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Six executed over killings of 10 law enforcement officers — gov't

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Six men were executed by authorities at dawn on Sunday after being convicted of killing 10 law enforcement officers in various inci-

dents around the Kingdom, official sources said.

"We have carried out the execution of six men who were convicted of murdering 10 law-enforcement officers in two terror-

ism related cases and three drug bust operations," Minister of Government Communication and Government Spokesperson Mohammad Momani said.

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Gov't to amend law to expand death penalty application, PM says

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday announced that the government

plans to amend legislation to expand the application of the death penalty, according to a

Prime Ministry statement.

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Prime minister unveils JD800m development programme for Zarqa

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday announced the launch of an executive development programme for Zarqa Governorate with a budget exceeding JD800 million over three years.

Hassan stressed the government's commitment to implementing the plan in partnership with local stakeholders.

Speaking during a Cabinet session held in Zarqa, Hassan said the programme reflects a comprehensive developmental vision focused on improving public services, supporting industrial growth and creating job opportunities in the governorate.

He said that healthcare, education and public transport will be among the programme's main priorities, in line with directives issued by His Majesty King Abdullah during his recent visit to Zarqa. "Industrial growth and employment are the other face of development and its very core," Hassan said, highlighting the importance of these sectors alongside projects being



Prime Minister Jafar Hassan speaks during a Cabinet session he chairs in Zarqa on Sunday

carried out by various ministries.

The prime minister said that the development plan includes 155 projects, 75 of which have already been completed, with an overall completion rate of 77 per cent.

He added that additional projects are being prepared following government field visits

to more than 18 sites across the governorate.

In the healthcare sector, Hassan said that the construction of the new Prince Faisal Hospital in Rusaifa remains a priority. He noted that the project's tender has been awarded, preliminary works started weeks ago and completion is expected within three years at an estimated

cost of JD9 million. In education, the Premier said that four new schools have been completed at a cost of JD10 million, including two schools with a capacity of around 1,000 students each.

Work is also underway on seven additional large schools worth JD15 million, in addition to the construction

of 500 classrooms and maintenance works at more than 25 schools, he said.

Regarding transport, Hassan highlighted the performance of the Amman-Zarqa Bus Rapid Transit system, which has served more than 15 million passengers since its launch.

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Safadi meets Algerian counterpart, receives Tebboune message to King

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Sunday met with Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf, who delivered a message from Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune to His Majesty King Abdullah.

Attaf is visiting Jordan ahead of the Arab Consultative Meeting and the 165th ordinary session of the Council of the League of Arab States at ministerial level, which will resume in Amman on Monday.

During the meeting, Safadi and Attaf discussed bilateral relations and regional developments, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The two ministers also reviewed the long-standing relations between Jordan and Al-



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Sunday meets with Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf, who delivers a message to His Majesty King Abdullah from Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune

geria and stressed the importance of expanding cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

They agreed to deepen cooperation, particularly in the economic, agricultural, health-care and pharmaceutical sectors.

They also discussed activating the Jordanian-Algerian Business Forum and exploring preferential trade arrangements for selected goods and products to boost bilateral trade and serve mutual interests.

Both sides further agreed to begin preparations for the 10th session of the Jordanian-Algerian Joint Ministerial Committee, as part of efforts to strengthen cooperation across various sectors.

On regional developments, the ministers reviewed efforts to de-escalate tensions and restore calm, stressing the need to achieve lasting security and stability.

They also discussed developments in the occupied Palestinian territories, emphasising the importance of sustaining stability in Gaza and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of humanitarian aid into the enclave.

The two ministers stressed the need to stop Israeli violations in the occupied West Bank, including settlement expansion, settler violence and land confiscation, as well as attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo at Jerusalem's Islamic and Christian holy sites.

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A man inspects the damage at the site of an Israeli strike that targeted an area in in the southern Lebanese city of Nabatieh on Sunday

Trump threatens to strike Iran over support for Hizbollah

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US President Donald Trump on Sunday threatened to strike Iran if it did not "immediately stop their highly paid PROXIES

in Lebanon from causing trouble", as peace talks started in Switzerland.

Trump was referring to Hizbollah, which joined the Middle East war with attacks on

Israel. Clashes in recent days between the two have threatened to derail the US-Iran preliminary peace deal.

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Jordan keeps inflation below int'l average despite global price shocks

- Jordan's inflation rate averaged 2.198% over the past five years, compared with a global average of 5.194%
The Kingdom contained inflationary pressures despite global shocks linked to the COVID-19 recovery, supply chain disruptions and energy price increases

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's inflation rate over the past five years remained significantly below the global average, reflecting the Kingdom's ability to contain price pressures amid a series of international economic shocks, according to local and global statistical data.

The figures show that Jordan recorded an average inflation rate of 2.198 per cent

between 2021 and 2025, compared with a global average of 5.194 per cent during the same period, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The global inflation wave began in 2021 as economies reopened following the COVID-19 pandemic, triggering a sharp rise in demand for goods and commodities. Global inflation climbed to 3.48 per cent that year, while Jordan main-

tained a much lower rate of 1.35 per cent.

In 2022, inflationary pressures intensified worldwide due to supply chain disruptions, maritime shipping bottlenecks and surging energy prices. Global inflation reached a peak of 7.93 per cent, while Jordan's inflation rate stood at 4.23 per cent, supported by government measures, including subsidies on essential commodities

and oil derivatives, as well as monetary policies adopted by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ).

Despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic, Jordan's domestic market continued to receive essential goods without major shortages. Local industries also maintained production, particularly of food products and hygiene and sanitisation

supplies.

As central banks worldwide raised interest rates in 2023 to control inflation, global price pressures began to ease, with global inflation declining to 5.73 per cent.

Jordan's inflation rate dropped further to 2.08 per cent, supported by the CBJ's prudent monetary approach.

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Minister of Interior Mazen Faraya on Sunday says that the King Hussein Bridge is a humanitarian crossing operating under 'exceptional' circumstances due to restrictions and procedures imposed by Israel

## 'Jordan seeks round-the-clock operation of King Hussein Bridge'

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Interior Mazen Faraya on Sunday said that the King Hussein Bridge is a humanitarian crossing operating under "exceptional" circumstances due to restrictions and procedures imposed by Israel.

Speaking to Al Mamlaka TV during a visit to the bridge, Faraya attributed recurring congestion to Israeli restrictions, including limited operating hours, sudden closures and limits on the number of travellers allowed to cross.

He noted that many travellers have called for the bridge to operate around the clock throughout the week, adding that the crossing currently operates according to Israel's schedule, which in-

cludes a weekly closure on Saturdays, limited working hours on other days and a specified capacity for travellers, contributing to recurring congestion.

Faraya said that Jordan continues to discuss extending the bridge's operating hours to 24 hours a day, seven days a week, noting that operational arrangements on the Israeli side are influenced by security and labour-related considerations.

The minister stressed the importance of the electronic booking platform in organising travel and managing reservations in line with the crossing's capacity.

He added that congestion is also driven by travellers arriving without prior bookings, reaching the bridge well ahead of

their scheduled travel times and failing to plan return trips in advance.

The minister reaffirmed Jordan's support for the Palestinian people and its commitment to preserving their dignity.

He also said that some criticism of the electronic booking platform is linked to commercial interests affected by its implementation.

During the visit, Faraya met with bridge officials and representatives of the Jordan Express Tourist Transport company to discuss operational challenges and reviewed plans to upgrade the crossing's infrastructure, including new waiting halls, shaded areas and improvements to passenger and cargo facilities.

## House speaker conveys King's greetings to Azerbaijani president, talks cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi on Sunday conveyed His Majesty King Abdullah's greetings to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, expressing the Kingdom's commitment to enhancing coordination and consultation to serve mutual interests and bolster cooperation.

During the meeting, President Aliyev expressed his country's "deep" appreciation for Jordan's pivotal role, under the leadership of His Majesty, in promoting regional peace, security, and stability, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He also highlighted the "deep-rooted" bilateral ties, the foundations of which were laid by His Majesty the late King Hussein and the late President Heydar Aliyev.

"I share a deep brotherly relationship with my brother, His Majesty King Abdullah, and we remain in constant contact," Aliyev said.

He added that Azerbaijan attaches great importance to the ongoing coordination with Jordan across various fields to serve the interests of both nations and promote regional stability and cooperation.

The Azerbaijani president added that Baku views Amman as an important partner and



Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, during a meeting with Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi on Sunday, expresses his country's 'deep' appreciation for Jordan's pivotal role in promoting regional peace, security, and stability

values its wise stances and efforts in supporting dialogue and understanding among peoples, noting that recent years have witnessed significant development in bilateral relations at the political, economic, cultural, and parliamentary levels.

Qadi stressed that Jordanian-Azerbaijani relations represent an "exemplary" model of ties based on mutual respect and understanding, pointing out that these relations

receive direct support and attention from King Abdullah and President Aliyev.

He stressed the Lower House's keenness to maintain continuous coordination with the Azerbaijani parliament and work jointly to overcome any obstacles hindering the development of ties, as well as to enhance parliamentary, economic, and investment cooperation.

He added that the Lower Chamber attaches "great" impor-

tance to boosting parliamentary relations with Azerbaijan and exchanging legislative expertise, which would positively serve the mutual interests of both countries and their peoples.

Qadi also commended Azerbaijan's developmental and economic achievements in recent years, stressing the importance of expanding cooperation between the private sectors of both nations, encouraging mutual investments, and estab-

lishing new economic partnerships in industry, tourism, food security and technology.

Qadi is currently visiting Azerbaijan to head a parliamentary delegation participating in the conference of the Parliamentary Union of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Member States.

During the visit, Qadi is scheduled to meet with Speaker of the Azerbaijani National Assembly Sahiba Gafarova and several senior officials.

## JAF Band backs Nashama with performances at World Cup events

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) Band on Sunday delivered an "outstanding" musical performance for Jordanian fans supporting the national football team in San Francisco, USA, as part of the promotional events accompanying the FIFA World Cup 2026.

