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Jordan managing regional crisis with 'efficiency, resilience' — Momani

- Kingdom maintains full readiness as air defences take down 261 missiles, drones — JAF
- 585 incidents from falling debris, 28 injured since war began — PSD

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani on Saturday outlined Jordan's response to ongoing regional developments, stressing that the Kingdom continues to manage the situation with "efficiency and resilience" amid escalating tensions.

Speaking at a joint press briefing alongside representatives from the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) and the Public Security Directorate (PSD) at the National Centre for Security and Crisis Management, the minister said the government remains committed to ensuring transparency and the timely dissemination of information.

Momani, who is also the official government spokesperson, also said that "Jordan has always emerged stronger from crises", attributing this to strong institutional performance, the professionalism of security and



Mohammad Momani

military agencies, and "wise leadership and decisive decision-making".

The minister also outlined two key strategic priorities guiding the government's response: Safeguarding national security and stability, and minimising the impact of the crisis on citizens and the national economy.

He said the JAF, particularly the air defence

systems and Royal Jordanian Air Force, are playing a central role in protecting the Kingdom from potential threats, expressing pride in their efforts.

Momani also said that Jordan has no foreign military bases, and defence agreements with friendly countries are activated solely under Jordanian sovereign decision-making to protect

national security, reiterating that the Kingdom "will not be a battlefield for any party" and will not allow its territory or airspace to be used for attacks against other countries.

The minister also stressed that His Majesty King Abdullah has been conducting intensive diplomatic efforts to de-escalate regional tensions, making more

than 55 phone calls to world leaders.

On the economic front, the minister said the government has taken a series of measures to mitigate the impact of the crisis, including supporting civil and military consumer institutions, easing import procedures and reducing costs associated with shipping containers.

He also highlighted close coordination with the private sector, including transport, shipping and industry stakeholders, noting that efforts are focused on ensuring continuity of services and reducing the burden on citizens.

The minister also stressed that supply chains remain stable, essential goods are available, and fuel supplies continue without disruption. He noted that 267 ships have arrived at Aqaba Port since March, reflecting sustained trade activity.

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Photo courtesy of Foreign Ministry

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Saturday meets with Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Al Shaibani

Foreign minister, Syrian counterpart discuss cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy prime minister and minister of foreign Affairs, Ayman Safadi, met on Saturday with Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Al Shaibani to discuss ways to enhance relations and strengthen cooperation between the two countries.

During the meeting, the ministers emphasised the importance of advancing ties and sustaining joint efforts to broaden cooperation

across multiple sectors, in a manner that serves the interests of both nations.

They also reviewed preparations by their foreign ministries for the upcoming second session of the Supreme Coordination Council between Jordan and Syria, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Safadi reiterated Jordan's steadfast support for the Syrian government in safeguarding

Syria's security, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity, while ensuring the safety of its citizens.

They also condemned Israel's repeated attacks and air strikes on Syria, describing them as clear violations of international law, assaults on Syria's sovereignty, and breaches of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement between Syria and Israel.

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From reform to results: Investment momentum builds across Jordan

By Hana Namrouqa

AMMAN — With key economic indicators on an upward trajectory and investor confidence gaining ground, Jordan is entering a new phase in its investment journey, one where ambition is increasingly being matched by delivery.

In an interview, Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh describes 2025 as a turning point, where reform, digitalisation and strategic planning converged to produce tangible, on-the-ground results.

What is taking shape is not a sudden transformation, but a steady and measurable shift. For years, Jordan's investment narrative has been built around potential; its location,



Tareq Abu Ghazaleh

stability and access to markets. Today, that narrative is increasingly supported by performance: Rising inflows, expanding activity and a more responsive investment environment.

"The main element that we are trying to enhance is the overall investment environment to accommodate more growth and to create more job opportunities,"

Abu Ghazaleh said, describing investment as a central pillar of economic policy. "We are looking at investment as a key element to support our economic growth."

Confidence reflected in numbers

The strengthening of investor confidence is reflected across multiple indicators. Foreign direct investment inflows into the Kingdom reached approximately \$2.024 billion in 2025, while the Amman Stock Exchange recorded a 50 per cent increase in market value. Meanwhile, the Central Bank's foreign reserves reached \$28 billion.

These figures, taken together, point to a more stable and attractive in-

vestment environment, one that is not only drawing interest but translating it into capital and activity.

"These are indicators for an output," Abu Ghazaleh said, emphasising that the focus is not only on the numbers themselves, but on the system producing them.

A key feature of this phase is to expand from attracting investment to sustaining and expanding it.

In 2025, 628 companies benefitted from investment incentives, marking a 14.4 per cent increase compared to the previous year. The Ministry of Investment also completed 7,568 incentive and facilitation transactions, covering a wide range of services from licensing and ex-

pansion to operational adjustments.

This level of activity reflects a deeper trend: Investors are not only entering the market but growing within it.

Abu Ghazaleh pointed to this as a critical indicator of confidence. Investment, he noted, is not measured solely by initial entry, but by the willingness of investors to expand and reinvest.

The ministry's approach is structured around what Abu Ghazaleh describes as the "three O's": Openness, operations and opportunities.

"The first O is openness... the second is operations... and the third one is opportunities."

(See full story on page 2)



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

Leviathan gas supply to Jordan resumes, set to return to normal levels — source

AMMAN (JT) — Natural gas flows from the Leviathan gas field in the eastern Mediterranean to Jordan resumed on Friday morning, with supply levels expected to gradually return to

normal in the coming period, an energy sector official said.

The unnamed official, quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that authorities were closely monitoring the

resumed flows to ensure a steady supply to power generation stations and maintain operational stability across the electricity system.

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ASE profits rise 9.6% in 2025 as majority of firms post gains

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) has revealed that 96 per cent of the 159 listed companies that submitted their audited annual financial statements for 2025 recorded a 9.6 per cent increase in total pre-tax profits compared to 2024.

According to ASE figures released late last week, pre-tax profits for these companies reached JD3.269 billion in 2025, up from JD2.982 billion in the previous year.

After-tax net profits attributable to these firms rose by 12.9 per cent to JD2.348 billion in 2025, compared to JD2.08 billion in 2024. This performance marks the second-highest net



profit in the history of ASE-listed companies.

Sectoral performance showed robust growth across the board. The financial sector's net profit attributable to shareholders increased by 10.1 per cent, while the services sector saw an 11.4 per cent rise. The industrial sector out-

performed others with an 18.4 per cent jump in profits.

The number of profitable companies grew to 110 in 2025, up from 106 in 2024, while the number of loss-making firms decreased from 46 to 42.

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Jordan strengthens alternative supply chains amid regional tensions, global disruptions

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — As regional tensions escalate across the Middle East, Jordan has taken proactive measures to safeguard its trade and logistics sectors from the mounting disruptions in global supply chains.

With the possibility of prolonged shipping delays and increased freight costs, the Jordanian government is working closely with the private sector to ensure the continued flow of essential goods and to strengthen the nation's resilience in the face of a volatile global market.



Aqaba Container Terminal

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan recently emphasised the criti-

cal role of shipping, freight and logistics companies in the

nation's economic stability.

"Our commitment to

collaborating with the private sector is key," he noted, as he reassured both businesses and the public of the government's focus on maintaining strategic reserves of essential goods and energy.

The government has also set up an ad hoc committee to monitor the evolving situation and its potential impacts on Jordan's supply chains.

One of the most pressing concerns is the instability in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital maritime choke point for oil and commercial cargo.

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INTERVIEW



From reform to results: Investment momentum builds across Jordan

Jordan has moved from a conventional investment destination to a proactive player actively pursuing investors globally

The Kingdom is consolidating its role as a stable regional gateway, leveraging resilience and strategic positioning to attract long-term, sustainable investment flows

By Hana Namrouqa

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In an interview, Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh describes 2025 as a turning point, where reform, digitalisation and strategic planning converged to produce tangible, on-the-ground results.

What is taking shape is not a sudden transformation, but a steady and measurable shift. For years, Jordan's investment narrative has been built around potential; its location, stability and access to markets. Today, that narrative is increasingly supported by performance: Rising inflows, expanding activity and a more responsive investment environment.

"The main element that we are trying to enhance is the overall investment environment to accommodate more growth and to generate extra work opportunity," Abu Ghazaleh said, describing investment as a central pillar of economic policy. "We are looking at investment as a key element to support our economic growth."

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A key feature of this phase is to expand from attracting investment to sustaining and expanding it.

In 2025, 628 companies benefited from investment incentives, marking a 14.4 per cent increase compared to the previous year. The Ministry of Investment also completed 7,568 incentive and facilitation transactions, covering a wide range of services from licensing and expansion to operational adjustments.

This level of activity reflects a deeper trend: investors are not only entering the market but growing within it.

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The ministry's approach is structured around what Abu Ghazaleh describes as the "three O's": Openness, operations and opportunities.

"The first O is openness... the second is operations... and the third one is opportunities."

Openness reflects Jordan's integration into

global markets. With 49 bilateral investment agreements and a wide network of free trade agreements, the Kingdom offers investors access to markets far beyond its domestic size.

This positioning allows Jordan to serve as a regional platform.

"Jordan... plays a major role in being the gateway," Abu Ghazaleh said, pointing to opportunities linked to regional development and reconstruction.

The second pillar, operations, focuses on the practical realities of doing business.

"We looked at the details of profitability for any investor," Abu Ghazaleh said, highlighting efforts to ease costs and improve sustainability.

This includes targeted incentives, particularly in sectors where input costs, such as energy and logistics, are significant. Development zones play a key role in this approach, offering ready infrastructure and sector-specific incentives.

Procedural improvements have also been central. Licensing timelines in development

zones have been reduced from 15 days to 7 working days, reflecting a broader effort to streamline processes and reduce delays.

"Investors look at how fast they can move," he said, underscoring the importance of speed in investment decisions.

Investment driving regional development

Investment activity is increasingly extending beyond traditional economic centres.

In 2025, 70 new establishments were registered in development zones across the Kingdom, with investments nearing JD195 million and expected to generate more than 4,000 jobs.

Across all development zones, there are now 1,624 investors, with total investments approaching JD5,984 billion and employment exceeding 130,000 jobs.

"Investment is a development tool," Abu Ghazaleh said. "Not only a financial tool."

This reflects a broader shift toward linking investment with local development, ensuring

that growth is more evenly distributed across governorates.

The third pillar, according to Abu Ghazaleh, is opportunities, which he says signals a more diversified approach to investment.

The ministry has developed a portfolio of around 100 investment opportunities, distributed across sectors and regions, including energy, logistics, healthcare, tourism and information technology.

These opportunities are supported by detailed data and actively promoted through targeted engagement.

