



AGRICULTURE
FAO launches Japanese-funded project to boost drought resilience in Jordan
2



TOURISM
Number of Jordanians travelling abroad drops 17.7% in 4 months — DoS
3



GROWTH
Jordan's industrial exports rise 9.1% to record JD2.8b in first four months — JCI
7



FOOTBALL
France wary of Sweden side with 'nothing to lose' at World Cup
8



Tuesday, June 30, 2026 | Muharram 15, 1448 Hijri



Public Security Directorate photo

Jordan's international search and rescue team on Monday says it recovered 11 bodies from two different locations in Caracas, Venezuela

Jordan's search, rescue team continues field operations in Venezuela

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's international search and rescue team dispatched by the Public Security Directorate/Civil Defence to Caracas said on Monday that it continues undertaking its efforts within the disaster response to the earthquakes that struck Venezuela. Since commencement of operations two days ago, the team has managed to recover a number of bodies from under the rubble. The team recovered 11 bodies from two different locations in Caracas yesterday, including a collapsed 10-storey building, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The team, which includes internationally qualified specialised staff, is operating in coordination with the relevant authorities in Venezuela.

Citizen's remains recovered from rubble in quake-hit Venezuela — FM

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday announced the recovery of the remains of a Jordanian citizen who had been trapped under the rubble following the twin earthquakes that struck Venezuela. In a statement, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Fuad Majali said that the Jordan International Search and Rescue Team assisted in recovering the remains. He added that the ministry, through its Operations and Consular Affairs Directorate and the Jordanian Embassy in Brazil, is providing necessary support and assistance to the victim's family, as well as to Jordanians residing in Venezuela. Majali also called on Jordanians in Venezuela to contact the ministry or the Jordanian embassy in Brazil to request assistance, noting that services are available around the clock.

port and assistance to the victim's family, as well as to Jordanians residing in Venezuela. Majali also called on Jordanians in Venezuela to contact the ministry or the Jordanian embassy in Brazil to request assistance, noting that services are available around the clock.



Jordan extends condolences over death of Qatari citizen in regional military operations

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday expressed condolences to the government and people of Qatar over the death of a Qatari citizen killed by shrapnel resulting from military operations in the region, which also injured another resident. Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Fuad Majali reiterated Jordan's solidarity with Qatar, extending condolences to the victim's family and wishing the injured a speedy recovery, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

dan's solidarity with Qatar, extending condolences to the victim's family and wishing the injured a speedy recovery, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.



AFP photo

A man speaks with a child while sitting near an unexploded artillery shell that fell during reported overnight Israeli bombardment that hit the village of Abidin in Syria's southwestern Daraa province, close to the Golan Heights, on Monday

Jordan condemns Israeli aggression on Syria

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry on Monday condemned continued Israeli attacks on Syrian territory, including recent incursions and artillery shell- ing in the governorates of Quneitra and Daraa. In a statement, the ministry said that the attacks constitute "blatant" violations of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity and a "clear" breach of international law and the UN Charter.

Continued on page 5

Social Development Ministry unveils national plan to combat violence against women, children

Strategy introduces costed framework, strengthens prevention, coordination, survivor-centred services

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — Deputising for the prime minister, Minister of Social Development Wafaa Bani Mustafa on Monday launched the National Multi-Sectoral Action Plan for the Prevention of and Response to Child Protection Issues, Family Violence, and Violence against Women and Girls (2026-2030).

The plan, developed by the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFCA) in partnership with UNICEF and UNFPA, provides a costed national framework aimed at strengthening prevention and response systems across sectors. It was prepared through a broad participatory process involving government institutions, civil society organisations, UN agencies and technical experts, and included consultations with hundreds of stakeholders, including children, women, persons with disabilities, service providers and specialists. Bani Mustafa said the plan reflects Jordan's national approach, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, to protecting human dignity and strengthening social cohesion, stressing that family stability remains a cornerstone of national development.



Petra photo

Minister of Social Development Wafaa Bani Mustafa on Monday launches the National Multi-Sectoral Action Plan for the Prevention of and Response to Child Protection Issues, Family Violence, and Violence against Women and Girls (2026-2030)

participatory process involving government institutions, civil society organisations, UN agencies and technical experts, and included consultations with hundreds of stakeholders, including children, women, persons with disabilities, service providers and specialists. Bani Mustafa said the plan reflects Jordan's national approach, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, to protecting human dignity and strengthening social cohesion, stressing that family stability remains a cornerstone of national development.

experts, and included consultations with hundreds of stakeholders, including children, women, persons with disabilities, service providers and specialists. Bani Mustafa said the plan reflects Jordan's national approach, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, to protecting human dignity and strengthening social cohesion, stressing that family stability remains a cornerstone of national development.

sons with disabilities, service providers and specialists. Bani Mustafa said the plan reflects Jordan's national approach, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, to protecting human dignity and strengthening social cohesion, stressing that family stability remains a cornerstone of national development.

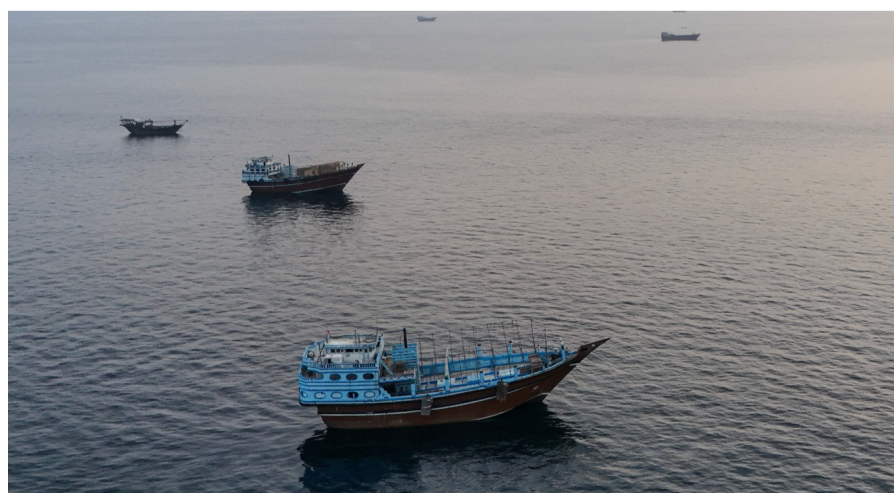
dan's national approach, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, to protecting human dignity and strengthening social cohesion, stressing that family stability remains a cornerstone of national development. The strategy aligns with the Economic Modernisation Vision (2023-2033), the National Social Protection Strategy (2025-2033) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and underscores that protecting women and children is a shared national responsibility requiring coordinated action across all institutions.

Continued on page 5

Trump says Iran meeting to take place in Qatar

TEHRAN (AFP) — US President Donald Trump said Iran has requested a meeting that will be held in Qatar on Tuesday, despite Tehran earlier denying that any technical talks on the deal aimed at ending the Middle East war were planned.

The announcement came after Iran held its first talks with Oman on managing the Strait of Hormuz since the US-Iran deal was signed, and as Washington and Tehran agreed to halt their attacks, which had strained the agreement. "IRAN HAS REQUESTED A MEETING. IT WILL TAKE PLACE TOMORROW IN



AFP photo

This aerial photograph shows boats anchored off Oman's northern Musandam Peninsula near the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday

DOHA! Trump posted on his Truth Social platform on Monday, without specifying the participants. White House spokes-

woman Karoline Leavitt later told Fox News that US Envoy Steve Witkoff

and Trump's adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner "will be flying to Doha for high-level meetings this week". A diplomat with knowledge of the talks confirmed to AFP that officials from the US and Iran were due to meet in the Qatari capital to discuss the deal signed earlier this month.

and Trump's adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner "will be flying to Doha for high-level meetings this week". A diplomat with knowledge of the talks confirmed to AFP that officials from the US and Iran were due to meet in the Qatari capital to discuss the deal signed earlier this month.

"Technical teams working on the implementation of the MoU are scheduled to meet in Doha in the coming days," the diplomat said on condition of anonymity. The diplomat added that "communications channels created to de-escalate any incidents are in place" after the strikes. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, however, denied reports that technical talks were "planned for this week", state TV reported. Nevertheless, a US official also told AFP that the negotiations would continue despite the recent strikes. "Both sides will stand down for now and vessels can move freely" in and around the Strait of Hormuz, the official said in an e-mail.

are in place" after the strikes. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, however, denied reports that technical talks were "planned for this week", state TV reported.

Nevertheless, a US official also told AFP that the negotiations would continue despite the recent strikes. "Both sides will stand down for now and vessels can move freely" in and around the Strait of Hormuz, the official said in an e-mail.

Iran's exercise of control over the strait has sparked repeated flare-ups, the latest of which came early on Sunday when US Central Command said it had attacked 10 Iranian military targets over "continued Iranian aggression against commercial shipping".

Iran said it retaliated with strikes against US bases in Kuwait and Bahrain.

The blockade remains a key sticking point in the US negotiations. Iran and Oman border the strait, through which a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas passed prior to the conflict, and Iran said on Monday they held their first talks since the deal was struck.

Iran said it retaliated with strikes against US bases in Kuwait and Bahrain. The blockade remains a key sticking point in the US negotiations. Iran and Oman border the strait, through which a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas passed prior to the conflict, and Iran said on Monday they held their first talks since the deal was struck.

Iran warned on Sunday that any attempt by ships to bypass its preferred route through Hormuz would "increase tensions" in the Middle East.

"During a trip to Muscat, the first meeting of the Joint Hormuz Committee was held," said Gharibabadi on X. "While reviewing the current issues related to the strait, we exchanged views on the future management." The strait comprises Omani and Iranian territorial waters, but under customary international law the two cannot generally block passage or charge tolls.

Iran warned on Sunday that any attempt by ships to bypass its preferred route through Hormuz would "increase tensions" in the Middle East.

Continued on page 5



Al Mamlaka TV photo

The project addresses the growing challenges of drought, water scarcity and climate change affecting the Jordanian agricultural sector

FAO launches Japanese-funded project to boost drought resilience in Jordan

AMMAN (JT) — The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) in Jordan launched a new project, funded by the Japanese government in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture. The project addresses the growing challenges of drought, water scarcity and climate change affecting the Jordanian agricultural sector, according to Al Mamlaka TV.

The initiative, titled "From Scarcity to Sustainability: Building Adaptive Drought Interventions in Agriculture — Climate Adaptation and Drought Resilient Jordan", aims to promote the agroecological approach and showcase climate-smart agricultural practices.

The project targets drought affected and refugee hosting communities in northern Jordan.

A representative of Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khreisat and Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Hideki Asari attended the launch ceremony.

The initiative targets around 380 beneficiaries, which include smallholder farmers from both refugee and host communi-

ties, women-led cooperatives, and ministry employees in Ajloun, Jerash and Northern Shuna.

