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Crown Prince visits Replit in Silicon Valley

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein, accompanied by HRH Princess Rajwa, visited on Monday Replit, an AI software creation company in Silicon Valley, California.

During a conversation with Replit's founder and CEO, Jordanian entrepreneur Amjad Masad, the Crown Prince expressed his pride in Jordanian talent, which has proven capable of competing at the global level, noting the importance of harnessing drive and determination to capitalise on available opportunities and tools to maximise impact, according to a Royal Court statement.



HRH Crown Prince Hussein, accompanied by HRH Princess Rajwa, on Monday visits Replit, an AI software creation company in Silicon Valley, California

His Royal Highness praised the productive collaboration between the National Council for Future Technology and Replit, a cloud-based software development platform and AI-powered coding assistant, which has resulted in the launch of the "Siraj" project, an AI-powered Arabic-language learning assistant serving 1.3 million users across some 5,800 schools.

Discussions also covered the potential of ex-

panding cooperation on AI initiatives in the fields of education and skills development, as well as hosting programming competitions to drive innovation and accelerate development in priority sectors in Jordan, such as water and energy.

Founded in 2016, Replit has a \$9 billion market valuation, and specialises in AI-powered "vibe coding", allowing users

to build and deploy web and mobile applications through natural language prompts rather than traditional coding.

Their Royal Highnesses toured Replit headquarters, and were briefed about its Replit Collaboration workspace which supports synchronous, real-time team programming. The company currently has more than 50 million registered users

and over 150,000 subscribers; its technologies have contributed to the creation of more than two million applications.

Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship Sami Smeirat, Jordan's Ambassador to the United States Dina Kawar, and Director of the Office of the Crown Prince Zaid Baqain accompanied their Royal Highnesses on the visit.



Photo courtesy of the Royal Court

KING, CROWN PRINCE ATTEND NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM MATCH AGAINST ALGERIA

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah and HRH Crown Prince Hussein on Tuesday attend the national football team's match against Algeria in the FIFA World Cup 2026, at the San Francisco Bay Area Stadium.

Jordan's economic vision gains momentum amid regional uncertainty — WB

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan continues to forge ahead with its Economic Modernisation Vision despite regional challenges, World Bank (WB) Managing Director of Operations Anna Bjerde said on Tuesday.

In an op-ed, Bjerde noted that she observed a "real shift" characterised by increased determination and a focus on delivery during her recent visit to Amman, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

She added that what sets Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision apart is not just its ambition, but its "discipline and focus on execution", describing it as a plan embedded at the core of government operations that is closely monitored and constantly measured.

Bjerde highlighted that "the challenges facing Jordan are real", noting that during her visit to Petra, she witnessed a



File photo

In an op-ed published on Tuesday, World Bank Managing Director of Operations Anna Bjerde says that Jordan continues to forge ahead with its Economic Modernisation Vision despite regional challenges

decline in visitor numbers, a clear indicator of the impact of regional instability on the tourism sector.

She added that inflation and trade disruptions are compounding

pressures at a time when public budgets face fiscal constraints and attracting investment has become more difficult.

Bjerde stressed that Jordan "is not standing idly by", but is leverag-

ing this period to push reforms forward.

She noted that the focus is on laying the foundations for job creation by working on the water, energy, transport and digital sectors, along-

side improving the business environment to attract private investment.

A vibrant private sector is essential for generating required employment, the WB official stressed.

Bjerde pointed out that "the Jordanian people are the country's greatest strength", saying that what Jordan possesses and what investors recognise is an educated, resilient workforce committed to getting the job done right.

She added that the new development lies in linking this advantage to the future of the economy.

During her participation in a ministerial roundtable on technology and artificial intelligence, Bjerde said that she felt a genuine momentum towards transforming Jordan into a regional digital hub.

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Photo courtesy of Prime Ministry

The Cabinet approves adding 30 buses to the operational support programme under the second phase of the inter-governorate public transport development project

Cabinet approves addition of 30 buses under inter-governorate transport project

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet, in a session chaired by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Tuesday, approved adding 30 buses to the operational support programme under the second phase of the inter-governorate public transport development project.

The decision includes 15 buses on the Karak-

Zarqa route and 15 on the Karak-Aqaba route, aimed at expanding regular public transport services, particularly for university students in the three governorates, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The Cabinet tasked Amman Vision Transport Company with supplying,

installing, operating and maintaining intelligent transport systems and passenger information systems for the project, while the Integrated Multi-Transport Company was assigned to oversee management and implementation.

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Jordan lose 2-1 to Algeria in second World Cup match



AFP photo

Nizar Rashdan of Jordan celebrates scoring his team's first goal during the FIFA World Cup 2026 Group J match between Jordan and Algeria at San Francisco Bay Area Stadium on Tuesday in Santa Clara, California

By Osama Alkafri

AMMAN — Jordan suffered a 2-1 loss to Algeria on Tuesday at San Francisco Bay Area Stadium in their second Group J match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

His Majesty King Abdullah and HRH Crown Prince Hussein attended the match.

Both sides entered the encounter seeking their first points of the tournament after losing their opening matches. Jordan started brightly despite the pressure, creating several scoring opportunities and showing attacking intent from the outset.

Al Nashama took the lead in the 36th minute

when Nizar Rashdan found the net with a right-footed shot from the centre of the box into the bottom-right corner, giving Jordan a deserved advantage before the break.

Algeria responded strongly in the second half as they searched for a way back into the match. Their persistence paid off in the 69th minute when Nadhir Benbouali headed home from the centre of the box to level the score.

Algeria completed the turnaround in the 82nd minute through Amine Gouiri, who fired a right-footed shot from close range into the centre of the

goal following a corner kick.

Despite the disappointing result, Jordan head coach Jamal Sellami expressed pride in his players' performance and insisted the scoreline did not accurately reflect the match.

"I am fully satisfied with the players' performance," Sellami said during the post-match press conference.

"The result was not fair. Al Nashama gave everything they had throughout both halves and created many chances, but Algeria's World Cup experience ultimately made the difference."

Continued on page 5

Cyber incidents in Jordan down 16% in Q1 2026 — NCSC

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — Cyber incidents in the Kingdom declined 16 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, according to National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) Director General Mohammad Smadi.

Smadi said that although Jordan has recorded a decrease in the number of cyber incidents compared with the same period last year, the nature

of attacks has become significantly more advanced, with artificial intelligence increasingly shaping global cyber threats.

Speaking during a Government Communication Forum session, He also warned that 89 per cent of global cyberattacks are now AI-assisted, underscoring the growing sophistication of digital threats.

Continued on page 5



RJ photo

Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) on Tuesday announces the launch of a new direct route between Amman and Vienna

RJ launches direct Amman–Vienna route

AMMAN (JT) — Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) on Tuesday announced the launch of a new direct route between Amman and Vienna, set to begin on Wednesday.

The move is part of the national carrier's efforts to strengthen its presence in the European market and expand its international network.

According to an RJ statement, the service will operate from Queen Alia International Airport (QAIA) with four weekly flights, using the airline's latest aircraft equipped with on-board Wi-Fi and advanced in-flight entertainment systems.

RJ Vice Chairman and CEO Samer Majali said the Amman–Vienna route aligns with the airline's strategy to reinforce its position as a leading regional carrier and expand its market share in Europe, which remains a key market for the company.

He added that the new route will also support Jordan's positioning as a global tourism destination and help attract more visitors to the Kingdom.

Majali described the Vienna route as a "qualitative addition" to RJ's network, noting that the Austrian capital serves as a major

European hub offering connections to multiple destinations.

He also said the service would enhance air connectivity between Jordan and Central Europe, boosting tourism and trade between the two countries, while also facilitating transit through RJ's Amman hub to destinations across Asia and Africa.

Majali said that RJ remains committed to its expansion strategy, which includes adding new destinations, modernising its fleet and upgrading the passenger experience to strengthen its competitiveness in regional and global markets.

House speaker, Azerbaijan PM discuss expanding economic, parliamentary ties

AMMAN (JT) — Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi and Azerbaijani Prime Minister Ali Asadov on Tuesday discussed prospects for expanding bilateral relations, particularly in the parliamentary field, as well as ways to enhance economic, investment and trade cooperation.

During the meeting, Qadi and Asadov stressed the "deep-rooted" ties between Jordan and Azerbaijan, which receive the care and attention of His Majesty King Abdullah and President Ilham Aliyev, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

They stressed that "strong" political links and shared visions provide a "solid" foundation to expand strategic partnership between the two nations.

The two officials underlined the importance of building on past achievements to enhance cooperation across various fields and expand economic links to serve mutual interests.

Qadi noted that his visit to Azerbaijan aims to participate in the parliamentary conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC).

He emphasised the Lower House's commitment to developing ties with the National



Petra photo

Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi and Azerbaijani Prime Minister Ali Asadov on Tuesday discuss prospects for expanding bilateral relations, particularly in the parliamentary field

Assembly of Azerbaijan to open new avenues for collaboration.

The House speaker added that there is "significant" potential to transition from traditional cooperation to strategic partnerships driven by investment, particularly in energy, technology, tourism and culture.

Boosting economic engagement requires "concrete" steps to increase trade volume and provide a stable legislative environment to encourage investment, Qadi said.

He also stressed the need to expand joint in-

frastructure, transport and logistics projects to enhance both countries' positions as regional trade hubs.

On regional issues, Qadi underscored the importance of political coordination to establish security and stability in the Middle East, promoting diplomacy and dialogue to resolve conflicts.

Achieving a just and comprehensive regional peace is only attainable through the two-state solution, which guarantees an independent, sovereign Palestinian state, the lawmaker said.

He reiterated the significance of the Hashemite Custodianship over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, describing it as a "safety valve" protecting the city's Arab, Islamic and Christian identity and its historical and legal status quo.

Qadi called for launching a direct, regular flight route between Jordan and Azerbaijan to boost tourism, facilitate business travel and expand trade.

For his part, Asadov underscored Azerbaijan's keenness to en-

hance relations with Jordan, describing Jordan as a key regional partner, and pointing to promising joint ventures in energy, industry, tourism, agriculture, education and logistics.

The prime minister added that Baku will consider operating two weekly flights between the two nations to support tourism and investment.

He also expressed interest in enhancing cooperation in technology, digital transformation, the knowledge economy and artificial intelligence.

Agriculture Ministry, ACSAD discuss expanding cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Agriculture Minister Saeb Khreisat and Director-General of the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) Nasr Eddin Obaid on Tuesday discussed ways to enhance cooperation and advance development projects supporting Jordan's agricultural sector.

During a meeting held at the Agriculture Ministry, Khreisat highlighted the ministry's "strategic" partnership with ACSAD, stressing the centre's role in supporting sustainable agricultural development through research and applied projects and the transfer of modern technologies, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The minister said that these efforts contribute to enhancing food security and improving "efficiency" of



Petra photo

Agriculture Minister Saeb Khreisat and Director-General of the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands Nasr Eddin Obaid on Tuesday discuss ways to advance development projects supporting Jordan's agricultural sector

natural resource use, particularly amid climate change challenges and water scarcity.

