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Friday-Saturday, June 26-27, 2026 | Muharram 11-12, 1448 Hijri



The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation on Thursday dispatches the ninth humanitarian aid convoy to Lebanon

Jordan sends 20-truck aid convoy to Lebanon

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO) on Thursday dispatched the ninth humanitarian aid convoy to Lebanon. The convoy was organised in cooperation with Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army, the Foreign Ministry, the World Food Programme, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. The convoy consists of 20 trucks loaded with essential aid, as part of Jordan's continuous efforts to support the Lebanese people and respond to the urgent humanitarian needs of affected and vulnerable groups, according to a JHCO statement.

The aid aims to ease difficult living conditions and improve public health and safety standards on the ground. JHCO Secretary-General Hussein Shibli said that this ninth convoy reflects Jordan's ongoing humanitarian role in standing by neighbouring nations during

challenging times. He added that the organisation coordinates continuously with the military, the foreign ministry and international partners to ensure aid reaches those who need it most based on actual assessments. The JHCO also expressed its appreciation and gratitude to the Syrian authorities for their significant efforts in facilitating the smooth transit of this convoy and previous humanitarian fleets sent to Lebanon over the past weeks.

Foreign minister offers King's condolences, support to Venezuela after deadly earthquakes

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi on Thursday held a phone call with Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yván Gil, during which he conveyed the condolences of His Majesty King Abdullah to Acting Venezuelan President Delcy Rodríguez over the victims of the devastating earthquakes that struck Venezuela. Safadi expressed Jordan's solidarity with the Venezuelan government and people in the face of the disaster and wished a speedy recovery to those injured. He also reiterated Jordan's readiness, under Royal directives, to provide any assistance possible to support Venezuela's relief and recovery efforts. Offers of rescue support, aid and condolences poured into Venezuela on Thursday after two powerful earthquakes left at least 164 dead and hundreds injured. Rescuers certified by the United Nations are travelling to Venezuela to help search for survivors, interim President Delcy Rodríguez



Rescue workers search through the rubble of a collapsed building in the Altamira neighbourhood following an earthquake in Caracas on Wednesday

Switzerland mobilised 80 personnel, eight rescue dogs and 18 tonnes of equipment to be sent to Venezuela "as soon as possible". Dutch Foreign Trade Minister Sjoerd

Sjoerdsma announced a 2 million-euro aid package to deploy a search-and-rescue team, while the Czech Republic said its team was preparing to fly in. The International

Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said it had released \$2.5 million to support recovery efforts.

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JAF sends medical, logistical supplies to surgical stations in Ramallah, Jenin

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) on Wednesday dispatched medical and logistical supplies to its surgical stations in the West Bank cities of Ramallah and Jenin to ensure their continuous operation and enhance their capacity to provide medical care to Palestinians. The supplies included specialised medicines, medical equipment, and logistical supplies aimed at bolstering the operational readiness of both stations and enabling medical personnel to efficiently handle various medical cases and provide treatment to patients, according to a JAF statement. The initiative is part of JAF's ongoing humanitarian and medical efforts to support the Palestinian people, in line with Royal di-



The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army on Wednesday dispatches medical and logistical supplies to its surgical stations in the West Bank

rectives aimed at easing their suffering and supporting them under various circumstances. The JAF continues

to carry out its humanitarian and medical mission through its field hospitals and surgical stations in

the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, reflecting Jordan's firm commitment to standing alongside the Palestin-

ians and meeting their healthcare needs. Jordan runs two military field hospitals in Gaza, one in the Strip's north and was established in 2009 following the war in 2008, and the second is in Khan Younis in the south, which was established in November 2023 at the peak of the Israeli war of aggression on the coastal enclave that erupted on October 7, 2023. Besides the field hospitals in Gaza, the JAF established the Jordanian field hospital in Nablus in late November 2023. Other humanitarian programmes include the land bridge for aid delivery, the mobile bakery, the Restoring Hope Initiative, which provides prosthetics for amputees and the evacuation of critical cases to Jordanian hospitals.

US says wants deal with Iran, but not 'at any price'

MANAMA (AFP) — Top US diplomat Marco Rubio warned on Thursday that a deal with Iran would not come at any price, as he sought to reassure Gulf allies that any eventual accord would not undermine their security. Rubio was in Bahrain as part of a regional tour of Gulf partners hit hard by Iran during the Middle East war, which began on February 28 with a massive US-Israeli campaign of strikes against the Islamic republic. The United States and Iran have signed a preliminary deal to end the conflict, embarking on negotiations expected to touch on thorny issues including Tehran's nuclear programme, sanctions relief and global energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz. "While we want a deal, we don't want a deal at any price," Rubio told a Gulf Cooperation Coun-



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio waves as he boards a US Air Force C-17 Globemaster III transport aircraft after his visit to the Middle East

cil meeting in Bahrain. "We want to ensure... that there is no part of this deal that's undertaken that in any way undermines the security, the stability, or the prosperity of any of our partners in the Gulf region." Rubio also sought to reassure the energy-rich Gulf that the Hormuz Strait, which they have

relied on for decades to export oil and liquefied natural gas, would remain toll-free. Iran imposed a blockade of Hormuz during the war as part of its retaliation against the US-Israeli campaign, sparking a global economic shock. Continued on page 5

Baking heatwave gives Europe no respite

PARIS, France (AFP) — At least 101 million Europeans were expected to experience temperatures of over 35°C on Thursday, in a punishing and increasingly deadly heatwave hotter than weather in parts of Africa. France and Spain, among the countries worst hit, began counting the toll from the extreme temperatures, including a three-year-old boy who was trapped in his family's car. AFP calculations based on forecasts from the German weather service and 2025 population projections from the European Joint Research Centre indicated that more than 380 mil-

lion people would face temperatures of over 30°C. The UN's climate chief Simon Stiell said the heatwave — made worse by buildings and infrastructure unsuited to such temperatures — "has the fingerprints of the climate crisis all over it." "It's the latest price to pay for fossil fuel pollution baking our planet. Until humanity stops burning colossal amounts of coal, oil and gas, extreme heat will keep getting worse," he added. The deputy director of the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service, Samantha Burgess,

said the hot weather was due to a "heat dome" of trapped air from north Africa in a low-lying high-pressure system, preventing cooler air from moving in. "While heat domes are a natural weather phenomenon, anthropogenic climate change is making heatwaves more severe and more likely to reach record-breaking temperatures," she added. Most of mainland France was under extreme heat alerts on Thursday, with some 63 million people out of a total population of 67 million facing temperatures of over 30°C. The heat will also sur-

pass 30°C for 70 million people in Germany, 48 million in Italy and 38 million in the UK, with high temperatures also in Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands. Temperatures are expected to fall in western Europe from Friday but eastern Europe was on red alert as temperatures climbed into the weekend. **Cooling off** In Spain, where new temperature records have been set for June, the MoMo monitoring system of mortality rates said 212 deaths between Sunday and Wednesday could be linked to the



A young boy stands next to water hoses spilling water to provide relief from the summer heat as part of Cologne's climate adaptation measures in Cologne, western Germany, on Thursday during a heatwave in Europe

heat. Three deaths in northern France's Pas-de-Cal-

ais region were "likely" caused by the heat while a three-year-old boy was

found dead in a car in the suburbs of Paris, where temperatures topped

40°C on Wednesday. The boy climbed into his family's unlocked car while he was supposed to be napping, and was found unconscious, a public prosecutor said. Two other children have died in similar circumstances this week. Dozens of people, from couples to families with babies, decided to sleep in hammocks and on camping mats at the Buttes-Chaumont park in Paris to try to beat the heat. "We've got everything we need, really. And quite a few people hang out here, so there's a good atmosphere," Maïssame Decosse, 26, told AFP. Continued on page 5



Petra photo

During an event held as part of the national dialogue programme, Minister of Culture Mustafa Rawashdeh on Thursday praises the contribution of Jordanian Circassians to the building of the Jordanian state

Culture minister highlights Circassian role in Jordan's national narrative

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Culture Mustafa Rawashdeh on Thursday highlighted the "distinctiveness" of the Jordanian Circassian narrative as an "integral part" of the broader Jordanian national narrative.

Rawashdeh said that it "complements the country's collective narrative in preserving identity and cultural heritage while linking the past, present and future," the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Speaking during an event held as part of the national dialogue programme at the Circassian Charity Association in Amman and organised by the Jordanian Circassian Tribal Council, Rawashdeh said that the gathering reflected efforts to document Jordan's shared memory and national narrative, enriched by cultural diversity, integration, faith and belonging.

He praised the contribution of Jordanian Circassians to the building of the Jordanian state since its establishment, describing Jordanian Circassians as "guardians of the young state's achievements and defenders of the homeland, who fought in battles on the walls of Jerusalem and the land of Karameh".

Rawashdeh also noted that Circassians in Jordan have preserved their customs and traditions while passing down their arts and folklore through generations, commending their values and cultural traditions that combine "strength and flexibility" as well as "horsemanship and mutual respect".

'Guardians of the young state's achievements and defenders of the homeland who fought in battles on the walls of Jerusalem and the land of Karameh'

He further highlighted the role of hundreds of Jordanian Circassian writers, artists and researchers who have "enriched" Jordan's cultural scene through literature, humanities, visual arts,

drama and music, in addition to contributions in sports, politics and industry.

Referring to the Jordanian narrative initiative launched by HRH Crown Prince Hussein in Tafleeh, Rawashdeh said that the project came in response to the need to document Jordan's rich civilisation-heritage throughout history.

He said that the initiative seeks not only to connect historical events with geography and history, but also to examine the human experiences and transformations that shaped Jordanian identity and contributed to the country's present and future.

Rawashdeh added that the Ministry of Culture had launched the participatory national cultural programme "Hiwarat", which tours governorates across the Kingdom to "enrich" the cultural content of the Jordanian national narrative, focusing on the story of both the land and its people.

He stressed that Jordan's history represents a "model of cultural diversity rooted in the succession of civilisations that inhabited the land since ancient times", adding that Jordanians have the right to take pride in and document their authentic heritage.

New medical personnel at Jordanian field hospital arrive in Nablus

AMMAN (JT) — New personnel of the Jordanian field hospital in Nablus on Wednesday evening arrived in the West Bank city to provide medical and humanitarian care to Palestinians.

Dispatched under Royal directives, the hospital includes medical cadres specialised in various fields, including general surgery, internal medicine, paediatrics, ophthalmology, dentistry, and emergency medicine, alongside nursing and technical staff, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) statement.

The deployment of these teams is a continuation of the humanitarian and medical role undertaken by JAF to support the Palestinian people.