The event featured a "patriotic" atmosphere that reflected pride in the "Nashama's" historic achievement and qualification for the global tournament, according to a JAF statement.

The performance drew a large crowd of the Jordanian expatriate community and national team supporters, who waved Jordanian flags and chanted patriotic anthems.

The military band



The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army Band delivers an 'outstanding' musical performance for Jordanian fans supporting the national football team in San Francisco, USA

performed a selection of national, traditional and military pieces showcasing Jordan's cultural identity.

This participation aligns with the JAF's ongoing efforts to sup-

port national events, represent the Kingdom in international arenas, and boost Jordan's cultural and sports presence, while enhancing ties with the expatriate community.

The JAF Band also took part in the "House of Jordan 2026" events held in San Jose, California.

The activities were organised with the support of the Ministry of

Tourism and Antiquities and the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB), in cooperation with the Nashama Fans Association in the US and several partners, running alongside the national team's World Cup matches.

The Ministry of Tourism and JTB commended the efforts of all participants, noting that the military band's performance embodied Jordan's national identity and the rich heritage of JAF through musical displays.

These events bolster pride and belonging among Jordanian and Arab expatriates, while promoting Jordan's cultural image and showcasing the Kingdom as a premier tourist and cultural destination to a global audience, the statement read.

## Jordan House event showcases culture, supports Nashama in California

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Tourism and the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB) are supporting cultural and national events accompanying the participation of Jordan's national football team, Al Nashama, in the FIFA World Cup 2026.

The events are organised on Sunday and Monday as part of the "Jordan House" in San Jose, California, in cooperation with the Jordanian Fans Association in the US and a number of partners and supporters, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

It aims to bring together members of the Jordanian community and Arab fans while showcasing Jordan's national identity and rich cultural heritage.

The programme features a range of artistic, cultural and entertainment activities, including traditional Jordanian dabkeh and folklore



The Ministry of Tourism and the Jordan Tourism Board are supporting cultural and national events in California, accompanying the participation of Jordan's national football team in the FIFA World Cup 2026

performances, musical evenings, fan competitions and public screenings of football matches in a "patriotic" atmosphere reflecting pride in Jordan.

Organisers said that the event provides an important platform to highlight the Kingdom's tourism and cultural assets and promote Jordan as a global travel destination.

The initiative aligns with efforts by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and JTB to leverage major international events to enhance the Kingdom's global

presence and showcase its distinctive tourism and cultural experience to international audiences.

Earlier in June, JTB launched the "Jordan: Impossible to Match" campaign as part of a global marketing strategy aimed at boosting the Kingdom's position as a tourism destination.

The campaign was launched in conjunction with the national football team's historic qualification for the FIFA World Cup 2026 and aims to capitalise on the achievement by promoting Jordan's tourism sector and highlighting the country's attractions and visitor experiences.

The initiative includes digital content across social media platforms and partnerships with international influencers and content creators to promote Jordan's tourism attractions, particularly Petra.



The workshop brings together 80 participants, including persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, members of the Senate and Lower House, government officials and representatives of national institutions

## HCD, UNDP hold workshop on persons with disabilities' inclusion in local governance

AMMAN (JT) — The Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Jordan on Sunday convened a consultative workshop in Aqaba on enhancing the political participation and representation of persons with disabilities in the local administration bylaw.

The workshop brought together 80 participants, including persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, members of the Senate and Lower House, government officials, representatives of national institutions, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, civil society organisations, human rights advocates and experts from across southern Jordan.

The event provided a participatory platform to examine legal, institutional, environmental and societal barriers affecting the political participation of persons with disabilities at the local level, and to explore practical measures to enhance inclusive and responsive local governance, according to a UNDP statement.

Discussions took place amid ongoing national efforts to review the legislative framework governing local administration, including the draft Local Administration Law of 2026.

Participants said that the reform process presents an important

opportunity to enhance the representation of persons with disabilities in municipal and governorate councils, including women with disabilities, and to ensure their perspectives are reflected in local planning and service delivery.

"Strengthening the participation of persons with disabilities in local administration is not only about increasing representation. It is about building more inclusive, responsive and effective institutions that benefit from the contributions of all citizens," UNDP Resident Representative in Jordan Randa Aboul-Hosn said.

"Participation is not a privilege to be granted. It is a right and a prerequisite for sustainable development and good governance," she added.

Participants also reviewed key elements of the draft Local Administration Law of 2026.

They also discussed mechanisms to boost representation of persons with disabilities in elected councils through direct and indirect electoral pathways.

Other sessions explored the role of national institutions in promoting political participation at both national and local levels, and highlighted the importance of integrating accessibility into local planning to ensure that the rights and priorities of persons with disabilities are reflected in policies and public services.

Additional discussions focused on inclusive local governance, regional and international experiences, and the role of organisations of persons with disabilities as strategic partners in local development.

A dedicated session also went over intersecting barriers affecting women with disabilities and ways to enhance their participation in decision-making.

Participants stressed the need to move from consultation to genuine partnership, calling for the institutionalisation of engagement with organisations of persons with disabilities in planning, policymaking, budgeting, implementation and monitoring processes.

Jordan has made notable progress in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, including ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the adoption of Law No. 20 of 2017 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, according to the statement.

The workshop forms part of the ongoing partnership between HCD and UNDP to promote rights-based and inclusive local governance.

It is implemented under the project "Empowering PWDs Voices for Inclusive Local Governance", supported by contributions from Denmark, Luxembourg and the Republic of Korea through UNDP Funding Windows.

# Gov't launched plan to upgrade water, health, transport, education in Zarqa — Momani

- JD300m allocated for water infrastructure works in Zarqa
- JD102m Zarqa Military Hospital project to begin operations in 2028
- Natural gas supply expanded to Zarqa Industrial City to boost competitiveness

By Ahmad Khatatneh

ZARQA — Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani said that Zarqa's development programme amounts to around JD800 million over three years.

Speaking at a press briefing following the Cabinet session held in Zarqa, Momani described the programme as a major investment package expected to deliver substantial improvements across key sectors, particularly water, health, transport and public services.

Momani, who is also the government spokesperson, said that the Cabinet meetings are aimed at strengthening direct engagement with citizens and local stakeholders while monitoring the implementation of development projects across the Kingdom.

He said that the approach reflects a "continuous communication methodology" between the government and the public through daily engagement, bilateral meetings, and regular press briefings on Cabinet decisions and policies.



Photo by Ahmad Khelifat

Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani speaks during a press briefing following the Cabinet session held in Zarqa governorate on Sunday

The minister also referred to His Majesty King Abdullah's recent visit to Zarqa, saying it reflects continued Royal attention to the governorate and a commitment to addressing citizens' needs and advancing development priorities in line with

Royal directives.

On water, he said that projects account for around JD300 million of the total development allocation, including JD17 million for transmission lines for Hallaqaq wells and related water transfer works. Six wells have

been drilled in the area, alongside rehabilitation of water networks across the governorate, he said.

He also highlighted a JD51 million wastewater treatment plant in Al Ghabawi and a JD30 million transmission line project linking Ain

Ghazal treatment plant to Khirbet Al Samra.

Treated wastewater, he said, is used for restricted agriculture, generating savings of around 200 million cubic metres annually.

Momani said that Zarqa's health sector has seen signifi-

cant improvements, including upgrades at Zarqa Government Hospital such as new waiting halls in emergency and outpatient departments and the establishment of a 100 square-metre "green zone" to ease pressure on emergency beds.

"Hospital capacity has increased to 479 beds, with 470 doctors now working at the facility, including consultants and specialists," he said.

"Five evening health centres have also been opened, serving around 700 patients daily and reducing pressure on Prince Faisal Hospital by 40 per cent and on Zarqa Government Hospital by 22 per cent, according to Health Ministry figures."

In education, the minister said that four new schools have been completed, seven are under construction, and 500 additional classrooms are being added across the governorate. He also noted a decision allowing the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) to use 20 dunams of forest land in Birin to establish a military culture school.

In local administra-

tion, Momani said the new Zarqa sanitation project is valued at JD21 million, in addition to JD6 million in municipal services and JD3.5 million in development projects. Reconstruction works for the phosphate railway are valued at JD4 million.

He said the Amman-Zarqa Bus Rapid Transit project continues through infrastructure packages worth JD68 million, noting it has already served around 15 million passengers and eased congestion between the two cities. Additional works include road maintenance and a JD12.3 million transport terminal near the BRT station.

In social development, projects worth JD38 million include cash assistance through the National Aid Fund benefiting 37,000 families, alongside housing support and emergency aid. Around 118,000 citizens have benefitted from productive family loans and grants. A National Autism Centre has also been established.

Momani said energy projects include replac-

ing 15,000 streetlights with energy-efficient systems, installing solar systems for 285 households and a JD28 million project to supply natural gas to Zarqa Industrial City.

He added that phase one of infrastructure development in Zarqa Industrial City is underway at JD21.5 million, alongside expansion works in Dulail Industrial Zone.

In labour, he said JD1.73 million is being allocated through employment programmes targeting 1,900 job seekers in 2025, in addition to JD1.5 million for small and medium enterprises and JD5 million for industrial support covering 44 projects.

Momani also said that Cabinet decisions included a draft amended regulation for currency exchange companies, extending compliance deadlines until 2028, and a mechanism for purchasing wheat and barley.

The minister also said that JD45 million has been allocated, up from JD19 million last year, for the purchase of grain expected from farmers, estimated at around 100,000-110,000 tonnes.

## JHCO delivers food parcels to displaced families east of Gaza City

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordanian Campaign, a strategic partner of the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO), on Sunday distributed food parcels to vulnerable and displaced families at Al Khudair camp in the Abu Halawa area, east of Gaza City.

The initiative came in response to an urgent humanitarian appeal from camp residents as living conditions continue to deteriorate and access to basic necessities becomes increasingly difficult, according to a JHCO statement.

The assistance included essential food supplies distributed through mechanisms designed to ensure aid reached the families most in need.

Campaign organisers said that the initiative reflects their commitment to responding swiftly to humanitari-



JHCO photo

The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation on Sunday distributes food parcels to vulnerable and displaced families in Gaza

an appeals from affected communities and expanding relief efforts to reach as many vulnerable families as possible across the Gaza Strip.