He underscored the ministry's commitment to expanding scientific and technical cooperation with ACSAD in livestock improvement and development, and combating the red palm weevil using

advanced scientific practices.

Khreisat said that the ministry would boost the National Seed Bank's role in preserving plant genetic resources, and implement water harvesting, rangeland management and crop productivity projects.

Obaid reviewed AC-

SAD's key projects in Jordan, describing the Kingdom as a "model partner" due to the implementation of specialised initiatives in rangeland development, water management, land reclamation and the development of drought-tolerant crop varieties, in addition to capacity-

building, training and knowledge-transfer programmes.

He said that ACSAD is "keen to broaden" cooperation with the ministry in the coming period through new projects aimed at addressing the impacts of climate change, promoting sustainable agricultural development and enhancing the resilience of the agricultural sector in line with government priorities and the Economic Modernisation Vision.

The two sides agreed to continue coordination on agricultural programmes and projects and enhance technical and scientific cooperation to improve natural resource management, support food security and advance sustainable development.

Population census reaches 90% completion rate — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — Field performance indicators for the General Population and Housing Census 2026 show rapid progress on the ground, with the overall completion rate reaching 90 per cent, Director-General of the Department of Statistics (DoS) Haidar Freihat said on Tuesday.

During a meeting in Balqa with the governorate's executive council, chaired by Governor of Balqa Faisal Masaeed, Freihat also reviewed the latest developments of the current census stage, according to Al Mamlaka TV.

According to DoS data, the building enumeration completion rate reached 90 per cent, while the block completion process reached 89.7 per cent, reflecting progress in preparing the necessary spatial and statistical foundation for the actual counting phase.



File photo

Department of Statistics data show that the building enumeration completion rate reached 90 per cent, while the block completion process reached 89.7 per cent

Freihat also referred to the continuous interest in the self-enumeration service, with the percentage of households wishing to use it reaching 21.5 per cent, stressing that this service increases execution efficiency and offers more flexible options for families.

Talks during the meeting went over mechanisms to support field teams and enhance coordination among various entities, stressing the important role of

local administrations in ensuring the success of this national project and providing accurate statistical data to support planning and decision-making.

For his part, Masaeed highlighted the importance of continued cooperation among various institutions to ensure the success of the census, considering it an "essential" step towards providing an updated database that serves development paths in the Kingdom.

PROJECT

Japan funds small-scale water harvesting infrastructure in Wadi Araba

AMMAN (JT) — The governments of Jordan and Japan agreed to utilise JD169,342 from the Jordan–Japan Counterpart Fund to finance the construction of small-scale water harvesting infrastructure in Wadi Araba, Aqaba Governorate, for the benefit of the Jordan Valley Authority.

The project is designed to support farmers and livestock herders adapt to the effects of climate change by deploying efficient rainwater harvesting techniques to capture and store

as much runoff as possible, according to a Planning Ministry statement.

The project is expected to boost local water availability and enhance rural livelihoods through sustainable water management solutions.

The Jordan–Japan Counterpart Fund was established in 1997 to finance projects that advance economic and social development in the Kingdom.

The fund has supported initiatives in agriculture, as well as efforts to boost food production.

'Jeen' play wins Best Integrated Performance award at Ammon festival

AMMAN (JT) — "Jeen" play, directed by Moataseem Kloob, won the Best Integrated Performance award at the closing ceremony of the 23rd Ammon Youth Theatre Festival.

During the closing ceremony on Sunday evening at the Royal Cultural Centre, attended by Minister of Culture Secretary General Nidal Ahmad, the judging panel announced the festival's winners, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The Ministry of Culture organised the event in cooperation with the Jordanian Artists Association (JAA), and the judging panel was chaired by artist Amal Dabbas.



Petra photo

The play 'Jeen' wins the Best Integrated Performance award at the closing ceremony of the 23rd Ammon Youth Theatre Festival

The Best Director award was shared between Kloob for his play "Jeen" and Mayes Zou'bi for her play "Al Jazeera" (The Island).

The Best Actor award was also split equally between Najm Al Din

Al Zawahreh for "Al Jazeera" and Abdullah Khalil for "Jeen".

The ceremony, attended by JAA President Hani Jarrah and Director of the Directorate of Theatre and Visual Arts Ishaq Yassin,

and hosted by artist Karam Zawahreh, saw Alaa Nahar win the Best Actress award for her role in "Al Jazeera".

Abdulrazzak Matariya won the Best Musical Composition award for "Al Jazeera", while the Best Scenography award went jointly to "Masrah Al Madina" (City Theatre), directed by Fares Marji, and "Akshab Hayya" (Live Woods), directed by Salah Al Din Issa.

The judging panel, which included Mohamed Rawashdeh, Adnan Mashaqbeh, Joyce Raie and Firas Zagtan, presented the Special Jury Award to Nizar Oweis for scriptwriting "Masrah Al Madina". A certificate of excel-

lence was also awarded to the child actor Nour Habashneh for his role in "Jeen".

The secretary general, accompanied by the JAA president and members of the jury, presented the awards on stage, alongside honorary certificates for all participating directors and jury members.

In its final report, the judging panel noted a shortage of local scripts compared to Arab and international texts, limited female participation, and a tendency in some performances towards visual spectacle that lacked artistic value.

They also indicated that several productions required more

preparation time.

The committee recommended employing language proofreaders to ensure linguistic accuracy, training actors on vocal and linguistic techniques, encouraging local playwrighting, and utilising independent dramaturgs rather than relying solely on directors.

The closing ceremony included a video presentation highlighting the festival's opening events and scenes from the six participating plays: "Jeen", "Beta Dalta Gamma" by Kamel Shawish, "Al Tell Al Baed" (The Distant Hill) by Abdullah Shawabkeh, "Akshab Hayya", "Masrah Al Madina" and "Al Jazeera".



Al Aqsa Mosque Compound and its Dome of the Rock in the Old City in occupied East Jerusalem, October 22, 2024

Extremist settlers storm Al Aqsa compound, 26 Palestinians arrested

AMMAN (JT) — Groups of extremist Jewish settlers on Tuesday morning stormed the courtyards of the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied Jerusalem under the protection of Israeli forces.

Dozens of settlers entered the compound through Bab Al Maghariba, conducted provocative tours and performed Talmudic rituals in the eastern section of the mosque, according to a statement by the Jordanian-run Jerusalem Awqaf and Aqsa Affairs Department.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces imposed strict restrictions on Palestinian worshippers, restricting entry, seizing identification cards and removing individuals from the site, according to Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Local calls continue for Jerusalemites and Palestinians to increase their presence at the compound to counter these incursions, with the aim of thwarting the plans of occupation and its settlers.

In the northern West Bank, Sebastia Mayor Mohammad Azem said that dozens of settlers under Israeli forces' protection stormed the archaeological site in the town of Sebastia, northwest of Nablus, with a heavy military deployment to secure the entry.

The historic town faces repeated incursions as part of efforts to assert control over the site and erase its Palestinian identity.

Extremist settlers also attacked the village of Burqa, east of Ramallah, smashing two privately owned vehicles during a dawn raid before fleeing.

Burqa has experienced ongoing settler violence targeting homes, property and agricultural lands.

Israeli forces launched a wide-scale raid and arrest campaign across various West Bank and occupied Jerusalem areas, as the operations involved home searches, property damage and field interrogations.

The Palestinian Prisoners' Society reported that Israeli forces arrested 26 Palestinians during the raids under the pretext of being wanted.

Foreign minister, Moroccan counterpart discuss cooperation, regional developments

Safadi, EU official stress importance of continued Jordan-EU coordination

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Tuesday met with Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates Nasser Bourita to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two kingdoms.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed regional developments and efforts to enhance security and stability, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Safadi and Bourita reiterated the strong relations between Jordan and Morocco and stressed their commitment to enhance cooperation in various fields.

They also discussed preparations for the sixth session of the Jordanian-Moroccan Higher Joint Commission, due to convene in the last quarter of this year.

The two ministers emphasised the importance of ensuring that the commission's meetings deliver tangible steps to expand cooperation across a range of sectors in the interests of both countries.

Safadi and Bourita reaffirmed their support for the US-Iran negotiations and stressed the need for a comprehensive agreement that ensures lasting security and stability.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Tuesday meets with Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates Nasser Bourita

They also stressed the need to mobilise all efforts to consolidate stability in Gaza and implement all provisions of US President Donald Trump's plan as a means to that end.

The top diplomats also reiterated the need to stop all illegal Israeli measures that undermine the two-state solution and to respect the historic and legal status quo at Jerusalem's Islamic and Christian holy sites.

Bourita concluded an official visit to Jordan after participating in the Arab Consultative Meeting and the ordinary session of the Arab League Council hosted by the Kingdom on Monday.

Also on Tuesday, Safadi discussed with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas ways to strengthen Jordan-EU cooperation across a range of sectors.

Speaking alongside Safadi, Kallas said that Jordan is an indispensable partner for the European Union in the region.

She said Jordan remains one of Europe's closest and most reliable partners in the Middle East, stressing the EU's commitment to maintaining close coordination and dialogue with the Kingdom on regional and international issues of mutual concern.

Kallas reaffirmed the EU's determination to deepen its partnership with Jordan, building on the outcomes of the 2026 Jordan-EU Summit and the launch of the bilateral Security and Defence Dialogue.

She stressed that peace and stability in the Middle East are in Europe's strategic interest, noting that "the problems of our neighbours today become our problems tomorrow".

Highlighting the rapidly evolving regional situation, Kallas said the EU is closely monitoring developments and remains committed to supporting efforts to end the escalation in the region while contributing to the next phase of diplomatic negotiations and broader political initiatives.

One killed, 8 injured in stampede at Amman's Hashemite Square — police

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — One person was killed and eight others were injured at dawn on Tuesday during a stampede at the Hashemite Square in downtown Amman, official sources said.

The injured were rushed to nearby hospitals for treatment, Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

"The deceased was transferred to the National Institute of Forensic Medicine for an autopsy," Sartawi said.

The Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) on Monday had announced providing free round-trip shuttle buses for fans wishing to attend the public viewing of the national football team's (Al Nashama) match against

Algeria at the Roman Amphitheatre and the Hashemite Square.

GAM called on fans to choose their nearest gathering point and adhere to the scheduled departure and return times to facilitate smooth access to

the viewing venues, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The municipality stressed its full readiness to receive crowds, calling for broad participation to support and cheer for the national team under the slogan: "Be on time...

let's cheer for the Nashama with one voice."

The national team clashed with Algeria on Tuesday at 6:00am (Jordan time) at the San Francisco Bay Area Stadium in the US, as part of the second round of the group stage in the



FIFA World Cup 2026. Jordan lost 2-1.

The Public Security Directorate (PSD) on Sunday urged Jordanians planning to attend public screenings of the match to comply with organisational and security instructions to ensure public safety and facilitate smooth entry and exit procedures, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

PSD called on attendees to remain within designated areas allocated for the general public, families, media representatives and persons with disabilities.

The directorate urged fans to keep entrances, exits and passageways clear, avoid gatherings in undesignated areas and respect venue capacity limits.