Meanwhile, the former personnel of the field hospital arrived in the Kingdom on Thursday after completing their mission.

The outgoing team provided medical services to 29,631 patients and



JAF photo

New personnel of the Jordanian field hospital in Nablus on Wednesday evening arrive in the West Bank city to provide medical and humanitarian care to Palestinians

performed more than 280 major and minor surgeries for residents of Nablus and neighbouring areas.

The Jordanian field hospital in Nablus was established in late No-

ember 2023.

Jordan also runs two military field hospitals in Gaza, one in the Strip's north and was established in 2009 following the war in 2008, and the second is in Khan Younis

in the south, which was established in November 2023 at the peak of the Israeli war of aggression on the coastal enclave that erupted on October 7, 2023.

Other humanitarian

programmes include the land bridge for aid delivery, the Restoring Hope Initiative, which provides prosthetics for amputees and the evacuation of critical cases to Jordanian hospitals.

JNC launches 5th cohort for UNRWA nurse, midwife training diploma

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordanian Nursing Council (JNC) and UNRWA on Thursday launched the fifth cohort of the Primary and Reproductive Healthcare Diploma for registered nurses and midwives.

The programme builds on ongoing cooperation to boost healthcare workforce capacity and improve service quality in line with the global advances in health education and continuous professional development, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

During the launching ceremony, JNC Secretary-General Hani Nawafleh said that the partnership reflects a "successful model", based on investing in human capital as a driver of health system development, aligning with JNC President HRH



Petra photo

The one-year programme is designed to enhance the clinical and scientific skills of nurses and midwives working in UNRWA health facilities across Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine

Princess Muna's vision for advancing nursing education, professional development, and international collaboration.

He said that the council continues to play a national and regional role as a reference institution in regulating and developing the nursing profession, stressing that sustainable capacity-building for

nurses and midwives is essential to quality care and patient safety.

Nawafleh added that such programmes reinforce Jordan's position as a "regional hub" for nursing education and professional development, pointing to the importance of sustained investment in health workers to build more resilient

and responsive health systems.

On its scope, the one-year programme is designed to enhance the clinical and scientific skills of nurses and midwives working in UNRWA health facilities across Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine.

Delivered through a hybrid learning model com-

bining online education with on-the-job training, the programme ensures continuity of healthcare services while improving professional competencies and practical skills.

The fifth cohort, which includes 114 nurses and midwives, is divided into two training groups, focusing on primary healthcare and reproductive health to enhance field readiness and improve service delivery.

Since its launch, the programme has graduated 171 participants across four cohorts.

The programme, which is also part of the Japanese government's support for health and humanitarian initiatives for Palestine refugees, aims at enhancing healthcare sustainability and human resource development in the sector.

Japanese ambassador highlights Jordan's role as 'anchor of stability'

AMMAN (JT) — Japan's Ambassador to Jordan Asari Hideki reaffirmed that peace and stability in the Middle East are of direct importance to Japan, given the close links between regional security, global supply chains, energy security and freedom of navigation.

He stressed the importance of ensuring safe and free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and expressed Japan's hope that stability would be restored through the steady implementation of the memorandum of understanding by all parties concerned, according to a Japanese embassy statement.

The remarks were delivered during a lecture entitled "Japan's Diplomacy: Challenges, Opportunities and Responses", organised by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan.

The event was attended by researchers, academics, and political and economic experts.

Asari discussed the Middle East's significance in Japan's foreign policy, the region's current challenges, Japan's diplomatic responses, and the strategic partnership between Japan



Photo courtesy of Japanese embassy

Delivering a lecture organised by the Centre for Strategic Studies, Japan's Ambassador Asari Hideki praises Jordan's role in serving as a regional humanitarian hub for Gaza, Syria, Lebanon

and Jordan.

Addressing the Palestinian issue, he reaffirmed Japan's support for efforts to end the conflict in Gaza, establish effective governance, and advance Palestinian state-building.

He also stressed the importance of halting unilateral measures in the West Bank, supporting the Palestinian Authority, and pursuing a two-state solution.

Since 1993, Japan has provided some \$2.6 billion in assistance to Palestine, including \$410 million since October 2023.

The diplomat highlighted Japan's long-term development initiatives, including the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity, the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park, and the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development.

The ambassador described Jordan as "an anchor of stability" in the Middle East, citing its resilience and active diplomacy under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah.

He praised Jordan's role in hosting refugees, facilitating the evacuation of foreign nationals from neighbouring countries and serving

as a regional humanitarian hub for Gaza, Syria, Lebanon and other crisis-affected areas.

The diplomat reiterated Japan's commitment to supporting Jordan's resilience and regional role.

Since 1974, Japan has extended some \$4.335 billion in Official Development Assistance to Jordan. In addition, Japan provided \$12.5 million in humanitarian assistance in the 2025 fiscal year through six UN agencies, including UNRWA.

Asari also addressed broader global challenges, including increasing pressure on the rule-based international order, climate change, nuclear non-proliferation, economic security, and the rapid advancement of science and technology.

He emphasised Japan's efforts to uphold the rule of law, strengthen cooperation with the United States and other like-minded partners, and reinforce global governance.

The ambassador elaborated Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) initiative, highlighting its role in promoting regional connectivity, economic growth, and international cooperation.

He noted that FOIP is also "highly" relevant to the Middle East and that Japan sees Jordan not only as a pillar of regional stability but also as a potential hub connecting the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East, and Europe.

Participants said that the rapidly evolving regional and international environment underscores the importance of further enhancing the Jordan-Japan strategic partnership and expanding cooperation in regional stability, development, human security and economic connectivity.



Al Mamlaka TV photo

Jerash Governor Malik Khreisat on Thursday says that the Southern Theatre and the Oval Plaza within the archaeological city have been designated to screen the Jordan-Argentina match on Sunday

Jerash prepares public screening of Jordan-Argentina match

AMMAN (JT) — Jerash Governor Malik Khreisat on Thursday said that the Southern Theatre and the Oval Plaza within the archaeological city have been designated to screen the upcoming Jordan-Argentina match on Sunday, following directives from the prime minister.

The announcement came during a meeting, which included the security and executive councils alongside municipal mayors, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

Khreisat said that both sites have been equipped with display screens, adding that dedicated buses will be provided to transport fans to the venues.

The governor noted

that selecting the ancient city to host the screening aims to promote local tourism, which offers an opportunity for visitors to engage with the site's historical and archaeological landmarks while supporting the national team.

A comprehensive security and traffic plan has been established in coordination with the Jerash Police Directorate.

This plan is designed to ensure smooth traffic flow and facilitate orderly entry and exit for the public at the archaeological site.

Khreisat noted that some 15,000 spectators attended the previous screening of the Jordan

against Algeria match at the historic site, which highlighted that the massive turnout reflects the community's "strong" unity, national pride, and continuous support for the national team.

The high attendance created a "vibrant" atmosphere that showcased the positive spirit of Jerash and its people, blending sports fandom with community solidarity.

Chairman of the Greater Jerash Municipal Committee Mohammad Bani Yaseen said that the municipality has finalised an integrated logistical and media plan to prepare the archaeological site for the event.

Safadi, Hungarian counterpart discuss ties, regional developments



Ayman Safadi



Anita Orban

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi on Thursday held a phone call with Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Anita Orban to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral ties and review regional developments.

During the call, the two ministers reaffirmed their commitment to expanding cooperation in areas of mutual interest and building on the progress achieved in Jordanian-Hungarian relations, both bilaterally and within the framework of cooperation with the EU, ac-

ording to a Foreign Ministry statement. Safadi and Orban also reviewed regional developments and ongoing efforts to reduce tensions and promote security and stability in the region, particularly in light of recent diplomatic efforts involving the US and Iran.

Safadi congratulated Orban on her appointment and wished her success in her new role. The two ministers agreed to maintain close coordination and communication to further enhance bilateral relations and address issues of common concern.

AT A GLANCE

Regent swears in Abu Shahout as IEC board member

AMMAN (JT) — Bushra Abu Shahout was sworn in before the Regent, HRH Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammad, His Majesty's chief adviser for religious and cultural affairs, and personal envoy, at Basman Palace on Thursday, as a member of the Independent Election Commission's (IEC) board of commissioners. Royal Hashemite Court Chief Yusef Issawi and IEC Chief Commissioner Musa Maaytah attended the swearing-in, according to a Royal Court statement.



Royal decrees approve embassy opening in Venezuela, ambassador transfers

AMMAN (JT) — A Royal Decree was issued on Thursday, approving the Cabinet's decision to open a Jordanian embassy in Venezuela. Separate Royal Decrees also approved Cabinet decisions to transfer a number of Jordanian ambassadors to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, according to the Official Gazette. The decisions include the transfer of Ambassador Zaid Mufleh Lozi from Jordan's embassy in Qatar and Ambassador Rami Adwan from Jordan's embassy in Bahrain to the ministry's headquarters, both effective December 31, 2026. The decrees also include the transfer of Ambassador Maen Masaadeh from Jordan's embassy in Brazil and Ambassador Amal Ghassan Tal from the embassy in South Korea to the ministry's headquarters, effective August 15, 2026. The decrees also approve the transfer of Ambassador Hosam Abdullah Hussein from Jordan's embassy in China to the ministry's headquarters, effective June 30, 2026.



Army thwarts drug smuggling attempt using guided balloons

AMMAN (JT) — The Eastern Military Region command on Thursday foiled an attempt to smuggle a quantity of narcotics carried by electronically-guided balloons within its area of responsibility, according to the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army statement. Border guard units detected the balloons, intercepted and downed them along with their cargo inside Jordanian territory in coordination with the security agencies and the Anti-Narcotics Department. The seized items were referred to the competent authorities for further legal action.



Jordan-EU Investment Conference to proceed as scheduled on November 19 — ambassador

AMMAN (JT) — EU Ambassador to Jordan Pierre-Christophe Chatzisavas on Thursday said the Jordan-EU Investment Conference, scheduled for November 19, will proceed as planned.

Speaking at a press conference, the ambassador underlined the EU's growing strategic commitment to Jordan, noting that the bloc remains the largest donor supporting the Kingdom's response to the Syrian refugee crisis, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Under the Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership signed in January 2025, Jordan receives around 80 million euros annually for refugee-related cooperation, Chatzisavas said, adding that a further 10-15 million euros is allocated for humanitarian assistance, bringing total annual support to nearly 100 million euros.

He expected this level of assistance to continue next year, while noting that post-2028 funding levels remain under discussion due to upcoming changes in the EU's multiannual financial framework.

