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Sunday, June 7, 2026 | Dhu al-Hajja 21, 1447 Hijri

## Jordan condemns Iranian attacks on Bahrain, Kuwait



Smoke rises following Israeli bombardment in southern Lebanon close to the Beaufort Castle as seen from a position across the border in the Upper Galilee, in northern Israel on Thursday

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Saturday condemned the Iranian attacks targeting Bahrain and Kuwait, describing them as a "flagrant" violation of the two Gulf states' sovereignty and a dangerous escalation that undermines regional stability.

In a statement on Saturday, the Foreign Ministry denounced the attacks as a threat to the security and territorial integrity of nations and stark breach of international law and the UN Charter.

The ministry affirmed Jordan's absolute solidarity with Bahrain and Kuwait, reiterating the Kingdom's full support for all measures taken by the two nations to protect their sovereignty, security, citizens and residents.

Iran fired missiles at US allies Bahrain and Kuwait on Saturday, after renewed American strikes against it, drawing a furious response from the Gulf monarchies and fur-



File photo

ther undermining a fragile truce, according to AFP.

Iran fired missiles Bahrain and Kuwait on Saturday, drawing a

furious response from the Gulf states.

Bahrain denounced the latest attacks against its territory as "blatant aggression"

and "a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of both countries".

Kuwait's military said early Saturday it was responding to

"hostile" missile and drone attacks, days after a strike on the country's international airport killed one and wounded dozens.

## Israeli strike kills three Lebanese soldiers, Jordan condemns attack

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday condemned an Israeli strike targeting a Lebanese Army patrol on the Khardali-Nabatiah road that killed two officers and a soldier, as a "flagrant violation" of Lebanon's sovereignty, security and stability and a breach of international law.

In a statement, the ministry stressed the need for an immediate cessation of Israeli attacks on Lebanon, the consolidation of the ceasefire agreement, and the full implementation of all provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Fuad Majali reiterated Jordan's

full support for Lebanon's security, stability and sovereignty, and for the safety of its citizens, as well as its support for the Lebanese government's efforts to assert authority across all its territory, reactivate state institutions and ensure that weapons remain under state control.

Continued on page 5

## Jordan's industrial exports up by 2.6% in Q1 2026 — JCI

AMMAN (JT) — The Kingdom's industrial exports grew by 2.6 per cent during the first quarter of 2026, compared with the same period in 2025, according to the Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI).

The growth was driven by increased shipments to Asian and European markets, JCI said.

According to the chamber, national industrial exports reached JD2.027 billion during the first quarter of 2026, up from JD1.976 billion recorded in the corresponding period last year.

Industrial exports accounted for 95 per cent of the country's total national exports, which stood at JD2.129 billion during the same period, according to JCI data, cited by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

JCI data also showed that manufacturing ex-



JT file

Data released by the Jordan Chamber of Industry showed that the Kingdom's industrial exports grew by 2.6 per cent during the first quarter of 2026

ports grew by 1 per cent during the first quarter, with industrial exports covering 44 per cent of total imports.

Industrial exports maintained an upward trajectory through the first three months of

2026, totalling JD677 million in January, JD607 million in February and JD743 million in March.

Switzerland led the fastest-growing markets for Jordanian industrial exports during the quar-

ter, with a 306 per cent increase to JD118 million, followed by China with a 75 per cent surge to JD101 million.

Exports to The Netherlands rose 129 per cent to JD48 million, while exports to Syria

increased 44 per cent to JD77 million. Shipments to Belgium grew 79 per cent to JD37 million, and exports to Thailand advanced 127 per cent to JD34 million.

In terms of relative importance, the United States remained the primary destination for industrial exports, valued at JD457 million (21 per cent of the total), followed by Saudi Arabia at JD224 million (11 per cent), Iraq at JD193 million (9 per cent) and India at JD170 million (8 per cent).

By sector, chemical and cosmetics industries topped the exporting list at JD450 million, followed by leather and garments at JD417 million, engineering and electrical industries at JD384 million, mining at JD279 million, and food and catering at JD255 million.

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Greater Amman Municipality photo

The Companies Control Department says that the number of registered companies in the Kingdom rose by 3 per cent during the first five months of 2026

## 3,071 companies registered by end of May 2026 — CCD

AMMAN (JT) — The number of registered companies in the Kingdom rose by 3 per cent during the first five months of 2026 compared with the same period last year, ac-

ording to a report issued by the Companies Control Department (CCD).

The CCD said that 3,071 companies were registered between the beginning of the year

and May 31, up from 2,982 during the corresponding period in 2025, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

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## Tourism Ministry welcomes UK travel advice update for Jordan



JT file

The Petra Treasury

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Tourism on Saturday hailed the United Kingdom's decision to ease its travel advisory for Jordan, describing the move as a significant step towards strengthening confidence in Jordan as a tourist destination.

The ministry said in a statement that the UK's decision to reclassify most parts of Jordan as safe for travel reflects Jordan's high level of security and stability and further strengthens its reputation as a safe and attractive destination for international

visitors.

The ministry also said that the updated guidance is expected to boost confidence among European travellers and support the recovery and growth of the tourism sector.

The British Embassy in Amman also welcomed the return of UK citizens to Jordan for tourism and investment purposes. The embassy encouraged prospective visitors to follow updates published on the official UK government website and make use of available consular services and support.

According to the ministry, the decision serves as a positive indicator for key tourism markets, highlighting Jordan's readiness to receive visitors through its well-prepared tourist sites, hospitality facilities and tourism services.

With the outbreak of the Middle East war on February 28, the UK's Foreign Office advised against non-essential travel to the majority of Jordan, but on June 3 the advice was lifted, no longer advising visitors against all but essential travel.

## Four killed in shooting incident at private centre in Amman

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Criminal Court prosecutor on Saturday began investigating the alleged murder-suicide incident which left four people dead at a private social service centre in South Amman earlier in the day, official sources said.

The incident occurred when a man reportedly entered the centre in the Husban area "where he shot and killed his wife, two

employees and was later found shot dead", Police Spokesperson Lt. Col. Amer Sartawi said.

"The wife worked at the centre and the two deceased individuals are employees at the premises," Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

The police official said that initial investigations indicated that the incident occurred following "a domestic dispute between the shooter and his wife".

Continued on page 5



In an interview with CNN on Friday, Prince Ali says that Jordan boasts a distinguished national team that has evolved through many stages over the years

## World Cup qualification crowns decades of youth development efforts — Prince Ali

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince Ali, president of the Jordan Football Association, stressed that the national team's qualification for the 2026 World Cup is the result of over two decades of hard work focused on youth development and building a competitive football foundation.

In an interview with CNN on Friday, Prince Ali said that Jordan boasts a distinguished national team that has evolved through many stages over the years, noting that the youth programme launched more than 20 years ago helped prepare many of the players representing the national team today, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The prince noted that while reaching the Asian Cup finals was considered a major achievement and challenge in the past, the national team has now become a consistent presence in the continental tournament, reflecting the progress of Jordanian football.

He added that the team looks forward to

giving its best during its historic first appearance in the World Cup, stressing that the players possess a high spirit and great determination to represent Jordan in the best possible way, despite some absences and injuries within the squad.

that the player serves as a model for the success of Jordan's talent development system.

Tamari started his career in youth academies before moving on to successful professional stints in Europe, progressing from Cyprus to Belgium and then France.

The prince expressed hope that more Jordanian players will get similar opportunities to advance their football careers.

He also touched upon the national team's new jersey, explaining that its design combines simplicity with national identity.

The colours were inspired by the Jordanian Shemagh, which has become a prominent symbol in the stands and reflects the immense fan support the team receives.

The prince's remarks come as the national team continues its preparations for upcoming fixtures, amid high public expectations to keep making history following their unprecedented first-ever qualification for the World Cup.

The prince's remarks come as the national team continues its preparations for upcoming fixtures...

Speaking about national team star Mousa Tamari, Prince Ali said

# Generations for Peace receives inaugural Count Jacques Rogge Award in Belgium

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince Feisal, founder and chairman of Generations for Peace (GFP), on Friday received the first edition of the Count Jacques Rogge Award during an official ceremony held at the City Hall in Ghent, Belgium.

GFP became the first organisation to receive this esteemed international honour, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The ceremony was attended by HRH Princess Zeina Al Feisal, HRH Princess Aisha Bint Feisal, Prince Laurent and Princess Louise of Belgium, alongside several global diplomatic and sports figures.

The jury collectively chose GFP in recognition of its pioneering approach in using sports as a key pillar for peace building and conflict transformation. The organisation uses sports activities as an educational tool to build resilience and promote social unity, supported by dialogue, advocacy, empowerment and media to create a sustainable social impact.



HRH Prince Feisal, founder and chairman of Generations for Peace, on Friday receives the first edition of the Count Jacques Rogge Award during an official ceremony in Belgium

Launched by Panathlon International Belgium, the award honours the humanitarian and sports legacy of the late Count Jacques Rogge, former president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which honours organisations that put youth and inclusivity at the heart of their programmes to achieve a tangible social

impact worldwide.

Prince Feisal expressed his pride in the recognition, saying that GFP started from a deep belief that sports go beyond competition to serve as a tool for positive change and healing.

He added that over nearly two decades, the organisation has created a sustainable impact on the lives of over 1.4

million people across 52 countries, stressing GFP's commitment to continuing this humanitarian journey.

Established in Amman in 2007, GFP has become a global model for sustainable peace building and youth leadership empowerment.

Since its inception, it has trained over 30,000 young men and

women worldwide, who in turn shared these skills within their local communities.

These efforts have received wide international recognition, including official support from the IOC.

GFP is currently ranked 24th among the top 200 non-governmental and social benefit organisations globally.

## Hikma wins US Supreme Court ruling in major pharmaceutical patent case

AMMAN (JT) — Hikma Pharmaceuticals has won a US Supreme Court ruling that its heart medication Vascepa does not infringe patents held by rival Amarin Pharma.

The decision marks a significant milestone for Hikma Pharmaceuticals, underscoring its competitiveness in global pharmaceutical markets and its ability to withstand complex legal disputes with major international drug makers, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

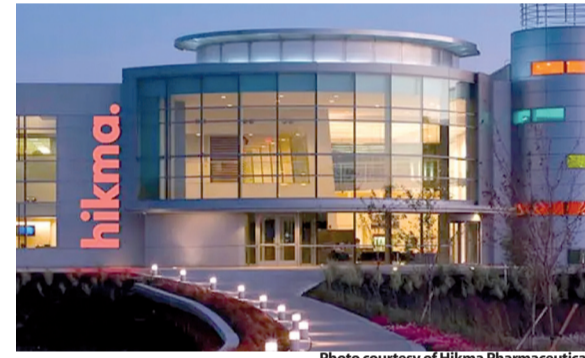
The ruling is also seen as a major victory for the generic pharmaceutical industry, as it strengthens the ability of companies

to introduce lower-cost alternatives to brand-name medicines while reducing legal uncertainty over patent disputes.

