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Tuesday, July 7, 2026 | Muharram 22, 1448 Hijri

**DIPLOMACY**

## Safadi meets with Uzbek president in Tashkent, discusses bilateral relations

Two sides stress importance of building on outcomes of King's visit to Uzbekistan

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Monday met with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev during an official visit to Tashkent.

Safadi conveyed the greetings of King Abdullah to the Uzbek president during the talks that highlighted the importance of implementing the outcomes of His Majesty's visit to Uzbekistan in August 2025 and expanding bilateral cooperation, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The two sides stressed the importance of building on the outcomes of His Majesty's visit, implementing the agreements reached, and expanding economic, trade, investment and tourism cooperation, including through the direct Amman-Tashkent flight.

They also discussed regional and international issues of common interest.

Mirziyoyev, in turn, asked Safadi to convey his greetings to King Abdullah, reaffirming Uzbekistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties.



Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on Monday receives Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi in Tashkent

Safadi also held separate talks with Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov on ways to enhance bilateral relations and expand cooperation across various sectors.

Discussions with Saidov focused on implementing the road-map agreed during King Abdullah's visit to Uzbekistan and his talks with Uzbek President in August 2025, with the aim of expanding bilateral cooperation.

They also highlighted continued efforts to expand bilateral cooperation, citing the visit of an Uzbek government and private sector delegation to Jordan, the inaugural meeting of the Jordanian-Uzbek Joint Ministerial Committee, and the signing of a visa waiver agreement to boost trade, tourism and cultural ties.

Safadi noted the launch of Royal Jordanian's direct Amman-Tashkent route and the signing of an agreement establishing the Jordanian-Uzbek Business Council.

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## Jordan condemns 'terrorist' plot targeting Morocco

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Monday strongly condemned the "terrorist plots" targeting public order and the safety of people and property in Morocco, calling them an unacceptable attempt to undermine the country's security, sovereignty, and stability.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali reaffirmed Jordan's "absolute solidarity" with Morocco, expressing full support for all measures taken to safeguard its

sovereignty, maintain stability and protect its citizens, according to a ministry statement. Majali also reiterated Jordan's firm rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism aimed at destabilising security.

Moroccan authorities announced they had foiled "advanced" terrorist plots targeting public order. Security agencies said that 10 suspects were arrested over alleged links to an affiliate of the Daesh group operating in the Sahel region.

According to the Maghreb Arabe Presse, citing Morocco's Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations, the suspects received logistical and operational support from the group's Sahel-based branch.

The statement added that special forces carried out simultaneous raids across the country following extensive surveillance and intelligence operations targeting the suspected cell.



A Palestinian child walks near a camp for the displaced on the beach in Gaza City on Friday

## Hamas announces dissolution of Gaza governing body

GAZA CITY, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas announced Monday the dissolution of the body that has governed the Gaza Strip for nearly two decades, clearing the way for a technocratic committee to implement civilian rule.

The move marks a significant political shift by Hamas, which has run Gaza since its fighters seized control from rival Palestinian movement Fatah in 2007 after winning legislative elections the previous year. Since a ceasefire took

effect in Gaza last October between Hamas and Israel, the group has repeatedly said it is prepared to step aside from day-to-day governance, but the thorny issue of its disarmament remains unresolved.

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## Company registrations rise 7% in first half of 2026 — CCD

AMMAN (JT) — The number of companies registered in the Kingdom during the first half of 2026 increased by 7 per cent compared with the same period last year, according to a report issued by the Companies Control Department (CCD).

The CCD report showed that 3,753 companies were registered during the first half of this year, compared with 3,493 during the corresponding period in 2025, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Total registered capital exceeded JD148 million, the report said, noting that limited liability companies were the most registered in terms of volume, with 2,864 companies accounting for 76.3 per cent of total registered entities, with a capital exceeding JD46 million.



A general view of Amman

Private shareholding companies followed, with a registered capital exceeding JD69 million.

The report also highlighted a 16 per cent drop in the number of dissolved or deregistered companies compared with the same period last year, standing at 473 companies compared with 562.

The net capital change also saw a 5 per cent increase compared with 2025.

For the second consecutive year, the CCD maintained results exceeding the JD1 billion mark in capital, generated either through new registrations or corporate capital increases.

The report revealed that 39,766 companies have been registered electronically since the launch of the department's e-services at the end of 2020.

Additionally, the number of electronic follow-up requests reached 2,629,248, while 101,129 archived copies and 567,111 certificates were issued digitally, the report added.

## Trump to meet Ukraine, Syria leaders at NATO summit — White House

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US President Donald Trump will meet his Ukrainian and Syrian counterparts on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Turkey, the White House said on Sunday, as he seeks to make headway in addressing two key conflicts.

"On Wednesday afternoon, President Trump will participate in bilateral meetings with President Zelensky of Ukraine and President al-Sharaa of the Syrian Arab Republic," Deputy Press Secretary Anna Kelly said in a call with reporters.

Trump's meeting with Volodymyr Zelensky in Ankara comes amid growing efforts to end the grinding, nearly stalemated invasion of Ukraine that Russia launched nearly four-and-a-half years ago.



Forecourt sculpture at the NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium

"The president's obviously getting together with him to talk about how we can end the war.

That's been a priority of his for a long time," a senior US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, added about the Zelensky meeting.

Trump would "follow up" with Russian President Vladimir Putin afterwards, the official said.

Both Putin and Zelensky spoke by phone with Trump on Saturday in calls to mark the 250th anniversary of US independence.

Trump and Zelensky most recently met during the G-7 summit in France in June, where leaders agreed to intensify pressure on Russia to end the war with Ukraine.

Continued on page 5

## Huge crowds fill Tehran for Khamenei funeral procession

TEHRAN (AFP) — A sea of people filled the streets of Tehran on Monday for the funeral procession of Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei, with authorities saying millions turned out in a display of the Islamic republic's resilience after Middle East war.

Ordinary Iranians loyal to the Islamic republic joined top officials for the procession, in which a truck carrying the bodies of Khamenei and four family members killed in a February 28 US-Israeli strike inched its way to Azadi Square in the west of the city.

AFP images showed huge numbers stretching along major boulevards in the Iranian capital, while state television said millions turned out for an event comparable to the giant funeral of Khamenei's predecessor Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989.

But on the third day of a marathon six-day sequence of funeral ceremonies, there was still no sign of Khamenei's successor and son Mojtaba Khamenei, who has not been seen in public since before his appointment a week after his father's death.

Clad in black, people threw petals onto the coffins, including the tiny casket of Khamenei's granddaughter, who was only 14-months old when she was killed, according to state media.

"We will avenge the blood of the martyrs and our martyred imam from these criminals," said a man, 63, who gave his surname as Kazemi.

Continued on page 5

# Geneva centres open regional hub in Amman to enhance regional engagement

AMMAN (JT) — The Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) have launched a joint regional hub in Amman to enhance their engagement across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

The new hub, named The Geneva Centres in Amman, is the first joint regional office established by the two Geneva-based organisations, according to a statement from the Swiss embassy in Amman.

The hub was inaugurated on Sunday in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the support of the Swiss embassy in Jordan.

The initiative aims to boost the organisations' regional presence in the fields of security sector governance and humanitarian demining.

Jordan was selected to host the regional hub due to its role as a centre for dialogue, cooperation and peace, offering political stability, regional connectivity and the infrastructure needed to support engagement across the MENA region, the statement said.

The embassy said that the decision also reflects the "longstanding" partnership between Jordan and Switzerland, as well as the two Geneva Centres, and their shared commitment to promoting peace, security and sustainable development.



Swiss embassy photo

Jordan is selected to host the regional hub due to its role as a centre for dialogue, cooperation and peace

Based in Amman, the hub will facilitate closer cooperation with national authorities, regional partners, local communities, UN agencies and other international organisations.

"We see this initiative as a meaningful contribution to lasting peace, security and safer communities in the region, something that can only be built through close partnerships, mutual trust and sustained engagement," said Amin Awad, president of DCAF's Foundation Council.

Barbara Haering, president of the GICHD's Council of Foundation, said that the hub would bring Geneva-based expertise closer to the region

and help ensure support is better aligned with regional priorities and evolving needs.

"The establishment of the Geneva Centres in Amman reflects Jordan's role as a trusted regional hub for dialogue, cooperation and expertise," Swiss Ambassador to Jordan Emilija Georgieva said. "Switzerland is proud to support this joint initiative, which brings our longstanding commitment to peace, security and humanitarian action closer to the region and strengthens partnerships with countries across the Middle East and North Africa," she added.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by representatives of

Jordanian authorities, diplomatic missions, international organisations, donor governments, civil society organisations and the media.

GICHD Director Ambassador Tobias Privitelli said that national leadership remains essential to addressing the region's contamination by explosive ordnance, adding that the centre's role is to help countries develop the systems, strategies and partnerships needed to protect communities and achieve sustainable results.

DCAF Director Ambassador Nathalie Chuard said that the organisation remains committed to promoting effective and sus-

tainable security governance amid renewed regional tensions.

"To deliver effectively and remain responsive to changing conditions, we need to stay closely connected with our partners," she said.

Founded by the Swiss government more than 25 years ago, DCAF and GICHD are independent organisations based in Geneva that support peacebuilding, security and humanitarian efforts worldwide.

By operating from a shared regional base in Amman, the two organisations aim to improve coordination, enhance operational responsiveness and boost collaboration across the MENA region, according to the statement.

# Regional dialogue seeks to boost cooperation on water security

AMMAN (JT) — The Water Diplomacy Centre at the Jordan University of Science and Technology, in conjunction with the second edition of the Water-Peace Dialogue Series, convened a regional meeting with a delegation from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) to discuss the Climate Adaptation Readiness Programme for the Levant and Iraq.

The programme aims to boost climate finance readiness, enhance institutional capacities, and prepare investment projects that contribute to improving water security and climate resilience across Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria.

The organisation delegation included FAO Representative a.i. in Jordan Paul Opio, Maysoon Zoubi and Fadi Masarweh.

The meeting was held as part of ongoing efforts to boost regional cooperation in water resources management and within the framework of the Blue Peace Middle East Initiative, which seeks to position water as a platform for dialogue, confidence-building and regional cooperation.

The initiative promotes sound water governance, build more resilient and sustainable water systems, and advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals while enhancing communities' capacity to adapt to climate change.

They also highlighted the need to enhance water governance, build more resilient and sustainable water systems, and advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals while enhancing communities' capacity to adapt to climate change.

The Blue Peace Middle East Initiative is the first regional platform of its kind bringing to-



Photo courtesy of FAO

The programme aims to boost climate finance readiness, enhance institutional capacities, and prepare investment projects that contribute to improving water security and climate resilience across Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria

gether Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey to foster cooperation on transboundary water management.

