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Prime Minister Jafar Hassan meets on Sunday with the World Bank's Managing Director of Operations Anna Bjerde

Prime minister, World Bank operations chief discuss cooperation, partnership

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday met with Anna Bjerde, the World Bank's managing director of operations, to discuss economic cooperation and partnership priorities.

During the meeting at the Prime Ministry, attended by Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Zeina Toukan, the pre-

mier commended the partnership between Jordan and the World Bank Group, praising its role in supporting the Kingdom's efforts to implement key economic and development projects.

For her part, Bjerde praised Jordan's economic and developmental efforts, affirming the World Bank Group's continued sup-

port for major government projects in energy, transport, water, education, healthcare and digital transformation.

She also emphasised the bank's commitment to supporting capacity building, knowledge transfer and economic policies that contribute to achieving the goals of the Kingdom's Economic Modernisation Vision.

Cabinet extends NPC concession for Risha gas field until 2061

- Extension forms part of national drive to diversify energy sources, boost domestic gas production
- Risha field production set to rise to 418 million cubic feet per day by 2030, reaching 810 million by 2035
- NPC to build strategic pipeline linking Risha field to Arab Gas Pipeline to transport locally produced gas across Kingdom

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet, in a session chaired on Sunday by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan, said it approved a 15-year extension of the concession agreement granted to the National Petroleum Company (NPC) for oil and gas exploration and production in the Risha gas field, extending its validity until 2061.

The decision forms part of a strategic drive to achieve Jordan's self-sufficiency in locally produced natural gas, strengthen and diversify energy sources, and advance one of the flagship projects under the second executive programme of the Economic Modernisation Vision (2026-2029), according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The government said that the extension is intended to enable NPC



Risha gas field in Ruweished in Mafrqa

to complete its comprehensive development plans and contribute to building an integrated and sustainable energy sector that supports investment and economic growth.

Under its production strategy, the company aims to raise output from the Risha gas field to 418 million standard cubic feet per day by 2030, before doubling it to 810 million standard

cubic feet per day by 2035. NPC plans to reach these targets using its own resources to expand processing facilities and transmission infrastructure, ensur-

ing efficient delivery of natural gas to end users and strengthening Jordan's long-term energy security, the statement said.

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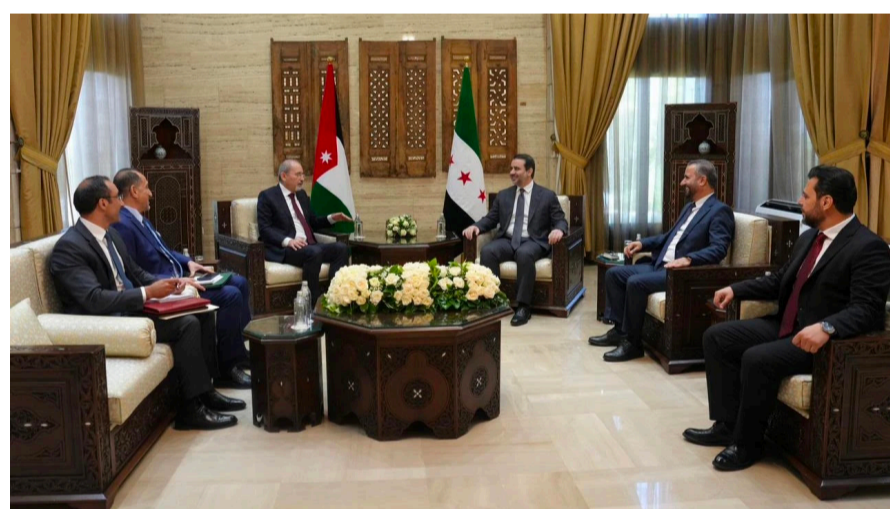
DIPLOMACY

High-ranking Jordanian, Syrian officials discuss cooperation, economic integration

AMMAN (JT) — A high-ranking Jordanian delegation, headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, held talks in Damascus on Sunday with Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Al Shaibani and other senior officials on ways to enhance cooperation across various sectors.

The two sides also reviewed progress achieved since the second session of the Jordanian-Syrian Higher Coordination Council, held in Amman in April, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The Jordanian delegation comprised Minister of Water and Irrigation Raed Abu Soud, Minister of Transport Nidal Qatamin, Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah, and Civil Aviation Regulatory Com-



A high-level Jordanian delegation, led by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, on Sunday meets in Damascus with Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Al Shaibani and senior officials to discuss boosting cooperation in several fields

mission Chief Commissioner Daifallah Farajat.

The Syrian side was represented by Minister of Economy and Industry Nidal Al Shaar, Minister of Energy

Mohammad Al Bashir, Minister of Transport Yarob Badr, Chairman of the General Authority for Borders and Customs Qutaiba Badawi, and President of the General Authority

of Civil Aviation and Air Transport Omar Hosari.

Talks focused on economic, transport, customs and water cooperation, with both sides stressing the im-

portance of strengthening coordination and advancing bilateral relations, the statement said.

Safadi and Shaibani commended continued progress in bilateral relations and stressed the importance of further enhancing cooperation in line with the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah and Syrian President Ahmad Al Sharaa.

The two sides reviewed progress in implementing outcomes of the council's second session, particularly in economic integration, transport, customs and water cooperation, stressing the need for continued coordination between relevant ministries and institutions to address challenges and advance joint work.

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Prime Minister Jafar Hassan issues a circular for the preparation of the 2027 draft General Budget Law directs all ministries, departments and government units to reduce operational expenditures by 15 per cent next year

Prime minister directs ministries to reduce operating costs by 15%

AMMAN (JT) — A circular issued by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan for the preparation of the 2027 draft General Budget Law directs all ministries, departments and government units

to reduce operational expenditures by 15 per cent next year.

Under the circular, seen by Al Mamlaka TV, government entities are required to prepare detailed budgets for 2027-

2029 and submit them to the General Budget Department by mid-July, along with the 2027 draft Civil Service Formation Bylaw.

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Preliminary works begin on landmark stadium in Amra City project

AMMAN (JT) — Preliminary excavation and site preparation works have begun for the Al Hussein Bin Abdullah II International Stadium, a flagship project within the first phase of the Amra City development, the Jordan Company for the Development of Cities and Facilities announced on Sunday.

The initial works pave the way for the official launch of construction at the beginning of 2027, according to a statement cited by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The project marks the first practical step toward building Jordan's largest national sports venue and supports the

goals of the Economic Modernisation Vision.

The company said the stadium will be built on a 1,000 dunnum site and will accommodate 46,000 spectators. Construction is expected to be completed in time for the venue's planned opening in late 2029.

The project includes a range of supporting facilities, including two training pitches and parking areas capable of accommodating up to 6,000 vehicles and buses. The stadium will also be connected to public transport networks and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes, while incorporating advanced facilities for athletes and



The Jordan Company for the Development of Cities and Facilities announces on Sunday the start of preliminary excavation and site preparation works for the Al Hussein Bin Abdullah II International Stadium project

spectators.

According to the company, the stadium's design draws on elements of Jordan's cultural and

architectural heritage, reinterpreted through a modern approach that meets international sustainability standards.

The venue is being developed to world-class specifications, with a focus on energy and water efficiency and the

integration of advanced smart technologies used in leading international stadiums.

The surrounding area will feature landscaped green spaces planted with trees and vegetation native to Jordan. Current works include site organisation, land grading and foundation excavations.

The project is expected to provide a significant boost to the economy by supporting the construction, contracting and manufacturing sectors, while creating hundreds of jobs during both the construction and operational phases.

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Trump says Israel attack on Beirut 'should not have happened'

WASHINGTON/ BEIRUT (AFP) — US President Donald Trump on Sunday said Israeli strikes on Beirut "should not have happened" as he vowed a regional peace deal was at hand, though he did not confirm reports it would be signed during the day.

"We are very close to a Deal that will bring peace to the region, including to Lebanon, and all

sides should stand down," Trump said on social media.

"This could be the beginning of a long and beautiful peace — Let's not blow it!"

Iran's highest national security body warned on Sunday that a response was "imminent" following an Israeli strike targeting Tehran's ally Hizbollah in Beirut's southern suburbs.

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HRH Princess Sumaya Bint El Hassan, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Amman Baccaulaureate School, patronises the graduation ceremony of the Amman Baccaulaureate School's 42nd graduating class of 2026

Princess Sumaya patronises 42nd graduation ceremony of Amman Baccaulaureate School

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Princess Sumaya Bint El Hassan, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Amman Baccaulaureate School, patronised the graduation ceremony of the Amman Baccaulaureate School's 42nd graduating class of 2026.

Princess Sumaya affirmed that the graduates carry with them the knowledge, values and experiences they have gained throughout their educational journey, enabling them to become active contributors to their communities and country, and to play a meaningful role in Jordan's continued development and progress, according to an Amman Baccaulaureate School statement.

Her Royal Highness noted that the occasion provides an opportunity to reflect on the vision of the Amman Baccaulaureate School's founders, HRH Prince El Hassan Bin Talal and HRH Princess Sarvath El Hassan, and their enduring belief that education is the highest form of investment and the strongest foundation for the advancement and prosperity of nations.

Speaking at the ceremony, Principal of the Amman Baccaulaureate School Fiyaz Ahmed

said that privilege is not merely an opportunity, but a responsibility that requires individuals to use their knowledge and skills in service of others and to make a positive impact on society.

The graduates' address was delivered by Class Valedictorian Zein Younes, who expressed her pride, and that of her fellow graduates, in being part of the Amman Baccaulaureate School community.

She also thanked the academic and administrative staff for their unwavering support, guidance and dedication throughout their years at the School.

During the ceremony, Princess Sumaya presented awards to outstanding students including the Award for Academic Excellence, the Khalil Talhouni Award for the Promotion of Arab and Islamic Culture, the STEAM Award, the King Constantine Award for Round Square, the International Schools Educational Cooperation Award for International Understanding, and the Board of Trustees Award for Excellence in Representing Jordan.

The Class of 2026 also celebrated ex-

ceptional university placements, securing offers from leading institutions in Jordan and around the world, including prestigious Ivy League and Russell Group universities, alongside other highly regarded international universities.

The ceremony featured a special artistic tribute presented by the Amman Baccaulaureate School as a gift to the nation in celebration of the Jordan national football team's historic qualification for the FIFA World Cup.

The tribute took the form of a performance of Tahya Al Malaeb by Omar Al Abdallat, featuring Grade 12 students, and came as a memorable surprise to the audience, reflecting the pride and joy inspired by this landmark national achievement.

The celebration also included a performance of Allah Ya Hal Watan by Jordanian singer Zain Awad accompanied by the Amman Baccaulaureate School Choir, in a moving expression of national pride and belonging.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Princess Sumaya presented diplomas to the graduates of the Class of 2026.