King Hussein Bridge faces sudden closures, procedural delays on other side — Interior Ministry

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Interior said on Tuesday that it keeps the King Hussein Bridge open until the last permitted passenger crosses from the other side, stressing that Jordan receives all incoming travellers without restrictions on numbers or timing.

In a statement, the ministry said that the bridge is subject to sudden closures on the other side for various reasons, in addition to delays faced by passengers due to procedures there, particularly security checks.

It added that, due to restrictions imposed by the other side on the number of buses and passengers allowed to enter, travellers are required to make prior bookings through an electronic platform.



The Ministry of Interior says on Tuesday that it keeps the King Hussein Bridge open until the last permitted passenger crosses from the other side

The ministry said the system facilitates procedures by regulating movement according to available capacity, helping prevent congestion and ensuring smoother and faster processing.

It pointed out that the other side allows entry of 2,500 passengers via 50 buses,

in addition to a maximum of 500 VIP passengers.

The ministry noted that departure operating hours via the bridge run from Sunday to Thursday from 3:30am to 8:00am, on Fridays from 1:00am to 8:00am, while Saturdays are a weekly holiday.

Lower House committee consults universities on amended higher education law

AMMAN (JT) — The Lower House Education Committee on Tuesday heard proposals from university presidents and representatives on the draft amended Jordanian Universities Law for 2026, which was referred to Parliament by the government.

Committee Chairman MP Ibrahim Qaraleh stressed the importance of consulting academic institutions when reviewing legislation related to higher education, according to a Lower House statement.

He said that the committee is committed to considering a broad range of views and recommenda-

tions to strengthen the draft law and ensure it meets its intended objectives.

Qaraleh said that the committee adopts a participatory approach in discussing legislation, particularly laws governing higher education, given the sector's vital role in preparing qualified national talent and supporting sustainable development.

He also underlined the need for legislation that keeps pace with the rapid changes and evolving needs of Jordan's higher education sector.

MPs Ibrahim Humaidi, Abdul Hadi Breizat, Tamara Nassereddin and Faryal Bani Sal-

man also emphasised the importance of modernising the legal framework governing higher education to address current challenges, enhance the quality of education and scientific research, and improve the performance of Jordanian universities.

University presidents and representatives presented a series of observations and recommendations on the draft law, including revising provisions governing faculty members' absence during their first year of appointment to better reflect the requirements of academic work while ensuring the continuity and sta-

bility of the educational process.

They also stressed that members of university boards of trustees should possess the necessary expertise and experience in higher education, administration and governance, enabling them to effectively formulate institutional policies and support the continued development of Jordanian universities.

The government said that the amendments seek to update the legislative framework governing higher education institutions, including provisions regulating community colleges and university colleges, in line with recent structural re-



The Lower House Education Committee on Tuesday hears proposals from university presidents and representatives on the draft amended Jordanian Universities Law for 2026

forms in the education sector.

The proposed changes also reflect the

merger of the ministries of education and higher education and scientific research,

aiming to ensure the legal framework keeps pace with the Kingdom's institutional re-

structuring and public sector modernisation efforts.

The amendments were also intended to improve the quality of higher education, align academic programmes with labour market needs and bring Jordan's higher education legislation closer to international best practices in governance.

They also seek to strengthen universities' financial sustainability by enabling them to diversify revenue sources, expand investment opportunities and attract more international students, as Jordan continues to position itself as a regional hub for higher education.



AFP file photo

A record 12.4 million people in Syria are struggling to find enough food to eat, the World Food Programme said

Over 13m acutely food insecure in Syria — UN

GENEVA (AFP) — More than 13 million Syrians — over half the population — are facing acute food insecurity, the United Nations warned on Tuesday, calling for clearing explosive-littered fields to revitalise agriculture in the war-shattered country. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said turning fields riddled with unexploded ordnance following the brutal civil war into productive land could help solve the food crisis in Syria. "Syria's agriculture sector is at a pivotal moment," said Pierro-Tomaso Perri, the FAO's acting representative in the country.

"After 14 years of conflict, recurrent droughts, economic hardship, damaged irrigation, weakened services, disrupted markets, and widespread explosive ordnance contamination, rural livelihoods remain under severe pressure."

He said there were "around 13.4 million people facing high levels of acute food insecurity," while for many rural Syr-

ians, "cultivating land, grazing animals, harvesting crops can be life-threatening".

'Agricultural and grazing areas continue to account for the majority of recorded incidents'

The Syrian civil war, which erupted in 2011 with president Bashar al-Assad's brutal repression of anti-government protests, killed over half a million people and devastated the country's infrastructure.

Assad was eventually ousted in December

2024. Perri said that since then, 1,299 explosive ordinance-related incidents have been recorded in Syria, with 2,325 casualties.

"Agricultural and grazing areas continue to account for the majority of recorded incidents," he told a press conference in Geneva. With vast contamination and limited capacity, FAO is drawing up prioritisation plans to identify where clearance could have the greatest impact on food production.

Once land is made safe, the FAO would then support farmers and herders with irrigation, seeds, animal feed and veterinary services.

The FAO Emergency Resilience Plan for 2026-2028 aims to assist 9.8 million people, and requires \$286 million.

"Our pledge is to continue supporting Syrian farmers, herders, and rural communities," said Perri, "so that agriculture can provide food security, restore livelihoods... and help Syria move from emergency to sustainable recovery".

Iran says to oversee Hormuz as Swiss talks conclude

BURGENSTOCK, Switzerland (AFP) — Tehran voiced on Tuesday its intent to maintain control over the vital Strait of Hormuz, a crucial question in the Middle East war talks with Washington that just wrapped up in Switzerland.

Vice President JD Vance called the negotiations a "very good foundation" for a final deal to end the conflict, noting on Monday that Washington suspended sanctions on Iranian oil.

But critical questions like Iran's nuclear programme and Hormuz, a major conduit for the world's oil supply, have not been resolved despite an initial deal between Washington and Teheran.

Technical talks that followed higher level negotiations in Switzerland have concluded, with working groups to be set up on nuclear issues and sanctions, Iran's state media reported on Tuesday.

US President Donald Trump has demanded an unconditional reopening of Hormuz to marine traffic, however Iran again pushed back fiercely.

"The Strait of Hormuz will never return to its pre-war conditions and will be administered by the Islamic Republic of Iran, in accordance with international law," Iran's chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said, state media reported on Tuesday.

The Strait of Hormuz had reopened last week, after Washington and Tehran reached an agreement, but Tehran announced on Saturday it had closed it again in response to Israeli attacks in Lebanon.

Frozen funds

Tehran and Washington have agreed to establish a line of communication "to avoid incidents and miscommunication with the aim of safe passage for commercial vessels" through the waterway,



AFP photo

Delegation staff members meet in the lobby on the day of a quadrilateral meeting between the United States, Iran, Pakistan and Qatar at the Burgenstock luxury hotel complex overlooking Lake Lucerne, Switzerland, on Sunday

according to Qatari and Pakistani mediators.

As part of their deal, Washington agreed to release \$12 billion in frozen funds to Iran, Iranian state media reported on Tuesday, and temporarily suspend sanctions on oil from the Islamic republic.

The US Treasury said the decision involved temporarily lifting sanctions on Iran to allow it to produce, sell and deliver crude and related products through August 21.

Vance said Iranian assets had not yet been unfrozen as part of the deal and that, if they were, they would be used to buy US goods such as soybeans and would not fund terrorism.

Iran has been subject to asset freezes and sweeping sanctions by the United States and other Western countries since its 1979 Islamic revolution that toppled the US-backed Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

The round of negotiations launched this weekend in Switzer-

land raised hopes for a lasting settlement of the conflict and pushed down oil prices.

The negotiations, in which Pakistan and Qatar are playing a mediating role, are aimed at producing a final document within a renewable 60-day deadline.

Diplomacy towards a deal continued on Tuesday, with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to travel to Pakistan, state media reported, following the talks in Switzerland.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio was due to start a trip to the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain to discuss the deal and "efforts to secure full and free safe transit through the Strait of Hormuz," his spokesman Tommy Pigott said.

Progress on talks

The developments come after mediators Pakistan and Qatar said the US and Iranian negotiators reached agreement on a "roadmap towards reaching a final deal

within 60 days".

"Encouraging progress has been made," they said, including a contact channel set up to "avoid incidents and miscommunication" in the Strait of Hormuz.

Vance said Iran would allow UN nuclear inspectors to return to the country, but Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Barqaei said for his part that "a very brief discussion took place regarding the nuclear issue, but there was no discussion of details".

Set up by the 2015 agreement torn up by Trump in 2018, these inspections were suspended by Iran after the Israeli-American bombings of its facilities in June 2025.

Since then, International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors have not been able to visit the sites hit, leaving doubts hanging over the state of the Islamic Republic's stocks of highly enriched uranium, a major point of contention with Washington.

Tehran has always denied seeking to acquire nuclear weapons, while remaining adamant about its right to develop a full civilian nuclear fuel cycle.

On the Lebanese front, which Tehran insisted on including in the discussions, a conflict management cell is to be set up to halt the fighting between Israel and the pro-Iranian Hezbollah movement, which dragged Lebanon into the war in early March.

On Monday, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said he had received a call from Vance regarding "the issue of consolidating the ceasefire in Lebanon, stopping the Israeli military escalation and steps that should be taken in this regard, including the possibility of forming a cell for this purpose".

The offensive in Lebanon, which Israel says is intended to prevent Hezbollah attacks, has left more than 4,100 dead and over a million displaced, according to the authorities.

More records set to fall as deadly Europe heatwave drags on

PARIS, France (AFP) — Europe on Tuesday braced for more extreme weather as a deadly heatwave threatened fresh temperature records in Britain, with trains disrupted and hospitals across the continent preparing for an influx of heat-afflicted patients.

The latest heatwave has raised fears of the effects of climate change-supercharged extreme weather on vulnerable people, while forcing the cancellation of outdoor events, causing transport chaos and shuttering schools.

It comes just a month after a previous stretch of unseasonably high temperatures scorched western Europe, with scientists warning that the increasingly frequent, lengthy and intense periods of extreme heat are a clear marker of human-driven global warming.

France crisis meeting

French Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu was scheduled to hold a crisis meeting on Tuesday, an aide said, after forecaster Meteo France reported that the country's average temperature had broken a record for the month of June.

Average daytime and nighttime tempera-



AFP photo

Young people jump from a bridge into the Canal Saint-Martin during a heatwave in Paris on Monday

tures reached 29.2°C on Monday, beating the previous high reached on June 30, 2025, according to provisional data, while the central village of Chateaufort recorded a sweltering 43.3°C.

French authorities blamed the extreme weather for the deaths of two children, aged two and four, found on Monday in their family car in a residential parking lot in the southern town of Carpentras.

The day before, three elderly people died in their residence in Girone in the southwest as a result of the high temperatures.

At the Pean nursing home for the retired in Paris, the staff have jumped into action to protect vulnerable residents, carrying around pitchers of water.

"It's not enough to put down a glass of water and tell them to drink. You have to be sure they actually do," said head nurse Badra Hamadi.

UK record under threat

Weeks after the UK broke its May temperature record, the British weather forecaster issued a top-level weather warning for only the second time in its history, covering parts of

England for Wednesday and Thursday.