FAO will implement the project in close cooperation with the National Agricultural Research Centre.

Key activities include distributing agricultural inputs and establishing demonstration sites for climate-smart practices, and the project also enhances institutional capacities in drought preparedness and water resource management.

Asari stressed Japan's commitment to supporting climate change adaptation efforts, noting that the project aligns with Japan's development cooperation policy for Jordan.

The ambassador expressed hope that the "timely intervention" will help Jordan address the severe impacts of drought at institutional and community levels.

He added that the project provides livelihood opportunities in vulnerable areas to support Jordan's sustainable economic growth.

Representing the Ministry of Agriculture,

Khalil Omar said that drought related challenges cross national borders, stressing the need to enhance collective action, exchange knowledge and transfer technology.

Omar also called for expanding climate finance and investing in scientific research and innovation, emphasising building effective partnerships across sectors to create more efficient, resilient and sustainable agricultural and food systems.

Acting FAO Representative in Jordan Paul Opio noted that promoting agroecological and climate-smart agricultural practices serves as a "vital" investment in vulnerable areas, as this investment meets immediate adaptation needs and builds long-term resilience.

Opio stressed that building drought-resistant agricultural systems remains essential to achieve food security and economic stability.

The project contributes to achieving several Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), Goal 13 (Climate Action) and Goal 15 (Life on Land).

Issawi inspects Royal initiative projects in Karak, Aqaba

AMMAN (JT) — Royal Hashemite Court Chief Yousef Issawi on Monday inspected a series of development projects in Karak and Aqaba governorates as part of ongoing field follow-up directed by His Majesty King Abdullah to ensure their timely implementation.

During the tour, Issawi, who also heads the committee overseeing the implementation of Royal Initiatives, reviewed progress on projects aimed at creating job opportunities, expanding green spaces, enhancing services for persons with disabilities and upgrading youth infrastructure.

In Karak, Issawi visited the production branch of El Zay Ready Wear Manufacturing Company in the Mujib area, established under the Royal Initiatives in line with directives to set up production branches across the Kingdom's governorates.

The initiative aims to create employment opportunities within local communities, reducing the need for residents to travel to cities and industrial zones while lowering transportation costs, according to a Royal Court statement.

Issawi reviewed operations at the factory, which was inaugurated during His Majesty's visit to Karak Governorate last November. The facility currently employs 100 workers from the area and surrounding villages, with numbers expected to rise to 220 during its first year of operation.

More than 35 production branches have been established under the Royal Initiatives across



Petra photo

Royal Hashemite Court Chief Yousef Issawi on Monday inspects a series of development projects in Karak and Aqaba governorates

the Kingdom, particularly in remote areas, creating over 10,000 jobs.

Issawi also inspected the "Roots" project in the Sunaynah area of Qasr District, launched in 2012 under Royal directives to expand green spaces and improve the environment.

He reviewed the fourth and final expansion phase, implemented in cooperation with the German Agency for International Cooperation, World Vision International and Al Haq Foundation.

The expansion includes planting an additional 3,200 dunnums with around 160,000 forest trees, 13,000 olive trees and 10,000 prickly pear trees, the statement said.

Upon completion, the project will cover nearly 27,000 dunnums and

include more than one million forest and fruit trees, including 40,000 olive trees, 15,000 pomegranate trees and 10,000 prickly pear trees. The project also includes four wells, irrigation reservoirs, road infrastructure, and a solar-powered energy system.

In Aqaba Governorate, Issawi inspected the construction of the Inclusive Day Services Centre for Persons with Disabilities in Wadi Araba.

The centre, built on a 4,000 square-metre site with a 900 square-metre building, includes nine classrooms, occupational and physical therapy rooms, an early intervention unit, a computer laboratory, a speech therapy room, a social worker's office, administrative offices, a meeting room and a re-

ception area.

The project, which is 20 per cent complete, is designed to provide care and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities in accordance with the highest standards, the statement said.

Issawi concluded the tour by inspecting the rehabilitation and development project at Aqaba Youth City.

The project includes expanding spectator stands, constructing additional seating, upgrading changing rooms for players and referees, and carrying out electrical and maintenance works at the stadium. Construction has reached 30 per cent completion.

In a statement following the tour, Issawi said the inspections are part of ongoing field monitoring of Royal Initia-

tive projects, reflecting His Majesty King Abdullah's commitment to continuous on-the-ground follow-up.

He said that the implementation of these projects is guided by a comprehensive approach aimed at translating the King's vision into tangible development outcomes that directly benefit citizens.

He stressed the importance of adhering to implementation schedules and quality standards, while ensuring close coordination among all relevant entities to accelerate project delivery.

Issawi added that the Royal Initiatives reflect the priorities of local communities and complement national development plans and programmes aimed at improving public services.

Image Festival Amman concludes with 'landmark' Mexican participation



Photo by Eliaf Khurshed

Mexican Ambassador Jacob Prado joins renowned photographer Bob Schalkwijk during the closing reception of Image Festival Amman 2026 at the MMAG Foundation

By Enad Abbadi

AMMAN — Image Festival Amman 2026 concluded on Monday with a reception at the MMAG Foundation attended by renowned photographer Bob Schalkwijk, whose participation marked a milestone in the festival's history through the first-ever inclusion of Mexican photographers.

Schalkwijk travelled from Mexico to take part in the festival through his exhibition Tarahumara, a public lecture and the closing ceremony, bringing to a close the 14th edition

of the annual photography event.

Organised by Darat Al Tasweer since 2011 in partnership with Jordanian and international institutions, Image Festival Amman has established itself as one of the "leading" photography festivals in the Middle East and the Arab world.

The festival annually brings together internationally acclaimed photographers alongside emerging talents, creating a platform for artistic dialogue, professional exchange and cultural collaboration.

Held under the theme "Behind the Scenes",

this year's edition featured 28 exhibitions, a book launch and a series of professional workshops organised in cooperation with the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.

Mexico participated through three exhibitions representing three generations of photographers, offering audiences insight into the diversity and richness of contemporary Mexican photography.

Schalkwijk presented Tarahumara, a visual chronicle spanning more than six decades and documenting the Rarámuri people of northern Mexico. Mexican

photographer Yolanda Andrade, who also travelled to Jordan to participate in the festival, exhibited Life Goes On, while Persia Campbell presented Liminal Spaces, a contemporary exploration shaped by life along the Mexico-United States border.

Throughout the festival, Schalkwijk met with photographers, students and photography enthusiasts, sharing experiences from a career that spans more than six decades. Together with Andrade's participation and Campbell's exhibition, the Mexican contribution offered Jordanian

audiences a rare opportunity to engage with three distinct artistic voices across generations.

Speaking during the closing reception, Mexican Ambassador Jacob Prado highlighted the significance of Mexico's participation, noting that it reflected the "growing cultural" relationship between Mexico and Jordan and demonstrated the diversity of Mexican photography.

"The Image Festival Amman 2026 concludes today with a reception honouring Bob Schalkwijk, a photographer who has documented

Mexico since 1959," Prado told The Jordan Times.

"His archive contains more than 700,000 photographs, not only from Mexico but also from many other countries," the ambassador added.

The embassy of Mexico expressed gratitude to Image Festival Amman, Darat Al Tasweer and Almanaque Fotográfica, as well as the participating artists and organisers, for contributing to what it described as a "successful first participation and the beginning of future cultural cooperation between the two countries".



RESCUE

Members of the Jordan International Search and Rescue Team carry out rescue operations amid earthquake rubble in Caracas, Venezuela to locate survivors trapped under collapsed buildings



Public Security Directorate photos



The 1,000-dunum park will feature water bodies as its primary element, alongside green spaces and picnic areas, and will be planted with various native trees and plants suited to the local climate

JCDCF, RSCN to establish 'major' ecological park within Amra City project

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordanian Company for the Development of Cities and Facilities (JCDCF) and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) on Monday signed a partnership agreement to establish a major ecological park as part of the first phase of the Amra City project, marking a qualitative addition to the Kingdom's environmental initiatives.

The 1,000-dunum park will serve as the centrepiece of the Amra City project. It will feature water bodies as its primary element, alongside green spaces and picnic areas, and will be planted with various native trees and plants suited to the local climate.

This initiative aims to restore the area's vegetation cover and transform the park into a station for migratory birds, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Construction is scheduled to begin in early July, with completion set within three years under the first phase of Amra City, providing a sustainable, long-term environmental haven.

RSCN will design, implement, and operate the park according to the highest environmental specifications.

The unique design

will adapt to the area's natural topography, utilising rainwater harvesting and natural valley pathways based on specialised environmental, engineering and technical studies.

The society will also manage and sustain the park, leveraging its extensive national expertise in the field.

The coalition will handle the master plan, architectural designs, and economic feasibility studies for the project...

Drawing its identity from the natural heritage of the Amra region, the site will undergo comprehensive landscaping to enhance local flora.

The park is part of the integrated development framework of Amra City, the largest urban development project in the Kingdom's history, which also includes a sports city, an international convention and exhibition centre and a

theme park, all aligning with the Economic Modernisation Vision for a greener and more sustainable future.

The state-owned JCDCF announced the awarding of a tender to a British-Saudi coalition to conduct the design and feasibility studies for the Kingdom's largest theme park, also within the first phase of Amra City.

The first phase of the theme park will cover 200 dunums out of a total planned area of 575 dunums, at an initial cost of JD50 million, and is slated to begin operations by late 2028.

The coalition will handle the master plan, architectural designs and economic feasibility studies for the project, which aims to become a unique tourist destination, generate hundreds of jobs, and stimulate various economic sectors under the quality-of-life pillar of the Economic Modernisation Vision.

JCDCF is wholly owned by the government and operates under the Jordan Investment Fund, tasked with overseeing project implementation, offering investment opportunities, and building local and international partnerships for the Amra City project.

Number of Jordanians travelling abroad drops 17.7% in 4 months — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — A total of 435,150 Jordanians travelled abroad for tourism during the first four months of 2026, according to Department of Statistics (DoS) data on outbound tourism.

The number represents a 17.7 per cent decrease compared to the same period in 2025, as the same four months in 2025 recorded 528,558 departing citizens, according to Al Mamlaka TV.

In January, the number of outbound tourists reached 161,709. The figure reached 104,051 in February and JD99,153 in March, while in April, the number reached 70,237, which brought the total to 435,150.

The sharpest decline occurred in April, as the number of outbound travellers dropped from 113,692 in April of 2025 to 70,237 in April



The Department of Statistics says that a total of 435,150 Jordanians travelled abroad for tourism during the first four months of 2026

of 2026, showing a 38.2 per cent decrease.

Previously published data also showed a 12.9 per cent drop in tourism expenditure abroad by Jordanians and residents during

the first four months of 2026, standing at \$562.6 million.