The initiative aims to improve water, food and energy security, protect ecosystems under the pressures of climate change, and transform water from a potential source of conflict into a catalyst for cooperation, trust and peace.

The Water-Peace Dialogue Series, organised by the Water Diplomacy Centre, serves as a regional platform that brings together policymakers, experts, international organisations and academic institutions.

The event seeks to promote dialogue on transboundary water issues, facilitate knowledge exchange and boost partnerships that support innovative and sustainable solutions to water and climate challenges, contributing to water security, sustainable development, and peace across the region, the statement added.

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MEETING

## House speaker, Spanish ambassador discuss ties, regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi on Monday received Spanish Ambassador to Jordan José Luis Cuerdo over bilateral relations and means of expanding cooperation, especially in the parliamentary field.

During the meeting, Qadi stressed the "deep-rooted" ties between Jordan and Spain, which are based on mutual respect and a shared desire to expand cooperation across various sectors, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He highlighted the importance of activating parliamentary cooperation to match the "advanced" level of political relations between the two countries in a way that contributes to bolstering economic, investment and developmental partnerships.

The lawmaker also reviewed efforts led by His Majesty King Abdullah at regional and international levels to stop escalation in the region and create a political ground based



Petra photo

Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi and Spanish Ambassador to Jordan José Luis Cuerdo on Monday discuss bilateral relations and means of expanding cooperation, especially in the parliamentary field

on the two-state solution that leads to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The Spanish ambassador stressed his country's keenness to continue boosting relations with Jordan across various sectors, praising the ongoing development and continuous coordination in bilateral ties.

He expressed Spain's keenness to expand parliamentary, eco-

nomic and investment cooperation to serve the mutual interests of both kingdoms.

Cuerdo commended Jordan's pivotal role, under the leadership of King Abdullah, in supporting peace efforts and promoting regional stability, stressing the importance of continued coordination to achieve political solutions to regional crises, foremost of which is the right to establish a Palestinian state.

## Arab Thought Forum hosts symposium on existence, civilisational action

AMMAN — The Arab Thought Forum (ATF) on Wednesday held an interactive symposium in Amman titled "To Be or Not To Be: Between the Question of Existence and the Dilemma of Civilisational Action", bringing together intellectuals, academics and researchers to examine questions of existence and their implications for the Arab world's future amid rapid global change.

ATF Acting Secretary-General Amani Jarar said that the event reflects ATF's commitment to promoting critical thinking and dialogue on key intellectual issues shaping the region, according to a forum statement.

She said that the symposium draws inspiration from a question posed by HRH Prince Hassan, "To Be or Not to Be", the famous word by William Shakespeare not as a search for definitive answers, but as a framework for rethinking existence, identity and the future through interdisciplinary dialogue.

Jarrar added that accelerating digital trans-



ATF photo

The Arab Thought Forum holds an interactive symposium in Amman titled 'To Be or Not To Be: Between the Question of Existence and the Dilemma of Civilisational Action'

formation and knowledge production require Arab institutions to shift from knowledge consumption to knowledge creation and active engagement with societal issues.

She noted that the symposium's interactive format, along with a documentation booklet to be expanded with participants' contributions, reflects the forum's effort to preserve intellectual output and enhance a culture of dialogue.

Literary critic Mohammad Asfour said

that Shakespeare's question has evolved beyond its dramatic context to become a metaphor for contemporary Arab challenges, representing a choice between resignation and collective action.

Chairing the first session, Mohammad Hourani said that meaningful change begins with awareness rather than information accumulation, stressing that the key challenge lies in understanding reality and managing resources effectively.

Rula Samain said

that the question "Who am I?" should be understood as an evolving process shaped by experience, knowledge and ethical responsibility, adding that shared values remain essential for cohesive societies.

Tawfiq Shomer warned that advances in artificial intelligence are reshaping perceptions of human identity, introducing concepts such as the "post-human", stressing the need to ensure technology enhances human creativity rather than replaces it.

that the Islamic intellectual tradition frames human existence as a purposeful mission requiring practical institutional responses.

Ibrahim Badran said that questions of existence are now linked to civilisational security challenges, including food and water security and dependency, stressing the importance of scientific knowledge and long-term planning.

The symposium concluded with a discussion session among participants, highlighting ATF's role as a platform for dialogue on major intellectual and civilisational questions.

## Wadi Rum reserve expands efforts to protect Arabian oryx — director

AMMAN (JT) — Director of the Wadi Rum Protected Area and Directorate Saleh Nuaimi on Monday said that preserving biodiversity is a "core" objective of the natural reserve.

Nuaimi told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the wildlife sanctuary contains more than 24,000 rock

inscriptions and 20,000 rock drawings dating back over 2,000 years, an archaeological evidence of human settlement in the area for over 12,000 years.

The rock inscriptions also show that Wadi Rum is a natural habitat for the Arabian oryx, he said.

The director added that a reintroduction project was launched in 2000 with 10 oryx

brought from the Shuamari wildlife reserve, later reinforced in 2008 with additional animals provided by the Environment Agency in Abu Dhabi to enhance genetic diversity and improve breeding sustainability.

Nuaimi said that the Arabian oryx currently lives in a semi-natural release environment inside the reserve, with the herd exceeding 72

animals.

He said that reproduction rates vary depending on factors related to rainfall seasons, which affect vegetation growth, as well as the presence of predators, such as the Arabian wolf, which targets young oryx.

Nuaimi said that the reserve aims to develop an integrated eco-tourism project that would allow visitors to ob-

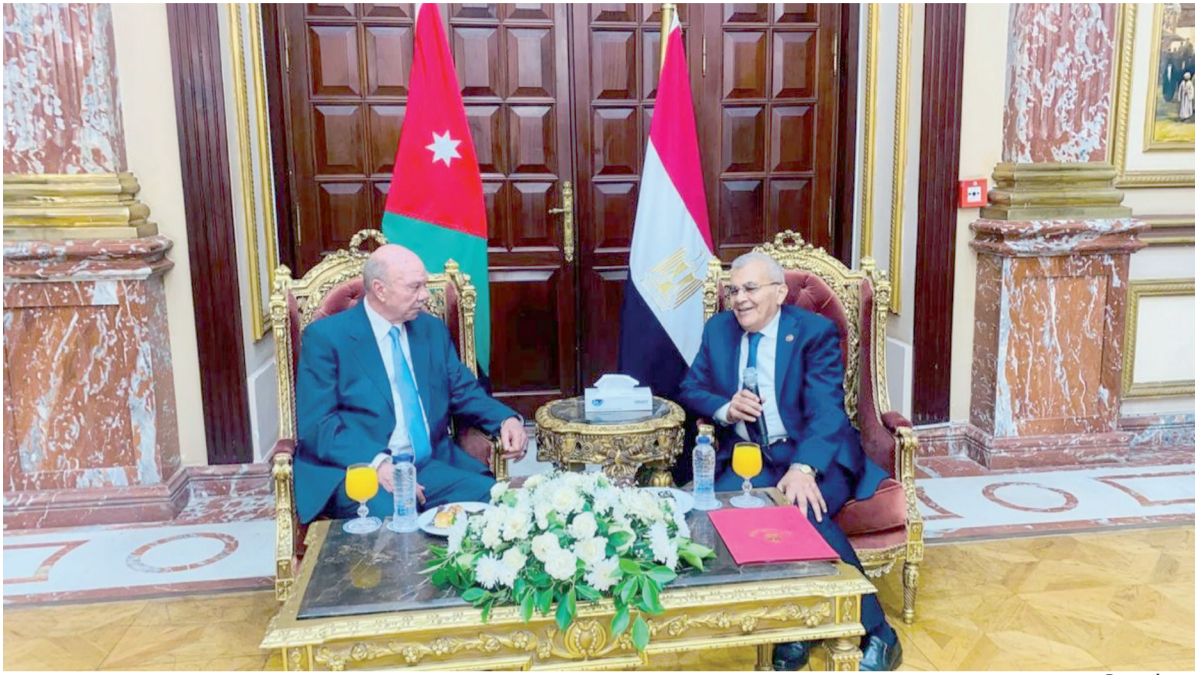
serve the Arabian oryx in its natural habitat, while maintaining environmental and wildlife protection standards.

Wadi Rum Reserve was established in 1999 over an area of 720 square kilometres and was inscribed in 2011 on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a mixed natural and cultural site due to its historical and environmental value.



Petra photo

Director of the Wadi Rum Protected Area and Directorate Saleh Nuaimi on Monday says that the Arabian oryx lives in a semi-natural release environment inside the reserve, with the herd exceeding 72 animals



Senate President Faisal Fayez on Monday meets with Egyptian Senate Speaker Essam Farid on the sidelines of the 10th Summit of Speakers of Parliaments of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM) in Cairo

# Senate president, Egyptian counterpart discuss ties

AMMAN (JT) — Senate President Faisal Fayez on Monday underscored the deep-rooted Jordanian-Egyptian relations at all levels, saying they are based on mutual respect and shared cooperation in the service of the interests of both countries and their peoples.

He also highlighted the strong ties between His Majesty King Abdullah and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El Sisi, noting their shared commitment to sustaining and further developing bilateral relations across various fields.

Fayez made the remarks during a meeting in Cairo with Egyptian Senate Speaker Essam Farid on the sidelines of the 10th Summit of Speakers of Parliaments of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM), in the presence of Jordan's Ambassador to Egypt Amjad Adaleh, according to a Senate statement.

The two sides discussed the importance of building on close bi-

lateral ties to enhance cooperation, particularly amid current regional challenges. They also stressed the need to strengthen parliamentary relations, unify positions on mutual issues, and advance Arab parliamentary work.

The Senate president praised Egypt's stance rejecting Iranian aggression against Jordan...

Fayez said the challenges facing the Arab world require unified positions and greater coordination to establish an integrated regional political and economic framework that safeguards security and stability against external interference.

He added that Arab

economic unity has become a key prerequisite for deeper integration, noting that the Arab world possesses the human and economic potential to become a significant regional and global power.

The Senate president praised Egypt's stance rejecting Iranian aggression against Jordan, as well as its support for the Hashemite Custodianship over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. He also commended Cairo's backing of King Abdullah's peace efforts and its broader support for Arab causes.

For his part, Farid reaffirmed the depth of historical and fraternal relations between Egypt and Jordan, praising the continued development of ties between Cairo and Amman and their close coordination on regional and international issues.

He stressed Egypt's unwavering support for Jordan against any threat to its security, stability and territorial integrity, reiterat-

ing Cairo's call to avoid any actions that could escalate tensions or undermine regional peace efforts.

Both sides reaffirmed their firm support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, emphasizing the two-state solution and rejecting any attempts to displace Palestinians or liquidate the Palestinian cause.

