with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban," the Kremlin said in a statement.

"Issues concerning Hungarian citizens mobilised into the Ukrainian armed forces and taken prisoner by Russia were also

touched on," it added.

The Russian defence ministry published a video last week purporting to show a dual Hungarian-Ukrainian citizen captured as prisoner of war, alleging he had been forced to enlist in the Ukrainian army.

Last July, Hungary summoned Ukraine's envoy over allegations an ethnic Hungarian man died weeks after military recruiters allegedly assaulted him

in Ukraine. Kyiv says the man was legally mobilised and denied he was beaten.

Orban and Putin's call also comes amid a stand-off between Budapest and Kyiv over supplies of Russian oil to Hungary through Ukraine.

Ukraine says the Soviet-era Druzhba pipeline that delivered large amounts of Russian oil to Hungary and Slovakia was damaged

in Russian air strikes on January 27.

Slovakia and Hungary, Moscow's closest partners in the European Union, have accused Kyiv of deliberately stalling the pipeline's reopening to put pressure on them. Kyiv rejects this allegation.

The Kremlin said Orban and Putin also discussed the war in the Middle East, in particular its implications for the global energy market.

### ROW

## Trump says US-UK relationship 'not like it used to be'

LONDON (AFP) — US President Donald Trump has said the historical relationship between his country and Britain is "not like it used to be", amid a diplomatic bust-up over US-Israeli strikes against Iran.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who told parliament on Monday his government "does not believe in regime change from the skies", initially refused to have any role in the US's war with Iran.

He later agreed to a US request to use two British military bases for a "specific and limited defensive

purpose".

The refusal sparked the ire of Trump who told British daily newspaper The Sun "this was the most solid relationship of all. And now we have very strong relationships with other countries in Europe", singling out France and Germany.

Starmer has cultivated a warm relationship with the unpredictable Trump, who was given an unprecedented second state visit to Britain last year.

The so-called special relationship between the World War II allies is largely built on long-standing defence co-operation and intel-

ligence sharing.

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

Trump said Starmer had "not been helpful", adding: "I never thought I'd see that. I never thought I'd see that from the UK. We love the UK."

"It's just a much different kind of relationship... It's very sad to see that the relationship is obviously not what it was," he said in the telephone interview.

### 'Tight diplomatic tightrope'

The scathing comments come a day after Trump described Starmer's first reaction to the US request as "very disappointing" in an interview with another UK newspaper, The Daily Telegraph.

Government minister Darren Jones defended Starmer's decision to only get involved in military action where there was a "legal basis" to do so and a "clear plan" that was in the UK's own national interest.

"That's why we were not involved in the initial strikes in Iran in

the Middle East," he said.

'It's just a much different kind of relationship... It's very sad to see that the relationship is obviously not what it was'

"But it is also why we've consented to American Air Forces using our air bases and

for British jets to be in the sky in order to defend British citizens who are currently in the region," he added.

He said two UK bases, one in Gloucestershire in western England and the UK-US Indian Ocean Diego Garcia base, had now been cleared for use by the Americans.

Starmer's Downing Street office said on Monday he took the decision after Iran fired missiles over the weekend that put British interests and people "at risk".

"We all remember the mistakes of Iraq, and we have learnt those lessons," Starmer said

later in parliament.

The prime minister added that the British Royal Air Force base at Akrotiri in Cyprus, where the runway was hit early Monday by an unmanned drone, was "not being used by US bombers".

British politicians have been haunted by the 2003 Iraq war in which a reported 179 UK soldiers died.

An official UK inquiry into the conflict later found that Blair acted on flawed intelligence when deciding to join the war.

Evie Aspinall, director of the British Foreign Policy Group think tank said Star-

er faced a "very tight diplomatic tightrope".

"The UK wants to support the United States, not least to protect its own security interests and to show European value to the US, which remains critical in the context of Ukraine and Greenland," she told AFP.

"At the same time, it is deeply cautious of engagement with a conflict that could rapidly increase global insecurity and of working closely with an increasingly unreliable United States, who keeps undertaking actions which don't align with UK interests," she added.

## 'I couldn't breathe': The dark side of Bolivia's silver boom

By Gonzalo Torrico  
Agence France-Presse

POTOSÍ, Bolivia — In the bowels of a Bolivian mine that made the Spanish empire fabulously wealthy 500 years ago, high prices are driving a new silver rush — with tragic consequences.

Lured by soaring prices for silver and tin, youths like Efrain Villaca are risking their lives to try find new seams in Cerro Rico (literally, Rich Mountain) outside the town of Potosí.

Cerro Rico, a UN World Heritage Site which sits at 4,800 meters in the Andean high plains, was so flush with silver in the 16th century it produced a Spanish idiom: "valer un Potosí" (to be worth a fortune).

With silver now trading an around \$87 per ounce, up from under \$20 four years ago, there's money to be made again for those who venture underground. They average about \$1,000 a month, more than twice the minimum wage.

But they work at their peril. Cerro Rico, which is riddled with tunnels, is slowly collapsing in on itself. Villaca, 28, nearly lost consciousness inside the mine after being poisoned by carbon monoxide.

"I went in to look for silver veins...and when I was going in, I felt like I was suffocating. I couldn't breathe," he told AFP.

Villaca emerged unscathed but in January and February, at least 32 miners died in Potosí department, home to several silver mines, according to the government ombudsman's Office.

Efrain Limache, 24,

saw two of his friends plunge to their deaths in the Porco silver mine, also in Potosí, and says he himself survived a 50-meter fall from an elevator.

"In all of Bolivia, and I would venture to say in all of South America, Potosí has the highest number of deaths from mining work," Jackeline Alarcon, a lawyer for the ombudsman's office, told AFP.

The rise in deaths — from 77 in 2022 to 123 last year — has tracked soaring silver and tin prices, which have smashed records on the back of insatiable demand from the tech and green energy sectors.

Silver, of which Bolivia was the world's fourth-largest producer in 2024, according to the US Geological Survey, is an essential material in solar panels and electric vehicles.

In January, the metal hit \$121 per ounce but has settled at under \$90. Tin, which is used in semiconductors, has tripled in price in four years to over \$54,000 per tonne.

China, the world's biggest producer of both electric vehicles and solar panels, is the largest buyer of Bolivian silver. Exports of the metal to the Asian giant rose to \$532 million in 2024, up 88 per cent in two years.

### 'Near slavery'

The miners work shifts in Cerro Rico, using hammers and chisels to extract large chunks of rock from which they extract the ore.

The mine is managed by dozens of cooperatives, whose members traditionally did the hard graft.

But "with the high prices, they have stopped working themselves and hired people to do their work instead", mining researcher Hector Cordova told AFP, describing "a state of near slavery".

The young recruits have no medical insurance.

They chew coca leaves for energy — a tradition in Bolivia, where the leaves help keep hunger and altitude sickness at bay — and some swig a 96 per cent strength alcohol.

None of those AFP saw on a visit to the mine wore masks to protect against carbon monoxide poisoning or any other safety equipment, besides helmets.

"We never know if we'll come out safe and sound," said Limache.

Mining Minister Marco Calderon assured AFP that cooperative miners would receive safety training, at their request but he made no mention of the fate of illegal miners.