Tourism spending abroad in April 2026 alone recorded a 33.7 per cent decrease, reaching \$103.0

million.

Central Bank of Jordan data previously showed a decrease by 6.3 per cent in tourism spending by Jordanians and residents travelling abroad dur-

ing the first quarter of 2026, falling to \$459.7 million.

Net tourism income also declined during the first quarter of 2026 by 2.8 per cent, reaching \$1.19 billion.

Fayez, Meridiam CEO discuss implementation of National Water Carrier project

AMMAN (JT) — Senate President Faisal Fayez on Monday met Thierry Déau, chief executive officer of Meridiam, the French company leading the international consortium implementing the National Water Carrier Project.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of Fayez's official visit to France, at the invitation of French Senate President Gérard Larcher, and was attended by Jordan's Ambassador to France Lina Hadid and Étienne Blanc, deputy chairman of the Jordanian-French Parliamentary Friendship Committee in the French Senate, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

During the meeting, Fayez and the accompanying delegation were

briefed by Déau on Meridiam's role in the National Water Carrier Project, the financial strength of the consortium members and the company's commitment to implementing the project according to the highest international technical standards.

Déau said that Meridiam is keen to invest in Jordan, citing the Kingdom's stability, security, and favourable investment environment.

Fayez stressed the depth of Jordanian-French relations in the political, economic, and parliamentary fields, affirming both countries' commitment to further strengthening their longstanding ties.

He also highlighted the role of friendship committees in the Jordanian and French Sen-

ates in enhancing parliamentary cooperation and bilateral relations.

Fayez also expressed appreciation for Meridiam's participation in the National Water Carrier Project, describing it as a long-term strategic solution to Jordan's water scarcity and a commercially viable investment.

Fayez also highlighted investment opportunities in Jordan, particularly in renewable energy, railways, public transport and infrastructure, noting that the Kingdom offers a favourable investment climate supported by legislation providing incentives and facilitation for investors.

He called on Meridiam and other French companies to explore wider investment op-

portunities across the Kingdom.

Fayez also praised the role of French companies, financial institutions, and the French Development Agency in supporting Jordan's development priorities, particularly in water, infrastructure, energy, and economic modernisation sectors.

Blanc reaffirmed the strong ties between Jordan and France and stressed France's commitment to supporting the Kingdom in addressing challenges posed by regional developments.

The National Water Carrier Project is considered one of the "main pillars of Jordan's long-term water strategy" and is expected to "significantly" enhance the reliability and resili-

ence of water supplies for households and the industrial and agricultural sectors.

The project, which will be implemented through a public-private partnership model, aims to provide Jordan with around 300 million cubic metres of additional drinking water annually starting in 2030.

The project includes the construction of a "large" desalination plant on the Red Sea and around 450 kilometres of transmission pipelines to deliver desalinated water to Amman and other areas, in addition to the installation of solar photovoltaic systems to cover part of the project's energy needs through renewable energy sources.

Jerash Festival reflects Jordan's cultural narrative, human heritage — culture minister

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Culture and Chairman of the Higher Committee of the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts Mustafa Rawashdeh on Monday stressed that the festival represents a national cultural milestone that elevates artistic and cultural taste, enhances creative production, and contributes to comprehensive and sustainable development.

Chairing the first meeting of the Higher Committee for the festival's 40th edition, Rawashdeh said all programmes and activities are aligned with the state's discourse and the Jordanian narrative, reflecting the history of the land and its people within a broader human context, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He added that the Jerash Festival is not limited to singing and music, but constitutes a



Minister of Culture and Chairman of the Higher Committee of the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts Mustafa Rawashdeh says that the programme includes a wide range of activities, featuring 78 cultural events, including poetry evenings, seminars, and performances by University of Jordan choirs, in addition to 59 musical and singing performances

celebration of human culture in its various forms, including poetry, novels, theatre, cinema, folklore, handicrafts and fine arts, noting that several administrative and organisational measures have been adopted alongside the introduction of new

spaces and programmes.

Outlining the festival's lineup, Rawashdeh said the programme includes a wide range of activities, featuring 78 cultural events, including poetry evenings, seminars and performances by University of Jordan

choirs, in addition to 59 musical and singing performances.

He added that the current edition also comprises 20 cultural exchange activities, 19 folklore and heritage shows, 19 family and children's activities, 11 embassy pavilion

events, four theatre and dance performances, and three fine arts exhibitions.

Regarding the geographical distribution of events within the ancient city of Jerash, Rawashdeh said the Hippodrome will host 34 events, the Artemis Theatre 30, and the Family and Children's Area 16. He added that 12 events are scheduled for the North Theatre, 11 for the South Theatre, 11 for the Embassy Pavilions, and three non-artistic events at the Oval Plaza.

In Amman and other governorates, the National Library Department will host 32 events, while 20 events will be held across various cultural sites in the governorates. The Royal Cultural Centre will host 19 events, followed by 12 at the Roman Theatre, 11 at the Odeon in downtown Amman, and two at the University of Jordan.

Vegetation cover in Azraq Basin increases 54.5% in 10 years

AMMAN (JT) — A recent scientific study by a team from the Azraq Wetland Reserve, managed by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), has revealed the success of environmental conservation efforts in restoring natural vegetation cover within Azraq Basin area.

The achievement comes less than 10 years after the area was integrated into the reserve's boundaries and subjected to specialised ecological management, including fencing and strict protection protocols, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The study, conducted by reserve director Hazem Hreisha and environmental researcher Tamer Aqaily, used remote sensing techniques and satellite imagery analysis via the Normalised Difference Vegetation Index to compare the area's vegetation cover



Photo courtesy of the Royal Society For The Conservation of Nature

Results of the study show that the total vegetation cover expanded significantly from 2.30 square kilometres in 2015 to 14.83 square kilometres in 2025.

Results showed that the total vegetation cover expanded significantly from 2.30 square kilometres in 2015 to 14.83 square kilometres in 2025.

This marks an increase of 12.53 square kilometres, or 54.5 per cent, corresponding with an equal decrease in arid lands.

The RSCN noted that

the study recorded a "substantial" rise in scattered plants, shrubs, and grasslands, indicating widespread natural regeneration and an improved ecosystem within Azraq Basin area.

This recovery enhances habitats for migratory and resident birds, combats desertification, stabilises soil, and elevates the area's ecological and tourism value.

Cassation Court upholds over 3-year sentence for drug dealer

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Court of Cassation has upheld a March 2023 State Security Court (SSC) ruling, sentencing two men to over three years in prison each after convicting them of possessing illegal narcotics in Amman in October 2023.

The court declared

the defendants guilty of possessing illegal narcotics with the intent of selling the drugs to an undercover agent in Rasheed Neighbourhood on October 16.

The SSC handed the defendants five years in prison each for the offence of possessing illegal narcotics and ordered them to pay

JD5,000 in fines each.

However, the court decided to reduce the fine to JD3,500 and the prison term to three years and four months in prison for each of the two defendants to give them a second chance in life.

Court documents said the Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) learnt the defendants were

in possession of illegal narcotics and sent one of its agents to pose as a buyer.

"The AND agent got in touch with the defendants and asked them for a small stash of hashish and 12 Captagon pills in return for JD50," court documents said.

When the two met with the AND agents, they were immediately

arrested, court papers added.

Upon searching the defendants, court papers said, AND personnel found "a small quantity of illegal narcotics in their possession, including Crystal meth, Captagon pills and Hashish".

The law enforcement officers also found a cell phone with one

of the defendants that contained "incriminating chats with various individuals related to illicit drug sales in the local market," according to court documents.

The defendants contested the SSC's ruling through their lawyer, who argued that the court "did not provide solid evidence to im-

plicate their client".

Meanwhile, the SSC prosecution office asked the higher court to uphold the sentences and the fines imposed on the defendants.

The higher court maintained that the SSC had followed the proper procedures in issuing the sentences against the defendants. "It was clear to the

court that the defendants confessed willingly to possessing the illegal drugs with the intent to sell in the local market," the higher court said.

The Court of Cassation judges were Yassin Abdullat, Nayef Samarat, Mohammad Khashshneh, Hammad Ghzawi and Qassem Dughmi.



Vehicles drive along the Al Jumhuri Street in central Baghdad on Sunday

Iraq sets September 30 deadline for pro-Iran groups to disarm

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq's government has given pro-Iran armed groups in the country until September 30 to disarm, coinciding with the end of the US-led anti-extremist coalition's mission, its spokesman said on Monday.

The announcement comes ahead of a visit to the United States by new Prime Minister Ali Al Zaidi, with Washington exerting pressure on Baghdad to ensure the factions turn in their weapons.

"All the armed groups have been informed of a specific date that marks the end of this issue [of disarmament]... which is September 30, which also marks the end of the international coalition's presence," government spokesman Haidar Al Aboudi said in a weekly press conference.

"After this date, all weapons outside the state framework will be subject to legal redress," he added.

Iraq is home to several powerful Iran-backed armed factions, which have seen their political and financial clout

increase over the years.

Many emerged in the wake of the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq and gained further power and prominence during the fight against the Daesh group from 2014 onwards.

They have long called for the withdrawal of American troops deployed within the anti-extremist coalition, and they have frequently hit bases hosting US troops.

During the Middle East war, they have intervened in support of Tehran, targeting US facilities in Iraq more than 600 times. They also hit targets in Gulf countries.

Washington in turn launched its own attacks on the factions, before withholding cash payments for Iraqi oil revenues, which are largely at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York under an agreement reached following the invasion.

In early May, Washington pledged to resume financial transfers to Iraq and security assistance once "concrete steps" had

been taken against the groups.

During a meeting with European ambassadors on Monday, Zaidi "stressed that confining arms to the hands of the state is not merely a slogan, but a policy already being implemented", according to his media office.

"The government remains committed to this course, particularly as Coalition forces are scheduled to complete their withdrawal by September 30," said Zaidi, who recently took office with the blessing of the United States.

Powerful Iraqi politicians have also called for a state monopoly on weapons.

While some armed groups announced they will cooperate to hand over weapons to the state, others remain adamant that the issue should not be discussed under US pressure.

Iraq has long been a proxy battleground for Iran and the United States, with Baghdad trying to walk a fine line between its two key allies but mutual enemies.

Lebanon army chief discusses Israel deal with US military commander

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — The Lebanese army said its chief and a senior US military commander discussed on Monday implementing a US-Lebanon-Israel agreement signed last week that aims to halt hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah.

Lebanon's Rodolphe Haykal received Admiral Brad Cooper, the commander responsible for US troops in the Middle East, with the discussions addressing "the latest developments in Lebanon and the region", a Lebanese army statement said.

Haykal and Cooper also discussed "the importance of successfully implementing the security annex of the framework agreement", as well as ways of strengthening future cooperation, the statement added.