Army chief attends graduation of 66th Joint Command and Staff course

AMMAN (JT) — Deputising for His Majesty King Abdullah, the Supreme Commander of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Sunday attended the graduation ceremony of the 30th batch of the 66th Joint Command and Staff course at the Royal Jordanian Command and Staff College.

The commander of the college stressed that the college, within its institutional vision, has sought to align its outcomes with the requirements of the contemporary operational environment, according to a JAF statement.

"This has been achieved by focusing on developing leadership competence and enhancing the integration of military thought and academic sciences, ensuring the preparation of first-class leaders and staff officers capable of operating within a multi-domain joint operations system", he added.

The commander noted that the college has worked to translate the Royal vision for developing JAF by updating its educational curricula to



Deputising for His Majesty King Abdullah, the Supreme Commander of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Sunday attends the graduation ceremony of the 30th batch of the 66th Joint Command and Staff course

include the planning and concepts of joint operations and the demands of modern warfare with its emerging dimensions, including drone systems, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and information operations.

Such updates would contribute to developing staff officers' capabilities and enhancing

their efficiency in military decision-making procedures.

Huneiti distributed certificates and prizes to graduates of the course, which grants a bachelor's degree in military science.

The course saw the participation of officers from various branches of JAF and security agen-

cies, alongside officers from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Yemen, Rwanda, Morocco, Tanzania, Turkey and France.

Writing in the VIP guestbook, Huneiti expressed his pride in the college's role in preparing and qualifying military leaders, wishing

the institution further progress and success.

The graduation ceremony was attended by the president of Mutah University, the director of the Public Security Directorate, a number of high-ranking JAF and security officers, as well as several military attachés accredited to the Kingdom.

Issawi opens, checks on Royal initiative projects in Muwaqqar

AMMAN (JT) — Royal Court Chief Yousef Issawi on Sunday inaugurated several Royal initiative projects in Amman's Muwaqqar District.

During the visit, Issawi also inspected other projects currently under implementation, which are being carried out in accordance with Royal directives to improve the level of services provided to residents, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

In his first stop, Issawi, who is also head of the follow-up committee for the implementation of Royal initiatives, opened a primary healthcare centre in the Zmailat area, in the presence of Minister of Health Ibrahim Badour and Amman Governor Yasser Adwan.

Issawi toured the 800-square-metre facility, which includes clinics for general medicine, dentistry, gynaecology, and maternity and childcare, alongside a pharmacy, laboratory, X-ray room, emergency



Royal Court Chief Yousef Issawi on Sunday inaugurates and checks on several Royal initiative projects in Amman's Muwaqqar District

department and medical records section.

The establishment of the centre aims to boost primary healthcare services and elevate the standard of medical treatment provided to citizens in the district.

Accompanied by Adwan, Zaha Cultural Centre Executive Di-

rector Rania Sbeih and Muwaqqar Municipal Committee Chairman Ghazi Raqqad, Issawi also inaugurated a public park in the Nuqayrah area, designed to provide a recreational space for families and children.

The park features green spaces, safe

children's play areas with sandy and rubber flooring, pedestrian walkways, shaded seating areas and public utilities.

Following the inaugurations, Issawi inspected the construction of a multi-purpose hall in the Umm Batma area, where the completion

rate has reached 85 per cent.

The project spans a total land area of 5,355 square metres with a built-up area exceeding 360 square metres, aiming to host social, cultural and national events for the local community.

He also inspected a five-a-side football pitch project in the Rujm Al Shami area, where the facility is designed to serve local youth and invest their energy in sports activities.

In remarks to the press, Issawi said that these Royal initiative projects in Muwaqqar were implemented under Royal directives following His Majesty King Abdullah's continuous visits and meetings with local communities.

He added that these projects aim to reinforce essential health and community services, noting that Royal initiatives across the Kingdom complement national plans to improve public services.

Fils Al Reef committee approves JD1.053m for 199 electricity connections in May

AMMAN (JT) — The Higher Steering Committee for Fils Al Reef approved electricity connectivity for 199 homes and sites for May, with a total cost of JD1.053 million.

The approved lists include regular network connections and solar cell systems, according to Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabsheh, who chaired the committee meeting, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Kharabsheh said that the committee approved a package of projects and sites to be funded through Fils Al Reef, a fee added to each kilowatt a household uses, including residential gatherings and various economic activities, adding that the decision comes un-



The Higher Steering Committee for Fils Al Reef approves electricity connectivity for 199 homes and sites for May, with a total cost of JD1.053 million

der recent amendments to the electricity delivery criteria.

Director of the Electricity and Rural Electrification Directorate at the Ministry of Energy Hisham Momani said that the decisions covered residential homes outside village boundaries with a total

cost of JD343,000.

Momani added that the decisions included supporting underprivileged and low-income families living within village boundaries in electricity companies' concession areas, with a total cost of JD3,000.

The support list also covered livestock

projects outside village boundaries, including poultry, cattle, sheep, and fish farms, with a total cost of JD88,000 to boost the agricultural sector.

Momani pointed out that Fils Al Reef contributed JD168,000 to support farms with artesian wells outside

village boundaries to achieve food security.

It also provided JD397,000 to support productive, industrial, investment, tourism, and economic projects, provided they create jobs for local Jordanians, he added.

The programme contributed JD30,000 to connect electricity for government sectors, as well as agricultural and charitable cooperative societies, the director said, adding that Fils Al Reef also allocated JD20,000 to light roads leading to cemeteries.

Momani said that the committee approved installing an isolated solar cell system for one underprivileged home outside village boundaries, located far from the regular electrical network, at a cost of JD4,000.

Project installs 500 water tanks to support southern Jordan communities

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Water and Irrigation, in cooperation with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), has implemented a project to support water security and improve services in local communities.

The initiative, carried out under the "Strong Water Utilities" project, is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), according to a Ministry of Water and Irrigation statement.

The project included the installation of 500 household water tanks, each with a capacity of two cubic metres, in a number of villages in southern Jordan.

A total of 183 tanks were installed in Yarout village in Karak Gov-

ernorate, 150 tanks in Fardakh in Maan Governorate and 167 in Abu Bana in Tafleeh Governorate, benefitting more than 3,000 residents in areas affected by water supply challenges.

He added that the initiative will help reduce the impact of irregular water distribution schedules in the targeted areas, while improving water services for beneficiary families.

The project aims to improve water resource management, enhance water supply in rural areas and support local communities, while helping boost resilience to water scarcity and climate change and encouraging more efficient water use.

The initiative comes as Jordan continues to face growing water challenges as one of the world's most water-scarce countries, highlighting the need for practical and sustainable solutions to help households manage their water needs and adapt to limited water resources and climate change impacts.

The project aims to improve water resource management...

Spokesperson of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation Omar Salameh said that the tanks will enhance households' ability to store water and meet their daily needs.

Cabinet approves competency frameworks to modernise public sector

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet, during a session chaired by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday, said it approved the first phase of technical competency frameworks related to public sector modernisation.

The frameworks cover a range of government domains, including human resources, digital transformation, information management and data analysis, cybersecurity, legal affairs, procurement, government inventory management, media and communication, service delivery, administrative affairs and financial management, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The government said that the adoption of the frameworks marks a key institutional step towards enhancing public sector efficiency by establishing clear and standardised criteria, and unifying job requirements across government entities, thereby improving service delivery and strengthening public trust in public institutions.

The new approach shifts human resources



Photo courtesy of Prime Ministry

The Cabinet on Sunday says it approved the first phase of technical competency frameworks related to public sector modernisation

management towards competency-based standards that focus on an employee's ability to perform duties effectively, rather than job titles or traditional qualifications, according to the statement.

The Council of Ministers said that the framework, implemented for the first time, establish-

es a unified understanding of these functions, which account for 40 per cent of public sector jobs, by defining the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for recruitment, development and performance evaluation under clear and standardised criteria.

It is intended not only

for recruitment and evaluation, but also as a comprehensive reference for professional development, performance management and training, enabling government institutions to utilise human resources more efficiently and effectively, the statement said.

The decision requires

all government departments to adopt the framework across human resource management processes. The Civil Service and Public Administration Commission would oversee implementation, provide technical support to government entities, and update the frameworks as needed.

The next phase would include the development of assessment tools to measure competencies for recruitment, promotion and career development purposes. The framework would also be provided to the Jordanian Academy for Government Administration to develop cumulative training programmes aimed at building skills and capacities, linking training investment to career progression.

The Cabinet approved the mandating reasons for the draft 2026 organisational bylaw for the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA) aimed at modernising institutional structures, paving the way for its referral to the Legislation and Opinion Bureau for completion of legal procedures.

The government said that the draft bylaw seeks to enhance the PDTRA's organisational and administrative structure, improve institutional performance, and reinforce governance, transparency and accountability, while ensuring optimal use of human, financial and

technological resources through a clearer distribution of responsibilities and powers.

It also aims to further develop Petra's administrative framework to improve services, strengthen its position as a leading tourism destination and UNESCO World Heritage Site, and enhance its contribution to the national economy through increased investment and visitor flows, the statement said.

The bylaw is expected to improve coordination among the authority's organisational units, raise institutional efficiency, and enhance service quality, strengthening Petra's global competitiveness as a tourism destination.

The Cabinet also approved a draft amended organisational bylaw for the Ministry of Social Development for 2026, aligning its structure with the Social Development Law of 2024 and the public sector modernisation agenda.

The restructuring includes the establishment of specialised directorates for care,

protection, institutional support, governorate affairs and development, as well as units to strengthen the sustainability and governance of associations.

It also introduces an inspection and compliance unit to ensure independent oversight of care homes and licensed entities, along with units for information management, data analysis and cybersecurity to support digital transformation and improve decision-making.

The bylaw will not result in additional financial burdens on the state budget, as staffing needs will be met through restructuring and reallocation of existing vacancies.

The Cabinet also approved an amended organisational bylaw for the Income and Sales Tax Department for 2026, aimed at aligning its structure with international best practices in planning, analysis and risk management in tax administration, and keeping pace with technological advancement and digital transformation.

Army foils drug smuggling attempts using drones

AMMAN (JT) — The Southern Military Region command on Sunday morning thwarted attempts to smuggle large quantities of narcotics using two drones on its western front.

The operation was conducted in coordination with military security agencies and the Anti-Narcotics Department, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) statement.

Border Guard units spotted the drones and applied the rules of engagement, shooting them down inside Jor-



JAF photo

The Southern Military Region command on Sunday morning thwarted attempts to smuggle large quantities of narcotics using two drones on its western front

danian territory. The seized items

were handed over to the relevant authorities.

Army chief, US Army Central commander discuss cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Sunday met with Commander of US Army Central Lt. Gen. Kevin Leahy and an accompanying delegation to discuss military relations and issues of mutual interest.