The nine-judge bench delivered a unanimous decision, overturning an earlier ruling that had favoured Amarin.

The case centred on a legal framework that allows pharmaceutical companies to market lower-cost versions of drugs for approved medical uses while excluding other uses that remain under patent protection.

Manufacturers of generic medicines had warned that an adverse ruling could discourage the production of cheaper



Hikma Pharmaceuticals wins a US Supreme Court ruling that its heart medication Vascepa does not infringe patents held by rival Amarin Pharma

alternatives, potentially driving up drug prices for patients in the US.

Hikma Pharmaceuticals reported a 7 per cent increase in revenues (6 per

cent in constant currency) to \$3.349 billion in 2025, compared with \$3.127 billion in 2024.

The company said that growth was achieved

across its three geographic regions, North America, the Middle East and North Africa and Europe, driven by strong performance in its branded medicines and Hikma Rx segments, in addition to improved results in its injectables business.

Hikma also announced a 5 per cent increase in total dividend distributions and the launch of a share buyback programme of up to \$250 million during 2026, reflecting the strength of its financial position and its ability to generate cash.

The company expects group revenues to grow by between 2 per cent and 4 per cent in 2026.

### HERITAGE

## Culture minister checks on preparations for 40th Jerash festival

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Culture Mustafa Rawashdeh on Saturday inspected the archaeological site in Jerash to review preparations for the 40th edition of the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts.

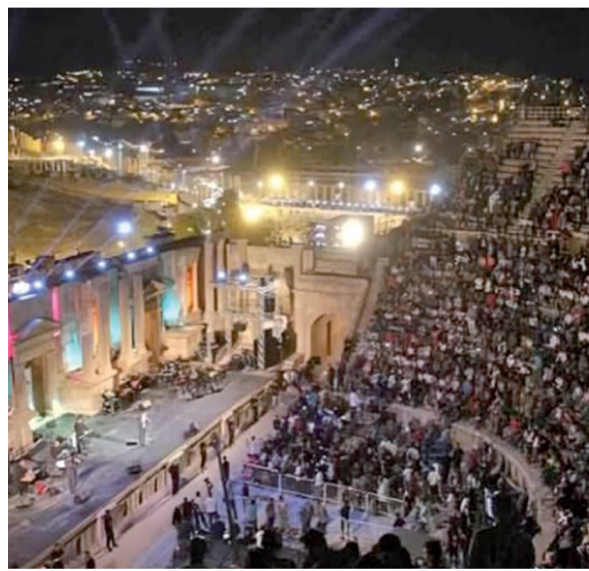
Rawashdeh stressed the importance of intensifying preparations and maintaining a team-based approach to ensure the festival is presented in a manner that reflects its "cultural and civilisational significance" locally and internationally, according to a ministry statement.

He called for the completion of all logistical and technical arrangements to the highest standards to ensure the success of the milestone edition.

The minister also highlighted the role of media institutions in showcasing preparations and promoting the festival as a national cultural event that reflects Jordan's heritage and boosts its presence on the regional and international cultural stage.

The visit included a review of ongoing preparations and coordination efforts aimed at ensuring the readiness of the festival venue ahead of its launch next month.

Rawashdeh has recently said that the festival's 40th edition, set to launch in July, will feature a rich cultural and artistic programme celebrating the festival's



Minister of Culture Mustafa Rawashdeh on Saturday checks on the archaeological site in Jerash to review preparations for the 40th edition of the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts

long-standing success over the years.

'The festival reflects the role of culture and art as a soft power that spreads positivity and national spirit within society'

He described the festival as a "major cultural legacy and a national,

Arab and global artistic and social phenomenon", noting that it reflects Jordan's image as an "oasis of security and stability while carrying a profound humanitarian message".

Rawashdeh added that the festival, which annually highlights Jordan's cultural diversity, heritage and historical presence, will place the Jordanian narrative at the heart of its upcoming edition.

He said that the festival embodies the "pulse" of Jordanian identity and the values of art, life and beauty, reflecting the depth and authenticity of Jordanian culture while expressing the voice of the nation.

The minister also pointed to the "strong"

presence of Jordanian talent across the festival's literary and artistic programmes, highlighting the richness and diversity of the country's artistic scene.

Rawashdeh noted that cultural events make up more than 80 per cent of the festival's activities, underlining its partnership with Jordanian cultural and artistic institutions, as well as its role as a platform for Arab and international creativity that showcases the heritage and folklore of different nations.

He added that the festival has helped launch the careers of many Arab artists and performers since its establishment in the 1980s, becoming a "landmark stage" for poets, musicians and art groups from Jordan and abroad.

"The festival reflects the role of culture and art as a soft power that spreads positivity and national spirit within society," Rawashdeh said, describing Jerash as the "father of festivals" in Jordan and a beacon of enlightenment, creativity and thought.

He also stressed that the festival has become a Jordanian cultural hallmark within the broader human cultural landscape, while also contributing to the economic modernisation and sustainable development processes and the growth of creative and cultural industries.



HH Princess Dana Firas with winners of PNT Heritage Award 2026 on Thursday at Odeon Theatre

## PNT Heritage Award honours regional efforts to safeguard cultural heritage

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — HH Princess Dana Firas, president of the Petra National Trust and UNESCO goodwill ambassador for cultural heritage, in partnership with the Delegation of the European Union to Jordan, attended the PNT Heritage Award 2026 ceremony at the Odeon Theatre on Thursday.

The event was held for the third year in a row and emphasised a regional expansion to include Jordan, Palestine and Syria, reflecting the importance of boosting regional cooperation in safeguarding shared cultural heritage, organisers said.

bassador of the European Union to Jordan Pierre-Christophe Chatzisavas, as well as a number of ministers, ambassadors, diplomats, cultural figures and representatives of local community institutions.

The ceremony opened with a keynote speech by Princess Dana, who welcomed the attendees and emphasised that "protecting cultural heritage is no longer solely a cultural responsibility, but has become an investment in identity, economy, development and social stability".

She added that "the continuation of this award reflects a growing belief in heritage as an active force in building the future and enhancing regional cooperation". Hijazin noted, "Jordanian cultural heritage represents one of the most important elements of national

identity and a key pillar of tourism and cultural development, and that investing in protecting historical sites and supporting cultural initiatives is an investment in the national economy and in strengthening Jordan's cultural and civilisational position regionally and internationally."

Ollongren said, "The right to culture is well established under international law. Also under international humanitarian law, cultural heritage is protected. Jordan is an essential partner in preserving cultural heritage, both in Jordan and in the broader region."

Ten projects out of 293 were selected for the final stage after review and evaluation by the technical committee.

In the category of Conservation and Adaptive Reuse, the

award was presented to Nablus Old Town Regeneration from Palestine.

In the category of Research and Innovation, the award was awarded to Returnee 67 from Syria and Tiraz Centre's Interactive Screen from Jordan. The award for Community Engagement and Social Inclusion was presented to The Heritage Guardians Project from Palestine.

The ceremony also included honouring five figures in recognition of their continuous efforts in preserving cultural heritage. Honorees included: Widad Qawar, Mamdouh Bisharat, Father Jean-Baptiste Humbert, Professor Emeritus Gary Rollefson and Father Jean-Michel de Tarragon, in recognition of their contributions to safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage.

# Jordan's food self-sufficiency rises to 61.4% in 2024 — statistics report

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's food self-sufficiency ratio rose to 61.4 per cent in 2024, up from 57.3 per cent in 2020, reflecting improvements in local production and food security indicators, according to the annual Food Balance Sheet Report issued by the Department of Statistics.

The report, a key reference for national food security data, showed that the increase was driven by higher domestic production and surpluses in several agricultural crops, particularly vegetables, although a number of essential commodities continue to depend heavily on imports.

According to the report, 28 agricultural products recorded production surpluses in 2024, compared with 22 products in 2020. Fresh vegetables posted some of the highest self-sufficiency rates, led by cantaloupe at 485 per cent, zucchini at 173 per cent and tomatoes at 167 per cent.

Among fruit crops, apricots achieved a self-sufficiency rate of 271 per cent, while olives maintained full self-sufficiency at 100



A report issued by the Department of Statistics of Thursday shows that Jordan's food self-sufficiency ratio rose to 61.4 per cent in 2024, up from 57.3 per cent in 2020

per cent. Olive oil exceeded domestic demand, reaching 114 per cent.

In the livestock sector, Jordan achieved full self-sufficiency in fresh milk and recorded a surplus in table

eggs, with a self-sufficiency rate of 108.1 per cent. Poultry meat reached 83.1 per cent self-sufficiency, while red meat remained significantly lower at 35.9 per cent.

Despite the gains,

several strategic commodities continue to rely almost entirely on imports. Wheat self-sufficiency stood at just 2.9 per cent, while fish and seafood reached 8.9 per cent. Production of rice, sugar and

vegetable oils, excluding olive oil, remained at zero per cent.

Fresh vegetables continued to dominate food exports in 2024. Tomato exports exceeded 226,000 tonnes, while exports of zucchini,

cucumber and eggplant reached 31,000 tonnes, 11,000 tonnes and 3,000 tonnes, respectively. Cantaloupe exports totalled 51,000 tonnes, while apricot exports reached 14,000 tonnes.

The report also highlighted growth in overall food production, which increased from 3.6 million tonnes in 2020 to approximately 4 million tonnes in 2024, representing an 11.4 per cent rise.

Food exports climbed to nearly 900,000 tonnes during the period, while imports increased modestly from 3.3 million tonnes to 3.4 million tonnes.

A number of products, including olives, cucumbers, zucchini, eggplants and basic dairy products, recorded zero imports in both years, reflecting sufficient local production to meet domestic demand.

The report also underscored the importance of reducing food waste to strengthen food security, noting that each person in Jordan wastes an average of 81.3 kilogrammes of food annually in the household sector alone.

## AT A GLANCE

### Army thwarts infiltration attempt

AMMAN (JT)

— The Northern Military Region command on Friday foiled an infiltration attempt by three individuals who tried to cross the border illegally. Border Guard units detected the three individuals, applied the rules of engagement, and arrested them, according to an Arab Armed Forces-Arab Army statement. The suspects were referred to the relevant authorities for legal action.



