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## Gov't reports airspace breach, reaffirms sovereignty

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Government Communication Mohamad Momani said that Jordan's airspace was breached by a number of missiles on Sunday evening amid renewed regional tensions.

In a statement the social media platform X, Momani, who is also the Government spokesperson, said that the Public Security Directorate activated warning sirens following the incident and was providing updated instructions and information as developments unfold.

He also said that the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army were closely monitoring the situation and continuing to carry out their duties to safeguard the Kingdom and protect public and private property.

The minister also renewed warning against any attempts to violate the Kingdom's airspace, stressing that it would not allow any party to use the Kingdom as a battleground. Air raid sirens sounded across Jordan on Sunday night as au-



thorities urged citizens to adhere to safety instructions amid heightened regional tensions and ongoing military escalation.

The activation followed a reported Iranian missile launch towards Israel on Sunday evening, the first since

the ceasefire came into force.

According to the PSD, three intermittent sirens indicate a threat, while a single siren signals that the danger has passed.

The PSD urged residents to remain where they are and avoid movement when the

three warning sirens sound, advising those outdoors to seek shelter in the nearest building until the threat has passed.

The directorate also called on residents to stay away from windows and exposed areas and remain near con-

crete stairwells whenever possible.

Royal Jordanian said on Sunday that all of its flights are operating according to schedule, except services to Iraq, which have been suspended until further notice amid ongoing regional developments.



His Majesty King Abdullah receives Iraqi Parliament Speaker Haibat Al Halbousi at Al Husseiniya Palace, and emphasizes the importance of strengthening the robust relations between Jordan and Iraq across various fields

## King receives Iraqi parliament speaker

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah received Iraqi Parliament Speaker Haibat Al Halbousi on Sunday at Al Husseiniya Palace.

His Majesty highlighted the importance of building on the ro-

bust relations between Jordan and Iraq across various fields, in service of their peoples and regional stability, according to a Royal Court statement.

Speaking about regional developments, the King underscored

the need to step up efforts aimed at consolidating the ceasefire agreement between the United States and Iran, while ensuring the security and sovereignty of Arab states.

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## Israel reports incoming Iranian missiles in first since Mideast war ceasefire

Iran says Israel's Beirut strike 'crossed all red lines'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Air raid sirens sounded in Israel on Sunday as its military worked to intercept barrages of incoming Iranian missiles for the first time since an April ceasefire took hold in the Middle East war.

The Israeli army reported the attack just hours after Tehran had threatened to retaliate for a new Israeli strike on Beirut.

An April 8 ceasefire had halted major hostilities between Iran, Israel and the US, but efforts to turn the truce into a settlement have repeatedly stalled, and Sunday's launches were sure to further dampen hopes for a lasting peace, as the Middle East war reached its 100th day.

Tehran has insisted any deal to permanently end the war must also halt the parallel conflict



Rocket trails are seen in the sky above the Israeli coastal city of Netanya, amid a fresh barrage of Iranian missile attacks on March 27

in Lebanon, where Israel is pursuing a campaign against the Iran-backed movement Hezbollah, and had warned that any new

attacks on Beirut would trigger a "full-scale resumption" of hostilities.

Iran's military central command said on Sunday

that Israel's latest strike on the southern Beirut suburbs had "crossed all red lines", demanding a halt to its campaign in

Lebanon.

"The Israeli army must stop its attacks on southern Lebanon and the suburbs, and if it expands its attacks to that region or responds to Iran's action, it will face more devastating and regrettable blows," said Gen. Ali Abollahi, the head of the Khatam Al Anbiya command, without directly mentioning missile salvos that Israel said it was intercepting.

Israel's military struck Beirut's southern suburbs on Sunday, hitting apartments in two buildings after saying it had intercepted rockets launched by Hezbollah into Israeli territory.

The Lebanese health ministry said the attack in the capital killed two people and wounded 20 others, including four children and four women.

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The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation says on Sunday that it had distributed dozens of tents to displaced and affected families in southern Gaza

## JHCO says tents distributed to displaced families in war-torn Gaza

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO) said on Sunday that it had distributed dozens of tents to displaced and affected families in southern Gaza as part of efforts to provide emer-

gency shelter assistance.

The relief organisation said in a statement that the tents were distributed in cooperation with the Jordanian Campaign, a relief effort carried out by JHCO in

war-torn Gaza.

The initiative aims to alleviate the suffering of residents who have lost their homes amid the ongoing crisis, JHCO said.

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## Jerusalem returns to centre stage amid Israeli schemes to impose new realities



Al Aqsa Mosque Compound and its Dome of the Rock in the Old City in occupied East Jerusalem

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — As Jordanians, Palestinians and the entire Arab nation commemorate the 59th anniversary of Yawm Al Naksa, the Palestinian question and Jerusalem at its heart has once again emerged as a focal point of regional tensions following the Iran war.

Marked annually on June 6, Yawm Al Naksa (Day of the Setback), which resulted in Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, the remainder of the Palestinian territories, the Syrian Golan Heights and Egypt's Si-

nai Peninsula, is remembered amid warnings of Israeli schemes to alter realities on the ground in Jerusalem.

Nearly six decades later, Jerusalem remains at the centre of political and religious tensions, with concerns mounting over the future of its holy sites and the preservation of the historical and legal status quo.

The issue drew renewed attention after news reports alleged that the United States is working with Israel to end the Hashemite custodianship over Al Aqsa Mosque.

But US Secretary of

State Marco Rubio has denied knowledge of such reports.

"I have never heard of that," Rubio said during testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, stressing that Jordan remains a close US partner and adding that the Jordanian custodianship over Jerusalem's holy sites had never been a matter under discussion.

His remarks came after media reports claimed that Washington and Tel Aviv were pursuing arrangements that could alter the management of the Al Aqsa compound.

The Middle East Eye reported that the US and Israel are allegedly collaborating on a plan to strip Jordan of its historic Hashemite custodianship over Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque.

The UK-based media website claimed that Washington and Tel Aviv are "actively working" to strip Jordan of its historic custodianship of Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque Compound/Al Haram Al Sharif.

Quoting multiple unnamed sources, the news website claimed that the US and Israel are pursuing a new arrangement

that would see the management of Islam's third holiest site closely align with Israeli interests.

### Jordan's custodianship

Jordan's Hashemite custodianship over Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, which has long been recognised under bilateral agreements, remains a cornerstone of the Kingdom's historic role in the city and a key element in safeguarding Al Aqsa Mosque Compound/Al Haram Al Sharif.

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# Exhibition highlights hunger, resilience in Gaza through family's lens

By Heba Elayyan

AMMAN — Visitors entering the "Menú de Gaza" exhibition at Al Balad Theatre step into two parallel narratives of war.

On one side, photographs document scenes of bombardment, destruction and devastation across Gaza.

On the other, images show something far more ordinary: Plates of food, a bowl of lentils, pieces of bread, or a simple meal shared among several family members.

At the end of the exhibition stands a single image: An empty plate.

Next to it appears the message: "Using hunger as a weapon of war."

The exhibition, organised by the Spanish embassy, is part of the 14th edition of Image Festival Amman, held at Al Balad Theatre under the theme "Behind the Scene", and will run until June 30.

It is the result of a collaboration between Spanish conflict journalist Mikel Ayestaran and Palestinian journalist and translator Kayed Hammad, documenting daily meals prepared by Hammad's family during the war in Gaza.

In a video message shown at the exhibition,



Spanish Ambassador to Jordan José Luis Pardo Cuervo speaks during the opening of the 'Menú de Gaza' exhibition, organised by the Spanish embassy as part of the 14th edition of Image Festival Amman

Ayestaran recalled how his conversations with Hammad shifted after October 7, 2023.

The project began with a simple question.

"Instead of talking about stories or interviews, I started asking him every day: What have you eaten today?"

he said. As shortages worsened and food became increasingly scarce, the question turned into an unintentional record of survival.

Each day, Hammad's wife, Amal, prepared whatever ingredients she could find. Their

daughter, Dalia, photographed the meals before they were shared within the family and sent to Ayestaran, who published them online.

The images soon became a lifeline for those following the family's situation.

For Ayestaran, those

photographs became a powerful symbol of resilience and demonstrate the use of hunger as a weapon.

"Every meal became a small act of resistance," he said. "A way of saying: We are still here."

"People were waiting for these photos as

signs of life," Hammad said during a video call held as part of the exhibition.

"If we didn't upload anything, they thought something had happened to us."

What began as a personal exchange between two friends evolved into an alternative form of wartime reporting, one that documented not destruction itself, but the struggle to endure it.

"We showed the harshness of the war, but not through blood and destruction," Hammad said.

"We showed it through what was, or wasn't, on the table."

During the war, the family remained in northern Gaza, displaced 17 times as fighting intensified. They lost nearly all their belongings and endured the killing of their eldest son, Omar, in an Israeli strike.

Despite this, they continued documenting what they ate each day.

Hammad described severe shortages of food, water and medicine that emerged shortly after the war began.

"Food became one of the biggest challenges for survival," he said. "There was a shortage of everything necessary for life."

At times, a single plate had to be divided among several people.

"Sometimes the plate was for two people and sometimes it was for seven," he said. "Many families could not find food for days."

For Hammad, hunger became one of the defining realities of daily life.

"There were people dying from hunger," he said.

The project has since expanded into a book, also titled Menú de Gaza, and is being developed into a documentary and travelling exhibition.

After nearly two years in Gaza, Hammad and his family left on June 25, 2025, following coordination between Ayestaran and Spain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They crossed into Jordan before continuing to Spain, where they now live in Malaga.

But leaving did not end the emotional weight of what they experienced.

"We left Gaza, but Gaza did not leave us," Hammad said.

"When we sit down to eat, we think about those still there. We cannot finish our meals."

Dalia said that the documentation process was a collective family effort.

"Everyone helped,"

she said. "Finding ingredients, preparing food, collecting wood, it took all of us."

"My mother would spend the whole day preparing the plate."