During the meeting, held at the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) General Command, the two sides reviewed military cooperation and coordination and discussed ways to further strengthen their strategic partnership

in support of regional security and stability.

Huneiti stressed the depth of relations between the Jordanian and US armed forces and commended the ongoing cooperation across various military fields, according to a JAF statement.

Leahy commended the JAF for its role in promoting regional and international security and stability.

The meeting was attended by a number of senior Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army officers and the US defence attaché in Amman.



JAF photo

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Sunday meets with Commander of US Army Central Lt. Gen. Kevin Leahy

Jordanian artists' work featured at Bolton Central Library in UK

AMMAN (JT) — A new exhibition showcasing the work of young Jordanian comic artists has opened at Bolton Central Library in the United Kingdom, highlighting disability and neurodiversity through an engaging visual narrative format aimed at fostering greater understanding, inclusion and social awareness.

The centre added that its founding story is featured in the opening editorial of the latest issue of Fanzeen magazine.

Among the participating artists is Mike Dardarian, founder of the Fanzeen initiative, which was launched in Amman in 2018 to promote inclusive artistic expression and support the development of independent comic art in Jordan.

As part of the project,

working at the intersection of art and disability.

In a statement, the Bunayat Centre for Special Education said the exhibition explores disability and neurodiversity through an engaging visual narrative format aimed at fostering greater understanding, inclusion and social awareness.

The centre added that its founding story is featured in the opening editorial of the latest issue of Fanzeen magazine.

As part of the project,



Provided photo

A new exhibition showcasing the work of young Jordanian comic artists opens at Bolton Central Library in the United Kingdom

Baheia Misk, director of the Bunayat Centre for Special Education (BCSE), worked closely with the artists and facilitated direct engagement with people with disabilities.

The initiative enabled participants to document and illustrate authentic personal experiences, avoiding stereotypes and reflecting lived realities, contributing to greater mutual understanding

and social impact.

Alaa Oattam, arts director at the British Council Jordan, said the exhibition reflects the power of art and creativity to promote empathy, inclusion and cultural exchange. She expressed pride in the Council's partnership with BCSE, the Jordanian Association for Arts and Disability (JAAD), and British partner institutions in bringing these creative voices to an international audience.

Julie Tait, founder and executive director of LICAF, welcomed the exhibition, describing it as a celebration of diverse international voices and a testament to comics' ability to communicate complex human experiences through accessible storytelling.

Lower House committee launches consultations on draft local administration law

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — The Lower House Administrative Committee on Sunday said that it will launch a series of nationwide consultations on the draft local administration law, aiming to broaden participation and gather feedback from political parties, experts and local stakeholders before the extraordinary parliamentary session.

Committee members agreed to begin early discussions on the legislation, stressing the importance of strengthening political and democratic engagement and ensuring a structured, inclusive review process.

The committee said it will first meet with the secretaries-general of political parties to hear their views and propos-

als on the draft law, followed by separate meetings with former mayors, members and heads of provincial councils, as well as academics and specialists in local governance.

Officials said consultations will also include international organisations that have previously worked with municipalities, in order to benefit from their assessments and experience in local administration reforms.

As part of the process, the committee announced the launch of an electronic platform to collect public feedback from across all governorates, as well as facilitate participation requests for those wishing to attend committee meetings.

MPs raised concerns about aspects of the draft law, arguing that it relies

excessively on bylaws rather than clear legal provisions.

They also called for defining key issues within the law itself, including the qualifications of municipal officials, the structure of executive administration and mechanisms for appointing acting municipal directors.

They also noted ambiguities regarding the roles of municipal leadership and executive staff, stressing the need for clearer separation of powers and responsibilities within the legislation.

Committee members said that the outcomes of the consultations will be compiled and analysed to ensure the final draft reflects a comprehensive and balanced approach to local administration reform.

Cassation Court upholds 4-year sentence for drug dealer

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Court of Cassation has upheld an October 2023 State Security Court (SSC) ruling, sentencing a drug dealer to four years in prison after convicting him of selling five grammes of Crystal meth to an undercover agent in Amman in May 2022.

The court declared

the defendant guilty of obtaining illegal narcotics (Crystal meth) with the intent of selling the drugs to an undercover agent on May 20.

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

However, the court decided to reduce the fine

to JD4,000 and the prison term to four years to give the defendant a second chance in life.

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

"The AND agent got in touch with the de-

fendant and asked him for five grammes of Crystal meth in return for JD200," court documents said.

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

Upon searching him, the law-enforcement agency officers found a mobile that contained conversations with in-

dividuals who wanted to buy illicit drugs, the court maintained.

The law-enforcement officers found an additional six grammes of the illegal substance in the possession of the defendant, the court added.

Crystal meth is the common name for crystal methamphetamine, a strong and highly addic-

tive drug that affects the central nervous system, according to WebMD.

The defendant contested the SSC's ruling through his lawyer, who argued that the court "did not provide solid evidence to implicate his client".

The lawyer also charged that the court relied on contradictory testimonies by the pros-

ecution witnesses.

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

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

"It was clear to the

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

The Court of Cassation judges were Mahmoud Ebtoush, Nayef Samarat, Hammad Ghzawi, Qassem Dughmi and Mohammad Khashashneh.



AFP photo

Chadian returnees meet with an International Organisation for Migration delegation in Tongori on June 9

At Chad-Sudan border, aid funding crisis leaves displaced in limbo

ADRE, Chad (AFP) — Rising numbers of Chadians fleeing the Sudan war are arriving at the Adre border post in Chad, but funding shortages could force UN agencies on the ground to stop operating.

The civil conflict in Sudan has already cost tens of thousands of lives and forced more than 12 million people to flee their homes, more than a million of them Chadian, according to UN figures.

Government forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been fighting since April 2023.

A steady stream of horse-carts arrived at the Adre border post, under the region's scorching desert sun, during a recent visit by AFP.

In the swirling dust and the crack of whips, some of the makeshift wagons toppled under the weight of their loads, dragging the horses onto their backs, hooves in the air. They leave loaded with cans of petrol and food for Sudan, and return to Chad, in some cases carrying people fleeing the war.

Lack of resources

Last week SungAh Lee, deputy director general of the UN's International Organisation for Migration (IOM), visited Adre as part of a three-day visit to the Assoungha region.

She met Chadians who had been in Sudan and had fled the war to return home.

"When I go there and meet the beneficiaries and hear from them, then go back and meet ambassadors and the donor community, it is important for them to hear what I have seen in person," she told

AFP.

In May, the number of Chadians returning from Sudan passed the 400,000 mark.

They had initially expected to reach that level by the end of June, Lee said, but the flow of returnees has accelerated.

Mahamat Issa Abakar, general secretary of the Assoungha region, confirmed the surge in returnees.

"There are more than 5,000 Chadians getting ready to return to Chad from Sudan in the coming days," said Abakar, himself a former aid worker.

"Their representatives came to ask me how they will be taken in here, but I don't know what to tell them," he added. "On our side, we lack the resources."

"The Chadians from Sudan returning to Chad have exactly the same needs as the refugees," he added.

"Their representatives came to ask me how they will be taken in here, but I don't know what to tell them"

And yet, he said, looking over at the IOM delegation, they were not as well cared for.

No food, no work

According to figures from the UN refugee agency UNHCR, more than 900,000 people have sought refuge in Chad since the start of the war in Sudan. They make up one in three people in the eastern

provinces of Chad.

In Tongori camp, where the IOM says 13,000 people are packed in, Chadians who have fled Sudan speak of a sense of abandonment.

"We don't have food!" said 59-year-old Ahmad Mahamat Hassan. "It hasn't been handed out for six months."

"It's the IOM who led us here and it's for you to take responsibility for us," he added, addressing the UN delegation set up under sheets of metal in the middle of some 300 Chadian returnees.

Others among the returnees complained of a lack of work and being stuck in the camp with nothing to do.

"We have a lot of skills here among the women, but we can't put them into practice," said Saide Yaya Abderamanou.

"Most of us have a job in Sudan. Some of us make jewels, perfumes, shoes," she added.

Lee, for the IOM, acknowledged the problem.

"Continuously providing humanitarian aid is not a sustainable model," she told AFP.

"They all want to work, they all have skills. So it's about creating opportunities for them and I think this is really the most difficult part."

But she also recognised the growing difficulties in helping the Chadians returning from Sudan.

The \$21-million IOM response plan for eastern Chad in 2026 was only 19 per cent financed, Lee said.

"After October 2026, we won't be able to provide humanitarian assistance if the finance doesn't arrive," she warned.

South Africa says 2,745 foreigners sent home in a week

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — South Africa has repatriated 2,745 foreigners in the week after President Cyril Ramaphosa vowed tougher action against illegal immigration, the country's home affairs minister said on Sunday.

One of Africa's largest economies, South Africa has long attracted migrant workers from across the continent, both legally and illegally.

But saddled with an unemployment rate above 30 per cent, it has experienced recurring spurts of anti-immigrant unrest, including fresh violence in recent weeks.

Mobs of South Africans carrying sticks, whips and shields have marched through parts of the country ordering foreigners with no residency papers to leave by June 30.

Growing security fears after businesses were looted and foreigners targeted have prompted citizens of Nigeria, Malawi, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique to accept voluntary repatriation organised by their governments.

"As of last night, the number we can report is 2,745 repatriations that have come in this period since the president spoke," Home Affairs Minister Leon Schreiber told reporters.

"It is a moving target," he said.

The government said most of those repatri-



AFP photo

Members of the South African Police Service hold their positions at Sherwood Park in Durban on Saturday as more than 7,000 people, mostly Malawian women nationals, queued for repatriation to Malawi

ated were in the country illegally.

They include Malawian nationals, about 7,000 of whom have been sheltering in an open field in the eastern port city of Durban, according to an inter-ministerial migration committee set up after the president's address.

Eight buses commissioned by the Malawian government began moving its citizens on Sunday, with South Africa providing 10 additional buses to speed up deportations, the committee said.

Among those boarding the first buses,

some carried babies on their backs and small bags of belongings.

"I'm relieved we are finally leaving. It's better than living in fear here," said Fortunate Chilenje from Blantyre, Malawi's commercial capital.

The 25-year-old had lived in South Africa for three years, she told AFP, adding that threats to leave had followed her even at the camp, one of the largest to emerge since the unrest began.

The government said on Sunday it did not operate refugee camps and had no intention of establishing them, even on a temporary

basis.

Another passenger, Laina Nala from Mangochi in southern Malawi, said she simply wanted to be dropped as close to her home as possible, rather than continuing on to Blantyre.

"Blantyre is too far and expensive from there," she said.

For Hassan Hasha, 27, a debt linked to his journey to South Africa still hung over his head.