### Fire destroys 800 dunams of crops, olive groves in Zarqa

AMMAN (JT)

— A fire broke out on Friday in the Birin district of Zarqa Governorate, burning nearly 800 dunams of grain fields and olive groves. A source at the Zarqa Agriculture Directorate said the affected area did not include forest trees, noting that the fire initially started in unploughed olive farms before spreading to adjacent grain fields, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra. The source urged farmers and landowners to plough their land, stressing that this preventive measure is highly effective in protecting property and limiting the spread of fires. The Zarqa Agriculture Directorate said it had previously taken preventive measures to protect forests and woodlands by clearing fire-breaks, while repeatedly calling on the public to exercise extreme caution when using fire in agricultural areas.



## 'Women in Jordanian Narrative' initiative launched to document women's role in nation-building

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — The Ministerial Committee for Women's Empowerment on Saturday launched the "Women in the Jordanian Narrative: Writing the Homeland through Women's Eyes" initiative.

Minister of Social Development and Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Women's Empowerment (IMC) Wafa Bani Mustafa said that Jordanian women have always been key partners in shaping national history and building the modern Jordanian state.

The launch ceremony was attended by Minister of Culture Mustafa Al Rawashdeh, members of Parliament and the Senate, as well as representatives of official and civil institutions, in addition to academic and cultural figures.

Bani Mustafa said the initiative aims to consolidate an inclusive national narrative that documents and highlights the contributions of Jordanian women across different stages of nation-building.

She underscored the pioneering role of Her Majesty Queen Rania, describing her as a global advocate for education, human rights, chil-



Minister of Social Development Wafa Bani Mustafa speaks during the launch of the 'Women in the Jordanian Narrative: Writing the Homeland through Women's Eyes' initiative

dren and refugees, and a strong voice on international issues, including the Palestinian cause.

Bani Mustafa said that Queen Rania's contributions have focused on advancing education, empowering youth and women, and launching qualitative initiatives aimed at improving education standards in Jordan and across the Arab world.

She added that Her Majesty has played a key role in promoting dialogue between cultures and enhancing Jordan's global image as a model for development, education and human rights.

She also highlighted the role of Her Majesty the late Queen Zein Al Sharaf and HRH Princess

Basma in supporting state-building efforts.

The minister also referred to the contributions of "pioneering Jordanian women in education, law, social work, health and politics".

"[Jordanian] women have historically broken barriers as lawyers, teachers, midwives and ministers, in addition to their roles in science, culture, diplomacy, sports and public service."

She said the Jordanian women's movement emerged from national necessity and evolved through successive historical phases since the 1940s, reaching a stage of empowerment and leadership under the era of His Majesty King Abdullah.

## Census data strictly protected under Statistics Law — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — Department of Statistics (DoS) Director General Haidar Fraihat said on Saturday that the Statistics Law strictly prohibits the disclosure of any personal data of citizens, stressing that the Population and Housing Census is being conducted in line with internationally recognised standards applied worldwide.

Fraihat said that the department draws on both government and non-government databases to facilitate researchers' work and reduce the need to ask citizens for information that is already available, thereby streamlining data collection.

He also emphasised that all data collected are used strictly for statistical purposes, with names, addresses and any identifying details removed, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The objective, he said, is to produce aggregated indicators and statistics, such as the proportion of citizens covered by public and private health



The Department of Statistics (DoS) says on Saturday that the Statistics Law strictly prohibits the disclosure of any personal data of citizens

insurance.

Fraihat added that citizens can verify the identity of field researchers through a QR code, noting that enumerators also wear official vests bearing Population and Housing Census and Department of Statistics insignia.

On Jordanians living abroad, he said households will be asked about family members residing outside the Kingdom, enabling the department to compile updated data on the number of Jordanians in different countries around the world.

He said that prepa-

ration for the census have been ongoing for about two and a half years, adding that the department is deploying advanced systems, call centres, and automated and computerised processes to ensure high accuracy.

"International statistical standards consider any statistical exercise with an accuracy rate of more than 95 per cent to be scientifically sound and reliable," he said.

Fraihat added that the DoS has completed the technical and logistical preparations for the census, which is scheduled to take place in October, aimed at updating Jordan's demographic, economic and social data to support development planning and policymaking.

He noted that around 1,400 researchers, supervisors, monitors and quality control officers are currently working across the Kingdom as part of the field listing phase, which involves visiting and numbering housing units and collecting basic information on occupants.

Fraihat said the phase is expected to be completed by mid-July, ahead of the main enumeration process scheduled for the final quarter of the year.

He added that the field listing phase has so far reached a 60 per cent completion rate.

## Environment minister participates in GEF-8 assembly in Uzbekistan

AMMAN (JT) — Environment Minister Ayman Suleiman, heading the Jordanian delegation, participated on Thursday in the eighth session of the Global Environment Facility (GEF-8) Assembly.

The event, hosted by Uzbekistan from June 4 to 6, brought together environment ministers, senior officials, and representatives of international organisations and financial institutions from around the world.

Delivering Jordan's address, Suleiman said the world is facing interconnected economic, social and environmental challenges that require urgent and coordinated international action, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He stressed the im-

portance of strengthening multilateral cooperation and international partnerships to address the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

The minister described the Global Environment Facility as a strategic partner supporting Jordan's transition towards a more resilient and inclusive green economy, in line with national priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Suleiman reviewed Jordan's national efforts under the Economic Modernisation Vision and the Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap, both of which place environmental sustainability and climate-resilient growth at the core of national

policy.

He noted that GEF-supported programmes and projects have contributed tangibly to improving water and food security, diversifying energy sources and advancing environmental sustainability.

He said that Jordan is actively integrating climate change, biodiversity conservation and land degradation efforts into national planning frameworks, including the National Adaptation Plan, the National Biodiversity Strategy and the updated Nationally Determined Contributions.

In the agriculture sector, Suleiman noted ongoing efforts to develop climate-smart agriculture, improve irrigation efficiency and promote sustainable land man-

agement to strengthen food security and climate resilience.

He also outlined initiatives in the energy sector, including expanding renewable energy projects, improving energy efficiency and advancing green transition efforts to enhance energy security and reduce reliance on imported energy.

On water scarcity, Suleiman said Jordan remains among the most water-scarce countries globally, with annual per capita water availability not exceeding 60 cubic metres.

He highlighted national efforts to reduce water losses, improve efficiency and upgrade infrastructure, including the National Water Carrier Project.

Suleiman called for enhanced cooperation with the GEF in the next phase, particularly in advancing the water-energy-food-environment nexus approach, expanding climate-smart agriculture and nature-based solutions, and strengthening environmental monitoring and policymaking systems.

He emphasised that achieving global environmental goals requires broad and inclusive partnerships involving governments, international organisations, the private sector, civil society, women, youth and local communities, stressing that national ownership and participation are essential to the success and sustainability of environmental action.

## ACC certificates of origin value rises 24.1% in first five months of 2026

AMMAN (JT) — The value of certificates of origin issued by the Amman Chamber of Commerce (ACC) for exported goods rose by 24.1 per cent during the first five months of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025.

According to ACC statistical data, exports covered by these certificates reached JD624 million between January and May, up from JD502 million recorded in the corresponding period last year.

The number of certificates issued also increased by 10 per cent, reaching 15,464 compared with 14,054 during the same period in 2025.

The data showed that the UAE received the highest number of certifi-

icates at 4,007, followed by Syria with 1,628, Iraq with 1,023, Egypt with 279, and Switzerland with 21.

In terms of value, Iraq topped destination markets at around JD254 million. Switzerland followed with JD92 million, the UAE with nearly JD46 million, Syria with JD32 million, and Egypt with JD31 million.

A breakdown by commodity group showed that foreign-origin products accounted for the largest share at JD273 million. Industrial goods followed at about JD84 million, agricultural products at JD74 million, and Arab-origin products at nearly JD73 million.

Certificates of origin

are international trade documents that certify the country in which goods were produced, manufactured or processed. Customs authorities use them to determine tariffs and verify product origins.

The ACC issues these certificates for Jordanian agricultural, animal and raw natural products, as well as for foreign goods re-exported or purchased from the local market under specific regulations.

It also issues certificates for local industrial products upon request by exporters, based on a certified factory invoice and an original certificate from an industrial chamber verifying Jordanian origin.

# Two Palestinian fighters recount the battle for Lebanon's Beaufort Castle

By Imad Freij  
and Mussa Hattar  
Agence France-Presse

JERICHO, Palestinian Territories — When former Palestinian fighter Moin Al Taher heard the Israeli flag was once again flying over Lebanon's Beaufort castle, he cast his mind back more than 40 years, recalling its historic walls "blazing" under heavy shelling as his comrades fought to defend it.

Moin Al Taher and Mohammed Al Qarout were both fighters for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in south Lebanon when the last battle for the castle unfolded in June 1982, which ended with Israel taking over the strategic vantage point and killing all the defending fighters.

"It was on June 6. That day, the castle was subjected to uninterrupted Israeli artillery and air bombardment," Taher, 74, who now lives in Amman, Jordan, told AFP.

"I saw the castle, which had come under heavy fire, blazing under the intensity of the shelling," he recalled.

Following the crea-



AFP photo

When former Palestinian fighter Moin Al Taher heard the Israeli flag was once again flying over Lebanon's Beaufort castle, he cast his mind back more than 40 years, recalling its historic walls 'blazing' under heavy shelling as his comrades fought to defend it

tion of the state of Israel in 1948, Israel displaced tens of thousands of Palestinians to Lebanon, where some organised into armed factions that launched operations against Israel from

Lebanese territory.

In 1978, Israel invaded Lebanon for the first time in response to the attacks and in 1982 it carried out a second invasion that eventually reached Beirut.

Taher commanded

joint Lebanese-Palestinian forces during the 1978 war along Lebanon's border with Israel, and at Beaufort Castle in 1982.

Taher said he was in Beirut where his wife had just given birth to

their daughter when the battle started and reached the area by noon that day.

"That morning, the fighters had managed to shoot down an Israeli warplane and capture its pilot."

He said he later attempted to reach the castle with another fighter to check on the men there, but their vehicle came under Israeli fire and he was wounded by shrapnel.

Inside the castle were about 30 fighters with the "Jarmaq Battalion", whose members hailed from the Palestinian Territories, Lebanon and Yemen, and fought under Fatah, the faction of historic Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

## Trenches and bunkers

Taher explained that Israeli air strikes had largely destroyed the castle by 1981.