On Friday, Lebanon and Israel, under US sponsorship, signed a "trilateral framework" agreement seeking to end hostilities, after the Iran-backed Hizbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war in March with rocket fire at Israel, triggering Israeli air strikes and a ground invasion.

The deal commits Lebanon to restoring sovereignty over its territory through the "verified disarmament of non-state armed groups and dismantlement of associated infrastructure", enabling a progressive Israeli withdrawal, according to the text released by the State Department.

"The components of this process will be



This handout photo released by the Lebanese army press office shows Lebanese army chief Rodolphe Haykal (right) meeting with Admiral Brad Cooper, the commander of US Central Command, at the Lebanese ministry of defence in Yarz on Monday

detailed in a Security Annex, developed with the full support of the United States," the text said, without immediately publishing the annex.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Friday that Washington would reimburse Lebanon's army for \$30 million as it seeks to "improve the capability and capacity" of the Lebanese military.

Washington has long been a key supporter of Lebanon's army.

Hizbollah chief Naim Qassem has called the agreement "null and void" and instead called for the implementation of a US-Iran Memorandum of Understanding to halt the regional war that included Lebanon.

The Israel-Lebanon talks in Washington have sought to separate Lebanon from the Iran deal.

However, Friday's agreement came after a lull in fighting that followed the US-Iran Memorandum, which

Tehran insisted should include Lebanon.

Washington has long been a key supporter of Lebanon's army

Hizbollah on Monday said it reserved the

right to self-defence after several Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon the day before, accusing Israel of a "blatant violation of the ceasefire".

Israeli troops are operating in a self-declared "security zone" stretching around 10 kilometres deep inside Lebanese territory along the border.

Lebanese authorities say Israeli attacks since the war began on March 2 have killed more than 4,200 people.

In Sudan's Kordofan, a key city reels as paramilitary offensive looms

EL OBEID, Sudan (AFP) — In a displacement camp near El-Obeid in Sudan's southern Kordofan region, Agsam Hamad trudges through searing heat to fetch murky water from a distant well, as paramilitary forces unleash their fiercest assault yet on the strategic city.

"We walk long distances for this water and it is undrinkable," the 35-year-old mother of seven told AFP from the camp on the edge of El-Obeid, a key prize in the three-year war between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

"Our situation is very difficult. We need food and water."

El-Obeid, a city of half a million people that hosts nearly 100,000 refugees displaced by violence elsewhere, has, in recent weeks, faced its most intense RSF attacks yet.

After breaking a prolonged siege in February last year, the army has struggled to stop the RSF from reimposing a blockade through repeated drone strikes targeting the city, its infrastructure and the main highway out.

Recent attacks have hit the main power station and fuel depots, plunged neighbourhoods into darkness and shut down water pumps.

With taps dry, residents now depend on tanker trucks, wells and a handful of distribution points, they told AFP.



A Sudanese girl reacts while carrying a plastic canister in al-Rahmaniyah camp for displaced people, near the city of El-Obeid in the southern Kordofan region, on June 25

The UN has warned of "substantial" RSF troop movements around the city ahead of a possible ground assault, raising fears of a repeat of the atrocities seen in El-Fasher, the Darfur city which fell to the RSF last October in an attack the UN said bore "the hallmarks of genocide".

Nohad Eltayeb of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a US-based non-profit, said that over the past month troop movements have been observed roughly 60 kilometres north, south and west of El-Obeid.

The eastern route to Kosti, about 300 kilometres from the capital Khartoum, remains under army control but is extremely dangerous, she told AFP.

El-Obeid sits at a key crossroads linking army-held areas in cen-

tral and eastern Sudan, including Khartoum, with RSF-controlled Darfur to the west.

Analysts say capturing it would consolidate RSF control over western Sudan and potentially open the way for a push towards the capital.

El-Obeid hosts an infantry division, an air base, a key oil pipeline and a major tree gum market.

"Controlling it is about power, land and money," said analyst Kholood Khair.

Fighting and tight restrictions have all but cut off access to the city, making independent reporting increasingly difficult.

An AFP journalist captured rare footage at Al Rahmaniyah camp showing exhausted women shuffling under a punishing sun, jerrycans swaying on their heads after hours spent

waiting for water at a distant well.

At the camp, nearly 200 families are crammed into fragile shelters stitched together from straw, torn fabric and sheets of plastic.

Children linger in the narrow shade cast by the huts, some too tired to play, others trailing silently after their mothers.

"We have nothing. No water, food or mattresses," Waseela Mohamed, a 70-year-old grandmother of seven, told AFP.

Aid deliveries that reached the camp weeks ago have dwindled as services across the city are repeatedly hit.

"Humanitarian groups are doing what they can, but the needs are far greater," said a volunteer, who asked not to be named.

Inside El-Obeid, drones buzz almost constantly, said Adam Hussein, using a pseudonym for fear of reprisals.

"We don't know what is really happening.

Everything is in crisis. Civilians and infrastructure are constantly targeted," he told AFP.

As he spoke, a drone crashed nearby, causing no casualties.

With water prices doubling, food costs rising by up to 300 per cent and transport fares also surging, many residents are now effectively "surrounded", said Khair.

"Many haven't left because they can't afford to or don't know where to go," she told AFP.

Mohamed Refaat of the International Organisation for Migration warned the city is nearing a total siege, with civilians "soon unable to leave or return".

UN agencies have suspended access as security deteriorates while needs are outpacing pre-positioned supplies, he told AFP.

Without immediate aid, Refaat said conditions could "within weeks" mirror those seen in El-Fasher, where civilians survived on animal feed during 18 months under siege.

The UN says more than 6,000 people were killed in the first three days of its fall.

Western countries have warned of the risk of similar atrocities if El-Obeid falls.

A government source told AFP the army has tried to slow the RSF advance, destroying equipment en route last week.

A source close to the RSF accused the army of using civilians as "human shields", arguing they should be evacuated.

While the city's demographics differ from El Fasher, where violence fell on ethnic lines, ACLED's Eltayeb said civilians "could still face looting, sexual violence and attacks on those accused of supporting the army".



Relatives mourn the death of Amir Ahmad Jawad Jaber, a Palestinian teenager who was killed during an Israeli raid, at a hospital in Ramallah, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Monday

Israeli forces kill Palestinian teen in West Bank

RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Israeli forces fatally shot a 15-year-old Palestinian teenager during a raid in the occupied West Bank on Monday, the Palestinian health ministry said, as violence surges in the Israeli-occupied territory.

The child Amir Ahmad Jawad Jaber, 15 years old, was martyred after being shot in the head and once in the chest by occupation soldiers during their raid in the Umm Al Sharayit neighbourhood in Al Bireh near the West Bank city of Ramallah, the ministry said.

There was no immediate response from the Israeli military when asked by AFP about the incident.

The Palestinian Red Crescent had earlier said its teams were transporting to hospital and trying to resuscitate a 15-year-old

who was shot in the head with live ammunition during a raid in the Umm Al Sharayit area.

In broad daylight," Laila Ghannam, governor of Ramallah and Al Bireh, told AFP.

"This is a disgrace to all institutions who claim to uphold democracy and human rights.

When it comes to our cause, they see nothing. They allow this occupation to escalate its campaign of terror every single day — not only across Palestine, but throughout the entire region."

Since the start of the Gaza war in October 2023, violence has escalated in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967.

Israeli soldiers or settlers have killed at least 1,085 Palestinians in the West Bank since October 2023, including both militants and civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Palestinian health ministry data, which says 71 people were killed in 2026.

Dozens of mourners gathered at the Palestine Medical Complex as grieving relatives wept over the teenager's body.

"Today, we witnessed a clear-cut execution



Minister of Youth Raed Adwan on Monday inaugurates the 2026 Hussein Camps for Work and Construction with the participation of more than 32,000 young people across the Kingdom

Youth Ministry launches 2026 Hussein Camps

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Minister for HRH Crown Prince Hussein, Minister of Youth Raed Adwan on Monday inaugurated the 2026 Hussein Camps for Work and Construction, under the theme “Independence 80”, with the participation of more than 32,000 young people across the Kingdom.

The opening ceremony, held at Qadisiyah Youth Camp, marked the inauguration of the Adventure Field at Qadisiyah Youth Camp, featuring obstacle and challenge courses designed to enhance participants’ physical fitness, leadership abilities and self-confidence.

During the visit, Adwan toured a number of activity stations, including taekwondo, boxing, self-defence, first aid and scout camping,

where he met participants and observed the training programmes, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The camps aim to strengthen the values of citizenship, belonging and loyalty, promote volunteerism and equip young people with practical, leadership and digital skills while fostering creativity, innovation and active community engagement during the summer holiday.

Running from June 27 to August 27, the programme comprises 978 day and residential camps targeting young people aged 12 to 30. The camps are organised in partnership with government institutions, security agencies, national and international organisations, and civil society groups.

This year’s pro-

gramme features a broad range of activities, including community service, environmental volunteering, road safety awareness, scouting and guiding, the Jordanian national narrative, rescue and crisis management, mural painting, entrepreneurship, digital skills, tourism trails, adventure and challenge activities, healthy minds initiatives, peacebuilding and community partnerships.

For the first time, the ministry will also organise a dedicated camp for young Jordanians living abroad who are visiting the Kingdom during the summer. The initiative aims to strengthen their connection to Jordan and introduce them to the country’s youth programmes and development initiatives.

Ebola outbreak in DR Congo spreads to fourth province

KINSHASA (AFP) — A deadly Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has spread to a fourth province, meaning the country’s entire north-east — home to around 15 million people — is now affected.

The epidemic has claimed 360 lives out of 1,274 confirmed cases, according to figures from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The DRC declared its 17th outbreak of the viral haemorrhagic fever on May 15. This time, it is caused by the Bundibugyo strain, for which there is no vaccine or specific treatment.

Clinical trials are set to begin in the coming days, according to the WHO, which has issued an international alert over the disease.

The conflict-hit Ituri province is the epicentre of the latest outbreak, reporting 1,165 cases and 301 deaths, according to health authorities.

Scientists and aid workers say the real numbers are likely higher.

Until now, two other provinces had been affected: North Kivu and South Kivu.

Twenty cases, including two deaths, have also been reported across the border in Uganda.

Haut-Uele, bordering South Sudan and the Central African Republic, is now the fourth affected province.

One case was detected after an infected person travelled from Bunia, Ituri’s capital, into



The epidemic has claimed 360 lives out of 1,274 confirmed cases

Haut-Uele, according to a source at the National Institute of Biomedical Research. That person has since died, another health source told AFP.

Authorities are now trying to trace the chain of transmission and identify contacts.

In many cases, the virus has spread at funerals, where the highly infectious bodies of Ebola victims are handled.

For weeks, aid workers, facing mistrust among local communities, have struggled to plan safe burials in affected areas to prevent contact with the dead.