### Children killed

Giovanna Zamorano, an emergency room doctor at Bracamonte Hospital in Potosí, has treated a growing number of injuries among young miners.

"There are more and more deaths," she said, adding that most of the victims were aged between 20 and 25 but that at least one was underage.

The metals boom has sparked an influx of young people to Potosí from other departments, Alarcon, of the Ombudsman's Office said.

"Unfortunately, those in power," he said, "don't see Potosí as a heritage site."

## US says Israel killed Iran's leader

WASHINGTON, TEHRAN (AFP) — The Pentagon's policy chief on Tuesday distanced the United States from the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, saying he was killed by an Israeli strike.

Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Elbridge Colby said the strike that killed Khamenei and other senior Iranian leaders was not part of the American military campaign.

"Those are Israeli operations," Colby said, pushing back when pressed by lawmakers about whether regime change was an objective of US action.

Colby's restrained tone contrasted with that of President Donald Trump, who has framed the conflict in sweeping and triumphant terms since the strikes began.

"For 47 years, the Iranian regime has chanted death to America and waged an unending campaign of bloodshed and mass murder," Trump said on Saturday.

In a social media post, Trump said Khamenei was "unable to avoid our Intelligence and Highly Sophisticated Track-



This US Navy handout photo released by US Central Command public affairs shows an EA-18G Growler, attached to Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 133, launching from the flight deck of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) in support of Operation Epic Fury on Monday

ing Systems" and that, "working closely with Israel, there was not a thing he, or the other leaders that have been killed along with him, could do."

The divergence in tone underscored broader questions about the administration's aims in Iran.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Monday that Washington acted only after learning Israel was preparing to strike, suggesting the US role was reactive rather than

part of a broader plan. Colby sought to narrow the scope of US objectives.

"The objectives of the military campaign... are focused on addressing the ability of the Islamic Republic to project military power against us, our bases, our forces, et cetera, as well as our allies and partners in the region and beyond," he said.

He described the primary targets as Iran's missile firepower — which he said had

grown substantially — as well as its capacity to produce those weapons and elements of the Iranian navy.

Those goals, he argued, were "scoped and reasonable objectives that can be attained."

Pressed by Jack Reed, the panel's top Democrat, on how the killing of Iran's top leader fit with those objectives, Colby reiterated that he was "talking about the goals of the American military campaign", adding that the leader-

ship strikes were Israeli actions.

While Trump has publicly urged the Iranian people to seize an "unprecedented opportunity" to overthrow the government, Colby maintained that the US military campaign is focused on degrading Iran's power projection capabilities — not explicitly on regime change.

Iran is ready for a long war against the United States and Israel and has so far not used its most advanced weapons, its defence ministry said Tuesday.

"We have the capacity to resist and to continue an offensive defence longer than what (the enemy) has planned for this imposed war," ministry spokesman Reza Talei-Nik was quoted as saying by the official IRNA news agency.

"We do not intend to deploy all our advanced weapons and equipment in the first days," he added.

Russian top diplomat Sergei Lavrov urged de-escalation in the Middle East war in a call with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Tuesday, Moscow's foreign ministry said.

## King, in calls with world leaders, warns of consequences of Iran's attacks on regional peace

Continued from page 1

The two leaders affirmed the need for restraint and dialogue to resolve crises and spare the region further escalation.

During another phone call from Greece Prime Minister Kyri-

akos Mitsotakis on Tuesday, the two leaders underlined the need to respect the sovereignty of countries and de-escalate tensions in the region.

His Majesty emphasised the need for effective international coordination to spare

the region the repercussions of the current crisis, according to a Royal Court statement.

The King also reiterated that Jordan will continue to take all necessary measures to preserve its security, the safety of its citizens and its sovereign-

ty, the statement said.

Also on Tuesday, His Majesty received a phone call from Comoros President Azali Assoumani.

During the call, the two leaders discussed the dangerous developments in the region, a Royal Court statement

said.

His Majesty emphasised that Iran's targeting of Jordan and a number of countries in the region undermines efforts to achieve regional stability, calling for dialogue and diplomacy to resolve the crisis.

## Army chief visits Hawk Missile Unit, says JAF ready to defend airspace, counter threats

Continued from page 1

He added that investment in specialised training and professional development

remains ongoing, enhancing readiness and reinforcing the level of professionalism in carrying out assigned duties.

Huneiti, accompanied by a number of senior Armed Forces officers, joined personnel at the Martyr Muwafaq Salti Air Base for Maghrib

prayer and Iftar.

He also commended their commitment and alertness in defending the Kingdom's airspace and ensuring its

security and stability, stressing that the JAF will continue to serve as the Kingdom's unwavering shield and bulwark against all threats.

## Gov't confirms stable energy supplies amid regional escalation

Continued from page 1

The minister emphasised that the energy sector is being managed with high efficiency and daily monitoring,

in coordination with relevant authorities under an integrated institutional framework capable of responding effectively to regional developments.

Kharabsheh has said the escalation had led to the suspension of gas imports from Mediterranean fields, which are used for electricity generation, noting that

the switch from natural gas to diesel is costing the National Electric Power Company around JD1.8 million per day.

The company noted

that the Kingdom's fuel reserves for power generation are sufficient for at least 30 days, even if supplies from the Mediterranean fields remain suspended.

## Authorities ban media coverage of defence operations amid regional tensions

Continued from page 1

In coordination with the JAF and the Public Security Directorate (PSD), the commission said it had decided to ban the publication of

any videos or information defence-related operations, with violations subject to criminal prosecution by state authorities.

Licensed media outlets and visiting teams

authorised to film were praised for their professionalism, sense of national responsibility, and support for the media mission of the state.

The commission also

highlighted the importance of continued coordination with the JAF's Military Media Directorate, the PSD's Media and Community Police Department, and other state

institutions to ensure coverage follows official channels. It urged all media to report content violating the directive so that appropriate action can be taken.

## Israel expands Lebanon front amid fears of widening regional conflict

Continued from page 1

Despite the truce, cross-border exchanges have continued intermittently. The current escalation marks the most serious decline along the northern front since the agreement entered into force.

The developments came amid a wider confrontation following coordinated US-Israeli strikes on Iranian targets.

Washington has sought to frame its operations as limited, but regional officials fear that Lebanon could evolve into a secondary theatre in a broader conflict involving Iran and its allies.

Diplomatic contacts have intensified in recent days, with international actors attempting to prevent further spillover.

Western officials are concerned that sustained fighting could destabilise an already fragile Lebanese state and complicate efforts to contain escalation across multiple fronts.

Political analyst Amer Sabaileh said the trajectory points to a calculated Israeli objective.

"The Israeli position is clear," he said. "This round is unlikely to end without a decisive weakening of Hizbollah."

He said the confron-

tation has shifted beyond limited border exchanges.

"We are likely to see larger operations targeting Hizbollah's infrastructure and leadership," he said. "The dynamic has moved into a broader Lebanese context."

Political analyst Thamer Anaswah said Hizbollah's involvement risks deepening Lebanon's internal fragility.

"There is little doubt that Hizbollah's support for Iran is evolving into direct confrontation," he said. "But Lebanon's sovereign decision-making remains fragmented."

He warned that the

Lebanese state lacks the institutional capacity to fully contain escalation.

'We are likely to see larger operations targeting Hizbollah's infrastructure and leadership'

"The government does not control the military decision, nor can it prevent Hizbollah's involvement," he

said. "That increases the risk of instability."