"It is now likely the current highest temperature on record for June will be broken, this being 35.6°C recorded in Southampton in June 1976 and Camden Square in June 1957," the Met Office said.

That milestone is set to be topped as early as Tuesday in southern England, where the weather forecaster expects highs of 37°C, before the temperatures potentially rise to as high as 40°C in some places on Wednesday and Thursday.

The warning runs from 9:00 am (08:00

GMT) on Wednesday to 9:00 pm on Thursday and covers a large area of central and southern England, including London and Birmingham, the UK's two largest cities.

Schools in southwest England said they were planning to finish the day early and a train company said it was cancelling or changing some of its services out of London because of the "severe weather".

Italy on high alert

Italy's health ministry declared a red heatwave alert in 15 cities including Milan and Rome for Tuesday and said the number would go up to 16 on Wednesday.

During a red alert, the highest level, the ministry advises people to eat light, stay indoors in the hottest parts of the day and sprinkle themselves with cool water.

In the capital, the transport authority admitted that the batteries on the city's new electric buses are running out before the end of the drivers' shifts because of more intensive use of air conditioning.

"We are organising the service to face up to this unusual heatwave," the Atac transport authority was quoted by the Corriere della Sera daily as saying.

Iberian 'climate refuge'

In Spain's capital, Madrid, where temperatures peaked at 40°C on Monday, city hall set up a "climate refuge" for homeless and vulnerable people, open between midday and 8:00 pm, which provides water, food and hygiene facilities.

In the southern city of Cordoba, doctor Clarisa Arismendi, 32, was trying to take a break from the heat.

"Eating an ice cream because it's horrible, it feels catastrophic. I don't know what temperature we're at, but it feels horrendous... and I'm from Mexico," she told AFP.

Portugal's weather agency is expecting Tuesday to be the peak of the heatwave in the Iberian nation.

Drownings rise

French Sports and Youth Minister Marina Ferreri told the France Inter broadcaster Tuesday that around 20 people had drowned since the beginning of the weekend.

She urged swimmers flocking to the country's waters in a bid to beat the heat to respect safety rules.

That warning carried over to Germany, where police said five people had died in fatal swimming accidents over the weekend.

Europe must be ready to replace key US weaponry 'soon' — EU defence chief

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AFP) — Europe faces an "urgent challenge" to replace US weaponry, as Washington weighs scaling back its military presence on the continent, the EU's defence commissioner said on Tuesday.

Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth last week announced a six-month review of the US force posture in Europe after anger with NATO allies over their response to the Iran war.

EU Defence Commissioner Andrius Kubilius said the move could see Washington shift key assets elsewhere in the world.

"We have to be prepared. This could not be at some distant time in the future. It could be soon," he told a defence conference in Brussels.

"We are now faced with an urgent challenge to replace American strategic enablers and heavy weaponry."

Kubilius warned that failing to plug the gaps in areas such as space-based intelligence would be an "open invitation" for Russian President Vladimir Putin to test Europe.

Putin could seek to lash out at the continent as he is on the back foot in Ukraine, Kubilius said.

The European Union

has pressed to ramp up the continent's defence spending as questions swirl over the reliability of US support under President Donald Trump.

Kubilius warned that filling the "strategic gaps" could cost around 500 billion euros, citing an estimation from Germany's Kiel Institute.

But the commissioner, who oversees efforts to bolster the EU's defence industry, said the issue was not just the eye-watering sums of money needed.

"We learnt how to raise additional funds," Kubilius said.

"We still need to learn how to spend them in an effective way in order to outproduce, out-innovate, outgun Russia."

Kubilius reiterated calls for the EU to better integrate Ukraine's defence industry, focus on producing at larger scale, and increase cooperation between member states.

"At a time when America is asking us to step up, because in some areas, they might step aside, now is the time to create a more integrated European defence market," he said.

He said the European Commission would lay out options on creating a more integrated EU defence market next week.

Hizbollah chief demands full timetabled Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — Hizbollah chief Naim Qassem on Tuesday demanded a scheduled withdrawal of Israeli troops from south Lebanon as authorities said Israeli gunfire killed two people there despite a recent lull in fighting.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun rejected Israel's occupation of the south and foreign interference in his country's affairs — an allusion to Hizbollah's backer Iran — as a fifth round of Israel-Lebanon talks began in Washington.

On Monday, mediators Pakistan and Qatar said that Tehran and Washington had agreed to set up a "de-confliction cell" to limit flare-ups in Lebanon following talks in Switzerland on ending the wider Middle East war, which Tehran has linked to halting the parallel conflict in Lebanon.

"We now have a ceasefire. The withdrawal must take place according to a timetable. Israel has no choice but to fully withdraw from



A man walks on the rubbles as he looks for items in a building hit in earlier Israeli military strikes on a neighbourhood in the southern Lebanese coastal city of Tyre on Tuesday

all Lebanese territory, without retaining an inch," Qassem said, in a televised address.

Deadly clashes between Israel and Hizbollah on Friday and Saturday had rattled the

fledgling US-Iran deal, which provides for a cessation of hostilities on all fronts, including Lebanon.

The fighting in Lebanon has largely paused since Saturday evening.

"Israel withdraws and the Lebanese army deploys exclusively south of the Litani River," Qassem said, referring to a waterway around 30 kilometres from the Israeli border.

'Tracherous attack'

Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA) said two men were killed Tuesday when Israeli soldiers opened fire with machine-guns "while

they were standing near an excavator that was unblocking a road" in Nabatieh Al Fawqa.

The health ministry later confirmed the toll. Hizbollah slammed it as a "blatant" Israeli truce violation and a "treacherous attack".

Israel's military said its forces fired warning shots at four alleged Hizbollah militants on a bulldozer and a motorcycle who entered an Israeli-declared "security zone" running around 10 kilometres deep inside Lebanon, before "additional fire was conducted in order to remove the threat".

Separately, it said its forces also "identified a cell of armed terrorists operating" near soldiers in the zone, adding it "struck the terrorists... to remove the threat".

The NNA also reported that "an enemy drone targeted a parked car" on the outskirts of the town of Barasheet, without immediately reporting casualties.

The UN peacekeeping

force in Lebanon, UNIFIL, had said earlier on Tuesday that it had not observed any launches, strikes or interceptions "since Sunday, marking more than two days without such activity".

'Sovereignty'

Under US pressure, Lebanese officials began direct talks with Israel in April in Washington, with Lebanese authorities seeking to separate the negotiations from the US-Iran deal.

"We accept nothing less than an end to the Israeli occupation and at the same time, the fall of foreign tutelage," Aoun said, according to his office.

The Lebanese president has previously accused Iran of using his country as a "bargaining chip".

He expressed hope that the new round of talks would be "decisive" in helping achieve "the full restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty".

Aoun's office also said he spoke to French President Emmanuel Macron over the phone, discussing the situation "in light of the results of the US-Iran negotiations".

Parliament speaker Nabih Berri, a Hizbollah ally who acts as an intermediary for the group, also spoke to Macron, his office said, emphasising "the importance of consolidating the ceasefire" and Israel's withdrawal.

Hizbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East on March 2 war with rocket fire at Israel to avenge the killing of Iran's supreme leader in US-Israeli strikes.

Israel responded with airstrikes and a ground offensive that Lebanon says have killed more than 4,100 people.

On Monday, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israeli forces in Lebanon retained "full freedom of action to thwart any direct or developing threat".

Iran will decide how to use unfrozen assets — ambassador

GENEVA (AFP) — Tehran alone will decide how to use its frozen assets once they are unfrozen under a US-Iranian deal towards ending the Middle East war, an Iranian ambassador said on Tuesday, contradicting US claims.

As part of the deal under negotiation, Washington has agreed to release \$12 billion in frozen funds to Iran, Iranian state media reported on Tuesday, and temporarily suspend sanctions on oil from the Islamic republic.

US Vice President JD Vance said on Monday that Iranian assets had not yet been unfrozen as part of the deal and that, if they were, they would not fund terrorism and could instead be used

to buy US goods such as soybeans.

'If there is any frozen Iranian assets that are unfrozen, then we have approval over that process...'

Vance said that US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner, along with Qatar, a co-mediator in the talks, had

come up with "a very interesting solution" to ensure those funds were not misused.

"If there is any frozen Iranian assets that are unfrozen, then we have approval over that process; the Qataris have approval over that process," he said.

Ali Bahreini, the Iranian ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, flatly rejected that.

"Iran is the only country who will decide what to do with its assets, which are going to be defrozen," he told reporters in Geneva.

"So I reject any claim about that there... would be any role for any other country to have an influence on those decisions or

on those process."

Bahreini had been with the Iranian diplomatic team at the Burgenstock complex in central Switzerland where the mediated talks between the United States and Tehran took place on Sunday.

Iran has been subject to asset freezes and sweeping sanctions by the United States and others for much of its history since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The issue of unfreezing assets is part of a memorandum of understanding signed last week by Tehran and Washington, laying the groundwork for 60 days of negotiations to settle broader issues including Iran's nuclear programme and

sanctions relief.

Bahreini said that Iran's blocked assets would be unfrozen "very soon".

He acknowledged that "there are some technical arrangements which should be made by United States and by Qatar, because the assets have been frozen by the United States, and at least some parts of those assets are in Qatar".

"Definitely there is a role for them, but that role is limited to these technical aspects of defreezing of assets," he said.

"Certainly, Iran does not allow them to have further influence on the other processes... That is something Iran and only Iran will decide."

Cabinet approves addition of 30 buses under inter-governorate transport project

Continued from page 1

The additional buses would be equipped with electronic payment systems and vehicle tracking devices linked to the national public transport network, the statement said.

The Land Transport Regulatory Commission was also instructed to allocate the necessary funding and submit a performance report by the end of December 2026, assessing the two routes against key performance indicators.

The government said that the project aims to provide reliable, scheduled public transport services supported by electronic fare collection and onboard monitoring systems, in a step to improve service quality.

Since its launch in mid-2025, the first phase of the project has deployed more than 150 buses linking Amman with major governorates. The service has carried more than 1.6 million passengers and operated 139,000 trips over eight months.

Building on this performance, the second phase is set to begin next month, introducing eight routes served by 180 buses. The expansion would provide direct services for students, workers and commuters, and is expected to serve more than 13,500 passengers daily.

The phase aims to strengthen connectivity between Amman and the governorates of Ma'an, Tafleeh and Ajloun, while also improving transport links among Irbid, Mafrag, Zarqa, Jerash, Karak and Aqaba, the statement said.

The Cabinet approved the Building Permits and Oversight Bylaw within the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) for 2026.

The bylaw seeks to develop an integrated framework for managing construction activities in the capital, streamline permit issuance procedures and enhance oversight of building projects.

It also aims to improve transparency by setting binding timelines for permit approvals, reducing procedural duplication and expanding the use of digital solutions, including artificial intelligence applications and electronic integration with relevant government and professional entities.

The system would establish a regulatory mechanism to ensure compliance with zoning regulations, building codes and municipal plans, while introducing clear procedures for addressing violations within defined timelines.