The fighters subsequently fortified it by digging trenches, bunkers, and a 150 metre tunnel within the fortress.

He said the castle became famous because of the constant Israeli bombardment.

"Every day, a communique would announce that the enemy had shelled Beaufort Castle."

Qarout, 69, also fought in the PLO's ranks in southern Lebanon.

He later held positions within the Palestinian Authority in Jericho, where he now lives, and focuses on collecting documents and information about the history of Fatah, including the battle of Beaufort Castle.

Another photograph shows a group of fighters in military uniforms atop the castle, waving their hands.

"The fighters held out in the castle for more than 60 hours until they were all martyred," Qarout recalled.

Both Qarout and Taher pointed to Beaufort's historic significance, having passed through the hands of many armies since its construction by the Crusaders, from Saladin to the Ottomans.

Its strategic importance lies in the fact that it overlooks northern Israel as well as the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, they said.

The goal of Israel's 1982 invasion was to force the PLO out of Lebanon.

The operation ultimately succeeded in expelling the organisation's leadership, headed by Yasser Arafat, from Lebanon after Israeli forces laid siege to the capital Beirut.

Leafing through printed documents and photographs from that era, Qarout showed AFP images of the castle and its fighters.

'The fighters held out in the castle for more than 60 hours until they were all martyred'

## Trump says Iran has '22 per cent' of missiles left

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — Iran still has "21, 22 per cent" of its missiles left, US President Donald Trump said on Friday, after Tehran fired dozens across the region during a week marked by repeated violations of a fragile ceasefire.

"They still have capacity. They have some missiles, they have some drones. I would say, percentage wise, maybe 21, 22 per cent of their missiles," Trump told NBC News in an interview.

That estimate for Iran's remaining missile stockpile is higher than the 18 per cent Trump gave in May. He has often claimed to have completely destroyed Iran's war-fighting capacity.

Iran's military said Friday it had fired "warning missiles" at



AFP photo

US President Donald Trump speaks with reporters while aboard Air Force One on Friday en route to Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

two US destroyers in the Gulf of Oman — a claim promptly denied by the US military.

Two days earlier, Kuwait said it had intercepted 30 ballistic missiles fired as part of "heinous Iranian aggression".

Weeks of complex talks marked by threats and flare-ups of vio-

lence have failed to secure a deal to end the war.

But Trump said Iran has "got no choice" except to reach an agreement.

"They're strong, they're proud, there are things they never thought they'd be doing that they're going to have to do," he told NBC.

## Gaza civil defence reports nine killed in Israeli strikes

GAZA CITY, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Gaza's civil defence service reported that Israeli strikes killed nine people on Saturday.

In Gaza City, a drone strike killed seven people and wounded 15 others in the Jawazat camp for displaced people, according to the civil defence, a rescue service that operates under the authority of the Islamist movement Hamas.

The city's Al Shifa Hospital also reported receiving seven bodies.

Further south, a 25-year-old man, Muhammad Othman Farwana, was killed in the morning in a strike on a tent, the civil defence said.

Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis said the man's body was brought in along with several wounded.



AFP photo

Palestinians clear debris at the site of an Israeli strike on a house whose residents were warned to evacuate before the attack, in Zawaida central Gaza Strip on Friday

The strike had hit his tent on the roof of his house, just before he was due to get mar-

ried later in the day, his cousin Mohammed Farwana said.

"The whole family

was ready to celebrate his wedding. Now, we're attending his funeral instead," he told AFP.

The civil defence announced in the evening a ninth person killed in an Israeli strike in southeast Gaza City, identifying him as a 37-year-old man.

Israel and Hamas accuse each other of near-daily violations of the truce meant to halt the war in Gaza, which was triggered by the October 7, 2023 surprise attack.

At least 951 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire took effect, according to Gaza's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the UN.

Restrictions imposed on media outlets and limited access in Gaza prevent AFP from independently verifying tolls or freely covering the violence there.

## Hegseth urges Europe on D-Day to counter present-day 'invasion'

LANGRUNE-SUR-MER, France (AFP) — US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on Saturday urged Europe to counter what he termed an "invasion" of its coastline by migration, as he marked the 82nd anniversary of the World War II D-Day landings in France.

Hegseth also called on European countries to do more to contribute to their own defence, in a speech at the American military cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer in Normandy.

However, he conspicuously skipped the main international ceremony later in the afternoon marking the anniversary of the Allied landings, which heralded an end to World War II.

"Sadly, today different European beaches are stormed by different dangerous ideologies," Hegseth said.



AFP photo

US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth (centre) arrives to attend a ceremony marking the 82nd anniversary of the D-Day landings at the Normandy American Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, north-western France, on Saturday

On "beaches in Spain and Italy and Greece and Bulgaria, boats and men arrive," he said.

"When will European capitals do something about that invasion? Or is it too late?"

His comments echoed the argument of the administration of US President Donald Trump that mass migration represents a danger to European civilisation.

US Vice President

JD Vance on Friday blamed Britain's handling of the murder of a white student by a Sikh man on what he called civilisational decline caused by an "invasion" of migrants. "May we learn from

this past," Hegseth said in reference to the pivotal involvement of US troops in the landings.

"The men buried here fought in a war-fighting alliance where every partner... brought its full measure of industry, courage and sacrifice," he said in front of the 9,387 white crosses of American soldiers killed in action during the Battle of Normandy.

"Not empty slogans, not lavish summits, not communiques. Real allies doing real things, taking real losses for a shared cause worth fighting and dying for."

## Peace 'through strength'

Hegseth said that while America "will lead", its "capable allies must be right there with us, shoulder-to-shoulder in the breach when it matters".

The Trump administration has also accused Europe of not pulling its weight to ensure the continent's security, and has even floated pulling out of the NATO alliance.

"Peace is secured only through strength," Hegseth told the audience, including French armed forces Minister Catherine Vautrin, without referring explicitly to the US-Israeli war against Iran.

"And it's strength on both sides of the Atlantic, fortified by readiness, shared military capabilities and an unwavering political will," he added.

## 'Challenge of our generation'

At the international ceremony on Saturday afternoon, which Hegseth did not attend, French Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu paid

tribute to the "3,000 men barely 20 years old" who died on D-Day, offering "the breath of their youth and the sacrifice of their lives".

'Sadly, today different European beaches are stormed by different dangerous ideologies'

Speaking to guests including veterans from the United States and also British Defence Minister John Healey, he hailed the "resilience" of the UK during the war, and the American people as "this great people,

friends of liberty".

In apparent allusion to American calls on Europe to look after its own defence, Lecornu said the continent had to meet "the challenge of our generation" to build "our autonomy, our capacity to defend ourselves" to face threats that are "getting closer, intensifying and multiplying".

The Normandy landings on June 6, 1944, were the largest amphibious operation in history.

An armada of 6,939 ships and 132,700 British, Canadian, American, Belgian, Norwegian and Polish troops stormed 80 kilometres of beaches in northern France.

The operation contributed decisively to the Allied victory over Nazi Germany, which was also being squeezed by USSR forces to the east.

# LA stadium workers threaten strike ahead of World Cup

LOS ANGELES, United States (AFP) — Workers at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles have overwhelmingly voted to authorize a potential strike during the World Cup, just days before football's global showpiece begins.

The Unite Here Local 11 union, which represents about 2,000 stadium food and beverage workers, is demanding better pay along with assurances that federal immigration agents will not be allowed to enter the venue.

A whopping 96 per cent of voters approved the strike call, meaning they have the green light to walk off the job at any time, with the World Cup due to open on Thursday.

"Contract negotiations with stadium food service operator Legends Global and FIFA have not had significant progress on key economic and workplace safety issues," the union said in a statement.

New talks are scheduled for Monday, ahead of the first World Cup match on US soil on June 12 at SoFi.

Cooks, dishwashers, bartenders and others



An aerial image shows Los Angeles Stadium, temporarily renamed from SoFi Stadium, and the KIA Forum (Rear) ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026 in Inglewood, California, on May 27

are represented by Unite Here.

SoFi Stadium — the world's most expensive sports venue, which opened in 2020 at a cost exceeding \$5 billion — will host eight World Cup matches.

"If we're forced to strike, those \$100,000

FIFA suites will have nothing but bottled water and Doritos," said union co-president Kurt Petersen.

The union has demanded that workers be allowed to walk out if Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel come to

SoFi during World Cup matches and create "a reasonable fear for their safety."

ICE has faced sharp criticism from human rights organizations for their sometimes brutal raids in various US cities, including Los Angeles.

Stadium workers have also expressed concerns about being forced to share their personal information with FIFA, football's world governing body, to get World Cup accreditation — amid fears that data will be shared with ICE.

"The FIFA World Cup

will generate enormous profits, but we are still fighting for basic respect and security," stadium bartender Cesar Zamora said in a statement provided by the union.

"We deserve better, and if that means going on strike, I'm ready."

## NATO bolsters defences around Sweden and Finland

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AFP) — NATO ground forces on Saturday started operations aimed at boosting defences around Sweden and Finland, two of its newest members, the alliance said.

Following Russia's all-out 2022 invasion of Ukraine, the two Nordic countries abandoned decades of military non-alignment to join NATO. Finland entered the alliance in 2023 and Sweden did likewise the following year.

The region around the two countries, part of NATO's northeastern flank, "is one of the most strategically significant and environmentally challenging areas in the world", the US general who is NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Alexus Grynkeiwich, said in a statement.

Sweden and Finland lie on the Baltic Sea, the waterway used by Russian warships heading to or from Saint Petersburg or the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad.

Finland, which shares a border with Russia, also fought two wars against the

Soviet Union during World War II.

NATO in 2024 decided to establish a new multinational military presence in Finland called the Forward Land Forces (FLF) Finland, designed to act as a rapid-reaction unit.

NATO has other similar land units in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia

That force, which began operations on Saturday, includes a Swedish battle group.

NATO has other similar land units in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

## Nigeria police order anti-cholera measures over northeast outbreak

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria (AFP) — Police in Nigeria said they were enforcing sanitation measures in the north-eastern state of Borno on Saturday, where a cholera outbreak has killed dozens.

Some 39 people have died from the waterborne disease across Borno in recent weeks, with at least 4,204 infected, according to the latest figures from local health authorities.

The outbreak is concentrated in Borno capital Maiduguri and the surrounding Jere district, health authorities reported in an update Tuesday.

The state police commissioner "has directed the full enforcement of the monthly environmental sanitation exercise", the Borno State Police Command said in a statement late Friday evening.