Anaswah added that without credible mediation, the confrontation could widen further.

"If diplomatic channels fail, the region risks sliding into broader and uncontrolled escalation," he said.

For now, Israeli officials maintain that operations remain limited.

But with exchanges intensifying and expression hardening, the northern front appears to be entering a sustained and dangerous phase with implications that extend beyond Lebanon's borders.

**National Center for Curriculum Development and Assessment**  
**Expression of Interest (EOI)**  
**Development of Interactive Digital Content for Science, Mathematics, and Arabic Language**

As part of the National Center for Curriculum Development and Evaluation's efforts, in partnership with the Ministry of Education in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, to develop and modernize school curricula in a manner that enhances the quality of education and supports digital transformation in learning environments, the Center intends to procure the services of a specialized company (or consortium of companies) to digitize school curricula for Science, Mathematics, and Arabic Language for grades 1 through 12. The scope of work includes the design and development of interactive digital learning content, aligned with the approved national frameworks and standards, in accordance with a phased implementation plan to be approved by the Center.

Accordingly, the Center invites qualified companies and institutions at this stage to submit an Expression of Interest to undertake this assignment, provided that the submission includes evidence demonstrating compliance with the following requirements:

1. A company profile that provides an overview of the applicant organization, including its size, organizational structure, number of staff, scope of services, key areas of expertise, and major projects implemented in the field of school curriculum digitization.
2. Experience Portfolio demonstrating the organization's experience in implementing national and/or international projects related to school curriculum digitization within approved national frameworks and standards, including the scope of work delivered, project size, and key outputs.
3. Statement of technical capabilities outlining the specialized technical capacities available within the organization, including instructional design, digital content development, technical integration, large-scale project management, and quality assurance, supported by appropriate evidence and references.
4. Statement of financial capacity, supported by audited financial statements for the last three years.
5. General implementation approach for executing the digitization project at the national level, outlining the proposed operational methodology, a phased implementation plan, and mechanisms for coordination and integration with a national team to be established for this purpose.

Applicants may submit individually or as part of a legally established consortium, provided that the consortium's lead entity is clearly identified. No changes to the consortium structure shall be permitted after the announcement of the shortlist without the prior written approval of the Center. Applicants may also choose to apply for the development of digital content for one or more subjects, or for a specific grade level, in line with their areas of specialization and technical expertise. Based on the submitted qualifications, the Center will prepare a shortlist of qualified companies. Only the shortlisted companies will be provided with the Request for Proposals (RFP) document and invited to submit their technical and financial proposals in accordance with the approved procedures.

Upon completion of the development, alignment, and implementation processes, and as will be specified in the tender documents, all intellectual property rights related to the content and materials developed under this project shall be transferred to the National Center for Curriculum Development and Assessment, in accordance with the approved contractual terms. The tender documents may also require that hosting and/or operational services be carried out within the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, as specified in the final tender documentation.

Expressions of Interest, along with the required information and supporting documents as detailed above, must be submitted within a period not exceeding three weeks from the date of the announcement, to the email address below:

**Email:** [ncdd.jo@gmail.com](mailto:ncdd.jo@gmail.com)

**Best regards,**  
**Special Tenders Committee**  
**National Center for Curriculum Development and Assessment**

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## ‘Too risky’ for Iran to hit Turkey over US assets’

By Hazel Ward and Anne Chaon

Agence France-Presse

ISTANBUL — Under relentless Israeli-US attack, Iran has bombarded US assets in the Gulf, but so far has not touched Turkey which would be a “high-cost strategic gamble” that could go disastrously wrong, analysts said.

Iran had long warned that if Washington attacked, it would target its regional assets, which in principle should include NATO-member Turkey where US troops are stationed at several bases.

Since the conflict began early on Saturday, Iran has fired missiles and drones across the Middle East, striking Israel, and at Iraq, Jordan and all six Gulf states in a bid to strike at US assets.

But not Turkey, despite the presence of several highly sensitive sites hosting an unspecified number of US troops.

One is Incirlik, a key NATO air base used for decades by US troops near the southern city of Adana, another is Kurecik, a base in central Turkey which has a NATO early-warning radar system that can detect Iranian missile launches.

Although Ankara has categorically denied the radar data has ever been used to help Israel, its presence has rattled Tehran.

“In the past, Iranian officials have pointed to Kurecik to signal displeasure over the radar installations but... at this point, attacking a NATO country like Turkey would be an even riskier gamble for Iran,” said Gonul Tol of the Washington-based Middle East Institute.

The bases are a deeply sensitive issue for Turkey with police on Saturday arresting three journalists for “national security offences” over footage filmed near Incirlik shortly after the Iran strikes began.

On Monday, Ankara roundly denied unsubstantiated online rumours alleging “a US military base in Turkey has been hit”, saying there were no “foreign” owned bases and “no attack against our country”.

### ‘Extremely high risk’

Unlike its strikes on the Gulf countries, an attack on Turkey would not be a low-risk “messaging operation” but “a high-cost strategic gamble for Iran”, said Arif Keskin, an Iranian expert at Ankara University.

“A direct military move against Turkey would risk triggering a symmetrical response from Ankara. This could push the conflict beyond manageable limits,” he told AFP.

Attacking a NATO member could also trigger the military alliance’s collective defence mechanisms, which would “raise the strategic cost dramatically”, he said.

Serhan Afacan, director of the Ankara-based Centre for Iranian Studies (IRAM), said Iran appeared to have banked on the fact none of the Gulf states would retaliate, which wouldn’t be the case with Turkey.

“Iran has neither the strategic incentive nor the intention to target anywhere in Turkey. The risks of such a move would be extremely high for Tehran, both politically and militarily,” he said.

It would also risk isolating one of its last potential avenues for negotiation.

“Iran continues to value Turkey’s potential role in de-escalation and diplomatic mediation. Targeting Turkey would undermine that channel at a moment when dialogue remains crucial,” he told AFP.

### Important neighbour

Turkey had furiously worked diplomatic backchannels to head off the military confrontation, but since Saturday has sought to maintain a neutral stance.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday he was “deeply disturbed” by the attacks while also denouncing Iran’s retaliatory strikes, vowing to step up diplomatic efforts to bring the sides back to the negotiating table.

For Tehran, Ankara remained “a critical diplomatic actor” who could play a key in back-channel diplomacy, Keskin said.

“An attack on Turkey would narrow Iran’s diplomatic manoeuvring space and cut off a crisis management route it may later need.”

It also risked pushing Ankara into “an opposing camp” which could play out badly for Tehran given Turkey’s geostrategic location, he said.

“Iran’s choice not to attack Turkey is not a matter of goodwill but the outcome of a highly layered strategic calculation,” he said.

# The cost of alignment: How the Iran conflict is reshaping the region

By Farrah Al Abdallat

The escalating confrontation between Israel, the United States and Iran is pushing the Middle East toward a dangerous shift in the balance of power. The assassination of Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other senior figures initially suggested that Washington and Tel Aviv may have succeeded in weakening, if not decapitating, the Islamic Republic’s command structure. Yet the continuation of Iranian missile strikes against Israel, along with attacks targeting strategic sites across the Gulf, indicates that the confrontation has entered a more dangerous phase rather than approaching its end. Instead of collapse, Tehran’s response signals a willingness to sustain a prolonged conflict even under overwhelming US-Israeli military pressure, raising the risk that the crisis will evolve into a wider regional confrontation.