As part of public sector modernisation efforts, the Cabinet also approved the rationale for a draft administrative regulation for the Jordan Academy of Public Administration, to be referred to the Legislation and Opinion Bureau for completion of the legislative process.

The regulation follows the establishment of the academy as the legal successor to the Institute of Public Administration and aims to establish a modern operational framework based on excellence, innovation and strategic partnerships.

The academy is expected to serve as a national reference institution for developing government leadership and institutional capacity, in line with the Economic Modernisation Vision and the Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap.

The Cabinet also approved the rationale for draft administrative regulations for the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and the Sharia Judges Department, as well as amendments to academic staff and scholarship regulations at Mu'tah University, referring them to the Legislation and Opinion Bureau.

The amendments aim to enhance institutional performance, support digital transformation, strengthen governance, and align Mu'tah University's regulations with the Jordanian Universities Law and practices adopted across public universities.

Jordan's economic vision gains momentum amid regional uncertainty — WB

Continued from page 1

This direction was put into practice during her visit to the Rujm Al Shami School, where she saw students using an AI-powered learning assistant developed under the government's MASAR programme, which

is supported by WB.

This transformation "is no longer just an idea. It is a reality happening inside classrooms", Bjerde said, underscoring that reforms in Jordan "do not happen by accident, but are driven, monitored, and held accountable for results".

Bjerde, accompanied by Vice President for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan Ousmane Dione, on June 13 had started a three-day visit to Jordan focused on supporting growth and job creation under the Economic Modernisation Vision

2033.

During her visit, Bjerde met with Prime Minister Jafar Hassan who commended the partnership between Jordan and the World Bank Group and praised its role in supporting the Kingdom's efforts to implement key economic and develop-

ment projects.

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

Jordan lose 2-1 to Algeria in second World Cup match

Continued from page 1

Following the match, His Royal Highness praised the team's efforts in a message posted on Instagram.

"We are proud of our national team, grateful for everything you gave

on the pitch and know how much you wanted to make Jordanians proud," the Crown Prince wrote.

He also congratulated Algeria on the victory.

Jordan will conclude their historic World

Cup campaign against defending champions Argentina on June 28 in their final Group J fixture.

Cyber incidents in Jordan down 16% in Q1 2026 — NCSC

Continued from page 1

He noted that serious incidents remain a small proportion of overall cyberattacks, while the most common threats include ransomware, denial-of-service attacks, phishing and social engineering, as well as the exploitation of security vulnerabilities and compromised digital identities.

Smadi said that 75 per cent of breaches globally are now linked to stolen credentials or compromised identities rather than direct technical intrusion, reflecting a shift in attacker strategies towards human and behavioural vulnerabilities.

He added that the most targeted sectors in Jordan during the first quarter of 2026 were

industry and trade, accounting for 27.9 per cent of incidents, followed by the government sector at 20.9 per cent.

The centre also recorded 27 cases of institutional impersonation attempts during the same period, he said.

"The cyber landscape is evolving rapidly, and artificial intelligence is now being used not only to defend systems but also to conduct increasingly complex and autonomous attacks," Smadi said, adding that the centre is studying advanced AI systems to strengthen detection and response capabilities.

He also pointed to the emergence of quantum computing as a future challenge for digital security, saying

Jordan is working with international partners on a national roadmap to address emerging technologies.

Smadi stressed that cybersecurity is not purely a technical discipline, but a comprehensive system based on three pillars: Human capacity, policy frameworks and technology.

He said that the human factor remains the most critical element in ensuring national cyber resilience.

"Awareness is the most important component of cybersecurity. No matter how advanced systems are, human error or lack of awareness can compromise entire networks," he said.

He cited common phishing attempts, including fraudulent messages offering prizes

or requesting users to click malicious links, as examples of how attackers exploit public trust rather than technical weaknesses.

Smadi said the centre has issued its National Cybersecurity Strategy for 2025-2028, which aims to build a secure and resilient digital environment, strengthen governance of essential services, enhance national capabilities, and expand strategic partnerships regionally and internationally.

He added that sectoral incident response teams are being developed to improve coordination across critical infrastructure sectors, including water, telecommunications, industry, aviation, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone and the financial sector.



Photo courtesy of magnificom

National Cyber Security Centre Director General Mohammad Smadi says that although Jordan has recorded a decrease in the number of cyber incidents, the nature of attacks has become significantly more advanced

The centre is also implementing a new licensing system for cybersecurity service providers, aimed at reg-

ulating the sector, improving service quality, and strengthening trust in the digital economy, he said.

Smadi said that Jordan has significantly expanded its cybersecurity framework, with more than 330 awareness

workshops conducted across government institutions and 110 entities already covered under the national cybersecurity framework.

He noted that legal amendments to the founding law are currently under review to enable the centre to address emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing more effectively and to formally integrate sectoral response teams into the legal framework.

The NCSC, established under Law No. 16 of 2019 and operational since 2021, is responsible for developing Jordan's national cybersecurity system, issuing policies and standards, and enhancing national capacity through training and awareness programmes.

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Immigrant Heritage Month: Remembering what really makes America great

June is National Immigration Heritage Month, a time to celebrate the diverse peoples and cultures that have made America great. This year—when not only immigration and cultural diversity are being challenged, but also the complex history of our country is being erased—it is more important than ever that we stop and examine the record of who we are and how we got to where we are as a country and an American people.



WASHINGTON WATCH

James J. Zogby

First, we should never forget that this country was born with two “original sins”: Slavery and genocide. The current administration in Washington wants to rewrite our history by eliminating mention of negative events and practices that defined our past, focusing instead on the “greatness and industriousness” of our founders and their “glorious victories”. In reality, there would be no America if not for the surplus wealth created by the labour of enslaved people across the South and the riches accrued by those who benefitted from the theft of indigenous peoples’ lands. Nor should it be forgotten (although it is) that the Declaration of Independence names one reason for the War of Independence against the British Empire as the American settlers’ grievance that King George would not defend them against “merciless Indian Savages”, who were resisting having their lands taken from them. And, of course, we fought a civil war not so much to end the deplorable practice of human slavery, but to rein in the power and independence of the southern states.

As the country grew and with the industrial age upon us, the need to build infrastructure to transport people and goods, mine coal for power; and operate factories opened the doors to new immigrants from countries far afield. Chinese built railroads; Irish dug canals; Irish and Eastern and Central Europeans worked in the mines and they were joined in the mines and factories by Italians, Greeks and Arabs.

As needed as these new immigrants were for America to grow and prosper, their very presence, growing numbers, and unique cultures provoked a backlash among the earlier north-west European settlers who had come to see themselves as the original and “real Americans”. The “new immigrants” were demeaned, discriminated against, and subjected to state and vigilante violence.

Tragically, we see the same pattern of behaviours playing out today as Americans are confronting our newest immigrants. In a brilliant paper written a decade and a half ago for the Immigration Policy Centre, Jeffrey Kaye examines the immigration history of one town in Pennsylvania. He notes that when the Irish, Italian, and Eastern and Central Europeans were first moving into the community, newspaper articles and speeches by City Council members described the Irish as “drunkards”, the Slavs as “peculiar”, the Hungarians as “ignorant, immoral and filthy”, and the Italians as “the most disreputable”. All were subjected to derision for their “queer languages” and not fitting in. The tragic irony is that one century later, the descendants of these same groups are now saying the very same things about the newest immigrants who were mostly from Latin American countries.

Forgotten in this history of miserable repetition are the lessons we should have learned and the benefits we accrued along the way. We now know that the early English settlers in New York and the eastern colonies learned lessons in governance and agriculture from the Native Americans, and yet they referred to them as “savages”. And we know that it was the hard work, for no wages, that brought wealth to white southern landowners who nevertheless demeaned Blacks as lazy and shiftless. Much the same can be said about the immigrants of the industrial age. Despite the bigotry and violence they endured, we can ask, “Where would America be today if not for the hard work and inventiveness of these immigrant communities?” Further, what would be American food, fashion, music, art, humour, literature, diplomacy, and so much more be without the contributions of African Americans, the Chinese, Italian, Greek, Polish, Irish, Jewish, Latino and Arab immigrants (and so many more)?

The lesson here is a simple one: We should never forget that what makes America great is its diversity and its capacity to absorb so many peoples and cultures. What threatens our greatness is when we forget this and stupidly attempt to fabricate our history and “whitewash” our culture.

The writer is president of the Washington-based Arab American Institute

Jordan as an AI medical tourism hub

By Lubna Hanna Ammari

As humanity stands at the threshold of a profound transformation in healthcare where data, algorithms and human expertise converge to redefine the meaning of healing nations that can intelligently integrate technology with natural therapeutic assets are poised to lead the future of medical tourism. Jordan occupies a uniquely strategic position in this emerging landscape, combining a well-established healthcare system with globally recognised natural healing destinations. By embedding artificial intelligence into its medical and therapeutic tourism ecosystem, Jordan has the potential to evolve into the Middle East’s leading smart medical tourism hub.

Globally, artificial intelligence is reshaping healthcare delivery through early disease detection, predictive diagnostics, and highly personalised treatment pathways. Advanced machine learning systems are now capable of analysing medical imaging with remarkable precision, often matching or exceeding the diagnostic performance of human specialists in identifying conditions such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases and neurological disorders. Research published in journals such as *The Lancet Digital Health* indicates that AI-driven diagnostics can significantly reduce medical errors while improving patient outcomes. This transformation extends beyond clinical settings, encompassing the entire patient journey, from pre-travel consultation and treatment planning to post-treatment follow-up and long-term care management.

For Jordan, integrating AI into medical tourism is not simply a technological enhancement; it is a strategic national opportunity. The country has already built a strong regional reputation for high-quality healthcare services, particularly in specialties such as cardiology, orthopedics and cosmetic procedures. The next

step lies in orchestrating these capabilities through AI-powered platforms that can efficiently manage international patient flows, optimise hospital operations, and deliver seamless, patient-centered digital experiences.

Jordan can attract a new segment of international patients seeking advanced medical care combined with holistic and technology-enhanced healing experiences

Equally significant is Jordan’s rich portfolio of natural therapeutic destinations, which provide a powerful foundation for holistic healing. The Dead Sea, the lowest point on Earth, is internationally recognised for its mineral-rich waters and therapeutic mud, which have been scientifically shown to alleviate dermatological conditions such as psoriasis and eczema, as well as respiratory and rheumatic disorders. Clinical research has demonstrated that the region’s unique atmospheric conditions, including higher oxygen levels and increased

atmospheric pressure, contribute to enhanced therapeutic outcomes for patients undergoing climatotherapy.

In parallel, Ma’in Hot Springs offers a distinctive healing environment where naturally heated mineral waters cascade through a series of waterfalls, creating a therapeutic setting enriched with restorative properties. These thermal springs have long been utilised for treating musculoskeletal pain, circulatory issues, and skin conditions. When integrated with modern medical supervision and AI-assisted monitoring systems, such sites can be transformed into intelligent therapeutic destinations that merge nature with precision medicine.