The ambassador described Jordan's implementation of international humanitarian



EU Ambassador to Jordan Pierre-Christophe Chatzisavas on Thursday says that the Jordan-EU Investment Conference, scheduled for November 19, will proceed as planned

and refugee law as "excellent", reiterating EU support for the voluntary and facilitated return of Syrian refugees, while stressing that Jordan remains firmly committed to the voluntary nature of returns.

On regional developments, Chatzisavas described the recent visit of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas to Jordan as highly significant, noting that it enabled her to meet

with around 20 Arab foreign ministers. Regarding the war on Iran, he said the EU, like the Arab Group, was not consulted and cannot endorse it, expressing deep concern over its implications for the region and Europe.

On Lebanon, the ambassador voiced European concern over the country's absence from certain negotiation tracks concerning its future, as well as the involvement of external actors speak-

ing on its behalf with vested interests in maintaining Hizbollah's influence.

Regarding Syria, Chatzisavas said Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Shaibani reaffirmed Damascus' commitment to respecting Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and broader participation in decision-making institutions.

On the Palestinian issue, he said the EU

fully understands Jordan's concerns over settler attacks in the West Bank, noting that the issue is receiving increased attention within the Union.

Turning to the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC), the ambassador said the initiative remains vital for the EU but is evolving into a flexible network of multiple routes rather than a single fixed line.

He stressed that His Majesty King Abdullah, in meetings with European leaders, has underlined that Jordan must be a beneficiary partner in the project, not merely a transit route, and must secure tangible added value in manufacturing, services, and logistics.

Chatzisavas said water, energy, green hydrogen, railways, telecommunications, digital transport, and airports will be key topics at the November 19 conference, noting that the preparatory forum held on June 15 laid a strong foundation for discussions.

On regional connectivity, he said railway projects linking Jordan with Saudi Arabia and the UAE represent an important contribution to the broader economic corridor, while

the Etihad Rail project connecting Aqaba to mining regions is progressing rapidly.

He added that the expansion of free trade agreements with India, Australia, South Korea, and Indonesia further reinforces the need for modern transport and logistics networks.

The ambassador described Jordan's implementation of international humanitarian and refugee law as 'excellent'

On democratic development, the ambassador announced that the EU will carry out a follow-up exercise between late November and early December on the recommendations of the EU Election Observation Mission that monitored Jordan's 2024 parliamentary elections, aimed at advancing continued bilateral dialogue and institutional cooperation.

Jordan offers condolences to Venezuela after deadly earthquakes

AMMAN (JT) — The Foreign Ministry on Thursday expressed its deepest condolences and sympathy to the government and people of Venezuela for the victims of the two earthquakes that struck the country.

Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali reiterated the Kingdom's full solidarity and standing with Venezuela during this painful ordeal, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

He extended sincere condolences to the families of the victims and wished a speedy recovery for the injured.

Two earthquakes measuring 7.2 and 7.5 on the Richter scale struck Venezuela, according to the US Geological Survey.

The quakes caused



The Foreign Ministry on Thursday expresses its deepest condolences and sympathy to the government and people of Venezuela for the victims of the two earthquakes that struck the country

dozens of deaths and hundreds of injuries in an initial toll, while witnesses reported collapsed buildings and scenes of panic in the capital, Caracas, AFP reported.

Acting President Delcy Rodriguez declared a state of emergency

across the country, and announced the closure of Caracas Airport, which reportedly suffered severe damage.

Rodriguez announced on Thursday that at least 32 people were killed and more than 700 others were injured.

TIES

Jordan, Azerbaijan discuss expanding energy cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi on Thursday met with Azerbaijani Energy Minister Parviz Shahbazov on the sidelines of the 20th Conference of Member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, held in the Azerbaijani capital, Baku.

During the meeting, Qadi and Shahbazov highlighted the deep-rooted ties between Jordan and Azerbaijan under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, stressing that the strong relationship provides a solid foundation for expanding cooperation across various sectors, particularly energy.

Qadi noted that Jordan offers an advanced legislative and invest-



Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi on Thursday meets with Azerbaijani Energy Minister Parviz Shahbazov on the sidelines of the 20th Conference of Member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

ment environment for the energy sector, adding that recent years have witnessed significant developments in regulations

governing investment, conventional energy and renewable energy projects, according to a Lower House statement.

The two sides reviewed a preliminary framework for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on energy production, ex-

port and supply and explored opportunities to enhance cooperation in the oil, gas and renewable energy sectors.

Shahbazov underscored the importance of signing an MoU on energy cooperation between the relevant ministries in Jordan and Azerbaijan and establishing a joint working group to identify future areas of collaboration.

The meeting was attended by Jordanian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Omar Nahar, Azerbaijani Ambassador to Jordan Shahin Shaker Abdullayev, Head of the Jordanian Parliamentary Friendship Committee MP Hussein Krishan, MPs Atallah Hneiti and Mohammad Bani Melhem and Senator Omar Ayasrah.

Jordan steps up efforts to ease Palestinian movement via King Hussein Bridge — interior minister

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Interior Mazen Faraya said on Thursday that Jordan will take all necessary measures to facilitate the movement of Palestinians through the King Hussein Bridge, under the directives of His Majesty King Abdullah.

Faraya also said the Ministry of Interior is primarily responsible for facilitating the entry

of Palestinians into Jordan, noting that advance booking via the electronic platform is essential to regulate traffic flow, as the number of travellers is capped by the Israeli side.

He added that the platform is not used at the Karameh crossing, where the number of Palestinians permitted to cross is not limited, according to

Al Mamlaka TV.

Palestinian Interior Minister Ziad Mahmoud said that the level of coordination between His Majesty King Abdullah and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas would translate into practical measures aimed at easing procedures for Palestinians, stressing Jordan's ability to manage the situation in coordina-

tion with police and border authorities.

Faraya on Thursday carried out an inspection visit to the King Hussein Bridge to review operations and assess services provided to travellers, as well as procedures at the crossing.

The visit comes as part of ongoing efforts to monitor conditions at the bridge, evaluate pas-

senger services, and assess measures taken to manage travel flow and reduce congestion.

The minister has said recently that the Interior Ministry is implementing infrastructure development projects at the bridge, including the construction of waiting halls and shelters for passengers, new facilities for freight and public trans-

port, as well as the rehabilitation of passport halls and improvement of passenger services.

He also said that Jordan receives all arrivals through the King Hussein Bridge without limits on numbers or time, while some delays and congestion are linked to procedures and restrictions imposed by the other side.



Minister of Interior Mazen Faraya said on Thursday that Jordan will take all necessary measures to facilitate the movement of Palestinians



Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei responds to reporters during the weekly press conference held at the ministry of foreign affairs in Tehran, Iran

Iran slams NATO chief's comments on US support in war

TEHRAN (AFP) — Tehran accused NATO on Thursday of “complicity” in the US-Israeli war against Iran, after the bloc’s chief noted its support for the United States in the conflict.

Responding to US President Donald Trump’s criticism of allies for not supporting the war, NATO boss Mark Rutte told Fox News that hundreds of American planes launched from bases in Italy.

Trump’s second term has been marked by tensions with NATO allies, who have voiced scepticism over the need for the conflict in the Middle East.

“Country after country, ally after ally after ally, have made their bases available for Epic Fury,” Rutte told US TV channel Fox News, referring to the US military operation in Iran.

“Five hundred US planes took off from US bases in Italy to support Epic Fury,” he said, referring to the US name for the operation

against Iran. Trump had told Rutte on Wednesday he was “let down” by members of the alliance who did not back his war against Iran.

‘This is a clear and damning admission of NATO’s active complicity in an unlawful war of aggression against a sovereign UN Member State’

Rutte also told Fox News that Romania “cut down on commercial air flights and airplanes because

they had to use the airports for the tanker facilities” during the Iran war.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei condemned the NATO chief’s admission of “active complicity” in the “unlawful war”.

“This is a clear and damning admission of NATO’s active complicity in an unlawful war of aggression against a sovereign UN Member State,” Baqaei wrote on X.

He accused NATO of “a flagrant violation of peremptory norms of international law and the core principles of the UN Charter”.

Italy was quick to distance itself from Rutte’s words, which the defence ministry said gave “a completely misleading message by confusing the type of flights that were authorised”.

It said Italy had allowed only “technical and logistical” US flights during Epic Fury under existing agreements with the United States.

Macron hosts Meloni for Riviera talks after Trump rift

ANTIBES, France (AFP) — Italy’s Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, fresh from a spat with US leader Donald Trump, on Thursday met French President Emmanuel Macron to build on a nascent rapprochement and tighten ties.

One of Europe’s most prominent right-wing leaders arrived in the resort of Antibes for the French Riviera for her first bilateral summit with Macron.

The talks marked the first Franco-Italian summit since a treaty on a strategic alliance came into force in 2021, elevating relations to a level comparable to that between France and Germany.

Smiling broadly, the two leaders exchanged kisses and briefly held hands as the French host welcomed Meloni outside the Picasso Museum in Antibes.

“Come, come”, Macron called out as he took Meloni on a private tour of the museum.

The French presidency said the summit would be an opportunity to deepen cooperation in strategic sectors such as defence, nuclear energy, and space.

“We need each other,” the Elysee said ahead of the talks at the Villa Eilenroc, a dazzling 19th-century residence overlooking the Mediterranean.

Relations have often been strained between Macron, a pro-European centrist, and Meloni, who leads a coalition of right and far-right parties.

But while the leaders of the European Union’s second and third largest economies are



French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni wave as they leave after a visit at the Picasso Museum as part of a Franco-Italian summit in Antibes, French Riviera, on Thursday

far from natural allies, they have worked to ease tensions, notably during a lengthy one-on-one meeting in Rome in June last year.

In April, as leaders gathered in Paris for a summit on securing the Strait of Hormuz, Meloni arrived at the Elysee in a red Alfa Romeo. Macron greeted the Italian leader with an enthusiastic double kiss that appeared to catch her off guard.

A video that went viral showed Meloni visibly surprised before both laughed it off.

‘Asymmetry’

Marc Lazar, an Italy specialist at Sciences Po in Paris, said Meloni and Macron would try to build on a tentative rapprochement, despite

disagreements. Meloni had long sought to position herself as a bridge between Europe and Trump.

But following a G-7 summit in France, Meloni has distanced herself from the US leader over what she called his “constant, unprovoked attacks”.

“That can only please Emmanuel Macron,” Lazar added.

Sergio Fabbrini, political science lecturer at Rome’s Luiss University, said Meloni had used her relationship with Trump “to weaken the European Union”.

“Now she finds herself without Trump and is forced to return to the European Union, particularly in terms of defence,” he said.

Fabbrini said Macron was strong at the European level, but weak at home.

By contrast, “Meloni is very strong domestically, but weak at the European level.”