They also highlighted the importance of strengthening parliamentary cooperation between the two senates to align visions, exchange expertise and enhance coordination on issues of mutual interest.

Separately, during the PA-UfM meetings, which were attended by Senators Amer Hadidi and Ali Al Ayed, along with MP Maysoun Qawabah, Jordan was elected to chair two of the assembly's permanent committees: The Committee on Women's Rights in Euro-Mediterranean Countries and the Committee on Infrastructure, Housing and Sustainable Communities.

# Mobile subscriptions grow to 8.3 million in Q1 2026 — TRC

AMMAN (JT) — Mobile telecommunications subscriptions in Jordan rose by 3.4 per cent to 8.3 million during the first quarter of 2026, up from 8.03 million in the corresponding period of 2025, according to the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC).

The TRC said that internet subscriptions also recorded modest growth, increasing to 829,000 from 818,000 a year earlier, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

Fixed-line voice subscriptions declined by 3.9 per cent to 465,000, down from 484,000 in the first quarter of 2025. Residential subscribers accounted for 68 per cent of the total, while commercial



services accounted for 62 per cent of subscriptions, while post-paid plans represented 38 per cent.

Meanwhile, fifth-generation (5G) mobile services continued to expand rapidly, with subscriptions climbing to 433,400 during the first quarter of 2026.

The figure represents a 35 per cent increase from 320,700 subscriptions in the fourth quarter of 2025 and a 95 per cent jump from 221,900 recorded in the first quarter of last year.

Leased-line services continued to edge down, with subscriptions declining by 0.8 per cent to 24,300, compared with 24,500 in the corresponding period of 2025.

users represented the remaining 32 per cent.

The report also showed that mobile broadband subscrip-

tions reached 8.3 million, reflecting continued growth in the mobile communications market. Prepaid

# Yarmouk Water, German officials discuss priority water projects

AMMAN (JT) — Yarmouk Water Company CEO Ghislain Juvanon met on Monday with a German delegation to discuss expanding cooperation and supporting priority water and sanitation projects across Jordan's northern governorates.

The delegation included Laura Schmitler from the German embassy in Amman and Nikolas von Kalm from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, as well as representatives from the German Development Bank (KfW), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), and the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR).

Juvanon outlined the company's operational challenges and infrastructure financing needs, stressing the importance of German support in helping address Jordan's growing



Yarmouk Water Company CEO Ghislain Juvanon meets on Monday with a German delegation to discuss expanding cooperation

water scarcity, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Yarmouk Water Company's Management Contract Director Ahmed Awamleh said the company's strategic plans are aligned with the National Water Strategy (2023-2040), focusing on reducing water losses, improving financial sustainability, and enhancing custom-

er services.

The two sides also discussed securing a 15-million-euro grant to finance priority infrastructure projects and improve the efficiency of sanitation systems.

Von Kalm praised the company's development plans and reaffirmed Germany's commitment to exploring new projects that promote sustainable water

management.

The visit concluded with a tour of the Wadi Al Arab Water Treatment Plant and the Wadi Al Arab Hydro-power Plant, where the delegation reviewed groundwater management practices, water quality monitoring systems, sustainable sludge management, and water-energy initiatives.

## RESUMPTION



# JPC restores postal exchange with Syria

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Post Company (JPC) on Monday announced the resumption of international postal exchange services with Syria, effective as of July 1.

The resumption comes following the official accreditation of a new exchange office in Damascus within the Universal Postal

Union's network of approved exchange offices, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Under this resumption, Jordan Post will serve as a vital transit hub for transporting letters and parcels to and from Syria and various countries worldwide via available commercial

flights, contributing to smoother service flows and facilitating exchange operations.

The company noted that resuming the service falls within its ongoing efforts to develop its offerings and expand its international postal network to ensure more efficient and reliable services for local and global clients.

# Agriculture Ministry, NLC launch first national programme to measure rangeland indicators

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Agriculture, in cooperation with the National Land Coalition (NLC) in Jordan, has launched the country's first national programme to measure indicators related to rangelands, pastoralists and livestock breeders.

With this initiative, Jordan becomes the first Arab country to implement the global methodology under the international "Mobility Matters" campaign, which is being carried out in a limited number of countries worldwide, according to a Ministry of Agriculture statement issued on Monday.

The initiative aims to establish a comprehensive national database on the status of rangelands, pastoral communities and live-



The initiative aims to establish a comprehensive national database on the status of rangelands, pastoral communities and livestock production by measuring indicators related to rangeland health, livelihoods, pastoral mobility and sectoral challenges

stock production by measuring indicators related to rangeland health, livelihoods, pastoral mobility and sectoral challenges.

The data collected will provide evidence-based insights to sup-

port the development of national policies and programmes.

NLC Jordan Chairperson Raed Gharib said that the initiative marks a significant milestone in strengthening knowledge on

pastoral communities in the Kingdom.

He added that the development of national indicators would help improve rangeland management policies and enhance the livelihoods of pastoralists

and livestock breeders. Gharib noted that Jordan's participation in the campaign reflects its commitment to adopting international best practices in the sustainable management of natural resources.

He said that the campaign highlights the importance of pastoral mobility and its role in preserving biodiversity, improving natural resource management and strengthening the resilience of pastoral communities in the face of climate change.

He added that the results of the measurement process are expected to support more responsive policies that address the needs of pastoralists while ensuring the sustainability of rangelands and natural resources across the Kingdom.

# Juvenile suspect detained over alleged murder of teenager in Amman

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Juvenile Court prosecutor on Sunday began questioning a minor in connection with the alleged murder of a 17-year-old boy from an Arab national in Amman, official sources said.

Police received information that a body was found in the Muwaqqar area, Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

"When the coroner arrived at the area, they detected bruises and physical abuse to different parts of his

body, Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

Investigators and forensic experts also detected strangulation marks on the victim's neck, according to the police official.

Sartawi added that investigators zeroed in on a minor as the prime suspect in the

case. Upon questioning the minor, he allegedly confessed to murdering the victim "after seeing him in his backyard".

Investigations are ongoing in the case, according to the Public Security Directorate.

The Juvenile Court

prosecutor will summon the victim and the suspect's family members for questioning, according to the senior official source.

The suspect was ordered detained by the Juvenile Court prosecutor for 15 days at a juvenile centre pending further investigation.





Venezuelan armed forces cadets arrange tons of donated supplies for the victims of the June 24 quakes, at the Jose Maria Vargas sports complex domo in Maiquetia, La Guaira state, Venezuela, on Friday

## As Venezuela quake deaths pass 3,000, attention turns to mourning, burials

CATIA LA MAR, Venezuela (AFP) — Deaths from Venezuela's devastating twin earthquakes rose to at least 3,342 on Sunday as officials began to bury dozens of bodies left unidentified 11 days after the disaster.

The June 24 double shocks, one of Latin America's worst quake disasters, toppled scores of buildings in the La Guaira coastal area north of Caracas and left thousands of people missing.

As international rescue teams packed up and ended attempts to find survivors, attention shifted to mourning those lost and burying the remains that families have recovered from the ruins.

In a secluded area of La Esperanza cemetery in La Guaira, gravediggers buried more than 150 bodies still unidentified since the earthquakes, AFP journalists saw.

A line of simple white crosses with small bouquets at their foot marked a long row of individual graves. Each one had the same date of death: June 24, 2026.

Two excavators were working to dig more graves in the light brown earth.

"We are first and foremost overcome with grief," said local resident Eli Zavala, who was helping with the burials.

"We started here on July 25th, the very next day, to do all the work...so that all those people could have dignified burials."

According to updat-

ed official figures on Sunday, at least 3,342 people died and another 16,700 were injured.

With nearly 200 buildings totally collapsed, most of them in La Guaira, more than 17,000 people have been left homeless and are sleeping in shelters and temporary camps.

The government has not given any figure for those still missing, but the UN estimates that as many as 50,000 people may still be unaccounted for after the shocks.

Many families are still trying to search for relatives in the rubble.

"I've lost track of the days. You lose your mind, but I'm not leaving here because I know he's there," said Zuly, looking for her son in Catia la Mar district.

She now sleeps in a plaza near where he worked.

"I found his motorcycle, I found his helmet. He's there, God willing, alive. If not, at least I can find him, see him...I'm not leaving here without my son."

### 'No social unrest'

Even before the quakes, Venezuela had been struggling with economic crisis and political upheaval that left infrastructure and health services depleted.

The UN estimates the quakes caused \$6.7 billion in damage — equivalent to 6 per cent of Venezuela's GDP.

The damaged international airport serv-

ing Caracas is still closed to commercial flights.

Soon after the quakes, many Venezuelans complained they were left alone to dig for families in the ruins and criticised the government's response until international teams arrived.

Interim President Delcy Rodriguez has defended the government reaction, saying thousands of public officials and rescue teams were dispatched.

On Sunday, she dismissed concerns about upheaval over the quakes.

"There will be no social unrest here, what we have here is deep social solidarity," Rodriguez said during a military ceremony marking the country's independence day.

Across Caracas and La Guaira, many were focussed instead on Sunday services in churches to remember those lost and still missing.

On the campus of Venezuela Central University in Caracas, dozens of people gathered around a large Venezuela flag surrounded by candles for a vigil.

"I've met with couples who have lost both their children, or two of their three. It's very painful," Father Rafael Troconis told AFP in La Guaira.

"You try to offer support as much as you can. You want to be close to those who are suffering. You notice a lot of sadness and despair."

# At least 330 child casualties in Sudan this year — UN

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The war in Sudan between the regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has killed or injured at least 330 children in the first six months of 2026, the United Nations' children's agency said on Monday.

The figures include more than 200 children killed and at least 100 maimed, mostly in the Kordofan and Darfur regions, according to data provided to AFP.

Children "are being killed and injured in their homes, on the roads, in markets, and while attempting to access essential services such as education and healthcare", UNICEF's Sudan chief Sheldon Yett said.

Since April 2023, the war between the former allied forces has killed tens of thousands, with aid workers estimating that more than 200,000 people have been killed.

At an effective stalemate, both sides have relied extensively on drone strikes, which have killed more than 1,000 people this year alone and account for 60 per cent of child casualties in the Kordofan region, according to UNICEF.



People gather around a water bladder in Al Mina Al Muwahad, the largest displacement camp near El Obeid city, Sudan, hosting approximately 25,000 people

The North Kordofan town of El Obeid has been pummeled by paramilitary drones for weeks, which have hit civilian infrastructure including power stations, water systems and schools.

The UN has raised a

"red alert" that the RSF is preparing to mount a deadly offensive on the city, threatening half a million people.

It has voiced fears that there could be a repeat in El Obeid of atrocities committed during the RSF's October 2025

assault on the city of El Fasher, which a UN inquiry found bore "the hallmarks of genocide".