The convergence of artificial intelligence with these therapeutic landscapes opens unprecedented opportunities for personalised healing experiences. A patient arriving in Jordan could benefit from an AI-generated medical profile that outlines optimal treatment protocols, recommended duration of stay and tailored therapeutic programmes at locations such as the Dead Sea or Ma’in. Wearable health technologies could continuously track the patient’s progress, transmitting real-time data to AI systems capable of dynamically adjusting treatment plans. This level of personalisation enhances both clinical effectiveness and patient satisfaction, positioning Jordan as a destination of choice for high-value medical tourism.

Moreover, AI has the potential to revolutionise the management of international patient journeys. Intelligent digital platforms can streamline processes such as visa facilitation, appointment scheduling, secure medical record exchange and multilingual communication. Virtual assistants powered by natural language processing can guide patients throughout their entire experience, ensuring continuity of care across geographical boundaries. Such innovations are already being implemented in leading global healthcare

systems and their adoption in Jordan would significantly strengthen its competitive advantage.

From an economic perspective, the integration of AI into medical tourism represents a high-impact growth avenue. Medical tourists typically generate higher spending levels than conventional tourists, contributing not only to the healthcare sector but also to hospitality, transportation, and local economies. By positioning itself as a smart medical tourism hub, Jordan can attract a new segment of international patients seeking advanced medical care combined with holistic and technology-enhanced healing experiences.

Realising this vision, however, requires coordinated national efforts. Strategic investment in digital infrastructure, robust data governance frameworks, and specialised AI training for healthcare professionals will be essential. Public-private partnerships can accelerate innovation, while regulatory systems must ensure data privacy, patient safety and ethical AI deployment. Equally critical is the development of a unified national strategy that aligns healthcare providers, tourism authorities, and technology stakeholders around a shared vision that places Jordan at the forefront of this transformation.

In conclusion, Jordan possesses all the essential pillars to lead the next generation of medical tourism: Clinical excellence, natural therapeutic wealth and a strategic geographic location. By embracing artificial intelligence as a transformative enabler rather than merely a technological tool, Jordan can redefine medical tourism in the region — not just as a destination for treatment, but as a comprehensive model for intelligent, personalised healing. The future of healthcare is data-driven, adaptive and patient-centered, and Jordan is uniquely positioned to shape this future.

Lubna Hanna Ammari is a specialist in educational technology

The illusions of Western virtue

By Ramzy Baroud

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has every right to condition European relations with any other country or bloc on respect for human rights. That, of course, would hold true if she genuinely cared about such values herself.

In response to the June 19 signing of the memorandum of understanding between the United States and Iran — intended to bring an end to a destructive war — von der Leyen declared that the European Union does not intend to lift its sanctions on Tehran.

Speaking on June 15, ahead of the G-7 summit, she firmly conditioned any diplomatic thawing on domestic changes within the Islamic Republic.

“The principle of sanctions is that we need real change on the ground before we can think about lifting them,” she stated, adding: “As long as there is no behavioural change, you cannot lift the sanctions because of human rights violations.”

Viewed in isolation, the European position might appear principled, even commendable. In its broader geopolitical context, however, it exposes a staggering level of hypocrisy.

On that very same day, the European Union’s duplicity was laid bare. During a Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Luxembourg, Europe effectively refused to take a unified stand on imposing trade sanctions on Israel, despite its ongoing genocide in the Gaza Strip and unchecked colonial violence and expansionist policies in the occupied West Bank.

The discussion itself would not have taken place had it not been for the persistent efforts of Spain and Ireland, which have repeatedly urged the bloc to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement over Israel’s flagrant violations of international law. The initiative failed because the EU remains deeply divided, constrained by the requirement of unanimity on foreign policy and repeatedly blocked by pro-Israel govern-

ments. While Europe continues to engage Israel, providing Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his extremist coalition with desperately needed political and economic lifelines, the European public has increasingly moved in the opposite direction.

Recent polling across numerous countries has revealed growing opposition to Israel’s war and genocide in Gaza and increasing support for Palestinian rights. Across Europe, mass demonstrations, consumer boycotts, campus mobilisations, and divestment campaigns have reflected a widening gap between public opinion and official policy.

This reality appears entirely irrelevant to von der Leyen, who remains preoccupied with the human rights records of states viewed as Western adversaries. Such concern is not motivated by solidarity with victims, but by the desire to maintain political leverage that can be invoked when convenient and ignored when necessary.

Lest we forget, von der Leyen was among the first Western leaders to visit Israel following the events of October 7, arriving in Tel Aviv on October 13, 2023. Standing alongside Israeli leaders, she offered unconditional backing, declaring that “Europe stands with Israel”. She did so as Palestinians in Gaza were already being subjected to a devastating military assault that would soon claim tens of thousands of lives.

Although her rhetoric became somewhat more cautious as international legal institutions began investigating Israel for genocide and pursuing war crimes cases against its leaders, her fundamental political alignment never truly changed.

For anyone to believe that von der Leyen has suddenly discovered that human rights should occupy centre stage in any responsible foreign policy is simply delusional. This is especially true given how re-

strained she remained, both in language and action, as the US-Israeli war on Iran expanded into a regional catastrophe that should never have been allowed to unfold.

None of that matters to von der Leyen, of course, since such immense human suffering does not neatly fit within her geopolitical priorities.

The instrumentalisation of human rights has long been a staple of Western foreign policy, despite mounting evidence that such commitments are rarely applied consistently

It is tempting to conclude that, for von der Leyen and many Western leaders, some human rights matter more than others. Yet, even that assessment grants too much credibility to their position, because it assumes that human rights are the actual basis of policy. More often than not, they are merely invoked when politically convenient.

Even the Catholic Church appears to be moving away from this selective moral framework. Since his election in May 2025, Pope Leo XIV has repeatedly emphasised a vision of “just peace” over the traditional doctrine of “just war”, warning against the use of moral and religious language to le-

gitimise military aggression. During his Palm Sunday homily earlier this 2026, he stressed that “God rejects the prayers of those who wage war”, a direct challenge to the normalisation of violence by political leaders.

But von der Leyen cannot help herself. The instrumentalisation of human rights has long been a staple of Western foreign policy, despite mounting evidence that such commitments are rarely applied consistently. In that sense, Europe appears increasingly bankrupt — not only morally, but politically as well.

The war involving Iran, the subsequent US-Iran agreement, and the major geopolitical shifts surrounding both unfolded largely without meaningful European involvement. Reduced to the role of spectator — or occasional cheerleader — the EU exerted little influence over events, underscoring its diminishing relevance in Middle Eastern and global affairs.

This helps explain why von der Leyen resorted to familiar rhetoric about human rights in Iran while remaining largely silent on Israel’s devastating actions in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere in the region. With Europe’s influence steadily shrinking, moral posturing has become a substitute for meaningful diplomacy.

Will the EU continue along this path of growing irrelevance, or will it finally heed the views of its own citizens, challenge Israel’s impunity, and pursue a foreign policy genuinely independent of Washington? The answer may determine whether Europe can reclaim political relevance—or continue its slide into long-term decline.

Ramzy Baroud is a journalist, author and the editor of *The Palestine Chronicle*. He is the author of eight books. His latest book, “Before the Flood”, was published by Seven Stories Press. His other books include “Our Vision for Liberation”, “My Father was a Freedom Fighter” and “The Last Earth”. Baroud is a non-resident senior research fellow at the Centre for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA)

BUSINESS

Wednesday, June 24, 2026



Photo courtesy of Airport International Group

AIQ welcomes 600,000 passengers at Queen Alia Int'l Airport in May 2026

AMMAN (JT) — Airport International Group (AIG), the Jordanian company operating Queen Alia International Airport (QAIA), has announced the airport's traffic statistics for May 2026, reflecting a gradual recovery in traffic activity at Jordan's prime gateway to the world.

Despite this positive momentum, passenger traffic remained substantially lower than the levels recorded during the corresponding period in 2025.

During May 2026, QAIA welcomed 605,181 passengers, marking a 46.9 per cent increase compared with April 2026 and a 17.9 per cent decrease compared with May

2025, according to an AIG statement.

The airport also recorded 5,348 aircraft movements, reflecting a 35.3 per cent increase month-on-month and an 18.1 per cent decrease year-on-year.

Meanwhile, QAIA handled 5,841 tonnes of cargo during the month, representing a 32.6 per cent increase compared with April 2026 and a 25.3 per cent decrease compared to the same month last year.

The month-on-month growth recorded in May signals a continued recovery in passenger traffic and aircraft activity following the fluctuations experienced earlier in the year resulting from regional instability.

Chief executive officer of AIG, Nicolas Deviller said "The recovery in passenger traffic and aircraft movements recorded in May is an encouraging indicator of the resilience of Jordan's aviation sector and the continued confidence of travellers in Queen Alia International Airport."

He added "As we navigate a dynamic operating environment, our focus remains on delivering an efficient airport experience. We remain committed to maintaining QAIA's position as Jordan's main gateway to the world and contributing to the Kingdom's economic growth and development," according to the AIG statement.

Investment opportunities in Jordan presented at China exhibition

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh participated on Tuesday in the opening of the China International Supply Chain Exhibition in Beijing, China, organised by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade with the wide participation of senior officials, business leaders and global economic institutions.

As a guest of honor, Abu Ghazaleh attended the exhibition as one of the most prominent global economic platforms specialised in supply chains, trade and investment, as part of the government's efforts to enhance Jordan's presence on the global investment map and expand its international economic partnerships.

The Minister held an "extensive" meeting with representatives of Chinese companies and economic institutions during the roundtable organised by the China Overseas Development Association in cooperation with the Jordanian Embassy in Beijing, in the presence of Jordan's Ambassador to China Hussam Hussein, investors and representatives of Chinese