Speaking to The Jordan Times on the sidelines of the exhibition, Spanish Ambassador to Jordan José Luis Pardo Cuervo said that the situation in Gaza remains present despite other regional crises.

"The situation in Gaza has not been forgotten," he said.

"There are already a lot of conflicts in the area, but it must not be forgotten."

He said that the exhibition aligns with the festival's theme, "Behind the Scene", because it invites viewers to look beyond what is immediately visible.

"You see the photos and you see food," Cuervo said. "But what is beyond that? A family in Gaza, under bombardment, surviving."

He added that the exhibition offers a different perspective from the usual imagery of war.

"We are saturated sometimes with images of destruction and suffering," he said.

"In this exhibition you do not see blood or destruction directly. But it makes you think what is beyond what you see."



The Crown Prince Foundation and the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation on Sunday launch a strategic partnership aimed at expanding skill development and employment opportunities for youth in Jordan

## CPF, Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation launch strategic partnership to bridge skills-to-jobs gap

AMMAN (JT) — The Crown Prince Foundation (CPF) and the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation (AGF) on Sunday launched a strategic partnership aimed at expanding skill development and employment opportunities for youth in Jordan.

The collaboration will be driven by the Nomu Al Ghurair Programme, a regional initiative tailored to equip young people with market-ready skills aligned with the requirements of Jordan's future economy, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The partnership was announced during a memorandum of understanding signing ceremony held in Amman.

The partnership combines AGF's regional expertise in designing scalable models that link learning to employment with CPF's national reach, operational capacities and leadership in youth empowerment.

The two sides aim to establish an integrated platform that directly addresses the skills-to-jobs gap faced by Jordanian youth.

Targeting Jordanian and Arab youth aged 18 to 35, the programme is expected to benefit over 5,600 young men and women across the Kingdom.

The partnership reflects a shared alignment between the two foundations on the importance of boosting education-to-work pathways and supporting the economic resilience of Jordanian youth

through an ecosystem-based approach.

As a "pivotal" partner within AGF's national strategy for Jordan, CPF will act as an ecosystem enabler, leveraging its local knowledge, networks and resources to activate, align and sustain the efforts of implementing partners within a broader national framework.

This approach ensures that interventions are locally rooted, scalable, and designed for long-term impact through local implementation and partnerships.

The initiative is built around five integrated pathways: Digital skills, technical and vocational education and training, green industries, career guidance and entrepreneurship, supporting the transition of youth into employment, self-employment, or further education.

The initiative supports Jordan Vision 2025 and the Economic Modernisation Vision (2022-2033), and aligns with the priorities of HRH Crown Prince Hussein, particularly in the areas of youth empowerment, innovation, and achieving inclusive economic growth.

AGF CEO Sonia Ben Jaafar said, "Youth are looking for a clearer link between education and opportunity. This partnership is about helping more young people gain the skills, support, and practical pathways needed to transition into the workforce and fully participate in the economy."

"By collaborating with the Crown Prince Foundation, we are building on Jordan's steadfast commitment to its youth and investing in opportunities that can create sustainable impact in local communities across the Kingdom," Ben Jaafar added.

CPF CEO Tamam Mango said, "This partnership reinforces CPF's role as a national ecosystem enabler for youth in Jordan, equipping them with the skills, confidence, and pathways required to actively participate in the economy."

"Through the Nomu Al Ghurair Programme, we are connecting ambition with opportunity and enhancing the readiness of youth for the future of work," Mango added.

Established in 2015 under Prince Hussein's directives, CPF leads national programmes in economic participation, leadership and sustainable community development.

Through 14 initiatives and 26 locations across the Kingdom, the foundation has reached over 2.2 million young people.

AGF is the largest privately funded Emirati philanthropic foundation in the Arab region. Since 2015, it has supported youth across the region through education and livelihood readiness initiatives, including providing more than 55,500 learning opportunities in Jordan through AGF and the Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair Refugee Education Fund.

## Agricultural Credit Corporation grants JD24m in loans through May — report

AMMAN (JT) — The Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) granted agricultural loans worth some JD24 million during the first five months of 2026, benefiting 4,690 farmers under its annual lending plan, according to a report cited by Al Mamlaka TV.

The report showed that the corporation's 2026 lending plan totals JD70 million, with lending activity reaching 35 per cent of the target by the end of May.

Loan repayments collected during the same period also amounted to JD24 million, according to the report.

In the area of social protection, the ACC said that its loan portfolio insured against death reached JD140 million, covering nearly 28,000 beneficiaries.

Compensation payments totalling JD286,000 were disbursed to 64 borrowers



The Agricultural Credit Corporation says that its 2026 lending plan totals JD70 million, with lending activity reaching 35 per cent of the target by the end of May

through the Death Assistance Fund, while 27 beneficiaries received a combined JD11,000 from the Humanitarian Exemption Fund for cases not covered by the mutual assistance programme.

The corporation also

reported progress in its digital transformation efforts, including the launch of a new computerised system and integrated electronic services linked to partner institutions.

More than 4,700 borrowers have benefited

from the new services, with additional digital services currently under development.

The report also said that the corporation also signed an addendum to an agreement with the Ministry of Labour to support vo-

educational education and youth empowerment through interest-free loans of up to JD15,000.

ACC also signed a JD1 million agreement with the Ministry of Health for the Healthy Villages Project, in addition to memorandums of understanding with the Specific Union of Women Farmers and an agreement with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation under the Rural Economic Growth and Employment Project.

In 2025, the ACC financed more than 12,880 farmers and investors, with total lending reaching JD64 million, up JD7 million from 2024.

Of this amount, around JD9 million was provided through Islamic financing, while some JD11 million was allocated as interest-free loans supporting various agricultural activities.

## Interior, education ministers review security, logistics plans for Tawjihi exams

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Interior Mazen Faraya and Education Minister Azmi Mahafzah on Sunday discussed security measures and logistical arrangements for 2026's General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (Tawjihi), as authorities prepare to ensure a "smooth" session of the nationwide exams.

The meeting, held at the Interior Ministry, was attended by Interior Ministry Secretary-General Khaled Abu Hamour, Education Ministry Secretary-General for Educational Affairs Nawaf Ajarmeh, the director of operations and control at the Public Security Directorate (PSD), and governors via videoconference, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Faraya stressed the

readiness of the Interior Ministry and PSD to support the examination process, ensure security at examination halls and marking centres, and safeguard the integrity of the Tawjihi exams.

He also underscored the importance of drawing on lessons learned from previous years to address any challenges that may arise during the examination period.

Mahafzah commended the role of the Interior Ministry and security agencies in supporting the successful administration of the exams, describing them as "key partners" in implementing the ministry's plans.

He also outlined arrangements for this year's examinations, which will be held in two phases for grade 12 and grade 11 students.



Tawjihi students stand outside an examination centre in Amman

rector of operations and control at the PSD highlighted ongoing coordination between the directorate, admin-

istrative governors and the Education Ministry to ensure a secure examination environment through joint security

plans. He added that a civil defence plan is also in place to respond to any emergency situations.

# Hassan receives Iraqi parliament speaker, reaffirms solid Amman-Baghdad ties



Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday receives Iraqi Parliament Speaker Hebat Halbousi and an accompanying delegation

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday received Iraqi Parliament Speaker Hebat Halbousi and an accompanying delegation, with both sides reaffirming the strong Amman-Baghdad historical ties and their commitment to expanding cooperation across key sectors.

During the meeting, Hassan stressed Jordan's support for security, stability and continued development in Iraq, describing Iraq's security as an inte-

gral part of the security of Jordan and the wider region, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The discussions focused on strengthening bilateral relations and advancing joint projects in the fields of energy, electricity, trade and economic cooperation.

Both sides underscored the importance of accelerating efforts to facilitate trade, enhance private-sector partnerships and encourage greater cooperation between busi-

ness communities in the two countries.

They also emphasised the need for closer coordination in light of ongoing regional challenges, noting that stronger cooperation is essential to mitigating their impact and promoting shared interests.

The meeting highlighted the two countries' mutual determination to build on their longstanding partnership and further deepen economic and strategic ties, according to the statement.

## AT A GLANCE

June 16th announced public holiday in observance of Hijri New Year



AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday issued a circular announcing on Tuesday, June 16, a public holiday to mark the start of the Islamic Hijri New Year. All ministries, government departments, public institutions and authorities, public universities, municipalities, joint service councils, the Greater Amman Municipality and wholly government-owned companies will observe the holiday, according to a Prime Ministry statement. The circular exempts ministries, departments and institutions for which it is otherwise required. To mark this occasion, the prime minister called on all ministries, government departments, and public institutions and authorities to highlight the significance of the Islamic New Year and honour it accordingly. This Muharram 1 marks 1447 lunar years since the Prophet Mohammad's migration from Mecca to Medina, known as the "Hijra".

## Indicators point to higher food self-sufficiency in Jordan — official

AMMAN (JT) — Several indicators point to an increase in Jordan's food self-sufficiency, according to Supreme Council for Food Security Secretary Nada Fraihat.

Speaking to Al Mamlaka, Fraihat said the number of agricultural commodities meeting local market demand has increased, with expectations that the self-sufficiency rate will continue to improve in the coming period.

She also said that Jordan remains dependent on imports for several strategic commodities, including wheat, barley, sugar, rice and vegetable oils, according to the Department of Statistics (DoS).

Fraihat attributed the continued reliance on imports largely to structural constraints, most notably water

scarcity, which limits the Kingdom's ability to expand production of key crops such as wheat and rice.

On sugar, she said that a development project is currently under way aimed at increasing domestic self-sufficiency levels.

Regarding red meat, Fraihat said self-sufficiency currently stands at 36 per cent, describing it as a "satisfactory" level given the prevailing production conditions.

She noted that the challenge is not only related to production capacity, but also to economic feasibility and resource efficiency.

She added that high feed prices, labour and energy costs, and limited grazing resources make local production in some cases less competitive than im-

ports from countries with larger agricultural bases.

Fraihat also highlighted food loss and waste as a key challenge affecting national food availability, stressing that improving efficiency in this area could enhance overall food supply without requiring additional production.