This asymmetry makes the meeting difficult and complicated.

Macron and Meloni share common ground on some issues, including opposition to the European Union’s free trade agreement with South America’s Mercosur bloc.

But they remain divided on others, such as Italy’s push for migrant detention centres outside the European Union.

Unlike Macron, Meloni opposes sending Italian troops to Ukraine, even in a post-

war scenario, to provide security guarantees to Kyiv.

On Thursday, the two countries were expected to sign a roadmap on defence, notably emphasising the Franco-Italian SAMP/T air defence system delivered to Ukraine.

A cooperation agreement was also to be signed on nuclear energy along with another on the planned European satellite powerhouse to rival Elon Musk’s Starlink.

With conflicts in Ukraine and Iran, “space has become absolutely central for the military”, said Herve Derrey, chief executive of Thales Alenia Space, during a Franco-Italian economic forum in the nearby town of Le Cannet.

No fuel, no sleep: Ukrainian strikes seek to cut off Crimea

WARSAW (AFP) — For Yulia, a 23-year-old resident of Crimea, nights have become sleepless due to increased Ukrainian drone attacks on the peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014.

Kyiv’s army is pounding supply routes and striking energy facilities across the Black Sea territory — a campaign it sees as fair retribution for Moscow’s daily barrages of Ukrainian cities, and one that it hopes will turn the tide of the four-year war in its favour.

On Thursday, the Moscow-installed governor of Crimea announced power cuts across the peninsula, which despite the war had been a popular holiday destination for Russians.

Fuel sales have been completely suspended to the public and children’s summer camps cancelled.

“It’s like some kind of psychological pressure: Every night there are drones, air alerts, it’s impossible to sleep,” Yulia told AFP via telephone interview.

“And if you sleep, you have terrible dreams.”

Since May, Ukraine’s army has destroyed dozens of fuel tankers and military vehicles travelling along supply routes through Russian-occupied southern Ukraine toward Crimea, exploiting advances in its drone technology.

‘Hard times’

Crimea holds particular importance for Russian President



This handout satellite image courtesy of 2026 Vantor taken on Monday and made available on Tuesday, shows smoke generators on Crimea Bridge, in Kerch

Vladimir Putin personally, who triumphed its 2014 annexation as a historic victory for Moscow.

Kyiv slammed the move as illegal, a position supported by the vast majority of the international community, with barely a handful of countries having recognised the peninsula as Russian.

Now, it is bearing the brunt of Putin’s decision to invade.

“We were afraid we’d never wake up again, we prayed all night,” one woman, holidaying in Feodosia on Crimea’s south-eastern coast, told AFP about a recent overnight attack.

“The sky was like Star Wars.”

Yulia, a 23-year-old who lives in the Crimean capital of Simferopol, said inter-city travel by bus and minibus was still possible.

But you cannot buy fuel and taxi prices have “shot up”.

Her friends working in construction say orders have dried up.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has called the campaign “carefully cal-

culated”, designed to create “the conditions” that will force “Russia to choose peace”.

Talks to end more than four years of full-scale war remain deadlocked.

Millions of Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes and swathes of the country’s south and east have been decimated by fighting.

On social media, Crimean residents lament that they now find themselves on the front line in an escalating aerial warfare.

‘Drive me out’

For Ukraine, the strikes have both a military and symbolic purpose.

“Zelensky is doing everything to show that Russia’s territorial gains are fragile,” Tatiana Kastueva-Jean, director of the Russia/Eurasia Centre at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI), told AFP.

But she cautioned that the current dynamics — favourable to Kyiv — could see Moscow intensify its own strikes in a bid “to break the Ukrainians”.

The Kremlin has no intention of abandoning land it considers permanently won — Crimea above all — she noted.

From a military standpoint, the success of Ukraine’s strikes show that Kyiv’s troops — on the backfoot for much of the conflict — have the ability to seize the initiative.

Military expert Stephane Audrand, an associate researcher at IFRI, told AFP that Ukraine could neutralise the “value” of Crimea to the Russian army if “the units stationed there can no longer generate positive military effects”.

The question is whether Ukraine will then have “the capacity to act on the ground to exploit this advantage”, he said.

As tourists cancel their trips and blasts sound out at night, Yulia in Simferopol was defiant.

“Yes, the local young people are worried. But they’re not planning to leave,” she said. “And I’m not going to either. You can’t drive me out of here,” she added, laughing.

Hanoi residents mount silent protest over home demolitions

HANOI, Vietnam (AFP) — Silent prayer vigils, cautiously worded protest banners and T-shirts pleading for neighbourhoods to be spared — Hanoi residents are showing rare public opposition to a massive redevelopment scheme that could displace hundreds of thousands.

Authorities in Vietnam’s capital have been on a demolition blitz, knocking down thousands of homes to make way for bridges and other infrastructure projects as part of a 100-year master plan approved last month.

One 11,000 hectare area along the Red River — roughly the size of Paris — is slated to become a warren of high-end residential complexes and parks, with roughly 250,000 residents relocated.

Large-scale protests are rare in Vietnam, where the communist authorities brook little dissent.

But private grumbling has given way to tentative public opposition as residents fight to save their homes.

“We have been living in fear, we don’t know when we will be kicked out of our houses. We want our voice to be heard,” said Hoa.

Her life savings are tied up in a two-storey house in the planned development area, surrounded by ornamental and fruit trees.

Last week, she joined a vigil at a Buddhist temple where residents prayed for peace — a veiled plea for their homes to be spared.

Hundreds of Red River area residents have attended similar vigils,



This photo taken on June 19 shows protest banners hanging over a street at a neighbourhood in Hanoi

organised anonymously in recent weeks and publicised on social media.

The low-lying region is home to dozens of vibrant communities, some dating back centuries with bustling markets, leafy gardens and traditional burial grounds.

French-style villas stand to be bulldozed, along with modest Hanoi-style “tube” houses and densely packed low-rises.

“May the Buddhas of the ten directions hear our earnest plea,” one anonymous user commented on a Facebook group dedicated to the Red River redevelopment.

“Please help us avoid losing our homes, our land, our ancestral graves.”

Cautious

Not far from Hoa’s home on a nearby street, resident Duc said he and some neighbours hung a banner from the balcony of his four-storey home.

“We urge local authorities to consider people’s aspiration in maintaining the present

T-shirts.

Ostensibly there to exercise, the women were also carrying a message on their backs — a call to maintain the “existing residential area” along the Red River.

Authorities have pledged to compensate residents for their homes and said they will build up to 85,000 new units to eventually house them on the outskirts of the city.

The principle will be that “the new living conditions are equal to or better than the old ones”, the city has said.

But many residents already displaced as part of Hanoi’s urban renewal drive complain they were paid below-market rates for their homes.

Others question how long the new housing will take to build — and how they will afford rent in the interim.

In the Red River area, part of the anger stems from the perception that private companies will profit from high-end apartments replacing their homes.

A consortium of three developers is undertaking the \$30 billion mega-project as part of a public-private partnership.

In 2020, a dispute over land expropriated to build an airport near Hanoi devolved into clashes that left three police officers and one villager dead, with two protesters later sentenced to death and more than two dozen jailed.

Since then, Oregon professor Vu said “there have been fewer acts of public protest and dissent”.

Neither do any of the dozen or so women who gathered over the weekend to stroll along the shores of Hanoi’s West Lake wearing matching red-and-yellow

Massive police deployment blocks Kenya protest anniversary

NAIROBI (AFP) — Kenyan police shut down much of the capital with a massive security operation on Thursday to prevent protests marking two years since a landmark “Gen Z” uprising.

Activists had hoped to hold a memorial march for the dozens killed by security forces in June 2024 protests against economic hardship and corruption that led to parliament being stormed.

It was a watershed moment as young Kenyans rallied together, ignoring traditional ethnic divisions, turning June 25 into an annual day of protest thanks to ongoing frustration with the government of President William Ruto.

But they have paid a heavy price: At least 127 people were killed across the two years of protests, according to a police watchdog, as security forces shot people with near-total impunity.

The authorities took no chances on Thursday, closing off traffic on major roads into central Nairobi and flooding key areas with officers who fired teargas at the first sign of groups gathering.

AFP journalists saw long lines of police wagons, horse patrols and



Kenyan riot police chase protestors (unseen) through a cloud of tear gas during demonstrations marking the second anniversary of the deadly June 2024 youth-led anti-Finance Bill protests, which saw demonstrators storm parliament, in Nairobi on Thursday

large numbers of plainclothes officers.

“They know people are not afraid of police in uniform. But they are scared of these plainclothes cops because they can just kill you and go,” said Moses, 31, a motorbike-taxi driver.

Many were too afraid to march, with one young woman in the business district telling AFP: “I don’t want to die, I’m the oldest. I just want to work.”

A small group of activists and politicians managed to reach parliament to lay flowers for those killed two years ago, chanting: “This is not a police state.”

“Life is so hard,” said Jacinta Anyango, whose 12-year-old son Kennedy was killed that day, as she laid a white rose on the barbed wire around parliament.

At least three were arrested when mounted police dispersed the group and by late afternoon, the normally hectic business district was completely deserted.

Amnesty International denounced the shutdown, saying: “A nation that honours its fallen does not lock its people out of their own city.”

‘Organised terror’

Ruto said this week that

Kenyans had a right to demonstrate but warned against anyone “mobilised to destroy property or cause chaos.”

Many feared the authorities would once again unleash hired “goons” — armed men that have been increasingly used against political opponents and civil rights groups.

AFP saw scores of them operating alongside police during last year’s protests and they were blamed for the looting and vandalism that followed.

Ruto’s former deputy Rigathi Gachagua, now a bitter rival, had warned young Kenyans

not to protest on Thursday, saying: “I plead with you: Stay at home. The state has organised terror against Kenyans.”

But in the end, the massive police presence and a deep fear of more violence deterred Kenyans from marching.

Many prefer to wait for elections in August 2027 to show their anger at Ruto, though it remains unclear if a strong challenger will emerge.

‘Clearly unpopular’

Ruto has long been associated with violence — he was charged with crimes against humanity by the International

France, Italy want to set up multinational coalition to succeed UNIFIL in Lebanon — Macron

ANTIBES, France (AFP) — France and Italy want to set up a multinational coalition to succeed the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, UNIFIL, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday.

“We want to launch a coalition for the post-UNIFIL arrangement, obviously in coordination with the European Union and the United Nations, to strengthen Lebanon’s sovereignty and that of its armed forces,” Macron said after talks with Italy’s Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni in the town of Antibes on the French Riviera.

The new force would help prevent Lebanon’s territory from becoming “a foothold for regional escalation”, Macron said.