"We are in close contact with the private sector to identify the opportunity, the needs and to help them," Abu Ghazaleh said, emphasising the role of collaboration in shaping the investment landscape.

This approach reflects a shift from passive promotion to active development of opportunities aligned with market demand.

Digital transformation

Digitalisation is playing an increasingly

central role in improving the investment environment.

"We are in a digital transformation era," Abu Ghazaleh said, noting efforts to "utilise the data... to support decision making, and ease doing business remotely."

The ministry has launched the "Invest. jo" incentives and regulatory information. Additional tools, including an investment calculator and AI-powered services, are designed to improve transparency and reduce uncertainty.

"Transparency... is very important," he added, highlighting the importance of accessible and accurate information.

These developments aim to simplify the investor journey and improve overall efficiency.

Jordan's approach to investment promotion is also evolving, according to the minister.

"We knocked their doors. We do not wait for them [investors] to come," Abu Ghazaleh said, describing a more proactive strategy.

This is reflected in engagement with 224 companies globally and the implementation of 12 international promotional campaigns during 2025.

Such efforts are aimed at positioning Jordan more competitively in a global investment landscape.

Abu Ghazaleh highlighted that the ultimate objective of investment growth is its impact on employment.

"When you are looking at unemployment, you cannot take absolute figures. You have to see trends," Abu Ghazaleh said, noting improvements since the launch of the Economic Modernisation Vision.

Unemployment currently stands at around 16 per cent, with expectations of continued improvement multibillion investment activities expand.

"We have to accelerate that trend," he said, linking job creation directly to investment facilitation.

Looking ahead, Jordan aims to achieve GDP growth approaching 4 per cent within the next three to four years, a level seen as supportive of broader employment gains.

A stable and strategic investment destination

Jordan's investment appeal continues to be anchored in its stability and resilience.

"Jordan has been always in a turbulent region," Abu Ghazaleh said, noting that the country has been able "to manoeuvre successfully" through regional challenges.

This stability, combined with consistent policy direction and economic reforms, has helped reinforce investor confidence.

"We are staying the course. We have a plan," he said, referring to the long-term framework provided by the Economic Modernisation Vision.

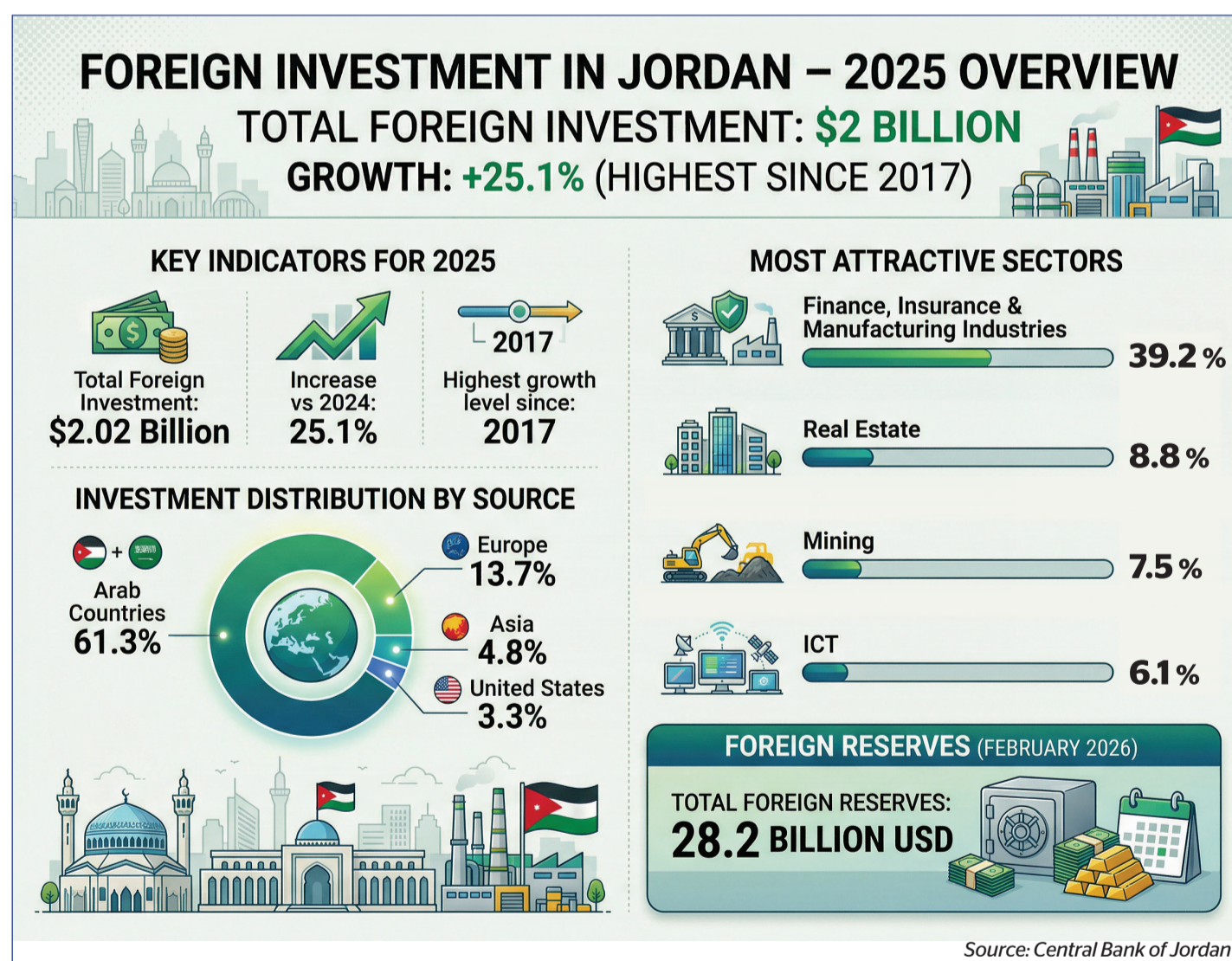
The minister underlined that Jordan's investment proposition is increasingly defined by two complementary dimensions. First, the continued modernisation of its economy, supported by reforms, infrastructure development and digital transformation, and, second, its role as a regional gateway.

"Jordan is the right place... the right gateway, for a safe investment," Abu Ghazaleh said, highlighting the Kingdom's strategic positioning.

This dual approach reflects a broader vision: to position Jordan not only as an investment destination, but as a platform for growth across the region, Abu Ghazaleh highlighted.

The trajectory remains gradual, but the direction is clear. Investment indicators are improving. Activity is expanding. Processes are becoming more efficient. Opportunities are broadening. But more importantly, confidence is increasingly being reflected in tangible outcomes.

Jordan's investment journey is moving beyond promise, toward delivery, according to Abu Ghazaleh, who underscored that as the shift continues, it is shaping not only the investment landscape, but the broader trajectory of economic growth in the Kingdom.



Photos by Ahmad Khlaifat

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Jordan is the right place... the right gateway, for a safe investment.



Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani on Saturday honours journalists who have completed 25 years in the practising journalists' registry, as well as the winners of the 2024 Hussein Award for Journalistic Creativity

Momani honours veteran journalists, 2024 Hussein award winners

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani on Saturday honoured journalists who have completed 25 years in the practising journalists' registry, as well as the winners of the 2024 Hussein Award for Journalistic Creativity.

During the event held at the Jordan Press Association (JPA), Momani said that the ceremony celebrates not only the longevity of careers but also a lifetime of experience, patience, and responsibility, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

"Journalism is a continuous mission that demands courage, accuracy, and an awareness of the impact of words on public opinion," he said.

Momani also highlighted that honouring journalists reflects recognition of their commitment to professional ethics and their role in shaping public awareness, especially

amid rapid transformations in the digital media sector.

He added that celebrating experienced professionals sends a message to younger generations that professionalism and dedication are the foundation for sustaining the profession and making a positive impact.

The minister also stressed that the Hussein Award embodies excellence and promotes positive competition based on quality and innovation. "The award encourages the creation of media content that meets the expectations of the Jordanian audience and offers new perspectives," he noted.

The Minister also hailed the Royal Hashemite Court for supporting the ceremony, emphasising that the gesture reflects the leadership's commitment to the media sector and its role in building national awareness.

JPA President Tareq Momani commended His Majesty King Abdullah's efforts in consolidating national stability and protecting Jordanian interests, commending the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army and security agencies for safeguarding the Kingdom.

He highlighted the role of national media in strengthening internal unity and raising awareness to confront challenges.

2024 Hussein Award for Journalistic Creativity winners: Obaida Damour, Frihan Hassan, Mona Abu Hamour, Ahmad Tamimi, Montaser Ghraibeh, Shadi Shakhaneh, Saher Qaddara, Nazzal Abu Kaf, and Ouda Douleh.

Journalists honoured for 25 years of membership in the Syndicate: Muslim Alimat, Mousa Barhouma, Ibtisam Awadat, Majed Amir, Naseem Anizat, Shaker Jawhari, Suhail Tal and Ghaleb Alawin.

Company registrations rise 32% in Q1 2026 — CCD

AMMAN (JT) — The number of companies registered in the Kingdom during the first three months of 2026 increased by 32 per cent compared with the same period in 2019, and by 4 per cent compared with 2025, according to official statistics from the Companies Control Department.

The department said that 1,842 companies were registered in the first quarter of 2026, compared to 1,399 in the same period of 2019 and 1,775 in 2025, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The data also showed that total registered capital exceeded JD62 million, with limited liability companies accounting for 1,403 registrations, or 76 per cent of the total, and a combined capital of over JD26 million. Private shareholding companies came next, with registered capital exceeding JD17 million during the same period.

The statistics also showed a "sharp" decline in company dissolutions or registration cancellations during the first quarter of 2026, falling 86 per cent compared with 2019 and 14 per cent compared with 2025.

"A total of 72 companies had their registration dissolved or cancelled during the first three months of 2026,



GAM photo

The Companies Control Department says that the number of companies registered in the Kingdom during the first three months of 2026 increased by 32 per cent compared with the same period in 2019

compared with 514 in 2019 and 84 in 2025." Additionally, new registered capital saw a substantial increase, rising by 3,448 per cent compared with 2019 and by around 15 per cent compared with 2025.

The number of com-

panies that reduced their capital in the first quarter stood at 14, down from 122 in 2019, while 98 companies increased their capital, up from 28 in the same period of 2019.

Since the launch of electronic registration

services in late 2020, more than 37,850 companies have been registered online. The platform has handled over 2.46 million follow-up requests, issued more than 96,000 electronic archive copies, and delivered over 543,000 electronic certifi-

cates, with payments through e-services exceeding JD70 million, the data showed.