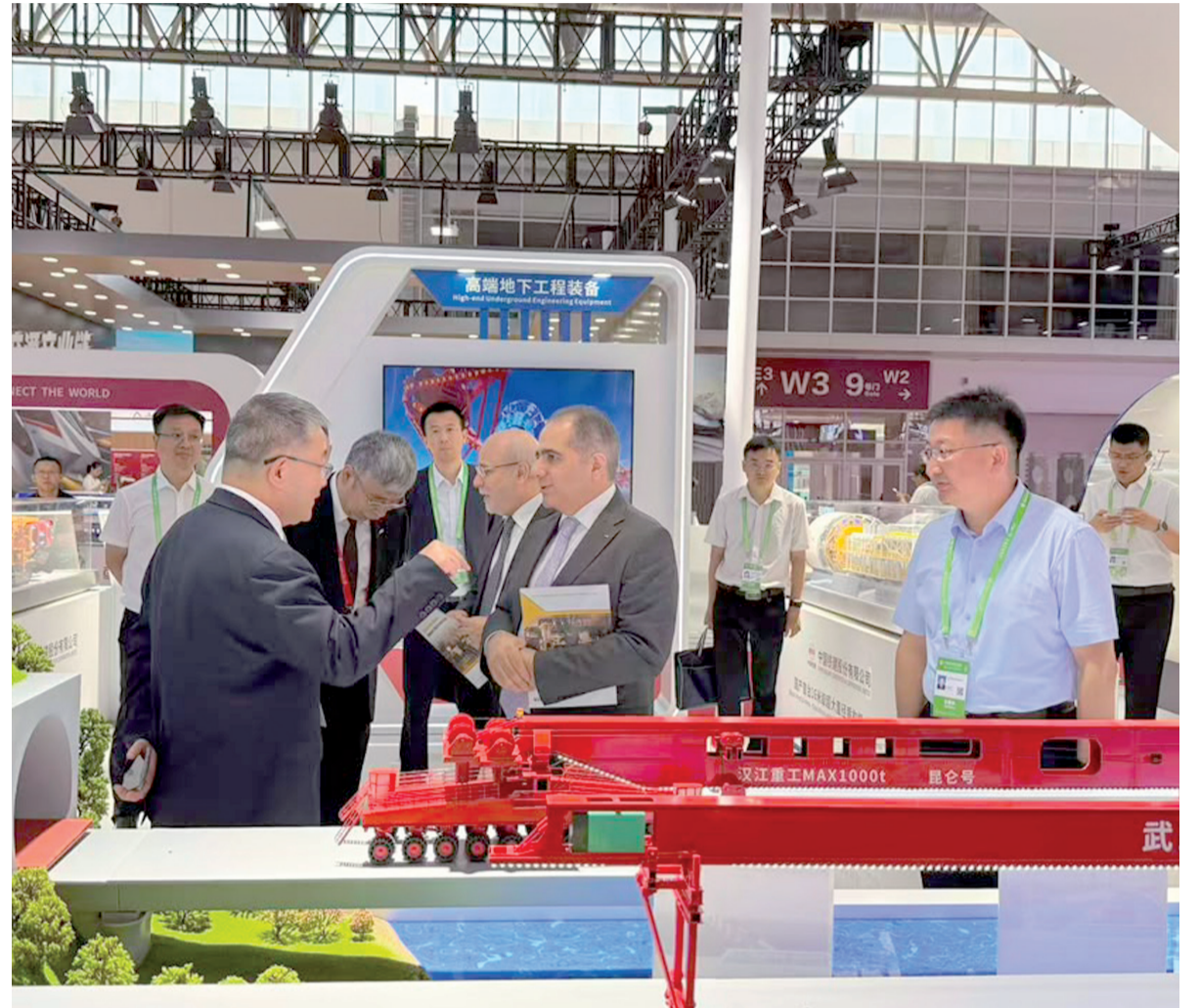


Photo courtesy of Ministry of Investment

Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh participates on Tuesday in the opening of the China International Supply Chain Exhibition in Beijing, China

companies interested in expansion and foreign investment.

During the meetings, Abu Ghazaleh reviewed the strategic

projects offered in the sectors of transport, logistics, energy, water, industry, agriculture and technology, including land and air

transport and railway projects.

The meetings included discussions on opportunities for co-operation in the fields

of renewable energy, supply chains, smart logistics and advanced industries, according to the ministry statement.

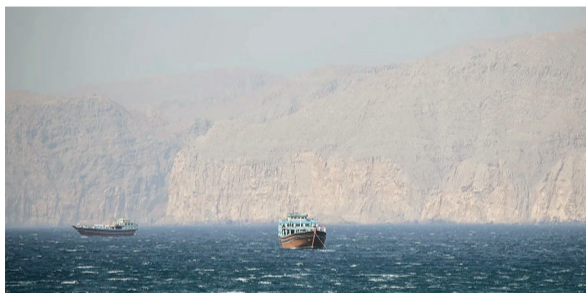
Iran, Oman to study charging service costs for Hormuz — joint statement

MUSCAT, Oman (AFP) — Iran and Oman will study the costs to be charged for services provided in administering the Strait of Hormuz, the two countries said on Tuesday, insisting they held sovereignty over the waterway.

Tehran has repeatedly said it plans to charge what it calls maritime service fees for crossing the strait, as opposed to tolls, a plan fiercely opposed by the United States.

In a joint statement on Tuesday, Iran and Oman emphasised their "sovereign rights over their territorial waters", but Muscat's foreign minister said on X that both sides were committed to "toll-free safe passage".

They "agreed to maintain their dialogue on this issue through a joint working group between the two foreign ministries", the statement said.



AFP photo

Boats anchored off Oman's Musandam Peninsula by the Strait of Hormuz

The working group was aimed at reaching "agreement on the future administration of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and the services that will be provided in this regard and the costs associated with them in accordance with international standards", they said.

The statement followed meetings in Muscat between top officials from the two nations. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and

chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf met Oman's Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq and Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi.

Last week, Iran's foreign ministry said the country would impose what it called maritime service fees for crossing the strait.

Ghalibaf has said the fees will come into effect after a 60-day period without charges that is stipulated in a Memorandum of Understand-

ing (MoU) signed with the United States.

The MoU states that Iran and Oman, which border the strait, will discuss its "future administration and maritime services" alongside other Gulf countries.

The strait, through which roughly 20 per cent of the world's crude oil and liquefied natural gas normally transits, was closed by Iran after it came under fire from the United States and Israel.

But Iran has since lifted its blockade as part of the deal signed with the US last week.

Prior to the MoU, Oman had come under fire from US officials over reports it planned to charge joint tolls with Iran.

US President Donald Trump has threatened that if Oman tries to control the waterway alongside Iran he will "blow them up".

EAIIA, Energy Fund explore ways to enhance industrial sector's competitiveness

AMMAN (JT) — Eastern Amman Investors Industrial Association (EAIIA), in cooperation with the Jordan Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund (JREEEF), held a dialogue session under theme "Increasing Competitiveness of Jordanian Industry by Enhancing Energy Efficiency Programmes in the Industrial Sector".

The event addressed the current situation and opportunities for reducing energy costs in industrial facilities across the Kingdom, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

During the session, Chairman of EAIIA Iyad Abu Haltam, said energy efficiency is a "key" pillar that precedes renewable energy systems in achieving optimal operational efficiency and significantly reducing capital investment costs by addressing waste first.

JREEEF Executive Director Rasmi Hamzeh, said the Fund has provided grants exceeding JD1.3 million to cover the costs of audit



JT file

Eastern Amman Investors Industrial Association in cooperation with the Jordan Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund hold a dialogue session

According to an EAIIA statement issued on Tuesday, Abu Haltam called for a roundtable dialogue to bring together representatives of the industrial sector and relevant stakeholders to discuss procedural challenges and find joint solutions that benefit both parties.

JREEEF Executive Director Rasmi Hamzeh, said the Fund has provided grants exceeding JD1.3 million to cover the costs of audit

studies for 187 factories, achieving savings in their annual energy bills ranging between 40-60 per cent.

Hamzeh added that limits on electrical capacity undergo strict technical and engineering guidelines governed by the instructions of the Energy and Minerals Regulatory Commission to maintain the stability of the national grid.

He noted the government's crucial al-

ternatives, mainly the "time-based tariff" and the special tariff for the industrial sector, which have contributed to cutting energy costs by 20 per cent for several factories that have "successfully" managed their consumption outside of peak hours.

Hamzeh announced the JREEEF Steering Committee will discuss possibility of creating flexible exceptions to the grant conditions based on production volume to cover a wider range of facilities, particularly in the stone and marble sector and automated factories.

Additionally, the Fund presented a package of available financing solutions to the Kingdom's industrial sector, which cover interest and profits on bank loans for projects up to a ceiling of JD350,000, with the provision of full grants for energy audit studies, Petra reported.

Tech names drag down world stocks, oil dips on supply hopes

LONDON (AFP) — A slump in high-flying technology stocks dragged down global markets on Tuesday, with Wall Street tumbling again on valuation concerns and persistent worries over huge AI outlays.

The rout that began on US markets Monday took a heavy toll in Asia, with South Korea's Kospi slumping 10 per cent on heavy selling of SK hynix and Samsung.

A plunge in Elon Musk's rocket and AI group SpaceX rattled investor confidence in the lofty tech valuations, wiping billions of dollars off its market value since its record-busting IPO earlier this month.

The stock pulled back into positive territory on Tuesday, but US chip companies such as AMD, Nvidia and Broadcom

again lost ground.

SpaceX "jumping on the bond train to fund excessive AI and infrastructure spending revives earlier concerns that Big Tech may be spending too much on AI infrastructure and increasingly financing that spending through debt", said Ipek Ozkardeska, senior analyst at Swissquote bank.

About 10 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.7 per cent at 51,356.35 but within half an hour had largely pulled back the session deficit.

The broad-based S&P 500 and the tech-rich Nasdaq were down more than 1 per cent, while major European indices were also in the red two hours out from the close.

Share prices of South Korean chip giants SK

hynix and Samsung tumbled more than 12 per cent to drag the Kospi index down 10 per cent, having finished on Monday at a record high.

"When you have markets that go up in a straight line... they tend to experience sharp moves in the opposite direction at unpredictable times," said Steve Sosnick of Interactive Brokers.

"This is what happens when markets get stretched."

Tokyo also took a beating, shedding 3.6 per cent, with tech investment titan SoftBank down more than 10 per cent, Tokyo Electron 6.2 per cent lower and Advantest off more than 2 per cent.

Investors were also keeping an eye on the yen as it came close to a 40-year low against the dollar, making exports

including oil more expensive for Japan.

Oil prices slipped, adding to recent falls as more tankers return to the Strait of Hormuz following a US-Iran deal aimed at ending the Middle East war.

A temporary suspension of US sanctions against Iran during their negotiations also raised hopes that more oil would be hitting the market soon.

Brent North Sea Crude was down another 1.2 per cent at \$76.97 a barrel around 14:00 GMT and West Texas Intermediate dropped similarly to \$73.00, those figures barely ten per cent above what they had been before the US-Israeli war on Iran.

Earlier in the conflict they had soared past the \$110 mark.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

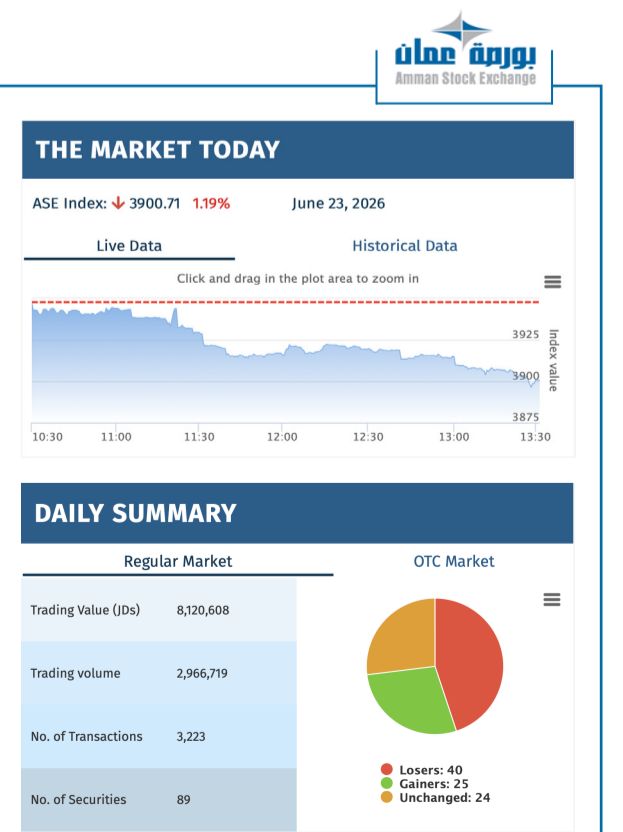
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Tuesday amounted to JD8.1 million spread over 3 million shares that traded through 3,222 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 1.19 per cent, closing at 3900.71 points.