The current escalation is placing unprecedented strain on the regional system that has long depended on US security guarantees. Iran has demonstrated its readiness to retaliate beyond its borders, while Gulf states are increasingly exposed to the consequences of their close defense partnerships with Washington. As the conflict widens, a growing debate is emerging across the region over whether the political and economic costs of alignment with the United States have become too high. What is unfolding is not only a military confrontation, but a moment of transition in which regional actors are reassessing alliances, deterrence strategies and their long-term place in a changing security architecture.

At the same time, the confrontation is proving to be as much an economic war as it is a military one. Iranian strikes on energy infrastructure in Saudi Arabia and Qatar have already shaken markets, while threats to close the Strait of Hormuz — through which nearly one-fifth of global oil supply passes — signal Tehran’s readiness to expand the conflict into the global economic domain. Iran’s attempt to internationalise the confrontation by targeting Gulf energy infrastructure may ultimately backfire. The temporary suspension of Qatar’s LNG production — which accounts for roughly 20 per cent of global supply — sent European gas prices sharply higher, underscoring how quickly regional escalation can generate global economic consequences. Rather than strengthening Tehran’s leverage, such actions risk widening the eco-

nomie fallout of the war and increasing pressure for a broader international response.

In this context, the current conflict is not only about Iran’s nuclear ambitions or Israel’s security concerns. It reflects a broader moment of transition in regional politics, in which traditional alliances are under strain, deterrence is being redefined and the balance between military power, economic stability and political legitimacy is becoming increasingly fragile.

US policy toward Iran under President Donald Trump has been based on pressure and deterrence, using sanctions, military threats and strong public statements to show that Washington is willing to act if necessary. While this approach has reassured some allies, it has also created concern among regional partners who fear that escalation could quickly move beyond control. Trump entered his second term promising to avoid long wars in the Middle East and to focus on limiting US involvement in regional conflicts. However, the current confrontation has placed him in a difficult position, where backing down could be seen as weakness, while further escalation risks widening the war. This contradiction is being closely watched in Arab capitals, where governments still depend on US protection but are increasingly cautious about being pulled into a conflict shaped by Washington’s internal political pressures as much as by regional realities.

Israel’s role has also been central in pushing the confrontation forward. For years, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has treated Iran as the main strategic threat in the region and has argued that a stronger response is necessary to limit Tehran’s military and political influence. Israeli policy has focused on stopping Iran from expanding its presence through missile programmes, proxy groups, and military positions across the region. This position has brought Israel closer to several Arab states that share concerns about Iran, especially after the Abraham Accords, but it has also increased the feeling among others that regional security is being driven by a confrontation approach that leaves little room for diplomacy. As a result, the current crisis is not only about Iran’s behavior, but also about the growing belief that the regional balance is being shaped by pressure and force rather than negotiation.

The vulnerability of Gulf states quickly became evident as the confrontation expanded beyond Israel. Much of the US military

infrastructure in Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates lies within the range of Iran’s short-range ballistic missiles, such as the Fateh-110, Zolfaghar, Oiam-1 and Hormuz-2, which are inexpensive, mobile and designed for rapid launch in large salvos. As a result, retaliatory strikes were able to reach targets across the Gulf within hours of escalation.

Iranian missile and drone attacks against US facilities hosted in the United Arab Emirates, including Al Dhafra Air Base, caused direct impacts on Emirati territory, while intercepted projectiles fell near civilian infrastructure in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Similar incidents were reported in Saudi Arabia, where an attack triggered a fire at the Ras Tanura oil complex, forcing Saudi Aramco to halt refinery operations at one of the kingdom’s most important export facilities. These developments highlight how proximity to Iran makes Gulf states the first arena of escalation whenever confrontation with the United States or Israel moves into open conflict.

Strategically, the current pattern of strikes suggests that Iran has not yet used the full extent of its military capabilities. Tehran’s doctrine favours gradual escalation, relying on calibrated missile and drone attacks rather than an immediate large-scale response. Decision-making has also become more militarised in recent years, with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps playing a leading role and showing less willingness to rely on de-escalation efforts that were attempted prior to the confrontation. Iranian planners appear aware that US policy under Trump has often prioritised short-term displays of strength, creating an incentive for Tehran to avoid a rapid, maximal response that could justify broader American intervention.

Recent defence cooperation between regional powers reflects a growing effort to reduce exclusive dependence on the United States at a time when the risks of close alignment with Washington have become more visible. The UAE has expanded security coordination with India, particularly in maritime and technological fields, while Saudi Arabia continues to rely on long-standing military ties with Pakistan in training and defence support. Turkey’s position reflects a similar effort to preserve strategic flexibility. Despite hosting key US and NATO assets, Ankara has explored closer defence coordination with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan while avoiding direct involvement in the confrontation, and Iranian

retaliation has so far bypassed Turkish territory even as other locations linked to US forces were targeted.

This pattern highlights a shifting deterrence dynamic in which regional powers tied to Washington are increasingly seeking to limit their exposure to escalation rather than rely solely on US protection. These partnerships are not new, but the current confrontation has increased their importance. The escalation with Iran has shown that states closely linked to the US security framework — especially those hosting American bases — can quickly become exposed to retaliation, including attacks on energy infrastructure and threats to shipping routes. In response, regional actors are not abandoning Washington, but they are clearly seeking additional partners to reduce their vulnerability. The conflict has highlighted the costs that can come with US protection and may gradually push the region toward a more flexible security architecture rather than one centered entirely on the United States.

The current confrontation risks disrupting the fragile balance of power that has long defined the Middle East. If the conflict continues, Israel could emerge with a significantly stronger strategic position, particularly if Iran is weakened without the emergence of a new regional counterweight. Such a shift would reshape the regional order in ways that many states may view with caution, even as they share concerns about Tehran’s influence.

At the same time, the risk of wider escalation remains high. Governments that have so far adopted a cautious diplomatic posture may find it increasingly difficult to remain on the sidelines if strikes continue to reach their territory, their energy infrastructure or the US facilities they host. What has so far remained a controlled confrontation could gradually pull additional states into direct involvement, turning a limited conflict into a broader regional crisis.

The prospects for diplomacy remain uncertain. Recent talks mediated by Oman failed to produce tangible progress, and within days the situation shifted from negotiation to open confrontation. This sequence underscores how fragile the current moment has become. The Middle East is entering a period in which the balance of power is shifting, alliances are being reconsidered and the next escalation may determine the shape of the regional order for years to come.

## Will Iran take part in the 2026 World Cup?

By Keyvan Naraghi

Agence France-press

Paris, France — The war in the Middle East triggered by US and Israeli strikes on Iran has raised the question of whether the Iranian national team will take part in the World Cup later this year, during which it is due to play group games in the United States.

### What is Iran’s position?

The possibility of a boycott of the World Cup has been raised in Iran.

Within hours of the joint US-Israeli strikes beginning on Saturday Iranian Football Federation president Mehdi Taj told Iranian television: “What is certain at the present time is that with this attack and this cruelty, we cannot look forward to the World Cup with hope.”

Taj also announced that the Iranian domestic league had been suspended.