She said per capita food waste in Jordan stands at around 81 kilogrammes annually, describing the figure as high for a country with limited natural resources, particularly water, based on national studies conducted in late 2025.

A nationwide awareness campaign titled "No to Food Waste" is currently under way, she added, covering media outreach and public awareness activities. A national roadmap has



Supreme Council for Food Security Secretary Nada Fraihat says that the number of agricultural commodities meeting local market demand has increased, with expectations that the self-sufficiency rate will continue to improve in the coming period

surplus output in several agricultural crops, particularly vegetables, although the Kingdom continues to rely heavily on imports for staple commodities.

Commenting on the broader outlook, Jordan Chamber of Industry Representative for the Food, Catering, Agriculture and Live-Stock Sector Mohammad Jitan said Jordan may be among the most food-secure countries in the region, with some neighbouring markets relying on it in certain food sectors.

He added that Jordan has achieved self-sufficiency, and in some cases surplus production, in selected food manufacturing industries, noting that a new report on food security and self-sufficiency is expected in the third quarter of the year.

### Jordan offers condolences to Iraq over traffic accident victims



AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday expressed its deepest condolences to the government and people of Iraq over the victims of a traffic accident in Dhi Qar Governorate. Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Fuad Majali reiterated Jordan's solidarity with Iraq, extending heartfelt sympathies to the families of the victims and wishing the injured a speedy recovery, according to a Foreign Ministry spokesman.

## JFA signs partnership with Google Gemini

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Football Association (JFA) and Google signed a partnership agreement on Sunday naming Google Gemini as the official artificial intelligence (AI) technical sponsor of the national football team.

The partnership aims to leverage advanced technology to support the national team, enhance fan engagement and expand the global reach of Jordanian football through innovative digital solutions.

Under the agreement, the two sides will launch a series of fan-focused initiatives across digital platforms, using Google Gemini to create AI-powered interactive experiences. Supporters will be able to engage with players in new ways and access creative content documenting the team's journey.

The collaboration will also enable fans to use Google Gemini



tools to design visual cheering materials and produce original team-related content.

The technology will also be used to simplify football concepts, analyse match performances and deliver interactive experiences for football enthusiasts.

JFA Secretary-General Samar Nassar said the partnership represents an important step in the federation's digital transformation efforts, noting that AI technologies will help strengthen communication with supporters and improve their overall experience in

line with global trends in sport.

Nassar stressed the importance of the agreement as Jordan prepares for a historic milestone with The Nashama's participation in the 2026 FIFA World Cup, describing it as an opportunity to showcase the team's story, the passion of its supporters and Jordan's national identity to a global audience.

For his part, Regional Marketing Director at Google for the Middle East and North Africa Najeeb Jarrar said the partnership combines technology and sport to support the Jordanian national team and deepen fan engagement.

Jarrar noted that Google Gemini, one of Google's leading AI platforms, will help create innovative experiences that celebrate Jordanian football's heritage while connecting supporters around the world.

## SSC sentences man to death for killing three anti-narcotics officers

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The State Security Court (SSC) on Sunday sentenced a man to death after convicting him of murdering three Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) officers during a raid in Amman in March 2026.

The court unanimously declared the defendant guilty of three counts of murdering three officers while on duty on March 18 and handed him the maximum punishment of death, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Court documents said that the three deceased officers were part of an AND force that was dispatched to arrest the defendant in an eastern Amman suburb.

The minute the arresting force entered the premises, the suspect opened fire, killing three officers at



The court declares the defendant guilty of three counts of murdering three officers while on duty on March 18 and handed him the maximum punishment of death

the scene, court papers said.

A fourth AND officer was also injured during the raid and was rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment, the court papers stated.

The suspect was eventually controlled and arrested by other officers during the

raid, according to the court documents.

The arresting force seized three firearms, illegal pills, 600 grammes of Hashish, a small amount of Crystal Meth and an undisclosed amount of Marijuana during the raid, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate (PSD) that was released shortly following the shooting incident.

The deceased officers were identified as First Lt. Murad Mawajdeh, Sergeant Khaldoun Ruqeb and Corporal Subhi Deweikat, according to the PSD statement.

Sunday's death sentence will automatically be reviewed by the Court of Cassation within the next 30 days.

## JHCO, Nobles Properties launch scholarship programme for underprivileged students

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO) and Nobles Properties on Sunday signed a Memorandum of Understanding to launch a university scholarship programme for Jordanian and Palestinian students from underprivileged families.

The programme will support students pursuing bachelor's degrees at public universities, with a focus on medical and information technology specialisations.

It aims to expand access to higher education, empower disadvantaged groups, and contribute to com-

munity development through investment in youth, according to a JHCO statement.

Under the agreement, JHCO would manage the programme and oversee the selection process, including receiving applications, conducting social assessments to verify eligibility and monitoring beneficiaries' academic progress throughout their studies.

JHCO Secretary-General Hussein Shibli said that education is a key tool for empowerment and long-term development, adding that the partnership represents a model of cooperation between

the private sector and humanitarian organisations in investing in human capital as a foundation for sustainable growth.

Chairman of Nobles Properties Omar Ayesch said that the agreement reflects the company's commitment to supporting diligent students who continue their education despite financial and social challenges.

He added that the initiative forms part of the company's broader corporate social responsibility efforts, stressing that education remains the cornerstone of building resilient and developed societies.

AMMAN (JT) — EU Special Representative for Human Rights Kajsa Ollongren said on Tuesday that Jordan is regarded as a key partner for the European Union and is considered a "valuable and reliable partner".

Ollongren said that the two sides are bound by a comprehensive strategic partnership reflected in high-level visits and regular dialogue on issues of mutual interest, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The EU official also commended Jordan's role as a stabilising force in the region and its resilience amid ongoing regional challenges, stressing that these issues remain central to Jordan-EU cooperation.

She said that her mandate covers human rights in its broad sense, including international humanitarian law, international human rights



Kajsa Ollongren

law, democracy and governance, adding that security and displacement issues are closely linked to this framework.

She also stressed the importance of preserving the international multi-lateral system based on the rule of international law amid current geopolitical shifts, saying Jordan and the EU share the same view on the need to uphold it.

On human rights in

Jordan, she said that discussions were "open and frank", adding that there is an institutional and structured dialogue between the two sides on human rights, democracy and governance.

She noted that she met representatives of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to discuss the situation of

Palestinian and Syrian refugees.

She said that the refugee file remains a key priority, particularly amid reductions in UN funding, despite the EU being the "largest donor" supporting these efforts.

Ollongren also said that human rights are facing growing pressure globally and in the region, adding that international humanitarian law is not being sufficiently respected in ongoing conflicts, underscoring the importance of a strong EU-Jordan partnership.

She warned of the risks of worsening regional conditions and potential new waves of displacement, citing large numbers of displaced people in Lebanon and continued uncertainty over developments in Iran.

On women's empowerment, she praised

the high level of education among Jordanian women and their strong presence in universities, saying increasing their participation in the labour market represents an important opportunity for Jordan despite relatively low participation rates.

She added that women's representation in professional sectors and leadership positions improves workplace environments, enhances diversity in business and strengthens empowerment efforts.

Ollongren said that the Jordanian government appears aware of challenges related to transport, infrastructure and childcare, which need to be addressed to boost women's participation in the workforce, expressing confidence that more women will assume leadership roles in the future.

# 'Joy, faith, love': Giant crowd flocks to Pope's Madrid mass

MADRID (AFP) — A jubilant crowd of Catholic faithful filled Madrid with chants, cheers and applause on Sunday as an open-air mass by Pope Leo XIV imbued the Spanish capital with religious fervour.

Cibeles Square — best known as the rallying point for Real Madrid fans celebrating their club's titles — was transformed into a giant communion of a different kind on day two of the Pontiff's visit to Spain.

A human tsunami — numbering more than 1.2 million people according to organisers — braved the heat. Many lay on the bare pavements from the early morning to get a better spot.

Crowds lined the streets crying out "Long live the Pope!" as Leo saluted the faithful from his popemobile before the mass.

Laura Peralta, a 46-year-old school councillor, had travelled from the southern region of Andalusia, determined not to miss the



Pope Leo XIV watches flamenco dancers and musicians during the meeting Building networks with the world of Culture, Art, Economy and Sports at the Movistar Arena in Sunday

occasion of "excitement, joy, faith and love".

Leo had called for an end to "polarising nar-

ratives" as a week-long state visit expected to focus on migration and social issues began on

Saturday, a source of inspiration for Peralta. "They are good teachings, whether we be-

lieve in him or not. They are humanitarian teachings," Peralta said of Leo, the fourth pope

she has seen after John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis.

Groups of all ages converged on the city centre to the sound of drums and guitars, with hardy pilgrims lugging rucksacks and camping material on their backs.

Teresa Valdecantos, a human resources employee in her 50s, arrived propped up on crutches but was undeterred. "Who doesn't have pain? I've come with a good chair," she told AFP.

### 'Worth the effort'

The authorities had prepared a vast logistical and security operation to secure the mass and the ensuing procession led by Leo.

Central Madrid was decked out with banners bearing the Pope's face and thousands of white and yellow carnations, matching the Vatican flag's colours.

As the solemn moment of the Eucharist got under way, the noise gave way to a reverent silence.

Hundreds of priests who had assembled handed out the consecrated wafers to the attendees with the help of volunteers who shaded them with white umbrellas.

"Seeing so many people, helped me a lot to pray. We were singing, answering prayers, it was a special moment," Lourdes Madrigal, 47, told AFP.

Miguel Moreno was unable to see the ceremony first-hand but thought watching it on a giant screen went "perfectly, like in any church, like any Sunday".

"It's an effort, but it's worth it. Lots of people want to experience that," the 50-year-old lawyer said, praising the city for a "brilliant" organisation.

### 'We want to see the Pope!'

Many onlookers had hats and fans to shield themselves from the sun. Although water bottles were handed

out, several people fainted and had to be evacuated, an AFP journalist saw.