"Any further deterioration could expose even more children to death, injury, displacement and other grave protection risks," UNICEF said

on Monday.

Across Sudan, five million children are internally displaced, according to UN figures. Millions are going hungry, including over 825,000 children under five suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

## Russia launches new barrage on Kyiv region — authorities

KYIV, Ukraine (AFP) — Russia attacked Kyiv's capital region with ballistic missiles on Monday, authorities said after the foes traded overnight strikes.

The attack was the second on Kyiv and its surroundings in less than a week and came as both sides increased long-range attacks, underlining the growing reach of the conflict more than four years after Russia invaded.

An AFP journalist in Kyiv heard more than 10 explosions during a ballistic missile alert early Monday. Around 30 minutes later, AFP journalists saw several flashes in the sky as another series of blasts rang out.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko stated that air



This photograph shows smoke rising during Russian missile strikes on the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv on Monday

defences were in operation and urged people to remain in shelters.

Ukraine has increasingly targeted energy facilities inside Russia and, in particular, Moscow-controlled terri-

tricity supplies.

"Following an enemy attack on energy infrastructure near Sevastopol, our city was temporarily left without electricity," Razvozhayev wrote on Telegram.

Moscow's Mayor Sergei Sobyanyin said on state-backed Max that several waves of drones bound for the Russian capital were shot down by Russian air defences.

### Fighting in key stronghold

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Sunday that troops were continuing to fight for the strategic eastern town of Kostyantynivka, a gateway to key Ukrainian

positions in the Donetsk region.

Moscow had said Friday it had taken the outpost but Kyiv dismissed the announcement as a "lie", saying that it is defending the town.

Zelensky also warned Russia was preparing new large-scale attacks ahead of this week's NATO summit in Turkey, where he is expected to hold talks with US President Donald Trump on the war.

US diplomatic attempts to end the war have stalled and Trump's talks will seek to revive that effort.

Both Putin and Zelensky spoke by phone with Trump on Saturday in calls to mark the 250th anniversary of US independence.

## Thousands flee raging wildfires in southern Europe

ILLE-SUR-TÊT, France (AFP) — Wildfires raged across southern Europe on Monday, forcing thousands of people to evacuate their homes and prompting officials to ban spectators from a stage of the storied Tour de France cycling race.

Hundreds of firefighters are battling blazes that have devastated more than 19,000 hectares of land — an area more than twice the size of Manhattan — across Portugal, Spain, France and Greece.

And temperatures are on the rise again, predicted to reach 40°C in parts of a region still suffering the aftermath of a recent record-breaking heatwave.

In southwestern France near the city of Perpignan, 700 hundred firefighters backed by special aircraft battled to control a "gigantic" blaze spreading in a hard-to-reach remote area, with more than 10,000 local residents evacuated.

Fanned by wind, intense heat and exceptionally dry air, the fire has nearly tripled in size since early Sunday, devouring 4,600 hectares and leaving a firefighter



A Canadair CL-415 water bombing aircraft of France's Civil Security services drops water on a wildfire in the southern France department of Pyrenees-Orientales where 700 hundred firefighters backed by special aircraft battled to control a 'gigantic' blaze spreading in a hard-to-reach remote area, with more than 10,000 local residents evacuated, near the town of Bouleternere on Monday

and a resident injured, local authorities said.

"The fire came within 300 metres of the houses. We were taken aback by how fast it spread, it was staggering — bordering on panic," said Patrice, a 53-year-old resident of the village of Trevillach, who did not wish to give his surname.

"We started seeing smoke around 10:30 pm, then it kept coming closer and closer. Someone from the town hall knocked on

our door around 1:00 am to tell us to leave," said Charlotte Pignol, 30, who was among the first to be evacuated from her home early on Sunday.

The blazes come shortly after a heatwave in June, one of Europe's worst, during which thousands of excess deaths were registered and which would have been "virtually impossible" without climate change, the World Weather Attribution group of scientists said.

With the mercury set to rise again in the coming days, authorities expressed alarm that the annual summer wildfire season had started a month early.

"Climate change is here, we are living the consequences and it is only the start of July," said French fire service Colonel Eric Belgoino as he appealed to people near the Pyrenees inferno to take precautions to avoid starting fires.

"The season is going to be long for the soldiers fighting fires. You have to help us," he pleaded.

In France, officials announced that Monday's third stage of the Tour de France cycling race through the Pyrenees would take place without spectators who normally line the routes of the storied competition.

The stage, which on Monday will see cyclists ride from Spain into France, "will be limited to the passage of the riders only and the vehicles essential to organizing the race" on French territory, the regional prefect Pierre Regnaud de la Mothe told reporters.

"The public is asked not to go near the route or to

the finish area," he said.

"In other words, and I regret having to say this, it will be, in France at least, a stage of the Tour de France without spectators."

In Greece, flames set off by a forest fire tore through two factories in Thessaloniki in the north of the country over the weekend, forcing authorities to evacuate the surrounding area and to warn households to keep their windows closed.

In Spain, a fire near the northeastern Costa Brava coast burned more than 2,200 hectares in two days and firefighters said their efforts would be "complicated" by rising temperatures and the many "smoking hotspots" within the fire's perimeter.

In Portugal, emergency services said they had controlled "80 per cent" of a wildfire that has devastated some 13,000 hectares of forest and scrub land in the north of the country.

Elsewhere, major fires also destroyed hundreds of hectares of forest, vineyards and scrub land on the Croatian island of Hvar and at Tale in Albania, authorities said.

## Canada picks German firm to build new submarine fleet — reports

TORONTO, Canada (AFP) — Canada has chosen Germany's Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems to build its new multi-billion-dollar fleet of submarines, Canadian media reported, with Prime Minister Mark Carney set to make the announcement later Monday.

Ottawa opened the bidding process for 12 new military submarines in 2024, warning its existing British-built Victoria-class vessels needed to be decommissioned by the mid-2030s.

In August 2025, Carney's government named the two finalists: TKMS and Hanwha Ocean Co. of South Korea.

Carney is making a security-related announcement in the east coast city of Halifax later Monday, where he is expected to name the bid winner, before heading to the NATO summit in Turkey.

Multiple outlets, including public broadcaster CBC and The Globe and Mail, have re-

ported that TKMS won the bid, citing unnamed sources.

Carney's office did not immediately respond to request seeking confirmation.

### 'I think the NATO element was ultimately the decider'

For Wesley Wark, a Canadian defence policy expert at the Center for International Governance Innovation, the German bid always had the upper hand, given Canada's desire to bolster alliances within a NATO facing unprecedented pressure from US President Donald Trump.

"I think the NATO element was ultimately the decider," Wark told AFP.

Carney has advanced historic increases in military spending since taking office last year, and his government has already hit NATO's minimum benchmark of 2 per cent of GDP committed to defence.

The prime minister has also warned that Canada relies too heavily on the United States for security, while seeking broader defence ties with European NATO allies.

But Wark stressed the decision may come at a cost, given the emerging importance of South Korea as an ally.

He said Carney would likely have a "tough diplomatic moment" in Turkey this week, with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung expected to attend the NATO meet.

"It's a tough decision because for Canada, we also have Indo-Pacific commitments," Wark said. "We're looking to South Korea as a key partner."

## France's Bardella says 'ready to accept consequences' of Le Pen verdict

STRASBOURG, France (AFP) — French far-right leader Jordan Bardella said he was "ready to accept the consequences" of a court ruling expected on Tuesday that will determine whether he will be his party's candidate in France's 2027 presidential elections.

"We have anticipated every scenario," the National Rally (RN) Party leader said Monday in the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

An appeals court will rule on whether to uphold a five-year ban from public office for Bardella's mentor, longtime party leader Marine Le Pen, in a case that has upended her presidential aspirations.

A lower court last year sentenced Le Pen, 57, to a five-year ban from public office and two years in prison over a fake jobs scam at the European Parliament.

If the appeals court upholds last year's ruling, the three-time presidential candidate will be banned from vying to replace outgoing centrist President

Emmanuel Macron in next year's election.

Le Pen has suggested that 30-year-old Bardella could stand instead if she has to step down.

'We promised to fight together in this appeal case and to campaign together afterwards, whatever is decided in the coming hours'

Bardella said he would return to Paris on Monday and meet with Le Pen late on Tuesday.

Whatever the court decides, "I will contin-

ue to support her as I have always done," he said.

"We promised to fight together in this appeal case and to campaign together afterwards, whatever is decided in the coming hours."

The first trial found Le Pen — along with 24 former European lawmakers, assistants and accountants — guilty of operating a system from 2004 to 2016 to use European Parliament funds to employ RN staff in France.

The lower court also sentenced Le Pen to four years in jail, with two suspended.

Le Pen claimed her party was the victim of a "witch hunt".

During the appeal trial, she denied that the RN had any system to embezzle European Parliament funds, and has said her party acted in "complete good faith".

Opinion polls in recent months have largely suggested the far-right will lead in the first round of next year's vote, but are divided on the outcome of the second round.

## Rebels fighting for control of camp in northern Mali

BAMAKO (AFP) — Extremists and their separatist Tuareg allies fought on Monday to control a key camp in northern Mali where Russian paramilitaries and forces for the country's military junta have been holed up.

The Al Qaeda-linked JNIM extremists and Tuareg FLA separatists launched coordinated attacks in the region on Saturday, just over two months after another major offensive in which they captured the strategic northern town of Kidal and killed the troubled west African country's defence minister.

The FLA claimed control of Anefis on Saturday, a location crucial to securing a grip on Kidal, which is about 100 kilometres away.

FLA reinforcements arrived in Anefis early Monday morning in several dozen armed vehicles, a local official told AFP.

"The fighting continued today [Monday] and will even continue tomorrow [Tuesday]. Our men are holding the camp, that's for sure," a Malian military source at the army general staff in Gao told AFP.

Malian army reinforcements that left Gao further south on Sunday



An aerial image shows a general view of Gao, in Mali, on November 26, 2019

were forced to turn back after being targeted by the FLA, another security source told AFP.

"Between five and eight military vehicles" were destroyed in the ambush, according to Wamaps, a collective of west African

journalists specialising in security issues in the Sahel region.

On Sunday, the African Union said it "strongly condemned the coordinated terrorist attacks".

"These attacks are a stark reminder that ter-

rorism and violent extremism continue to pose a serious threat to Mali, the Sahel and the African continent as a whole," said AU Commission chairman Mahmoud Ali Youssouf.

Since coups in 2020

and 2021, Mali has been led by the military.

Its junta leaders had promised to restore calm in the vast nation, which has been grappling with a security crisis since 2012, but so far have mostly failed to deliver.

## Safadi meets with Uzbek president in Tashkent, discusses bilateral relations

Continued from page 1

The two ministers agreed to convene the inaugural Jordanian-Uzbek Business Forum to boost investment and economic cooperation. They also highlighted the steady growth in bilateral trade and

stressed the importance of building on this momentum.