"Residents are therefore urged to actively par-

ticipate in the exercise by cleaning their homes, business premises, drainage channels, and surrounding environments," the statement added.

"To ensure compliance, police personnel and other relevant stakeholders will be deployed to strategic locations across the state during the sanitation period."

The state government meanwhile has set up dedicated treatment centres.

Cholera is spread by bacteria-tainted water and food, and can cause dehydration and diarrhoea.

Modern sewage treatment has all but eliminated the disease in much of the rich world.

But war, conflict and poverty — all familiar to Borno state, the epicentre of a long-running jihadist insurgency — are major risk factors for an outbreak.

## Police, protesters clash in Bolivia at road blockade

SANTA CRUZ, Bolivia (AFP) — Police and anti-government protesters clashed on Saturday in the Santa Cruz area of eastern Bolivia, as authorities attempted to clear a road blocked by rural workers demanding President Rodrigo Paz's resignation.

A month of demonstrations calling for the center-right Paz to step down have paralysed the Andean nation, with some 100 protest blockades around the country causing severe food and medicine shortages in major cities.

On Saturday, dozens of anti-riot police backed by military vehicles fired tear gas as they attempted to clear a road in the town of San Julian, an AFP correspondent witnessed.

The Santa Cruz region is an agricultural breadbasket for Bolivia, supplying food to the country's western areas.

Demonstrators threw stones and burned tires



Anti-government demonstrators clash with police officers and civilians during an operation to clear a road blockade in San Julian, Santa Cruz department, Bolivia, on Saturday

to try to halt the police's advance, according to the reporter and local television footage.

The road was eventually partially cleared,

but protesters moved to block it again. Local media reported that one officer had been wounded.

The incident came one day after police and sol-

diers cleared a key road linking La Paz to farming communities.

The US-backed, pro-business Paz took office in November promising

to resolve the country's worst economic crisis in decades, but his unpopular economic reforms and failure to respond to social demands have

roused public ire.

He has repeatedly called for dialogue with protesters but on Wednesday announced a bill to declare a state of emergency, which would authorize military deployment to crack down and clear the blockades.

Congress is debating the measure.

Supplies are running low in La Paz, El Alto, as well as the cities of Cochabamba, Oruro and Potosi.

The government accuses former socialist president Evo Morales — in hiding from charges related to his relationship with a teen with whom he allegedly fathered a child — of fomenting the unrest.

On Friday, US President Donald Trump's new Shield of the Americas alliance — an anti-cartel coalition that includes pro-US administrations in Argentina, Bolivia and Chile among other countries — gave Paz its unequivocal backing.

## Israeli strike kills three Lebanese soldiers, Jordan condemns attack

Continued from page 1

Majali also expressed Jordan's condolences to the Lebanese government and people, as well as to the families of the victims.

An Israeli strike on a vehicle in south Lebanon killed three soldiers, Beirut's military said Saturday, days after the two countries announced a conditional truce following talks in the United

States.

"A number of military personnel, including an officer, were martyred in a barbaric Israeli raid targeting a military vehicle on the Khardali-Nabatiah road," the Lebanese army said in a statement posted to X.

A ceasefire that was supposed to end the fighting in Lebanon between Israel and Iran-backed Hizbollah took effect on April 17, but

has not been respected.

The Lebanese army said Saturday that "the continuation of the deliberate and repeated brutal Israeli aggression... is aimed at thwarting all efforts to reach a solution that will allow for the restoration of stability", according to AFP.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun also denounced the latest attack, calling it a "flagrant

violation of Lebanese sovereignty... despite Lebanon's efforts in the Washington negotiations to put an end to the continued Israeli aggression that goes unchecked".

Israel on Saturday renewed evacuation orders for five villages in Lebanon's south and east, telling residents to move north of the Zahrani River. Its military conducted several strikes across

south Lebanon, according to Lebanese state media, AFP said.

Lebanon was drawn into the wider Middle East war when Hizbollah attacked Israel on March 2 to avenge the February 28 US-Israeli killing of Iran's supreme leader.

Israel responded with an extensive campaign of airstrikes and a ground invasion that have killed over 3,500 people.

## 3,071 companies registered by end of May 2026 — CCD

Continued from page 1

Total registered capital during the period exceeded JD84 million.

Limited liability companies remained the most common form of incorporation, with 2,339 companies accounting for 76.2 per cent of total registrations and registered capital of more than JD40 million. Private shareholding companies followed, with

registered capital exceeding JD18 million.

The report also showed a decline in company closures, with the number of dissolved or deregistered firms falling by 18 per cent. A total of 393 companies were liquidated or struck off the registry in the first five months of 2026, compared with 482 during the same period in 2025.

Corporate capital expansions rose by 14 per

cent year-on-year.

Since the launch of electronic services at the Companies Control Department in late 2020, the cumulative number of companies registered online has reached 39,084.

The system has processed 2,567,467 online follow-up requests, issued 96,073 digital archive copies, and generated 558,937 electronic certificates.

## Jordan's industrial exports up by 2.6% in Q1 2026 — JCI

Continued from page 1

The therapeutic industries and medical supplies sector recorded exports of JD147 million, followed by plastics and rubber at JD41 million, construction at JD40 million, packaging at JD35 million, and wood and furniture at JD9 million.

Garments and related accessories led individual product exports at

JD193 million, followed by raw potash at JD167 million and pharmaceutical preparations at JD147 million.

JCI President Fathi Jaghbeer told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that European and Asian markets were the main drivers of growth, with exports to non-EU European countries increasing by 114 per cent, or approximately JD95 million.

Exports to EU nations grew by 71 per cent (JD72 million), while exports to East Asian countries climbed 56 per cent (JD44 million), and shipments to other Asian countries advanced 33 per cent (JD30 million).

Jaghbeer noted that this performance underscores the success of local industries in diversifying export destinations, mitigating

declines in some traditional markets.

Switzerland contributed the highest share of the export increase with a rise of JD89 million year-on-year, followed by China (JD43 million), The Netherlands (JD27 million) and Syria (JD24 million).

This expansion offset declines in major conventional destinations, as industrial exports to the US fell 18 per cent

(JD102 million), shipments to India dropped 17 per cent (JD35 million), exports to Iraq fell 13 per cent (JD28 million), and exports to Saudi Arabia decreased 7 per cent (JD17 million).

Despite these market shifts, the overall positive growth highlights the resilience of Jordan's industrial sector and its capacity to adapt to global market changes, Jaghbeer added.

Four killed in shooting incident at private centre in Amman

Continued from page 1

The shooter was found dead later and "we are currently investigating the source of the bullets," he added.

"Bullets were extracted from the shooter's body and sent to the Forensic and Labora-

tories Department for a ballistic match," according to the police official.

The Criminal Court prosecutor will summon the victim and the shooter's family members for questioning to learn more about the incident, according to a

statement by the Public Security Directorate.

Meanwhile, a government source told The Jordan Times that the premises where the incident occurred is a private entity and is not affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development.

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## Food self-sufficiency in Jordan

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

The latest food balance data released by Jordan's Department of Statistics highlights a noteworthy shift in the Kingdom's food security landscape. Jordan's food self-sufficiency ratio increased to 61.4 per cent in 2024, up from 57.3 per cent in 2020, marking an improvement of 4.1 percentage points over four years. While this progress reflects the agricultural sector's resilience and its ability to expand production despite economic and climatic pressures, it also underscores persistent structural vulnerabilities that continue to leave the country reliant on imports for key food staples.

Jordan's total food production rose from 3.6 million tonnes in 2020 to approximately 4 million tonnes in 2024, representing growth of 11.4 per cent. During the same period, food exports climbed from 604,000 tonnes to nearly 900,000 tonnes, signalling stronger competitiveness and greater access to regional and international markets. Yet food imports also increased, rising from 3.28 million tonnes to 3.42 million tonnes. This suggests that although domestic production is expanding, it has not fundamentally altered Jordan's dependence on imported food products.

A closer examination of the data reveals that much of the improvement in self-sufficiency stems from the performance of the vegetable and fruit sectors. Vegetable self-sufficiency reached 137 per cent in 2024, compared with 121 per cent in 2020, while fruit-tree crops increased from 75 per cent to 89 per cent. Several crops recorded exceptionally high surplus levels, including melons at 485 per cent, apricots at 271 per cent, zucchini at 173 per cent, tomatoes at 167 per cent and fresh dates at 146 per cent. These figures demonstrate that Jordan not only satisfies domestic demand for many agricultural products but also generates significant exportable surpluses.

The olive sector remains one of the country's strongest agricultural success stories. Olive production achieved full self-sufficiency, while olive oil reached 114 per cent, reflecting both production stability and the sector's growing economic value. Given its export potential and contribution to rural incomes, olive cultivation continues to play a strategic role in Jordan's agricultural economy.

Yet a striking paradox remains. Despite large production surpluses in many fruits and vegetables, consumers do not always benefit from lower prices. Food prices are influenced by far more than production volumes; they are shaped by cultivation costs, transportation, storage, marketing expenses and supply chain dynamics. Consequently, farmers often complain that market prices fail to cover production costs, while consumers simultaneously face high retail prices. This disconnect suggests that inefficiencies within supply chains and distribution networks may be a greater challenge than production itself.

In the livestock sector, Jordan achieved full self-sufficiency in fresh milk and maintained a self-sufficiency ratio of 108 per cent for table eggs. Red meat self-sufficiency improved from 28 per cent in 2020 to 36 per cent in 2024, reflecting gradual progress. Nevertheless, the sector remains heavily dependent on imports. Poultry self-sufficiency declined slightly from 84 per cent to 83 per cent, despite a substantial increase in domestic production exceeding 302,000 tonnes.

The most significant challenge emerges when examining strategic food commodities. Jordan remains overwhelmingly dependent on imports of wheat, rice, sugar, legumes, fish and vegetable oils. Wheat self-sufficiency stands at just 3 per cent, while rice and sugar record virtually no domestic production. Dry legumes achieve only 1 per cent self-sufficiency and fish products just 9 per cent. Such figures reveal the extent to which Jordan's food security remains exposed to international market disruptions, geopolitical tensions and global supply-chain shocks.

The scale of this dependence becomes even clearer when import figures are considered. In 2024, Jordan imported more than 1.13 million tonnes of wheat while producing only 34,000 tonnes domestically. The country also imported 274,000 tonnes of rice and 352,000 tonnes of sugar, commodities for which local production remains negligible. These realities demonstrate that improvements in overall food self-sufficiency do not necessarily translate into reduced food-security risks, particularly when the most critical items in the national food basket continue to rely on foreign markets.