The 2019 period is used as a comparison base to provide a clearer picture, avoiding distortions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

Fair competition essential amid Syrian cost gaps — Jaghbir

AMMAN (JT) — President of the Jordan and Amman Chambers of Industry Fathi Jaghbir on Saturday stressed that the ongoing debate over duties on Syrian imports should be grounded in a comprehensive analysis of facts rather than selective data points.

In a statement, Jaghbir said the Syrian side has unilaterally implemented new border measures without prior coordination, including barring Jordanian trucks from entering Syrian territory and enforcing a "back-to-back" transhipment system, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He noted that while Jordan remains committed to international shipping agreements by allowing Syrian trucks into the Kingdom, Damascus has prevented passenger vehicles from transporting Jordanian goods, including personal items, even as these vehicles continue to bring Syrian products into Jordan.



JT file

The Jordan Customs Department (JCD) says on Saturday that the Anti-Smuggling Directorate had uncovered three major cases within 48 hours

Addressing customs duties, Jaghbir clarified claims that rates on certain goods have reached 70 to 80 per cent, particularly in the garment sector.

He said that these rates apply only to a limited range of highly sensitive items and do not reflect Jordan's general customs policy.

He added that these measures are rooted in reciprocity, particularly in the chemical, textile and food industries, where Syrian

duties, imposed in US dollars per tonne, mirror the impact of recent Jordanian protectionist measures.

For example, Syrian duties on detergents (code 3402) stand at roughly \$500 per tonne, representing 88 per cent of the product's price. In the garment sector (codes 61-63), Syrian duties reach \$4,004 per tonne, averaging 68 per cent of the price for ready-made clothing and rising to 86 per cent for hosiery

and 70 per cent for knitted garments. Syrian duties on cement (code 2523) are around \$29 per tonne, or 45 per cent of the export price.

Jaghbir highlighted significant disparities in production costs and state support between the two countries, emphasising the need for regulatory measures to ensure fair competition in the local market.

He said the Jordanian market remains open to imports worldwide under clear regulatory frameworks that balance openness with fair trade. Jordan had previously proposed "exempt lists" to facilitate trade, but Syria's internal trade policy has shifted toward protectionism.

Jaghbir noted that Jordan enjoys a surplus exceeding 90 per cent, reflecting structural economic differences rather than emergency measures.

He argued that addressing this imbalance requires enhancing productive capacity and industrial partner-

ships rather than escalatory actions, stressing that sustainable solutions are built on gradual balance and integration.

He also pointed out that Jordan postponed certain measures to protect importers who had already prepared shipments, whereas the Syrian ban on Jordanian trucks was immediate, causing significant losses for stakeholders on both sides.

On Syrian investments in Jordan, he reaffirmed that these are treated as Jordanian investments, benefiting from the Kingdom's production-based economy, trade agreements, and global market access.

Jaghbir emphasised the brotherly ties between the two nations and Jordan's long-standing support for Syria. He stressed that economic relations must be based on balanced reciprocity and accurate data to ensure sustainable growth and protect producers in both countries.



JT file

The Jordan Customs Department (JCD) says on Saturday that the Anti-Smuggling Directorate had uncovered three major cases within 48 hours

JCD seizes 109,000 Captagon pills, 2 kg of marijuana in 48 hours

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Customs Department (JCD) said on Saturday that the Anti-Smuggling Directorate had uncovered three major cases within 48 hours as part of ongoing efforts to combat smuggling and safeguard society and the national economy.

In the northern region, patrols intercepted a vehicle carrying approximately 80,000 captagon pills, which were handed over to the relevant authorities for further legal action, the

Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

JCD stressed that its personnel continue to perform their duties with efficiency and professionalism, working closely with security agencies to protect society and the economy from the dangers of narcotics and smuggling.

The department also urged citizens to report any suspicious activities or information affecting the national economy or public health through the Anti-Smuggling Operations Centre's toll-free number.

A third operation, conducted following close surveillance and described by Customs as the result of "precise intelligence work", led to the seizure of 2 kilogrammes of marijuana, in coordination with other security agencies.

Labour Ministry, DEF launch interest-free loan programme for vocational graduates

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Labour and the Development and Employment Fund (DEF) on Saturday signed an agreement to finance small home-based projects through interest-free loans for vocational training graduates, with a ceiling of JD3,000 per loan.

The agreement was signed by Ministry Secretary General Abdul Halim Doujan and DEF Director General Mansour Wa-

reikat, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Doujan said the initiative aligns with the Economic Modernisation Vision by promoting entrepreneurship and encouraging young people to enrol in vocational training, while providing them with the financial support needed to launch their own businesses.

He added that JD1 million has been allocated under the fund's 2026 plan to support youth

across the Kingdom in establishing small home-based projects across various sectors.

Wareikat outlined the programme's eligibility criteria, noting that applicants must be Jordanians aged between 18 and 45 and hold a valid professional licence. Loan values range from JD1,000 to JD3,000, with a grace period of up to three months and a repayment period of up to 60 months.

Cassation Court upholds over 5-year sentence for drug dealer

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Court of Cassation has upheld a September 2023 State Security Court (SSC) ruling, sentencing a drug dealer to five years in prison after convicting him of possessing illegal narcotics in Amman in June 2023.

The court declared the defendant guilty of obtaining illegal narcotics with the intent of selling the drugs to an undercover agent on June 14.

The SSC handed the

defendant five years in prison for the offence of possessing illegal narcotics and ordered him to pay JD5,000 in fines.

However, the court decided to reduce the fine to JD3,500 and the prison term to three years and four months in prison to give the defendant a second chance at life.

Court documents said the Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) learned the defendant was in possession of illegal narcotics and sent one of its agents to pose as

a buyer.

"The AND agent got in touch with the defendant via a mobile application and asked him for a stash of marijuana in return for JD15," court documents said.

When the two met, AND agents immediately arrested the suspect, court papers added.

Upon searching the defendant's home, officers found additional illegal narcotics, including Crystal meth, marijuana and Captagon pills, the court added.

The defendant contested the SSC's ruling through his lawyer, who argued that the court "did not allow me to cross-examine the prosecution witnesses".

The lawyer also charged that his client denied all the charges during interrogation and in court.

Meanwhile, the SSC prosecution office asked the higher court to uphold the sentence and the fine imposed on the defendant.

The higher court

maintained that the SSC had followed the proper procedures in issuing the sentence against the defendant.

"It was clear to the court that the defendant confessed willingly to possessing the illegal drugs to sell in the local market," the higher court said.

The Court of Cassation judges were Yassin Abdullat, Nayef Samarat, Mohammad Khashashneh, Oassem Dughmi and Hammad Ghzawi.



A smoke cloud erupts following Israeli bombardment on Abbasiyeh, near Tyre in southern Lebanon, on Saturday

Israel strikes Tyre in south Lebanon after evacuation warnings

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — Israel's military renewed its strikes on the southern Lebanese city of Tyre on Saturday after issuing evacuation warnings, following attacks on nearby buildings that damaged a hospital in the city.

Israel has carried out strikes across Lebanon and launched a ground invasion in the south since March 2, when Hezbollah entered the war in the Middle East on the side of its backer Iran.

The Israeli army struck three buildings it had warned people to evacuate, according to Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA).

An AFP correspondent said a missile hit an 11-storey building northeast of Tyre, completely destroying it and reducing it to a pile of rubble that covered a nearby gas station.

A second raid on a five-storey building near the city levelled half of it, leaving the other half standing.

The third strike was on the Burj Al Shamali Palestinian refugee camp, southeast of the city.

Tens of thousands of people have left Tyre, but around 20,000 remain, including 15,000 displaced from surrounding villages...

In a statement on Saturday, Israel's military said it had "completed an additional wave of strikes targeting command centres belonging to the Ouds Force Lebanon corps in Beirut", referring to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' foreign operations arm, and "two headquarters of the [Palestinian Islamic Jihad]".

After attacking a bridge in the West Bekaa region in eastern Lebanon on Friday "to prevent the transfer of reinforcements and military equipment", Israel hit it again on Saturday, destroying it completely, the NNA said.

West Bekaa is right above Lebanon's south,

aged others moored nearby, the correspondent said.

Another Israeli air strike targeted and completely destroyed a mosque in the town of Baraashit in the Bint Jbeil district, the NNA reported.

Dawn strikes also targeted Beirut's southern suburbs, a largely evacuated Hizbollah stronghold that has been attacked repeatedly during more than a month of war.

where Israeli troops have been advancing on the ground.

The NNA also reported that, in Shebaa near the eastern side of the Israeli border, Israeli forces abducted a man at around 3:00 am on Saturday.

It was at least the third time Israeli forces have seized someone from south Lebanon after infiltrating their home since the war with Hizbollah began.

The Iran-backed group claimed responsibility on Saturday for a series of attacks on northern Israeli towns and Israeli troops in Lebanese border towns, particularly Marun Al Ras, Hula and Ainata.

The war has displaced upwards of a million people in Lebanon and killed more than 1,400 people in the country, including 54 medics and three Indonesian UN peacekeepers in the south.

On Saturday, a strike on Al Hawsh near Tyre wounded 18 people, and a strike on Habush in the Nabatiyeh district killed at least two children and wounded 22 people, according to Lebanon's health ministry.

The United Nations force said on Friday that three peacekeepers were wounded in a blast inside a UN facility near Odaisse, and were rushed to hospital.

Jakarta slammed the incident as "unacceptable" after the UN office there confirmed the wounded were Indonesian.

Indonesia's government said "these events underscore the urgent need to strengthen protection for UN peacekeeping forces amid an increasingly dangerous conflict situation".

On Saturday, a UN security official told AFP that Israeli forces destroyed 17 surveillance cameras linked to UNIFIL's main headquarters in Naqura.

The UN peacekeeping force has been caught in the crossfire in southern Lebanon since the start of the war, with Hizbollah launching attacks on Israel and its troops, and Israeli forces pushing into border towns.

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Strike hits near Iranian nuclear plant, as FM warns of risk to Gulf

TEHRAN (AFP) — US-Israeli strikes hit an area near Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant on Saturday, prompting its foreign minister to warn that the effects of any fallout would be felt most keenly by the country's Gulf neighbours.

The strikes came as the search continued for a missing US airman whose fighter jet went down over Iran, and as Tehran announced fresh attacks in the region, with the Revolutionary Guards saying they carried out a drone strike on a commercial ship in Bahrain allegedly linked to Israel.

The war erupted more than a month ago with US-Israeli strikes on Iran that killed supreme leader Ali Khamenei, triggering a retaliation that has spread the conflict throughout the Middle East and convulsed the global economy.