In the DRC, as in much of Africa, funerals often last several days, during which family and friends traditionally touch the

body of the deceased. Health centres have reported incidents of angry confrontations after relatives demanded they hand over the body of their family member.

Hard to contain

Both Ituri and Haut-Uele are border regions with heavy cross-border movement and trade, which can speed up the spread of the virus.

Ituri has faced years of violence, with massacres carried out by local militias and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), which is linked to the Daesh group.

The ADF has recently launched incursions into Haut-Uele, also troubled by armed groups from

neighbouring countries. The insecurity makes it harder to roll out the health response, which was already slow to get off the ground.

Health workers say the virus may have been spreading for months before it was officially detected, with some suspected cases dating back to January.

Although efforts have been stepped up in recent weeks, healthcare systems in the regions remain weak.

Facilities often lack even basic supplies such as protective equipment and disinfectants.

Ebola treatment centres, set up with support from the WHO and aid groups, are already overwhelmed.

According to the National Public Health Institute, they are operating at more than 138 per cent capacity.

The outbreak has also hit medical staff, with 78 health workers infected while 18 have died so far.

Experts say the outbreak has not yet reached its peak, even more than six weeks in, and warn the crisis could last up to a year.

Ebola, which spreads through contact with bodily fluids, has killed more than 15,000 people in Africa over the past 50 years.

The deadliest outbreak in the DRC came between 2018 and 2020, when nearly 2,300 people died out of 3,500 cases.

Europe’s deadly heatwave scorches eastern flank, takes aim at Ukraine

PARIS, France (AFP) — The most severe heatwave ever recorded in Europe roasted central and eastern parts of the continent on Monday and began to creep over Ukraine, which scrambled to prepare its war-ravaged power grid for the shock of scorching heat.

The heatwave first smothered western Europe last week, sending mercury to record highs and straining hospitals, transport networks and power grids on a continent where infrastructure was not built to withstand the punishing temperatures and where air conditioning is not widespread.

More than 1,300 excess deaths were recorded in Europe since June 21, according to the UN health agency, including several small children who died in locked cars and youths who drowned as they sought relief from the infernal temperatures in unsupervised swimming spots.

France reported at least 74 drowning deaths since June 18 and Poland said 17 drowned on Sunday alone.

“I’m doing the same thing as everyone, try-



People walk past the Royal Castle reflected in the pond on Warsaw’s Old Town as thermometers show record temperatures during a heatwave that has reached Poland on Sunday

ing to stay in the shade and drink a lot of water,” Susanne, a Vienna resident, told AFP on a bank of a river near the Austrian capital.

“I just hope that the politicians will understand the situation and will begin to set a course in the right direction,” she said.

On Monday, the Balkans braced for temperatures of up to 40°C, with firefighters in Bosnia battling blazes sparked during the heat.

At least 130 million people in Europe were expected to swelter through temperatures of more than 35°C, down

from 190 million on Sunday according to an AFP analysis.

This heatwave is the most severe ever recorded in Europe, and would have been “virtually impossible” this early in the summer without climate change, the World Weather Attribution group of scientists said.

All-time temperature records have been broken in Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic, as well as for the month of June in the UK and in Switzerland.

New shock for Ukraine

Ukraine on Monday was

preparing to absorb the blow from Nature on its energy network, already pummeled by Russian attacks over more than four years of war.

Grid operators in at least five regions, from Ivano-Frankivsk in the west to Zaporizhzhia on the front line in the south, announced temporary restrictions on energy usage would be in force during parts of Tuesday.

The state weather service said the country would face “intense heat”, with temperatures of 35°C-38°C expected on Monday.

“The heat is also a

serious test for equipment that has been operating under wartime conditions for more than four years and has withstood numerous attacks,” Sergii Kovalenko, CEO of the Yasn energy company said over the weekend.

He said that summer was the peak period for repairing the energy network, battered through the winter by repeat Russian attacks, meaning the grid was already “operating at the limit of its capabilities”.

Record temperatures

Over the weekend, the heat scorched the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland, with the countries setting new temperature records of 41.9°C, 41.7°C and 40.5°C, respectively.

The Berlin police used water cannons to help residents of the capital cool off for a second day running Sunday, this time at the Olympia venue where singer Bruno Mars was performing.

With temperatures cooling in France, the national weather service said on Sunday evening it was already anticipating the possibility of another heatwave in July.

Jordan condemns Israeli aggression on Syria

Continued from page 1

Ministry spokesperson Fuad Majali said that repeated Israeli attacks and measures targeting Syria’s security and stability must stop, warning that they constitute a violation of the UN Charter and Israel’s obligations under the 1974 Disengagement Agreement,

and represent a “dangerous” escalation that will only lead to further conflict and tension in the region.

Majali reiterated Jordan’s “firm support” for Syria’s reconstruction on foundations that preserve its unity, sovereignty, security, stability, territorial integrity and the rights of all Syrians.

He also called on the international community to assume its legal and moral responsibilities, compel Israel to halt its “provocative and illegitimate” attacks on Syria, end its occupation of parts of Syrian territory, and respect international law, relevant UN resolutions and state sovereignty.

Social Development Ministry unveils national plan to combat violence against women, children

Continued from page 1

The minister added that the plan translates national priorities into measurable actions through clear performance indicators and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure effective implementation and accountability.

She also highlighted the importance of prevention through community awareness, life skills programmes, and family and community empowerment, alongside expanding access to integrated services providing social, psychological, health and legal support under one roof.

NCFA Secretary-General Mohammad Maqdad said that the plan represents a shift towards a unified national protection system based on an evidence-driven methodology and coordinated institutional response.

He said that violence is a structural issue linked to poverty, social norms and gaps in early intervention, stressing that the new framework focuses on

prevention as well as response and aims to address root causes rather than isolated cases.

UNICEF Representative to Jordan Marc Rubin said the framework brings together coordinated systems, sustained investment and action at all levels to improve protection outcomes for children and families.

The plan is expected to guide national efforts over the next five years...

against women and girls as a development issue with broader social and economic impacts.

He added that investing in prevention should be viewed as a long-term investment in development, rather than a fiscal burden, given its impact on health, justice and social protection systems.

UNICEF Representative to Jordan Marc Rubin said the framework brings together coordinated systems, sustained investment and action at all levels to improve protection outcomes for children and families.

He added that the effectiveness of the plan will depend on implementation, coordination and sustained institutional commitment, alongside adequate resources.

The plan is expected to guide national efforts over the next five years to strengthen prevention mechanisms and ensure more efficient and equitable delivery of protection services across Jordan, according to officials.

Trump says Iran meeting to take place in Qatar

Continued from page 1

Iran insists ships transiting the strait pass through a corridor near its own shores.

How the memorandum is to be implemented remains unclear, with the issue of de-mining sparking Iranian displeasure on Monday.

In a joint statement following a meeting between French President Emanuel Macron and Omani Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Paris and Muscat said they would

conduct “joint de-mining operations”.

In response, Gharibabadi insisted on X that under the agreement only Iran was to conduct de-mining efforts and “no other country”.

“The situation is sensitive and complex. We strongly advise France not to complicate it further with its provocations,” he wrote.

Traffic slowed over the weekend after a vessel was struck while transiting the waterway on Saturday, with 29 com-

modity vessels crossing on Saturday and 12 transiting on Sunday, according to data from the maritime tracking firm Kpler.

No vessels used a southern corridor through Omani waters according to data from Kpler, while AXSMarine found that 44 vessels had stopped publicly transmitting their position.

‘Hegemonic dreams’

The published text of

the memorandum of understanding says Iran will define the future administration of the strait in dialogue with Oman and the other Gulf States, but “in line” with international law.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guards said they were taking measures to control traffic in the strait and that vessels violating those measures would be dealt with more firmly than before.

Mohammad Mokher, adviser to Iran’s

supreme leader, wrote on X that as long as Iran managed the strait, Washington’s “hegemonic dreams in the region will not be realised”.

Experts said there would likely be more Hormuz incidents.

For Iran, “a drawn-out negotiation accompanied by controlled pressure in the strait can work to its advantage”, said HA Hellyer of the Royal United Services Institute, a London think tank.

THE JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975

Chairman of the Board
Samih Maaitah

Director General
Hasan Jazzazi

Editor-in-Chief
Raed Omari

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
Website: jordantimes.com

Follow us on X Platform: [@jordantimes.com](https://twitter.com/jordantimes)
Like our facebook page: [thejordantimes](https://www.facebook.com/thejordantimes)
Youtube: [thejordantimes](https://www.youtube.com/thejordantimes)

National Library registration number:
D/1998/2062

Telephone: **5600800 ext. 2392**

Facsimile: **5696183**

Advertising facsimile: **5696183**

Circulation Department:
5600800 ext: 2383

The right way to tackle developing countries' cancer crisis

By **Thompson Ayodele**

LAGOS — In Nigeria, a cancer diagnosis is often a death sentence. Nearly 130,000 Nigerians receive one each year and nearly 80,000 die of the disease. An average of 33 women per day in Nigeria are infected with cervical cancer, and 22 women per day die from it. The problem is not that interventions do not exist, but that Nigerians — and developing-economy patients more broadly — lack access to them.

Breakthroughs in cancer treatment, especially immunotherapy, have drastically reduced the disease's mortality in recent decades. A mere generation ago, the idea that the immune system could be trained to fight cancer sounded like science fiction. Today, it represents the most promising front in cancer research, with more than 30 immunotherapies, treating 25 different forms of cancer, now approved by the US Food and Drug Administration.

The results speak for themselves. Patients with advanced melanoma were once expected to survive a mere 16 weeks. But, thanks to immunotherapy, they now have a one in three chance of living a decade or longer. Likewise, for some lung cancer patients, prognoses that were once measured in months are now measured in years.

But Nigerian patients rarely have access to immunotherapies or other innovative treatments. Even at major hospitals in Lagos and Abuja, doctors routinely find themselves unable to prescribe what they know could help their patients. So, while cancer patients in rich countries live longer than ever, Nigerians — like patients in many developing countries — continue to die.

Some believe that the best way to close this gap is to weaken intellectual-property protections for medical innovations and force drug makers to give away their treatments at little or no cost. They argue that patent rules and high prices create unfair barriers to healthcare. But this well-intentioned argument overlooks an inescapable reality: Without strong incentives for innovation, advanced treatments like immunotherapy would not exist at all.

The development of new cancer therapies requires immense investment and carries staggering risk. Since most new prospective drugs never succeed, the few that do must make up for the costs of the failures. Nigeria, like many developing countries, does not yet have the economic or scientific infrastructure required to develop its own cancer breakthroughs at scale, so it remains dependent on discoveries made in countries like the United States. If we dismantle the system that rewards their innovative activities in the name of faster access, progress will slow, and future patients in rich and poor countries alike will suffer as a result.