He said he had barely stayed in South Africa for weeks before the anti-foreigner sentiment flared, but added: "I have resigned myself to going home".

Last week, Ramaphosa acknowledged public concerns over illegal immigration but warned authorities would not tolerate anyone taking the law into their own hands.

Tensions escalated after two Mozambicans were killed following a May 29 march against illegal migrants in the Western Cape town of Mosel Bay. Mozambican authorities put the toll at five.

There are more than three million foreigners living in South Africa, or 5.1 per cent of the population, according to the statistics agency.

UK intercepts Russian shadow fleet vessel in Channel — ministry

LONDON (AFP) — British forces on Sunday intercepted a sanctioned oil tanker belonging to Russia's shadow fleet in the English Channel, the defence ministry said.

The six-hour operation in the early hours was supported by aircraft, including Chinook helicopters, and navy vessels such as the frigate HMS Sutherland.

"In the first UK-led operation of its kind, the vessel SMYRTOS was boarded by Royal Marine Commandos and specially trained law enforcement officers from the National Crime Agency, despite Russia's best efforts to evade sanctions and continue fuelling its barbaric war with



AFP photo

The Mozambican-flagged oil tanker 'Deyna', suspected of belonging to Russia's 'shadow fleet', is seen off the coast near the Rainaires beach, close to Port-de-Bouc, in Martigues on March 25

Ukraine," the ministry statement said.

The vessel will now be moved to an anchorage off the south coast of England and monitored, it added.

"Russia relies on

its shadow fleet to fund their conflict in Ukraine and our interdiction delivers a blow to Putin's illegal war," said Defence Minister Dan Jarvis.

He said the operation was carried out in "close coordination with the French".

Disrupting the shadow fleet was "directly bearing down on the resources sustaining Russia's aggression in Ukraine, and reducing its capacity to threaten security across Europe and beyond", he added.

The UK has sanctioned hundreds of vessels suspected of being part of the shadow fleet used by Russia to bypass Western embargoes since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The ships, usually ageing tankers with dubious ownership, are banned from accessing UK ports and services.

Prime Minister Keir

Starmer said the operation delivered "yet another blow to Russia and reminds those fuelling Putin's war in Ukraine that they cannot hide".

In March, the government announced that British forces would be able to board and seize shadow fleet vessels passing through its waters.

The announcement followed the easing of restrictions on Washington on Russian oil to soften prices sent soaring by the US-Israel war against Iran.

France, Belgium, Finland and other European countries have also recently seized sanction-busting vessels believed to belong to the so-called shadow fleet.

In crisis-hit Cuba, World Cup offers brief respite

HAVANA (AFP) — "You need to be happy," reads graffiti spray-painted on a ruined building swamped in trash in Cuba's capital Havana.

And for 100 minutes, as Morocco held local favourites Brazil to a draw, Cubans complied and put their troubles aside as football's World Cup came to state television on Saturday — two days late.

In a small cafe in the densely populated Centro Habana district of pastel-coloured townhouses with peeling facades and washing lines strung from the balconies, men perched on stools were watching the action on a small screen.

Baseball — a mad Cuba has never taken part in a World Cup tournament.

But on the communist island, reeling



AFP photo

Cubans watch the FIFA World Cup match between Brazil and Morocco on a TV at a bar in the Centro Habana neighbourhood, in Havana, on Saturday

from the worst economic crisis in over a generation, intensified by a US-imposed oil blockade, football is king among the kids

particularly. So when state television announced, a day after kick-off in nearby Mexico, that it would broadcast 16 games

from the opening stages, the national mood lightened.

Now, if only the energy gods would also play ball by keeping

the lights on for the matches.

There was no such luck for Ismael Veranes, the round-faced human resources director of Cuba's national theater.

Sipping a juice out of a carton — his one indulgence for the game — he came to the cafe after spending 20 hours without power at home.

Speaking in fluent French, this man of mixed Les Bleus and Selecao loyalties said the tournament provided a welcome respite amid chronic fuel shortages which have grounded most cars and public buses.

His commute to work now is an 8 kilometre roundtrip by foot, in crushing summer heat.

"And when you get home, exhausted, there's no electricity," he complained.

"It's hot and there are mosquitoes."

An hour before the game, on a nearby corner, nine-year-old Lionel Messi fan Michael and his 10-year-old sister Meiliuviv were dribbling with a bottle top, under the benevolent watch of beret-clad Che Guevara on the wall of a gallery across the street.

Whereas in the past Cuban children were weaned on baseball — Fidel Castro was known to bat for the crowds — since the arrival of smartphones in 2018, "children lean more towards football", Michael's father Osmany explained.

And while the crisis is also etched in the island's "very degraded" football pitches, the World Cup "allows us to clear our minds for a while", he said with a smile.

Many Cubans speak nostalgically of World Cup past, when all the games were broadcast by state television, and food and fuel were not as scarce — except in the early 1990s, when Soviet aid dried up.

This time round, only bars with cable TV and expensive beer show all the games, leaving many on the outside looking in, literally — from the sidewalk.

"It's not the same," 36-year-old Alan said mournfully as he stood on the street discussing Brazil's prospects with two friends, a can of beer in hand.

In Cuba, however, some football fans are more equal than others.

In Havana's leafy middle-class Vedado neighborhood, pints at a dollar a pop were flowing at a watch party in a cultural center

festooned with a Brazil flag and World Cup bunting.

Outside, a row of SUVs attested to the existence of a small elite that is doing well on dollar salaries from the expanding private sector — even as other Cubans rummage through rubbish bins for food.

But even here, the long arm of the crisis is visible, with the TV reception periodically freezing, triggering loud groans from supporters clad in the yellow Brazilian jerseys of stars Vinicius Junior, Neymar and others.

Victor Diaz, a 24-year-old biologist, looked grave as he described the need for escapism.

Having "something to lighten all the burdens that we're dealing with day by day is incredible", he said.

Zelensky says will discuss Ukraine war with Trump at G-7 summit

KYIV, Ukraine (AFP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday he will discuss the Russian invasion and efforts to end it during a meeting with US President Donald Trump at the G-7 summit in France.

Earlier on Sunday, Trump's 80th birthday, Zelensky spoke by phone with the US leader.

The call was made public shortly before the Kremlin said Russian President Vladimir Putin also rang Trump to speak about the wars in Ukraine and Iran.

Zelensky said on social media he and Trump "discussed things that could help bring about peace now, and I informed the president about the latest developments



Firefighters work near the damaged Kharkiv Art Museum following a drone strike in Kharkiv on Sunday

on the battlefield and how our position has strengthened".

"We agreed that we

will discuss more during our meeting at the G7 Summit. We have some good ideas that

could help advance peace and protect lives," Zelensky added. Trump will take part

in a G-7 working session with Zelensky in France on Tuesday. US-led talks to end

the conflict in Ukraine — grinding through its fifth year — have been sidelined by the Iran war and Russian advances on the battlefield are showing signs of losing steam.

Trump has pushed both sides to end the conflict after initially boasting he could end the war within a day of taking office.

He also repeatedly leaned on Ukraine to make compromises with Russia, which invaded in February 2022.

Trump-Putin call

In a statement issued shortly after Zelensky announced his call with Trump, the Kremlin said Putin and his US counterpart had held a "friendly and frank" phone call.

"The conversation focused on the situation surrounding the memorandum of understanding being drafted between the United States and Iran," Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov told reporters.

"Donald Trump said an agreement is close and he hopes the results of the difficult, but ultimately successful, negotiations could be announced today," Ushakov said.

Both leaders also agreed that "US presidential special representatives Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, who are currently closely involved in Iranian affairs, will return to Russia soon".

Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Kushner have been involved in shuttle diplomacy between Russia and

Ukraine but the peace process has largely stalled since the US-Israeli strikes on Iran in February.

Ushakov said Putin told Trump that "no attempts" by Kyiv "to strike civilian infrastructure in Russia will change the critical situation for Ukraine on the battlefield".

Amid near-daily pummeling of its cities by Russian drones and missiles, Ukraine has in recent weeks stepped up its own aerial attacks, which it says mostly target Russia's oil infrastructure to sap its profits that fund the war.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has turned into Europe's worst conflict since World War II, with thousands of civilians and hundreds of thousands of troops killed.

Prime minister directs ministries to reduce operating costs by 15%

Continued from page 1

The directives also require ministries and public institutions to account for a JD30 monthly salary increase for public servants and military employees and retirees whose monthly salaries or pensions are below JD600 when preparing current expenditure estimates for 2027-2029.

Hassan stressed the need to adhere to preliminary budget ceilings,

stipulating that they should not be exceeded unless justified by the public interest.

Any requests for additional allocations must be accompanied by explanations detailing variances from the 2026 budget, in line with government efforts to rationalise public spending.

Priority will be given to ongoing capital projects, projects under implementation, initiatives linked to the Economic

Modernisation Vision and the Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap, as well as commitments made by the Cabinet during its field visits to governorates, the circular said.

The directives also highlight a greater emphasis on integrating green economy and climate-change priorities into budget planning, taking into account Jordan's commitments to reducing carbon emis-

sions and strengthening climate adaptation measures.

Government bodies were also urged to incorporate requirements related to digital transformation, public-service automation and cybersecurity enhancement into their budget plans.

The prime minister also instructed ministries and public units to align programmes and projects with national priorities, strategic ob-

jectives and performance indicators for the 2027-2029 period, reinforcing a results-based budgeting approach that links public spending to development and service outcomes.

Government entities were also asked to prepare summaries of their 2027 staffing tables, detailing vacant, new and redundant positions while adhering to public-sector job classification and coding standards.

Cabinet extends NPC concession for Risha gas field until 2061

Continued from page 1

The NPC said it has begun logistical procedures to establish natural gas processing units and construct a strategic pipeline linking the Risha field to the Arab

Gas Pipeline, enabling the transport of locally produced gas to consumption centres across the Kingdom. The project is expected to be completed and operational by 2029.

The government is

providing financial support to facilitate the expansion plan, allocating JD87 million over three years. The package includes JD35 million this year, JD35 million in 2027 and JD17 million in 2028.

High-ranking Jordanian, Syrian officials discuss cooperation, economic integration

Continued from page 1

Discussions covered cooperation across air, land, maritime and rail transport, with both sides agreeing on measures to facilitate truck movement between and through the two countries to boost bilateral and transit trade.

In the water sector, the two sides reviewed outcomes of the third meeting of the Joint Water Committee held in Amman, and stressed the importance of implementing its recommendations and ensuring the equitable sharing of water resources.

They also hailed the launch of a joint operational water platform and a study on the development of the Yarmouk Basin.

During the visit, Jordan and Syria signed

an air services agreement, signed by Farajat and Hosari.

Safadi and Shaibani also held expanded talks on bilateral relations and regional developments, including efforts to enhance security and stability.