Closer to the high-security perimeter, a crowd of worshippers had despaired as police officers blocked their route.

"We want to see the pope!" they chanted in the small streets surrounding Cibeles Square, brandishing their QR access codes on sheets of paper and phones.

"I have come to meet Jesus Christ through the words of the Pope," said 30-year-old police officer Marta Perez.

"He's come to do good, with all his love," she said of Leo's firm stance in favour of peace and migrants.

Catholicism has played a central role in Spanish life for centuries, but traditional religious observance has declined for decades in line with a trend across Europe.

Yet for Maria Ferez, 33, the huge attendance proved that "the Church is alive".

## Hundreds of kidnap victims freed from Nigerian extremists

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria (AFP) — Several hundred people kidnapped by Boko Haram earlier this year from a village in the northeastern state of Borno were freed over the weekend, a senator and local youth leader said on Sunday.

Kidnappings, often for ransom, have become a key tactic of Boko Haram extremists in their 17-year-old insurgency against the Nigerian state, mostly concentrated in the northeast.

Samaila Kaigama, president of the Borno South Youth Alliance [BOSYA], said his group "has secured the release of all the 416 women and children abducted from Ngoshe".

They were released Saturday, Kaigama told journalists.

Mohammed Ali Ndume, a senator from Borno, confirmed the release to AFP.

It was not immediate-

ly clear how the victims' release was secured.

But separately, the military said it executed an "intelligence-led rescue operation" freeing 360 people.

The victims had been held by Boko Haram militants "under harsh conditions after being abducted from several communities, particularly within the Ngoshe axis", it said.

"Sadly, two infants died due to exhaustion from prolonged captivity and harsh terrain," Daniel Bwala, a spokesman for President Bola Tinubu, said on social media.

The military statement said troops had gathered intelligence and used "psychological operations" to sow "mistrust within the insurgent ranks" before "the commencement of the assault phase".

The militants had demanded millions of naira in ransom for the Ngoshe captives.

Authorities in Nigeria deny paying ransoms, though analysts say it is common practice, by both the government and victims' families.

Nigeria's various armed groups, including extremists, "bandit" gangs and separatists, have created a kidnapping crisis across the country that raised some \$1.66 million in ransom payments between July 2024 and June 2025, according to a report by SBM Intelligence, a Lagos-based consultancy.

Ngoshe lies less than 10 kilometres from the Cameroonian border in the Gwoza hills, a Boko Haram stronghold, and has come under repeated attack.

Since erupting in 2009 with Boko Haram's uprising, Nigeria's jihadist insurgency, which has spawned multiple armed groups, has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions.

## Starmmer will be 'part of' any leadership race — British deputy PM

LONDON (AFP) — British Prime Minister Keir Starmer will stand in a leadership contest if triggered; a senior minister said on Sunday, after media reported Starmer had contacted key backers insisting he would run in any race.

This came after popular northern mayor Any Burnham, who is standing in a key by-election this month, said last week he would participate in any leadership race, although none has yet been triggered.

Starmer "has been absolutely clear, were there to be a contest, you need 81 signatures [of MPs] to launch a contest, he will be part of that contest", Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy told Sky News on Sunday.

The prime minister would automatically be included in any



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer is shown a Vanta system as he visits defence contractor STARK in Swindon, southwest England, on Friday

leadership ballot if he wanted to participate.

The BBC and The Sun newspaper reported on Sunday, citing unnamed MPs, that Starmer has been calling key supporters this

weekend to say that if there is a contest he would "fight it".

The Sun reported: "Sir Keir has hardened his position and is hellbent on running against Mr Burnham."

Labour veteran Burn-

ham is standing to become an MP again in a June 18 vote in Makerfield in north-western England. If elected, he would be able to take part in a leadership

contest. Burnham said on a BBC talkshow on Thursday that he would seek to challenge Starmer if he won the by-election and if a race is triggered.

He said former health minister Wes Streeting, who resigned last month with an open letter expressing no confidence in Starmer, "seems to have launched a leadership contest. So if that is running, I would seek to join it."

The prime minister has repeatedly rejected calls to resign and insisted he wants to stay on as leader of the Labour party after winning a general election in 2024.

Starmer told LBC radio station on Friday "I'm not going to walk away", adding he did not want to "plunge our country into the chaos of a leadership fight".

## North Korea nuclear programme 'absolutely non-negotiable': leader's sister

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea's nuclear weapons programme is "absolutely non-negotiable", the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong-un said in a statement carried by state media on Sunday, ahead of a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Pyeongyang has long insisted on its right to a nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programmes although they are forbidden under the terms of UN Security Council sanctions. It enshrined its nuclear status in its constitution in 2023.

"Our status as a nuclear power is absolutely non-negotiable," Kim's sister Kim Yo Jong said in a statement published by North Korea's official Rodong Sinmun, adding that the North "will not tolerate any threats".

The statement by Kim Yo Jong, a key player in the country's communications and foreign policy, came on the eve of Xi's visit to North Korea from Monday to Tuesday, according to state media.



This photo taken on Saturday and released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) via KNS on Sunday, shows North Korean leader Kim Jong-un attending the 80th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Korean Children's Union at Kim Il-sung Stadium in Pyongyang

Beijing is a vital source of political and economic support to North Korea, which is one of the most diplomatically isolated countries in the world and under heavy international sanctions.

Xi's upcoming visit to Pyongyang would be his first in seven years, and comes after he hosted back-to-back

summits with US President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin last month.

Pyeongyang has repeatedly declared itself an "irreversible" nuclear state since Kim Jong-un's 2019 summit with Trump collapsed over the scope of denuclearisation and sanctions relief.

North Korea's leader

has since been emboldened by the war in Ukraine, securing critical support from Moscow after sending thousands of troops to fight alongside Russian forces.

Kim Yo Jong, in her statement, went on to slam Washington over its comments that the goal of North Korea's denuclearisation had

been reaffirmed during last month's summit between Donald Trump and Xi Jinping in Beijing.

The White House posted a fact sheet following the summit stating that "President Trump and President Xi confirmed their shared goal to denuclearise North Korea", which Kim Yo Jong said was false.

"Some officials in the United States still have yet to awaken from their escapist and anachronistic dream," she said.

"This is nothing more than Washington's habitual dissemination of false information."

She rejected Washington's attempts to deny or challenge the North's status as a nuclear power, saying it "carries no legal force".

"The policy of continuously strengthening the country's self-defensive nuclear deterrent, as set out by the nation's leader, is an irreversible course that must be implemented without fail," she added.

## DR Congo ceasefire a 'health emergency' given Ebola outbreak — EU

BUNIA, DR Congo (AFP) — An Ebola outbreak raging in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has made it even more urgent to broker a ceasefire for the conflict-ravaged region, the European Union's crisis management commissioner said during a visit on Sunday.

The EU said it had flown in 100 tonnes of humanitarian aid on Sunday — including medicine, tents and protective gear to fight the haemorrhagic fever — to hard-to-reach Ituri province, the epicentre of the epidemic.

Ituri is difficult to access because of poor roads, and is plagued by insecurity because of numerous armed groups operating in the region, including the Rwanda-backed M23, which has seized vast swathes of territory.

Hadja Lahbib, the EU commissioner for crisis management, visited the provincial capital, Bunia, calling for humanitarian and health workers in the region to be guaranteed access to people in need.



Family members mourn as members of a Congolese Red Cross team prepare to lower the coffin of a woman suspected of having died from Ebola virus disease as part of her safe burial at a cemetery in Bunia on Sunday

"A ceasefire was already a political necessity. Now it's become a health emergency," she told journalists.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared an international health emergency over the outbreak.

In an updated toll Sunday, the DRC government said the country had 488 confirmed cases and 86 deaths in the epidemic, which it announced on May 15.

The WHO has reported another 19 cases in

neighbouring Uganda. There is no specific vaccine or treatment for the Bundibugyo Ebola strain behind the latest outbreak.

The European Commission said in a statement that a "humanitarian air bridge" to Bunia, which it has established with UNICEF, flew in the 100 tonnes of aid.

Lahbib said five more flights were planned for Bunia airport, a key logistics hub in the epidemic response.



Palestinians assess damage at the site of an Israeli air strike in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip, on Sunday

AFP photo

## Gaza health officials say 10 killed in Israeli attacks

GAZA CITY, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Gaza's civil defence service and hospitals said Israeli attacks killed at least 10 people on Sunday, in the latest episodes of violence despite a months-old truce.

Israel and Hamas have traded accusations of near-daily ceasefire violations, keeping the Gaza Strip gripped by bloodshed as progress on permanently ending

the war remains stalled. A strike on a vehicle near the Al Buraq School in western Gaza City killed four people, said the civil defence agency, which operates as a rescue service under Hamas.

Gaza City's Al Shifa hospital confirmed receiving the four bodies.

Another Israeli airstrike targeting a police station in the Al-Noss area of Al Mawasi district in western Khan

Yunis killed five people and wounded another 17, the agency reported.

Khan Yunis's Nasser Hospital confirmed receiving five bodies and treating the wounded, some of them in "critical condition".

The Gaza police directorate confirmed that Israeli warplanes struck the police station in Khan Yunis.

In a separate incident, Israeli naval forces shot dead a fisherman in the

early hours of Sunday, the Al Aqsa Hospital in Deir El Balah said after receiving his body.

The Israeli military said it was looking into reports of the attacks.

Sunday's bloodshed followed a deadly Saturday that saw at least 12 people killed across Gaza, including a man the Israeli military identified as a Hamas "terrorist cell commander".

At least 961 Palestin-

ians have been killed since the ceasefire took effect on October 10 last year, according to Gaza's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations.

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

## Bolivian congress gives Paz power to use troops against crippling protests

LA PAZ (AFP) — Bolivia's legislature gave the green light on Sunday for President Rodrigo Paz to use the military to clear roadblocks that have crippled key cities for weeks.

A month of heated demonstrations calling for the centre-right Paz to step down have paralysed the Andean nation, with blockades causing severe food and medicine shortages.

Endless lines at the pump have also led many to sleep in the vehicles to not lose their place.

