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Jordan denounces Iranian attacks on Saudi, Qatari tankers in Hormuz



Regent visits tomb of King Talal Bin Abdullah

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince Feisal, the Regent, visited on Tuesday the tomb of His Majesty the late King Talal, on the 54th anniversary of his passing. His Royal Highness recited prayers and laid a wreath at the tomb. A number of Royal family members, heads of authorities, and senior civilian and military officials also visited the tomb.

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Tuesday condemned the Iranian attacks targeting Saudi and Qatari tankers while they were transiting the Strait of Hormuz, calling them a "flagrant violation of international law and a threat to the security and safety of maritime navigation."

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Jordan's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and Qatar, affirming the Kingdom's support for all measures taken by the two countries to safeguard their security, stability and national resources.

Saudi Arabia blamed Iran for an attack Tuesday on one of its tankers as it transited the Strait of Hormuz, after Qatar issued a similar condemnation for another attack it accused Tehran of committing.

The Saudi foreign ministry denounced in a statement "Iran's targeting of the Saudi tanker Wedyan while it was transiting the Strait of Hormuz, as well as the targeting of the Qatari tanker Al Rekayyat".

Three tankers including a Qatari LNG vessel were struck within hours in the Strait of Hormuz,



Desh Garima, an Indian-flagged tanker carrying crude oil that transited through the Strait of Hormuz, is seen docked at an offloading terminal along the coast in Mumbai on April 30

maritime monitors and Qatar said on Tuesday, with peace mediator Doha denouncing an "unacceptable" Iranian attack, AFP reported.

An "unknown projectile" hit a tanker overnight, causing a fire, before two more were hit, at least one by a drone, British maritime security

agency UKMTO said.

Qatar, which helped broker the truce, blamed Iran for the attack on its tanker and urged Tehran to "cease all practices that undermine regional security or threaten the safety of international maritime navigation".

"The targeting of the Qatari vessel 'Al Rekayyat' while transiting near the Strait of Hormuz constitutes an unacceptable attack on the security and safety of international maritime navigation," Doha's foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al Ansari wrote on X.

"We hold Iran fully legally responsible for this attack and for any resulting damages or repercussions," he added. The attacks came despite the ceasefire between the United States and Iran in the Middle East war, which began with US-Israeli strikes on Tehran in late February. The future of Hormuz, the main route for Gulf energy exports, has been a sticking point during talks between Tehran and Washington to permanently end the conflict.

'Clear signal'

"Iran is sending a clear signal that no alternative will be accepted. Tankers trying to diverge through the Omani maritime corridor without registering with the Iranian authority will be punished," Krieg added, calling it a "clear violation" of the ceasefire agreement and international law.

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Alternative water plans underway to ensure constant supply — ministry

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Water and Irrigation said on Tuesday that ensuring water supplies for citizens and all sectors across the Kingdom remains a top national priority, amid reports that the government may purchase additional quantities of water from Israel.

A source from the Water Ministry said in a statement that the government had prepared and begun implementing alternative plans and contingency measures since last year to safeguard the national interest and ensure uninterrupted water supplies under all possible scenarios.

The source emphasized that "Jordan continues to receive its water entitlements as stipulated under the 1994 Wadi Araba



A photo of the King Talal Dam, located in Jerash Governorate in the Tal Rumman Heights area, 50 kilometres north of Amman

Peace Treaty". The contingency plans, the source added, include rehabilitating and increasing the productivity of existing wells, drilling and equipping new wells in cooperation with the

private sector, expanding the use of non-conventional water sources such as saline wells, and intensifying efforts to curb illegal use of water resources.

According to the ministry, these measures have recovered additional water supplies, helping to reduce part of the country's drinking water deficit.

The ministry added that it is continuing efforts, in coordination with relevant authorities, to achieve financial close for the National Water Carrier Project.

Once implemented, the project is expected to supply 300 million cubic metres of water annually, meeting most of Jordan's water needs and helping address the country's chronic water shortage, the ministry said.



Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah (left) and the UK's parliamentary undersecretary of state for the Middle East, Hamish Falconer

Jordan, UK agree measures to deepen trade, investment cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan and the United Kingdom reaffirmed their commitment to deepening trade and investment ties during the second Jordan-UK Partnership Council meeting in London, where the two sides reviewed

progress under their bilateral partnership agreement and agreed on measures to boost economic cooperation.

The meeting was co-chaired by Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah and the UK's parlia-

mentary undersecretary of state for the Middle East, Hamish Falconer, and attended by senior officials, technical experts and diplomats from both countries.

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Jordanian referee Adham Makhadmeh impresses on World Cup stage

By Osama Alkafri

AMMAN — Jordanian international referee Adham Makhadmeh has made history as the first Jordanian official to referee matches at the FIFA World Cup, marking a significant milestone Jordanian football.

An international referee since 2013, Makhadmeh has steadily built a reputation as one of Asia's most respected match officials.