Safadi and Saidov agreed to hold the third round of political consultations in the fourth quarter of 2026 to follow up on the outcomes of the Royal visit and advance preparations for

the Uzbek president's visit to Jordan.

They also discussed regional developments, stressing the need to support efforts to de-escalate tensions and restore security and stability, and reviewed the situation in the Palestinian territories,

calling for the sustained delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza and reaffirming support for a just and lasting peace based on the two-state solution.

The two ministers stressed their commitment to expanding bilateral cooperation and

continuing coordination within international organisations, including the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

During the visit, Safadi toured the Islamic Civilisation Centre in Tashkent, one of Uzbekistan's leading cultural landmarks.

## Trump to meet Ukraine, Syria leaders at NATO summit — White House

Continued from page 1

But Trump has also had tense ties with the Ukrainian, most notably during a shouting match in the Oval Office in February 2025 when he said Zelensky lacked the "cards" to win.

The meeting with Syrian President Ahmed Al Sharaa meanwhile comes after Trump repeatedly suggested that Damascus could get involved militarily in Lebanon, where Israel and Hizbollah are at war.

But Sharaa, whom Trump hosted at the White House last year, denied in June that his country sought to intervene militarily in Lebanon, saying he was looking for "economic channels between Lebanon and Syria, not military ones".

NATO allies must ensure that Ukraine receives the support...

"We will announce tens of billions in new contracts that will provide the crucial kit we need to deter and defend," he told a news conference in Ankara.

NATO's European members and Canada will pledge to give Ukraine 70 billion euros (\$80 billion) in military aid both this year and next at the alliance's summit in Ankara next week, diplomats said Friday.

The vow — to be contained in a final summit declaration

porters in the Turkish capital Ankara. "Allies and NATO partners must continue to ensure Ukraine gets what it needs."

NATO allies will unveil billions in new contracts to bolster their ability to "defer and defend", Rutte said.

And it is meant to demonstrate to Zelensky — who will attend the summit — that backing remains steadfast as his country appears to be turn the tide in the war.

Diplomats say that the financing from the European Union loan and the pledges they have made already mean they are on course to reach the 70 billion euros in each year.

Germany — now the largest backer of Ukraine — had pushed to have the commitment put in writing as it seeks to drive other European countries to do more.

Officials said that there was some pushback from Italy over putting the pledge in black-and-white, but that it was eventually approved Friday by ambassadors at NATO.

## Hamas announces dissolution of Gaza governing body

Continued from page 1

"The head of the government's emergency committee Mohammed Al Farra has officially submitted his resignation," Ismail Al Thawabta, head of Hamas's government media office, told AFP.

"He has also decided to dissolve the committee to facilitate the administrative and governmental transition to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG)," he added.

The NCAG, currently based in Cairo, was created by the Board of Peace that US President Donald Trump established when he brokered the ceasefire in October 2025.

"Hamas has taken a new step in that it will no longer be in charge of the Gaza Strip, in order to remove any pretexts for the occupation, which continues its aggression and war of extermination," Ha-

mas spokesman Hazem Qassem told AFP.

"We hope for the swift entry of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, and Hamas affirms its readiness to hand over governmental responsibilities to the committee to ensure its success."

'Symbolic gesture'

The NCAG said it was ready to govern Gaza.

"We affirm that the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza is fully prepared to assume its national responsibilities as soon as the necessary resources and capabilities are available," Ali Shaath, head of the committee, wrote on X.

"The fundamental requirements for the committee's success are a single authority, a single law with a clear mandate, and a single armed force under the authority of this single entity."

The NCAG has been based in Cairo for months, reportedly due to Israeli objections to its entry into the war-devastated territory of 2.1 million people.

Mkhaimar Abusada, a political expert from Gaza, told AFP that Hamas's move was a "symbolic gesture".

"The problem is not with dissolving their governmental committee, but with agreeing to disarmament," he said.

"Hamas has not agreed to disarming itself and that is still the sticking point."

Hamas and other Palestinian factions have held several rounds of talks in Cairo with mediators to narrow differences, particularly over the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire, which includes the group's disarmament.

"From Hamas's perspective, this checks a few boxes," said a diplomatic source, referring to Monday's announcement.

"It shows they are moving the process forward, puts the spotlight on what they portray as Israel's failure to follow through on its commitments," added the source, who attended some of the talks in Cairo.

**Ceasefire violations**

The first phase of the Gaza ceasefire involved the release of the last Israeli hostages held by Hamas in exchange for Palestinians detained by Israel.

The transition to the second phase, which was to involve Hamas's disarmament and a gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, has been stalled for months.

Israeli forces have actually expanded their presence in the territory in recent months, taking control of nearly 70 per cent.

Meanwhile, Hamas is demanding the estab-

lishment of a Palestinian administration before it will consider handing over any part of its arsenal.

The question of Gaza's post-war governance also remains one of the main sticking points in negotiations on implementing phase two of the truce.

Israel rejects any return of Hamas to power, but also rejects a direct takeover by the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority at this stage.

Both Hamas and Israel accuse each other of violating the ceasefire.

At least 1,072 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the truce took effect, according to the territory's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations.

The Israeli military says it has lost five soldiers in Gaza over the same period, as well as one contractor.

## Huge crowds fill Tehran for Khamenei funeral procession

Continued from page 1

People carried blood-red flags — symbols of vengeance in Shia Islam — as well as slogans including "Kill Trump" and images of Mojtaba Khamenei.

"I came with honour and pride to show all the people of the world how much we loved him [Ali Khamenei] and how committed we are to the system, the people, and the Islamic Republic," said Melika Nourian, 22, a university student.

'Message to enemies'

Another truck was adorned with images of top Iranian and pro-Tehran officials killed in recent years, including the head of the overseas operations arm of the Revolution-

ary Guards, the Ouds Force, Gassem Soleimani, who was killed in a US strike on Iraq in 2020.

In sweltering heat that nudged 40°C, trucks sprayed mourners with water to cool them along a procession route that covered around 20 kilometres.

"The leadership of the martyr taught everyone that Iran's greatest asset is its people and their unity," President Masoud Pezeshkian, who was among the mourners, wrote on X, adding that "today we will continue the path of Iran's honour, progress and glory".

Other figures shown attending by state media included Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, judiciary chief Gholamhossein

Mohseni Ejei and the current head of the Ouds Force, Esmail Qaani.

The head of Iran's supreme national security council, Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr, whose predecessor Ali Larijani was killed in an airstrike in March, made his first appearance in public since being named at the procession, state television showed.

"The presence of millions of people with red flags and slogans, demanding bloodshed, is a clear message from the Iranian nation to its enemies," Iranian media quoted him as saying.

State media also showed images of Mahmood Ahmadinejad, Iran's president from 2005 to 2013, taking part. Ahmadinejad had

fallen out with Khamenei in the latter part of his presidency and had not been seen since the war began.

**Focus on Mojtaba Khamenei**

But as on previous days, there was still no sign of Mojtaba Khamenei, fuelling speculation over his whereabouts and condition. Iranian officials have said he was wounded in an air strike and it remains uncertain if he will appear for the ceremonies.

Mojtaba Khamenei earlier reappointed Ejei as judiciary chief, according to his official social media.

Monday's procession will be followed by similar events in the clerical hub of Oom on



People gather along a street during the funeral procession of Iran's late supreme leader Ali Khamenei and his family members, in Tehran on Monday

Tuesday and in Iraq's holy cities of Najaf and Karbala on Wednesday.

The ceremonies culminate with Khamenei's burial in his hometown of Mashhad in north-eastern Iran on Thursday which

will be closely watched for signs of Mojtaba attending.

The government is eager to tout the mass mobilisation in the wake of the war but also after January mass protests, which rights groups say were quelled by a crackdown that killed thousands of people.

But authorities are also eager to avoid a repeat of the chaos that marred the 1989 funeral of Khomeini, which drew an estimated 10 million people, according to state media, but where crowd surges killed more than 10 people and injured over 10,000.

Jafar Miadfar, the head of emergency services, told state news agency no fatalities have been recorded so far.

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## Jordan's arbitration reform: A step towards a stronger dispute resolution hub

By **Mohammad F. A. Nsour**

Jordan's draft amendment to the Arbitration Law, published on the website of the Legislation and Opinion Bureau, is a welcome step toward modernising the Kingdom's dispute resolution framework and strengthening its appeal to foreign investors, international companies and cross-border legal practitioners.

The draft introduces several features now common in modern institutional arbitration, including the establishment of a Jordanian arbitration centre, emergency arbitration, expedited procedures, multi-party and multi-contract arbitration, disclosure of third-party funding and shorter procedural timelines. These reforms show Jordan's intention to keep pace with regional and international arbitration practice.

For foreign users, however, the central question is not only whether Jordan has modern arbitration concepts in its legislation. The more important question is whether the legal framework creates confidence, neutrality, efficiency and institutional independence.

In this regard, one point deserves careful consideration: the Jordanian Arbitration Centre may be better regulated through a separate law rather than being established within the general Arbitration Law itself. The Arbitration Law should remain a neutral framework governing arbitration agreements, tribunals, proceedings, interim measures, awards, annulment and enforcement. By contrast, the governance, structure, board of trustees, resources, exemptions, rules and institutional liability of a specific arbitration centre are matters better addressed in a dedicated statute.

This approach would strengthen both the centre and the Arbitration Law. A separate law could give the Jordanian Arbitration Centre a clear legal identity, transparent governance rules, proper financial oversight, a code of conduct, conflict-of-interest standards, and detailed provisions on emergency arbitration and expedited procedures. At the same time, the general Arbitration Law would remain neutral and applicable to all arbitrations, whether administered by the Jordanian centre, another local institution, an international centre, or conducted on an ad hoc basis.

For international parties, party autonomy is essential. Any reform should expressly confirm that the creation of the Jordanian Arbitration Centre does not prevent parties from choosing another arbitration institution, does not give the centre exclusive jurisdiction and does not make its rules applicable unless the parties agree to them. The centre should succeed through the quality of its administration, the competence of its arbitrators, the clarity of its fees and the enforceability of its decisions.

Institutional independence is equally important. If the centre is to compete regionally, its board of trustees should be formed in a manner that inspires confidence. A broad nomination model involving independent professional bodies, such as the Bar Association, Engineers Association, Contractors Association, chambers of commerce and industry, universities and arbitration experts, would help reinforce the centre's credibility. Clear rules on disclosure, conflicts of interest and removal would further strengthen trust.

The proposed tax and fee exemptions should also be drafted with precision. Supporting a national arbitration centre is a legitimate policy choice, but exemptions should be clear, proportionate and transparent, so that the centre's competitive position is based primarily on performance rather than statutory privilege.