The Jordanian Campaign and the JHCO said they continue to

implement a range of humanitarian programmes covering food security, water, shelter and emergency assistance to help alleviate the impact of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

## Census listing phase ahead of schedule with 86 per cent completion rate — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — Director General of the Department of Statistics (DoS) Haidar Fraihat said on Sunday that the current listing phase of the 2026 Population and Housing Census is progressing ahead of schedule, with an overall completion rate of 86 per cent nationwide.

During a meeting attended by Amman Governor Yasser Adwan and members of the governorate's executive council, Fraihat said that building listing has reached 87 per cent, while block listing stood at 85.3 per cent out of a total of 24,058 blocks across the Kingdom, reflecting the preparedness and commitment of field teams.

Fraihat also highlighted growing reliance on digital tools in the census process,



Greater Amman Municipality photo

Director General of the Department of Statistics Haidar Fraihat says on Sunday that building listing has reached 87 per cent, while block listing stood at 85.3 per cent out of a total of 24,058 blocks across the Kingdom

noting that 21 per cent of citizens have opted for the self-enumeration service, which enhances efficiency and

provides greater flexibility for respondents.

He said the actual enumeration phase is scheduled to begin on

October 1, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The meeting also discussed operational

arrangements and logistical support for field teams, stressing the importance of coordination among official and local entities to ensure the success of the national project.

For his part, Adwan underscored the strategic importance of the census as a key national undertaking that provides accurate data to support decision-making and development planning. He praised the efforts of the DoS and field teams across the Kingdom.

The meeting is part of a series of coordination sessions held by the DoS with governorates and partner institutions to monitor progress and ensure preparations for the next phases, in line with the highest standards of quality and accuracy.

## WHO hails Kingdom's health reforms, pharmaceutical progress

AMMAN (JT) — World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Hanan Balkhy on Sunday commended Jordan's progress in the health sector, describing the Kingdom as a model for adopting modern health policies and advancing pharmaceutical infrastructure.

Speaking at Al Mamlaka TV on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the Islamic Development Bank Group, Balkhy highlighted the strong strategic partnership between the WHO, the Jordanian government and the Ministry of Health.

She said that Jordan was among the first countries in the region to adopt the One Health

approach, which integrates the health, environment, water and finance sectors to address public health challenges.

"I have personally witnessed the high-level commitment and serious coordination by Jordan's Ministry of Health, Parliament and all relevant stakeholders to develop sustainable solutions and implement this concept, particularly in tackling antimicrobial resistance, which depends on close cooperation among these sectors," Balkhy said.

She added that Jordan is making steady progress in embedding the One Health approach more deeply into government policies and

ministerial agendas.

Balkhy also described Jordan as a regional leader in pharmaceutical manufacturing, saying the WHO considers the localisation of pharmaceutical production a strategic priority to strengthen medicine security across the region, drawing lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.

She said that current efforts are focused on expanding Jordan's pharmaceutical exports, while stressing the need to continue strengthening the national medicines regulatory authority to achieve the highest WHO-recognised regulatory maturity level.

The WHO official also commended Jordan's

efforts to modernise pharmaceutical and vaccine storage facilities through advanced temperature-control systems, barcode technology and expanded digital management of medical supply chains.

She called for a coordinated regional strategy for pharmaceutical production rather than competition among countries, stressing that local manufacturing should ultimately improve public health, combat communicable and non-communicable diseases and ensure access to safe, effective and affordable medicines.

Balkhy also underscored the WHO's strategic partnerships with the Islamic Develop-

ment Bank Group and other multilateral financial institutions, noting that joint programmes focus on polio eradication, strengthening healthcare infrastructure and supporting pharmaceutical self-sufficiency.

She noted that the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region comprises 22 countries and serves nearly 750 million people, facing significant health and economic challenges despite its considerable potential.

Reflecting on the COVID-19 pandemic, Balkhy said the crisis exposed the urgent need to localise pharmaceutical manufacturing to improve preparedness for future outbreaks.



## Army foils infiltration attempt by 4 individuals

AMMAN (JT) — The Northern Military Region command on Sunday thwarted an attempt by five individuals to illegally cross the border within its

area of responsibility. Border Guard units detected the individuals while they were attempting to cross, according to the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab

Army. The forces applied the rules of engagement, arrested the suspects and handed them over to the relevant authorities.



US Vice President JD Vance (right) shakes hands with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the Burgenstock luxury hotel complex overlooking Lake Lucerne, Switzerland, on Sunday, ahead of high-level talks aimed at advancing a deal to end the Middle East conflict

## US, Iran set for talks as Lebanon conflict threatens deal

BURGENSTOCK, Switzerland (AFP) — The first round of negotiations between the United States and Iran since the two sides signed a preliminary agreement to halt their war was due to begin in Switzerland on Sunday, with the conflict in Lebanon threatening the deal.

Washington and Tehran signed a memorandum of understanding earlier in June to extend the ceasefire in the Middle East war, which began in late February with US-Israeli strikes on Iran, and enable negotiations on a broader deal.

As part of the agreement, the Israel-Hizbollah war in Lebanon was due to stop, but Iran said it would close the Strait of Hormuz again because of Israeli attacks. There were no reports of fresh strikes in Lebanon since Saturday evening.

US Vice President JD Vance arrived at the Swiss mountainside resort of Burgenstock early on Sunday to meet Iranian negotiators for the second time since the months-long conflict sowed chaos across the Middle East and rattled the global economy.

"I think we're going to hopefully make progress on the nuclear issue, make progress on the Lebanon ceasefire issue. Those are the two big things that I think we're to be focused on," Vance told reporters before departing from Joint Base Andrews, saying he could only join the talks "for a day or two."

The Swiss foreign ministry said both US and Iranian delegations, plus mediators Pakistan and Qatar, were all present at the luxury resort, with talks set to begin later on Sunday morning.

The talks are meant to trigger a two-month period to negotiate the terms of a final deal between the foes, including issues such as Iran's nuclear programme and crippling sanctions on the Islamic republic.

There remained scepticism from Tehran, however, with Mohsen Rezaei, a military adviser to supreme leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, posting on X that "the enemy has shown itself to be a promise-breaker."

"One should be cautious; any optimism will be exploited by the enemy," he said.

### Switzerland push

An Iranian delegation led by top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in Switzerland late Saturday, while Pakistani mediators landed in the country on Sunday.

Foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said the delegation would "demand implementation of the other party's commitments" under the deal.

"Otherwise, the entire understanding will be in trouble," he said, the official news agency IRNA reported.

Islamabad said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and army chief Asim Munir would take part alongside Qatari mediators.

US negotiators Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff were already in Switzerland handling "some of the technical elements" and had reported that "things are going well", Vance said in an interview with Fox News earlier Saturday.

Follow-up talks had been planned for Friday but were postponed after Israel launched deadly strikes in Lebanon following the deaths of four of its soldiers in combat there.

Washington announced a renewed ceasefire in the country later on Friday, but Israeli troops again clashed with Hizbollah fighters the following day, with each side accusing the other of breaking the truce.

Citing a US "breach of contract" and "the Zionist regime's continuous and relentless violation of the

ceasefire in southern Lebanon", Iran's central military command said "the Strait of Hormuz will be closed to vessel traffic".

The strait, a key conduit for oil and gas shipments, has been blockaded by Tehran since early in the war, sending shockwaves through energy markets.

US Central Command said after Iran's announcement that safe passage through the international waterway had "remained intact".

### Lebanon truce frays

Israel and Hizbollah however continued trading accusations on Saturday as fighting persisted in southern Lebanon.

The Israeli military said a soldier was killed in combat, the fifth such fatality since the US-Iran deal was reached.

An Israeli army official later said the military had received orders from the country's political leadership to cease fire, adding that troops were "not conducting proactive strikes" but operating defensively inside a security zone.

Hizbollah accused Israel of carrying out "under the cover of the ceasefire... an infiltration attempt towards the Ali Taher hills".

Lebanese state media reported Israeli air raids on around 20 locations, with authorities counting more than 30 dead. The overall death toll from the fighting in Lebanon had surpassed 4,000, the health ministry said.

Hizbollah pulled Lebanon into the wider Middle East conflict in early March when it fired rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's supreme leader in US-Israeli strikes.

A previous ceasefire meant to take effect in Lebanon in April was never honoured, with each side justifying its attacks by citing alleged violations by the other.

# Iran says Lebanon conflict 'main topic' in US talks

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran said on Sunday that the ongoing conflict in Lebanon between Israel and militant group Hizbollah will top the agenda in talks with the United States in Switzerland, as well as issues such as frozen Iranian funds and the sale of the country's oil.

"The Zionist regime continues to violate its commitment in Lebanon, this issue will be the main topic of discussion in today's talks," Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said in a video shared by IRNA state news agency.

Tehran said on Thursday it had signed a deal with Washington to end months of hostilities that began on February 28 following US-Israeli attacks on Iran.

Under the agreement, the Israel-Hizbollah conflict in Lebanon was also due to stop.

Iran's military announced on Saturday that it has closed the Strait of Hormuz again over ongoing Israeli attacks in Lebanon.

But there were no re-



Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs Seyyed Abbas Araghchi (left) and Swiss Federal Council, Ignazio Cassis take part in bilateral discussions at the Burgenstock resort in Obbuergen, near Lucerne, on Sunday

ports of fresh strikes in Lebanon after Saturday evening and Baqaei said that since Saturday "a fragile cessation [in Lebanon] has been established".

According to Baqaei, the Iranian delegation will meet with the US delegation alongside mediators Pakistan and Qatar during the

talks on Sunday at the Swiss mountainside resort of Burgenstock.

"This meeting will be in the form of separate meetings with the mediators in the morning and a quadrilateral meeting in the afternoon, meaning that the delegations of all four countries will be present in the same

room," he said from Switzerland.

He added that Tehran would also pursue the issue of its frozen and inaccessible funds in the negotiations.