The strike near the Bushehr nuclear plant killed a guard and led Russia, which partly constructed the facility and helps operate it, to announce it was evacuating 198 workers.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned that continued attacks on the plant on Iran's southern coast could eventually lead to radioactive fallout that would "end life in GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] capitals, not Tehran".

Bushehr is considerably closer to Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar than it is to the Iranian capital.

Rafael Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency wrote on X that no increase in radiation levels had been reported at the site, but nonetheless voiced "deep concern" at the strike, which he said was the fourth such incident in recent weeks.

"NPP [nuclear power plant] sites or nearby areas must never be attacked," he said.

There were also more strikes on Tehran, where an AFP journalist saw a thick haze of grey smoke covering the skyline.

"Things are really hard right now. You can't even plan six hours ahead," a 40-year-old photographer living in the capital told AFP.

"There's really nothing we can do. We don't have the power to change the situation," said the man, who has been selling his belongings online to make ends meet.

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Images posted on social media and verified by AFP TV showed Iranian police firing at a US helicopter in southwestern Iran as US forces searched for the missing airman.

Retired US brigadier general Houston Cantwell, who has 400 hours of combat flight experience, said a pilot's training would likely kick in before he or she parachutes to the ground.

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He wrote on X: "After defeating Iran 37 times in a row, this brilliant no-strategy war they started has now been downgraded from 'regime change' to 'Hey! Can anyone find our pilots? Please?'"

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Shrapnel from intercepted drones injured four people in Bahrain on Saturday.

Separately, two buildings in Dubai were hit by debris, including one housing the US cloud computing firm Oracle, authorities in the United Arab Emirates said.

On their Sepah News website, Iran's Revolutionary Guards also said they had targeted a commercial vessel, the MSC Ishyka, "owned by the Israeli regime and flying the flag of a third country" at the Khalifa Bin Salman port in Bahrain.



A man walks past the damaged building of the Shahid Beheshti University following a strike, in Tehran on Saturday

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Italian PM in Qatar after Saudi visit

DOHA (AFP) — Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni met with Qatari leader Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani Saturday to discuss the energy crisis sparked by the ongoing war in the Middle East.

Meloni arrived in Qatar after a visit to Saudi Arabia, where she had talks with Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman.

Her trip to the Gulf, which has been targeted on a daily basis by Iranian missile and drone attacks in retaliation for US-Israeli strikes, was not announced in advance.

According to a statement from her office, Meloni and the Qatari emir "tackled energy issues... and discussed possible measures to mitigate the shocks suffered".

The Italian prime minister also said her



This handout photograph taken and released by Qatar's Amiri Diwan shows Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani receiving Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni during their meeting at Lusail Palace on Saturday

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Strike kills one Iraqi fighter near Syria border

BAGHDAD (AFP) — An attack killed one fighter from the former

paramilitary coalition Hashed Al Shaabi on Saturday, the alliance said, blaming the US and Israel.

Iraq has been dragged into the war between the United States, Israel and Iran, with strikes targeting both US interests and pro-Iran groups in the country.

"This treacherous attack resulted in the martyrdom of one PMF fighter and the wounding of four others, as well as a member of the ministry of defence," said a short statement from the group, which

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P500/2025/18

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P15/2026/4

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Any quotations/offers will not be accepted after above mentioned closing date and sharp time.

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18 killed in Nigeria attacks, dozens kidnapped — residents

GUSAU, Nigeria (AFP) — Gunmen killed seven people and kidnapped dozens more in raids on six remote villages in northern Nigeria, residents told AFP, as police reported 11 killed in communal clashes in the centre of the country.

Killings and kidnappings have become almost daily occurrences in Africa's most populous country.

Police in central Nasarawa state said Saturday that 11 people had been killed and more than 50 houses burnt "after hoodlums suspected to have carried out a reprisal attack over the alleged killing of two of their kinsmen".

In northwestern Zamfara state police confirmed a "mass" abduction in raids that occurred on Thursday, without giving any figures.

Large numbers of heavily armed men suspected to be bandits invaded Bukkuyum local government area, police said in a statement on Saturday.

Zamfara is one of several states in northwest and central Nigeria plagued by criminal gangs, locally called bandits. They carry out deadly raids on communities, kidnap residents for ransom and burn homes after looting them.

Residents told AFP that dozens of motorcy-

cle-riding bandits had raided the neighbouring villages late Thursday through Friday, shooting and abducting residents.

Three different locals told AFP that around 150 had been kidnapped. "We are aware of the mass kidnapping in the affected villages but we are waiting for a detailed report from the divisional police officer in the area," Yazid Abubakar, Zamfara police spokesman told AFP.

Mass abduction claims

Aminu Ibrahim who hails from the Kurfa Danya community but lives in Bukkuyum town, the main town in the district, said the bandits had "killed seven people across the villages" and "abducted around 150."

Another Bukkuyum resident, Jamilu Aliyu, who has relatives in some of the affected villages, told AFP the gangs "kidnapped more than 150 people". Umar Abdullahi, another resident gave the same number for the captives, adding that the attackers had come from a vast forest in the area where they maintain camps.

District lawmaker Sulaiman Abubakar Gumi confirmed the attacks, accusing central government of focusing on fighting militants in the northeast while "banditry festered in Zamfara".

Indonesia receives bodies of peacekeepers killed in Lebanon

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesia received the bodies of three peacekeepers on Saturday who were killed while on deployment in Lebanon and called for security guarantees for blue helmets a day after another three of its soldiers were injured.

The soldiers' coffins, draped in the Indonesian flag, arrived at the international airport and were carried into a hall on the shoulders of uniformed comrades for a ceremony attended by President Prabowo Subianto.

Family members of the men wept over the coffins, each fronted by a photograph of the dead soldier in a gold frame.

Prabowo saluted each portrait and held the hands of grieving loved ones, some weeping unconsolably.

Another three Indonesian peacekeepers were injured in Lebanon on Friday, two seriously, officials said.

Foreign Minister Sugiono told reporters after Saturday's ceremony that Indonesia wanted a thorough UN investigation.

"This is a peacekeeping mission. Incidents such as this should not happen," the minister, who like many Indonesians has only one name, told reporters at the



The coffins of Indonesian soldiers killed while serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) are moved by soldiers after they arrive at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Tangerang on Saturday

airport.

"There must be a security guarantee for peacekeeping soldiers," he added.

Peacekeeper Farizal Rhomadhon, 28, died when a projectile exploded on March 29 in southern Lebanon, where Israel and Hezbollah have been fighting since Lebanon was drawn into the Middle

East war.

A UN security source told AFP on condition of anonymity Tuesday that fire from an Israeli tank was responsible for that attack.

A day later, two more Indonesian peacekeepers — 33-year-old Zulmi Aditya Iskandar and Muhammad Nur Ichwan, 26 — died after an explosion struck

a UNIFIL logistics convoy, also in southern Lebanon.

'Unacceptable'

As Indonesia mourned its fallen soldiers, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) said three more peacekeepers were wounded in a blast at a UN facility near El Ade-

isse on Friday afternoon, and rushed to hospital.

The UN Information Centre in Jakarta said the "origin of the explosion" was unknown but identified the injured soldiers as Indonesian.

"Repeated attacks or incidents of this kind are unacceptable," the Indonesian foreign ministry said in a statement.

The government urged

the UN Security Council "to immediately convene a meeting of troop-contributing countries to UNIFIL to conduct a review and take measures to enhance the protection of personnel serving with UNIFIL".

The father of fallen soldier Zulmi Aditya Iskandar, said this week he was shocked that peacekeepers were losing their lives in the conflict.

"We were really sad and regretful, because this is a UN troop, a peacekeeping troop, not deployed for war," 60-year-old Iskandarudin told reporters at his house in West Java province.

The military has promised financial support for the bereaved families.

All three men are to be laid to rest on Sunday.

After the latest attack that injured three more soldiers, Armed Forces Commander

General Agus Subiyanto ordered Indonesian peacekeepers in Lebanon to enter bunkers and refrain from activities outside.

The Indonesian National Armed Forces has said it will deploy more than 750 personnel to Lebanon next month as part of the scheduled UNIFIL peacekeeping troop rotation.

Jordan managing regional crisis with 'efficiency, resilience' — Momani

Continued from page 1

He added that while the government has introduced measures to sustain economic activity, it has also implemented rationalisation policies, stressing that both approaches are necessary and complementary under current circumstances.

The minister also said regular reports are submitted to the prime minister and relayed to His Majesty King Abdullah, who continues to direct the government to take all necessary measures to protect national security and limit the impact of the crisis.

He also emphasised the role of the National Centre for Security and Crisis Management as a key coordination hub, ensuring align-

ment among government institutions and continuous monitoring of developments.

The minister also warned of the spread of rumours during times of crisis, noting that the government is responding through professional media engagement, legal enforcement against false information, and public awareness. He called on citizens to rely on official sources and credible media outlets, stressing that public awareness remains a key pillar in maintaining national stability.

Director of Military Media Brig. Gen. Mustafa Hiyari said the regional war has entered its fifth week, noting that despite Jordan's diplomatic efforts to prevent escalation, the

conflict between the US and Israel on one side and Iran on the other continues to unfold.

'Material damage included 59 homes, 31 vehicles, and several cases involving public property [were recorded]'

He said that the JAF is conducting defensive operations under what is known as "Operation Shield of Jordan", aimed at protecting the Kingdom and preventing casualties.

The spokesperson also said that Iranian

forces and affiliated groups have directly targeted Jordanian territory, stating that the Kingdom has been subjected to 281 missiles and drones, including 161 missiles and 120 unmanned aerial vehicles.

He said air defence systems successfully intercepted and destroyed 261 of these projectiles, while 20 were not intercepted, resulting in debris falling into the Kingdom.

"To address the risks posed by unexploded ordnance and debris, more than 30 engineering teams have been deployed across the country in coordination with security agencies," he added.

He also stressed that the armed forces have enhanced their capabilities in coun-

tering drone threats through early detection systems, electronic jamming, and direct interception, while maintaining high readiness to deal with various scenarios.

He also emphasised that the armed forces continue to secure borders against infiltration and smuggling attempts that may exploit the regional situation.

Hiyari also reiterated Jordan's position of not allowing its territory or airspace to be used for military operations by any party, while emphasising the Kingdom's right to defend itself.

PSD spokesperson said that security forces remain on high alert, with emergency plans activated to respond to potential incidents.

He said civil defence and police teams have handled 585 incidents related to falling debris across the Kingdom since the escalation began, resulting in 28 injuries, most of them minor, with all injured individuals discharged after receiving treatment.

"Material damage included 59 homes, 31 vehicles, and several cases involving public property [were recorded]."