“Team Melli”, as the Iranian national team are known, secured qualification in March last year for a seventh World Cup, and a fourth in a row.

Iran have been drawn in Group G with Belgium, Egypt and New Zealand and are due to play two games in Los Angeles and one in Seattle.

A large Iranian diaspora has lived in Los Angeles since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. A large part of that diaspora backed

the Pahlavi dynasty which was overthrown in the revolution.

### What is FIFA’s position?

World football’s governing body is remaining cautious regarding the possibility of Iran pulling out of the World Cup.

“We had a meeting... and it is premature to comment in detail, but we will monitor developments around all issues around the world,” FIFA Secretary-General Mattias Grafstrom said on Saturday.

‘We had a meeting... and it is premature to comment in detail, but we will monitor developments around all issues around the world’

A source close to FIFA said no discussions had yet taken place with the Iranian Football Federation regarding a possible withdrawal of the team from the tournament.

Tuesday marks exactly 100 days to the tournament’s opening game and the situation in Iran could become acutely uncomfortable for FIFA President

Gianni Infantino, who has been keen to show that he has a close relationship with US President Donald Trump.

All the more so as other countries in the Gulf who are due to take part in the World Cup have been drawn into the war, with Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Jordan all being targeted by retaliatory Iranian strikes.

### What do FIFA’s regulations say?

FIFA’s regulations do not provide for the possibility of a boycott of the World Cup by a qualified team. A source close to world football’s governing body said “specific decisions” would have to be taken to replace Iran with another team if necessary.

Article 6 of the regulations for the 2026 World Cup says that “if a participating member association withdraws... as a result of force majeure”, FIFA “shall decide on the matter at its sole discretion and take whatever action is deemed necessary”.

If a team withdraws or is excluded from the competition, FIFA therefore has the freedom to take whatever decision it sees fit and “may decide to replace the participating member association in question with another association”.

It would seem logical that an eventual absence of Iran from the competition would open the way for another Asian nation to take their place.

At the moment eight Asian teams have qualified for the

first World Cup to feature 48 teams in total. There could yet be a ninth Asian team, if Iraq win an intercontinental play-off against either Bolivia or Suriname, scheduled to be played on March 31 in Monterrey, Mexico.

### Has a country boycotted a World Cup before?

There have been boycotts of the Olympics, impacting most notably the Games in Moscow in 1980 and in Los Angeles four years later, during the Cold War. But there has not yet been an equivalent situation at a World Cup.

Several qualified teams withdrew from the 1950 World Cup, but for different reasons. Turkey cited financial reasons, while Scotland said they would only go if they won the 1949/50 British Home Championship — FIFA said the top two out of the four teams would qualify, but Scotland finished second to England and so refused to go.

Yugoslavia qualified for the 1992 European Championship but the outbreak of war in the Balkans led to UEFA replacing them with Denmark — who had finished behind Yugoslavia in their qualifying group — barely two weeks before the tournament began. Denmark went on to win the trophy.

Russian clubs and national teams have been suspended from all international competitions by FIFA and UEFA since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

# BUSINESS

Wednesday, March 4, 2026



Figures issued by the Companies Control Department indicates that 1,316 companies were registered during January and February

## Company registrations rise 35% compared with 2019 — department

AMMAN (JT) — The number of companies registered in the Kingdom during the first two months of 2026 rose by 35 per cent compared with the same period in 2019 and by 0.6 per cent compared with 2025, official data showed on Tuesday.

Figures issued by the Companies Control Department indicated that 1,316 companies were registered during January and February, compared with 973 in the same period of 2019 and 1,308 in the corresponding period of 2025, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Total registered capital during the first two months exceeded JD48.9 million. Limited liability companies accounted

for the largest share of registrations, with 1,011 firms representing 74.3 per cent of the total and holding registered capital of more than JD19 million. Private shareholding companies followed, with registered capital exceeding JD16.6 million.

The data also showed a sharp decline in company deregistrations. A total of 171 companies had their registration annulled or revoked during the first two months, marking an 85 per cent drop compared with 1,149 companies in the same period of 2019, and an 11 per cent decrease from 193 in the corresponding period last year.

Meanwhile, net capital increases recorded significant growth. The net in-

crease in registered capital during the first two months reached around JD727 million, compared with JD85 million in the same period of 2019 and JD229 million in the corresponding period of 2025.

The number of companies that raised their capital reached 750 during the reporting period, compared with 288 in the same period of 2019, while 127 companies reduced their capital, down from 243 in 2019.

The net value of newly registered capital surged by 776 per cent compared with 2019 and by 199 per cent compared with the same period last year, reflecting stronger business activity at the start of 2026.

## Pharmaceutical exports reach JD 642m in 2025 — DoS

Exports of pharmaceutical preparations grow by 5.1% in 2025

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's pharmaceutical exports posted "solid" growth in 2025, driven by rising demand for Jordanian medicines in overseas markets.

According to foreign trade figures released by the Department of Statistics (DoS), exports of pharmaceutical preparations grew by 5.1 per cent in 2025, reaching JD642 million, up from JD611 million a year earlier, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Fadi Atrash head of the pharmaceuticals and medical supplies sector at the Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI) said on Tuesday, the sector has begun to capitalise on strong Royal support, particularly following overseas tours by His Majesty King Abdullah to several Asian countries, where demand for human medicines is expanding.

He described the pharmaceutical industry as one of Jor-



Exports of pharmaceutical preparations grow by 5.1% in 2025, reaching JD642 million, according to the Department of Statistics

dan's most promising sectors, citing advanced expertise and high manufacturing standards.

Jordan now produces more than 4,500 pharmaceutical products, compared with just a limited range in

earlier years, he said.

Atrash noted that local drug manufacturers continue to expand production lines, inject new investments and adopt cutting-edge technologies, strengthening their competitiveness in ex-

port markets.

The sector comprises 30 pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities across the Kingdom, with registered capital of around JD350 million.

It employs about 10,000 people directly,

35 per cent of them women, and exports to 85 markets worldwide. Annual production capacity is estimated at JD1.5 billion, according to Atrash.

Jordan's pharmaceutical output covers a wide range of medical specialisations, including treatments for chronic diseases, cancer, infectious, neurological, psychological, allergic and gastrointestinal conditions, in multiple dosage forms such as tablets, capsules, liquids, injections, creams and inhalers, he noted.

Atrash also stressed the "pivotal" role of the Jordan Food and Drug Administration in supporting the sector, particularly through faster registration procedures and strict application of good manufacturing practices, which helped local producers access new markets and strengthen their position in global supply chains.

## Strait of Hormuz impasse squeezes world shipping

PARIS, France (AFP) — With few captains willing to brave the Strait of Hormuz as war rages around the Gulf, companies will have to do business without one of the world's most vital shipping lanes, especially for oil and gas.

### What is the strait's importance to world markets?

The strait is especially key to the world energy markets, with around 20 per cent of global seaborne oil passing through.

That said, analysts believe that cutting off access, as Iran has threatened to do, will not affect the major Asia-Europe shipping route, with the Gulf ending in a cul-de-sac by the shores of Kuwait, Iraq and Iran.

But the strait is essential to all regional trade as it allows access to Dubai's Jebel Ali Port, the world's 10th-largest container port and a redistribution hub for more than a dozen countries in the region.