A bill relaxing the country's strict rules surrounding states of emergency passed the lower chamber following 15 hours of overnight debate, the body's president, Roberto Castro, announced.

Having already

passed the Senate, it heads to Paz's desk for signature.

The new law comes a day after dozens of riot police backed by military vehicles fired tear gas as they attempted to clear a road in the town of San Julian.

The town is in the Santa Cruz region — an agricultural breadbasket supplying food to the country's western areas.

Protesters threw stones and burned tyres to try to halt the police's advance, according to an AFP reporter at the scene.

Paz on Sunday wrote on X that that the capital La Paz and second city El Alto are "still facing difficult times, but concrete progress is also beginning to be made," including on fuel distribution.

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.

### Legal liability

He has repeatedly called for dialogue with the protesters but on Wednesday announced the legislation seeking to amend the country's state of emergency laws.

The new rules would allow troops to use force against protesters, and grants them a "presumption of legality" in situations of conflict.

The issue of legal liability for the military was one of the most heated debates.

## King receives Iraqi parliament speaker

Continued from page 1

His Majesty also called for preventing the exploitation of the situation in the region

as a pretext to impose new facts on the ground in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza.

Speaker of the House

Representatives Mazen Oadi and Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh attended the meeting.

## JHCO says tents distributed to displaced families in war-torn Gaza

Continued from page 1

The tents were distributed to the most vulnerable families in displacement areas in southern Gaza, contributing to the provision of temporary shelter for households facing difficult humanitarian conditions amid the worsening situation in

the enclave.

Programme officials said that the distribution was part of a broader relief plan implemented by the Jordanian Campaign and the JHCO, which includes shelter, emergency relief and humanitarian assistance.

The programme is intended to support

affected families and help meet their basic needs amid the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, according to the statement.

These efforts include the implementation of programmes and initiatives aimed at meeting the urgent needs of the most affected groups.

## Zelensky meets allies in UK after strike hits Ukraine nuclear site

LONDON (AFP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky arrived in Britain Sunday for defence talks with leaders of the UK, France and Germany after new Russian strikes killed five people and hit a nuclear site in Ukraine.

Zelensky said in an online post he was in London and would meet British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

Kyiv is asking its Western allies for more ammunition deliveries for its anti-air defences as Ukraine endures daily Russian strikes. Zelensky is also seeking ways for the allies to further pressure Russia to end the fighting.

On Sunday, Russia fired waves of drones and other munitions at Ukraine, with one of the attacks damaging a

nuclear storage facility in the Chernobyl exclusion zone, Ukrainian officials said.

'As of now, there are no readings exceeding normal background radiation levels. But there is certainly an increase in Russia's brazenness, which long ago went off the charts'

Radiation levels at the facility remained within normal limits

following the attack, although its fuel reception building was "partially destroyed", according to Ukraine's nuclear energy operator, Energoatom.

Moscow and Kyiv have intensified drone strikes on each other in recent months, as US-led diplomatic efforts to end the war — now in its fifth year — remain stalled and sidetracked by the conflict in the Middle East.

Russian leader Vladimir Putin has rejected direct peace talks proposed by his Ukrainian counterpart. Zelensky, in an earlier online post, said Russia had used an Iranian-designed Shahed drone to "hit one of the buildings of the Centralised Spent Fuel Storage Facility" in the Chernobyl exclusion zone.

"As of now, there are no readings exceeding normal background radiation levels. But there

is certainly an increase in Russia's brazenness, which long ago went off the charts," he said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said it was dispatching a team to inspect the damage, calling the incident "deeply concerning".

The facility is located in a remote area of forest around a dozen kilometres from the site of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster, and is designed to house spent fuel from Ukraine's three active nuclear plants.

### Deadly strikes

Both sides accused each other of renewed attacks on civilians Sunday.

A Russian bombardment of a public transport stop in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region left at least two people dead, while a nearby drone strike killed a 56-year-old

minibus driver, authorities said.

Separate Russian attacks on the central Dnipropetrovsk region killed two men, governor Oleksandr Ganzha posted on Telegram.

In Russia, a Ukrainian drone strike on a car in the Belgorod border region killed a woman and injured her husband, local authorities said.

Hundreds of thousands have been killed and millions forced to flee their homes since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Russia now occupies around a fifth of its neighbour: the Crimean peninsula, which it annexed in 2014, most of the eastern regions of Donetsk and Lugansk — collectively referred to as the Donbas — and large parts of the southern Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions.

## Jerusalem returns to centre stage amid Israeli schemes to impose new realities

Continued from page 1

Greek Orthodox Archbishop and Head of the Council of Church Leaders Archbishop Christophoros Atallah reaffirmed that no one is more deserving than the Hashemites of custodianship over Jerusalem's Muslim and Christian holy sites.

"Christians feel reassured about their holy sites under the Hashemite custodianship," Atallah said, stressing that the Hashemites' role is rooted in a longstanding commitment to protecting Jerusalem's holy sites.

Officials in Jerusalem warned of increasingly serious efforts to expand Israeli control over Al Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest

site. Jerusalem Governorate adviser Marouf Al Rifai said that a recent campaign by Israeli occupation authorities to recruit volunteers into the so-called Temple Mount Unit represented a dangerous development and reflected a more advanced stage in efforts to Judaise Al Aqsa Mosque.

He said that the initiative involved integrating activists from extremist Temple groups and religious nationalist movements into structures used by Israeli authorities to impose control over the site.

Christian leaders have underlined the significance of the Hashemite Custodianship as major pillar in preserving the Old

City's identity, warning at the same time of repeated Israeli attempts to alter Jerusalem's long-held status quo.

During a meeting with His Majesty in Amman in December, Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem and All Palestine and Jordan, said the Hashemite Custodianship over Muslim and Christian holy sites in the Holy Land remains a force for good and a fundamental pillar for achieving balance in times of uncertainty and challenges.

He asserted that the existential threat to the Christian presence in the region is real and growing, citing ongoing violations and infringements on the right to free access to holy sites.

He also said that Christians in the Holy Land are watching with grave concern the erosion of the historic arrangements of the status quo and the disturbing violations committed by extremist groups against Al Aqsa Mosque.

Archbishop of the Anglican Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem Husam Naoum affirmed that the Hashemite Custodianship bolsters the resilience of the Church in Jerusalem, and is considered a safety valve for Palestinians who remain steadfast in their land and holy sites.

He warned that violations by Israeli extremists against Muslim and Christian holy sites cannot be tolerated and must be

condemned, stressing the need to preserve freedom of worship and access to places of worship, including Al Haram Al Sharif and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

### Status quo under threat

The developments coincided with renewed warnings from the Arab Parliament.

Arab Parliament Speaker Mohammed Al Yamahi has said that the 59th anniversary of the Naksa comes at one of the most dangerous moments in the region's history, accusing Israel of pursuing settlement, displacement and expansionist policies aimed at imposing new realities on the ground.

He warned that continued escalation threatens regional stability and undermines prospects for a just and lasting peace.

Political analyst Amer Sabaileh said that Israel is moving to reorder its security priorities following the war with Iran.

"For Israel, the fronts that have opened in recent years are not ones it can simply live with. The priority is to address them according to the level of threat they pose," he said.

"With the war in Iran paused, Lebanon is now taking centre stage. Syria has gradually moved down the list of priorities, while attention is shifting towards the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem," Sabaileh added.

"Israel does not intend to coexist with fronts that can be reopened against it. From its perspective, reordering these arenas has become inevitable."

Jordan has held the responsibility of overseeing Islamic endowments and holy sites in Jerusalem since 1924. The custodianship was further recognised under the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

In 2013, His Majesty King Abdullah and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas signed an agreement reaffirming Jordan's role in protecting Jerusalem and its holy sites and safeguarding the historical and legal status of Al Aqsa Mosque and Al Haram Al Sharif.

The agreement also reaffirms the historic principles upon which Jordan and Palestine are in agreement as regards Jerusalem and their common goal of defending Jerusalem together.

It also reaffirms the status of East Jerusalem as Palestinian sovereign territory, and that all post-1967 occupation practices or aggressions against Jerusalem are not recognised by any international or legal entity.

Article 2 of the agreement reads, "His Majesty King Abdullah II, as the Custodian of the Jerusalem Holy Sites, exerts all possible efforts to preserve the Jerusalem Holy Sites, especially Al Haram Al Sharif."

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An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975

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## Israel, Iran and the remaking of regional power

As Israeli military operations deepen inside Lebanon, while direct negotiations between the Lebanese government and Israel continue, the region appears to be entering a new reality that could amount to a complete reversal of the equations that have governed the Lebanese front since the end of the 2006 war.

From an intelligence and strategic perspective, Israel is reshaping the security landscape along its northern border in a manner fundamentally different from anything seen over the past two decades. Advancing beyond the Litani River is not merely an effort to neutralise Hizbollah, it reflects a broader attempt to redefine strategic depth and deterrence across the northern front. This approach creates a complex dilemma for Hizbollah. As its material and structural losses continue to grow, preserving its remaining political gains becomes an existential priority. Israel has effectively transformed the confrontation from a cycle of periodic escalation into a struggle with existential dimensions, increasing Hizbollah's incentive to raise the cost of any future settlement for all parties involved.

At the same time, the dynamics inside Iran are becoming increasingly complex. The competition between the negotiating camp and the security-oriented camp associated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is not about ultimate objectives, but rather about the methods used to achieve them. Both factions seek to prevent the consolidation of a strategic Israeli victory, yet they differ over the timing and instruments of escalation. What appears to be an internal division is in reality a disagreement over crisis management. The longer the political deadlock persists, the greater the likelihood that Tehran will resort to creating additional pressure, whether through attacks against Gulf states, the activation of proxy networks, maritime escalation or threats linked to the Strait of Hormuz.

This distinction is particularly important when assessing future risks. Divisions within revolutionary security-oriented systems rarely produce political moderation. Instead, competing factions often seek to demonstrate greater resolve to avoid appearing weak, increasing the likelihood of calculated risk-taking rather than restraint.