The two ministers reviewed cooperation in strategic projects and sectors including institutional development, capacity-building, international cooperation, energy, health and investment, and agreed to hold the third session of the Higher Coordination Council in Damascus in October.

Safadi stressed Jordan's support for Syria's recovery and reconstruction, underlining the importance of preserving its unity, security, stability and territorial integrity.

Shaibani expressed appreciation for Jor-

dan's continued support for Syria's reconstruction efforts.

The two top diplomats also discussed the implementation of a roadmap for resolving the crisis in Sweida and stabilising southern Syria, while rejecting any partition plans or attempts to undermine Syria's unity.

They also condemned repeated Israeli attacks on Syrian territory and called for withdrawal to the 1974 Disengagement Agreement lines, warning that such actions threaten Syria's stability and regional security.

Both sides reiterated the importance of diplomacy and dialogue in addressing regional crises and agreed to maintain coordination and consultation on issues of mutual interest.

Preliminary works begin on landmark stadium in Amra City project

Continued from page 1

Upon completion, the stadium is expected to strengthen Jordan's sports infrastructure, support the development of local athletics and enhance the Kingdom's ability to host major regional and international sporting events.

The Jordan Company for the Development of Cities and Facilities, a wholly state-owned company operating under the Jordan Investment Fund, is responsible for overseeing the project's implementation, promoting investment opportunities, engaging developers

and attracting local and foreign investment to the wider Amra City project.

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan launched the Amra City Project in November last year.

The government said at the time that the long-term urban development initiative is aimed at managing population growth, creating investment opportunities, and providing sustainable living solutions for future generations.

Planned over 25 years, the project is intended as a model city rather than a new administrative capital, the government said

in a statement, adding that the mega project's launch follows directives from His Majesty King Abdullah in the Letter of Designation.

The project aims at easing demographic pressure on Amman and Zarqa, where populations are expected to reach 11 million within 25 years if growth continues at its current pace.

The project is located on state-owned land totaling nearly 500,000 dunums, with the first phase covering 40,000 dunums. The Jordanian Company for Urban and Facilities Development will oversee implementa-

tion, with construction beginning early next year and some components scheduled for completion within two years.

Amra City will follow a comprehensive land-use plan that designates areas for investment, education, commerce, industry, services, housing and tourism. It is envisioned as a green, technologically advanced city that relies on clean energy, modern public transport and digital infrastructure, the statement said.

The first phase of the project includes major projects such as an international exhibi-

tions and conferences centre to be completed in 2027, an integrated sports city featuring an international football stadium to be completed in 2029, an Olympic city, Olympic-standard indoor arenas, a car-racing track, a 1,000-dunum environmental park, and an entertainment city expected to open in 2028.

It will also include commercial and service zones, an educational city, a technology hub focused on investment in the education sector, and expanded cultural facilities including an extension of the Royal Automobile Museum.

Trump says Israel attack on Beirut 'should not have happened'

Continued from page 1

"The response of the fighters of Islam is imminent," the Supreme National Security Council said in a statement on X. "Lebanon is our life and violation of the red lines of the Islamic Republic will not be tolerated."

Israel struck Beirut's southern suburbs on Sunday, killing three people, in response to what it said was Hizbollah fire at northern Israel, while its military also carried out broader strikes on southern Lebanon.

The latest escalation came amid expectations that a deal between the United States and Iran to end the Middle East war could be imminent, but Iranian chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said there was "no point" in continuing peace talks with Washington after the strike.

Tehran insists a ceasefire in Lebanon must be part of any deal.

Israel and Hizbollah have been at war since March 2 when the Iran-backed group fired rockets at Israel to avenge the killing of Iran's supreme leader in US-Israeli strikes days earlier.

Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) said a strike hit an apartment in the Ghobeiry neighbourhood of Beirut's southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold known as Dahiyeh.

An AFP correspondent saw smoke and dust rising near a heavily damaged apartment as debris covered the street and people searched for survivors, with panic in the area after the strike along a busy road filled with shops.

Lebanon's civil defence agency reported three dead and six wounded.

Israeli officials including prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu have warned that Israel would strike south Beirut if the Iran-backed Hizbollah group tar-

gets northern Israeli communities, a position they say has the backing of Washington.

The Israeli military earlier Sunday said three suspected Hizbollah drones struck northern Israel in separate incidents, causing no casualties.

Hizbollah on Sunday claimed several attacks on Israeli troops who have invaded south Lebanon, but none on north Israel.

'Test'

Israel's military had struck Beirut's southern suburbs last week after saying it had intercepted rockets launched by Hizbollah into Israeli territory.

Iran launched missiles towards Israel in response to that attack, triggering Israeli retaliatory strikes before both sides halted fire.

Iran had repeatedly warned it would strike Israel if the Lebanese capital was targeted.

Netanyahu's office said Sunday that the military "carried out strikes in the Dahiyeh district of Beirut against terrorist targets belonging to the Hizbollah terrorist organisation, in response to Hizbollah's firing towards Israeli territory".

Israel's military said it "conducted a precise strike on a Hizbollah command centre" in the area.

Two far-right Israeli ministers earlier Sunday had called for strikes.

"The shooting at northern communities is a test of the Dahiyeh Doctrine that the prime minister declared. I call on him to implement it decisively and firmly, and to bring down buildings in Dahiyeh," finance minister Bezalel Smotrich said on X.

"For every drone — a missile; for every violation — fire; for every UAV — Dahiyeh must tremble," wrote national security minister Itamar Ben Gvir on X.

A senior Iranian military official meanwhile warned that



People gather at the site of an Israeli air strike that targeted a building in Beirut's southern suburbs on Sunday

Israel's strike on Beirut's southern suburbs would not go "unanswered" by Tehran.

"Without a doubt, these crimes will not go unanswered," Brigadier General Mohammad Jafar Asadi, deputy commander of Iran's highest military command, told Defa Press news agency.

Lebanon's NNA also

reported Israeli strikes on more than 20 locations in the country's south, including the city of Nabatieh.

The strikes came both before and after the Israeli army issued evacuation warnings for almost 30 south Lebanon locations ahead of raids there.

Israel's military activity in recent days

has been focused on the region around Nabatieh.

Direct talks

A military source told AFP on Sunday that a small Lebanese army force which had been present in Kfar Tibnit, near Nabatieh, evacuated its position there a day earlier after an

Israeli incursion into the village.

Requesting anonymity, the source emphasised that the Lebanese army was however still present at the Nabatieh barracks.

An AFP correspondent saw around a dozen vehicles, including some military trucks and heavy machinery as well as civilian vehicles, heading out of Nabatieh on Sunday.

In April, Israel and Lebanon began landmark direct talks in Washington seeking to halt the hostilities, with a fifth round scheduled later this month.

Hizbollah rejects the direct talks and has dismissed a conditional ceasefire announced this month that would require it to cease attacks but makes no mention of Israel doing so or withdrawing troops from Lebanon.

Lebanon says Israel's campaign of airstrikes and ground invasion since March 2 have killed more than 3,700 people.

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From open war to deferred war

This week we saw a brief return to military escalation, a clear indication that the factors that pushed the region into open confrontation remain intact and that the conflict itself has yet to reach its true endpoint.

For the three principal actors, the latest developments revealed much about the nature of the current phase. From the Israeli perspective, the strike on Beirut's southern suburbs was largely symbolic. Rather than a deep military operation or a campaign of widespread destruction, it appeared to be a calculated attempt to provoke an Iranian response and break the existing stalemate. Such a move was hardly unexpected. Iran cannot remain indefinitely under a pressure campaign that began with war and continued through sanctions and isolation. From this perspective, breaking the deadlock also serves an Iranian interest.

At the same time, Israel remains committed to separating the Lebanese front from any future agreement with Tehran while maintaining pressure on Hizbollah. Equally significant was the demonstration that direct action against Iran remains firmly embedded within Israeli strategic calculations, even during periods of negotiation. The message was clear: Negotiations do not necessarily create immunity from military pressure.

For Tehran, renewed strikes against Israel carry political significance beyond their military value. Entering negotiations under the image of submission to American pressure is not a position the Iranian leadership is prepared to accept. Limited military action therefore becomes a means of restoring an image of strength, preserving deterrence and demonstrating continued regional relevance in the face of a growing perception that Iran is gradually losing some of the instruments through which it projected influence across the region.

The United States, meanwhile, appears increasingly convinced of the effectiveness of sustained pressure without crossing the threshold into large-scale war. Recent American strikes conveyed a broader message: Pressure intended to bring Iran to the negotiating table can, if necessary, be transformed into military pressure designed to shape the terms of an agreement.

At the same time, the fronts upon which Iran once relied to transfer the crisis into Israel or generate wider regional instability are gradually being contained. Missiles and drones launched from Yemen no longer constitute a strategic balance of power, while prolonged disruption of maritime routes only increases international determination to restore stability and secure critical waterways.

The underlying objective of the latest escalation appears to be pushing Iran toward an agreement without prolonged negotiations. Yet the regional landscape reveals realities that cannot be ignored. The process of separating conflict arenas is advancing steadily. In Iraq, some armed factions have begun moving toward arrangements under state authority, marking the beginning of what could become a long process aimed at ending the concept of a state within a state.

Lebanon, meanwhile, is moving along two parallel tracks. The first is political, under American sponsorship, based on the assumption that negotiations can become the gateway to a fundamental restructuring of the Lebanese landscape. The second is military, focused on sustaining pressure on Hizbollah, reducing its capabilities, and limiting its freedom of action. Notably, both tracks continue to advance simultaneously without obstructing one another.

The most important dimension, however, is the effort to redirect Iran's attention inward as it confronts the realities of the post-war period. Economic considerations have become decisive, making sanctions relief and access to frozen assets critical components of any future settlement. At the same time, Washington appears determined to retain significant influence over Iran's future priorities and strategic behaviour.

Israeli calculations remain equally important. For Israel, coexistence with the Iranian threat has become increasingly unacceptable. Yet weakening the Iranian regime is no longer necessarily the ultimate objective after years of costly regional confrontations. As a result, any agreement with Iran is unlikely to bring a definitive end to the conflict. The more likely scenario is a transition from open war to deferred war — from direct military confrontation to the management of conflict.

In such an environment, American and Israeli military and intelligence superiority will remain the primary instruments for preserving and adjusting the new regional order now taking shape.



Amer Al Sabaileh

From debtors' imprisonment to credit history: Has Jordan completed the transition

Over the past few years, Jordan has undergone an important legal and economic transformation by reducing its reliance on the imprisonment of debtors as a means of debt collection. This shift has sparked considerable debate. Some view it as a progressive reform aligned with international best practices and the protection of individual rights and freedoms, while others fear it may lead to higher default rates, weaker repayment discipline, and reduced confidence in commercial and financial transactions.