The introduction of emergency arbitration is especially positive. An emergency arbitrator can protect rights before a tribunal is fully constituted, for example by preserving assets, evidence, goods or the status quo. Yet, the law should clarify the legal effect of an emergency arbitrator's decision, its enforceability before Jordanian courts and its relationship with urgent judicial relief.

Finally, the draft would benefit from clear transitional provisions. Parties to ongoing arbitrations should not be unexpectedly affected by new rules or new time limits that did not exist when their arbitration began or when their arbitration agreement was concluded.

Jordan is right to modernise its arbitration framework. A strong national arbitration centre can support investment, reduce reliance on foreign venues and enhance Jordan's role as a regional dispute resolution hub. The best path is to preserve the Arbitration Law as a general and neutral framework, while establishing the Jordanian Arbitration Centre through a separate, carefully drafted law. This would send a clear message to foreign users: Jordan supports modern arbitration, respects party autonomy, and is committed to credible, independent and enforceable dispute resolution.

The writer is an attorney-at-law and professor of law at the University of Jordan

## Green hydrogen: Jordan's opportunity in the new energy economy

By **Yusuf Mansur**

Green hydrogen is no longer merely an ambitious environmental concept; it has become one of the defining pillars of the emerging global economy. While countries competed throughout the twentieth century for oil and natural gas resources, they are now competing for abundant sunshine, strong wind resources, desalinated water, strategic ports and integrated industrial value chains. For Jordan, the key question is no longer whether green hydrogen matters, but whether it can be transformed into a genuine industry capable of expanding GDP, creating high-quality jobs and opening new export markets.

Globally, the clean hydrogen industry is still in its infancy. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), production of low-emission hydrogen continued to expand in 2024, yet, it still accounts for less than one percent of global hydrogen production. The overwhelming majority of hydrogen continues to be produced from natural gas and coal. Nevertheless, the long-term direction is unmistakable. Decarbonising heavy industry, fertiliser production, maritime transport, aviation, steel manufacturing and chemicals will require steadily increasing volumes of hydrogen and its derivatives.

At the same time, the IEA has recently revised downward its 2030 projections for low-emission hydrogen production, citing rising project costs and implementation delays. The implication is clear: The market is highly promising, but its development is by no means guaranteed.

Forecasts for future demand vary considerably. Depending on the pace of industrial decarbonisation and climate policies, global hydrogen demand by 2050 is expected to range between 150 and 500 million tonnes annually. By 2030, however, commercially committed demand remains relatively modest. The Hydrogen Council estimates that approximately 8 million tonnes per year of clean hydrogen demand could materialise across Europe, the United States, Japan and South Korea, provided existing policy commitments are fully implemented and supported by long-



**ECONOMIC REVIEW**

Yusuf Mansur

term offtake agreements. Competition within the region is intensifying.

Saudi Arabia has entered the race through the NEOM Green Hydrogen Project, a \$8.4 billion industrial investment designed to produce green hydrogen and convert it into green ammonia for export.

Oman has positioned itself as another global contender, with plans that could require approximately US\$33 billion in investment to reach one million tonnes of renewable hydrogen production annually by 2030. Egypt is leveraging its strategic location around the Suez Canal and its broad industrial base to become a regional hydrogen hub. It is targeting investments that could reach US\$60 billion by 2040, with official estimates suggesting that the sector could contribute US\$18 billion to GDP while creating more than 100,000 jobs.

Morocco, meanwhile, enjoys a unique geographical advantage through its proximity to European markets and its exceptional solar and wind resources. It has introduced what is known as the "Morocco Offer"—a comprehensive investment platform combining land allocation, infrastructure, financial incentives and a clear regulatory framework to attract integrated green hydrogen projects spanning renewable power generation, electrolysis, green ammonia, synthetic fuels and downstream industrial activities.

Where, then, does Jordan fit within this increasingly competitive landscape? Jordan's comparative advantage does not lie in scale, but in specialisation. The country enjoys world-class solar irradiation, growing expertise in renewable energy, the strategic Port of Aqaba, and a well-established phosphate and fertiliser industry. Together, these assets create a strong foundation for developing a competitive green ammonia industry and producing

low-carbon fertilisers for international markets.

Jordan's National Green Hydrogen Strategy suggests that production costs could eventually decline to approximately US\$1.8–2.2 per kilogramme, assuming access to low-cost renewable electricity, adequate infrastructure and desalinated water supplies.

Importantly, Jordan has already begun moving beyond memoranda of understanding towards concrete investments. In 2026, the Kingdom announced a US\$1.6 billion project in Aqaba to produce green hydrogen and green ammonia. This was followed by another investment agreement exceeding US\$1 billion to establish a facility capable of producing 100,000 tonnes of green ammonia annually, powered by solar energy and desalinated seawater.

Yet, several challenges remain. Water availability is perhaps the most critical. Producing one kilogramme of green hydrogen requires approximately 13 kilogrammes of high-purity water, making large-scale desalination in Aqaba not simply desirable but essential.

Financing represents a second challenge. Green hydrogen projects require substantial upfront capital investment as well as long-term purchase agreements capable of ensuring commercial viability.

Third, exporting hydrogen in its raw form is generally less economically attractive than converting it into higher-value products such as green ammonia, low-carbon fertilisers, or synthetic fuels, where significantly greater value added can be captured domestically.

From an economic perspective, Jordan should pursue a realistic strategy based not on competing with Saudi Arabia or Oman in production volume, but on establishing a highly specialised industrial ecosystem. Should the Kingdom succeed in attracting cumulative investments ranging between US\$5 and US\$10 billion over the next two decades, the sector could ultimately contribute between 2 and 4 per cent of GDP, while creating 20,000 to 40,000 direct and indirect jobs across energy, engineering, construction, chemicals, logistics and related services.

These estimates should not be interpreted as guaranteed out-

comes. Rather, they represent a realistic development scenario contingent upon export contracts, desalinated water, competitively priced renewable electricity and strong industrial integration with Jordan's phosphate, fertiliser and port sectors.

Perhaps what Jordan needs most today is what might be called a "Jordan Offer" for green hydrogen, a comprehensive investment proposition rather than a collection of isolated projects. International investors are not searching merely for abundant sunshine. They seek dedicated industrial land, reliable desalinated water supplies, competitively priced renewable electricity, modern port infrastructure, transparent pricing mechanisms, efficient licensing procedures, regulatory certainty and commercially viable markets for hydrogen derivatives such as green ammonia and low-carbon fertilisers.

In this sense, Jordan's success in the green hydrogen race will depend less on the resources it possesses than on its ability to package those resources into a compelling investment proposition. Just as Morocco has successfully launched the "Morocco Offer" to attract global investors, Jordan can develop its own "Jordan Offer" by capitalising on its unique strengths: the Port of Aqaba, abundant solar resources, an internationally competitive phosphate and fertiliser industry, institutional stability and strategic proximity to both European and regional markets.

Ultimately, green hydrogen is neither a magic solution nor simply another energy project. It is a comprehensive industrial policy capable of reshaping entire economic sectors. Jordan's success should therefore be measured not by the number of memoranda of understanding it signs, but by the number of factories it builds, the jobs it creates, and the export shipments leaving the Port of Aqaba.

With sound planning and effective execution, Jordan may never become the world's largest producer of green hydrogen. However, Jordan can certainly become one of the smartest and most competitive players.

The writer is a former Jordanian minister of State for Economic Affairs.

## Jordan joins the upper-middle-income club: What comes next?

By **Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal**

Jordan's elevation to the World Bank's upper-middle-income category in its 2026 income classification should not be dismissed as a simple statistical revision. Rather, it marks an important economic milestone that reflects years of macroeconomic resilience and sends a positive signal about the country's economic standing. More importantly, it provides an opportunity to reassess Jordan's development path and the policies required to sustain future growth.

The key question is therefore not why Jordan's classification has changed, but what this new status means for the country's economy in the years ahead.

The World Bank classifies economies according to Gross National Income per capita. While this indicator captures the average income generated by an economy, it does not directly measure household welfare, income distribution, job quality, or living standards. Consequently, Jordan's move into the upper-middle-income category should not be interpreted as evidence that all citizens have become wealthier. Instead, it indicates that the economy has expanded, national income has increased and productive capacity has improved in line with internationally recognised benchmarks.

Several factors contributed to this achievement. The recent revision of Jordan's national accounts by the Department of Statistics provided a more accurate estimate of the country's economic output. However, statistical revisions alone do not explain the upgrade. Over re-

cent years, Jordan has demonstrated remarkable macroeconomic stability despite a highly uncertain regional and global environment. The Jordanian dinar has remained stable, the Central Bank has maintained comfortable foreign exchange reserves, inflation has stayed relatively contained compared with many emerging economies and the economy has continued to record positive although still modest growth despite persistent global economic headwinds.

The new status brings greater responsibility. As countries move into higher income categories, access to concessional financing from international development institutions often becomes more limited, with borrowing increasingly shifting towards market-based financing...

The significance of this new classification extends well beyond statistical reporting. It sends a strong signal to international investors that Jordan remains a stable and credible

investment destination. Investors typically value macroeconomic stability as much as market size. A higher income classification reinforces confidence in the country's economic institutions and its ability to generate sustainable long-term returns. If accompanied by continued regulatory reforms and improvements in the business environment, this recognition could become a powerful catalyst for attracting both domestic and foreign investment.

At the same time, the new status brings greater responsibility. As countries move into higher income categories, access to concessional financing from international development institutions often becomes more limited, with borrowing increasingly shifting towards market-based financing. This makes prudent fiscal management even more critical. Reducing the cost of public debt, strengthening domestic revenue mobilisation, improving the efficiency of public spending, and maintaining fiscal sustainability will become increasingly important policy priorities.

Equally important is the challenge of translating this statistical achievement into tangible economic progress. Preserving an upper-middle-income status requires stronger and more inclusive growth than Jordan has achieved in recent years. Economic growth must be capable of generating productive employment, increasing real household incomes, and raising labour productivity. Growth that improves macroeconomic indicators without creating sufficient employment opportunities cannot deliver lasting improvements in living standards. The next stage of Jordan's eco-

nomical transformation should therefore focus on strengthening the real economy. Expanding investment in manufacturing, tourism, high-value-added services, digital technologies, renewable energy, and green industries would diversify the productive base and enhance export competitiveness. At the same time, continued investment in education, skills development, innovation and human capital will remain essential for improving productivity and sustaining long-term economic growth.

International experience demonstrates that countries do not become advanced economies simply because average income rises. Sustainable prosperity is achieved when higher income is accompanied by stronger productivity, greater investment, quality employment, technological advancement and more inclusive economic opportunities. Jordan's real challenge, therefore, is not merely to preserve its new classification but to use it as a platform for accelerating structural transformation and building a more competitive and resilient economy.