His career has included several high-profile appointments, notably the first leg of the 2017 AFC Champions League final between Al Hilal and Urawa Red Diamonds, matches at the



Referee Adham Makhadmeh looks on with match officials during the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 16 match between USA and Belgium at Seattle Stadium on Monday in Seattle, Washington

AFC Asian Cup, the 2025 Arab Cup, as well as numerous FIFA World Cup qualifiers. At the 2026 FIFA World Cup, Makhadmeh was among eight referees selected from the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

He made his tournament debut in Spain's goalless Group H draw against Cape Verde on June 15 before taking charge of the group-stage encounter between New Zealand and Belgium.

His assured performances earned him a knockout-stage appointment, officiating England's 2-1 Round of 32 victory over the Democratic Republic of the Congo on July 1.

FIFA later entrusted him with another major fixture, appointing him to referee the Round of 16 clash between

the United States and Belgium.

Makhadmeh's displays have also received favourable assessments from refereeing analysts.

Following the England-DRC match, Spanish refereeing analysis platform Archivo VAR awarded him an 8 out of 10 rating, one of the highest given to referees during the Round of 32.

The platform described his performance as "very good", praising his authority, positioning, proximity to play and decision-making, including correctly rejecting two penalty appeals by England.

For the United States-Belgium Round of 16

match, Archivo VAR awarded Makhadmeh a rating of 6 out of 10, describing his performance as positive and noting that he encountered no major difficulties while maintaining control of the game.

Although the rating was lower than his previous World Cup performance, it placed him joint-highest among Round of 16 referees alongside England's Anthony Taylor.

He received higher marks than several prominent officials, including Michael Oliver, Ismail Elfath, Ali-reza Faghani and Ilgiz Tantashev.



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday condemns the two terrorist bombings that struck the Syrian capital, Damascus, earlier in the day

Jordan condemns terrorist bombings in Damascus

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struck the Syrian capital, Damascus, earlier in the day.

Continued on page 5

Princess Ghida advocates equitable cancer care at international conference

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Princess Ghida Talal, chairperson of the board of trustees of the King Hussein Cancer Foundation and Centre (KHCC), has participated in the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) annual conference in Athens.

Delivering a keynote speech titled "The Power of Partnership in the Fight for Cancer Equity", Princess Ghida emphasised the vital role of partnerships in narrowing gaps in access to cancer treatment and promoting health equity for patients, particularly in regions facing economic and humanitarian challenges.

She also highlighted Jordan's model in expanding access to cancer care through the KHCC, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The princess underscored that a patient's place of birth or socioeconomic background should never dictate their chances of survival or access to advanced medical care.

She reviewed the ongoing efforts led by KHCC to provide



Delivering a keynote speech in the Stavros Niarchos Foundation annual conference in Athens, HRH Princess Ghida Talal stresses the vital role of partnerships in narrowing gaps in access to cancer treatment

cutting-edge treatment protocols to underprivileged patients and refugees, alongside the centre's commitment to integrating psychosocial support and mental healthcare into its comprehensive care system.

Princess Ghida also stressed the impor-

ance of international partnerships in ensuring the sustainability of cancer care services and elevating the quality of treatment provided to patients.

She pointed out the active cooperation between KHCC and several leading global institutions, including

the SNF and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

The partnership with SNF builds upon an ongoing strategic cooperation established between both sides since 2022, which aims to cover the treatment costs for underprivileged paediatric cancer patients at the KHCC.

The annual SNF conference is a prominent global platform that gathers thought leaders, policymakers and experts from around the world to discuss pressing humanitarian, development and health issues.

Jordan, Spain launch 'Reayah 2' project to boost preliminary healthcare

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Health Ibrahim Bdour signed a letter of intent with Spanish Ambassador to Jordan José Luis Pardo Cuervo on Tuesday to launch the "Reayah 2" (Care) project, with a grant of 5.5 million euros.

This initiative enhances the Jordanian-Spanish partnership and supports national efforts to upgrade public health infrastructure, aiming to enhance primary healthcare services across the Kingdom for citizens, refugees and host communities alike, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Bdour said that the project continues the "fruitful" cooperation between the Ministry of Health and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation.

He said that the ministry aims to develop the health sector in alignment with the Economic Modernisation Vision by improving service quality, accessibility and long term sustainability, as primary healthcare serves as the cornerstone of this national strategy due to its pivotal role in disease prevention and non-



Minister of Health Ibrahim Bdour and Spanish Ambassador to Jordan José Luis Pardo Cuervo on Tuesday sign a grant of intent to launch the 'Reayah 2' project with a grant of 5.5 million euros

communicable disease management.

The funding will directly support the ministry's efforts to develop primary healthcare services in Zarqa, he said, adding that the project aims to build institutional capacity, train medical personnel and elevate service quality to meet local community needs.

Bdour expressed appreciation to the Spanish government for investing in Jordan's healthcare system to ensure a more sustainable future.

Cuervo stressed Spain's commitment to supporting Jordan's public health system and guaranteeing eq-

uitable access to high quality services, and reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases through early detection and prevention remains a strategic priority for the bilateral partnership.

The "Reayah 2" project builds directly upon the successes of the first phase, which the European Union originally funded and Spain implemented.

This new phase will expand upon earlier achievements by introducing the best international practices and enhancing technical cooperation between Jordan and Spain to optimise public health outcomes.