Patents expire, and when they do, low-cost generic versions emerge. In the meantime, several pharmaceutical companies and NGOs have launched initiatives designed to expand access to medicines in developing countries. The system might not be perfect, but at least it allows the breakthroughs to keep coming.

In any case, the biggest barriers to access to accurate cancer diagnosis and effective treatment in developing countries are not patents at all, but regulatory delays, weak healthcare infrastructure and poverty. Instead of attempting to dismantle incentives for innovation, governments should work on reducing bureaucratic red tape, speeding up approvals for imported medicines, and expanding healthcare infrastructure and capacity, which is in particularly short supply in rural areas.

Policymakers should also take action to improve overall living standards. Expanding trade and liberalising markets are among the most effective ways for developing countries to boost economic growth and dynamism. Faster growth, in turn, would enable higher investment in infrastructure and healthcare, while creating job opportunities that increase household incomes.

When lifesaving medicines are out of reach, calls for quick solutions are understandable. But a short-sighted approach risks turning today's tragedy into tomorrow's catastrophe. Weakening the incentives that underpin medical innovation will slow the pace of progress. And it is progress that is essential to prevent a cancer diagnosis from becoming a death sentence.

Thompson Ayodele is a senior research fellow at the Initiative for Public Policy Analysis, a public-policy think tank based in Lagos, Nigeria. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2026. www.project-syndicate.org

Economic impact assessment and better public policy

By **Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal**

As part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen public administration and enhance the quality of decision making in the public sector, the Jordanian Academy for Public Administration is delivering a specialised training programme titled "Economic Impact Assessment". The programme targets senior public sector officials and aims to promote a culture of evidence-based policymaking while equipping government leaders with the economic tools needed to design public policies, evaluate alternative policy options, and assess their outcomes before and after implementation.

This comprehensive training programme comes at a time when governments face increasing challenges, including limited public resources, rising costs of public services and rapidly changing economic conditions. These challenges make it essential for government decisions to be grounded in a systematic economic analysis that ensures the highest possible return from every public dinar spent.

The era in which public policies were judged solely by the size of government expenditure or the number of beneficiaries has come to an end. Modern governments increasingly evaluate policies according to their economic and social impact, their ability to improve citizens' welfare, stimulate economic growth and enhance the efficiency of public resource allocation. Economic Impact Assessment has therefore emerged as one of the most important tools of modern public administration, enabling policymakers to answer the most fundamental question in policy design: Does this policy justify the resources allocated to it and are there alternative options capable of delivering better outcomes?

The Economic Impact Assessment methodology goes far beyond simply determining whether a policy succeeds

or fails. Instead, it follows a comprehensive analytical framework that begins with diagnosing the economic problem and defining the objectives of government intervention. It then examines how policy effects are transmitted throughout the economy, distinguishes between direct and indirect impacts as well as positive and negative consequences, and identifies both the beneficiaries of the policy and those who may bear part of its costs.

The era in which public policies were judged solely by the size of government expenditure or the number of beneficiaries has come to an end

Cost-Benefit Analysis represents one of the core components of this methodology. It systematically compares the expected economic and social benefits with the costs borne by both the government and the economy, thereby providing an objective basis for assessing the economic viability of public interventions. The methodology also incorporates Sensitivity Analysis and Scenario Analysis to evaluate the robustness of policy decisions under changing eco-

nomical assumptions, including variations in economic growth, inflation, interest rates, or expected demand. A sound public policy is not one that performs well only under ideal circumstances, but one that remains effective under uncertainty and changing conditions.

In addition, the programme examines how the effects of government decisions spread across different sectors of the economy. Government expenditure or investment in a particular sector does not affect that sector alone; rather, its effects extend to production, services, labour markets, household income and consumption. Understanding these transmission mechanisms allows policy-makers to estimate the overall economic impact more accurately than relying solely on direct effects.

The evaluation process also extends beyond identifying the most economically efficient policy. It includes comparing alternative policy options using multiple criteria such as cost, expected impact, implementation speed, risk and equity, ultimately leading to evidence-based policy recommendations for decision makers.

An equally important component of the methodology is the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation framework after implementation. This framework relies on measurable performance indicators and compares actual outcomes with those anticipated during the policy design stage. Such an approach enables governments to refine policies, expand successful initiatives and address shortcomings where necessary. Economic Impact Assessment is therefore not a one-time exercise but a continuous process that accompanies public policy throughout its entire life cycle.

Integrating Economic Impact Assessment into government institutions represents a significant advancement in public administration. It transforms policymaking from reliance

on individual judgment into a systematic process based on scientific analysis and quantitative evidence. Furthermore, it contributes to improving the efficiency of public expenditure, strengthening transparency and accountability, enhancing the quality of public services, and directing scarce resources toward programmes that generate the greatest contribution to economic growth and sustainable development.

The evaluation process also extends beyond identifying the most economically efficient policy

For these reasons, investing in the capacity of government institutions to conduct Economic Impact Assessments is no longer merely a training initiative. It has become an institutional necessity for improving governance, strengthening the quality of public policy, embedding evidence-based decision-making, enhancing government performance, maximising the economic and social returns of public policies, and ultimately achieving more efficient and sustainable development.

European heatwave's unlikely accomplice: An ocean 'cold blob'

By **Laurent Thomet**

Agence France-Presse

PARIS, France — The heatwave battering Europe may have an unlikely partner-in-crime: A patch of cold ocean water south of Iceland and Greenland that can influence weather patterns over the continent.

Often called the "cold blob", this swath of water in the North Atlantic has bucked the global warming trend, cooling even as the planet's temperatures rise due to human-induced climate change.

Greenhouse gas emissions are the main driver of climate change, which has made heatwaves more frequent and intense

A recent study reinforced concerns that it could signal a weakening of a key Atlantic Ocean current system that helps regulate the planet's climate.

A shutdown of this conveyor belt of ocean currents, known as Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), could potentially lead to harsher winters in northern Europe in the future, scientists say.

But researchers have also explored the cold blob's con-

nection to heatwaves in Europe, finding that extreme hot spells have coincided with periods when these waters west of Britain were unusually cold.

"A cold Atlantic doesn't necessarily mean a colder Europe," Gerard McCarthy, oceanographer at Ireland's Maynooth University, told AFP.

"That cold isn't a kind of a get-out-of-jail-free card in terms of global warming. Some of the hot extremes can actually be exacerbated by this cold blob in the Atlantic," McCarthy said.

Heat dome

Greenhouse gas emissions are the main driver of climate change, which has made heatwaves more frequent and intense.

But several factors have made Europe the planet's fastest-warming continent, including changes in atmospheric circulation and melting ice.

Studies suggest the cold blob influences atmospheric circulation by altering the path and speed of the jet stream that flows west to east across the continent.

When cooler and warmer waters meet, the sharp contrast changes the air above, making the jet stream wavier and slower, according to researchers.

These changes can create conditions for high-pressure systems that park over Europe, such as the "heat dome" searing the continent this week.

Marilena Oltmanns, an ocean and climate physicist, pointed to recent data showing a strong cold anomaly currently present in the subpolar North Atlantic, creating a front that "acts like a guide" for the winds and the jet stream.

"The jet stream... bends northward and flows northward around Europe instead of crossing it. As a result, a heat

dome emerges over Europe," Oltmanns told AFP.

Oltmanns, a professor at the University of Bremen in Germany, led a 2024 study showing that the melting of Greenland ice pours freshwater into the ocean, creating colder surface waters in the North Atlantic.

"The chain of events, starting from the meltwater and the North Atlantic cold blob, then leading to changes in the ocean and atmospheric circulations, makes Europe heat up more quickly than other parts of the world in summer," she told AFP.

The AMOC carries warm tropical waters to the Northern Hemisphere, where they cool, become denser and sink before returning southward at depth

A 2016 study suggested that cold Atlantic anomalies were a "common precursor" to major heatwaves that had hit Europe since the 1980s.

Another paper published in 2023 ran computer simulations, with and without the cold blob, to see if the anomaly had an influence on European heatwaves.

"With this cold anomaly, we have longer and more intense heatwaves in Europe," that study's lead author Sabine

Bischof, researcher at Germany's GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel, told AFP.

'Very worried'

While worldwide sea surface temperatures have increased by 1°C on average since 1900, the cold blob region has cooled by up to 0.9°C, according to a 2019 study.

Research published last month sought to settle a scientific debate over whether the loss of heat from the sea surface or a weakening AMOC were behind the cold blob.

"We find that this famous 'cold blob' in the northern Atlantic is caused by ocean currents bringing less heat into this region, and not by more heat lost through the sea surface there," the study's lead author, Stefan Rahmstorf, told AFP.

The AMOC carries warm tropical waters to the Northern Hemisphere, where they cool, become denser and sink before returning southward at depth.

Scientists broadly agree the AMOC is weakening with warming, but debate persists over how fast it could slow and whether a collapse is possible this century.

Rahmstorf, head of Earth system analysis at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, used to be sceptical about the risk of an AMOC shutdown.

But he now gives it an over 50 per cent chance of happening.

A shutdown would have dire consequences: Tougher European winters, droughts in South Asia and parts of Africa, and higher sea levels around the North Atlantic.

"I am very worried," Rahmstorf said. "The consequences of an AMOC shutdown would be massive in many parts of the world."

BUSINESS

Tuesday, June 30, 2026



JCI launches 'Industrialist's Compass' series

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Chamber of Industry on Monday launched a new knowledge series titled "Industrialist's Compass" aimed at providing industrial companies with simplified and practical analysis of key global economic, trade and regulatory developments.

The series seeks to outline the implications of economic changes on Jordan's industrial sector, enabling companies to make prepared and flexible decisions in a rapidly changing business environment, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The chamber stated that the launch, through its Studies and Policies Department, aligns with its role in supporting national industrial competitiveness and providing specialised economic knowledge to industrialists, particularly amid accelerating global shifts in international trade, supply chains, environmental regulations,

geopolitical developments and technological transformation.

It provides practical recommendations and actionable steps to help companies prepare for changes, seize opportunities and reduce risks.

The first issue addresses the European Union Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), one of the "most significant" new trade-related regulations affecting exporters to the European market or those targeting it in the future.

It explains the mechanism, covered sectors and its potential implications for Jordanian industry.

The publication outlines practical guidance for early preparation, including organising energy and fuel consumption data linked to production, identifying emission sources, engaging early with European clients to understand requirements, and beginning carbon emissions data collection and measurement.

It highlights the Eu-

ropean Commission's self-assessment tool to evaluate exposure to CBAM requirements.

The chamber said "Industrial Compass" will be issued periodically and will cover priority topics for Jordan's industrial sector, including global trade developments, energy and raw material prices, supply chains, tariffs, international regulations, artificial intelligence and sustainability.

It added that the series forms part of ongoing efforts to enhance knowledge-based services for industrial firms and strengthen their ability to adapt to global transformations, supporting export growth and reinforcing the competitiveness of Jordanian industry in regional and international markets.