The World Bank's decision represents an important vote of confidence in Jordan's economic performance. Maintaining that confidence will require continued reforms, a stronger role for the private sector, more efficient public institutions, and policies that foster investment, innovation and productivity. Only then will this new classification become more than a statistical benchmark. It will become a meaningful step toward higher living standards, better employment opportunities, and a more prosperous and resilient Jordanian economy.

# BUSINESS

Tuesday, July 7, 2026

## Jordanian banks increase tech investment to JD221m in 2025 — ABJ

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian banks increased spending on technology and digital transformation to around JD221 million in 2025, up 2.5 per cent from approximately JD216 million the previous year, according to a new study by the Association of Banks in Jordan (ABJ).

The study found that investment extends well beyond the development of mobile banking applications and online services, encompassing technology infrastructure, core banking systems, cyber security, digital channels, data management and analytics, as well as artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies that support digital transformation.

The report also highlighted the growing impact of digital banking on branch networks, saying that nearly 59 per cent of banks either closed or downsized some branches during 2024 and 2025 as customers increasingly shifted to digital banking channels.

Despite the rapid pace of digitalisation, the study found that technological investment has not resulted in significant job losses. "Around 71 per cent of banks said their dig-



The Association of Banks in Jordan headquarters in Amman

ital transformation programmes had not reduced staffing levels. Instead, they had redeployed employees, enhanced their skills and prepared them for new roles better suited to an increasingly digital operating environment."

According to the study, 70.6 per cent of banks have board-approved digital transformation strategies supported by clear performance indicators. A further 23.5 per cent said

their strategies remain under development, while only 5.9 per cent reported having no digital transformation strategy in place.

Technology infrastructure, including hardware, networks, data centres and core technology solutions, accounted for the largest share of investment, representing 24 per cent of total technology spending.

"Core banking and enterprise systems made up

21.9 per cent, while digital channels, including mobile banking applications, online services and branch automation, accounted for 17.7 per cent," the study said.

Banks allocated 17.8 per cent of their technology budgets to cyber security, underscoring the sector's focus on strengthening digital resilience. Spending on data and analytics represented around 8 per cent of total technology

investment, while artificial intelligence accounted for 3.5 per cent.

The study also recorded a sharp rise in digital banking activity. The average proportion of transactions conducted through digital channels increased from 59.1 per cent in 2024 to 64.4 per cent in 2025, reflecting growing customer reliance on mobile and online banking services for day-to-day transactions.

Five banks now pro-

cess more than 90 per cent of their transactions digitally, while four others conduct between 80 per cent and 90 per cent of transactions through digital channels. The findings indicate that more than half of Jordan's banks have reached an advanced stage of digitalisation.

Meanwhile, the proportion of digitally active customers rose from 52.1 per cent in 2024 to 54.4 per cent in 2025, suggesting that the customer base using digital banking services on a regular basis continues to expand.

ABJ expected digital transactions to continue rising over the coming years, with most routine banking services likely to become fully digital as reliance on paper-based transactions and traditional banking channels steadily declines.

The study said that Jordan's banking sector is entering a new phase of development, evolving from digitalisation towards the concept of the smart bank, underpinned by sustained technology investment, institutional expertise, a skilled workforce and an increasingly sophisticated regulatory and organisational framework.



The Ministry of Transport says that land freight traffic increased by 23.6 per cent during the first quarter of 2026 compared with the same period last year

## Land freight volume rises 23.6% in Q1 2026 Transport Ministry

AMMAN (JT) — Land freight traffic increased by 23.6 per cent during the first quarter of 2026 compared with the same period last year, according to data released by the Ministry of Transport.

Official figures cited by Al Mamlaka TV showed that total freight volume reached 9.44 million tonnes during the January-March period, up from 7.64 million tonnes in the first quarter of 2025.

Imports rose by 14.2 per cent to 4.89 million tonnes, compared with 4.28 million tonnes during the corresponding period last year.

Exports recorded stronger growth, surging by 35.5 per cent to 4.55

million tonnes, up from 3.36 million tonnes in the first quarter of 2025.

Passenger traffic through all land border crossings also increased by 19.6 per cent, with the number of travellers reaching 2.95 million during the first three months of 2026, compared with 2.47 million a year earlier.

Truck traffic across all border crossings rose by 11.9 per cent, with 318,537 trucks entering and leaving the Kingdom during the quarter, up from 284,575 in the same period of 2025.

Meanwhile, the public transport fleet expanded marginally by 0.14 per cent to 41,724 vehicles, including buses, mid-sized buses, passenger vehicles and taxis.

## UN Women warns low female workforce participation could slow growth

By Ilham Darwazah

AMMAN — A decline in women's participation in the labour market could have implications for Jordan's productivity and long-term growth, according to a UN report.

According to a new policy brief by the UN Women Arab States office, women account for around 16 per cent of Jordan's labour force, warning that economic slowdowns risk widening existing gender gaps as women face reduced employment opportunities in both the private and public sectors.

The report said that the Economic Modernisation Vision aims to raise female labour-force participation to 28 per cent, but economic pressures could slow progress towards that target by limiting women's access to formal employment.

The UN Women Arab States office told The Jordan Times that women are likely to be affected through two main channels: Weaker private-sector demand and tighter fiscal conditions in the public sector.

In the private sector, employment in retail, services and hospitality could decline by between 7,100 jobs under a moderate economic slowdown and nearly 12,000 jobs in a more severe scenario, according to the report.

At the same time, fiscal constraints could result in hiring freezes and wage pressures in education, healthcare and public administration, sectors that employ a significant share of Jordanian women.

The report noted that many young, educated women enter the labour market through these sectors, meaning reduced recruitment could limit their transition into formal employment.

The brief also pointed to broader economic costs associated with gender employ-



Women-led microbusinesses supported by UN Women in the Governorate of Mafraq, Jordan

ment gaps across the Middle East and North Africa. In Jordan, estimates cited in the report suggest that narrowing the gender employment gap could increase GDP per capita by as much as 70 per cent in the long term.

Lower female labour-force participation could therefore affect household incomes, domestic demand and overall economic performance while making it more difficult to achieve the employment goals set out in the Economic Modernisation Vision.

### Policy recommendations

The UN women office recommended targeted measures to help women remain in employment during periods of economic adjustment.

Short-term recommendations include emergency cash transfers, wage subsidies and livelihood support for women working in sectors most affected by economic pressures, particularly those without formal contracts or social protection.

It also called for extending support to informal workers

through simplified eligibility criteria and existing national delivery systems.

The UN Women Arab States office recommended expanding access to credit guarantees...

Over the medium term, the brief urged policymakers to prioritise public spending on education and healthcare and avoid broad hiring freezes in the public sector because of their importance to women's employment.

The spokesperson of the UN Women

Arab states office also identified support for women-led businesses as a priority. Although women own around one-quarter of businesses in Jordan, they face an estimated \$585 million financing gap, with many women-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises reporting limited or no access to formal finance.

To address these challenges, the UN Women Arab States office recommended expanding access to credit guarantees, recovery financing and enterprise support programmes to strengthen business continuity and protect employment.

The UN Women Arab states office concluded that maintaining and increasing women's participation in the labour market would support productivity, income growth and long-term economic development. It added that policies promoting labour-market inclusion, business financing and public-sector employment could contribute to more balanced economic outcomes while advancing Jordan's economic reform agenda.

## Asian markets mixed as tech recovery stutters, oil slips

HONG KONG (AFP) — Asian markets fluctuated on Monday as investors struggled to maintain last week's late tech recovery, with traders turning their focus to the upcoming earnings season, while oil prices fell on further supplies passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

After a tough end to June — fuelled by worries that valuations linked to the AI boom may have been overdone — the mood was lifted on Thursday by data showing fewer US jobs than expected were created last month.

That soothed fears the Federal Reserve could hike interest rates soon to bring down inflation, and fuelled a healthy bounce across Asia, led by Seoul.

However, traders remain edgy and tech firms once again saw big moves in early trade on Monday, with Seoul swinging from a near two percent gain to a more than two percent loss.

Tokyo was also in the red with Singapore and Sydney, while Hong Kong, Shanghai, Wellington and Taipei edged up.

The AI theme remains the dominant force in markets, with talk now



This photo taken on Wednesday shows a ship carrying containers sailing past the Hong Kong skyline in Victoria Harbour, as seen from Kowloon

centred on when firms will see returns on the trillions of dollars invested in the sector and whether valuations have run ahead of fundamentals.

Alphabet, Amazon, Meta and Microsoft have said they would put aside more than \$725 billion for the industry this year alone.

Sentiment was given a lift by Taipei-listed Hon Hai, which announced a forecast-beating jump in April-June sales and predicted more growth to come.

The firm, also known as Foxconn, has gone

losses as tankers continued to pass through the Strait of Hormuz and on optimism over US-Iran peace talks.

However, SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes warned the benefits could take some time to feed through the economy.

"Energy knock-on effects rarely arrive all at once," he wrote. "First crude moves, then freight, transport, consumer confidence, corporate margins, inflation expectations and eventually the questions central bankers would rather avoid."

"A few more tankers moving safely through Hormuz may take the edge off the immediate panic premium, but it does not undo the cost pressures already working their way through the global economy."

And Karsten Junius, chief economist at Bank J. Safra Sarasin, added: "Oil exports remain well below pre-war levels and bottlenecks are likely to persist."

"Meanwhile, efforts to re-build strategic and commercial reserves should support demand. As a result, oil prices are likely to settle around \$75-\$80 a barrel over the coming year, keeping the inflation trajectory more elevated this year."

## AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

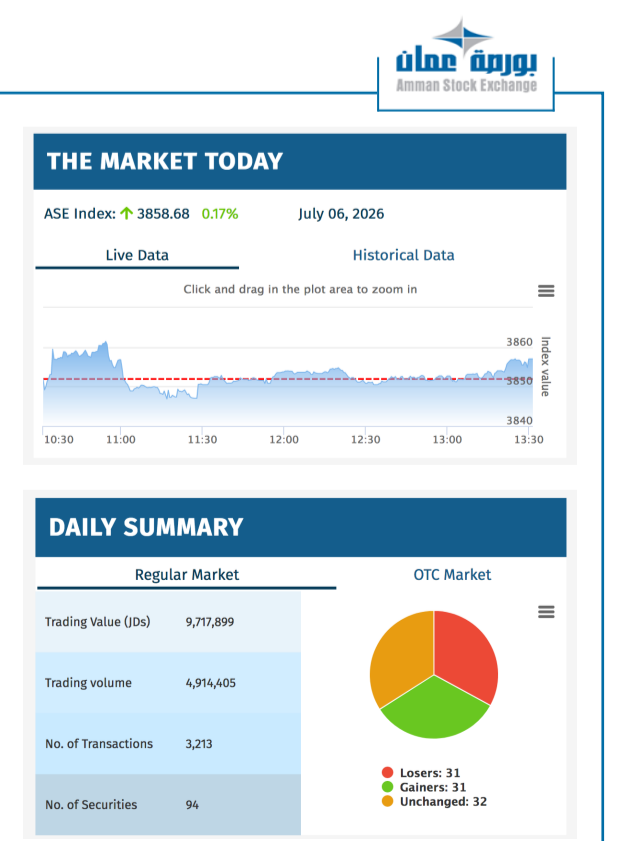
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Monday amounted to JD9.7 million spread over 4.9 million shares that traded through 3,213 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.17 per cent, closing at 3858.68 points.