The official also noted that warning sirens have been activated 476 times since the start of the escalation, urging citizens to treat them seriously and follow safety instructions. He stressed that the sirens are critical for public safety and should not be perceived as routine.

Foreign minister, Syrian counterpart discuss cooperation

Continued from page 1

The ministers also discussed regional tensions, condemning Iran's attacks on Jordan and Gulf countries, and underscored the importance of resolving crises through diplomacy that re-

spects the sovereignty, security, and stability of states under international law.

Both sides agreed to maintain ongoing consultations, strengthen cooperation across various sectors, and coordinate on matters of shared interest.

Leviathan gas supply to Jordan resumes, set to return to normal levels — source

Continued from page 1

The source said that the continuity of gas supplies remains dependent on regional developments, adding that Jordan is managing multiple operational scenarios through diversified energy sources and enhanced system readiness to safeguard

energy security.

Gas flows from the Leviathan field had been suspended following joint US-Israel strikes on Iran on February 28, but production has reportedly resumed at the offshore gas project operated by Chevron Mediterranean Limited, a subsidiary of Chevron.

Jordan strengthens alternative supply chains amid regional tensions, global disruptions

Continued from page 1

Experts, including president of the Jordan Logistics Association (JLA) Nabil Khatib, said recently to the Jordan Times that he predicts that disruptions here could force shipping companies to reconsider their routes, creating new opportunities for Jordan.

"If disruptions become prolonged, shipping companies may shift focus from Gulf ports towards alternative ports along the Red Sea," Khatib said.

Ports such as Jeddah Islamic, Port Said, and Aqaba could emerge as key hubs for cargo flows, enhancing Jordan's position in the regional logistics network.

He further highlighted the potential of the Red Sea-Mediterranean corridor as a critical alternative route

for container trade between Asia and Europe.

"Ports like Aqaba, Jeddah, and Rotterdam could play an increasingly vital role in global trade," he stated, underscoring how such shifts could significantly bolster the strategic importance of Jordan's Aqaba Port, particularly in serving Levant markets.

The direct land corridor between Aqaba and Iraq further strengthens this strategy, potentially positioning the port as an alternative maritime gateway for Iraq's growing trade.

Meanwhile, the Arab Potash Company (APC), a major player in Jordan's potash export sector, has taken strategic steps to mitigate disruptions caused by the uncertain regional conditions.

CEO Maen Nsour in recent remarks with The Jordan Times said

that despite the challenges, APC's export operations continue smoothly.

"Since March, we have successfully loaded five vessels from the Port of Aqaba, and we have activated overseas storage facilities in North-west Europe to ensure continuity of supply," Nsour confirmed.

APC has also shifted some of its containerised shipments to bulk vessels and expanded land transport to Gulf markets, adapting swiftly to the evolving situation.

"These steps help secure shipping capacity and maintain export continuity during a period of increased uncertainty in regional maritime routes," he said.

The construction sector in Jordan has not been immune to the ripple effects of these disruptions. The rising

costs of shipping, raw materials, and energy are placing significant pressure on the industry.

General Manager of Kingdom Concrete, Raja Al Alami in a recent statement to the Jordan Times said, "We've already been notified of price increases and shipment delays, which are likely to push up prices for key products like concrete admixtures."

These challenges are compounded by the rising costs of fuel, which impact transportation and production.

The government, recognising the strategic importance of the construction sector, has introduced measures to alleviate these pressures.

"Temporary exemptions on increased maritime freight charges and efforts to facilitate goods through land

borders will help reduce logistical costs and support continued production," said the Chairman of the Jordan Chamber of Industry Fathi Jaghbir in a recent statement to the Jordan Times.

Moreover, to address energy challenges, Jordan is diversifying its energy sources, with a focus on supplying industrial cities with natural gas and increasing investments in renewable energy projects.

These measures are part of Jordan's broader Economic Modernisation Vision, which seeks to expand industrial capacity and reduce dependence on imports.

The government aims to strengthen local supply chains, enhance infrastructure, and support the growth of key sectors such as cement, steel, chemicals

and plastics.

With the launch of major projects like the Umrah City, which is expected to drive demand for construction materials, Jordan is positioning itself to become more self-sufficient in the face of global supply chain challenges.

As global shipping disruptions and regional tensions continue to threaten traditional routes, Jordan's proactive stance in securing alternative supply chains has positioned the country as a key player in regional logistics.

The strategic focus on diversifying routes, strengthening local production, and investing in renewable energy is expected to mitigate future disruptions and ensure that Jordan's economy remains resilient, even in times of uncertainty.

ASE profits rise 9.6% in 2025 as majority of firms post gains

Continued from page 1

Several sub-sectors witnessed significant surges in net profits, led by real estate at 243.1 per cent, followed by hotels and tourism at 111.4 per cent, and electrical industries at 111.1 per cent. Other notable performers included transport (94.6 per cent), diversified financial services (82.7 per cent), textiles and leather (51.5 per cent), insurance (49.7 per cent), health services (47.5 per cent), educational services (46.7 per cent), pharmaceuticals and medical industries (31.5 per cent), and the

mining and extraction industries (19.2 per cent).

These positive results and the upward trend in net profits for 2025 come despite regional challenges, signaling the resilience and positive trajectory of the national economy.

Analysts attribute the improvement to a strengthened investment environment bolstered by government stimulus measures. These factors contributed to a 3 per cent growth rate in the fourth quarter of 2025, driven largely by the agriculture, mining, and manufacturing sectors.

THE JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975

Published by the Jordan Press Foundation

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Editorial and advertising offices
Jordan Press Foundation

National Library registration number:
D/1998/2062
Telephone: **5600800 ext. 2392**
Facsimile: **5696183**

The Jordan Times is published daily except Saturdays

Advertising facsimile: **5696183**
Circulation Department:
5600800 ext: 2383

The real cost of war is already reaching Jordan's fields

By Raed Ghraib

For countries like Jordan, the real cost of rising regional tensions is not measured in oil prices or geopolitical headlines. It is measured more quietly, in the growing pressure on local food production.

Much of the global conversation continues to revolve around energy markets and strategic routes. This is understandable. But it overlooks a more immediate reality: The effects of these tensions are already being felt much closer to the ground. They are being felt by farmers.

When uncertainty builds around key trade corridors, particularly routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, costs do not rise dramatically overnight. They shift gradually, but persistently.

Fuel becomes more expensive. Fertiliser prices follow. Transport costs adjust.

At first glance, these changes appear manageable. They are absorbed somewhere within the system. But they do not disappear. They move. And eventually, they reach the farm.

In Jordan, agriculture does not operate with large margins of flexibility. Water is limited. Input costs are already high. Many farmers depend on imported supplies whose prices they cannot control.

In such conditions, even modest increases in cost are not marginal, they are decisive. Farmers begin to adjust. Not as a strategic choice, but as a necessity. They reduce input use. They scale back planting. They reconsider whether the next season is worth the risk.

These decisions rarely attract attention. They do not produce immediate shortages or visible disruption. But taken together, they begin to reshape the system.

There is a tendency to think of food security in terms of availability. As long as food continues to enter the market, the system is assumed to be functioning. But availability can be maintained for some time, even as the foundations of production weaken.

The more difficult question is not whether food is available today, but whether it can continue to be produced tomorrow. And that depends, fundamentally, on whether farmers can continue to farm.

What is often described as adjustment or adaptation is, in many cases, something more serious. It is a gradual withdrawal. Farmers are not stepping back because they lack knowledge or commitment. They are stepping back because the conditions under which they operate are becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. And this process does not register immediately as a crisis. It appears incremental, even rational. But over time, it accumulates.

There is also a quieter shift taking place — one that receives even less attention. As agriculture becomes less viable, land begins to change in how it is used and valued. Fields are left uncultivated, repurposed or slowly disengaged from production. This does not happen through sudden decisions, but through a series of small adjustments.

Over time, however, these adjustments alter the landscape: Who is producing food and who is no longer able to do so. None of this is inevitable. But it is not accidental either. It reflects how the current system responds under pressure. In stable conditions, it functions efficiently. Under stress, it does something else: It passes the burden downward.

Those with the least capacity to absorb risk are left to carry it.

For Jordan, this should not be seen as a distant or abstract concern. The effects are already visible — not in markets, but in decisions made at the level of the farm. And once those decisions accumulate, they are not easily reversed. If there is a lesson in the current moment, it is this: Food systems are not defined by how they perform when conditions are stable, but by how they respond when pressure builds.

At present, that pressure is being transferred quietly, steadily and unevenly. And by the time its consequences become visible, they may already be difficult to undo.

Raed Ghraib is executive director of Seeds for Sustainable Development and chair of the National Land Coalition—Jordan, working on land governance and food systems

The new logic of American power

By Mohammad Abu Rumman

The ongoing US–Israeli war against Iran will not only reshape the Middle East, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has promised, but may also reconfigure the very structure of international relations. The central paradox that has gradually emerged since Donald Trump's return to power, reaching its peak with the current war, is that America's traditional allies appear more alarmed, vulnerable and adversely affected by his policies than its strategic adversaries, such as China and Russia.

This shift is no longer confined to economic measures, as was initially the case when Trump imposed tariffs on allies. It now extends to defence and security policies, the cohesion of NATO, and even provocative rhetoric about annexing territories belonging to allied states, such as Canada or Greenland. More striking is the increasingly derisive and confrontational tone Trump employs when addressing or referring to allied leaders, seen repeatedly in his remarks about French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, and even Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi during her visit to Washington, when he invoked memories of World War II.

Such practices may yield short-term gains for Trump, economically and strategically. As noted by the Chinese scholar Jiang Xueqin, a prominent specialist in game theory and what is sometimes referred to as "predictive history", the United States stands to benefit from the current global

energy crisis, while major Asian economies — particularly China and Japan — bear the brunt of its costs. Yet, while this perspective may hold in the short term, leading scholars of international relations increasingly warn that Trump's presidency may produce deeply damaging long-term consequences for the United States itself.

In this regard, two important recent articles (published in *Foreign Affairs*) offer conceptual tools for understanding this emerging pattern of US foreign policy. The first, by Harvard Kennedy School scholar Stephen Walt, and the second by Alexander Cooley (Columbia University) and Daniel Nexon (Georgetown University), attempt to move beyond conventional theoretical frameworks in international relations. They argue that Trump's approach represents a qualitatively distinct phenomenon — one that cannot be adequately captured by traditional categories such as realism, nationalism or isolationism.

While certain aspects of Trump's behaviour may be partially explained through established theories — such as Thomas Schelling's concept of strategic interaction and brinkmanship, or the "operational code" framework for analysing leaders' belief systems — the broader dynamics governing international relations under Trump point to something far more unprecedented.