The real question, however, is not whether debtors should be imprisoned, but rather: What is the most effective mechanism for ensuring financial obligations are honored? Can credit history replace imprisonment as a tool for financial discipline and creditor protection?

In reality, debtor imprisonment is no longer the primary debt recovery mechanism in most advanced economies. Modern states concluded decades ago that imprisonment — besides being costly and burdensome on public finances — does not generate income, does not help debtors repay their obligations, and may even worsen the problem by preventing them from working and producing. Consequently, most countries replaced this approach with what may be described as a "long-term economic penalty", embodied in credit history and credit scoring systems.

In the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and most European countries, individuals understand that failure to meet their financial obligations will not result in imprisonment. However, it will affect their credit reputation for many years, potentially preventing them from obtaining a mortgage, car financing, credit cards, commercial facilities or funding for a new business venture. As a result, repayment discipline shifts from fear of legal punishment to the desire to preserve one's economic reputation.

This reflects what economists often refer to as the internalisation of costs and benefits, which is the incorporation of future economic consequences into present decision-making. Individuals repay their debts not because they fear prison, but because they understand that default carries long-term economic costs.

International experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of credit reporting and credit scoring systems. Credit information systems have reduced lending risks, improved banks' ability to assess borrowers, expanded access to finance, lowered borrowing costs for responsible customers and helped curb excessive indebtedness. They have also provided financial institutions with more accurate and equitable risk management tools.

Today, a credit history is among the most valuable economic assets an individual or business can possess. In many advanced economies, banks do not begin by examining collateral; they first review the applicant's credit record. In some cases, the credit profile is more important than the value of the collateral itself. After all, the primary role of a bank is to provide financing and financial assets — not to trade in land and real estate.

In Jordan, institutional attention to this issue began with the enactment of the Credit Information Law No. 15 of 2010, which estab-



ECONOMIC REVIEW

Yusuf Mansur

CRIF has collected data from banks, finance companies, leasing companies, microfinance institutions and a number of service providers. It produces credit reports and credit scores that assist financial institutions in evaluating clients before extending financing.

Undoubtedly, this represents a significant improvement compared with the situation a decade ago. Banks now possess more comprehensive information about borrowers, and lending decisions increasingly rely on objective data rather than personal judgment or relationships. Citizens can also access their own credit reports and gain a clearer understanding of their financial standing.

Yet an important question remains: Has Jordan's credit information system become a genuine substitute for debtor imprisonment? The answer, at least for now, appears to be: Not entirely. For the system to function effectively, credit history must become a decisive factor in economic life. Citizens must recognise that any default will directly affect their future ability to borrow, invest or obtain financial facilities. Likewise, all major financial and commercial institutions should actively participate in information sharing and genuinely incorporate credit scores into their decision-making processes.

At the same time, many Jordanians remain unaware of the importance of their credit records, and the practical impact of credit history on many economic decisions remains more limited than in advanced economies. This suggests that Jordan's transition from a culture of legal sanctions to one based on credit reputation is not yet complete.

Another important issue concerns the structure of the credit reporting market itself: Is it appropriate for Jordan to have only one credit bureau? There are strong arguments in favor of a single provider. A unified database reduces inconsistencies, lowers operational costs and facilitates regulatory oversight by the Central Bank. Furthermore, Jordan's relatively small market may not be large enough to sustain multiple competing firms.

However, the existence of only one credit bureau also raises legitimate concerns regarding competition, innovation, service quality and even potential monopoly effects. In the United States, for example, several major credit bureaus operate simultaneously, including Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. Competition among these firms has improved data quality, fostered innovation and reduced costs for users.

This does not necessarily mean Jordan immediately requires three or four credit bureaus. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to ask whether the Jordanian market has matured

sufficiently to support one or more competitors to CRIF in the future. If market size is considered insufficient, policymakers may even consider supporting the emergence of another provider to encourage competition and innovation.

Another issue of equal importance is the responsibility of the credit bureau itself. The success of the system depends not only on collecting data, but also on ensuring its accuracy, comprehensiveness, timeliness, and the ability of individuals and firms to challenge and correct errors. A credit reporting system can only be considered fair when information is accurate, up to date, transparent and subject to review.

The importance of credit history extends beyond consumer lending and banking. It is directly linked to a broader issue: The economy's ability to finance investment through leasing and movable assets financing.

Modern economies do not rely solely on real estate as collateral. Increasingly, financing is based on machinery, equipment, vehicles, inventories, accounts receivable and other movable assets. This is why advanced economies have developed comprehensive legal frameworks allowing such assets to serve as collateral.

Jordan attempted to move in this direction through the enactment of the Financial Leasing Law in 2002, the development of legislation governing movable assets and the establishment of a registry for security interests in movable property. The objective was to enable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access financing without owning high-value real estate.

The philosophy of financial leasing is both simple and economically powerful. Instead of paying the full price of machinery, equipment, or vehicles upfront, a leasing company acquires the asset and leases it to the client over an extended period in exchange for regular payments, often with an option to purchase at the end of the contract.

This allows entrepreneurs to allocate scarce capital toward expanding production rather than purchasing assets outright. A manufacturer, for example, can invest in expanding a factory rather than tying up resources in trucks or equipment. The model has proven highly successful across North America, Europe, and Asia because it enables businesses to acquire productive assets without requiring substantial liquidity or real estate collateral.

Despite having the legal framework in place for many years, Jordan's financial leasing market remains significantly smaller than its potential. Likewise, the use of movable assets as collateral remains limited compared with international practice.

The reasons appear to extend beyond legislation itself. They involve broader issues related to risk management, credit information systems and the efficiency of legal enforcement mechanisms. In advanced economies, leasing companies depend on two critical pillars: Comprehensive credit information that allows accurate borrower assessment and efficient legal procedures that enable the rapid recovery of leased assets in cases of default.

If credit history systems remain incomplete or have limited practical impact, risk perceptions rise.

As a result, financing becomes more expensive, and institutions become less willing to expand leasing and movable asset financing. In some cases, leasing companies continue to require real estate collateral because they fear that leased equipment may be sold or transferred without adequate legal deterrence.

Ironically, Jordan has undertaken three major reforms over the past decade in the right direction: The establishment of a credit bureau, the creation of a movable collateral registry and the reduction of debtor imprisonment. Yet these reforms continue to operate with varying degrees of integration.

Credit history has not yet become a decisive factor across all financial transactions. Financing based on movable assets remains below its potential and many SMEs continue to rely primarily on real estate collateral.

Indeed, one of the reasons advanced economies were able to abandon debtor imprisonment is that they developed strong and credible alternatives. A borrower in the United States or the United Kingdom may not face imprisonment for default, but they face an immediate loss of creditworthiness, difficulty obtaining future financing and efficient enforcement against pledged assets.

If traditional sanctions are removed without strengthening these alternatives, financial markets may experience higher risks, weaker confidence and increased financing costs.

For Jordan to successfully transition from a philosophy of debtor imprisonment to one of credit discipline, the entire ecosystem must function effectively. Credit history, financial leasing, movable collateral registries, and SME financing are all interconnected components of the same system.

If these components operate in an integrated manner, Jordan will be able to expand access to finance, reduce excessive dependence on real estate collateral, increase investment and productivity, and create more jobs. If they continue to function only partially or independently, a substantial portion of their economic benefits will remain unrealised.

Ultimately, the issue is no longer whether debtors should be imprisoned. The real challenge is building a modern economy based on information, transparency, credit reputation and productive finance.

More than a decade after the enactment of the Credit Information Law and nearly ten years after the launch of CRIF Jordan, perhaps the time has come for a comprehensive national evaluation of the experience. What has been achieved? What remains unfinished? Has credit history truly become the primary mechanism of financial discipline in Jordan? And, have financial leasing and movable asset financing fulfilled their intended role?

The answers to these questions will largely determine Jordan's ability to move from an economy dependent on legal sanctions and traditional real estate collateral toward one driven by information, reputation and efficient capital allocation. After all, modern economies are not built through prisons; they are built through information, trust and transparency.

The writer is a former Jordanian minister of state for economic affairs

AI competency framework for public sector: A gateway or trap?

By Hamza Alakalik

The Ministry of Public Sector Development recently convened a strategic forum with the Jordan Strategy Forum to discuss the Competency Framework for Artificial Intelligence Integration in the public sector. The initiative reflects recognition that delaying AI adoption risks leaving public administrations behind in a technology driven world. At the same time, the Jordanian government has launched a project to assess the readiness of public institutions for AI adoption. Yet this transformation raises questions about infrastructure, software costs, workforce preparedness and the future of employment in a country where human capital remains a strategic asset.

The 2026 competency framework introduces a model that categorizes Jordan's approximately 218,000 public employees into four interconnected groups, ranging from basic awareness to digital leadership. International comparisons indicate that the framework aligns with standards adopted in Singapore. Its success will depend on activating the Jordanian Academy for Public

Administration as the primary vehicle for capacity building. Implementation should begin with a phased approach that prioritises a roadmap and a readiness assessment before large scale training programmes are deployed.

Advanced AI technologies require infrastructure. Jordan is expected to retain computing capabilities centrally through a government cloud managed by the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship. Rather than relying on a single unified database, the government is likely to expand the use of data sharing bridges through the Government Service Bus. This model enables the exchange of non-classified information through open application programming interfaces while maintaining privacy protections and strengthening cybersecurity safeguards.

Any discussion about artificial intelligence must also address the economics of digital consumption. Every interaction with an AI model is translated into tokens, and every token requires computing power, energy and cooling resources. If unrestricted access were granted to all public employees, the financial bur-

den on the state could become substantial. To avoid this scenario, the framework adopts a tiered model. General employees are expected to focus on foundational awareness, while advanced generative AI tools and agentic systems are reserved for specialised professionals and policy leaders.

The administrative modernisation programme links AI adoption to measurable performance outcomes. It includes assessment mechanisms that evaluate employee competencies and measure the impact of technology on reducing processing times and improving user experiences. Training programmes will not be considered successful unless they lead to practical applications that simplify procedures, support evidence-based policymaking and improve operational efficiency.

Strategic analysis suggests that the framework is centred on redesigning jobs around human machine collaboration. The objective is not to replace employees but to automate repetitive administrative tasks and allow public servants to focus on higher value responsibilities. International research has produced mixed findings regarding

labor market impacts. Some studies found little immediate effect on unemployment following the launch of ChatGPT, while others identified links between AI adoption and job displacement in selected technical professions. For Jordan, this highlights the importance of continuous training, workforce reskilling, and preparing employees for emerging roles that combine technological proficiency with human judgment and creativity.