On the international level, President Trump's insistence on keeping negotiations with Iran alive has deepened the strategic divergence between Washington and Tel Aviv. While the US administration views diplomacy as an opportunity to generate stability that can be translated into political gains, Israel sees the current moment as a historic opportunity to reshape regional balances of power. This has created what could be described as an alliance management crisis, in which the alliance remains formally intact while the priorities of both partners continue to diverge, increasing the risk of unilateral and poorly coordinated initiatives.

In this context, the Strait of Hormuz remains one of Iran's most important pressure instruments. The strategic value of the threat does not necessarily lie in physically closing the waterway, but in keeping global energy markets under the influence of persistent risk. A rise in perceived vulnerability alone can affect energy prices, insurance costs and maritime transportation, allowing Tehran to secure significant strategic gains without bearing the costs of direct confrontation.

As a result, the real battlefield is no longer confined to Lebanon or the Gulf. It has expanded to encompass the global economy itself. Iran is pursuing a long-term strategy of attrition based on calibrated pressure, limited military signalling and controlled escalation, keeping both the regional and international systems in a state of chronic tension without crossing the threshold into full-scale war.

Inside Israel, political tensions and the prospect of early elections add a new dimension to decision-making. War is no longer merely a security issue, it has become part of domestic political contest. This reduces negotiating flexibility and raises the political cost of any potential concession.

Consequently, the most important indicator in the months ahead will not be the number of attacks or casualties, but the evolution of Israel's operational doctrine. If the Israeli military continues to consolidate its presence beyond the Litani River and expand its operational footprint, the region will gradually move toward a model based on direct security control rather than mutual deterrence, effectively bringing the post-2006 framework to an end.

Ultimately, the region does not appear to be moving toward either a stable peace or a comprehensive regional war. Instead, it is drifting toward a new model of permanent confrontation characterised by low- and medium-intensity conflicts, incomplete deterrence, sustained pressure on energy markets and growing regional fragmentation. In this sense, the Middle East is entering a new historical phase in which influence, deterrence, alliances and rules of engagement are being redefined simultaneously, a convergence that makes the coming period more fragile, more complex and potentially more dangerous than a limited conventional war.



Amer Al Sabaaiah

## Overtaken by Hong Kong in global wealth management, Swiss keep cool

Agence France-Presse

ZURICH — Though Hong Kong has overtaken Switzerland as the number one in cross-border wealth management, rather than enter panic mode, Swiss banks seem unruffled, feeling it bolsters the case against looming tighter banking regulations.

Hong Kong is now the world's largest cross-border booking centre thanks to inflows from mainland China, strong initial public offering activity and equity market gains, said a study published last week by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

Hong Kong had \$2.95 trillion of cross-border assets under management in 2025, while Switzerland had \$2.946 trillion.

Rapid advances in technology innovation and artificial intelligence sectors are "expected to open up greater scope for development within Hong Kong's asset and wealth management industry", said the semi-autonomous Chinese city's Financial Secretary Paul Chan.

More than 60 per cent of the external capital comes from mainland China, the BCG 2026 Global Wealth Report said, adding that Hong Kong was "cementing its role as China's gateway to global markets".

"Uncertainties around US-

China tensions are the main reason they are moving capital and managing wealth in Hong Kong," Gary Ng, senior economist at Natixis Corporate and Investment Banking, told AFP.

However, China's market regulator announced a sweeping investigation in May against some brokers running cross-border trading, as it launched a two-year crackdown on investment leaving the mainland.

On Monday, China's cabinet unveiled new rules due to enter force in July, aimed at curbing outbound investment and deals with foreign entities which might transfer restricted technology, services and data overseas without authorisation.

"Investors engaging in foreign investment and related activities... shall not endanger China's national security or harm national interests," authorities said.

Ng noted that if Beijing "truly wants to accelerate" the internationalisation of China's yuan currency, "it will need to accept freer cross-border capital movement".

### Tougher Swiss regulations planned

The Swiss Bankers Association told AFP that Hong Kong

had been directly benefitting from exceptionally strong asset growth in China.

But it said Swiss banks too had a successful presence in key Asian growth markets.

"For Switzerland, competitive framework conditions are particularly crucial for the future. It is essential that regulation remains targeted and internationally coordinated so that both stability and competitiveness are strengthened," it said.

Switzerland's biggest bank UBS is currently at loggerheads with the government, which wants to tighten banking regulations following the implosion of Credit Suisse in 2023.

UBS was strongarmed into a quickfire takeover of its closest domestic rival to prevent a major blow to Switzerland's financial stability.

Bern now wants stronger safeguards, given the merged megabank's size relative to the Swiss economy.

Hong Kong overtaking Switzerland "shows that international competitiveness must remain at the heart of the discussions", the Association of Swiss Private Banks, which represents wealth management firms, told AFP.

During debates on the government's proposals, "parliament will have to keep this in mind",

it added.

### 'Playing half the game'

Andreas Venditti, an analyst with Swiss investment managers Vontobel, said Hong Kong's rise to the top had been coming because growth rates were stronger in Asia.

"As Swiss banks are among the largest wealth managers in Asia, with UBS the largest in the region by very far, they clearly benefit from the higher growth rates," he told AFP.

UBS's assets under management in the Asia-Pacific region amounted to \$781 billion at the end of March, he noted.

Cross-border wealth grew by 10.7 per cent in Hong Kong in 2025, compared to 7.6 per cent in Switzerland, said BCG.

Dean Frankle, a managing director and financial institutions specialist at BCG, said Hong Kong overtaking Switzerland is primarily down to "the rise of Asia".

For wealthy Asian clients, "why would you go to Europe" when Hong Kong is "at your doorstep", he said, hence the importance for Swiss banks to be competitive in the Asian market.

"If you're not serving both markets, you're only playing half the game," he told AFP.

## Homes razed around Niger airport in anti-extremist clampdown

Agence France-Presse

ABIDJAN — Thousands of illegally built homes are being torn down in a sprawling neighbourhood next to Niamey airport that authorities say was infiltrated by extremists to carry out an unprecedented attack.

With the bulldozers just around the corner, people in Kobontafa in Niger's capital have been forced to hastily take down their roofs, doors and windows.

"We've been told to clear out," Ali Adamou said. "So, we're picking up the pace," he added from the roof of his house, a crowsbar in his hand, like dozens of others.

Niger's military-led rulers have introduced several recent measures designed to counter the risk of extremist strikes on the capital, which is on its guard.

For around a decade, the vast country in west Africa's Sahel region has battled violence by armed groups linked to Al Qaeda and the Islamic State group.

But on January 29, the city's Diiori Hamani international airport and a military drone base were targeted in an attack claimed by the Islamic State in the Sahel (EIS).

Nigerien armed forces and

Russian allied fighters repelled the strike, which was a rare development as violence had previously been contained to other parts of the country.

Twenty assailants were killed and four soldiers wounded in the surprise assault, which caused damage, authorities said.

Junta chief Gen. Abdourahmane Tiani, who seized power in a July 2023 coup, later spoke on state television of "a flaw in the system" that "enabled the attack", whose "objective was to destroy all of the air capabilities" of the army.

The demolition concerns mostly the east side of the airport.

The area is "occupied in an anarchic way" and is where the attackers came in from, Transport and Aviation Minister Col. Amadou Abdramane said.

Interior Minister Gen. Mohamed Toumba has said he fears a "new terrorist infiltration through these neighbourhoods" as well as the airport being downgraded by international authorities for lack of security.

"All the countries of the Alliance of Sahel States [Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger] must take drastic measures to strengthen their security," a former Nigerien lawmaker said, also pointing to widescale extremist

attacks at the heart of the Malian junta in April.

Some 26,000 people living in four neighbourhoods of illegally built dwellings, occupying nearly a quarter of the airport area, are affected, authorities say.

### 'Watch brigades'

People loaded furniture and other personal belongings into their cars or hired tricycles. Amid the rubble, children watched as a cargo plane took off nearby.

"Forcing 26,000 people to leave is the equivalent of a small town," civil society figure Maikoul Zodi said.

"Even if the operation is considered 'necessary', whatever the reason, Nigerien law and international standards require strict support measures. Without that, it becomes a forced and inhuman eviction," he said.

Authorities have promised to compensate those affected by the demolitions but say people must officially register.

"The government should have taken the social aspect into account and made appropriate arrangements to rehouse those concerned before demolishing the homes they had acquired over many years. Social justice is a demand of

the sovereign people," a political analyst, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said.

Other security measures have been introduced, too.

At the airport, the perimeter wall has been extended and more than 350 cameras have been installed inside and outside the premises.

Within the city, vehicles transporting flammable products, hydrocarbons, butane gas or explosives are prohibited without prior authorisation from going to strategic sites such as barracks, government ministries and public bodies.

Also, "in view of the new infiltration methods used by the enemy", the interior ministry has banned the lodging of "any foreigner" in mosques and Koranic schools, a common practice in a country with a Muslim majority population.

An awareness campaign has also been launched across the country encouraging people to report "any suspicious individual" by ringing the security forces on their emergency phone number.

And at the behest of the authorities, young people organised into "watch brigades" and other local groups set up every evening on the main junctions in the capital to keep an eye out.

## Burkina Faso junta quashes dissent in new crackdown

Agence France-Presse

ABIDJAN — As part of their clampdown on dissent, Burkina Faso's military rulers' latest targets have included an influential imam, several worshippers and students who criticised the junta.

Captain Ibrahim Traore seized power in a coup nearly four years ago and now openly asserts that he is not presiding over a democracy.

His army of supporters on social media regularly applaud the arrest and abduction of critics of the junta's "popular progressive revolution".

In what has now become a well-trodden pattern, masked men, sometimes in civilian clothing, arrive and detain anyone questioning the effectiveness of those in power, especially over the extremist violence that has plagued the west African country for a decade.

The lucky ones are convicted and end up in prison.

Others are conscripted and shipped off to fight the extremists at the front, some not to be seen again.

In the latest round-up, influential Sunni Imam Mohamad Ishaq Kindo was detained last week and taken to an unknown

destination.