The JCI urged industrial companies to follow the series and benefit from its content as a practical tool to understand global shifts and turn them into growth opportunities.

Jordan's industrial exports rise 9.1% to record JD2.8b in first four months — JCI

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's industrial exports grew by 9.1 per cent during the first four months of 2026, underscoring the sector's growing competitiveness in global markets, according to the Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI).

Statistical data obtained by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, showed that industrial exports recorded their highest value for the January-April period in recent years, reaching JD2.808 billion, up from JD2.574 billion during the corresponding period of 2025.

The JCI said that export growth across all industrial sub-sectors, without exception, reflects the resilience and broad-based expansion of Jordan's industrial sector.

The chamber added that the increase also demonstrates the effectiveness of export support policies and its efforts to help industrialists access new markets, maximise the benefits of free trade agreements, and provide technical and informational support.

In terms of value, mining industries recorded the largest increase, with exports rising by JD82 million, followed by construction industries at JD58 million and chemical and cosmetics industries at JD37 million.

While exports of leather and garments increased by JD21 million, while therapeutic industries and medical supplies recorded a JD15 million rise.

Exports from the food, agriculture and



Jordan's industrial exports grow by 9.1 per cent during the first four months of 2026, underscoring the sector's growing competitiveness in global markets, according to the Jordan Chamber of Industry

livestock industries increased by around JD8 million, while engineering, electrical and information technology industries grew by JD5 million.

Plastic and rubber industries recorded an increase of JD4 million, followed by packaging, paper and office supplies at JD3 million and wood and furniture industries at JD1 million.

By destination, Switzerland recorded the largest increase in the value of Jordanian industrial exports, rising by JD89 million, followed by China

at JD62 million and Thailand at JD30 million. Exports to Syria increased by around JD28 million.

While shipments to The Netherlands and Belgium rose by JD24 million and JD12 million, respectively, reflecting continued diversification of export markets.

By product category, garments and related accessories remained Jordan's leading industrial export at JD517 million, followed by crude potash at JD220 million and pharmaceutical preparations at JD184

million.

Several export items recorded exceptional growth rates, with lubricating oils surging by 4,085 per cent, organic chemical products by 938 per cent, copper and its articles by 89 per cent and cement by 84 per cent.

Industrial exports accounted for around 95 per cent of the Kingdom's total national exports, which reached JD2.956 billion during the first four months of 2026.

Industrial exports also covered 43 per cent of the Kingdom's total imports, high-

lighting the sector's strategic role in supporting the national economy and improving the trade balance.

The JCI said that these positive indicators reflect the industrial sector's success in strengthening its competitive position, stressing the importance of continuing efforts to diversify export markets, enhance value-added manufacturing and maximise the benefits of free trade agreements to support the objectives of the Economic Modernisation Vision.

Stocks rise, oil climbs after US-Iran clashes

LONDON (AFP) — Stocks mostly rose while oil prices climbed on Monday after the United States and Iran exchanged fire over the weekend, underscoring the fragility of their tentative agreement to end the war.

While Washington said it had agreed with Iran to halt the attacks and continue talks, the strikes again disrupted shipping through the vital Strait of Hormuz over the weekend.

Oil prices, which last week fell to pre-war levels, rose modestly on Monday.

"The impact on oil prices remains rela-



A man walks past an electronic quotation board displaying the Nikkei 225 stock prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange along a street in Tokyo on Monday

tively contained," said Ipek Ozkardesky, senior analyst at Swissquote.

"News that some key markets have even

turned oversupplied thanks to the release of strategic reserves and oil tankers quietly making their way out of Hormuz has certain-

ly helped investors react more moderately to the latest escalation," she added.

But Trade Nation analyst David Morrison noted that it appears that Tehran still wants to charge vessels a fee for transiting the Strait of Hormuz, which would be illegal under international law.

"This would be a step too far for the Trump administration," he noted, while the US president also appears to be increasingly desperate to end the war and reopen the strait as US midterm elections approach.

"The danger is that

he may have to resume hostilities to have any chance of getting what he wants," Morrison said.

Wall Street opened higher, with the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite adding 0.8 per cent as trading got underway in New York.

Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare called it a "buy-the-dip effort" after last week's tech-driven losses.

In Europe, Paris dipped, London was trading flat and Frankfurt edged up in afternoon deals.

Asian stock markets fared better with Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shanghai all closing

higher.

Investor confidence remained shaky, however, after last week saw markets whipsaw on growing concerns about a tech bubble fuelled by the AI boom.

Tech firms were again in the spotlight, with South Korean chip makers SK hynix and Samsung extending last week's selling and weighing on Seoul's Kospi index.

South Korea said Monday that it would invest nearly \$1.2 trillion — equivalent to more than two-thirds of its GDP — in a new chip-building hub and AI data centres over several years.

Yet, investors are increasingly questioning whether tech valuations have gone too far, and when firms will see a return on the trillions of dollars pumped into AI.

The tech rally this year has sent Seoul, Tokyo and Wall Street's three main indexes to record highs, with SK hynix soaring 300 per cent in the first six months of the year.

On the economic front, investors are looking ahead to the release of US jobs data this week, which could have a bearing on the Federal Reserve's monetary policy plans.

The bank has tak-

en a more hawkish turn amid concerns over surging inflation caused by the Iran war.

"Key data releases like payrolls have grown even more significant since Kevin Warsh has become chair of the Federal Reserve," said Kathleen Brooks, research director at XTB trading group.

"He does not like forward guidance, so volatility around key economic releases could increase," she added.

Eyes will also be on the European Central Bank's annual forum held in Portugal this week, which Warsh is expected to attend.

EU, China trade tensions loom over minister visit

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AFP) — Europe and China were seeking to gauge on Monday whether trade frictions can be resolved without a fight, as top EU trade official Maros Sefcovic hosts his Chinese counterpart Wang Wentao in Brussels for day-long talks.

The European Union has turned its attention to China as Brussels frets over increasing trade imbalances between the 27-nation bloc and the Asian powerhouse.

The issue is existential for the EU.

Brussels fears it will lose certain industries entirely if it does not act against a glut of inexpensive goods made in China threatening manufacturers in Europe.

Wang's visit comes

less than two weeks after EU leaders tasked the European Commission with tackling the issue through talks with Beijing — while simultaneously preparing beefed-up defence measures to protect key sectors.

"Busy agenda, substantive talks, clear purpose," Sefcovic posted on X as he welcomed Wang for "a packed day of meetings", culminating with a special dinner on Monday evening.

The EU trade chief was due to tell the Chinese minister that the current imbalances are unsustainable for the EU.

The bloc's trade deficit in goods with China hit around 360 billion euros (\$410 billion) in 2025, meaning the bloc imported way more from

the Asian giant than it exported there.

In turn, Wang will likely seek to understand how seriously the EU is threatening to deploy its trade defence armoury against Beijing.

The bloc still hopes to avoid a trade war with its second-largest trading partner for goods alone, according to the European Commission — with China making clear it will retaliate against actions it views as unfair.

Europe insists on the need for a level playing field, pointing out that Chinese firms have an unfair advantage because of massive state subsidies.

The numbers support Brussels' argument.

Between 2005 and 2024, Chinese companies received around three

to eight times more government support than businesses in countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which called it "a conservative estimate".

The EU already has an arsenal of trade defence tools it can use to address the issue.

These include imposing higher tariffs if investigations prove that companies are selling goods at unfairly low prices or if there is state support that gives an unjust advantage to the manufacturers.

Brussels could also set restrictions known as safeguard measures — including quotas — if there is a sudden surge in imports.

New measures are also likely on the way.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Monday amounted to JD13.7 million spread over 5.4 million shares that traded through 4,209 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.5 per cent, closing at 3844.10 points.

Out of 90 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 29 companies rose while the share price of another 27 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Jordan Insurance by 6.33 per cent, International Arabian Development and Investment Trading Company by 5.56 per cent, Premier Business and Projects Company Ltd. by 5 per cent, Jordan Vegetable Oil Industries by 4.95 per cent and Jordan Petroleum Refinery by 4.81 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Northern Cement Company by 7.1 per cent, Jordanian Management and Consulting Company by 4.62 per cent, Philadelphia International Educational Investment Company by 3.44 per cent, Real Estate Development by 3.08 per cent and Jordan Pipes Manufacturing by 2.70 per cent.

THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↑ 3844.10 0.50% June 29, 2026

Live Data
Historical Data

Click and drag in the plot area to zoom in

DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market		OTC Market	
Trading Value (Jds)	13,727,048		
Trading volume	5,405,493		
No. of Transactions	4,209		
No. of Securities	90		

● Losers: 27
● Gainers: 29
● Unchanged: 34

THE JORDAN TIMES SPORTS AT A GLANCE

France wary of Sweden side with 'nothing to lose' at World Cup

TENNIS

Pegula slams Vondrousova's 'harsh' doping ban

LONDON (AFP) — American World No.4 Jessica Pegula has slammed the four-year ban given to former Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova for refusing an anti-doping test. Vondrousova did not submit a sample when notified by a doping control officer during an out-of-competition test attempt at her home in December 2025. The 27-year-old Czech, who won Wimbledon in 2023, claimed "months of physical and mental stress" affected her decision making, in addition to concerns for her safety. Players are required to log their whereabouts for an allotted hour each day so that authorities can conduct anti-doping tests outside of competition. Vondrousova's ban has sparked debate in the tennis world, with Pegula hitting out at the decision after her Wimbledon first-round win against Darja Vidmanova on Monday. "It's just really unfortunate. I feel like for Marketa, I don't know the ins and outs of exactly what happened, it seems like there's a lot of 'he said, she said' kind of things going on right now," Pegula said. "But I just think for something like that, for four years, you're ruining someone's career over something that could have really just been a complete misunderstanding. I just don't think that's fair. I think the sentencing is so harsh."

CRICKET

Maiden Kaia century as Zimbabwe control Bangladesh Test

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AFP) — Innocent Kaia struck a maiden Test century as Zimbabwe retained a firm grip on Monday in a one-off international against Bangladesh in Harare. His 140 runs off 227 balls propelled the home team to 410 all out on the second day at Harare Sports Club. Dismissed for 140 in their first innings on Sunday, Bangladesh were 33-1 at the close of play to trail by 230 runs. Playing only his fifth Test innings, 33-year-old right-hand batter Kaia had scored 172 runs in his previous four knocks at an average of 43. His impressive stand, which included 17 fours, ended when he tried a flick shot off a Tajul Islam delivery only to edge the ball to Shadman Islam at silly mid-off. Kaia was not alone in tormenting the Bangladeshi bowlers as Wessly Madhevere (77 not out), Craig Ervine (60) and Brian Bennett (59) all claimed half centuries

EAST RUTHERFORD, United States (AFP) — France coach Didier Deschamps has warned his team to be wary of a Sweden side with "nothing to lose" when the nations meet in the last 32 of the World Cup on Tuesday.