Economically, the findings present a mixed picture. On one hand, Jordan's agricultural sector has expanded production, increased exports, and generated valuable surpluses that support rural livelihoods and contribute to economic activity. On the other hand, structural constraints — including severe water scarcity, rising production costs and limited agricultural land — continue to hinder progress in strategic crops that are essential to long-term food security.

Another often-overlooked issue is food waste. According to official statistics, each person in Jordan wastes approximately 81.3 kilogrammes of food annually. Reducing food loss and improving consumption efficiency could significantly strengthen food security outcomes without requiring substantial increases in agricultural production.

Ultimately, Jordan's food balance data reflects meaningful progress in agricultural productivity and self-sufficiency. However, achieving comprehensive food security requires more than producing surplus fruits and vegetables. It demands a long-term strategy aimed at strengthening resilience, improving supply-chain efficiency, reducing waste, and addressing the structural weaknesses that leave the Kingdom dependent on imported strategic commodities. Only through such an approach can Jordan build a more sustainable food system capable of withstanding future economic and geopolitical shocks.

## The next front: Jerusalem

Mohammad Abu Rumman

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio recently responded to a question from a member of the US Senate regarding media reports about American-Israeli plans to weaken, and ultimately abolish, the Hashemite custodianship over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Rubio claimed he knew nothing about such plans and expressed surprise at the question, while emphasising that relations between the United States and Jordan remain excellent.

Whether Rubio's answer was genuine — meaning that he is genuinely unaware of plans that may be discussed elsewhere within political circles — or whether he was simply evading the question, the reports leaked by several sources regarding American-Israeli efforts to alter the status quo at Al Aqsa Mosque and weaken the Hashemite custodianship are highly consistent with realities on the ground and with long-standing Israeli policies. These reports reinforce the growing conviction that Israel enjoys a green light from Washington to continue advancing this agenda.

Those who believe that a genuine American veto exists against Israeli measures are mistaken. Rubio's remarks should not be celebrated as evidence of restraint imposed on Netanyahu's government, nor should they be treated as a definitive refutation of the reports in question. Rather, they represent another attempt to obscure reality and ignore the openly declared Israeli policies aimed at Judaising Jerusalem and transforming the existing status quo.

These policies are neither hidden nor speculative. They are reflected in budgets ap-

proved by the Knesset for land acquisition projects, settlement expansion and strategic infrastructure schemes, including the well-known E1 project, which would effectively divide the West Bank into two major geographical sections.

The significance of the recent reports lies in their explicit reference to the Hashemite custodianship. Yet an important question remains: What exactly is the value of this custodianship? Does it extend beyond the day-to-day administrative and service functions within Al Aqsa Mosque?

If Washington succeeds in neutralising Iran and weakening the so-called 'Axis of Resistance', the central struggle will increasingly shift toward Jerusalem and the occupied territories

Many observers fail to appreciate the historical, political and strategic dimensions of the custodianship. Its foundations are rooted in the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and were subsequently reinforced by a Jordanian-Palestinian agreement affirming the Hashemite role in protecting Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Its significance extends far beyond administrative respon-

sibilities. It serves as a mechanism for safeguarding the holy sites themselves. Jordan occupies a historically recognised role in Jerusalem and has, for decades — particularly since the signing of the peace treaty — acted as both monitor and negotiator in efforts to preserve the status quo. Daily reports issued by Jordan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs document Israeli violations and changes on the ground. Diplomatic channels, both public and private, have continuously been employed to address developments concerning Jerusalem's holy sites.

Despite repeated Israeli attempts to advance their plans, Jordanian diplomacy has consistently treated Jerusalem as a matter of core national priority. From Israel's perspective, removing the Hashemite custodianship would provide far greater freedom of action inside Al Aqsa Mosque and facilitate a gradual transformation of the existing reality there, much as has occurred — and continues to occur — at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron.

According to the leaked American-Israeli document cited in media reports, part of this agenda involves removing the administration of Jerusalem's Islamic endowments (Awqaf) from Jordanian authority and placing them under alternative control. Such a development would effectively eliminate one of the most important mechanisms of oversight and accountability.

As for the Trump administration, it is important to recognise that its disagreement with Israel is neither about annexation nor about control over Jerusalem. During Trump's first term, the US embassy was moved to Jerusalem, signalling a fundamental shift in American policy. The difference lies elsewhere: In the method rather than the

objective. Washington's preference is to proceed quietly and strategically, avoiding unnecessary confrontation with friendly Arab governments and regional allies.

What may be even more consequential is the broader political context. Trump's difficulties in dealing with Iran, the increasingly public disagreements between him and Benjamin Netanyahu, and his insistence on preventing Israeli escalation in Lebanon have all created new pressures within the relationship.

Under such circumstances, the files of the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza become among the few remaining areas through which Trump can compensate his difficult ally. In practice, Israel has already been granted considerable freedom of action in these arenas. Netanyahu, facing future electoral battles and seeking to satisfy his Religious Zionist partners, is likely to pursue major political rewards in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

This makes Jerusalem and the West Bank the most likely arena for the region's next major political confrontation. If Washington succeeds in neutralising Iran and weakening the so-called "Axis of Resistance", the central struggle will increasingly shift toward Jerusalem and the occupied territories. In that sense, these issues represent both a pillar of continuity in the Trump-Netanyahu relationship and a political lifeline for Netanyahu's own future.

For that reason, Rubio's statements should not distract observers from what is taking place on the ground. Political realities are ultimately shaped not by public denials but by facts, policies and cumulative developments. And on that front, the signs are increasingly difficult to ignore.

## Queen Rania's message for an exhausted world

By Mwaffaq Ootom

At a global event commonly connected with innovation, technology, art, creativity and future, Her Majesty Queen Rania addressed a much more basic topic, the ability humans have to carry weight.

Her Speech at SXSW London followed moments in which many people are experiencing huge overwhelming events in many parts of the world, which, at times, are very difficult to process because they seem to be so great, so brutal or so fast. Here in our region, the "weight" is more immediate, for example, the suffering in Gaza, instability in the Middle East, refugees and displaced people from their homeland, impoverished populations, and loss of hope in the international system of justice. In addition to that, beyond the region, the entire world carries the pressure and burden of climate anxiety, increasing inequalities, disruptive technologies, racism and an increasing inability to communicate effectively within our communities.

The power of Queen Rania's speech lay not only in her identification of the heaviness, but also because she raised an even more difficult question: Are we becoming too weak to carry the

moral burdens of our age?

Her Majesty's metaphor of atrophy was especially striking. Muscles lose their strength when they are not used. Societies work in much the same way. If we do not have difficult discussions, we lose the ability to have them. If we look away from the pain of others, we become less able to feel compassion for them. Finally, if we allow judges to use algorithms or slogans or identity groups to make their decisions, we ultimately surrender the discipline of moral reasoning.

Queen Rania's way of describing the spiritual ramifications of technology on our bodies and minds through the use of the term "tech-neck" is enlightening. We are all hunched over our devices, but it's not just a physical position; we're also feeling weighed down emotionally, mentally, and spiritually by the barrage of content that is meant to enrage and divide us and ultimately leave us feeling drained.

In this worldwide discussion of human rights, Her Majesty's speech encompassed an evidently Jordanian input to the surrounding world. The principles of the Jordanian people, namely: Community, discipline, humility and service, are much

more than simple ideals, they are the daily realities of a people taking on more responsibility than either their size or their resources can support. Jordanians have welcomed millions of refugees into their borders, they have provided humanitarian aid, and, when the odds are against them, they continually behave in a manner that promotes moderation and dignity.

It doesn't suggest that Jordan is perfect, nor do all those who honestly reflect nationally need to suggest that. However, the strength of Jordan has often come from a refusal to let scarcity become an excuse for indifference. The people of Jordan, whether living in villages, cities, organisations established for charitable purposes or working in hospitals, schools and universities, have continuously demonstrated through their actions that having compassion is not measured only by wealth, but rather by willingness.

That willingness is urgently needed today. Everyday Jordanian people are donating, volunteering to help, talking, organising and praying for the suffering in Gaza. Medical teams have provided medical coverage at field hospitals. Perhaps the main point of

Queen Rania's speech was how Her Majesty described Tawakkul (to have trust in Allah). Far too often, many people associate having faith in Allah with being idle, therefore, they consider having faith means they should sit back and wait for history to happen and unfold. However, Tawakkul when defined properly is not an act of submission. It is having the ability to take action without becoming arrogant. It is putting forth the effort but does not give one the false sense of total control. Tawakkul is discipline to do what you can and it is humility to understand you may not be able to control what will ultimately result from your actions.

The world is indeed heavy, but can also challenge us as to how far we are willing to push ourselves for the sake of providing strength. By demonstrating that Tawakkul is more than just surrendering, Queen Rania gives us a message that is closely tied to our beliefs and urgently matters to the present, we must lift what we can, together, again and again, and trust that sincere effort is never wasted.

Mwaffaq Ootom is former vice president of Yarmouk University

## AI: Your gateway to a new era of opportunity

By Hamza Alakalik

The future of our professional lives is no longer just about adopting new digital tools; it is about a fundamental shift in how we think, work, and create value within our organisations. The world is changing rapidly. The modern economy no longer rewards traditional, repetitive effort as much as it rewards the intelligence to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) to transform data and time into impactful, remarkable results.

The question for major companies today is no longer Should we use AI? Instead, it is How do we build an integrated system that makes this technology a core part of our professional lives to boost efficiency and ensure sustainable growth?

To achieve this excellence, we must adopt what we call the Digital Leadership Pyramid, a simple framework consisting of three interconnected layers:

The foundation begins with

Productivity. Here, automation tools act as a hidden engine that reengineers your day. They handle repetitive, tedious tasks for you, freeing up nearly 20 per cent of your valuable time.

At the second level, we find Creativity. In the past, producing a marketing campaign or a piece of design required large teams and weeks of effort. Today, thanks to generative AI, you can turn your ideas into reality in just a few hours. The secret here is not complex technical skill, but your ability to guide the machine with smart prompts to obtain precise, creative results.

The peak of the pyramid is Analytical Thinking and Decision-Making. Here, AI becomes a cognitive partner that helps you navigate risks, understand data and predict what will happen tomorrow. The real difference between an average employee and a digital leader lies in the ability to turn this information into bold, intelligent decisions. Despite this progress, a fun-

damental challenge persists in developing nations: The skills gap. The problem is not a lack of technology, but a lack of knowledge of how to use it strategically. We must invest in people first, empowering them to lead these tools effectively.