Long seen as a junta supporter, he criticised a draft law regulating the exercise of religious freedoms in a country where around 60 per cent of the population is Muslim.

"The terror has reached its peak," an ally of the preacher told AFP.

"Brutally abducting a religious leader and preventing worshippers from gathering for prayer by firing tear gas even inside the mosque is taking things way too far," they said.

After his arrest, the imam's supporters demonstrated to call for his release and several were themselves detained.

Images on social media later showed them dressed in military uniforms and undergoing physical training at a camp in the capital.

"If an individual breaks the law, the justice system should deal with it. Why resort to such barbaric practices?" Kindo's ally said.

"What this regime is putting the people of Burkina Faso through is unbearable, all under the pretext of fighting terrorism, when we can't even see any results," they added.

In September 2022, Traore had justified toppling the previous

rulers for their inability to put an end to the extremist attacks.

He promised to do so within months. Nearly four years on, groups affiliated to Al Qaeda and the Daesh control large swathes of the country and have imposed a blockade on several cities.

A researcher in Ouagadougou, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said Kindo's arrest reflected a desire to strictly define the framework of religious discourse.

Public authorities, including those before Traore, believed that "in the face of terrorism, the only legitimate words that can be recognised from religious leaders are those that contribute to tolerance, social cohesion and peace", the researcher said.

The imam's arrest was not an isolated case.

The biggest student union, the General Union of Students of Burkina (Ugeb), has also been suspended and its leader arrested.

The union had denounced arbitrary arrests and criticised the junta for its "obvious inability to restore security".

A union official said, biting, that "what this regime wants is the elimination of all student movements and the establishment of a single, uniform way of

thinking".

"University is not a camp for subjugation and indoctrination, much less a prison," another activist complained.

Since the religious leader's arrest, the activist said people were noticeably speaking out a bit more freely.

"It's impossible to count how many videos there are of young people who, for the first time, are criticising the regime in scathing terms," he said.

However, even the most zealous supporters of the ruling authorities are not safe.

In March, activist Mahamadi Baguian, whose posts on social media sung the junta's praises, died after being arrested. Officially his death was put down to a "dizzy spell".

But the researcher said the clampdown against the imam and the faithful was not likely to turn people away from the junta, which was welcomed into power.

"I don't think these demonstrations can be powerful enough to cause the regime to lose significant support within the Muslim community," the researcher said.

The national office of the Sunni movement called in a statement on Sunday for calm and restraint and said it "regretted calls for a new mobilisation".

# BUSINESS

Monday, June 8, 2026

## More traffic, halved profits for airlines in 2026 — Industry forecast

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AFP) — Airlines are expecting higher passenger numbers in 2026 but half the profits of last year, according to forecasts released on Sunday at a conference in Brazil, as rising fuel costs fail to deter travellers.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA), which represents more than 370 airlines, estimates that its members will carry 5.1 billion passengers in 2026.

That is 2.4 per cent more than in 2025, which saw 4.98 billion passengers, according to a provisional estimate.

The 4 billion threshold was crossed in 2023.

But the growth will be accompanied by profitability at half last year's level, with losses for Middle Eastern airlines.

"War-related disruptions in the Middle East and rising fuel costs have shifted the outlook for airlines to the worse," IATA Director General Willie Walsh said in a statement.

"Profits will shrink from \$45 billion in 2025 to \$23 billion this year. And margins will shrink from 4.2 per



AFP file photo

cent to 2 per cent," he said, referring to the net margin.

According to IATA's calculations, net profit is expected to be \$4.50 per passenger, half the 2025 figure.

"Under the circumstances, that shows resilience. But it won't even buy you a hot dog at most of the FIFA World Cup venues and it does not leave much of a buffer should other

costs or taxes start rising," Walsh said. "Fuel price shock" Rising fuel costs, some of which are being reflected in ticket prices, have failed to deter people from travelling entirely.

IATA member airlines turnover is expected to rise by 9 per cent this year to \$1.165 billion.

"Airlines are bearing the brunt of the fuel price shock. While air

fares are rising, airlines are still absorbing part of the hike in their bottom lines," the IATA said.

Profitability will vary across different regions of the world, according to the IATA's projections.

Middle Eastern airlines, which have traditionally had access to an abundant supply of fuel, are expected to face a difficult year,

with net margins projected to turn negative.

For these airlines, including Emirates and Qatar Airways, "the immediate recovery path is likely to be driven more by pricing than by a rapid return of volumes," the IATA said.

But it is not concerned about demand, even as the Middle East war entered its 100th day on Sunday with no end in sight.

## Franchise, Trade Agencies Expo 2026 to open in Amman Tuesday

AMMAN (JT) — Franchise and Trade Agencies Expo 2026 will kick off on Tuesday at Amman International Exhibition Centre on Airport Road, with official participation from Jordan and Iraq, alongside business owners and companies.

The exhibition, is organised in cooperation with the Iraqi Business Council in Jordan, and it is projected to attract business owners, investors, agents and traders seeking new brands or international franchises.

The event will also attract distribution, marketing, and logistics companies and entrepreneurs looking to establish new franchising-based businesses, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

According to a council statement issued on Sunday, the activities seek to provide direct access to influential businesspeople and investors to establish new partnerships and agencies, and facilitate talks with franchising and distribution experts.

The venue will streamline steps to sign agreements and Memoranda of Understanding and explore financing options for projects and



Petra photo

Franchise and Trade Agencies Expo 2026 will kick off next Tuesday at Amman International Exhibition Centre on Airport Road

companies.

On its agenda, the list targets "vital" sectors mainly; banking, digital banking, insurance, food and retail, tourism and hospitality, technology and digital transformation, energy, construction, healthcare, medical supplies and pharmaceuticals, financial services and other promising sectors.

Additionally, the activities aim to open direct channels between local, regional and international companies, and Iraqi and Jordanian businesspeople to enhance opportunities for commercial agencies and franchises, facilitating market entry

into Iraq through reliable partnerships.

The expo provides a platform for networking and negotiation between businesses in a secure environment in Jordan.

In parallel, the exhibition aims to promote investment opportunities in Iraq to Arab and international companies, which hold commercial agencies, support entrepreneurship in Iraq by empowering the private sector with new products and franchises.

The statement said participants will exchange expertise in the field of brand distribution, marketing and franchising, Petra reported.

## UK proposes 'tech pact' with EU to boost AI, innovation

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AFP) — Britain floated the idea of striking a tech deal with the EU to boost ties in AI and other innovative sectors recently, as part of a push to rebuild post-Brexit relations.

UK business and trade secretary Peter Kyle said he discussed the possibility with EU Trade Chief Maros Sefcovic, during a Brussels meeting focused on other bilateral issues.

"There are enormous opportunities out there for us to partner," Kyle told a conference in the Belgian capital. "A tech partnership, for example."

With its vast capital markets London could play a key role in helping scale-up tech firms to rival American and Asian

giants, he said.

"We are the spin-out capital of Europe. We are the unicorn capital of Europe," Kyle later told reporters, referring to the creation of new companies and start-ups valued at more than \$1 billion.

"But I want to go much further, and we are much more likely to go global by working with European countries and the European Union."

Britain signed a similar — later-suspended — deal to align on innovation and spur private-sector investment with the United States in September.

The idea of a repeat with the EU comes as London and Brussels painstakingly negotiate other matters un-

der a "reset" in relations vowed by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer to fire up Britain's insipid economy.

Kyle met Sefcovic as the EU and UK are due to hold a summit at a yet-to-be confirmed date, likely in July.

Both parties are hoping to present several deals, namely on food and animal safety standards, a youth mobility scheme, and the linking of their emissions trading systems, at the event.

But discussions have hit a series of roadblocks.

Britain is said to want a cap on the number of visas granted under the mobility scheme and to be unwilling to pay into some EU funds as requested by Brussels.

## New aid shipment from Mexico arrives in Cuba



AFP file photo

HAVANA (AFP) — A new shipment of humanitarian aid from Mexico arrived in Cuba on Sunday, as the communist-led island faces a mounting crisis amid the US blockade on oil imports.

The shipment — the sixth from Mexico since February — arrived in Havana's harbour Sunday morning, AFP journalists witnessed.

While the United States has had an embargo on Cuba for decades, US President Donald Trump has drastically ramped up pressure on the country and openly muses about taking it over.

tanker has been authorised to dock since then, with fuel shortages leading to power outages of up to 22 hours a day.

The United Nations representative on the island warned Thursday that the humanitarian emergency, coupled with the onset of the Caribbean hurricane season, made for an "explosive cocktail".

Only one Russian oil

## As OPEC+ meets, Iran war hobbles power to shape oil market

LONDON (AFP) — OPEC+ ministers were scheduled to meet on Sunday to weigh higher production quotas in a bid to cap oil prices that have surged since the Iran war effectively choked off Gulf crude shipments.

But even if the cartel members vow to ramp up output by thousands of barrels per day, analysts say geopolitical realities mean they probably won't move the needle on prices.

With the crucial Strait of Hormuz shut since US and Israeli attacks on Iran in late February, oil prices have nearly doubled, igniting inflation pressures worldwide.

Ministers from the 21 member states of OPEC+, the main oil producing nations and their allies, were holding their quarterly meeting online.

The group was likely to beef up its production quotas by "188,000 barrels a day", said Jorge Leon, analyst at Rystad Energy, similar to recent increases.

But in reality, only seven members — Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria and Oman — have the capacity to do so.



AFP file photo

Logo of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries OPEC

### Dwindling supply

Tehran's threats of retaliatory attacks to US and Israeli strikes have virtually blocked the vital Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly a fifth of global oil and gas supplies normally pass.

That is equivalent to about 20 million barrels a day.

But with key Gulf producers shut out of the global market, pledges to raise output in a bid to ease spiralling prices are unlikely to sway traders.

"Any announced pro-

duction increases or changes to output targets will have limited practical value," said Ole Hansen, a commodities analyst at Saxo Bank.