"The issue of making available Iran's frozen or restricted assets, as well as the discussion related to issuing the necessary licences

for the sale of Iranian oil, will also be on the agenda," he said.

Iran has not officially disclosed the value of its frozen assets, though media reports have estimated them at more than \$100 billion, largely frozen since the 1979 Islamic Revolution that toppled the US-backed shah.

## UK's Starmer mulling 'political realities' — senior minister

LONDON (AFP) — British Prime Minister Keir Starmer was reflecting this weekend on the "political realities" that he faces, a senior minister said on Sunday, amid media reports the premier would resign within days.

It follows veteran Labour politician and rival Andy Burnham's victory in a crunch by-election on Friday, which paves the way for the 56-year-old to challenge the beleaguered Starmer to be party leader and prime minister.

Any Labour leadership candidate must be a member of parliament.

If Starmer does leave office this year, Britain will get its seventh prime minister in a decade, an unprecedented rate of churn in its modern history.

Burnham — Greater Manchester mayor since 2017, has made clear he intends to bid to lead the slumping centre-left party, warning in his by-election victory speech that it had a "final chance to change".

If successful, he would become prime minister by default, given that ruling Labour has a huge parliamentary majority. Starmer, who is



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer gestures as he talks with local residents as he visits a housing development in north-west London on Friday, with a formal challenge to his leadership likely to be triggered in the near future

deeply unpopular with voters according to polling, has insisted he will fight any attempt to oust him.

But the emphatic nature of Burnham's win in the Makerfield constituency in north-west England, where he nearly doubled Labour's majority, has increased the internal pressure on Starmer to quit.

Business Secretary Peter Kyle said on Sunday that Starmer was "making time to reflect on the political realities, challenges and opportunities that he finds himself in".

"He has been engag-

ing in conversations with a wide, wide range of people," Kyle told Sky News broadcaster after having what he said was a "frank" conversation with Starmer on Friday.

The Observer newspaper headlined on its cover on Sunday that Starmer was "expected to resign" the following day, while the Sunday Telegraph also reported he was "ready" to go, citing allies of the embattled British leader.

The Observer said Starmer would "set out a timetable for his departure", noting he had been holding weekend

talks from Chequers, the countryside retreat for prime ministers.

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper was among the senior ministers telling her boss to stand down, Sky News reported.

Starmer, who took office in July 2024, has been clinging to power for months after a tenure littered with missteps, policy U-turns, scandals and ministerial resignations.

He was nearly forced out in March, over his ill-fated decision to appoint ex-Jeffrey Epstein associate Peter Mandelson as the UK's ambassador to

Washington. Labour's drubbing in local and regional polls in England, Scotland and Wales last month once again intensified the pressure on him.

The fallout from the polls saw Makerfield's previous Labour MP quit in order to allow Burnham to stand there.

Burnham, a former MP and government minister under ex-prime ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, is due to be sworn back in to parliament on Monday.

From the so-called soft-left wing of Labour, he reinforced his reputation as the party's most popular figure by easily beating the hard-right populist Reform UK party's candidate in this week's by-election.

Reform, led by Brexit architect Nigel Farage, had won all Makerfield's wards in last month's local elections there.

Burnham has provided little detail about his plans for government if he wins power.

UK media reported that he intends to replace Finance Minister Rachee Reeves, while keeping Interior Minister Shabana Mahmood in post.

## Al Jazeera rejects Israeli accusations against journalist killed in Gaza



Mourners bid farewell to the bodies of the Al Jazeera journalists who were killed in an overnight Israeli strike on their tent in Gaza City, before their burial at the Sheikh Radwan cemetery in Gaza City on August 11, 2025

DOHA (AFP) — Al Jazeera on Sunday rejected Israeli accusations that one of its journalists, killed in Gaza a day earlier, was a Hamas operative, as family and colleagues mourned the cameraman in the Palestinian territory.

The Qatar-based network said in a statement that it "condemns the Israeli occupation army's baseless accusations, which seek to justify its crimes against Al Jazeera journalists and cameramen in Gaza, most recently the killing of cameraman Ahmed Wishah".

The Israeli military said in a statement issued late on Saturday that Wishah was killed in a "precise strike" alongside two other Hamas militants and that he had served as a "sniper operative" in Hamas.

"Alongside his work as an Al Jazeera photojournalist in recent years, Wishah was an operative in Hamas' military wing," the military said.

When contacted by AFP an Israeli military spokesman provided no evidence to support the accusations against Wishah.

AFP footage captured in Deir El Balah in central Gaza showed friends and family grieving over Wishah's lifeless body in the area's Al Aqsa Hospital.

The cameraman could be seen laid out on a steel tray in the hospital's morgue in a cabinet with other bodies.

Bilal Abu Samak, a freelance journalist in Gaza said the killing had left him "in shock".

"For the first time, I found myself unable to film. The occupation deliberately kills journalists and anyone covering events on the

ground," Samak added. In its Sunday statement, Al Jazeera said an "Israeli campaign of incitement has relentlessly spread false allegations and baseless accusations against Al Jazeera staff".

The network called the effort a "smear campaign" and "a transparent and futile attempt to justify the deliberate targeting of journalists and cameramen".

On Saturday, Al Jazeera reported that Wishah was killed in an Israeli air strike that targeted a house in the Bureij refugee camp.

Ahmed Wishah's brother Mohammed Wishah, also an Al Jazeera journalist, was killed by Israeli shelling in April, the Qatari broadcaster said at the time.

According to the media rights group Reporters Without Borders, Israeli forces have killed more than 220 journalists since the war in Gaza erupted. At least 70 of them were killed in the context of their professional duties.

The Israeli military has said it does not deliberately target journalists.

## France hosts street music festival despite worsening heatwave

PARIS, France (AFP) — France went ahead with its annual street music festival on Sunday in a boiling heatwave, with a third of the country on red alert and alcohol consumption banned in the streets.

In a first, the red alert — France's highest heat warning — was issued across half the country for Monday, as temperatures under the fierce heatwave were expected to climb further.

Thirty-five departments — roughly a third of the country — were under the highest heat alert on Sunday. On Monday, that number will grow to 49 departments, a new record, with another 40 under orange alert.

According to AFP estimates, more than 90 per cent of France's population — more than 63 million people — will be affected by the heat on Monday.

Despite the worsening heatwave France hosted the annual Fete de la Musique, when musicians take over streets as revellers celebrate the start of summer late into the night.

President Emmanuel Macron on X urged French people to "look out for others", especially the elderly, children and isolated or



Partygoers dance in a street during the annual street music festival 'Fete de la Musique' in Bordeaux, south-western France, on Sunday

vulnerable people. Weather service Météo-France warned that temperatures could reach as high as 41°C in some places on Sunday as France finds itself at the epicentre of a heat anomaly also affecting southern Britain, Spain and Portugal.

To minimise health risks and prevent potential public disturbances, the government announced a ban on alcohol consumption in public places during the festivities in departments under red alert.

Some Parisians were in favour of the ban.

"I think it's a good thing," said Hailey Infante, 21.

cloding Paris, Lyon and Strasbourg — were largely going ahead.

The Louvre museum in Paris, though, announced that its planned free concert under its famous glass pyramid had been scrapped due to the heatwave.

To minimise health risks and prevent potential public disturbances, the government announced a ban on alcohol consumption in public places during the festivities in departments under red alert.

Some Parisians were in favour of the ban.

"I think it's a good thing," said Hailey Infante, 21.

"Honestly, it's really hot and even a drop of alcohol can quickly go to your head."

Nicolas Pilc was more sceptical, saying the measure would have "absolutely no effect". "Everyone will do whatever they want," said the 48-year-old.

### Schools closed

The government said it would be up to local event organisers to adapt festivities outside red-alert areas but alcohol will not be served at state-organised events.

Bartender Mona Jaffart said her establishment would not be selling takeaway alcohol

and it would "just be a normal day" inside.

Last year, around two million people attended the June 21 street music parties in Paris alone, many of them travelling from Britain.

To ensure public safety, authorities have deployed 4,800 police officers and gendarmes, along with 2,500 firefighters, in and around the capital.

Gatherings along the lower banks of the Seine river will be prohibited to reduce the risk of people falling into the water.

Officials warned about risks linked to swimming, after four teenagers drowned in France on Saturday.

The number of departments on red alert has reached a record high, surpassing the previous peak of 20 recorded on July 24-25, 2019.

On Monday, 845 French schools were to be closed because of the heat, while another 1,800 have modified classroom hours to adapt to the weather.

Thirteen of the 17 regions of neighbouring Spain were on orange alert on Sunday, while the northern Basque Country bordering France was on red alert.



A woman votes at a polling station during the presidential election run-off, in Villa Paz, Valle del Cauca, Colombia, on Sunday

## Colombians vote in presidential run-off

BOGOTÁ (AFP) — Colombians began voting in a presidential run-off on Sunday, choosing between a hard-right, White House-backed lawyer and a leftist senator to decide the fate of a stumbling peace process and strained ties with Washington.

Up to 41 million voters will choose between frontrunner Abelardo de la Espriella and his leftist rival Ivan Cepeda — the latest in a series of hyperpolarised Latin American elections.

Security issues dominated a campaign marred by guerrilla bomb attacks and the murder of a leading conservative presidential candidate.

"I have to say, there is a certain fear," 59-year-old Alex Vizcaino told AFP while voting in the Caribbean coast city of Barranquilla. "It's the first election where you feel this bit of fear."

"There are a lot of fanatics. You see a lot of violence," he said. "I think everyone's hope, regardless of political colour, is that things change."

De la Espriella, a dual US-Colombian national who calls himself "The

Tiger", won May's first-round vote by promising to wage war on drug-running guerrilla groups who refused to sign a 2016 peace accord.

He has won President Donald Trump's "complete and total endorsement" and hopes to ride a right-wing wave that has swept rightist candidates to power in Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Honduras.

From behind bullet-proof glass and with a military salute, he has rallied support with a cry of "stand firm for the homeland!"

He told AFP that if elected, he wants US backing for a 90-day campaign of air strikes against armed groups producing coca, the raw material of cocaine.