In Jordan, we have a golden opportunity. Our youth possess passion and education, but we must accelerate our adaptation to the global pace. Integrating AI into education and work is no longer a luxury; it is an absolute necessity to remain competitive. The real challenge is not fearing these technologies, but the speed and flexibility of our educational and economic systems in embracing them and turning them into levers for growth.

Ultimately, success in this era is not about possessing the tool, but about mastering the art of using it to build deeper, more meaningful human value. Public policy must focus on balancing innovation with human protection. Furthermore, it is our

collective responsibility — as individuals and institutions — to embrace a continuous learning mindset to be part of this bright future.

AI is not an enemy to jobs; it is the greatest opportunity we have ever had to break free from routine tasks and unleash the human creativity that machines can never replicate. The future does not wait for the hesitant; it belongs to those who have the courage to learn, adapt, and innovate their own tools.

The new era has already begun, and the decision is yours: will you watch the transformation from the sidelines, or will you be the one leading it, making a difference in your work and community? Start today, for every step toward digital mastery is an investment in your future and the future of our national economy. Success in the age of machines is truly a triumph for the creative human mind that knows how to harness technology to serve its greatest goals.

# BUSINESS

Sunday, June 7, 2026



The Social Security Investment Fund convenes its 11th Corporate Governance Forum 'Governance in Times of Transformation: Responsible Leadership and a Digital Future'

## SSIF hosts 11th Corporate Governance Forum on leadership and digital transformation

AMMAN (JT) — The Social Security Investment Fund (SSIF) on Saturday hosted its 11th Corporate Governance Forum titled, "Governance in Times of Transformation: Responsible Leadership and a Digital Future".

The event brought together governance experts, business leaders and the fund's representatives serving on the boards and supervisory bodies of its portfolio. According to an SSIF statement, the forum provided a platform for discussing the evolving role of corporate governance amid rapid technological and economic change, with a focus on leadership, accountability and digital transformation.

SSIF Board Chairman Omar Malhas said that governance has evolved beyond a matter of regulatory compliance to become a strategic capability that enables institutions to anticipate disruption, manage risks and create sustainable value.

He noted that the accelerating pace of economic and technological change is increasing pressure on boards to move from passive oversight to proactive stewardship that balances growth, sustainability and competitiveness.

"In that context, investing in board development is an investment in the quality of

institutional decision-making itself," Malhas said.

SSIF Chief Executive Officer Ezzeddine Kanakrieh stressed that the fund views its representation on the boards of portfolio companies as a tool for value creation rather than a formal requirement.

'In that context, investing in board development is an investment in the quality of institutional decision-making itself'

He said the fund's governance framework is built on three pillars: Regulatory structures that guide board conduct, development programmes that strengthen board capabilities, and evaluation mechanisms that ensure accountability

and performance. "Board quality translates directly into investment returns and developmental impact," Kanakrieh said.

He added that women now account for about 25 per cent of the fund's institutional representatives, describing the figure as evidence of progress while acknowledging that further efforts are needed to enhance representation.

Discussions during the forum focused on several governance challenges, including the legal liability of board members and its implications for effective oversight, responsible governance of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, and results-based performance governance aimed at translating strategic objectives into measurable outcomes.

The forum forms part of the SSIF's broader efforts to strengthen corporate governance across its investment portfolio through regulatory frameworks, board qualification programmes and performance monitoring systems.

According to the statement, these efforts are intended to support the development of more effective boards, stronger companies and a greater contribution to Jordan's economic growth and development.

## Investment minister discusses economic opportunities with UK business leaders

AMMAN (JT) — Investment Minister Tareq Abu Ghazaleh held a series of economic meetings with business and trade representatives in London to promote investment in Jordan, strengthen partnerships and attract qualitative investments.

Abu Ghazaleh participated in a roundtable discussion hosted by British Expertise International (BEI) and The D Group, as part of the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) activities, according to a ministry statement.

The minister highlighted Jordan's competitive business environment, ongoing economic reforms, and investor-friendly legislation, according to a Ministry of Investment statement.

The meeting was attended by Jordan's Ambassador to the UK Manar Dabbas and featured business leaders in infrastructure, energy, manufacturing, and logistics.

Participants discussed private-sector investment partnerships, especially in development projects, and utilising Jordan's strategic location as a regional gateway.

The minister highlighted the deep strategic relations and



Investment Minister Tareq Abu Ghazaleh holds a series of economic meetings with business and trade representatives in London to promote investment in Jordan

economic cooperation between Jordan and the UK, highlighting the "promising opportunities in Jordan across vital sectors, supported by a competitive business environment and updated regulations that ease investor procedures".

Dabbas stressed the importance of building on strong Jordan-UK ties to expand partnerships with the British business community and attract more investments to the Kingdom.

The meetings focused on increasing economic and trade cooperation, attracting high-quality investments, driving sustainable economic growth, and creating employment opportunities, according to the ministry statement.

## Bitcoin drops below \$60,000, first since Oct 2024

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — Bitcoin dropped below \$60,000 on Friday, its lowest level since October 2024, just before Donald Trump's election, which propelled it to a record high.

The currency fell by about 6 per cent around 16:15 GMT, to \$59,770.9, before paring its losses slightly.

The election of Trump, a staunch advocate of crypto currencies, to the White House for a second term in November 2024 sparked a wave of enthusiasm in the sector, sending the price of bitcoin soaring to nearly \$110,000.

The current dip has been caused by factors including one corpo-



Cryptocurrency fans have counted Tesla boss Elon Musk as among their champions, but this week he rocked their world by criticizing carbon emissions from bitcoin, causing bitcoin's price to drop

rate selloff, according to Emma Bernuau, a consultant at Euros

agency. A surprise sale by Strategy — one of bit-

coin's most prominent corporate holders — rattled confidence. The

CEO of BEI and Advisory Director of D Group, David Landsman, said that both organisations work with an extensive network of experts in climate, energy, education, space, infrastructure and logistics.

He added that the meeting offered a key opportunity to explore private sector cooperation between the UK and Jordan, expressing confidence that the talks will yield fruitful joint opportunities.

During his visit, Abu Ghazaleh also met with the British Trade Envoy to Jordan, Kuwait and Palestine, Lord Iain McNicol and leaders of the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce in London.

The meetings focused on increasing economic and trade cooperation, attracting high-quality investments, driving sustainable economic growth, and creating employment opportunities, according to the ministry statement.

## Gov't suspends recruitment of non-Jordanians across most sectors

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Labour has ordered the suspension of the recruitment of non-Jordanian workers across all economic sectors and activities, effective June 1.

The ministry said in a statement that the decision was part of a wider endeavour to regulate labour market and prioritise employment opportunities for Jordanians.

A number of sectors and activities were exempted from the decision, including domestic workers and the garment and textile industry, as well as manufacturers of complementary production inputs operating or registered in development zones, Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs) and free zones.

High-skilled professions requiring specialised expertise were also excluded from the suspension.

The ministry said that recruitment approvals issued before the decision took ef-



In this undated photo, trainees are seen during a carpentry course at the Vocational Training Corporation

fect will continue to be processed in accordance with established procedures.

Ministry spokesperson Mohammad Zyoud said that the measure followed an ongoing assessment of labour market requirements and employers' needs.

In remarks to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Zyoud said that the ministry manages the recruitment of foreign workers based on labour market conditions, suspending recruitment when sec-

tors achieve sufficient workforce levels and reopening it only when a clear shortage of non-Jordanian labour emerges.

He also said that the ministry seeks to prevent oversupply in the domestic labour market while ensuring that sectors with genuine workforce needs can continue to operate effectively.

"The ministry's primary objective remains increasing the employment of Jordanians and linking job

seekers with available opportunities," Zyoud said.

He added that the ministry is implementing an integrated strategy in cooperation with the Vocational Training Corporation and the Development and Employment Fund (DEF), both chaired by the labour minister, to equip young people with skills aligned with evolving labour market demands and emerging professions.

The strategy is supported by DEF financing programmes that promote entrepreneurship and help women and youth establish independent businesses, he said.

Zyoud said that the fund also offers dedicated financing programmes for vocational training graduates, enabling them to launch small enterprises and create additional employment opportunities within their communities.

The overall unemployment rate in the Kingdom fell to 16.1

per cent in the first quarter of 2026, down 0.5 percentage points compared with the same period of 2025 and 2.3 percentage points compared with the first quarter of 2022, the Department of Statistics (DoS) said on Sunday.

The report showed that unemployment among Jordanian males stood at 17.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, a decrease of 0.7 percentage points year-on-year.

It added that unemployment among Jordanians overall (males and females) declined by 1.7 percentage points over the past four years compared with the first quarter of 2022, while the rate among Jordanian males has dropped by 6.3 percentage points since 2021.

Among Jordanians aged 24 and above, the unemployment rate reached 17.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, including 14.4 per cent for males and 29 per cent for females.

## Blockbuster US job gains ruffle Wall Street

LONDON (AFP) — Forecast-beating US jobs data rattled Wall Street recently as investors saw increased chances of an interest rate hike.

Oil prices retreated meanwhile despite continued clashes in Lebanon, with no apparent progress in reaching a peace deal between Iran and the United States that would open up energy exports through the Strait of Hormuz.

Data showed the US economy added 172,000 jobs in May, far more than the 80,000 expected by economists polled by Dow Jones Newswires and The Wall Street Journal.

April figures were also revised higher, to 179,000 from 115,000, indicating the US economy is resilient as rising energy costs from the Mideast war begin to hit consumers and businesses.

While the figures are "good news for the US economy, borrowers and investors may feel differently", said eToro analyst Bret Kenwell.

In a best scenario, he said, a rapid resolution of the conflict that allows oil prices to drop would allow the US

Federal Reserve to ride out the recent spike in inflation.

"However, if policymakers even start talking about rate hikes or taking a more hawkish posture, that could throw cold water on the recent stock market surge," Kenwell said.

Yields on US Treasury bonds rose in response to the data as investors anticipated higher rates from the US Federal Reserve.

The dollar rose against main rivals as well.

"This report adds to pressure on the Fed to drop its easing bias, but it may not trigger a rush to price in rate hikes anytime soon," said Kathleen Brooks at XTB, noting that markets still price a less than 40 per cent chance of a rate hike this year.

Wall Street's main stock indices were lower, but the Dow still gained enough in initial trading to set a record high before sagging into the red.

The Nasdaq Composite fell 2.1 per cent as investor jitters over AI investments returned.