Jordan's transition into the age of artificial intelligence will not be without challenges. Brain drain among digital talent and resistance to change within traditional systems remain significant obstacles. However, if implemented with neutrality, financial discipline, governance, centralised cloud capabilities and secure interoperability mechanisms, the proposed framework could become a powerful driver of administrative performance and sustainable economic growth. The choice facing Jordan is clear: Embrace thoughtful transformation and secure a leading place in the digital future, or risk remaining constrained by outdated bureaucratic models in a rapidly evolving world.

BUSINESS

Monday, June 15, 2026



SSC cuts debt installment interest rates to support businesses

AMMAN (JT) — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) has announced a new package of incentives for indebted businesses, reducing interest rates on debt installment plans from 9 per cent to between 2 per cent and 6.5 per cent, depending on the repayment period.

In a statement on Sunday, the SSC said that the decision, approved by the board of directors, aims to support economic sectors and encourage employers to settle outstanding social security obligations.

The corporation said that businesses seeking to repay or re-schedule their debts can apply under the

new scheme from June 15 through December 31.

The SSC said that the decision, approved by the board of directors, aims to support economic sectors...

Under the revised terms, installment interest rates will start at 2 per cent for repayment periods of up to 12 months. The rate will increase by 0.5 percentage points for each additional year of

repayment, reaching a maximum of 6.5 per cent for repayment periods extending to 120 months.

The SSC said that businesses that have not previously benefitted twice from earlier decisions granting reduced installment interest rates will be eligible to apply under the new programme, subject to the specified conditions.

The corporation also said that tourism-sector establishments and municipalities will continue to benefit from the current arrangement, which allows them to repay debts at a zero-percent interest rate until June 30.

After that date, they will be eligible to apply for the new installment programme, it said.

Real estate trading volume reaches JD2.46 billion through May — report

AMMAN (JT) — The real estate trading volume reached nearly JD2.458 billion during the first five months of 2026, marking a 5 per cent decline compared with the same period last year, according to the Department of Lands and Survey's monthly report for May.

The report showed continued weakness in the property market, with real estate sales and revenues recording year-on-year declines, although non-Jordanian ownership transactions posted notable gains in May.

Monthly real estate trading volume stood at JD474.27 million in May, down 12 per cent from the same month in 2025 and 17 per cent lower than in April.

Despite the overall slowdown, the estimated value of non-Jordanian ownership transactions increased by 26 per cent in May compared with both May 2025 and April 2026, reaching JD19.65 million.

However, the total number of non-Jordanian ownership transactions during the January-May period reached JD75.31 million, reflecting a 7 per cent decrease from the same period last year.



A view of Amman

chases by non-Jordanians declined by 2 per cent, while land purchases dropped by 23 per cent.

The estimated value of non-Jordanian ownership transactions during the January-May period reached JD75.31 million, reflecting a 7 per cent decrease from the same period last year.

The report also in-

dicated that revenues generated during the first five months of 2026 amounted to JD104.66 million, down 1 per cent from the corresponding period in 2025.

In May alone, revenues fell to JD18.90 million, representing a 10 per cent decline compared with May 2025 and a 16 per cent drop from April.

Overall real estate sales in the Kingdom decreased by 12 per cent during the first five months of 2026 compared with the same period last year. Apartment sales declined by 9 per cent, while land sales fell by 13 per cent.

During May, total real estate sales dropped by 14 per cent year-on-year and by 10 per cent

compared with April. Apartment sales declined by 12 per cent from May 2025 and by 8 per cent from April, while land sales recorded a 14 per cent annual decrease.

According to the report, the total number of properties sold to companies across the Kingdom during the first five months of 2026 reached 3,684.

Labour Ministry launches worker status regularisation drive through September 30

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Labour Khaled Bakkar on Sunday announced details of a Cabinet decision to legalise and regularise the status of non-Jordanian workers of all nationalities in accordance with the Labour Law and related regulations and instructions, effective from Monday through September 30.

Bakkar said the decision is part of the government's ongoing efforts to regulate the labour market, address existing distortions, and encourage employers to rectify the status of non-Jordanian workers who failed to obtain or renew work permits during previous periods.

He said the measures aim to reduce the financial burden on employers while ensuring compliance with labour regulations and improving labour market governance, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The minister noted that the decision excludes non-Jordanian workers employed in the garment and knitwear

manufacturing sector and complementary production-input industries operating in development zones, Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs) and free zones, as well as workers holding permits in specialised skills professions.

Bakkar urged employers to take advantage of the exemption period to regularise the status of non-Jordanian workers and ensure their employment remains lawful.

He said the Ministry of Labour, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Public Security Directorate, will carry out a comprehensive inspection campaign during the regularisation period to identify labour violations across all sectors.

He added that, following the end of the grace period, deportation measures will be taken against any non-Jordanian worker whose work permit has expired for three months or more and who fails to regularise their status.

Under the Cabinet de-



Minister of Labour Khaled Bakkar on Sunday announces details of a Cabinet decision to legalise and regularise the status of non-Jordanian workers of all nationalities

cision, employers and non-Jordanian workers across all economic sectors, including domestic workers, will be exempted from 50 per cent of accumulated work permit fees for previous periods.

The decision also grants a full exemption from late-payment penalties associated with renewing expired work permits or transferring workers between employers.

In addition, non-Jordanian workers covered under the Residence and Foreigners Affairs Law No. 24 of 1973 and its amendments will re-

ceive a full exemption from overstay fines if they regularise their status during the specified period.

The decision stipulates that only the work permit fee for one year, or part of a year, related to the worker's most recent valid permit will be collected.

For workers wishing to permanently leave the Kingdom under a "departure without return" arrangement, all previous work permit fees and fines will be waived.

They will also be exempted from residency overstay penalties, provided their files are set-

led before departure.

The measures further allow departing workers to receive their social security entitlements directly from the Social Security Corporation.

The Cabinet decision also permits employers to hire non-Jordanian workers who previously benefitted from exemption programmes or who opted for permanent departure but remain in the Kingdom, enabling them to obtain work permits and benefit from the new exemptions.

In addition, non-Jordanian nationals who entered Jordan in previous years for non-work-related reasons will be allowed to obtain work permits for the first time.

The decision permits the transfer of non-Jordanian workers between economic sectors and activities, subject to specific conditions.

Workers holding permits in specialised skills professions will not be allowed to move to other occupations, while recruited workers who entered Jordan after 25

February 2025 will not be eligible for transfers.

Workers holding permits as specialised skills workers will not be allowed to transfer to other professions, except under self-employment permits.

The decision allows holders of self-employment permits to transfer to building services occupations. It also permits garment and knitwear workers whose permits expired or were cancelled for two years or more to transfer to any employer and work in permitted, restricted, or specialised skills occupations without clearance from a previous employer.

It also allows workers in all sectors to transfer to self-employment permits, while maintaining self-employment as a closed category from which transfers are not permitted.

Among the general provisions, the decision removes the requirement for a clearance certificate from a previous employer when a worker

transfers after a permit expires or is cancelled.

Workers reported as absconding by previous employers may also benefit from the decision without obtaining employer approval, provided they remain in the Kingdom and their work permit expired more than one year ago.

The decision further allows workers whose recruitment contracts expired before completing work permit procedures to obtain permits, and permits the employment of workers already present in the Kingdom who were recruited as replacements for other workers.

Regarding domestic workers, the decision introduces a number of measures to facilitate transfers and regularisation procedures.

Domestic workers previously reported absent and subsequently replaced may transfer to a new employer without obtaining approval from the former employer, provided the absence report is withdrawn

before submitting the application.

Domestic workers reported absent but not replaced may also transfer to a new employer after two years have elapsed from the date of the report, subject to the withdrawal of the absence notification.

The decision also allows female domestic workers who married a Jordanian citizen and changed their residency status to obtain new work permits following divorce, widowhood, or if they wish to return to employment.

In addition, individuals who entered Jordan for employment purposes may obtain domestic worker permits, subject to Ministry of Interior approval.

Domestic workers whose permits have expired or been cancelled may transfer to another economic sector if more than two years have passed since the expiry of their last permit, without requiring approval from a previous employer, Petra reported.

NEPCO says sales rise 2.5% through May 2026

AMMAN (JT) — Total electricity sales by Jordan's National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) increased by 2.5 per cent during the first five months of 2026 compared with the same period last year, according to company data.

NEPCO reported total sales of 9,401.5 gigawatt-hours (GWh) through the end of May, up from 9,174 GWh recorded during the corresponding period of 2025. Sales to Jordan's three electricity distribution companies reached 9,044 GWh, marking a 2.3 per cent increase from 8,838 GWh a year earlier, NEPCO said in a statement.

The Jordanian Electric Power Company limited (JEPCO) accounted



for the largest share of sales at 5,718.2 GWh, up 3 per cent from 5,549.2 GWh. Sales to the Irbid District Electricity Company rose 2.7 per cent to 1,763.4 GWh, compared with 1,717.5 GWh in the same period last year.

Meanwhile, sales to the Electricity Distribution Company stood at 1,562.4 GWh, compared with 1,571.3 GWh a year earlier.

The data also showed a modest increase in sales to large consumers, which rose by 0.8 per cent to 208 GWh from 206.3 GWh.

Electricity exports posted the strongest growth, climbing 15.3 per cent to 149.5 GWh from 129.7 GWh during the first five months of 2025.

Exports to the Central Electricity Generating

Company in the Central Region increased by 13.3 per cent to 62 GWh, while exports to the Jerusalem District Electricity Company rose by 16.9 per cent to 84.3 GWh.

Electricity supplied through the Trebil border crossing with Iraq also increased, reaching 3.2 GWh, up 10.3 per cent from 2.9 GWh recorded during the same period last year.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Sunday amounted to JD24.9 million spread over 5.6 million shares that traded through 5,498 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 1.55 per cent, closing at 4015.79 points.

Out of 100 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 45 companies rose while the share price of another 21 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Jordan Phosphate Mines by 5.68 per cent, Arab Company for Investment Projects by 4.68 per cent, Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 4.55 per cent, Zara Investment Holding by 4.35 per cent, and Afaq Holding for Investment and Real Estate Development Company Plc. by 3.45 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordan Dairy by 4.89 per cent, Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 4.76 per cent, Jordan International Investment Company by 4.62 per cent, Al Sanabel International for Islamic Investments holding Plc. Company by 4.55 per cent, and National Aluminum Industrial by 4.05 per cent.