He advocates the right to carry arms, construction of mega-prisons, fracking, cutting the size of the state, and has said that it would be "ideal" to dollarise Colombia's economy.

Cepeda is a 63-year-old philosopher-turned-senator and human rights defender and has been a key figure behind the current government's policy of

negotiating "total peace" with armed groups.

He is the son of a communist senator killed by right-wing paramilitaries and is the political heir to outgoing President Gustavo Petro — who is constitutionally barred from running.

Critics say Petro's leftist government has allowed armed groups to grow richer from trafficking, expand their territory and gain power.

Cepeda recently told AFP that he would "take stock" of peace talks and "make the necessary changes". He has long favoured dialogue over an iron fist security approach.

Cepeda's support comes mainly from progressives and the poor — who have benefited from a reduction in poverty, higher wages, and lower unemployment in what is still one of the most unequal countries in the world.

The first round of voting showed a total collapse of Colombia's political centre and the traditional right, which has run the country for much of the last two centuries.

## Six executed over killings of 10 law enforcement officers — gov't

Continued from page 1

The minister said two people were executed for murdering six law enforcement officers in August 2018.

Convicted terrorists Mahmoud Nayef Musa and Anwar Adel Saleh, who were executed on Sunday, were part of a group known as the Salt Terror Cell who carried out a terrorist attack near a joint patrol of public security and gendarmerie forces on August 10, 2018, near the Fuheis Festival, 19 kilometres west of Amman.

The blast killed two gendarmes and injured six members of the patrol.

On August 11, 2018, four security personnel were killed during an operation in Salt's Naqab Al Dabour region, 27 kilometres west of Amman.

The security personnel were part of a joint force conducting the operation to arrest suspects believed to be

### Gov't to amend law to expand death penalty application, PM says

Continued from page 1

The announcement came after authorities carried out the execution by hanging of six convicts in cases under the jurisdiction of the State Security Court, following the finalisation of their sentences and the completion of all constitutional and legal procedures.

Speaking during a Cabinet session held in Zarqa, Hassan said the implementation of the

involved in the Fuheis bombing. Five suspects were arrested, and three others were killed.

The deceased officers were identified by Momani as: Lt. Col. Muath Damani, Warrant Officer Ali Gawaqzeh, Sergeant Hisham Aqarbeh, Corporal Mohammad Bani Yassin, Corporal Mo-

hammad Hiajneh and Corporal Ahmad Zu'bi.

In another case, according to Momani, Ibrahim Mansour was executed for being part of a group that ambushed a police patrol in Maan in December 2022.

The attack led to the death of Col. Abdulrazzaq Dalabeeh, who served as deputy direc-

tor of the Maan Police Directorate.

Meanwhile, convicted criminal Ihab Maher Kamal, a drug dealer, was executed for murdering Lt. Ahmad Rawahneh, an Anti-Narcotics Department officer, during a drug raid in Irbid in November 2018, Momani added.

The fifth convict that was put to death was Hamzeh Mansour, a drug dealer, who killed Corporal Hussam Abbad during a drug raid in 2014, according to Momani.

The last convict to be executed on Sunday was Khalid Asraf Fayeze, also a drug dealer, who shot and killed Sgt. Mohammad Salameh Saqarat, an agent who was part of a force that raided a public garden in Zawahreh neighbourhood in Zarqa in 2017, Momani added.

Sunday's executions were carried out after the State Security Court (SSC) verdicts

were upheld by the Court of Cassation, veteran legal experts have said in recent interviews with The Jordan Times.

Afterwards, their files are sent to the Cabinet for endorsement. Finally, a Royal Decree has to be issued to approve the executions, according to the veteran legal experts.

Before any execution is carried out, "the attorney general reviews the files for one last time to make sure procedures are correct, and that there has been no last-minute settlement between the victims' families and the defendant", which automatically leads to cancelling the death penalty and replacing it with a prison term.

Sunday's executions were carried out under the supervision of the SSC Attorney General in accordance with the text of Article 359 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, according to Momani.

## Trump threatens to strike Iran over support for Hizbollah

Continued from page 1

"If they don't, we'll hit Iran very hard again, just like we did last week, only harder!!!" Trump posted on his Truth Social platform.

Hizbollah chief Naim Qassem on Sunday rejected any Israeli security zone in Lebanon, after Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed his troops would remain in the country's south for as long as necessary.

Israeli troops "re-

maining on Lebanese land is impossible. There are no security zones for Israel... we have a national army which deploys and it is responsible for preserving sovereignty, and it is who we cooperate with", Qassem said in a televised address, adding that "Israel is an aggressor and must leave".

Netanyahu said on Sunday that Israeli forces would remain in southern Lebanon "as long as necessary", while also vow-

ing to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

"We will remain in the security zone in southern Lebanon for as long as necessary to protect the cherished residents of the north and all the citizens of Israel... Nothing will alter that commitment," Netanyahu said.

"And with regard to Iran: Whatever political developments may unfold, I will not allow Iran to acquire nuclear weapons. As long as I serve as prime minis-

ter of Israel, that will not happen".

Envoy from regional heavyweights Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt pushed for swift progress in US-Iran talks at a meeting in Cairo on Sunday, as negotiations between the two foes began in Switzerland.

The Swiss talks are the first since the United States and Iran signed a preliminary agreement last week to end their war and are expected to open a 60-day negotia-

tion period to address long-running disputes, including Iran's nuclear programme and sanctions.

In a joint statement, the ministers called for a "swift and successful conclusion" to negotiations aimed at reaching a solution to outstanding issues that is "lasting, verifiable and mutually acceptable", while taking into account regional concerns, particularly the security and stability of Gulf states.

## Jordan keeps inflation below int'l average despite global price shocks

Continued from page 1

The downward trend continued in 2024, when Jordan's inflation rate fell to 1.56 per cent, benefitting from improved global supply chains and shipping conditions, while global inflation remained higher at 4.70 per cent.

By the end of 2025, global inflation stood at around 4.1 per cent amid continued price

pressures, particularly in services in developing economies.

Jordan recorded a slight increase in inflation to 1.77 per cent during the year, mainly due to price movements in non-essential goods.

The five-year inflation trend highlights the effectiveness of Jordan's economic policies and the CBJ's flexible monetary measures in maintain-

ing price stability and supporting the purchasing power of citizens and businesses despite regional and global challenges.

The CBJ said Jordan's inflation rate in 2025 was in line with its expectations of remaining below 2 per cent, adding that inflation is expected to stabilise around this level in 2026, supporting economic stability and investment activity.

The Kingdom's ability to contain inflation comes amid renewed global uncertainty following escalating regional tensions, which triggered economic pressures, disrupted supply chains and increased shipping costs.

According to the latest World Bank "Global Economic Prospects" report, the Middle East conflict and supply chain disruptions have contributed to

renewed global inflationary pressures, with the global price index expected to approach 4 per cent in 2026.

The report attributed the increase to higher energy and commodity prices, along with rising shipping and insurance costs.

The World Bank also lowered its global growth forecast to 2.5 per cent, compared with 2.9 per cent last

year, citing growing stagflation risks.

Meanwhile, data from the Department of Statistics showed that Jordan's inflation rate declined during the first five months of 2026, reaching 1.88 per cent compared with 1.97 per cent during the same period last year.

International comparisons show that inflation remained significantly higher in

several countries. Turkey recorded an inflation rate of 32 per cent in May, followed by Egypt at 13 per cent, Tunisia at 5.5 per cent, Russia at 5.3 per cent and Brazil at 4.4 per cent.

Inflation in Australia and the United States stood at 4.2 per cent each during May, while South Africa recorded 4 per cent.

The Eurozone and Oman both recorded

inflation rates of 3.2 per cent, followed by South Korea at 3.1 per cent. Canada and the United Kingdom recorded identical rates of 2.8 per cent.

Among the countries cited, Saudi Arabia and Morocco recorded the lowest inflation rates in May at 1.7 per cent each, while the United Arab Emirates recorded 1.4 per cent during the first quarter of 2026.

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**Samih Maaitah**

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P.O. Box 6710  
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Director General  
**Hasan Jazzazi**

E mail: [editor@jordantimes.com](mailto:editor@jordantimes.com)  
[jotimes@jordantimes.com](mailto:jotimes@jordantimes.com)  
Website: [jordantimes.com](http://jordantimes.com)

Editor-in-Chief  
**Raed Omari**

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## US-Iran negotiation under conditions of conflict

The memorandum between the United States and Iran, initiating a sixty-day negotiation track, does not signal the beginning of a conventional diplomatic process as much as it exposes the fragility of the entire framework meant to sustain it. The early indicators, beginning with an electronic signature rather than a direct political encounter, followed by the postponement of technical talks originally scheduled in Switzerland, suggest that what is unfolding is not a procedural delay, but a reflection of unresolved strategic contradictions at the core of the relationship.



Amer Al Sabaileh

On the Iranian side, the message attributed to the Supreme Leader, who is more often referenced than directly heard, serves to delineate the boundaries of political responsibility rather than to endorse the process itself. The conservative establishment deliberately positioned the burden of negotiation on President Masoud Pezeshkian and his team, reaffirming that while the Supreme Leader maintains a different strategic reading, he trusts the delegation not to compromise core national interests. In doing so, the conservative current preserves the ideological architecture built on decades of adversarial positioning toward the United States, ensuring that negotiations remain framed as an act of necessity rather than doctrinal revision.

This internal balancing act allows the Iranian establishment to separate political functionality from ideological legitimacy. Negotiation becomes a tactical instrument of state survival, not a shift in identity. Within this logic, the invocation of historical-religious symbolism, such as the attributed phrase of Imam Hussein rejecting allegiance to Yazid Ibn Muawiyah, is not incidental, but part of a broader effort to reinforce the distinction between coercive political necessity and preserved ideological purity.