After pushing equity markets to record highs this year, technology firms are facing selling

pressure on concerns that the eye-watering sums pumped into artificial intelligence may have been overdone and stock valuations are too high.

The so-called Magnificent Seven, which includes AI players Nvidia, Google-parent Alphabet and Meta, were mostly lower.

US chipmaker Broadcom also sparked concern this week after its revenue forecast for the third quarter undershot expectations.

Broadcom's shares fell 5.6 per cent on Friday, and those of rival Micron Technology dropped 7 per cent.

Tech tremors also hit Asian markets.

South Korea's tech-heavy stock market tanked almost seven per cent at one point Friday, before ending down 5.5 per cent.

The Nikkei in Tokyo was off more than one per cent, matching Thursday's retreat.

The losses come as investors anticipate the coming IPO by Elon Musk's SpaceX, which is aiming to raise \$75 billion in the world's biggest initial public offering.

# THE JORDAN TIMES SPORTS AT A GLANCE

## CRICKET

### Robinson rocks New Zealand again as rain frustrates England at Lord's

LONDON (AFP) — Ollie Robinson continued to prove a thorn in New Zealand's side, taking two quick wickets, as England moved closer to victory in the first Test during what little play was possible at Lord's on Saturday. Rain and bad light meant fewer than 10 overs were bowled on the third day of this three-match series. But that was enough time for the 32-year-old Robinson to take two wickets for no runs in four balls as New Zealand slumped to 53-5 in their second innings. The Black Caps added two more runs before rain, which meant there was no play before lunch, returned at 13:10 GMT Saturday. The umpires finally abandoned proceedings for the day at 16:29 GMT, with a handful of spectators still braving the bad weather as the floodlights pierced the gloom in northwest London. At 55-5, New Zealand need 199 more runs to reach a victory target of 254 in what is the 150th Test staged at Lord's — the most at any ground. On only five occasions have the Black Caps successfully chased a higher total to win a Test. Only four sides have made more in the fourth innings to win a Test at Lord's. New Zealand were struggling at 36-3 at Friday's close after England paceman Gus Atkinson struck twice and fast bowler Josh Tongue dismissed key batsman Kane Williamson.

### Gill, Rahul tons power India to 368-3 in Afghanistan Test

INDIA (AFP) — Centuries by skipper Shubman Gill and KL Rahul led India to a commanding 368-3 on the first day of the one-off cricket Test against Afghanistan on Saturday. Rahul made 100 off 165 balls and put on a second wicket partnership of 139 with Sai Sudharsan, who scored 81, after India elected to bat first in New Chandigarh. Sudharsan and Rahul departed before Gill finished the day on 103 in an unbeaten stand of 121 with wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant, who was on 50 not out. India, ranked third in the world Test rankings, are looking to bounce back after suffering a 2-0 defeat to South Africa at home in November. The match is not part of the World Test Championship cycle but is still an important game for Afghanistan, who played their first five-day game in India in 2018.

By Aline Bannayan

AMMAN — As Jordan prepares to play Columbia on Sunday in their final tune-up match ahead of World Cup kicking off June 11, Jordan's squad got another setback with news that key young striker Ibrahim Sabra, had joined players sidelined with injury.

The ankle injury during practice added to the woes of the coaching staff who were already challenged with options as key players sitting out the lineup include star striker Yazan Nue'imat and Adham Qurashi, who have been out the past few months. Before the lineup was finalised, Isam Smeiri, who had excelled in the Arab Cup in Nue'imat's absence was injured during practice. Now Sabra, one of the key stars of Jordan's U-23 team, who plays for Croatia's NK Lokomotiva Zagreb, is out for the World Cup as well.

The match against 7-time World Cup qualifier, 13th ranked Columbia which will be played in San Diego at 4:00 pm Pacific time Sunday (2:00 am Jordan local time on Monday), will be the final friendly before the World's biggest sporting event — the 2026 World Cup starts in the US, Canada and Mexico.

Earlier in the week, World 63rd ranked Jordan lost to 12-time qualifier World 19th ranked Switzerland 4-1 in a



A Jordanian defensive midfielder Nizar Al Rashdan vies for the ball during the friendly match at the Kybunpark Stadium, in St. Gallen, on May 31

match that saw clear defensive errors and Jordan's young star Odeh Fakhoury scoring the sole goal. Now, the team will seek to amend mistakes before heading to Portland where the squad will be based for their first two World Cup matches.

The Kingdom kicks off World Cup Group J matches in San Francisco against FIFA 24th ranked Austria, on June 17. They play 28th ranked Algeria on June 23 before leaving to Dallas to play World 3rd ranked reigning World champions Argentina on June 28 in the

last Round 1 match. Despite the challenging group, Jordan's Moroccan coach Jamal Selami, a World Cup player at France 1998, believes his side is capable of making a strong impression and has motivated players underlining the "honour and responsi-

bility of being the first team to represent Jordan in the World Cup". The team is the focus of a whole nation. In an interview with CNN, Jordan Football Association President HRH Prince Ali told Becky Anderson, "The players will give it all they have. We have

had some injuries including the best striker in Asia, Yazan Nu'eimat, but the team has a lot of potential. He described the Kingdom's qualification as hugely inspiring for the young generation, describing Jordan as "the representative of the Levant".

# LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

## Scientists find yeast in ancient Iceman's guts and make bread

PARIS, France (AFP) — Yeast has been growing in the guts of a frozen mummy called Oetzi the Iceman for thousands of years, scientists have discovered, telling AFP they used it to make a tasty sourdough bread.

More than 5,300 years ago — before the Egyptian pyramids were built — Oetzi was strolling through the Alps on the border of Austria and Italy when he was killed by an arrow in the back.

He remained frozen in the ice until two German hikers stumbled across his mummified remains in 1991 in the northern Italian region of South Tyrol.

Since then, his stunningly well-preserved remains have been kept at the same temperature — minus six degrees Celsius — as his icy tomb.

This has allowed scientists to carefully study Oetzi, who offers an incredibly rare window into ancient human life.

For the latest research, published in the Microbiome journal on Wednesday, an Italy-based team found evidence that both ancient and modern microbial life remain active in the frozen body.

"What we didn't expect to find was yeast," lead study author Mohamed Sarhan of the



AFP photo

Though he died more than 5,300 years ago, Oetzi the Iceman is still surprising scientists

Eurac Research institute in the Italian city of Bolzano told AFP.

### 'Very good sourdough'

The scientists discovered four different yeasts that can survive sub-zero temperatures in Oetzi's guts, skin and "brownish" water that melted off his body when he was partially unfrozen.

These kinds of yeast only live in very cold conditions such as Antarctica, so are believed to have entered Oetzi's body at some point after he died.

Genetic analysis revealed "DNA damage levels very comparable to the original microbes" in the Iceman's guts, suggesting the yeast entered his body soon after death, Sarhan said.

"These yeasts have accompanied Oetzi on his long journey through the millennia," study co-author Frank Maixner said in a statement. The scientists then reproduced the gut yeast in a fridge.

"If you tell anyone you have yeast, they immediately ask: Can we use it for bread?" Sarhan said.

So they tried to make a sourdough loaf "Initially it didn't work," the microbiologist admitted. But after three months of effort "we had a very, very good sourdough", Sarhan said with a laugh.

When asked if the scientists were considering using the yeast to brew beer, he responded: "It's on the list." The study contained more serious possible uses for the yeast.

When the mummy was found in 1991, it was initially treated as a normal cadaver. A chemical called phenol was used to stop fungus from growing in the body.

However the strange yeast was able to eat the phenol, meaning that in the future it could help break down the chemical in contaminated environments, the scientists said.

### Inside the ancient microbiome

The yeast was not the only surprising discovery in Oetzi's body.

An analysis of his microbiome revealed a particular kind of a gut bacteria that is almost non-existent among modern humans.

Though gone from the stomachs of people

in the industrialised world, the bacteria has been detected among tribes in Africa and South America, Sarhan said.

It has also been found in 3,000-year-old faeces preserved in a salt mine in Hallstatt, Austria — which serves as one of the only other available views into the ancient human microbiome.

Oetzi and these Bronze Age salt miners ate more fibre and whole grain than modern-day people, Sarhan explained.

The study said it "reveals that the Iceman is not a biologically 'frozen' time-capsule but rather a complex ecosystem".

It is too early to say whether the yeast is harming the mummy, Sarhan said, calling for more research.

Nikolay Oskolkov, a researcher at the Latvian Institute of Organic Synthesis not involved in the study, told AFP it was interesting that "the Iceman's microbiome is not 'frozen'".

However Oskolkov, who previously discovered ancient fungus in the mummy's guts, cautioned that the yeast samples were only taken in 2010 and 2019.

This provides "very little evidence that the yeasts have been multiplying over millennia", he said, adding that he believed they were "relatively recent colonists of the mummy's body".

## Eurovision viewing figures drop to 131 million after boycott

GENEVA (AFP) — The 2026 Eurovision Song Contest was watched by 131 million viewers, organisers said on Friday, down 35 million on the year before after five countries boycotted over Israel's participation.

Bulgaria won the TV extravaganza for the first time with Dara's catchy floor-filler "Bangaranga" sweeping the 70th edition of the world's biggest live televised music event, with Israel finishing in second place.

The Netherlands, Iceland, Spain, Ireland and Slovenia all pulled out of this year's Eurovision — with the latter three refusing to broadcast the show at all.

Eurovision 2026 was held in Vienna, with the grand final taking place on May 16.

First held in 1956, Eurovision is run by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the world's biggest public-service media alliance.

"While some of our figures are naturally lower without those of our five members who chose not to participate this year, we remain committed to doing everything possible to find pathways back for them in 2027,"

said Eurovision director Martin Green.

### Big Nordic audiences

The biggest share of viewers watching Eurovision was recorded in Finland (93 per cent), Sweden (86 per cent), Norway (83 per cent) and Denmark (79 per cent).

Eurovision garnered more than a billion views for content on Instagram this year. "It's fantastic to see the impact the Eurovision Song Contest is having on young audiences globally," said Green.


"The hundreds of millions reached via our digital platforms also underlines the Eurovision Song Contest's 70-year evolution from a TV show to a true global, cultural, multi-platform phenomenon."

People in 148 different countries and territories cast votes for their favourites.


Outside the 35 participating countries, the biggest votes were received from the United States, The Netherlands, Canada, Spain, Ireland, Slovakia and Turkey.


Around 100,000 tickets were sold for the shows at the Wiener Stadthalle arena, bought by fans from 75 countries.

After Dara's win, next year's edition will be hosted in Bulgaria. The EBU noted that



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