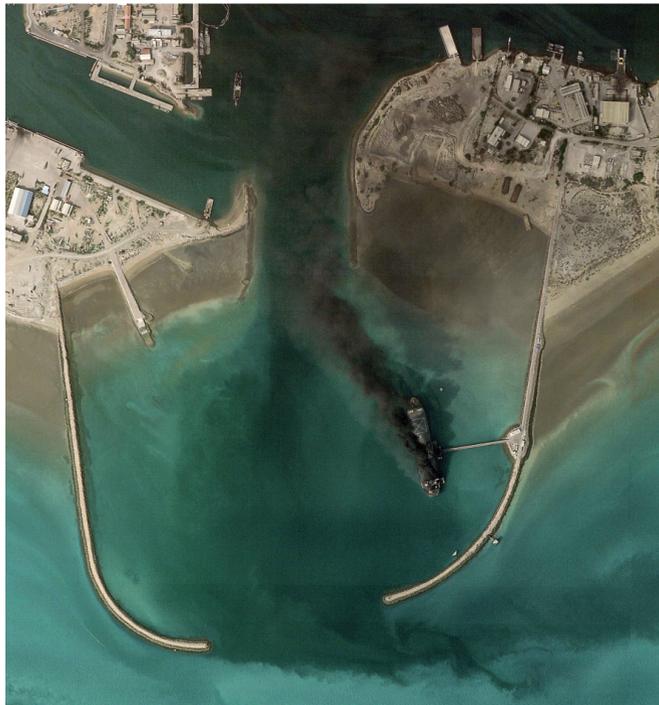
In Jebel Ali, container ships are unloaded onto smaller vessels bound for countries ranging from east Africa to India, noted Anne-Sophie Fribourg, vice-president of France's TLF freighters union.

### Has it ever been closed?

The Strait of Hormuz has always been open for business.

Even during the Iran-Iraq war between 1980 and 1988, commercial passage was maintained despite attacks on oil tankers, said Director of the French High Institute for Maritime Economy, Paul Tourret.

The current "freeze" on goods transiting through the strait is "unprecedented", said Research Director at the French Navy's Strategic Studies Centre, Cyrille



This handout satellite image taken by 2026 Planet Labs PBC on Monday shows smoke billowing from a vessel following an explosion from the port of Bandar Abbas along the strait of Hormuz

Poirier-Coutansais.

Since Israel and the United States launched strikes on Iran on Saturday, the world's largest shipping firms — Italian-Swiss MSC, Denmark's Maersk, France's CMA CGM, Germany's Hapag-Lloyd and China's Cosco — have ordered their ships to find shelter and stay safe.

On the Marine Traffic map, which tracks world shipping movements, you can make out clusters of ships, mainly tankers, anchored far to the north near Kuwait, as well as off the coast near Dubai.

The Iranian merchant navy is likewise visible off the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas on the other side of the strait.

Several other distinct groups of ships can be seen just before the entry to Hormuz, Tourret said.

### What goods transit through Hormuz?

Germany ships cars, machinery and industrial products via the strait, while France mainly sells cereals and agricultural products, cosmetics, luxury goods and pharmaceuticals.

Italy, meanwhile, exports food, large quantities of marble and ceramics, said TLF's Fribourg.

In the other direction, besides oil and gas, from which fertilisers and plastics are derived, the Middle East accounts for nine per cent of the world's primary aluminium production, nearly all of which is exported, according to TD Commodities.

**Will there be delays? Price increases?**

Several online shop-

ping platforms have warned their clients that delivery times may increase.

Temu and Shein have warned of delays of several days, while Amazon forecast even longer waits, according to Bloomberg.

Freight costs are already rising as a result of the additional charges shipping companies are imposing for transit in the region.

For the Europe-Asia route, ships are also no longer using the passage through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal due to fears of renewed attacks by Iran's allies in Yemen, the Houthis.

Rounding the Cape of Good Hope, at the tip of South Africa, adds around 10 extra days at sea and increases costs by roughly 30 per cent.

## Global markets turmoil intensifies on Iran war

LONDON (AFP) — Global stock markets dived, energy prices surged and the dollar gained on Tuesday as the Iran war drove volatility across global financial markets and roiled companies worldwide.

World oil prices soared more than 8 per cent and European natural gas prices rocketed for a second day running as the war disrupted Middle East exports.

Brent North Sea crude, the international benchmark, topped \$85 a barrel for the first time since July 2024.

The US and Israeli attacks on the Islamic republic and its retaliation across the region have upended regional energy flows, with the crucial Strait of Hormuz — through which about a fifth of global oil transits — effectively closed off.

The war has also fuelled fears of a fresh energy crisis that could ramp up inflation.

The Frankfurt, Madrid and Milan stock markets each shed around 4 per cent in midday deals, while Paris and London lost close to 3 per cent.

"European markets are being hit hard as the full inflationary impact of the war in Iran truly comes home to roost," said Joshua Mahony, chief market analyst at Scope Markets.

The European Central Bank's chief economist Philip Lane said in an interview with the Financial Times published on Tuesday that a lengthy Middle East conflict and sustained drop in energy supplies could trigger a "spike" in eurozone inflation and hit regional growth.

New strikes were reported on Tuesday across the Middle East, including Israeli bombardment on Lebanon and a drone attack on the US embassy in Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh.

The conflict started with US and Israeli strikes on Iran over the weekend, which sparked retaliatory Iranian attacks and showed no sign of abating as it entered its fourth day.

Iran has unleashed missiles and drones across the Middle East, including at Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Dubai,

while threatening explicitly to drive up global energy costs.

A general in Iran's Revolutionary Guards threatened to "burn any ship" seeking to navigate the Strait of Hormuz.

The Dutch TTF natural gas contract, considered the European benchmark, shot up more than 40 per cent to over 60 euros on Tuesday — its highest level since January 2023, in the wake of the price spike triggered by the Ukraine war.

European natural gas prices surged 50 per cent on Monday after Qatar's state-run energy firm said it had halted liquefied natural gas production.

The rise in energy costs could give most central bankers a headache as they look to bring down inflation while also cutting interest rates to support their economies.

"A spike in energy prices creates a dilemma for central banks," said Rodrigo Catril at National Australia Bank. "Stagflation makes central banks very uncomfortable, a longer-lasting energy shock is inflationary and

at the same time it weakens growth."

The dollar, seen as a safer bet in times of economic unrest, extended gains against major rivals.

Asian equities extended Monday's losses.

Seoul, which has surged more than 40 per cent this year on the back of a tech rally, led the retreat by diving more than seven per cent as investors returned from a long weekend.

Tokyo shed more than three per cent while Hong Kong, Shanghai, Sydney, Wellington, Taipei and Jakarta were also sharply lower.

Airlines were again among the biggest losers in the region, with Tokyo-listed Japan Airlines down more than 6 per cent, Cathay Pacific down 2.8 per cent in Hong Kong and Qantas losing 1.8 per cent in Sydney.

The price of gold fell four per cent and silver plunged more than 12 per cent as investors piled into strategic bets on energy and the dollar, said analyst Kathleen Brooks at trading platform XTb.

## AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Tuesday amounted to JD9.2 million spread over 3.5 million shares that traded through 2,651 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.54 per cent, closing at 3572.49 points.