Yet, this duality is not confined to Tehran. In Washington, the same structural divergence is increasingly visible. President Donald Trump's insistence on a sixty-day negotiation window has elevated Vice President J.D. Vance as a visible advocate of diplomatic engagement. However, this position remains far from institutional consensus. Key nodes of the American security architecture, including the intelligence community, the Department of Defence, the National Security Council, and the Treasury Department, appear more inclined towards containment logic than negotiated accommodation. Their influence is likely to expand as the process encounters operational friction.

Regionally, Israel remains the decisive variable shaping the limits of any diplomatic trajectory. The escalation in Lebanon, framed by Tehran as evidence of instability, introduces an additional layer of pressure on Washington. Yet, any American attempt to constrain Israeli operational behaviour is likely to remain temporary and tactical, particularly in light of the emerging international convergence around the Lebanese state as the sole legitimate actor and the parallel push towards disarmament of Hizbollah under international sponsorship frameworks. In practice, however, Israel continues to operate under an autonomous security doctrine that prioritises direct action over negotiated restraint.

Statements regarding a possible Syrian role, attributed to President Trump, reflect less a coherent geopolitical design than a recurring tendency to compress complex regional structures into simplified transactional concepts. Israeli strategic messaging, by contrast, has been far more explicit: security will remain self-defined, self-executed and independent of any regional intermediary role, including Syria.

Even in the event of a temporary de-escalation in Lebanon, the regional system does not move towards stabilization but towards displacement of tensions. Alternative arenas, ranging from the West Bank and Jerusalem to the Syrian theatre, including contested constructs such as the "Druze entity" or the "David Corridor", remain structurally available as activated pressure points should the Iranian-Hizbollah axis be partially contained.

Despite this multi-layered volatility, direct negotiations with Iran remain, at least in the short term, the only available mechanism for managing escalation risks, securing maritime flows through the Strait of Hormuz, and addressing the uranium enrichment issue. Yet, the American objective extends beyond nuclear containment towards a broader architecture of political and financial constraint, encompassing frozen assets, sanctions calibration, and conditional re-integration mechanisms.

For Tehran, however, the real threshold lies not in external concessions alone but in their internal consequences. Any negotiated adjustment risks recalibrating the balance of power within the state itself, reshaping institutional hierarchies and redistributing authority between competing centres of power. As a result, each negotiation cycle is likely to function not as a step towards closure, but as a potential ignition point; between Washington and Tehran, within each capital, and across a region entering a phase of structural redefinition rather than temporary stabilisation.

# The price of reconciliation

Mohammad Abu Rumman

It is striking how rapidly and unexpectedly the relationship between the administration of US President Donald Trump and Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has transformed. Not long ago, the two leaders were exchanging praise, applauding one another, speaking of mutual achievements and the depth of the strategic relationship between their countries. Today, however, the relationship has entered what can only be described as a political "blame game", which began through carefully orchestrated media leaks following the ceasefire decision and has now escalated to public statements by senior officials on both sides, including the explicit remarks of US Vice President J. D. Vance and comments from Israeli ministers and officials within Netanyahu's government.

What happened to turn the situation upside down? How far can the current disagreement go, and where might it lead? These questions have become even more pressing after President Trump shared on his platform an article originally published by Just the News, discussing the administration's position regarding Israel's upcoming elections and the various political scenarios under consideration. Such discussions could significantly affect Netanyahu's electoral

prospects. They also intersect with Trump's recent and surprising remarks suggesting the possibility that Netanyahu might not run in the next election — comments that reportedly caught even members of the Likud Party off guard, prompting them to reaffirm that Netanyahu remains the party's candidate.

In essence, someone must pay the price for what is increasingly viewed as the reckless decision to launch the war against Iran. The strategy failed to achieve its central objectives; at the very least, it did not succeed in bringing down the Iranian regime or eliminating its leadership. The question now is which of the two partners will emerge politically unscathed.

Trump chose to sign the memorandum of understanding and avoid a prolonged war of attrition. He may also feel that he was misled by Netanyahu's assessments and those of the Israeli intelligence establishment, particularly regarding the apparent ease with which the Iranian regime could supposedly be destabilized. Trump's priority now is to extricate himself from the current crisis and protect Republican prospects in the upcoming midterm elections. This concern has grown more acute as divisions emerged within the MAGA movement — the core pillar of his political support — among Republicans

and conservative voters.

On the other side, Netanyahu and the Israeli right perceive the abrupt end of the war, the inclusion of southern Lebanon in the arrangements, the release of Iranian funds, and the strategic gains achieved by Iran despite its considerable military and economic losses as nothing short of a political defeat for Israel. They also view it as an unprecedented instance of Washington imposing regional policy decisions on Israel. Both Netanyahu's allies and his opponents increasingly agree that this is the first time American influence has penetrated so deeply into Israeli decision-making. For Netanyahu personally, the current historical moment may therefore be among the most challenging of his political career.

It is true that Netanyahu and his defence minister reluctantly accepted the ceasefire arrangement in southern Lebanon under intense American pressure. Yet, a full withdrawal from southern Lebanon would amount, from Netanyahu's perspective, to political suicide. He is unlikely to agree to such a move unless he receives a substantial political reward capable of compensating for these losses and preserving the cohesion of his right-wing coalition on the eve of the elections.

The most vulnerable arena in this entire equation may well be the Palestinian issue

— namely the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza. This could represent the only significant concession Trump is able to offer in order to achieve two objectives simultaneously: First, to escape the current regional impasse and ensure the success of the memorandum of understanding as a pathway toward broader regional negotiations; and second, to maintain the loyalty of his Christian Zionist constituency, a crucial component of Republican electoral strength. Without such reassurance, this constituency could turn against him under the influence of the current discourse emanating from the Israeli right.

The Palestinian question may therefore be the key that restores cordial relations between the two allies and helps both reduce the political costs and domestic crises that could arise if the current disagreement deepens further. Trump and Netanyahu continue to rely on conservative religious-right constituencies, and both face crucial and potentially historic elections. For that reason, Arab policymakers must read this equation carefully. Iran may have succeeded in securing a favorable arrangement domestically, and Americans and Israelis may eventually reconcile their differences. Yet, within this broader context, Arabs — and particularly Palestinians — risk emerging as the greatest losers.

## From the sea to the heart of Jordan: A vision of water and life

Jordan's National Water Carrier Project, officially known as the Aqaba-Amman Water Desalination and Conveyance Project, is one of the Kingdom's largest and most strategically important infrastructure initiatives. The project aims to address Jordan's severe water scarcity by desalinating seawater from the Gulf of Aqaba and transporting it to major population centres, including Amman.

With an estimated capital cost of approximately \$4.3 billion and a total value, including financing costs, expected to reach around \$5.8 billion, the project represents one of the largest infrastructure investments in Jordan's history.

The Jordanian government has played a pivotal role in advancing this national initiative by placing water security at the center of its strategic priorities. Through national planning, international cooperation, fi-



Kamel Mahadin

ancing arrangements and coordination with private sector partners, the government has worked to move the project from the planning phase towards implementation. This reflects a long-term national strategy to secure sustainable water resources and respond to Jordan's growing water challenges.

His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan has consistently emphasized the importance of water security as a national priority. His support for strategic projects that protect Jordan's vital resources reflects the importance of long-term planning, innovation, and in-

vestment in infrastructure. The National Water Carrier Project represents this vision by strengthening Jordan's ability to provide reliable water supplies for future generations.

The project is expected to produce approximately 300 million cubic meters of desalinated water annually and transport it through a large-scale pipeline network to serve citizens, communities and economic sectors. Government involvement ensures that the project remains aligned with national development priorities and contributes to improving the reliability and sustainability of water services across the Kingdom.

Water is a fundamental component of national security. Reliable access to water directly influences public health, economic development, food security and social stability. For Jordan, one of the world's most water-scarce countries, secur-

ing long-term water supplies is not only an environmental and development priority but also a strategic necessity that strengthens national resilience.

The National Water Carrier is also expected to reduce pressure on existing water sources, including groundwater reserves and dams, while helping Jordan manage the impacts of population growth and climate change.

In conclusion, the value of Jordan's National Water Carrier Project cannot be measured only by its estimated \$5.8 billion investment. Its true importance lies in its role as a strategic national project that supports water security, economic stability and sustainable development. The government's leadership in advancing this initiative demonstrates a commitment to protecting Jordan's future and ensuring access to reliable water resources for generations to come.

## France ditching Palantir could be 'tricky', experts say

Agence France-Presse

PARIS, France — France's domestic intelligence agency is to drop AI giant Palantir to avoid over-dependence on the United States, but shedding the powerful American software could prove complex, experts say.

Governments and lawmakers in European countries, notably in France, Germany and Britain, have been rethinking ties with the firm amid shifting transatlantic ties under US President Donald Trump.

When Washington last week ordered that another US behemoth, Anthropic, ban foreigners from using two of its models, it added urgency to the debate on digital sovereignty.

But "the tricky thing about Palantir is how powerful it is. It's a piece of software that is extremely capable", said Clement Renault, an intelligence expert at the French Institute for Strategic Research (IRSEM).

Doing without such tools presents "a real risk of losing data processing capabilities in the short term", he said. Palantir was co-founded by Peter Thiel, a right-wing billionaire close to Trump, in the wake of the September 11 attacks to sift through vast datasets to flag security threats.

It has also worked more recently with the US government to identify undocumented immigrants or targets in the US-

Israel war on Iran.

Palantir provides powerful AI-driven facial recognition software to help governments to find, track and, in some cases, kill people, with the company accused of enabling Israel's targeting of Palestinians in Gaza.

The scale of the company's mass surveillance, potential for racial bias and ties with Trump have drawn a chorus of alarm from rights groups and privacy advocates.

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'Can't afford snags'

French Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu on Tuesday said his country would "build real autonomy" by turning instead to

domestic provider ChapsVision.

The firm, founded in 2019, it is a relative minnow in comparison to American giants, reporting \$232 million of revenue in 2025 compared to Palantir's \$4.5 billion.

Deploying the new ChapsVision software would take several months, Finance Minister Roland Lescure has said, without providing a clear timeline.

A French security source told AFP Chapsvision's tool was "nearing the end of its development" and "entering a real-world testing phase".