“Italy and France can absolutely make a difference,” the Italian prime minister said.

“From our point of view, it is necessary to ensure an international presence that avoids an extremely dangerous security vacuum.”

France is one of the biggest contributors to the UN peacekeeping force.

UNIFIL currently counts some 7,500 peacekeepers from nearly 50 countries. They are deployed in south Lebanon near the Blue Line.

The force has been a

buffer between Lebanon and Israel since 1978, although its presence has not prevented repeated outbreaks of conflict.

Last August, the UN Security Council, under US pressure, decided to end the mandate of UNIFIL on December 31.

‘Italy and France can absolutely make a difference’

UN chief Antonio Guterres has said that peacekeepers will be needed in Lebanon after the mandate of the current mission expires, an option likely to face opposition from the United States and Israel.

Last Daesh-linked Australian woman to return home — government

SYDNEY (AFP) — The last Australian woman stranded in the Middle East over suspected links to the Daesh group will be allowed to return home, Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke said on Thursday.

Dozens of women and children have been returning to Australian from squalid Syrian detention camps, where they were held for years after the collapse of Daesh’s self-declared caliphate.

In many cases the women left Australia to follow husbands who had signed up as extremist fighters, which has seen them widely dubbed the “Daesh brides” back home.

The unnamed woman is the last of more than 30 women and children to return to Australia.

Burke said authorities had blocked her return using a “tem-



Some Australian women linked to the Daesh group were held in Syria’s Camp Roj

porary exclusion order”, but this had now expired and Australia could not legally turn away one of its citizens.

The woman would

face stringent security conditions once she returned to Australia, Burke said, including surveillance and limitations on computer and telephone access.

“There will be a very high level of scrutiny and surveillance and we have gone to the legal limit that we’re able to,” Burke said.

Three women were

immediately arrested after returning to Australia earlier this year, charged with crimes ranging from slavery to joining a terrorist organisation.

Hundreds of women from Western nations were lured to the Middle East as the Daesh group gained prominence.

Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and others are still grappling with how to treat citizens stranded after the group collapsed.

Australia’s Human Rights Commission has urged the government to help repatriate women and children stuck in Syria’s notorious detention camps.

But others have accused the women of turning their back on Australia and believe they should be left to face the consequences.

US says wants deal with Iran, but not ‘at any price’

Continued from page 1

It has since said it plans to introduce what it terms maritime service fees, with the Revolutionary Guard on Thursday warning that any unauthorised crossings would be “dealt with”.

The US and its allies have flatly rejected the introduction of fees or tolls, with Rubio reiterating Washington’s position that Hormuz should be considered an international waterway and therefore not subject to charges.

“International waterways do not belong to any nation state. This is a foundational principle in the world today, without which the world would be in total chaos,” he said.

Hormuz is a narrow stretch of water between Iran and Oman that leads to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, making it a chokepoint for crucial energy shipments out of the Gulf.

At Thursday’s Gulf meeting with Rubio, Oman’s top diplomat Badr Albusaidi said plans for Hormuz “do not

entail the imposition of any transit fees” — despite his government and Iran saying on Tuesday that they were studying costs to be charged for services provided in the strait.

On Wednesday, Oman released a map of a new temporary shipping route running close to its coast. It said the path through the strait was coordinated with the International Maritime Organisation, a UN agency responsible for marine safety.

Iran later appeared to denounce the new corridor in a statement by the Revolutionary Guard, but did not refer to Oman specifically.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed last week by Tehran and Washington stipulated that commercial ships may transit the strait free of charge for the next 60 days.

It is unclear what arrangements will be in place after that period.

‘Declaration of America’s defeat’

Iran has emerged em-

boldened from the war, vowing not to relinquish control of Hormuz and calling its initial deal with Washington to stop the fighting “a declaration of America’s defeat”.

President Donald Trump met with NATO chief Mark Rutte at the White House on Wednesday and said the United States was “doing great” in the negotiations.

Trump also asked Congress for nearly \$88 billion in supplemental funding, mostly to cover the cost of the war, just a day after Congress called on him to end the conflict unless lawmakers explicitly authorise further military action.

Iran slammed NATO on Thursday after Rutte noted its support for the US, with foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei accusing the transatlantic bloc of “complicity” in an “unlawful war”.

Rubio and mediator Pakistan said technical talks between the US and Iran were expected to resume in the coming days following a first round in Switzerland.

Foreign minister offers King’s condolences, support to Venezuela after deadly earthquakes

Continued from page 1

US President Donald Trump said that his country “stands ready, willing, and able to help”. He “instructed all agencies of our government to get ready to move quickly. We will be there for our new and great friends”.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio promised a “whole-of-government response” that would be “big... fast and... effective”.

China also said it was ready to send whatever was needed.

“China is willing to provide what help it can in an appropriate manner according to the needs of the Venezuelan side,” Foreign Ministry spokesperson

Guo Jiakun told a news briefing.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei voiced “Iran’s readiness to provide any assistance required in relief and rescue operations”.

Latin American governments were quick to offer solidarity and help.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said her country was dispatching a military team of rescuers and medical personnel to Venezuela, and would send further assistance later on if necessary.

“Mexico always stands in solidarity and always will,” she earlier posted on X.

Brazil’s President Luiz Inacio Lula da

Silva said he had listened to news about the quake “with great concern and dismay” and would support recovery efforts.

El Salvador’s President Nayib Bukele said he had readied 300 rescuers and paramedics and 50 tonnes of equipment, medicines and basic supplies.

Cuban health workers were already present, said Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez, and were “fully mobilised and providing medical services to the affected population”.

Chilean President Jose Antonio Kast said he was dispatching humanitarian aid and rescue teams to Venezuela.

“I’ve just spoken by phone with Venezuela’s

acting President, Delcy Rodriguez, to convey Chile’s solidarity,” he posted on X.

Argentina, Costa Rica and Uruguay also expressed solidarity, while Ecuador and the Dominican Republic both said they had readied aid to send.

Japan offered “sincere condolences to those affected” in Venezuela. The east Asian nation was rocked by a 7.2-magnitude quake itself on Thursday, escaping with no major damage.

Spain was the first of several European countries to react to the quakes.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez offered “full support” to the Venezuelan people, adding,

“Our thoughts are with the victims and their families.”

Italian leader Giorgia Meloni and Germany’s Friedrich Merz echoed these sentiments.

The French government said it stood “in solidarity” with the Venezuelan people before confirming that its embassy in Caracas had been damaged in the disaster.

Two warring nations, Ukraine and Russia, also sent their condolences without specific aid offers.

The EU said that it had activated its satellite surveillance system, with aid commissioner Hadja Lahbib writing online: “We stand ready to step up assistance.”

Baking heatwave gives Europe no respite

Continued from page 1

“It’s better to be here than indoors.”

Elsewhere, locals flocked to the Canal Saint-Martin in the north of the city, some with inflatables, after the authorities allowed swimming due to the heat.

But in Brussels, residents complained about the lack of public swimming facilities in the Belgian capital, that made it hard for residents to cope as temperatures nudged 40°C.

“It’s honestly a joke for a city like Brussels with more than a million residents,” said Paul Steinbrück, co-founder of the Pool is Cool organisation. In Germany, where temperatures were in the

high 30s and expected to hit 40°C through the weekend, several outdoor events were cancelled.

Rail operator Deutsche Bahn also told customers to avoid travel due to a high risk of disruption from wildfires, heavy rain and thunderstorms.

‘Nature is angry’

The effects of extreme heat — from dehydration to heatstroke — are a concern for those caring for the vulnerable, including the very young and old, and those with medical conditions.

“Dehydration is a high risk for elderly residents,” said Shiny Mathappan, manager of the Kingsley Court Care Home in

Hayes, where fruit juice and water were handed out to dementia patients in shaded areas of the garden.

“When they’ve got dementia, they forget to ask about whether they feel thirsty,” she said.

The UK’s Met Office weather service extended a red warning for extreme heat until Friday night for London and the surrounding area. Forecasts of 37-38°C Wednesday and Thursday would be a new June record.

Kingsley Court resident Lucine Nazikian, 97, said she was not keen on the heat and the world needed to take it seriously — or pay the price.

“Nature is angry with us because we destroy everything,” she said.

THE JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975

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Editorial and advertising offices
Jordan Press Foundation

The Jordan Times is published daily except Saturdays

Published by the Jordan Press Foundation

Queen Rania Al Abdullah Street
P.O. Box 6710
Amman 11118

E mail: editor@jordantimes.com
jotimes@jordantimes.com
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National Library registration number:
D/1998/2062

Telephone: **5600800 ext. 2392**

Facsimile: **5696183**

Advertising facsimile: **5696183**

Circulation Department:
5600800 ext: 2383

Fans in China put politics aside to cheer Japan at World Cup

Agence France-Presse

SHANGHAI — In a packed Shanghai sports bar, Chinese football fans erupted in frenzied delight as Japan's Ayase Ueda looped a header over Tunisia's goalkeeper to secure a 4-0 win in a World Cup group match.

China isn't the most obvious place for Japan fandom to thrive, the two countries' historical animosity is never far from the surface and relations have been tense since hawkish Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi took office in Tokyo last year.

But for the dozens of blue-jerseyed Chinese supporters in the bar on Sunday afternoon glued to Japan's every move on massive screens, their love of the football team has a long personal history, completely detached from politics.

"For our generation, the 90s generation, most of us basically grew up watching a lot of Japanese anime, including 'Captain Tsubasa' [a series about a football prodigy]," said Fan, the group's main organiser, who gave only his surname.

"More importantly, since we are both part of Asia, you could say that Japan now represents the pride and glory of Asian football."

China have only qualified once for the World Cup, in 2002, when they lost all three of their games without scoring a goal.

They are 91st in the FIFA world rankings, while Japan are the top Asian team at 16th.

Fu Jinyu, a long-time Japan fan who has written a book on the subject, said Japan has a modern football ecosystem supporting youth development and fan culture, and the team is now at "European-level competitiveness".

In contrast, "the Chinese are still struggling... not knowing what the correct path is", he said.

"Chinese football... has become increasingly insular and is simply not as open as it used to be," Jasper Sun, another of Fan's group, told AFP.

'Relatively open-minded'

On Sunday, as the final whistle blew, the group pulled out an enormous team flag and posed at the front of the bar, jumping up and down and cheering with joy.

Asked if they had ever encountered animosity from other Chinese people, both Fan and Sun shrugged it off.

"There will definitely be people like that, but personally, I don't really pay much attention to that kind of thing," said Fan.

Sun said he could understand why supporters in other regions might have concerns but that Shanghai was "relatively open-minded and inclusive".