Walt introduces the concept of "predatory hegemony" to describe this shift. According to this framework, US foreign policy under Trump departs not only from

the liberal hegemony of the post-World War II era, but also from the more assertive, post-Cold War unipolar dominance. Instead, it reflects a form of hegemony driven by the extraction of maximum immediate gains, the treatment of international relations as a zero-sum game, and a focus on short-term economic and strategic benefits, with little regard for long-term systemic stability — even if that stability underpins American power itself.

One of the most consequential implications of this approach is the erosion of the distinction between allies and adversaries. Allies are no longer treated as strategic partners, but as actors to be leveraged, pressured or even exploited within transactional relationships. The result is a steady erosion of trust, a decline in US international legitimacy and a growing inclination among allies to seek alternative arrangements to hedge against uncertainty.

The second article, by Cooley and Nexon, advances a complementary but distinct concept: "The Age of Kleptocracy". Here, Trump's foreign policy is not understood as an extension of liberal internationalism or even classical realism, but as part of a broader transformation in the logic of power itself. Rather than managing the international system, power is increasingly deployed as a means of extracting direct, personalised gains.

Kleptocracy, in this sense, goes beyond corruption as a byproduct of governance; it becomes a governing principle. The state is repurposed to serve the private interests of ruling elites. Cooley

and Nexon argue — drawing on numerous empirical examples — that US foreign policy has increasingly been used to enhance Trump's personal wealth, consolidate his political standing, and benefit a narrow network of allies, family members and loyalists. Central to this model is the blurring of boundaries between public and private interests, the weakening of institutional constraints, and the merging of security, economic and diplomatic domains into large, opaque deals — a process they term "transactional bundling".

The authors further distinguish kleptocracy from traditional patrimonial systems. In the latter, corruption functions as a tool for maintaining elite loyalty.

In the former — closer to Trump's model — corruption becomes an end in itself. The state is thus transformed from an instrument of public good into a mechanism for generating private wealth, and foreign policy becomes a direct expression of the interests of those who control it.

In conclusion, Trump's era represents more than a shift in US domestic or foreign policy. It marks a broader turning point that challenges the theoretical foundations through which international relations have long been understood. What we are witnessing is not merely a change in strategy, but a transformation in the nature of power, legitimacy, and the state itself — one that is increasingly reflected in a growing body of critical scholarship, much of which views this trajectory as deeply de-stabilising and potentially catastrophic.

The cost of war: A shock reshaping the region's economy

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

Wars are not only measured by how long they last, but by how deeply they affect economies. Even a short conflict in the Middle East can disrupt production, energy markets, trade, and financial systems. According to the United Nations Development Programme report, a war lasting just four weeks could reduce regional GDP by about 5 per cent, with losses reaching around \$150 billion. This decline is mainly driven by higher energy and trade costs, lower productivity and reduced investment. In some cases, capital itself shrinks, as seen in Lebanon where it fell by about 5 per cent. In simple terms, the economy does not just slow down, it becomes less able to function normally.

The impact is not evenly spread across the region. Gulf countries face the largest losses at around \$150 billion, followed by the Mashreq at about \$23 billion,

North Africa at roughly \$2 billion, and the least developed countries at around \$0.2 billion. However, smaller economies are often more affected in relative terms because they have weaker economic structures and fewer resources to absorb shocks.

In percentage terms, Gulf economies may contract by about 7 per cent, with investment falling by around 12 per cent. Similar declines are expected in the Mashreq, while the impact in North Africa remains limited at about 0.4 per cent, with some countries possibly benefitting slightly from higher energy prices.

A major reason for this shock is the disruption of trade and energy flows. Shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has dropped by more than 70 per cent, even though it carries about 20 per cent of global oil and 20 per cent of liquefied natural gas. Activity through the Suez Canal has fallen by around 50 per cent, while air cargo ca-

capacity between Asia, Europe, and the Middle East has declined by about 40 per cent within days. This creates bottlenecks in global supply chains.

As a result, prices have risen quickly. Oil prices increased from around \$72 per barrel to about \$120 before stabilising near \$110, while European gas prices jumped by more than 50 per cent. These increases spread across sectors through higher transport and production costs.

Trade costs have also risen sharply. Marine insurance in conflict zones increased from about 0.02 per cent to nearly 1 per cent of a vessel's value, while dry bulk shipping activity dropped by more than 90 per cent in some periods. This raises the cost of transporting goods and contributes to imported inflation.

The financial sector is also affected. Egypt experienced foreign capital outflows of around \$6 billion, along with currency depreciation from 47 to over 52 pounds

per dollar. At the same time, remittances, which are a key source of income, remain vulnerable. They account for about 33 per cent of GDP in Lebanon, around 9 per cent in Jordan and roughly 7 per cent in Egypt. Any decline in these flows would reduce consumption and increase poverty.

The cost of war is not limited to direct financial losses. It is a broad supply shock affecting production, trade, energy and finance at the same time. If the conflict continues, it may lead to long-term structural changes in the regional economy. History shows that such shocks leave lasting effects, especially in already vulnerable economies. The main challenge is not only dealing with the immediate impact, but also adapting to it and building stronger economic resilience for the future. Even if a war ends politically, its economic effects often last much longer, making its true cost far greater than what current figures suggest.

Tragedy is reborn as hope

By Chiara Cordelli

PARIS — We live in a world of senseless suffering and impending catastrophe, where it would seem the idea of moral progress has become unintelligible. Two epochal crises afflict contemporary society: The rise of anti-democratic forces and climate change. But what if today's tragedies turn out to be a source of hope?

The authoritarian drift fuelled by right-wing populism threatens democracies around the world, including even long-standing ones like the United States, where President Donald Trump's abuse of power seems to know no limits. Even Trump's more moderate European allies constantly attempt to undermine the rule of law. Most recently, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni tried to limit the judiciary's independence through a national referendum. Fortunately, Italians turned out en masse to protect their Constitution.

The crisis of democracy feeds the climate crisis. Trump withdrew the US from the Paris climate agreement and has weakened or dismantled myriad environmental protections. Meloni reversed course on several commitments under the European Union's Green Deal and opposes stricter emissions targets. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has repeatedly blocked or delayed EU-level climate legislation.

Policymakers' unwillingness to address the crisis has left the fate of the planet in the hands of private investors and their (often limited) desire to adopt sustainable technologies. At most, governments incentivise such investors, but rarely replace them. This is why there has been insufficient

funding for renewable energy, even as AI investment by Big Tech giants has skyrocketed.

The irrationality and violence of Trump's politics in recent months — from the brutality of the Minneapolis killings and his absurd plan for the reconstruction of Gaza to his imperialistic invasion of Venezuela and the jaw-dropping folly of his war against Iran — have reinforced our era's tragic character. Politics appears dictated by sheer force, while moral ideals, from a healthy democracy to environmental sustainability, seem ludicrous. The space for principled action seems to have vanished.

But we have been here before. Albert Camus famously argued that even in a senseless world, we can create a form of hope through rebellion. Hannah Arendt found hope in the human capacity to start anew even in the face of genocidal events. Martin Luther King, Jr., emphasised that suffering could lead to moral progress and collective transformation. My recently departed colleague, the philosopher Jonathan Lear, explained how loss can be the source of "radical hope" for a good future, even without being able to specify or imagine what that good future would look like.

In the new issue of our magazine, leading thinkers examine how recent developments, from the AI revolution to intensifying geopolitical volatility, are reshuffling the economic and financial deck and generating new winners and losers across the global economy.

Recent events seem to vindicate such thinkers. Consider the reawakening, however embryonic, of civil society: Democracy's beating heart and its most precious bulwark against authoritarianism.

We saw this in the US with the "No Kings" protests that involved millions of people. We also saw it in the exceptionally high turnout for the Italian referendum, especially in the participation of a significant number of young people, who in the past would have stayed home.

Such awakenings cannot be attributed solely to the gravity of today's conditions or the authoritarian character of today's right-wing governments; even in the face of egregious acts that highlight the importance of politics, apathy can persist.

Awakenings require something more: A renewed sense of possibility.

In the decades preceding Trump, a feeling of stagnation and powerlessness had spread in the US and Europe. Many people began to believe that it did not matter who governed, because nothing would change. Right-wing and left-wing governments would all end up doing the same things, adhering to the dictates of neoliberalism. The ability to change course seemed limited by external and internal constraints, from constitutional to fiscal.

There were, of course, moments that spurred hope for change. Barack Obama's election as US president in 2008 was one. But it ended in disappointment. Under Obama, Wall Street banks received large bailouts following the global financial crisis, while millions of Americans lost their homes.

Trump, on the other hand, is living proof that one person holding political power can change the fate of the world — and in the blink of an eye. It is therefore worth fighting to ensure that power ends up in the right hands, or at least not in the hands of dictators or mad-

men. The ease and arbitrariness with which an autocrat can transform domestic and foreign affairs has given rise to a new democratic activism, and the hope that comes with it.

The same is true for the climate crisis. Who would have thought that the only hope for completing the energy transition could emerge from a senseless war? And yet that is exactly what is happening. Although the outcome of the Iran conflict remains uncertain, among its greatest beneficiaries may be green technologies and renewable energy. After all, Trump's war has revealed the fragility of economies heavily dependent on fossil fuels, with the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz causing energy prices to soar.

As other commentators have noted, China would do well to convene a coalition of willing countries to launch a global push for green investment, boosting demand for its industries. European countries would find it appealing, as would many others (including even the Gulf states). Thus, the hope for a cleaner atmosphere and a more sustainable environment emerges from the tragedy of a senseless war.

Ironically, tragedy — not faith in linear moral progress through which humans learn from past mistakes and avoid their repetition — has become the source of hope for moral and political progress. The rebirth of democracy and the salvation of the planet now depend on it.

Chiara Cordelli is professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago and senior research fellow at the Centre for History and Economics at Sciences Po. Copyright: Project Syndicate www.project-syndicate.org

BUSINESS

Sunday, April 5, 2026



Photo Courtesy of Food and Agriculture Organisation

Jordan accelerates efforts to secure 'alternative' food supply routes as Iran war drives global price hikes

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — Rising global food prices triggered by the ongoing Middle East war are adding fresh urgency to Jordan's push to secure alternative supply chains, as the Kingdom works to shield its domestic market from a new wave of imported inflation.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reported a 2.4 per cent rise in its Food Price Index (FFPI) in March, marking the second consecutive monthly increase, largely driven by higher energy and fertiliser costs linked to the regional conflict, AFP reported.

Bloomberg similarly said that the index climbed to 128.5 points, reflecting disruptions rippling through global food supply chains.