In the meantime, the domestic spy agency, or DGSI, "can't afford operational snags" and will "continue to use Palantir", they said.

Palantir has said its contract with the DGSI "remains fully in force" for the time being.

Germany's internal security service too is thinking about quitting Palantir and working with ChapsVision instead, according to media reports last month.

But Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt has not ruled out using it in digital investigations, and security authorities in several regions do use Palantir software.

British lawmakers earlier this month called for the country's National Health Service to end its contract with the American company.

The London mayor's office

also blocked a bid by the British capital's Metropolitan Police to work with Palantir.

Foreign operating systems

Damien Van Puyvelde, an intelligence expert at Leiden University in The Netherlands, said it would take time for France to switch to any new software, including to train staff to use it.

And even then the country would not be free from its technological dependencies, as it would still rely on operating systems and chips manufactured abroad, he said.

Many European states do not have "the size, budgets, or expertise" to build what they call more "sovereign solutions", he added, saying that "strategic autonomy" to him was chiefly a "political slogan".

Artur Gruszczak, of the Jagiellonian University of Krakow in Poland, said that, if it came to it, EU member states would probably not agree to digital sovereignty in security "based on one solution offered by only one country".

Any such solution to process defence-related data would instead have to be "negotiated between all member states, consensually approved and duly implemented by European stakeholders".

"This will take a lot of time," and even then might not be successful, he said.

# BUSINESS

Monday, June 22, 2026



JT file

The value of certificates of origin issued by the Irbid Chamber of Industry in May totalled \$107 million, the number of certificates issued during the month reached 1,290

## Certificates of origin issued by Irbid Chamber of Industry reach \$107m in May

AMMAN (JT) — The value of certificates of origin issued by the Irbid Chamber of Industry (ICI) in May totalled \$107 million, while the number of certificates issued during the month reached 1,290.

According to chamber figures, the textile and leather sector topped exports at \$92.6 million, followed by the food, agricultural and supply industries sector at \$5.7 million, and the pharmaceuticals and medical supplies sector at \$3 million.

The remaining exports were distributed across the chemical and cosmetics, engineering and electrical, plastics and rubber, construction, packaging, paper and station-

ery, and mining sectors, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Al Hassan Industrial Estate (HIE) accounted for the largest share of exports during May, with a value of \$102 million, followed by Cyber City at \$3 million and the chamber's main office at \$808,000.

Exports to the United States totalled around \$48.4 million, while exports to The Netherlands stood at \$6.8 million, Germany at \$4.3 million, Saudi Arabia at \$2.9 million, and Canada at \$2.1 million.

ICI President Hani Abu Hassan said the industrial sector in the northern region continued to achieve positive results during

the first five months of 2026, despite regional challenges and shifts in global trade.

He added that export growth reflects the ability of Irbid's industries to maintain production and export momentum and sustain their presence in foreign markets despite surrounding challenges.

Abu Hassan stressed the importance of continuing to support the industrial sector and enhancing its competitiveness to sustain this positive performance, noting that the chamber is working with government agencies and partner institutions to open new markets and diversify exports, Petra reported.

## 170 countries adopt 900 measures to contain energy prices — IMF

AMMAN (JT) — Governments around the world have introduced nearly 900 measures across about 170 countries to contain energy prices since the outbreak of the war in the Middle East, according to a new policy tracker released by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The conflict in the Middle East has renewed fears over global energy security, prompting governments worldwide to adopt measures aimed at containing fuel and energy prices.

The IMF said the swift interventions have helped cushion the impact of the latest energy shock on households and businesses, but have also put additional pressure on already strained public finances.

"Energy shocks force policymakers to choose whether adjustment happens through prices or is absorbed by budgets, and the early responses so far show a clear preference for containing prices," IMF economists Era Dabla-Norris, Christian Mumsen, Rodrigo Valdes and Daria Zakharova said.

According to the Fund, almost half of the measures adopted by advanced economies



JT file

Governments around the world have introduced nearly 900 measures across about 170 countries to contain energy prices since the outbreak of the war in the Middle East

were subsidies to energy producers and distributors, while around one-third involved cuts to fuel excise taxes.

Emerging and devel-

oping economies, meanwhile, have relied heavily on price caps, fuel-pricing formulas and other administrative controls, sometimes

combined with rationing measures.

The IMF said that if recent peace efforts lead to a normalisation of trade and oil flows,

governments will face the challenge of gradually unwinding support measures while safeguarding fiscal sustainability.

## ECB favours cross-border banking in Europe

PARIS, France (AFP) — Creating large banks that can operate across Europe is desirable for sustaining the continent's financial system, the European Central Bank's chief economist said Friday.

"Having a banking system that is too localised and, in turn, too intertwined with its domestic sovereign, is not a good recipe," Philip Lane told a conference organised by French investment bank Natixis in Paris.

"From a macroeconomic point of view, it's very important to have the risk sharing that comes from cross-border banking. That can be in terms of equity ownership, it can be in terms of funding, it can be in terms of com-



(AFP file photo)

The headquarters of the European Central Bank is pictured in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany, June 15, 2022

mon technology," Lane added.

He was speaking as Italy's second-largest bank, UniCredit, targets a hostile takeover of German rival Commerzbank, having launched a bid in May that expired on

Tuesday. The Italians longer-term aim is to merge Commerzbank with Germany's HypoVereinsbank, owned by UniCredit.

The Milan-based bank made a bid valued at 35 billion euros (\$40.6 billion) not just

to take control of a rival in a fellow EU state but to cement its status as a European heavyweight.

Lane said if banks are unable to achieve mergers, they must seek other ways to reduce costs and risks in a period of rising fixed expenditure, amid the growing need for expensive cybersecurity systems.

Lane said he foresaw a relatively small number of giant banks in Europe and noted the arrival of purely digital banking players to the market, disrupting traditional banking models.

Established players must respond to this process by offering competitive products, embracing technological change along the way, he said.

## Agreement signed to establish factory in Maan's Udhruh district, creating 400 jobs

AMMAN (JT) — An agreement to establish a new productive branch a "clothing factory" in the Al Manshiyah area of Udhruh District in Ma'an Governorate was signed on Sunday at the Ministry of Labour, aiming to create 400 jobs for Jordanians.

The agreement was signed by Minister of Labour Khaled Bakkar, Mayor of Al Ashari Municipality Abdullah Tourah where the factory will be built, Jerash Garments and Fashion Manufacturing Company General Manager Eric Yu Hung Tang, board member Ibrahim Saif and CEO Ariana Awaysheh.

Bakkar said the establishment of the new unit brings the total number of productive branches in Maan Governorate and its affiliated districts to eight, raising the number of local employees in these facilities to around 1,200.

He added that this also increases the total



JT photo

An agreement to establish a new productive branch "clothing factory" in the Al Manshiyah area of Udhruh District in Maan Governorate signed aiming to create 400 jobs for Jordanians

number of productive branches across the Kingdom's governorates to 39, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The minister stressed that the expansion of productive branches, which operate as factories across various sectors, is in line with royal directives to boost job opportunities for Jordanians nationwide,

localise development, and alleviate financial burdens on workers by establishing projects closer to their places of residence.

Under the agreement, Bakkar said the investor will receive JD1 million in capital support and JD792, 000 in operational support from the government to employ 400 Jordanian men and women from the Ud-

hruh District in Maan.

He noted that the private sector remains the primary partner in establishing and expanding these branches, emphasising the government's commitment to empowering businesses to generate more employment opportunities for Jordanian youth.

Bakkar also commended the cooperation of municipalities, including Al Ashari Municipality, in providing land to attract investors and facilitate the establishment of productive branches across the governorates.

For his part, Eric Yu Hung Tang, general manager of Jerash Garments and Fashion Manufacturing Company, praised the role of the government and the Ministry of Labour in enabling the private sector to create employment opportunities for citizens across the Kingdom's districts and governorates.

## Japan rice prices fall for first time in 3.5 years — official

TOKYO (AFP) — Rice prices in Japan finally fell in May for the first time in three and half years, a government official said on Friday, following sharp rises for the staple that put the government under huge pressure.

Rice prices skyrocketed in 2024 and 2025 because of supply problems linked to multiple factors including hot weather

and panic-buying after a "megaquake" warning the previous year.

Combined with falling living standards and corruption scandals, this led to voters deserting the ruling party and Shigeru Ishiba's resignation in September after less than a year as prime minister.

Rice prices, excluding the luxury koshihikari variety, were

5.4 per cent lower in May than a year earlier, the first drop since November 2022, an internal affairs ministry official in charge of inflation data told AFP.

The government, now headed by popular Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, took various measures to bring prices down, including by releasing emergency stockpiles of the grain.

Tokyo resident Jun Hongo said the decrease was "a huge help", although he still found rice costly.

"The other day...I saw a 10-kilogramme bag of rice in the 4,000-yen [\$25] range for the first time in a long time, so I grabbed it immediately," the 48-year-old house husband said.

"But prices are still expensive compared with a few years ago," he added.

"They keep blaming the so-called supply chain crunch, but I really wish they will investigate the root cause of all this and make sure prices will

stabilise without another massive jump."

A mosaic of factors lay behind the shortages, including an intensely hot and dry summer in 2023 that damaged harvests nationwide.

After that some traders began hoarding rice in a bid to boost their profits down the line, according to experts.

The issue was made worse by panic-buying prompted by a government warning about a potential "megaquake" in 2024 that did not strike.

The rising price of imported food boosted demand for domestic rice, while record numbers of tourists were also blamed for a spike in consumption.

But analysts also blamed Japan's decades-old policy of cutting rice-farming land, as well as an ageing population, with many rice farmers growing old and their children having little interest in taking over.