Out of 88 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 24 companies rose while the share price of another 40 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Amwaj Properties by 4.76 per cent, Real Estate and Investment Portfolio Company by 4.72 per cent, Middle East Insurance by 4.27 per cent, National Portfolio Securities by 3.70 per cent, and Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 3.57 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were United Insurance by 6.30 per cent, Arab International for Education and Investment, by 6.08 per cent, International Arabian Development and Investment Trading Company by 5 per cent, Future Arab Investment Company by 4.55 per cent and Al Tas-heelat Jordan Specialised Financing by 4.47 per cent.



THE JORDAN TIMES
SPORTS
AT A GLANCE

England, Ghana eye last 32 as Portugal look for lift-off

TENNIS

Williams loses in Germany, Osaka eases through

BAD HOMBURG, Germany (AFP) — Five-time Wimbledon champion Venus Williams was knocked out in the first round of the Bad Homburg WTA grass court event on Monday but Japan's Naomi Osaka breezed through. Williams, 46, is due to play doubles with her sister Serena at Wimbledon, which starts in a week's time, and was also given a wildcard to enter the Bad Homburg singles. She took her time to get going against qualifier Irina-Camelia Begu of Romania, losing the opening set 6-2 before battling back to take the second 6-4. Williams led 5-3 in the decider and was two points from victory at one point but Begu dug in to force a tie-break, which she won 8-6. Sixth seed Osaka, 28, had little trouble seeing off Pole Magdalena Frech 6-4, 6-1. The first set was close until a rain-enforced break at 5-4, after which, the four-time Grand Slam champion lost only one more game. Osaka has never won a grass court tournament, with her best result a semifinal at Nottingham in 2018.

CRICKET

England coach McCullum denies rift with 'good friend' Stokes

LONDON (AFP) — England coach Brendon McCullum has denied his relationship with Ben Stokes was damaged by the nightclub controversy that forced the captain into exile for the second Test defeat against New Zealand. Stokes and fast bowler Gus Atkinson were dropped after breaking a midnight curfew in an incident at a London nightclub following England's first Test win at Lord's. McCullum said he was concerned and worried about Stokes in the aftermath of the all-rounder's late-night antics, which sparked suggestions he might be stripped of the captaincy or retire from international duty. The pair were largely cleared in two subsequent investigations, receiving only a written warning from the England and Wales Cricket Board for breaking "specific contractual obligations". Two unprovoked attacks on Atkinson in the nightclub occurred when Stokes was elsewhere, while the Cricket Regulator ruled there was insufficient evidence against them to justify further punishment.

LOS ANGELES, United States (AFP) — England will aim to become the latest of the World Cup big guns to book their place in the knockout rounds on Tuesday as Portugal attempt to kickstart its campaign after a lacklustre opening draw.

A day after Argentina and France sailed into the last 32, England faces Ghana in Group L, knowing that victory will see them safely into the next phase of the tournament.

England launched its campaign last week with a stylish 4-2 win over Croatia, a result that has given the Three Lions camp fresh belief as they chase a first major championship win in 60 years.

With captain Harry Kane scoring twice and Real Madrid star Jude Bellingham netting, England midfielder Declan Rice believes Thomas Tuchel's squad should be a match for any team in the tournament.

Rice said on Monday the challenge for England will be reproducing the swashbuckling attacking display that marked their second-half performance against Croatia.

"We know as players the level, we know what's required, and that second-half performance was probably the benchmark for us in terms of having to start the game at that level," Rice said.

"We believe that if we can do that from the



Portugal's forward #07 Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring the opening goal during the 2026 World Cup Group K football match between Portugal and Uzbekistan at the Houston Stadium in Houston on Tuesday

opening minute, with the players that we also have to come on and finish the game, we can beat any opponent in the world.

"We want to be confident in our abilities and what we can do on the pitch."

England's German manager Tuchel meanwhile says his team are already embracing the pressure that comes with a World Cup campaign.

"There are emotions involved and you can at some point feel the ten-

sion and feel the pressure. I hope we can cope with it, accept it and turn it around," Tuchel said.

"I heard also a lot about it and I feel of course the excitement and the pressure, but I feel that we have so many winners and so many players who are experienced to cope with the pressure."

England though will be wary of the threat posed by Ghana's Antonio Semenyo, the London-born Manchester City winger who is the focal point of the Black

Stars attack.

Ghana, 1-0 winners over Panama in their opener last week, can also qualify for the knockout rounds on Tuesday with a victory at Foxborough, just outside Boston.

In the other game of the group, 2018 runners up Croatia could be knocked out if they lose to Panama and Ghana avoid defeat to England.

Captain Luka Modric is set to play his 200th Croatia game, with only three men's players having featured more times

on the international stage.

Leading the way is Cristiano Ronaldo (229), well ahead of Lionel Messi (201), both present at this World Cup with Portugal and Argentina respectively. Bader Al Mutawa has also won 202 caps for Kuwait.

Portugal chase response

Elsewhere, Portugal will attempt to draw a line under a turbulent first week of the tournament when they take on Uzbekistan in Houston.

Portugal arrived at the World Cup as one of the tournament favourites, boasting a team studded with flair players and spearheaded by veteran Ronaldo in attack.

But Ronaldo's leaden performance in a faltering 1-1 draw with the Democratic Republic of Congo renewed debate about the captain's place in the starting line-up.

Portugal coach Roberto Martinez has continued to offer staunch support of his 41-year-old captain, despite his failure to score in his last 10 matches at major tournaments.

"He's a good example for us, for all of us," Martinez said of Ronaldo.

"So he really wants to keep on improving, to contribute to the team, and he's really a role model for our team."

Martinez though stopped short of confirming Ronaldo will start against Uzbekistan when asked by reporters on Monday, saying he had not informed his players of the lineup.

Martinez said the disappointment Portugal felt after drawing with the DRC will be motivation against Uzbekistan, who are playing at a World Cup for the first time and will be heavy underdogs.

"The feeling of frustration that we all had as a team, the feeling of disappointment after the game, probably that's the best starting point to prepare for the next game," said the Spaniard.

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

Marc Bloch, historian and Resistance hero, joins France's Pantheon greats

PARIS, France (AFP) — Leading historian and Resistance fighter Marc Bloch, who was tortured and executed by the Gestapo in 1944, was to enter the Pantheon on Tuesday in a rare tribute reserved for France's most revered historical figures.

The ceremony at France's secular temple of national memory will celebrate his intellectual legacy, as well as his role in the fight against the Nazis.

He will become the first historian to enter the Pantheon, an honour reserved for the most exceptional figures from the worlds of politics, culture and science.

"It's a tremendous recognition," said Suzette Bloch, the historian's granddaughter, a former AFP journalist, ahead of the ceremony on Tuesday evening.

President Emmanuel Macron has described the historian as a "man of the Enlightenment in the army of the shadows" — a reference to the French Resistance.

He is to be honoured for his "for his work, his teaching and his courage".

Bloch's induction carries political significance less than a year



Historian Marc Bloch fought for France in World War I and in the Resistance during World War II

before France heads to the polls to elect a successor to Macron, with Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN) party eyeing its best chance at seizing power.

Bloch was a renowned specialist of the Middle Ages. He revolutionised the study of history by incorporating anthropology, economics and sociology.

He fought in World War I and was decorated for bravery, receiving the Legion of Honour among other awards.

The 53-year-old father

of six was mobilised again as World War II began in 1939.

Tortured under 'Butcher of Lyon'

After the Nazis occupied all of France, Bloch joined the French Resistance in 1943.

Captured by the Vichy police in 1944, he was tortured under the authority of Gestapo chief Klaus Barbie, who was nicknamed the "Butcher of Lyon" for his cruelty and sadism.

On June 16, 1944, 10 days after Allied forces

landed in Normandy, Bloch was executed by the Nazis alongside other Resistance fighters.

He cried "Vive la France!" ("Long live France!") as he was shot.

One of Bloch's most widely cited works is "L'Étrange Défaite" ("Strange Defeat"), published posthumously, in which he analyses France's collapse to Nazi Germany and highlights the failures of its military leadership.

Bloch is buried in a village cemetery in central France, and, in accordance with his family's

wishes, his remains will not be moved.

During the ceremony in Paris, scheduled to begin at 9:00 pm (19:00 GMT), a symbolic casket will be carried into the former church in the French capital's Latin Quarter.

It will be accompanied by a casket of his wife, Simone Vidal, who died in Lyon in 1944 and whose body was never found.

The coffins will contain Bloch's medals and photographs, as well as letters from his wife to their children, said Suzette Bloch.

'Forever relevant'

The Pantheon houses more than 80 national heroes, including writer Victor Hugo and French-American Resistance member Josephine Baker.

Bloch's family requested that far-right politicians be excluded from the ceremony, citing the historian's "deeply anti-nationalist" views.

While protocol requires parliamentary leaders to be invited, Le Pen — who leads the RN in the lower house — will not attend, a member of her team said.

The far-right nevertheless paid tribute to the historian.

"Marc Bloch will remain forever relevant, and the nation is grateful to him," RN leader Jordan Bardella said on X.

Matis Bloch, the Resistance fighter's great-grandson and himself a historian, said the far right had been "constantly invoking" the scholar for the past two decades.

"There's something that seems entirely contradictory to us, and it deeply irritates us," he told the francinfo broadcaster.

Steam launches video game console amid high component prices

NEW YORK (AFP) — Video game heavyweight Valve on Monday launched a new console, dubbed the Steam Machine, that will set gamers back more than one thousand dollars due to chip prices inflated by the global AI race.

The US company behind the popular Steam game marketplace and subscription platform, the namesake of the new console, attempted a similar launch in 2015, but abandoned the project in 2018 after it had tepid sales.

But the successful launch of the handheld Steam Deck console in 2022, which the company says sold millions of units, gave new impetus to a Steam Machine stand-alone device.

The Steam Machine is not quite a traditional console in the vein of an Xbox or a PlayStation, but rather a PC tailor-made for high-end gaming, and can function as a traditional computer when not used for gaming.

Valve, the company behind famous video game titles like Counter-Strike, Half-Life, and Left 4 Dead, says Steam Machine units will start shipping on June 29.

But the exploding cost

of memory chips, also used in the massive, global AI data centre boom, will see the entry-level version of the console priced at \$1,049.

'The prices we're sharing today reflect the state of the world for manufacturing...'

Prices for memory chips have more than tripled over the last year or so.

The current iterations of Sony's PlayStation and Microsoft's Xbox are priced at \$599, though they were released more than five years ago.

"The prices we're sharing today reflect the state of the world for manufacturing; or, more accurately, it reflects the price of the components as we've secured them over the past 6 months," the company said in a statement.

It added that high demand for the chips has created a shortage, which "has impacted the number of units we've been able to produce for launch."

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