CEO of Arab Potash Company (APC), Maan Nsour told The Jordan Times that Jordan's leading mining company is focused on continuity of exports and meeting its

contractual commitments through a combination of operational planning, strategic inventory positioning, and flexible logistics arrangements.

Nsour said, "Maintaining scheduled loadings from Aqaba, since early March 2026, APC has loaded several potash vessels and continues to operate according to its planned shipping program, with additional vessels scheduled."

"A number of vessels are already in the port of Aqaba or positioned in the Red Sea awaiting loading, helping to minimise delays and manage turnaround times."

Supply chain disruptions, particularly through the Strait of Hormuz, have been reportedly leading to higher freight costs and delays in the movement of key agricultural goods and inputs, adding uncertainty to global markets.

FAO Chief Economist Maximo Torero has warned that prolonged conflict and persistent

ly high fertiliser prices could force farmers to cut inputs or reduce planting, threatening future yields.

Bloomberg echoed concerns that continued disruption could sustain food inflation in the months ahead.

Nsour said, "The risk is not driven by price alone, but also by availability and timing. Even when fertilisers are available, delays beyond critical planting or application windows can negatively affect yields."

"This is why maintaining dependable supply flows, such as through APC's continuity measures, is an important factor in supporting global food security."

The APC's current approach is to ensure the steady movement of physical product by combining, reliable port operations, strategically located overseas inventories and multiple logistics routes, enabling customers to continue receiving supply despite elevated regional risks.

Jordan maintains economic stability despite regional crises, global shocks — Shehadeh

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of State for Economic Affairs Muhannad Shehadeh has said that in a region often defined by volatility and unpredictable geopolitical shifts, Jordan has consistently stood out for its "remarkable" ability to maintain economic stability.

In a post he shared on professional network LinkedIn, Shehadeh said that the Kingdom has weathered an array of external challenges over the years, from regional conflicts and the global financial crisis to the COVID-19 pandemic and a sustained influx of refugees.

"Despite repeated external shocks, regional conflicts, the global financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and sustained refugee inflows, the Jordanian economic model continues to stand firm. Not by chance, but by design," the minister said.

According to Shehadeh, Jordan's success story lies in its consistent ability to absorb shocks and adapt in times of crisis.

As global markets fluctuate and regional tensions remain high, key economic indicators highlight Jordan's robust performance, he said.

"Over the past years, and even amid ongoing regional tensions, key indicators reflect a system that adapts,



Muhannad Shehadeh

absorbs and continues to move forward."

Ongoing regional war

Even amid ongoing regional instability, he said that the Kingdom's capital markets have shown steady growth, signalling strong investor confidence.

"As a direct result, projections for 2025 are showing massive growth, with Jordan's markets poised for sig-

nificant expansion." Commending the high entrepreneurial momentum in Jordan, the minister said that the number of registered companies continues to rise at double-digit rates.

"This surge reflects the momentum of an economy that fosters innovation and business development, even in challenging times."

He also said that remittances from Jor-

dans abroad remain a vital support for household income, sustaining both economic balance and the resilience of Jordanian families.

Shehadeh said that Jordan's critical infrastructure continues to operate at peak capacity.

"The country's airspace remains open and fully operational, ensuring seamless connectivity for both

passengers and cargo. The port of Aqaba, a key strategic trade gateway, continues to perform efficiently, bolstering the nation's role as a logistics hub for the region.

Transport and logistics activity along Jordan's corridors remains strong, highlighting the country's pivotal position in global trade routes."

On the monetary front, the minister said that Jordan's foreign reserves are at healthy levels, reinforcing the stability of its currency and safeguarding the economy against external shocks.

"Foreign Direct Investment has surged by around 25 per cent in 2025, reflecting a renewed global confidence in Jordan as a safe and reliable investment destination."

Parallel to these economic achievements is Jordan's unwavering commitment to security, the minister said.

"The Jordan Armed Forces, known for their professionalism and readiness, have successfully intercepted hundreds of unauthorised aerial threats with no casualties, further ensuring the country's stability amid a turbulent region."

"Jordan's resilience is not just about surviving crises, it is a testament to its institutional strength, disciplined policy and strategic positioning."

Majority of commodities crossing Hormuz linked to Iran — AFP analysis

PARIS, France (AFP) — Sixty per cent of commodity-bearing ships crossing the Strait of Hormuz since the start of the Middle East war have either come from Iran or were heading there, an AFP analysis of maritime data showed.

Iran has placed a stranglehold on the key shipping lane, cutting off global fuel supplies and roiling energy markets, in retaliation for US-Israeli strikes on February 28 that triggered the conflict.

From March 1 to the morning of April 3, global maritime analytics firm Kpler identified 221 ships carrying oil, gas or other commodities that crossed the strait to enter or leave the Gulf.

An AFP analysis based on Kpler data showed some transited it several times accounting for a total of 240 crossings.

Nearly six out of 10 crossings have involved ships coming from or

bound for Iran, a share that rises to 64 per cent for vessels transporting cargo.

Other countries of origin or destination lag far behind — United Arab Emirates (20 per cent of all crossings), China (15 per cent), India (14 per cent), Saudi Arabia (8 per cent), Oman (8 per cent), Brazil (6 per cent) and Iraq (5 per cent).

Among the 118 crossings by ships carrying cargo, 37 transported crude oil totalling 8.45 million tonnes.

All were leaving the Gulf. Thirty of the 37 oil tankers originated from Iran or sailed under the Iranian flag. Most were sailing to an unknown destination.

The few ships carrying Iranian oil that reported their destination were heading, with one exception, to China.

The seven other oil tankers that crossed the strait with cargo depart-

ed from Saudi Arabia.

One of these vessels, the Hong Kong-flagged New Vision, which transited on March 1, is expected to arrive in the French port of Le Havre on Saturday.

In addition, there were 40 crossings with cargoes of petroleum products carrying 1.6 million tonnes of refined products, gas, LPG, bitumen, etc., 21 with materials destined for industry (1 million tonne of iron ore, steel, etc.), and six with chemicals or petrochemicals (211,000 million tonnes of methanol, ethylene, etc.).

While Iran was the point of departure for most of these crossings, this is not the case for agricultural products.

Since March 1, six ships, notably from Brazil and Argentina, have entered the Gulf carrying soyabean or corn (382,000 tonnes in total), all bound for Iran.

Aqaba ports see surge in maritime activity, handling over 2.2m tonnes of cargo in March

AMMAN (JT) — Chief Commissioner of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority Shadi Majali on Saturday said that the ports are currently witnessing increased maritime activity and handling volumes, reflecting Aqaba's role as a strategic logistical hub in the region.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Majali said that the total number of ships received by Aqaba ports during March reached around 267 vessels, including 115 ships via the passenger terminal.

The total handling volume amounted to about 2.2 million tonnes, in addition to 74,221 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs).

The ports also received 8,174 vehicles, which he described as a clear indicator of operational efficiency and the port's capacity to handle various types of cargo.



Petra photo

Chief Commissioner of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority Shadi Majali on Saturday says that the ports are currently witnessing increased maritime activity and handling volumes

The Chief Commissioner added that the ports welcomed around 37,808 passengers, alongside the handling of around 132,000 tonnes of cargo, reflecting the growing tourism

movement and maritime transport for individuals and vehicles through Aqaba.

Majali noted that the ports are expected to receive 64 ships in the coming days, including

28 via the passenger terminal.

Expected handling volumes are projected to reach 699,000 tonnes, in addition to 16,511 TEUs and the movement of 2,197 vehicles.

He further clarified that the passenger terminal will deal with around 10,000 passengers and handle 17,500 tonnes during the same period, confirming the sustained momentum in maritime and tourism activity at Aqaba's ports.

Majali emphasised that these indicators do not only reflect the readiness of Aqaba's port system but also confirm the effectiveness of operational planning and its ability to absorb the rapid growth in ship and cargo traffic.

He pointed out that this performance is supported by a package of continuous developments aimed at consolidating Aqaba's position as an advanced regional centre for transport and logistics, driving the national economy in line with the Kingdom's Economic Modernisation Vision, Petra reported.

Jordan's exports to EU surge on stronger trade agreements, market access

AMMAN (JT) — The Kingdom's exports to European Union countries recorded a "sharp" rise in January, thanks to improved competitiveness and stronger access to European markets, according to President of the Jordanian European Business Association (JEBA) Ali Murad.

Murad said the increase reflects a "tangible improvement" in the ability of Jordanian products to expand and compete internationally, stressing the efforts of His Majesty King Ab-



JT file

The Kingdom's exports to EU countries records a 'sharp' rise in January, according to President of the Jordanian European Business Association Ali Murad

dullah in strengthening economic and investment ties and opening wider opportunities for

Jordanian exports in the EU, one of the Kingdom's key economic partners.

"Exports to the EU

rose by 54.3 per cent in January to JD54 million, up from JD35 million in the same month last year, marking a positive indicator of effective trade cooperation and the benefits of existing agreements," Murad told the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

He highlighted the Jordan-EU Association Agreement, signed in 2002, as a cornerstone of economic relations, helping to expand trade and boost investment flows between the two sides.

He added that growth

was driven largely by key sectors including garments, nitrogen-based fertilisers, chemicals, as well as raw phosphate and potash, "industries in which Jordan holds clear competitive advantages in quality, cost and supply capacity."

Murad said that the figures also point to improved supply chains and production performance among Jordanian companies, enabling them to meet strict European standards and increasing their potential to capture a larger market share.

He said the rise in exports reflects close cooperation between the public and private sectors, adding that Jordanian industrial products are gaining wider acceptance in European markets due to adherence to high international standards.

The EU, alongside North American and non-Arab Asian markets, remains a major driver of export growth, with total Jordanian exports increasing by 11.2 per cent year-on-year, underscoring the importance of diversified trade part-

nerships, he said.

Murad stressed that expanding access to EU markets remains a key pathway for sustained export growth, calling for stronger partnerships with European businesses and enhanced technical and trade cooperation programmes.

He also underlined the role of the European Chamber of Commerce (EuroCham) in promoting Jordanian products through trade events, exhibitions and business networking initiatives aimed at connecting Jor-

danian firms with new partners.

"Efforts are ongoing to organise joint trade missions and facilitate direct engagement between business leaders, helping to build strategic partnerships and expand commercial ties."

He called for building on current momentum by intensifying public and private sector efforts to diversify export products, attract investment in productive industries, and achieve sustainable export growth that supports the national economy and creates jobs.