AFP file photo

A farmer loading new trays of seedlings while using a transplanter to plant rice at a farm in the town of Sanjō, Niigata prefecture in northern Japan

## AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

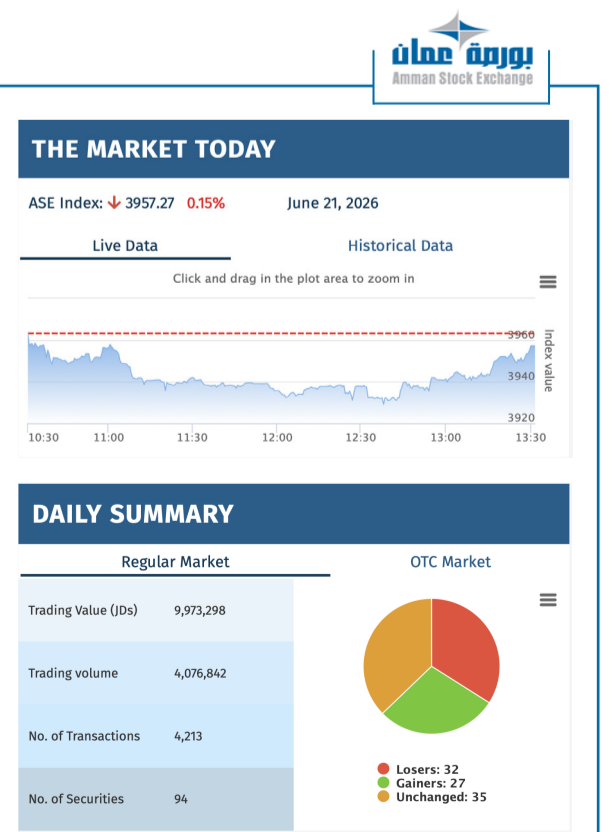
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Sunday amounted to JD10.0 million spread over 4.1 million shares that traded through 4,213 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.15 per cent, closing at 3957.27 points.

Out of 94 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 27 companies rose while the share price of another 32 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were United Cable Industries by 5.63 per cent, Jordan International Investment Company by 4.92 per cent, Al Shamekha for Real Estate and Financial Investments by 4.35 per cent, Ubour Logistic Services Plc. by 3.95 per cent, and Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 3.85 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Amwaj Properties by 4.55 per cent, Real Estate Development by 4.41 per cent, Al Rakaez Investment Company by 4.35 per cent, Safwa Islamic Bank by 4.18 per cent, and Shareco Brokerage Company by 3.03 per cent.



# SPORTS AT A GLANCE

# Room heroics earn Curacao World Cup point against Ecuador

## CYCLING

### Pogacar wins final stage to seal Tour of Switzerland success

VILLARS-SUR-OLLON, Switzerland (AFP) — Tadej Pogacar took his third stage victory this week as the world champion sealed overall success in the Tour of Switzerland on Sunday after catching French climber Lenny Martinez 800 metres from the line. After a cat-and-mouse chase up the final climb to Villars-sur-Ollon at the end of a brutal 152km-long mountainous stage, the last of the race, Pogacar gradually ate into the Frenchman's 1min 30sec lead. For several kilometres, it looked like it would be touch and go, but Pogacar picked up the pace in the last couple of kilometres and with one kilometre left, his success looked inevitable. Just 200m later, he sauntered past Martinez and came home to win by seven seconds. Dutchman Bart Lemmen finished third from the breakaway just over a minute and half behind Pogacar, while Ecuador's Richard Carapaz held onto his second place overall as he came home seventh at 2min. Czech Mathias Vacek came home 12th to finish third overall with Norway's Tobias Foss fourth.

## CRICKET

### Stokes to return as England captain for 3rd New Zealand Test — McCullum

LONDON (AFP) — Ben Stokes will return as England captain for next week's third and deciding Test against New Zealand in Nottingham, head coach Brendon McCullum announced on Sunday. Stokes was stood down from England's emphatic 253-run defeat by New Zealand in the second Test at the Oval this week for breaching a team curfew following his side's win in the series opener at Lord's earlier this month. Although absent from the second Test, all-rounder Stokes, 35, was permitted to play for Durham and he made 95 against Northamptonshire in the County Championship on Saturday. But on Sunday, before play started, both Stokes and Surrey paceman Gus Atkinson, who was also dropped by England for his part in the curfew breach, were both removed from their respective domestic matches in the clearest sign yet that they were being primed for a Test recall. "Ben will be back. He'll be back and he'll be captain," McCullum, a former New Zealand captain, told reporters at the Oval on Sunday. "I think everyone is excited about that, especially after seeing him hit some form for Durham. I've been speaking to Ben every single day since we had the incident and my assessment was that I was worried about him."

KANSAS CITY (AFP) — Curacao goalkeeper Eloy Room was the hero on Sunday as the tiny Caribbean island claimed its first-ever World Cup point in a goalless draw against toothless Ecuador.

Ecuador, which finished second in South American qualifying, had 28 shots, including 15 on target, in Kansas City but Room stood firm in an astonishing display.

The 0-0 draw in Group E keeps alive Curacao's hopes of reaching the knockout phase, extending their fairytale journey at their first World Cup.

The tiny country — the smallest by population ever to play on football's biggest stage — have Miami FC goalkeeper Room to thank for their point against Ecuador.

Room's 15 saves are the most on record — since 1966 — by any goalkeeper at a World Cup match that did not feature extra-time.

The draw in the American Midwest restored pride after a 7-1 mauling by Germany in their opening match.

"History! Our first ever point at the @fifa-worldcup," Curacao posted on X.

"I still have to process it myself," said Room. "The match was full of emotions. I knew it was going to be a tough match."

"There were lots of saves, but I think after



Curacao's goalkeeper #01 Eloy Room makes a save during the 2026 World Cup Group E football match between Ecuador and Curacao at the Kansas City Stadium in Kansas City on Sunday

the first save, the tone was put in place, also for the team. It gave me confidence, and I grew. We all grew, and this was a team effort.

"We were fighting up to the last minute. Earning a point this way for Curacao is absolutely great."

Ecuador fans turned the Arrowhead Stadium, the home of NFL team Kansas City Chiefs, yellow, hugely outnumbering supporters of Curacao.

But Curacao had royalty on their side in the form of Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima. The island is an autonomous country within the Kingdom of The Netherlands.

Out of their 26-strong squad, managed by vastly experienced Dutch coach Dick Advocaat, 25 were born in The Netherlands, and many play their football there. The match started at

a fizzing pace. Ecuador seemed certain to open the scoring in the third minute when former West Ham forward Enner Valencia burst through the middle but Room tipped the ball around the post.

Sheryl Floranus fired over at the other end as Curacao showed their pace on the break.

Ecuador captain Valencia failed to beat Room from close range before Jordy Alcivar had an effort as Ec-

uador continued to dominate.

The South American team ended the first half with 65 per cent of possession but nothing to show for their dominance.

They went close to breaking the deadlock just before the hour mark but Room kept out a Gonzalo Plata header, before a flurry of Curacao chances.

Ecuador, more than 50 places higher than their opponents in the

FIFA rankings, looked increasingly frazzled as they pressed for an opener.

They continued to pour forward and rained shots on Room's goal but he stood firm.

Ecuador substitute Angelo Preciado mishit a cross that bounced off the top of the crossbar and went behind in the final minutes.

The Curacao players swarmed around goalkeeper Room at the end of the match, celebrating an extraordinary point.

Ecuador has yet to score in two games at the World Cup after netting just 14 goals in 18 qualifying matches.

"There are things you cannot explain in football," said Ecuador coach Sebastian Beccacece.

"We wanted to win, we didn't do it. I am the one who is responsible and I've told my team, if I see that you are giving it all competing, I have no complaints. No one wants to miss out on scoring."

Earlier, four-time champions Germany came from behind to beat Ivory Coast 2-1 in Toronto, sealing their qualification for the round of 32. Curacao's draw ensures Germany will top the group.

Ecuador will play Germany on Thursday while Curacao take on Ivory Coast, with all of the teams in Group E still alive in the competition.

## FAMILY FLAVOURS MAGAZINE

THE JORDAN TIMES

# LIFE

# Menopause: An emotional & psychological journey

By Deema Haddad, Clinical Psychologist / Family Flavours magazine / In Collaboration with Tajaddadi Initiative

She used to handle life's demands with ease. Now she finds herself feeling anxious over things that never bothered her before. She forgets simple details, struggles to sleep, feels emotionally overwhelmed and wonders why she no longer feels like herself.

Many women experience these changes during perimenopause and menopause, yet few are prepared for the impact this transition can have on their mental health.

### The emotional side

When menopause is discussed, the focus is

often on physical symptoms such as hot flushes, sleep disturbances, or changes in weight. What receives far less attention is the emotional side of the experience.



A woman may feel anxious, irritable, emotionally sensitive, or susceptible to occasional fluctuations in mood.

Many describe feeling exhausted, not only physically, but

both mentally and emotionally.

### Coping with transitions

These experiences are real and

they are more common than many women realise. Hormonal fluctuations can influence brain chemistry and affect mood, sleep, concentration and the body's ability to cope with stress. However, hormones are only one

piece of the puzzle. For many women, this stage of life unfolds alongside profound personal transitions; children may be becoming more independent, her ageing parents may need additional care and support, relationships may be changing and professional responsibilities may be growing.

At the same time, she may begin reflecting on questions of identity, purpose and what the next chapter of her life may look like.

The combination of biological and life changes can place considerable pressure on her emotional wellbeing.

Mental health should not be treated as secondary to physical health. Both are closely connected, especially during times of hormonal transition.

One of the most common misconceptions is that emotional difficulties during menopause should simply be tolerated because they are "part of the process".

Mood changes are common during this stage of life. However, persistent anxiety, depression, panic attacks,

sleep disturbances, emotional withdrawal, or a noticeable decline in day-to-day activities should not be overlooked. These symptoms deserve attention, understanding and appropriate support.

Investing in emotional well-being

Psychotherapy can play an important role in helping her navigate the emotional challenges that may accompany perimenopause and menopause; it provides a safe and supportive space to understand


emotional changes, manage anxiety and build resilience during a period of significant transition.

For some women, psychotherapy may focus on anxiety or depression. For others, it may involve adjusting to changing family roles, rebuilding self-confidence, processing loss, or redefining personal goals and priorities.


### When to seek support


Seeking psychotherapy is not a sign of weakness. It is an invest-





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