بورصة عمان
Amman Stock Exchange

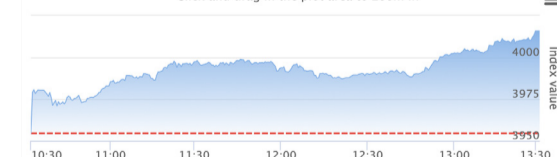
THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↑ 4015.79 1.55% June 14, 2026

Live Data

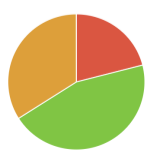
Historical Data

Click and drag in the plot area to zoom in



DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market		OTC Market	
Trading Value (JDs)	24,878,358		
Trading volume	5,609,474		
No. of Transactions	5,498		
No. of Securities	100		



Knicks beat Spurs to claim first NBA title in 53 years

NFL

Former 49ers defensive lineman Aldon Smith dies at 36

SAN FRANCISCO, United States (AFP) — Former NFL defensive lineman Aldon Smith died on Saturday at the age of 36, the San Francisco 49ers said without disclosing the cause of death. Smith played six seasons in the NFL for the 49ers, the Oakland Raiders and the Dallas Cowboys. The 49ers, who selected him with the seventh overall selection in the 2011 NFL draft, confirmed Smith's death in a statement. "We are devastated by the sudden and tragic passing of Aldon Smith," the 49ers said. "Aldon's undeniable talent and sheer dominance on the field were on display from the moment he joined our organisation, having recorded one of the best rookie seasons the National Football League has seen." Smith recorded 14 sacks and 27 quarterback hits in his rookie campaign and was second in Defensive Rookie of the Year voting. In 2012 he had 19.5 sacks — still a 49ers franchise record — and 29 quarterback hits in the best season of his career. But off-field issues slowed his rise, including multiple arrests on suspicion of driving under the influence and an arrest in 2013 on felony charges of possessing illegal assault weapons.

TENNIS

Poland's Majchrzak stuns De Minaur for first ATP title

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Polish outsider Kamil Majchrzak clinched his first ever ATP tennis tour title Sunday, stunning World No.6 Alex de Minaur 6-3, 2-6, 7-6 (7/5) in a nail-biting final on the 's-Hertogenbosch grass. The win capped a fairytale run for the world number 76, who had already overcome two top-10 players in consecutive rounds in Felix Auger-Aliassime (world rank four) and Daniil Medvedev (world rank eight). Both players battled blustery conditions but Majchrzak was the more aggressive player, taking more risks and eventually grinding down the obdurate de Minaur in a match lasting two hours 25 minutes. The Pole got off to a flying 3-0 start in the first set, breaking De Minaur's first service game as the Australian appeared to struggle with the swirling wind on serve. That early break proved to be enough, as Majchrzak wrapped up the first set 6-3 with a high backhand volley at the net. In the end, De Minaur handed him the title with a double fault, Majchrzak sinking to his knees in triumph after the biggest win of his life.

LOS ANGELES, United States (AFP) — The New York Knicks, fueled by a sensational 45 points from Jalen Brunson, rallied again to beat the San Antonio Spurs 94-90 and win their first NBA title in 53 years on Saturday.

The Knicks won the best-of-seven championship series 4-1, denying Victor Wembanyama and his young Spurs teammates on their home floor to lift the trophy for the first time since 1973.

The Knicks, who recovered from 29 points down in game four to produce the biggest comeback in Finals history, erased a double-digit deficit to win for the fourth time in the series.

They trailed by 16 in the second quarter and were down by 10 early in the fourth, but Brunson wouldn't let them lose.

"I've got no words," Brunson said after setting a Knicks record for points in a Finals game, surpassing Willis Reed's 38 in game three of the team's 1970 triumph over the Los Angeles Lakers.

"I don't know what I'm feeling," added Brunson, who was named Finals Most Valuable Player. "I'm in awe. Whenever someone counts us out, we find a way to come back and do something about it."

French star Wembanyama scored 19



Karl-Anthony Towns #32 celebrates with the Larry O'Brien Championship Trophy after the victory against the San Antonio Spurs in Game Five of the 2026 NBA Finals at Frost Bank Centre on Sunday in San Antonio, Texas

points, pulled down 14 rebounds and blocked five shots and rookie Dylan Harper scored 25 points off the bench for San Antonio.

But once again the Spurs team that vanquished the defending champion Oklahoma City Thunder in the Western Conference finals were unable to hold off the crafty and determined Knicks.

The win marked the final chapter of a dramatic play-off run

which had captivated New York, with tens of thousands of long-suffering fans packing neighbourhood watch parties throughout the Big Apple as the team inched towards a first title in more than half-a-century.

Within moments of clinching victory on Saturday, the Empire State Building was lit up in the Knicks' signature orange and blue colors, as raucous celebrations erupted out-

side the team's Madison Square Garden home.

There was a boisterous blue and orange-clad contingent cheering them on at the Spurs' Frost Bank Centre as well, where the celebrities on the sidelines included not only longtime Knicks fans but also Britain's Prince Harry, who sat with NBA commissioner Adam Silver.

Mikal Bridges scored 14 points and Josh

Hart added 13 points and 11 rebounds for the Knicks. Karl-Anthony Towns scored just two points before fouling out in the fourth quarter but pulled down 10 rebounds and came up with three steals and a blocked shot.

Fouled on a three-pointer, Brunson made all three free-throws to put the Knicks up 86-85 with 3:40 left to play.

It was their first lead since the opening min-

utes and they wouldn't trail again.

Game four hero OG Anunoby drove for a dunk that made it 88-85 and after the Spurs knotted it at 88-88 Brunson put New York back in front with a driving basket and the Knicks held on.

With their backs against the wall the Spurs were locked in defensively from the opening tip-off.

Wembanyama set the tone, blocking three shots in the first quarter as the Spurs powered to a 23-13 lead, holding the Knicks to their fewest points in any quarter this post-season.

Wembanyama tied a Finals record with five blocks in the first half and drilled a three-pointer that pushed the Spurs lead to 16 early in the second period.

But the Knicks were heating up, cutting the deficit to three before Devin Vassell's fadeaway basket at the buzzer sent the Spurs into the interval with a 42-37 lead.

San Antonio quickly rebuilt a double-digit lead, but Brunson and the gritty Knicks wouldn't let them get away.

"We weren't ready to win an NBA championship," Spurs coach Mitch Johnson said. "The better team won. We did a lot of good things and we didn't finish the job. That's what it is."

FAMILY FLAVOURS MAGAZINE

THE JORDAN TIMES



The critical role of gut health in men



By Dr Said Qabbaah,
Medical writer & public health expert / Family Flavours Magazine

Ageing is a natural part of life, yet many men undergo subtle changes along the years. Energy levels go down, recovery takes longer and illnesses can feel harder to bounce back from. Behind many of these changes lies the immune system, which

gradually becomes less responsive with age.

What is less widely known is that the gut plays an important role in this process. Often described as a "second brain", the gut is home to trillions of microbes that quietly support immunity, metabolism and overall health. As research continues to evolve, one message is becoming clear: In men, healthy ageing and good gut health go hand in hand.

Ageing and the immune system

As men age, the immune system becomes slower and less effective. The body can experience a

low-level, ongoing inflammation, a process sometimes called "inflammaging", which can contribute to age-related health issues over time.

This combination creates a double challenge: On one hand, the body becomes less efficient at fighting infections. On the other, chronic inflammation quietly increases the risk of long-term health conditions.

Although this process is completely natural, it is not entirely fixed. Lifestyle factors such as diet, physical activity, sleep and gut health can shape how your immune system changes with time. Everyday choices play a meaningful role in how the gut and immune system age, showing that while ageing cannot be stopped, the body's response to it can still be guided.

The gut-immune connection

The collection of bacteria, viruses and fungi that live in your digestive tract is known as the gut microbiome. These microbes actively communicate with the immune system. In fact, the gut microbiome plays a key role in training and controlling immune responses throughout life.

Think of it as a constant dialogue. Healthy microbes help the immune system recognise harmful invaders while preventing unnecessary inflam-

mation. This stability is essential for maintaining health. So, when the gut is diverse and well-balanced, it supports strong immune defences. On the other hand, when it is disrupted, immune function can suffer.

When the gut microbiome becomes imbalanced, it can promote the release of inflammatory signals throughout the body. This matters because inflammation sits at the centre of many age-related diseases. For instance:

- * In the heart, it contributes to plaque build-up.
- * In the brain, it may play a role in cognitive decline.
- * In the immune system, it disrupts normal responses.

By supporting gut health, it may be possible to reduce this inflammatory problem and support healthier ageing.

The gut and ageing?

Just as the immune system changes with age, so does the gut microbiome. Research shows that older adults often experience a shift in gut bacteria, with fewer beneficial microbes and more pro-inflammatory ones. This imbalance, known as dysbiosis, can weaken your gut barrier. As a result, harmful substances may pass more easily into the bloodstream, triggering inflammation.

Several factors con-

tribute to these changes, including:

- * Eating a less varied diet.
- * Increased medication use.
- * Lower physical activity.
- * Chronic health conditions.

Gut health and men

Men face some unique health challenges that make gut health particularly relevant: For instance, men are more likely to develop cardiovascular disease, including heart conditions and strokes, earlier in life.

Chronic inflammation linked to poor gut health adds to this risk. Also, some evidence suggests that men may be more likely to consume diets lower in fibre and higher in processed foods, both of which can negatively affect the microbiome.

On top of that, many men may delay addressing general health concerns which can allow imbalances to persist. For example, a man in his fifties who occasionally skips meals, follows a low-fibre diet, or requires repeated courses of antibiotics for recurring infections could gradually develop gut imbalance. Over time, this may contribute to fatigue, weight changes or greater sus-

ceptibility to illness.



ceptibility to illness.

Improving gut health as you age

The encouraging news is that even small changes can positively impact gut health over time, when done correctly and consistently. This includes:

- 1. Eating a fibre-rich diet:** Foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes provide fuel for beneficial gut bacteria and support microbial diversity.
- 2. Including fermented foods:** Yogurt, kefir (a fermented milk drink) and fermented vegetables can introduce helpful bacteria into the gut.
- 3. Staying physically active:** Regular movement has been linked to a more diverse microbiome and improved immune health.

4. Using antibiotics wisely: While essential when needed, frequent or unnecessary use of antibiotics can disrupt gut balance.

5. Managing stress: Chronic stress can negatively affect both the gut and the immune system, highlighting the importance of mental health.

6. Considering Vitamin D: Emerging research suggests that vitamin D interacts with the gut microbiome and may help regulate immune ageing.

Your gut, your health

Ageing is more than the passing of years; it's the story of how our bodies, habits and surroundings interact over time. At the heart of that story is the gut, quietly connecting what we eat, how we live

and how our immune system responds. For men, paying attention to gut health offers a way to take the lead in their own wellbeing.

It's not about getting everything perfect, but about small, steady choices that nurture the body throughout life. When the gut thrives, the immune system thrives too, helping the body move through the ageing process with greater ease and grace. Because, in many ways, the journey to better health begins from within, with each step writing the next chapter.

You can contact Dr Said Qabbaah at said.qabbaah@gmail.com

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