Out of 87 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 36 companies rose while the share price of another 22 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Jordan Insurance by 7.2 per cent, Arab East Investment by 4.76 per cent, Comprehensive Multiple Transportations Company by 4.76 per cent, Professional Company for Real Estate Investment and Housing by 3.80 per cent and First Jordan Investment Company Plc. by 3.57 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Babelon Investments Company Plc. by 4.76 per cent, Jordan Express Tourist Transport by 3.3 per cent, Tuhama for Financial Investments by 3.13 per cent, Philadelphia International Educational Investment Company by 2.58 per cent and Latent Energies for Investments by 2.53 per cent.

**THE MARKET TODAY**

ASE Index: ↑ 3572.49 0.54% March 03, 2026

Live Data Historical Data

Click and drag in the plot area to zoom in

**DAILY SUMMARY**

Regular Market	OTC Market	Bonds
Trading Value (JDs)	9,184,008	
Trading volume	3,454,008	
No. of Transactions	2,651	
No. of Securities	87	

# THE JORDAN TIMES SPORTS AT A GLANCE

## RUGBY

### England makes sweeping changes for Italy Six Nations clash

LONDON, United Kingdom (AFP) — England coach Steve Borthwick has radically overhauled his team following their Six Nations slump, bringing back Fin Smith at fly-half to face Italy as part of a whole new back line. There are nine changes in personnel and a further three positional switches following the 42-21 rout by Ireland that realistically ended England's title chances with two rounds remaining. That followed a 31-20 defeat by Scotland in Edinburgh. Smith will direct operations at the expense of George Ford, who has been jettisoned from the matchday 23 entirely after under-performing against Andy Farrell's Ireland. British and Irish Lions playmaker Smith marshals a back line that includes only one survivor from the Ireland mauling in Tommy Freeman, and even he has been relocated from wing to outside centre.

### Players holed up in Dubai after Iranian strikes

PARIS, France (AFP) — A "small number" of tennis players remain stuck in Dubai following a men's tournament last week, owing to the war in the Middle East, the tour's governing body the ATP said on Monday. Russian Daniil Medvedev, who won the singles title on Saturday, is among those who have been unable to leave the city because of the attacks from Iranian missiles and drones. "The health, safety and well-being of our players, staff and tournament personnel is our priority," the ATP said in a statement published on X, formerly Twitter. "We can confirm that a small number of players and team members remain in Dubai... They are being accommodated in the official tournament hotels. We are in direct communication with those affected." Finnish player Harri Heliövaara, who won the doubles alongside British player Henry Patten, wrote on his blog on Sunday "much of the airspace in the surrounding areas is closed" in response to the Iranian strikes. The Finn estimated that around 30 people in total were being housed in a hotel close to the airport.



Giannis Antetokounmpo #34 of the Milwaukee Bucks dribbles the ball against Hugo Gonzalez #28 of the Boston Celtics during the third quarter at Fiserv Forum on Tuesday in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

## Murray scores 45 as Nuggets hold off Jazz

LOS ANGELES, United States (AFP) — Jamal Murray scored 45 points as the Denver Nuggets held off the struggling Utah Jazz to snatch a 128-125 victory on Tuesday. Nuggets point guard Murray drained eight three-pointers and shot 13-of-19 from the field in a back-and-forth duel that saw the lead change hands no fewer than 22 times. Murray's virtuoso performance was backed by 22 points from Nikola Jokic, who also pulled down 12 rebounds, on a night when all of Denver's starters reached double figures. The win lifted Denver to 38-24 in the Western Conference standings, while Utah fell to 18-43 and remain one place off the

bottom. Elsewhere Monday, Giannis Antetokounmpo returned from a five-week injury absence but could not prevent the Milwaukee Bucks slumping to a hefty 108-81 defeat to the Boston Celtics. Antetokounmpo, making his first appearance since suffering a right calf strain in late January, finished with 19 points and 11 rebounds in a losing effort against the outclassed Bucks. Boston meanwhile kept up their pursuit of the Detroit Pistons at the top of the Eastern Conference with a potent all-round offensive effort. All five starters finished in double digits for the Celtics, while Payton Pritchard produced an eye-catching

25-point cameo off the bench that included five three-pointers. The Celtics drained 20-of-50 from outside the arc, with Derrick White and Sam Hauser bagging four three-pointers apiece. Boston improved to 41-20 with the victory as the Bucks fell to 26-34. The Celtics are second in the East, five games behind leaders Detroit (45-14). The Bucks' third straight loss leaves them in 11th place in the East, just outside the play-in places. In other games on Monday, Trae Young managed the unusual feat of getting ejected for new club Washington before playing a game for the franchise. Young has been injured since his trade to the Wiz-

ards from Atlanta on January 7, but is due to make his debut later this week. On Monday however he was ejected after walking onto the court during the third quarter of the Wizards' 123-118 defeat to the Houston Rockets to complain after teammate Jamir Watkins was shoved to the hardwood by Houston's Tari Eason. "Don't expect me to get ejected too many more times D.C...but I'm definitely bringing that energy & competitiveness when I'm back for my brothers!" Young wrote on Twitter following the incident. On the court, Washington were well beaten by Houston, who improved to 38-22 and remain in third place in the Western Conference.

## Unbeaten South Africa faces 'fresh start' in semifinal

KOLKATA (AFP) — South Africa captain Aiden Markram on Tuesday said his team's win over New Zealand in the group phase will count for nothing in the T20 World Cup semifinal, which will be a "completely fresh start". The two teams clash at Kolkata's Eden Gardens in the first semifinal on Wednesday, with both having never lifted a cricket World Cup.

South Africa is the only unbeaten side in the last four and is trying to rid themselves of a reputation for choking in the final stages at World Cups. They have been the team to beat in this edition and got the better of New Zealand by seven wickets in a group game in Ahmedabad on February 15. "We had a good run against them in the group stages, but both teams have played a lot of cricket since then," Markram told reporters. "It's a completely fresh start tomorrow and it being a semifinal which is exciting as well. "I don't think it's as straightforward as just being able to repeat that. We'll try to bring our best game to the front again." South Africa suffered a heartbreaking defeat in the 2024 T20 World Cup final against India

in Barbados, when they needed 30 off 30 balls with six wickets and lost by seven runs after a clatter of wickets. South Africa beat India and the West Indies in the Super Eights in the Super Eights to have many marking them down as the favourites to lift the trophy. "With regards to being favourites or not, that's all different people's opinions," said Markram. "Us as a team really just try to focus on putting good games of cricket together and playing that exciting brand that we've been trying to play for the last 18 months or so. Markram has led South Africa from the front with 268 runs including three half-centuries and a top score of 86 not out in seven matches. He holds an impressive captaincy record of 15 wins in 16 T20 World Cup matches with the only defeat in the 2024 final. "The senior guys in the team, we lean on them a lot. They help guide you and lead you when you have a few doubts," said Markram. "I think because of that and a really strong group of players over the years, we've developed that. Fortunately it reflects well, but it's definitely a reflection on the group as a whole."