THE JORDAN TIMES SPORTS AT A GLANCE

NBA

Injured Lakers star Doncic out for rest of regular season

LOS ANGELES, United States (AFP) — Los Angeles Lakers star Luka Doncic will miss the remainder of the NBA regular season with a left hamstring strain, the team said on Friday. Doncic "has been diagnosed with a Grade 2 left hamstring strain and will be out for the remainder of the regular season", the Lakers, who have five games left in the regular season, said in a statement. ESPN reported that Doncic, who leads the league in scoring, is "uncertain" for the playoffs. Doncic's injury is a massive blow to the Lakers, who have clinched a play-off berth but at third in the Western Conference are just one game ahead of the fourth-placed Denver Nuggets. Doncic, who is averaging 33.5 points per game, 8.3 assists and 7.7 rebounds, limped out of the third quarter of the Lakers' crushing 139-96 loss to the reigning champion Oklahoma City Thunder on Thursday. The 27-year-old Slovenian was emotional as he hobbled towards the sideline. Moments earlier he had pulled up in obvious pain while driving to the basket. Doncic produced a magical March campaign, delivering 13 30-point performances.

FOOTBALL

Kenya ex-skipper Victor Wanyama retires aged 34

NAIROBI (AFP) — Former Kenya national team captain Victor Wanyama, the first from his country to join the English Premier League, announced his retirement from football at the age of 34. The midfielder, whose career spanned nearly two decades, signed for Southampton from Scottish club Celtic for a reported fee of £12.5 million in July 2013. He made 85 appearances for the Saints, scoring only four goals before agreeing a £11 million move to fellow League side Tottenham in June 2016. "Today I announce my retirement from football," Wanyama said late Friday on X. Four different countries, six different clubs, a boy from Muthurwa with a big dream, carrying a nation's pride everytime I stepped onto the pitch." Wanyama made 64 international appearances for Kenya before quitting as Harambee Stars captain in September 2021 after being overlooked for Kenya's unsuccessful attempt to qualify for the 2022 World Cup.

Slot urges Liverpool to stick together after FA Cup rout at Man City

MANCHESTER, United Kingdom (AFP) — Arne Slot urged his Liverpool flops to stick together after admitting Saturday's dismal 4-0 defeat at Manchester City in the FA Cup quarter-finals summed up their turbulent season. Slot's side wasted a series of early chances at the Etihad Stadium before capitulating when Erling Haaland bagged City's opener late in the first-half.

Haaland struck again on the stroke of half-time and completed his treble after the break following Antoine Semenyo's goal.

Liverpool's wretched performance, which also including a missed Mohamed Salah penalty when the score was 4-0, increased the pressure on Slot after a miserable campaign.

"It's very disappointing to be out, not only in the manner but also the result and the score. Another big disappointment for us," said Slot, whose team have only two wins in their last seven games.

"The first 35 minutes was the sort of team I would like to see but the 20 minutes after that, we have to defend so much better than we were doing today.

"I tried not nice to go in at 2-0 just before half-time, not helpful for your mood especially after the season we have had. That was really hard to take."

In a frank admission of Liverpool's problems, Slot said he was concerned with avoiding an even bigger thrashing ahead of Wednesday's Champions League quarter-final first-leg at Paris Saint-Germain (PSG).



Manchester City's English goalkeeper #1 James Trafford saves a penalty kick from Liverpool's Egyptian striker #11 Mohamed Salah during the English FA Cup quarter final football match between Manchester City and Liverpool at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, on Saturday

"The only good thing was that we didn't concede more. If you want to have a good game on Wednesday, a 4-0 loss is already not helpful but an even bigger loss would be a bigger problem for us to go there," he said.

"I tried to get us back into the game, to make it 4-1 or 4-2 but make sure that it stays at four and that was the main thing I thought about."

The Reds are languishing in fifth place in the Premier League, with their title defence in tatters and their bid to qualify for next season's

Champions League far from certain to have a happy ending.

'A lot of setbacks'

Slot was taunted by City fans who chanted "you're getting sacked in the morning" and while that might be premature the Dutch coach is under increasing scrutiny.

Liverpool supporters have grown frustrated with their team's limp performances.

The Champions League represents Liverpool's last chance for silverware this season, but they face

a daunting task against holders PSG.

Calling for his team to stand up to the pressure against PSG, who knocked Liverpool out of the Champions League last term, Slot said: "We are really looking forward to playing against a very good side again."

We have had a lot of setbacks and disappointments but that is also part of being a football player and being a human being. You have to stand there when things are not so positive and that's what it is about now. Players that have

shown so much quality in the past now have a fantastic chance to show that against PSG."

With City boss Pep Guardiola serving a touchline ban, his assistant Pep Lijnders took the post-match media duties.

"Pep is really pleased, that is the most important. It's not easy to please him," Lijnders said.

"The first 25 minutes we were too open. Then we started to control the game and created more chances."

"Erling's header was insane. I love when a striker flies and attacks the ball

What a goal." City's eighth successive FA Cup semi-final appearance keeps them in contention to win the competition for the first time since 2023.

They have already won once at Wembley this season, beating Arsenal 2-0 in the League Cup final just before the international break.

"Pep was really happy because it's special if you go eight times to Wembley," Lijnders said.

"It's the part of the season where the business has to be done. The boys feel that."

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

Artemis mission shares office space — and physics — with Apollo

HOUSTON (AFP) — As four astronauts whiz towards a flyby of the Moon, looking out for them are mission control experts using cutting-edge technology and lessons learned from the Apollo programme 50 years ago.

At the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, a team of engineers and technicians watched over 100-odd computer screens Friday as the Artemis astronauts in the Orion capsule headed for their rendezvous with Earth's natural satellite on day three of their high-stakes mission.

The nerve centre of the operation is the White Flight Control Room, where flight directors Judd Frieling and Rick Henfling oversee everything as the space travelers prepare to slingshot around the Moon on Monday using its gravitational pull, before heading home.

Nearby is the computer screen of the CAPCOM, or capsule communicator, the person responsible for all direct communication with the astronauts.

This time, the CAPCOM is Stan Love, a seasoned former astronaut who sends instructions, flight updates and decisions from the flight directors to the four astronauts:



Artemis II controllers monitor the progress of the Orion spacecraft in the White Flight Control Room at Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas, Friday

Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch, all from the United States, and the Canadian Jeremy Hansen.

"The team in mission control is very well trained, and experts in their systems that they're watching over on the spacecraft," NASA spokesperson Kylie Clem said, with the busy control room visible behind her.

"They work for a period of years to earn and graduate essentially into this role and working in the front room," Clem added. Of course, Houston is no stranger to space history.

On July 20, 1969, mission control received a

message that reassured millions of Americans: "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed."

It was of course the voice of Neil Armstrong, the first person to set foot on the Moon, with the Apollo 11 mission. He would later utter what has become one of history's most famous quotes: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

It was here, too, that NASA heard the anxious and oft-misquoted words "Ah, Houston, we've had a problem", spoken by astronaut Jim Lovell on April 13, 1970, during the Apollo 13 mission. An oxygen tank had

exploded in their spacecraft, forcing them to abort their lunar landing plans.

"All of our mission control rooms are all in this building," said Clem.

"There are different wings that have been modified over the years, but it's in the same building essentially as the historic Apollo mission control room, the International Space Station flight control room, and this room that we're in now."

The Artemis 2 mission is the first crewed one to the Moon, the astronauts will not land, only fly by it — since the last Apollo flight in 1972.

Since then, of course, the technology has

changed dramatically. NASA Orion Programme Manager Howard Hu said that among other things this involves much greater computing capability, which lets the crew interact more with the spacecraft's systems.

He said another is sensor capability — "the ability for us to know exactly where we are in space".

Hu also said the precision with which NASA can now do rendezvous and docking, for instance, "is a huge step in technology".

And while the Apollo capsules had room for three astronauts, the Orion craft carries four; as equipment was made to be more compact without a loss of functionality.

The Apollo vessels were come-shaped to maximise stability as the craft sped back to Earth through the atmosphere. Orion kept this feature.

"But physics doesn't change. The teardrop shape is very efficient from the aerodynamics perspective," said Hu.

"The Apollo guys were just very good technical engineering experts," he said.

"So we learned a lot from them in terms of the things they learned and we leveraged off of that."

Wary of news media, Silicon Valley builds its own

By Alex Pigman

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — When OpenAI acquired the tech podcast TBPB this week, it wasn't just buying a show — it was buying a message.

The move laid bare a strategy that Silicon Valley has been perfecting for years: Ditch the tech-sceptics of the traditional press and build your own media.

TBPB is in many ways a tribute to mainstream news, with co-hosts John Coogan and Jordi Hays — both from the venture capital world — presenting a three-hour show daily from a studio in Los Angeles that resembles a business or sports programme on a cable news network.

But Coogan and Hays insist they are not journalists, even if they line up interviews with key figures in the industry who offer insightful access to the Silicon Valley world.

The show — like a whole ecosystem of podcasts and media orbiting Silicon Valley today — operates in a world where the benefits of tech for society need no explaining, and tech enthusiasm runs deep.

Fidji Simo, OpenAI's CEO of AGI Deployment, said the acquisition was

driven by a need for "constructive conversation about the changes AI creates", and said TBPB would maintain its editorial independence.

The show and its team now fall under the responsibility of OpenAI's public affairs chief Chris Lehane, a veteran Washington lobbyist who made his name handling scandals for the Clinton administration.

"You could read this as OpenAI needing help translating complexity to decision makers. You could also read it as buying favourable narrative positioning during a period of intense scrutiny. Probably both," said Monica Kahn, CEO of brand advisory Creator Revolution.

"They're buying the layer where interpretation happens," she added on LinkedIn.

The transaction follows a movement spearheaded by Elon Musk and venture capitalist Marc Andreessen in which the most powerful figures in tech are circumventing mainstream news media to avoid an establishment they describe as anti-tech or left-wing.

The roster of shows where Silicon Valley's elite now prefer to make news constitutes a parallel media ecosystem. Andreessen Horowitz

has invested heavily to build its own media empire, putting out podcasts to showcase its portfolio of tech investments and push a deeply pro-tech agenda without confrontation.

Lex Fridman's podcast draws millions of viewers or listeners and has attracted tech luminaries including Musk, Zuckerberg, DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis, and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman for two-to-three-hour discussions ranging from business to the personal.

The unabashedly right-wing All-In Podcast has featured the top CEOs, as well as executives closely linked to the Trump administration who avoid the mainstream news coverage they see as unsympathetic.

Zuckerberg used a three-hour January 2025 appearance on Joe Rogan's podcast to defend Meta's rollback of content moderation.

Whether bypassing the news media will actually benefit tech's cause remains an open question.

"I think the TBPB deal is a mistake," said former BuzzFeed reporter Alex Kantrowitz of the Big Technology Podcast. "Under the OpenAI umbrella, the network loses credibility and everything it says will be seen as OpenAI marketing."



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