"Sweden is not playing for their survival. Obviously they will do everything to win the game, but they have nothing to lose," Deschamps told reporters Monday at the MetLife Stadium outside New York City, where the tie will be played.

"We need to stay humble, maintain our determination and concentration. In the group stage winning the first game gave us some margin for error, but now we have no second chances."

Deschamps returned to the France team's base in Boston on Saturday after missing the 4-1 win against Norway to fly home to attend his mother's funeral.

France came into the World Cup as one of the leading contenders to win the trophy, following its triumph in 2018 and defeat on penalties to Argentina in the 2022 final.

They were impressive in the group stage, at least after a shaky first half in their opening game against Senegal.

After winning that match 3-1 in New Jersey, they eased to a 3-0 victory over Iraq in a storm-interrupted contest in Philadelphia, and then hammered a second-string Norway in Boston.

Les Bleus were one of only three teams to



Adrien Rabiot #14 of France speaks during a press conference ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 32 match between Group France and Sweden at New York New Jersey Stadium on Monday in East Rutherford, New Jersey

take the maximum nine points in the group stage, along with reigning champions Argentina and co-hosts Mexico.

Their tally of 10 goals scored was also the joint-highest in the first round along with Germany and The Netherlands.

"We just need to stay confident, but now we wipe the slate clean," said Deschamps about the start of the knockout phase.

"We are confident but we know that the quality of the opposition will go up as well." Sweden made it to the

World Cup via the backdoor, finishing bottom of their qualifying group but parachuting into the play-offs thanks to their performances in the UEFA Nations League.

A comprehensive 5-1 win over Tunisia and a draw with Japan, either side of a 5-1 loss to the Dutch, took them through to this stage as one of the best third-placed teams in the group phase.

Saliba to return?

"They are a good team, very athletic, but also

with [Viktor] Gyokeres, [Alexander] Isak and [Anthony] Elanga, they have lots of quality in attack," said Deschamps.

The only previous meeting of the teams at a major tournament came at Euro 2012, just before Deschamps took charge of France.

Sweden won that group-stage encounter 2-0 in Ukraine with Zlatan Ibrahimovic among the scorers. He is now working as a World Cup pundit on US TV network Fox.

Deschamps revealed

that Marcus Thuram is unlikely to be an option in attack for the game due to a minor muscle injury, while veteran midfielder N'Golo Kante is a doubt.

William Saliba is expected to return in central defence after resting against Norway due to back pain.

Meanwhile, France midfielder Adrien Rabiot said the squad were relieved to have Deschamps back again after his quick return trip home.

"It was quite difficult when he announced to

us the death of his Mum and said he had to leave. It was a shock," admitted Rabiot.

"We are pleased to have him back. It is not easy to be mourning someone in these circumstances, but I think he has come back with a real desire to do well and go as far as possible in the competition."

The winners on Tuesday will advance to a last-16 showdown in Philadelphia on Saturday against the winners of Monday's match between Germany and Paraguay.

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

Viral bullying videos test Bhutan's digital transition

By Dechen Wangdi
Agence France-Presse

THIMPHU, Bhutan — In the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, which has long limited outside influence, viral videos of school bullying have triggered debate over social media's erosion of traditional values.

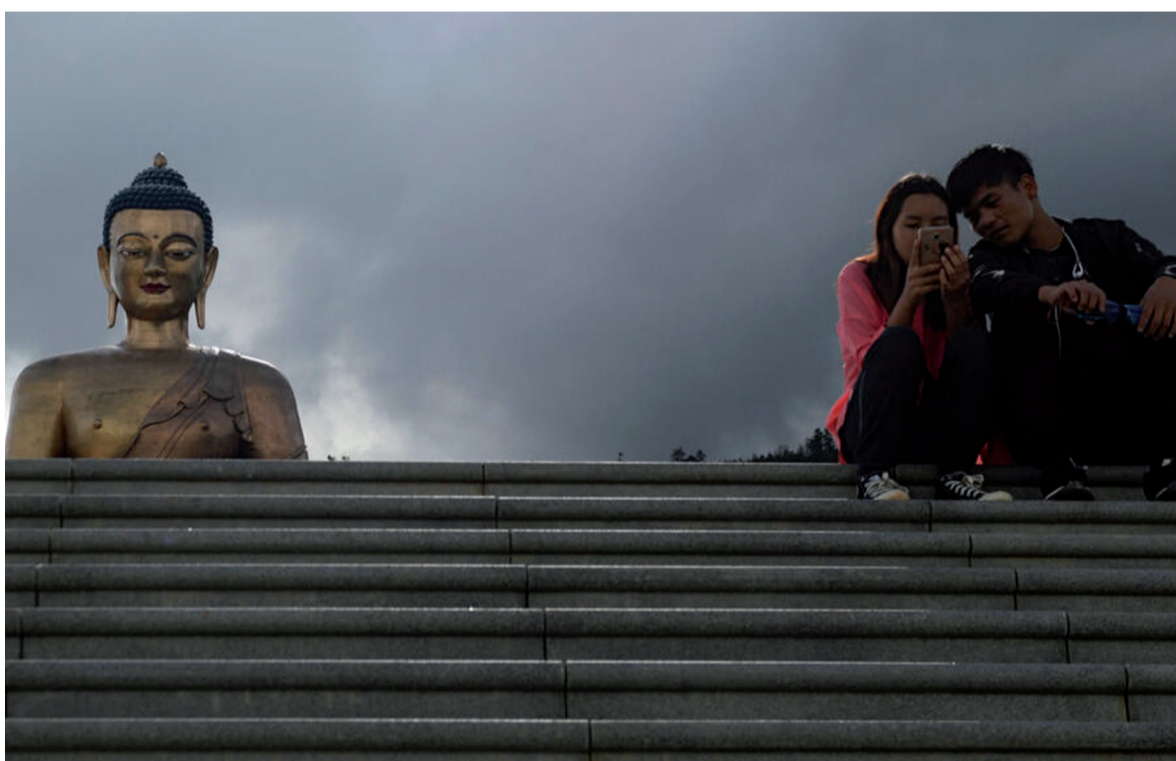
Footage of fighting pupils circulated across Facebook, X, Reddit and Telegram in early June, sparking outrage and probes by police and education authorities.

Filed by classmates as others looked on, the videos showed secondary school girls slapping and punching another student to the ground.

Bhutan carefully controls tourism and foreign access, and only introduced television and the internet in 1999 under a cautious modernisation programme designed to protect its distinct culture.

At the same time, social media has become increasingly popular, acting as a bridge to the outside world for the population of around 800,000.

For many, this month's incident felt at odds with Bhutan's self-cultivated image as a peaceful Buddhist nation that has sought to prioritise social wellbeing over material growth through its "Gross National Happiness" philosophy.



People look at a phone as they sit beside the Buddha Dordenma statue in Bhutan's capital Thimphu on August 25, 2018

The school, Lungtenzampa Middle Secondary School in the capital Thimphu, said the situation was being treated with "the utmost seriousness".

Students have been suspended and the videos taken down after the incident, which has raised broader questions about youth behaviour, digital responsibility, misinformation and how technology shapes society.

'Disturbing'

Bhutan's National Commission for Women and Children urged

the public not to share the footage, warning that it "may cause further harm, trauma, stigmatisation, and victimisation of the children concerned".

For Sangay Dema, a 32-year-old who found the video on her feed, it was deeply upsetting.

"As a mother myself, I couldn't even fall asleep at night and images kept flashing in my memory," she said. "It was that disturbing."

Bhutan has an overall Internet penetra-

tion rate of 88 per cent, and 485,000 social media user identities, according to analytics site DataReportal.

There has been no indication that the nation — where more than half the population is under 28 — is considering banning young teens from social platforms, a move taken by an increasing number of governments.

"Social media has democratised access to information, civic participation and opportunities for youth," said Tandin Wangmo, head

of the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy, a rights group.

"But it also has the potential to amplify outrage, public shaming and hate speech," she told AFP. "Everybody is a judge."

Dorji Gyeltshen, a 24-year-old content creator who saw the footage on Telegram, said that children with access to phones and tablets can be easily influenced.

"The content we consume has a significant impact on our lives," Gyeltshen said.

'Becoming bullies themselves'

Bhutan has embraced technology — including hydropower-backed cryptocurrency mining — as it seeks to create jobs and curb the migration of its young people to countries such as Australia.

Yet, its digital transformation has also brought new social challenges.

Children in Bhutan "face new challenges as the traditional layers of protection offered by families and communities are weakened" amid rapid modernisation, economic development and increasing urbanisation, according to the UN children's fund.

Six out of 10 children in Bhutan have experienced some form of physical violence, Unicef says, using data from a 2016 government study.

"A lot of what we see now is not new behaviour, but things that were once hidden behind closed doors," said company employee Srijana Giri, 31.

"The kind of online culture I would like to see in Bhutan is one where adults actually behave like adults — not acting like judges or gods trying to punish others, while becoming bullies themselves in the process," she said.

Movie theaters are allies for streamers like us, Apple exec says

LOS ANGELES, United States (AFP) — Tech giant Apple views movie theatres as allies in its fight to carve out a space for its platform in the competitive streaming sector, a top company executive told AFP.

The firm, which launched Apple TV+ in 2019 without any third-party content, has won over critics in recent years, and is so far the only streaming platform to win the best picture Oscar, with "CODA" in 2022.

It also shook up the box office with "F1: The Movie", the high-octane motor racing drama starring Brad Pitt, which grossed \$634.1 million worldwide and earned the company another Academy Award this year, this time for best sound.

After years of wariness between movie theaters and streaming services, Eddy Cue, the company's senior vice president of services and health, said Apple is committed to producing films for both platforms, allowing them to play out their theatrical runs based on audience demand rather than adhering to rigid release windows.

"If a movie like 'F1'

was on theatrical longer than 45 days [it was] because people wanted to watch it theatrically, they wanted to watch it in an IMAX theatre," he told AFP.

"Theatrical is a great experience, it's here to stay, and I think it's growing."


While viewers might initially want to see a blockbuster on a big screen, they love the chance to rewatch it when it turns up on the streaming service, now rebranded as Apple TV.

Cinema and streaming are "very complementary. I think they can both work together", Cue said.


The company, headquartered in California, is gearing up to produce a sequel to "F1", with Cue saying the plot and script are currently in development.


It "was the biggest sports movie of all time. It was Brad Pitt's biggest movie of all time, and I do think that people want to see another one", he said.

Cue, who has been credited with revolutionising Apple's services sector, was recognised this week as the Entertainment Person of the Year at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity.



DOWNLOAD OUR APP NOW

Available on the
 App Store

ANDROID APP ON
 Google Play