THE JORDAN TIMES

## UK pop-soul star Olivia Dean sweeps Brit Awards

LONDON (AFP) — British singer-songwriter Olivia Dean triumphed on Saturday at the Brit Awards, claiming four prizes at the UK's biggest annual music celebration held for the first time in Manchester, northwest England. After topping the charts at home and abroad with her monster hit "Man I Need" and lauded album "The Art of Loving", the 26-year-old dominated the star-studded awards ceremony at the city's Co-op Live arena. Weeks after winning the best new artist Grammy, she bagged the evening's most coveted Album "Of The Year" gong, beating out indie singer Sam Fender, rockers Wolf Alice, pop star Lily Allen and rapper Dave. Dean also won best artist, best pop act and — alongside Fender — song of the year for their single "Rein Me In", topping the likes of British stars Raye, Lola Young and Calvin Harris. "Thank you so much for believing in me when I didn't really believe in myself sometimes," an emotional Dean said as she accepted the best album accolade. "This album is just about love and loving each other in a world that feels lovelessness right now." Rising star Young did not leave empty-handed, picking up best breakthrough artist while Wolf Alice snagged group of the year. "It is a great time in British music and music in general, and I'm

just so proud to be a part of it," 25-year-old "Messy" singer Young said in her acceptance speech. **Pep appearance** Spanish singer Rosalia, who won best international artist, delivered an electric performance featuring Bjork. The Icelandic singer-songwriter emerged from a choreographed dance ensemble to showcase their hit song "Berghain". K-pop idol Rose — a member of Blackpink — and Bruno Mars won the international song of the year for their viral hit "APT" while Brooklyn rockers Geese bagged best international group. Collecting the prize, band drummer Max Bassin was bleeped out from the British television broadcast of the event after telling the audience "free Palestine" and "f\*ck Ice". The Brit Awards have recognised the cream of British and global pop music since they were first held in 1977, but have often been peppered with scandal and farce. Pulp frontman Jarvis Cocker famously stormed the stage in protest while Michael Jackson performed surrounded by children in 1996, while Madonna suffered whiplash injuries in 2015. Its setting this year in Manchester, synonymous with legendary bands including the recently reunited Oasis, was notable. The band's Noel Gallagher was in attendance

to collect the gong for songwriter of the year. A die-hard Manchester City fan, the club's manager Pep Guardiola made a special video tribute, telling the Oasis legend "I'm so proud of you... and I love you". **Harry Styles performance** Producer and DJ Mark Ronson was also honoured, with the outstanding contribution to music award. He got behind the turntables for a mini-set that eulogised his former collaborator Amy Winehouse — who died in 2011 — and featured US rapper Ghostface Killah and Dua Lipa. Late rocker Ozzy Osbourne's wife Sharon and daughter Kelly collected the lifetime achievement award for the Black Sabbath frontman before pop star Robbie Williams performed a tribute track in his honour. Earlier, Harry Styles had opened the night with a performance of his new single "Aperture", ahead of the much-anticipated release of his new album next Friday. Known for his style as well as his music, the former One Direction star was dressed in a Chanel pinstriped suit and was joined on-stage by a gospel choir. The trio of singers from the fictional girl group Huntrix in the hit animated film "KPop Demon Hunters" — Ejae, Audrey Nuna and Rei Ami — also performed, as well as Raye, who swept the Brits two years ago.

## Hollywood's finest gather for guild's Actor Awards

LOS ANGELES, United States (AFP) — Film and TV A-listers walked the red carpet in Los Angeles on Sunday at the Screen Actors Guild's prize gala, as "One Battle After Another" and "Sinners" go head-to-head in the last major awards ceremony before the Oscars. The top honour at the newly rebranded Actor Awards recognises the ensemble cast of a film — a decision that sometimes, but not always, presages Oscars best picture glory. "One Battle after Another", Paul Thomas Anderson's political thriller starring Leonardo Di Caprio as a pot-addled former revolutionary forced back into the game when his teenage daughter goes missing, leads the pack with seven nominations. Not far behind is Ryan Coogler's "Sinners", a vampire fable about America's difficult racial history, with five nominations. For industry insiders, "Sinners" may have the upper hand with SAG-AFTRA, which represents more than 160,000 members — but that may not hold true in two weeks for the Academy Awards. "I think 'Sinners' is almost certainly going to win the Best Ensemble SAG Award," Scott Feinberg, awards columnist for The Hollywood Reporter, told AFP. "I'm not as confident that it's going to win the best picture Oscar. It might, but those two awards have gone to dif-



From left to right: US film producer Nicolas Gonda, British film producer Pippa Harris and US film producer Liza Marshall attend the 98th Oscars Nominees Luncheon at the Beverly Hilton hotel in Beverly Hills, California, on February 10

ferent films just about as often as they have gone to the same film. **Chalamet shoe-in** Seth Rogen, the creator and star of Apple TV's Hollywood satire "The Studio," along with his co-stars Chase Sui Wonders and Kathryn Hahn, were among early arrivals to an event that recognises the best performers on the small and big screen. The ceremony comes as voting proceeds for the Oscars, with Sunday's winners expected to gain some momentum in the march to the March 15 finale to Hollywood's awards season. In the film actor categories, Feinberg said Timothee Chalamet is

a clear frontrunner for best male actor for his portrayal of an obsessive 1950s table tennis star in "Marty Supreme". "He won last year for [Bob Dylan biopic] "A Complete Unknown"... so we know that this group really likes him," he said. "And this year he's expected to win the Oscar." Chalamet faces competition from Di Caprio, Michael B. Jordan for his twin lead role in "Sinners", Ethan Hawke for his portrayal of a washed-up lyricist in "Blue Moon" and Jesse Plemons, who plays a likeable conspiracy theorist in "Bugonia". For best female actor, all bets are on Jessie Buckley, who plays the grief-stricken wife

of William Shakespeare mourning their son in "Hamnet". She has so far swept this awards season. Others in the category are Rose Byrne ("If I Had Legs, I'd Kick You"), Kate Hudson ("Song Sung Blue") Chase Infiniti as DiCaprio's daughter in "One Battle After Another" and Emma Stone for "Bugonia". **Unpredictable** The picture is a little cloudier for actors in a supporting role, said Feinberg, with both male and female categories up for grabs. "Different people have been recognized in those categories at almost every award show," he said. The Golden Globe for

best supporting actress went to Teyana Taylor, DiCaprio's revolutionary love interest in "One Battle After Another", Amy Madigan snapped up a Critics Choice Award for "Weapons" and the BAFTA went to Wunmi Mosaku for "Sinners". Ariana Grande ("Wicked: For Good") and Odessa A'zion ("Marty Supreme") complete the female lineup. For the men, the Critics Choice Awards recognized Jacob Elordi for "Frankenstein", the BAFTA went to Sean Penn ("One Battle After Another") and the Golden Globe went to Stellan Skarsgard in "Sentimental Value", who did not even get a SAG nod. The other three nominees are Benicio del Toro ("One Battle After Another"), Paul Mescal as Shakespeare in "Hamnet" and Miles Catton from "Sinners". "Those categories are all over the place," said Feinberg. In television, Netflix limited series "Adolescence", medical drama "The Pitt" and "The Studio" are poised to repeat their Emmys success. Catherine O'Hara, who died in January, could win the award for best actress in a comedy series for "The Studio". The ceremony, which will honor Harrison Ford for his career, will be hosted by Kristen Bell and streamed live on Netflix. The 32nd Screen Actors Guild Awards begins at 5:00 pm (1:00 GMT Monday).