"There is very little OPEC can do," he told AFP. OPEC+ itself said daily production has plummeted to just 33 million barrels a day as tankers remain stuck, compared to nearly 43 million before the conflict.

A US blockade on Iranian ports means "it will be even less than that" in reality, said Homayoun Falakshahi, head of crude

oil analysis at data firm Kpler.

### UAE slams the door

The United Arab Emirates' recent decision to quit OPEC further saps away at the cartel's influence, given its huge excess production capacity.

And Abu Dhabi has made clear it wants to boost output. "They don't want to be dictated to, they want to maximise their revenues," said Lawrence Haar, a lecturer in finance at the University of

Brighton in England.

And the cartel risks seeing other countries follow the UAE's example.

"If Iraq were to leave, it could mark the end of OPEC+," Falakshahi said.

Saudi Arabia, by far the cartel's most influential member, "is going to do

what it takes to stop anyone else from leaving", Falakshahi predicted.

That could translate into more flexible output quotas or decreased penalties for any excess production.

But "for now, the compensation framework has

effectively become irrelevant due to widespread production shut-ins," Hansen said.

As a result, the Iran war has largely neutralised the cartel's stated mission "to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of pe-

troleum to consumers, and a steady income to producers".

For Falakshahi, the only factor limiting further oil price spikes at the moment is China, "which is buying less oil than normal" by tapping into its vast strategic reserves.

## AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Sunday amounted to JD18.2 million spread over 5.8 million shares that traded through 5,970 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.57 per cent, closing at 4007.11 points.

Out of 103 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 32 companies rose while the share price of another 40 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Arab Company for Investment Projects by 4.96 per cent, Al Tajamout for Catering and Housing Company Plc. by 4.55 per cent, Dar Al Amman for Investment by 4.44 per cent, Rumm Financial Brokerage by 4.39 per cent and Al Rakaez Investment Company by 4.35 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Northern Cement Company by 7.02 per cent, Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 4.76 per cent, Real Estate and Investment Portfolio Company by 4.39 per cent, National Insurance by 4.38 per cent, and Arab Pesticides and Veterinary Drugs Manufacturing Company by 4.18 per cent.



### THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↓ 4007.11 0.57% June 07, 2026



### DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market	OTC Market	Bonds
Trading Value (JDs)	18,216,872	
Trading volume	5,843,146	
No. of Transactions	5,970	
No. of Securities	103	

Losers: 40  
Gainers: 32  
Unchanged: 31

# SPORTS AT A GLANCE

# 'So many of us!' Mexicans attempt world's biggest human wave

## CRICKET

### Tamim becomes Bangladesh's youngest cricket chief

DHAKA (AFP) — Ex-Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal became the country's youngest cricket chief on Sunday, weeks after he was appointed interim president and vowed to repair the sport's damaged reputation in the country. Cricket and politics are intertwined in Bangladesh, and the game was affected by turmoil after the 2024 uprising that ousted long-term ruler Sheikh Hasina. A new government elected in February dissolved the Bangladesh Cricket Board over alleged "gross irregularities" and appointed an interim board led by 37-year-old Tamim, who retired from international cricket in 2023. Tamim was elected after topping a board election with 73 votes from 75 councillors, and led a 16-candidate field competing for 12 director positions. Fahim Sinha, who received 66 votes, was named vice-president at the board's first meeting. "We all have to keep one thing in mind, which is that the reputation damage that Bangladesh cricket has suffered worldwide, I alone cannot fix this," Tamim told reporters after the first meeting. "I will need everyone's support here," he added.

## RUGBY

### New All Blacks boss Rennie lifts title in final Japan game

TOKYO (AFP) — Incoming New Zealand head coach Dave Rennie signed off from Japan with a championship final win as his Kobe Steelers side beat Kubota Spears 22-13 on Sunday. Rennie will now take charge of the All Blacks after being named in early March to replace Scott Robertson, who was fired midway through a four-year contract. Rennie made sure he left Japan with a bang after leading a Kobe team featuring All Blacks Ardie Savea and Anton Lienert-Brown to the title in front of more than 50,000 spectators at Tokyo's National Stadium. Rennie will name his first All Blacks squad for Nations Championship Tests against France, Italy and Ireland on June 22, leaving the new coach with just over a year to prepare for the next World Cup in Australia. New Zealand then depart for an eight-match tour of South Africa in August and September, including four Tests against the world champion Springboks. Kobe were looking for their first title since 2013 and were facing a Kubota team featuring Australian fly-half Bernard Foley but missing Springboks hooker Malcolm Marx through injury.

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — Just days before Mexico hosts the World Cup's opening match, thousands of people packed the capital's main thoroughfare Saturday in a bid to set a new record for the largest-ever human wave.

The tradition of the wave was popularised in Mexico's soccer stadiums during the 1986 World Cup to cheer on the home squad, and it has grown into a global phenomenon.

Locals rallied to the cause early Saturday, donning national football jerseys and waving flags as they danced to loud music and stretched their arms and legs.

Standing in the front row of a crowd stretching two kilometres down the iconic Paseo de la Reforma, a wide avenue that runs through the heart of Mexico City, Sally Aviles expressed confidence in a new record.

"I say we're going to break it. There are already so many of us, and we can do it!" said the 31-year-old content creator.

"We'll make it happen because we've always done it — at every game, in every stadium."

Joining the crowd were women dressed in lavish gowns and wearing skeleton masks in the style of "catrinas," iconic figures tied to the coun-



AFP photo

Thousands of Mexicans packed the capital city's streets in an effort to set a new Guinness record for the world's largest human wave

try's Day of the Dead holiday.

Members of the La Sonora Santanera orchestra pumped out tropical rhythms while a master of ceremonies guided the mass movement.

"Attention! We drop to our knees, bend and spring up as fast as we

can. Hands way up!" she shouted.

On cue, the front row stood with arms raised and then knelt, while those behind repeated the motion in succession until the entire crowd swayed like swells on an ocean.

"I couldn't miss out on being part of this

wonderful event, on showing the world what Mexico is really like — the atmosphere, the love, the unity, the peace," said Gloria Frago, 55, wearing a traditional headdress.

Frago said Mexico is "more than ready" to welcome fans arriving for the World Cup,

which is being co-hosted by Canada and the United States.

Gang violence has scarred Mexico for years, and authorities have vowed to boost security as the country hosts tournament matches in Mexico City, Monterrey and Guadalajara.

Cultural authorities reported on social media later Saturday that the record for the largest human wave had been broken, without providing details.

The Guinness World Records is to assess whether or not the record has been broken.

## FAMILY FLAVOURS MAGAZINE

THE JORDAN TIMES

# LIFE

# A Taste of Kurdistan: Golden chicken & spiced tea

Text & Photos By Sara 'Ajour Food Writer | Family Flavours Magazine

Summer is one of the busiest travel seasons of the year.

This month, our culinary journey in Family Flavours magazine takes us to Kurdis-

tan with a comforting Kurdish chicken dish and tea that I learned to prepare from a Kurdish family.

### Fresh & locally sourced

Kurdish cuisine is renowned for its use of fresh, locally sourced

ingredients.

Preparing meals is often a communal activity that brings together families and neighbours of all ages, including children, with everyone lending a hand in the cooking process.

The Kurdish flag fea-

tures a radiant sun, symbolising light, life, freedom and rebirth; themes that are deeply woven into Kurdish cultural identity.

Much like the flag itself, this Kurdish chicken dish shines with a golden hue and aromatic flavours, offering a meal that nourishes both family and soul.

### Traditional Kurdish chicken

(Serves 4).  
Ingredients.  
1kg chicken.  
½ cup olive oil.  
¼ cup boiling water.  
1 small to medium onion.  
4 cloves garlic.  
1 tsp turmeric.  
1 tsp paprika.  
Salt and pepper, to taste.

### Directions

1. Remove the skin from the chicken and cut into 8-12 pieces, then wash and drain.
2. Coat the chicken with the turmeric, paprika, salt and pepper, set aside for 1-2 minutes.
3. Finley dice the onion and garlic.
4. Heat olive oil in a

frying pan on medium heat.

5. Add the chicken, finely diced onion and garlic into the pan.

6. Fry until lightly the chicken is golden.

7. Then add boiling water to cover the chicken, onion and garlic.

8. Cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes until the sauce is reduced, turning the chicken pieces.

9. Strain the concoction from the sauce and place the chicken, garlic and onion into a serving dish.

Keep the sauce in a separate glass jar.

### For the rice

1. Pre-soak the rice in cold water for half an hour, then wash and drain.
2. Place the rice to a saucepan and cover with boiling water (keeping the water one cm above the rice).
3. Boil then reduce the heat to low. Cook for approximately 10-15 minutes.
4. In a separate pan heat a quarter cup oil, until smoking, then pour carefully onto the rice.
5. Cook the rice for a further 5 minutes.



6. Switch off and leave to stand for 5-10 minutes.

7. To serve, fluff the rice with a fork and arrange the chicken pieces on to the rice and drizzle with the sauce.

### Mountain comfort: Traditional Kurdish tea

Tea is traditionally enjoyed alongside meals, particularly in the mountainous regions of Kurdistan, such as the Qandil Mountains. Clove-infused Kurdish tea is also believed to help strengthen joints and support the respiratory system.

A fragrant blend of black tea and warm-

ing spices, this traditional Kurdish brew is the perfect companion to a family meal and a cherished part of Kurdish hospitality.

### Ingredients

2 cups water.  
2 tsp Kurdish black tea or any loose black tea.  
3 rose buds.  
5 cardamom pods.  
1 small piece of cinnamon bark.

### Directions

1. Place all the ingredients in a teapot and bring to the boil over medium heat.
2. Reduce the heat

and simmer for 1-2 minutes.

3. Remove from heat and leave to infuse for 5 minutes.

4. Strain the tea into teacups.

5. Sweeten with sugar, to taste.  
Tip: For a more authentic Kurdish experience, serve the tea in small glass cups alongside dates, nuts or traditional Kurdish sweets.

You can contact Sara 'Ajour at ajoursarah@gmail.com

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