When he had travelled, for example to watch Japan play China in Xiamen in 2024, he said he hadn't encountered problems.

"Honestly, there wasn't much conflict... We all took the bus together at the time," he added.

Online interactions can be a different matter, as Aki Yang has found.

The 30-year-old, from eastern China, runs a social media fan page for the Japanese national team.

She has attracted a growing number of followers, and a growing amount of abuse, which she said she had "got used to".

"Some netizens say things online like, 'What sort of traitor or lackey are you?'," she said.

On the Instagram-like platform Xiaohongshu, one recent post gave advice on concealing the flag on Japanese jerseys, to "avoid embarrassment".

"Wear a helmet when you go out," another user posted.

'Bridge of friendship'

Student Julie Wang told AFP the comments she sees online mean she does not dare publicly express support for Japan.

"I've noticed some arguing that supporting the Japanese team at this time is unpatriotic," she said.

Relations have been particularly fraught since Prime Minister Takaichi suggested Tokyo might intervene militarily if Beijing were to invade self-governing Taiwan.

"Honestly, especially now when relations are more strained, I feel it's even more necessary for people like us to stand up," said Fan, the Shanghai supporters' group organiser.

"My ultimate ideal, my biggest dream, is to help build a bridge of friendship between our two countries."

Despite the abuse she has received, Yang still believes football can "break down barriers".

"The world is so tumultuous today, football can set aside political identities and nationality, becoming simply a source of joy," she said.

Jordan: A regional logistics hub in a reshaping economic order

By Hasan Dajah

In a world witnessing the re-drawing of economic influence and global trade routes, the importance of nations is no longer measured solely by the size of their natural resources or military strength, but rather by their ability to transform into a strategic hub connecting international markets, corridors and major development projects. In this context, Jordan stands out as one of the most important geopolitical and logistical centers in the Middle East, not only due to its geographical location, but also because of its position at the heart of a number of international and regional projects seeking to reshape the regional economic order.

From a strategic perspective, Jordan is not merely a transit point in these projects, but a crucial geographical hub

which aim to revive land and rail corridors extending from the Arabian Gulf through Jordan, Syria and Turkey to European markets, is growing.

From a strategic perspective, Jordan is not merely a transit point in these projects, but a crucial geographical hub. The Kingdom is situated at the heart of the Levant, connecting the Gulf, the Levant, and the Mediterranean, granting it a comparative advantage in a regional environment where trade routes and supply chains are becoming increasingly vital. Furthermore, Jordan's political, security, and institutional stability makes it a reliable partner in a region still facing complex security and geopolitical challenges.

This role becomes even more critical as the reconstruction phase approaches in several countries in the region, particularly Syria and Iraq. International experience indicates that countries neighboring reconstruction zones typically transform into major logistical hubs, benefitting from the movement of goods, services and investments associated with construction and development projects. In this context, Jordan possesses significant advantages that qualify it to play this role, most notably the Port of Aqaba, one of the most stable maritime gateways in the region, in addition to its road network, development zones, and infrastructure capable of accommodating the economic and service activities associated with reconstruction efforts.

Jordan's location also grants the Kingdom a unique opportunity to capitalise on the growing international competition surrounding economic corridors without becoming entangled in the politics of alliances. China views Jordan as a crucial part of the geographical reach of its Belt and Road Initiative, while the United States and its partners see the Kingdom as a key link in new economic connectivity projects between Asia and Europe.

Simultaneously, Arab states view Jordan as a natural gateway connecting the Gulf economies with the Levant, Turkey and European markets.

This highlights one of the most prominent strengths of Jordanian policy: Its ability to balance various international and regional projects without falling into the trap of polarisation or the politics of alliances.

This role becomes even more critical as the reconstruction phase approaches in several countries in the region, particularly Syria and Iraq

Jordan does not view these initiatives as competing projects that force it to choose sides, but rather as strategic opportunities that can be leveraged to enhance national development and solidify the Kingdom's economic and regional standing.

This approach reflects a deep understanding of the transformations occurring in the international system, where interests are no longer built on exclusive alliances but rather on diversifying partnerships and multiplying avenues of cooperation.

Through this pragmatic and balanced approach, Jordan seeks to benefit from China's Belt and Road Initiative, the India-Central-Europe Economic Corridor, and Arab and regional connectivity projects simultaneously. This will strengthen its role as a pivotal logistics hub, enhance its ability to attract investments, develop infrastructure, and transform its geographic location into a sustainable economic and strategic

asset.

In light of these factors, Jordan has a genuine opportunity to become a regional platform for logistics, supply chains, re-export, and manufacturing. It can also play an increasingly important role in energy transmission, electricity interconnection, the digital economy, and cross-border cables, thus strengthening its position within the new regional economic networks. However, realising this vision requires continued investment in infrastructure, developing transport and railway projects, enhancing the investment environment, expanding industrial and logistics zones linked to the Port of Aqaba, and building effective economic partnerships with various regional and international stakeholders.

Ongoing transformations indicate that future competition will not be solely over resources, but also over economic corridors and logistics hubs capable of connecting markets. In this context, Jordan has a strategic opportunity to transform from a crossroads nation into one that manages a significant portion of trade and investment in the region.

Therefore, Jordan's strategic value in the coming decades will stem not only from its geographical location, but also from its ability to leverage this location within a comprehensive national vision that transforms it into a regional logistics hub and a center for economic connectivity between Asia, Europe, and the Arab world. Between the Belt and Road Initiative, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, and Arab-Turkish connectivity projects, Jordan stands at the heart of the new regional economic order, capitalising on its political stability and geographical position to advance its national interests and solidify its role as a link between various international economic projects.

HasanDajah is professor of strategic studies at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University

Development in a time of disruption

By Keun Lee

SEOUL — Development was once understood as a simple matter of applying the models developed economies created. But, as my research has shown, there is a catch-up paradox: A country cannot conclusively catch up with, let alone overtake, its forerunners merely by imitating them. Instead, latecomers should take advantage of emerging technologies to "leapfrog" those ahead of them.

Fundamentally, leapfrogging means doing something new before those who were once ahead of you. The rise of wireless communications technologies enabled a number of developing economies to bypass fixed-line telephony altogether. But true leapfrogging is what happened next: Some of these countries (perhaps most famously Kenya) developed innovative mobile payment systems, without ever having built traditional banking systems or using services like credit cards.

The point is not just to bypass outdated technologies, but to lead in new markets. South Korea's leap into digital technology, for example, enabled it to surpass its forerunner Japan. While South Korean champion Samsung built global dominance in digital televisions, Japan's Sony remained stuck in its ways, continuing to invest in and produce analog TVs.

This incumbent trap also ensnared the American firm Motorola, which remained committed to analog mobile phones, instead of developing digital phone alternatives that it considered less stable. The choice was not irrational: Motorola, like other firms that fall into the incumbent trap, had invested massively in achieving superiority in an existing technology, and did not want to throw that away. In the end, however, it was left behind.

For latecomers, the key to successful catch-up cycles, which bring changes in industrial leadership, is to recognise

the window of opportunity created by emerging technologies to forge a new path. As Ha-Joon Chang of the University of Cambridge pointed out in 2002, once firms and economies ascend to market dominance, they often kick away the ladder behind them and use patents, trademarks and other intellectual-property protections to erect entry barriers in established markets. Other advantages, such as existing economic complexity, scale and capacity, strengthen their position further.

The point is not just to bypass outdated technologies, but to lead in new markets. South Korea's leap into digital technology, for example, enabled it to surpass its forerunner Japan

Leapfrogging effectively amounts to using a hot-air balloon to ascend where there is no ladder. Of course, this requires the latecomer to have certain resources and capabilities. But once those are in place, it is largely a matter of identifying the right weather conditions: A balloon is likely to find a clear path and far more lift amid a shift in technological paradigms, or during exogenous moments of disruption or "creative destruction".

Even under the most favorable of conditions, no flight is risk-free. Countries must choose the right technologies to focus on, and confront the costs of building new markets. This is as true in advanced economies as it is in developing ones. First movers like Tesla initially

faced huge losses, and survived only because of generous public-sector support (in Tesla's case, from the US Department of Energy and California's state government), as well as venture capitalists and financial markets.

But such support is no guarantee of success. The US firm Solyndra arrived on the scene in 2005 offering more efficient solar-panel technologies based on thin films instead of silicon, and four years later, it secured a \$535 million loan guarantee from the Department of Energy. But losses accumulated, and in 2011, the firm filed for bankruptcy.

Simply put, becoming a first mover is a high-risk, high-reward strategy. For those unwilling to undertake it — or unable to bear big losses on the way to success — a parallel-mover strategy offers an alternative. In this scenario, a company simultaneously develops multiple types of products alongside industry leaders. In automobiles, Germany's Volkswagen is an incumbent; China's BYD is a leapfrogger; and Korea's Hyundai is a parallel mover, balancing the development of combustion-engine and electric vehicles.

China's leapfrogging has partly been a matter of geopolitical necessity. Last month, Huawei unveiled a new chip-design principle it calls the Tau Scaling Law. Instead of continuing to make transistors smaller, as Moore's Law would dictate, Huawei is seeking to accelerate communication across electronic systems. A key motivation to develop this approach is undoubtedly US sanctions, which restrict the Dutch company ASML from exporting its extreme ultraviolet lithography machines to China.

The new chip design reflects China's broader approach to development, which has never followed the Western model. China's leaders have always understood that attempting to overtake the US without changing lanes virtually guarantees a

collision. Even as the two countries compete in cutting-edge technologies like AI, their strategies are fundamentally different, with China focusing more on building open-source models that can be implemented broadly and the US emphasising proprietary frontier models.

Leapfrogging has played a powerful role in making successful catch-up cycles possible, and will continue to do so. Given the economic transformation that is currently underway, emerging and developing economies should be working to identify where opportunities match their capabilities and resources. Managing first-mover risks effectively — or adopting a more cautious parallel-mover approach — will be vital to success.

A key motivation to develop this approach is undoubtedly US sanctions, which restrict the Dutch company ASML from exporting its extreme ultraviolet lithography machines to China

Advanced economies have something to learn, too. No matter how dominant a firm was yesterday, or remains today, the incumbent trap can be a death sentence.

Keun Lee, a former vice chair of the National Economic Advisory Council for the president of South Korea, is professor of Economics at Seoul National University and the author, most recently, of "Innovation-Development Detours for Latecomers: Managing Global-Local Interfaces in the De-Globalisation Era" (Cambridge University Press, 2024)

BUSINESS

Friday-Saturday, June 26-27, 2026



The Department of Statistics says that Industrial Production Index rose by 0.04 per cent during the first four months of 2026, while the Industrial Producer Price Index dropped by 0.34 per cent

IPI rises 0.04%, PPI falls 0.34% in first four months of 2026 — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's Industrial Production Index (IPI) rose by 0.04 per cent during the first four months of 2026, driven by stronger mining and electricity production, while the Industrial Producer Price Index (PPI) fell by 0.34 per cent, according to the Department of Statistics (DoS) data released on Thursday.