Out of 94 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 31 companies rose while the share price of another 31 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Jordanian Management and Consulting Company by 4.84 per cent, National Aluminum Industrial by 4.35 per cent, Specialised Jordanian Investment by 4.26 per cent, Arab Phoenix Holdings by 4.17 per cent, and Arab Investors Union Company for Real Estates Developing by 3.70 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were International Arabian Development and Investment Trading Company by 5.26 per cent, Gulf Insurance Group in Jordan by 4.83 per cent, Ihdathiat Co-ordinates by 4.76 per cent, Jordan International Investment Company by 4.69 per cent, and Noor Capital Markets for Diversified Investments by 4.52 per cent.



# THE JORDAN TIMES SPORTS AT A GLANCE

## TENNIS

### Paolini ends Eala run to reach Wimbledon quarters

LONDON (AFP) — Jasmine Paolini reached her first Grand Slam quarter-final for two years, edging out rising Filipina star Alexandra Eala in a tense last 16 match at Wimbledon on Monday. Italian 13th seed Paolini ended the run of Iga Swiatek's conqueror Eala with a gritty 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 victory on Centre Court. "I feel so lucky to have this opportunity and so lucky to get the win," said Paolini, before addressing the watching Roger Federer in the royal box. "I just needed to stay focused and don't think about him [Federer] being here... It's an amazing feeling to be here right now with the win." Paolini will face Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine in her first major quarter-final since reaching the Wimbledon final in 2024, when she lost to Barbora Krejčíková in three sets. The Italian was also the French Open runner-up to Swiatek in 2024. She has struggled for most of this season but has rediscovered her form at the All England Club since losing the opening set of her first-round match 6-0.

## CRICKET

### Winning debut for Zimbabwe ODI captain Ngarava against Bangladesh

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AFP) — Richard Ngarava celebrated his debut as Zimbabwe one-day international captain on Monday by scoring 27 and taking three wickets in a 25-run victory over Bangladesh in Harare. Put in to bat, Zimbabwe were all out for 141 with right-arm quick Nahid Rana capturing six wickets, including that of Ngarava. Rana (6-21) wreaked havoc in his 10 overs, including two maidens. His figures were the best by a Bangladeshi in an One-Day-International (ODI). But while Zimbabwe struggled to make runs, Bangladesh battled even more. They plummeted to 116 all out with only three batters reaching double figures. Zimbabwe, fresh from an innings victory over Bangladesh in a one-off Test, can clinch the three-match ODI series by winning again on Thursday. The final match is set for Saturday. Newman Nyamhuri top scored for the home team with 33 runs. Ngarava and Innocent Kaia (26) were the other batters to impress. Sikandar Raza, often a prolific scorer for Zimbabwe, managed just one run before becoming the first victim of Rana, leaving the hosts reeling at 45-4.

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — President Donald Trump confirmed on Monday he asked FIFA boss Gianni Infantino to review the "horrible" decision to hand a red card to star US striker Folarin Balogun, but said he did not request it be overturned.

"I asked for a review because I didn't think it was a foul," Trump told reporters at the White House. "All I did was ask for a review, I didn't say you have to do this."

"That wasn't even an infraction. That was two guys running full speed that happened to crash into each other," Trump said.

The Republican president — who said "I understand sports really well" — acknowledged that he was initially unaware that the red card meant Balogun was barred from the next game, saying the rule is "very unfair".

Trump took aim at Raphael Claus, the Brazilian referee who made the call, describing him as "a little bit suspect if you check his past".

Balogun had been set to miss Monday's last-16 knockout clash against Belgium after receiving a straight red card following a video review for stepping on the ankle of a Bosnian defender in a round-of-32 clash that the US won 2-0.

Under FIFA rules, a straight red card automatically triggers a



Folarin Balogun #20 of the United States celebrates scoring his team's first goal during the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 32 match between USA and Bosnia and Herzegovina at San Francisco Bay Area Stadium on Wednesday in Santa Clara, California

one-game ban, which cannot be appealed by the player's team.

US media reported that the red card kicked off multiple days of lobbying by the Trump administration aimed at getting the decision overturned.

The effort involved officials including Andrew Giuliani, the executive director of the White House FIFA

Task Force, as well as Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also publicly called for the red card to be rescinded.

After the personal call from Trump, world football's governing body said on Sunday the ban would now be suspended for a year,

with Balogun only serving it if he com-

mits another similar foul within that period.

"We're going to have a full team, and Belgium is going to have a full team, and you know what? If they beat us, then they can be really proud," the US president said on Monday.

"The other way, if they beat us... I say it was rigged, just like the election was rigged

in 2020," Trump said, referring to his false, repeated claim that he was the real winner of the election won by Democrat Joe Biden.

The decision to allow Balogun to play has been slammed by Belgian football officials, who released a statement saying they were "astonished" by a move that is in "direct contradiction" with FIFA's

own rules.

Top scorer Balogun has been key to the US team's progress in the tournament, scoring three times and his absence against Belgium would have been a major blow to the team in the upcoming game in Seattle.

The decision to suspend the ban was taken by FIFA's disciplinary committee.

# LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

## 'Not a museum': Slovak UNESCO village strains under tourism

By Petra Vrablicova  
Agence France-Presse

VLKOLÍNEC, Slovakia — "Private property. No entry", "No photography" read the signs on a gate set up in front of a traditional log house in Vlkolinec, a UNESCO-listed Slovak village visited by tens of thousands of tourists a year.

"Are we in a zoo or something?" 68-year-old pensioner Anton Sabucha protested to AFP, nodding to the signs outside his house.

Tourists are "going wherever they want, taking pictures and peering around" every day, he complained.

He said he and other villagers felt like extras on a film set and he wanted Vlkolinec's UNESCO World Heritage status removed.

Sabucha, the oldest resident, is one of just 17 people who live year-round in the village, struggling to preserve its authenticity and its inhabitants' privacy in the face of the tourism boom.

Vlkolinec, which comprises some 45 wooden houses, attracts around 100,000 tourists a year according to official estimates.

They wander among the houses — painted mostly in shades of white, yellow



Traditional log houses are seen at the UNESCO-listed Slovak village of Vlkolinec, near the central Slovakian town of Ruzomberok, on Monday

or brown — and go biking or hiking in the surrounding hills of central Slovakia.

### Doctor Zhivago

UNESCO recognised Vlkolinec in 1993. Two other sites with traditional log houses also have heritage status in neighbouring Hungary and Czech Republic.

Besides stopping at the church, belltower and the granary, tourists can visit the UNESCO centre, which

hosts small exhibitions on nature and history and showcases films shot in the village, including the 1965 classic "Doctor Zhivago".

For the tourists' benefit, Vlkolinec puts on traditional craft demonstrations, from sewing folk costumes and gingerbread decorating to mowing and haymaking.

It also stages harvest festivals and reenactments of traditional weddings.

But Sabucha said several of these customs

were never genuinely even part of Vlkolinec's past and others were no longer practiced.

"They're showing them something that's no longer here," he grumbled.

While most residents are not lobbying for the UNESCO label to go, however, they do want their grievances addressed, according to Jan Ondrik, chairman of the Vlkolinec civic association.

"Locals feel the municipality is doing more for the tourists than for resi-

dents," he told AFP.

Vlkolinec doesn't have adequate access roads, parking areas or public toilets needed to cater for the crowds that descend on it.

So some visitors may actually "relieve themselves in someone's garden", said Ondrik, who occasionally finds a tourist wandering into his own house.

### Living village

Miroslav Parobek, 62, head of the cultural and tourism department of Ruzomberok city, which administers the site, rebuffed complaints that the village has lost the qualities for which it gained UNESCO status.

"This is not an open-air museum. It is a living village," he insisted.

He said there were no plans to seek a UNESCO delisting and Ruzomberok was trying to address residents' complaints.

Villagers get an annual 400-euro (\$450) "animation contribution" to compensate for the disruption engendered by tourism, he added.

Vlkolinec's population has shrunk by more than 300 people over the past 150 years.

But two families have chosen to move to the village in the last decade, despite the excess tourism.



People dressed as different characters attend the premiere of 'Minions & Monsters' at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California

## Banana! 'Minions' knocks 'Toy Story' off N.America box office perch

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The latest chapter in the lowbrow but lucrative "Minions" franchise debuted atop the North American box office this weekend, edging out another popular animation series in "Toy Story", industry estimates showed on Sunday.

Universal's "Minions & Monsters" — featuring the gibberish-spouting yellow creatures who stole the show in multiple "Despicable Me" films — pulled in \$36.4 million in the Friday-to-Sunday period, which Exhibitor Relations said was the franchise's lowest opening.

The film, a chaotic gag-filled take on early Hollywood, raked in an additional \$98 million from international showings.

"Minions" displaced "Toy Story 5" from the top spot, two weeks after

the Disney-Pixar offering took home the year's best opening weekend in North America, at \$160 million.

The sequel — featuring Woody the cowboy, Buzz Lightyear and their gang of toys fighting for survival against competition from screen-based tech — came in second with another \$31 million.

Debuting at third spot with \$20.8 million on this Independence Day weekend was the historical epic "Young Washington", about an American founding father earning his military stripes during the French and Indian War, decades before commanding the Continental Army during the American revolution.


Released by independent Angel Studios, known as a faith-based operation that eschews traditional Hollywood

approaches, the film features stars Ben Kingsley, Andy Serkis and Mary-Louise Parker and showcases William Franklyn-Mille as Washington.


Slipping two spots to fourth was "Supergirl", a Warner Bros sci-fi effort starring Milly Alcock as Kara Zor-El, a cousin of Superman who also possesses superhuman strength. It earned \$9.6 million in its second weekend.


Holding on to fifth place is the Stephen Spielberg-directed sci-fi thriller "Disclosure Day", which earned \$6 million for a current total of \$105 million.

With an ensemble cast led by Emily Blunt and Josh O'Connor, the action-packed Universal film follows an effort to reveal a decades-long coverup of extraterrestrial visitations.



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