The IPI registered a 0.04 per cent increase in the general index for the first four months of 2026 compared with the same period of 2025.

The index for the first four months of 2026 stood at 87.16, compared with 87.12 during the corresponding period of 2025, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The PPI fell by 0.34 per cent in the first four months of 2026 compared with the same period of 2025, with 2018 serving as the base year (2018=100).

The general PPI stood at 106.61 points during the first four months of 2026, compared with 106.97 points in the same period last year.

Industrial Production Index

Comparing the first four months of 2026 with the corresponding period of 2025, production in the mining and quarrying sector, which accounts

for 5.4 per cent of the index, rose by 5.06 per cent.

Electricity production, representing 5.9 per cent of the index, increased by 3.64 per cent, while manufacturing production, the largest component at 88.7 per cent, fell by 0.48 per cent.

The report cited a 1.19 per cent decrease in industrial production in April 2026 compared with the same month of 2025.

The index stood at 84.41 points in April 2026, compared with 85.43 points in April 2025 and 89.06 points in March 2026.

On a year-on-year basis, the decline in the general IPI for April 2026 was driven by a 2.44 per cent decrease in manufacturing production, which accounts for 88.7 per cent of the index.

Meanwhile, production in the mining and quarrying sector rose by 12.70 per cent, while electricity production increased by 6.14 per cent.

On a month-on-month basis, manufacturing production fell by 5.15 per cent and electricity production declined by 14.03 per cent, while mining and quarrying output increased by 4.49 per cent.

Industrial Producer Price Index

On a year-on-year ba-

sis, the PPI for April 2026 rose by 5.8 per cent compared with the same month of 2025, while it increased by 6.98 per cent compared with March 2026.

The index stood at 112.78 points in April 2026, compared with 106.60 points in April 2025 and 105.43 points in the previous month.

Comparing the first four months of 2026 with the corresponding period of 2025, manufacturing prices, which account for 88.74 per cent of the index, fell by 0.71 per cent.

Meanwhile, prices in the mining and quarrying sector, representing 5.36 per cent of the index, rose by 4.44 per cent, while electricity prices, which carry a weight of 5.91 per cent, increased by 1.12 per cent.

The year-on-year increase in the April 2026 index was driven by a 5.93 per cent rise in manufacturing prices, an 8.98 per cent increase in mining and quarrying prices and a 1.12 per cent increase in electricity prices.

On a month-on-month basis, the general PPI for April 2026 rose compared with March 2026 due to a 7.24 per cent increase in manufacturing prices, a 10.27 per cent increase in mining and quarrying prices and a 0.34 per cent increase in electricity prices, Petra reported.

Minister of Investment highlights transport cooperation during Higer Bus plant visit

AMMAN (JT) — Investment Minister Tareq Abu Ghazaleh has concluded on Thursday a working visit to China that included a series of high-level meetings with economic institutions, Chinese and international companies and field visits to industrial and technology projects.

At the conclusion of the visit, Abu Ghazaleh toured the smart city of Xiong'an, where he reviewed China's experience in smart city development, advanced infrastructure and sustainable urban planning.

He also discussed opportunities to benefit from Chinese expertise and attract investment in these sectors to Jordan, in line with the Economic Modernisation Vision and efforts to enhance the Kingdom's investment competitiveness, according to a Ministry of Investment statement.

During the visit, the minister participated as an honorary member at the opening of the China International Supply Chain Expo (CISCE) in Beijing and attended the launch ceremony of the Overseas Cooperation and Investment Committee, affiliated with the China Chamber of International Commerce (CCOIC).

The ministry said the participation reflected growing eco-



Investment Minister Tareq Abu Ghazaleh has concluded on Thursday a working visit to China that included a series of high-level meetings with economic institutions

conomic ties between Jordan and China and supported efforts to strengthen the Kingdom's presence on international investment platforms.

Abu Ghazaleh also held talks with Chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), Ren Hongbin and met representatives of several Chinese economic institutions and companies.

The visit included

meetings with leading Chinese firms, including Cainiao Smart Logistics Network Limited, and Sinofer and Sinochem Holdings, which operate in the fertiliser and agricultural sectors.

Abu Ghazaleh also toured the Higer Bus manufacturing plant, whose buses are expected to be used in the Southern Badia school transport project.

During the meetings, the minister highlight-

ed investment opportunities in Jordan, noting that the Kingdom's strategic location,

stability, investment reforms and network of trade agreements strengthen its appeal as a regional hub for business, investment and logistics services.

He added that the visit provided a "significant" opportunity to strengthen direct engagement with Chinese economic institutions and businesses and explore coopera-

tion in industry, logistics, energy, technology, agriculture and infrastructure.

The minister noted the ministry would continue following up on the outcomes of the visit and seek to translate discussions with Chinese companies and institutions into investment projects and partnerships that support economic growth and create employment opportunities, according to the ministry statement.

Easyjet rejects latest takeover bid but leaves door ajar

LONDON (AFP) — British no-frills airline EasyJet rejected on Thursday a fourth informal takeover proposal from a US private equity firm, but left the door open to possible talks on a higher offer.

EasyJet said the latest offer from Castlelake of 6.50 sterling pounds per share, still totalling about 5 billion sterling pounds, "substantially" undervalues the carrier, which flies mostly

across Europe.

However, EasyJet agreed to provide the firm with more access to commercial information and requested to extend the deadline for a formal bid to July 5, which was approved by UK regulators.

"The board believes that giving Castlelake access to limited commercial information... might produce a more attractive proposal that better reflects the value of EasyJet," the carrier said in a

statement.

Castlelake said in a short statement that it "welcomes the EasyJet board's constructive engagement" and extension given to make a formal offer beyond Friday's original deadline.

EasyJet's previously said it considered Castlelake's approach "highly opportunistic" given that its share price had fallen and company losses had increased after the Middle East war

sent jet fuel costs rocketing.

EasyJet's share price closed up 6.4 per cent at 5.74 sterling pounds on Thursday, far below the latest offer, indicating that investors do not yet believe a deal will be struck.

Under the proposal, Castlelake and its co-investors would own 49 per cent of the airline.

The remaining 51 per cent would be owned by European

Union nationals including two airline industry veterans, Peter Bellow and Mark Breen, since EasyJet operates within EU countries.

EasyJet has expressed concerns about the ownership structure in the takeover bid, without going into further detail.

Under UK takeover rules, if Castlelake does not table a formal bid by the July 5 deadline, it must walk away for six months.

US Fed's preferred inflation gauge hits fresh three-year high

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The US Federal Reserve's preferred inflation measure hit a fresh three-year high in May, government data showed on Thursday, with elevated energy prices sparked by Presi-

dent Donald Trump's Iran war rippling through the economy.

The personal consumption expenditures (PCE) prices index jumped 4.1 per cent from a year ago, the Commerce Department said,

up from 3.8 per cent in April.

The new data was in line with the expectations of economists polled by Dow Jones Newswires and the Wall Street Journal.

The US-Israel war

on Iran has sent global energy prices skyrocketing and snarled supply chains, as Tehran's retaliatory action targeted Washington's regional allies and virtually blocked the Strait of Hormuz.

Washington and Tehran are in the midst of peace negotiations, but markets continue to deal with a high degree of uncertainty and economists warn it will take months for fuel prices to come down to pre-war

levels.

Core PCE inflation, which strips out volatile food and energy prices, rose by 3.4 per cent.

Rising fuel prices saw US consumers spend \$151.2 billion more on gasoline and related

products in May over the same month a year ago, the data showed.

The average price of a gallon of regular gasoline in the United States is still about 31 per cent higher than at the start of the war, according to

the AAA motor club.

The new data on Thursday showed US personal consumption expenditures rose by 0.7 per cent, with disposable personal income increasing by the same amount.

Hormuz traffic sees sharp uptick but not back to normal

LONDON (AFP) — Strait of Hormuz traffic has increased sharply, but remains at roughly half its peacetime level, officials said on Thursday as stranded sailors made their way out of the waterway.

Seventy confirmed crossings were recorded on Wednesday, according to an X post by analytics firm Kpler.

This marked the highest number of vessels in a day since Iran shut the Strait of Hormuz on March 1 in retaliation for US-Israeli strikes.

At least 56 commodity vessels, including tankers carrying oil, gas, and dry bulk such as fertilisers, crossed on Wednesday, Kpler's tracking platform

showed.

On Thursday, 15 commodity vessels crossed by midday, according to Kpler, more than the average of 10 daily crossings between March 1 and June 14, when Iran and the US agreed to a memorandum of understanding to start discussing an end to the war.

For the first time since March 1, dry bulk tanker traffic through the waterway on Wednesday reached its 2025 level, with 22 crossings according to maritime tracker AXSMarine.

The traffic increase comes as some of the 11,000 seafarers who had been stuck in the Gulf because of the war continued to sail out of

the key passageway.

A UN-led plan to evacuate the mariners got under way on Tuesday evening.

Two Maersk vessels exited the Gulf on Wednesday evening and Thursday morning, the shipping company told AFP, adding that three of its vessels remained stuck.

Since June 15, traffic has been steadily increasing through the strait, which normally sees around a fifth of the world's oil and gas exports.

Ships exiting the Gulf are using many different routes, creating confusion and signalling that traffic has not returned to its pre-war state, when ships passed through a

toll-free corridor at the centre of the waterway, experts say.

"Iran continues to tightly manage the northern routes, issuing what we've heard are selective permits and phasing of agreements," shipping journal Lloyd's List editor-in-chief Richard Meade said in a briefing on Thursday.

Tehran warned on Thursday against any crossings of the Strait of Hormuz without its authorisation, saying vessels not complying "will be dealt with".

"Non-Iranian vessels relying on the southern Omani corridor under US Navy monitoring should not mistake this for any kind of normalcy," Meade said.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Thursday amounted to JD12.7 million spread over 5.1 million shares that traded through 4,081 transactions.

The ASE share price index closed at 3865.68 points, with an increase of 0.54 per cent

Out of 91 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 36 companies rose while the share price of another 31 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Jordan Kuwait Bank by 5.67 per cent, International Arabian Development and Investment Trading Company by 5.56 per cent, Jordan Insurance by 5 per cent, Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 5 per cent, and Amwaj Properties by 4.76 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Al-Isra for Education and Investment Plc. by 6.90 per cent, Century Investment Group by 5 per cent, Specialised Trading and Investment by 4.72 per cent, Al-Faris National Company for Investment and Export by 4 per cent, and Jordan Vegetable Oil Industries by 3.85 per cent.



THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↑ 3865.68 0.54% June 25, 2026

Live Data Historical Data

Click and drag in the plot area to zoom in



DAILY SUMMARY

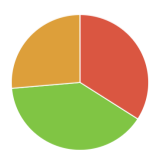
Regular Market OTC Market

Trading Value (JDs) 12,698,087

Trading volume 5,095,468

No. of Transactions 4,081

No. of Securities 91



THE JORDAN TIMES SPORTS AT A GLANCE

TENNIS

Dominant Osaka cruises into Bad Homburg semis

BAD HOMBURG, Germany (AFP) — Four-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka is through to the semifinals of the Wimbledon warm-up tournament in Bad Homburg, Germany after a dominant win over Ekaterina Alexandrova on Thursday. The Japanese sixth seed won 6-2, 6-2 in just 59 minutes to reach the final four of the grass court tournament just days out from the start of Wimbledon. Osaka, the World No. 15, was broken early in the opening set but swift struck back against the unseeded Russian. Osaka won eight straight games — a run which included 15 points in a row — as she took the opening set and ran out to a 3-0 lead in the second. The 19th-ranked Alexandrova rallied to win her next two service games but Osaka closed out the match in just under an hour. Later on Thursday, fourth seed Karolina Muchova takes on Dane Clara Tauson while American Emma Navarro faces Romania's Elena-Gabriel Ruse in the remaining quarter-finals. Chinese World No. 52 Wang Xinyu is already through to the final four after Ukrainian Elina Svitolina, ranked eighth in the world, pulled out citing exhaustion on Wednesday.

Borges defeats top seed Darderi in Mallorca Open quarters

PALMA, Spain (AFP) — Nuno Borges eliminated Mallorca Open top seed world number 16 Luciano Darderi 7-6 (7/1), 6-4 on Thursday to reach the semifinals. The Portuguese, ranked 53rd, crushed his Italian opponent in the first set tie-break before wrapping up the second set by breaking to love in the 10th game. Borges will face Ethan Quinn on Friday in the final four after the American defeated Czech Vit Koprivá 5-7, 7-5, 6-3. Home favourite second seed Alejandro Davidovich Fokina downed Grigor Dimitrov 6-3, 6-3, and will face Hungary's Fabian Marozsan after he eased past Miomir Kecmanovic 6-4, 6-3.

Morocco overcomes historic Haiti goals to maintain World Cup momentum

ATLANTA (AFP) — Morocco twice overcame the shock of conceding to Haiti to win a World Cup thriller 4-2 in Atlanta on Thursday, but missed out on top spot in Group C to Brazil.

Haiti bowed out with its first World Cup goals for 52 years as a Yassine Bounou own goal and Wilson Isidor's stunning strike twice gave them the lead.

Achraf Hakimi and Ismael Saibari, with his third goal in as many games at the World Cup, levelled before half-time.

Soufiane Rahimi was nearly brought to tears when the 30-year-old's deflected effort found the top corner to give Morocco the lead before Gessime Yassine rounded off the scoring.

But Morocco missed out on top spot in the group to Brazil on goal difference, meaning it will head to Monterrey for a likely meeting against The Netherlands or Japan on Monday.

Despite bowing out without a point, Haiti's performances at a first World Cup since 1974 have done a nation gripped by poverty proud.

Les Grenadiers were already eliminated after losing to Scotland and Brazil, but the thousands of Haitian expats in the stands at Atlanta were undeterred as every attack



Soufiane Rahimi #9 of Morocco scores his team's third goal during the FIFA World Cup 2026 Group C match between Morocco and Haiti at Atlanta Stadium on Thursday

was met with deafening cheers.

Morocco boss Mohamed Ouahbi made four changes to the side that had impressed in holding Brazil and beating Scotland in its opening two games and the Atlas Lions started sloppily.

Haiti's long wait for a goal on the global stage was ended after just 10 minutes when Jean-Kevin Duverne got the by-line and Leny Joseph flicked his cross into the net via a deflection off Bounou.

Hakimi has continued to captain Morocco despite learning mid-tournament that he is to face a trial on rape charges in France.

The reigning African footballer of the year stormed forward from right-back at every opportunity and was in the right place to equalise on 39 minutes.

In his final game for Haiti, 38-year-old goalkeeper Jonny Placide could only parry Bilal El Khannouss' strike and Hakimi had a simple task to force the

ball over the line.

Within four minutes, though, Haiti had restored their lead in far more spectacular fashion.

Sunderland striker Isidor pounced on a loose ball and let fly from outside the area with a shot that arched into the top corner.

Hakimi and Ouahbi were visibly angered by conceding for a second time, but the 2022 World Cup semifinalists responded before half-time.

Saibari stroked home his third goal of the tournament with a cool finish from Hakimi's low cross.

Brahim Diaz nearly even gave Morocco a half-time lead when his curling effort shaved the post to end a thrilling first half.

With Brazil cruising to victory over Scotland in Miami, Morocco knew only a comprehensive victory would secure them top spot in Group C.

Ouahbi began turning his attention to

the last 32 as Bayern Munich-bound Saibari and Real Madrid's Diaz were replaced with over 20 minutes remaining.

But two of his substitutes came on to win the game for Morocco.

Rahimi's powerful strike from a corner flew into the top corner via a deflection off a desperate Haiti defender.

He then turned provider by robbing possession on the Haiti by-line and crossing for Yassine to roll into an empty net.

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

Secret cameras, mics and AI reveal rare Cambodia wildlife

By Sara Hussein and Suy Se
Agence France-Presse

CARDAMOM NATIONAL PARK, Cambodia — Above the patter of rain cascading through the jungle canopy comes the haunting call of a pileated gibbon singing to fend off intruders in Cambodia's Cardamom Mountains.

It is being recorded as part of work harnessing hidden microphones, cameras and artificial intelligence to reveal the secrets of species living deep in the rainforest and help protect them.

To conservationist Ratha Sor, the whoops and whistles are the sound of hope — a sign that the country's largest remaining stretch of intact rainforest is healthy enough to support the endangered species. Gibbons are "indicators that our forest is still alive", he said.

By showing that everything from pangolins to elephants call the Cardamom Mountains home, conservationists hope to secure its future, in a country that has lost over a third of its forest cover in the last 25 years.

"This is the real evidence... we are conserving very unique species in our landscape," said Ratha Sor, biodiversity and science manager at Conservation International (CI), a US-headquartered non-profit.

The Cardamoms range, spread across more than a million hectares in south-



This aerial photo taken on June 10 shows the protected forest in the Central Cardamom Mountains in Koh Kong province

west Cambodia, is regarded as one of the most important remaining rainforests in the region.

For decades, it was eaten away by rampant deforestation and emptied by poaching.

Bolstered protections have helped slow both, though infrastructure projects, including dams, remain a serious threat.

In 2024, CI published the results of the first-ever systematic camera trap survey of the Central Cardamom region, revealing more than 100 resident species, nearly two dozen of them either vulnerable or endangered.

That effort, involving nearly 150 devices placed at regular intervals, will

be repeated later this year.

It is supplemented by ongoing targeted camera trapping, focused on areas where animals are likely to be and offering deeper understanding of how populations are changing and behaving.

Macaques, dholes, elephants

AFP joined conservationists, rangers and locals this month as they retrieved and replaced cameras and microphones in the forest.

Under a chaotic canopy woven with vines and studded with fearsome spiked stems, the group crossed streams, waded through mud and picked

off dozens of leeches.

Local community members like Pan Sok, a member of the Chong Indigenous minority, guide CI on where to place devices.

The 50-year-old lives outside the forest but calls himself a "jungle man" after years tapping resin from its trees.

He sat to review black-and-white footage from a camera he helped locate, describing "pride" at the sight of pig-tailed macaques, endangered wild dogs called dholes and his favourite, elephants. "My efforts paid off," said Pan Sok.

Some of these species are seen fairly regularly elsewhere in Southeast Asia, but encounters can

be vanishingly rare in the Cardamoms.

A ranger told AFP he had not seen an elephant once in 12 years patrolling.

While camera traps can capture many of the forest's inhabitants, gibbons are rarely seen because they live in treetops and move too quickly, so CI is turning to bioacoustic monitors and AI.

Its staff spent three months training a machine-learning programme to identify calls recorded by dozens of monitors placed at 10 sites.

They are set at least three kilometres apart, as close as gibbon groups come to each other without fighting, meaning

each device is picking up a different troop.

'This is gibbon, this is not'

In just six weeks, the monitors recorded nearly 800 calls.

The team labelled up to half the data for the AI, teaching it "this is gibbon, this is not", said Ratha Sor.

AI then processed the rest, and in the future will be trained to distinguish male from female, and eventually individual calls. Experts say poaching in the region has waned, though a ranger found part of an old snare during AFP's visit.

Patrolling has also reduced small-scale encroachments, but infrastructure projects including multiple dams are still driving deforestation.

In the last five years, the Central Cardamom protected region has lost nearly 7,000 hectares of tree cover, Global Forest Watch data shows.

Ratha Sor trod carefully when asked about government-backed infrastructure projects responsible for some of that deforestation. "It's out of our control," he said.

But he hopes evidence of the region's rich wildlife will show the benefits of leaving the forest standing.

"It is an encouragement to protect... one of the very pristine evergreen forests in this Cardamom Mountains."

Amazon pledges additional \$13 b in India AI investment

NEW DELHI (AFP) — E-commerce giant Amazon announced on Thursday an additional \$13-billion investment by 2030 to expand its artificial intelligence (AI) footprint in India, months after declaring plans to invest more than \$35 billion.

The announcement was made following a meeting between company CEO Andy Jassy and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The \$13 billion will target AI and cloud infrastructure projects in Mumbai and Hyderabad, the company said in a statement.

"Amazon's cumulative investments in India from 2010-2030 stand at over \$88 billion," the company said.

Jassy said he was "excited" about the future.

"Still early days for what we can build," he said in a post on X.

"By 2030, we plan to support 3.8 million jobs, enable \$80 billion in ecomm exports, and bring benefits of AI to 15 million small businesses and four million government school students," he added.


Modi welcomed the investment, adding that it would increase opportunities for the country's youth.

"It shows the growing interest across the world to invest in India!" he said on X.


'Still early days for what we can build'


Several global corporations have announced large investments in the world's most populous nation, which has more than a billion internet users.

There has been a string of billion-dollar data centre announcements from tech giants like Google as well as domestic firms such as Reliance Industries.



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