Two Aqaba vessels become region's first Blue Flag tourist boats

AMMAN (JT) — The Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan (JREDS) on Tuesday announced that two local tourist boats have been awarded the international Blue Flag certification, making them the first eco-friendly tourist vessels in the Middle East to receive this global recognition.

The certification was awarded after meeting all international criteria regarding environmental management, safety, service quality, waste management and environmental awareness, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

JREDS President Khaled Kurdi said that this achievement is the result of years of hard work and local and international partnerships, marking a "turning point" for sustainable marine tourism in Jordan.

He noted that only 158 boats worldwide hold this "prestigious"



The Royal Marine Conservation Society of Jordan on Tuesday says that two local tourist boats have been awarded the international Blue Flag certification

certification.

Managing Director of Ayla Oasis Development Company Sahl Dudin said that the milestone reflects Ayla's commitment to implementing the highest standards of sustainability.

The owners of both vessels expressed pride in achieving the Blue Flag certification, reaffirming their ongoing commitment to protecting the marine environment and

implementing the best sustainable practices.

The Blue Flag programme is one of the world's most recognised voluntary ecolabels awarded to sites, facilities and destinations committed to stringent environmental management, safety and sustainability standards, thereby boosting visitor confidence in Jordan's tourism sector and supporting Aqaba as a global marine destination.

Petra marks New Seven Wonders anniversary with 204,217 visitors in 5 months

AMMAN (JT) — The Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA) on Tuesday announced that Petra welcomed 204,217 visitors in the first five months of 2026.

On July 7, 2007, Petra won a spot in the popularity poll, led by Canadian-Swiss Bernard Weber and organised by the New7Wonders Foundation based in Switzerland, out of 21 finalist ancient sites across the globe, and became one of the New Seven Wonders.

Official data cited by Al Mamlaka TV showed that foreign tourists made up the majority of these arrivals with 143,427 visitors, while Jordanian citizens accounted for the remaining 60,790 guests.

These figures mark an 11 per cent decline in overall tourism traffic compared to the same five month pe-



The Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority on Tuesday announces that Petra welcomed 204,217 visitors in the first five months of 2026

riod in 2025, which represents a net loss of 25,358 visitors.

During that previous timeframe, Petra received 229,575 visi-

tors, which included 180,368 international travellers and 29,207

domestic tourists.

According to previous statistics announced by PDTRA, the total number of visitors to Petra during 2025 reached 582,550 visitors, which reflects a significant 27 per cent increase over the 457,215 tourists recorded throughout 2024.

The Nabataeans built this thriving trading hub, establishing themselves as an influential Arab civilisation that dominated the region from the fourth century BC to the second century AD.

Unlike traditional archaeological sites, the city features massive royal tombs, towering facades, historic temples and the world famous Treasury monument all sculpted straight into the mountain walls.

In 1985, Petra was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Zaha Cultural Centre empowers over 1.5 million beneficiaries — director

AMMAN (JT) — Executive Director of the Zaha Cultural Centre Rania Sbeih on Tuesday said that the centre continues to boost its role as a leading national institution for empowering children, adolescents and young people.

During a Government Communication Forum meeting hosted by the Ministry of Government Communication on the centre's community role, Sbeih said that the centre provides several educational, cultural, creative and innovation programmes, alongside development initiatives and community partnerships that contribute to improving educational environments and enhancing quality of life nationwide.

She noted that the centre operates at 25 locations, including eight centres in the capital, with plans to expand to 30 branches, providing services to around 1.57 million beneficiaries, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

She added that the centre offers more than 350 training programmes



During a Government Communication Forum meeting, Executive Director of the Zaha Cultural Centre Rania Sbeih says that the centre provides several educational, cultural, creative and innovation programmes

across a wide range of fields, including artificial intelligence, creative thinking, performing arts, music, handicraft production, languages, sport, media literacy, innovation, technology, digital manufacturing, psychological and social counselling, early childhood development, agricultural programmes and entrepreneurship.

These programmes are designed to equip children and adolescents with future-ready skills while preserving and revitalising Jordan's national heritage through

modern approaches.

Sbeih said that the centre has developed 85 creative and handicraft products under the "Made in Jordan" label, noting that its handicraft programmes focus on reviving traditional crafts, particularly pottery, through the use of technology and by providing kilns, equipment and qualified trainers across its branches.

She noted that participants in the centre's programmes have gone on to compete in international taekwondo and football championships, as well as Arab and international

festivals celebrating creativity and excellence.

At the development level, Sbeih said the centre has implemented its inclusive gardens project since 2016, expanding it to 170 locations across the Kingdom to integrate children with disabilities alongside their peers in safe and inclusive environments.

She added that the centre has also helped establish children's playrooms in 26 public and military hospitals and implemented the "Opportunity to Learn" initiative at Queen Rania Al Abdullah Hospi-

tal for Children.

The director added that the centre established the first psychological well-being centre within a government institution at its Khaldi branch before opening a second centre in Aqaba, providing free psychological support and counselling services for children and adolescents under the supervision of specialists.

Sbeih said the centre's services have benefited 5,344 people with disabilities. Through its branches, it has delivered 2,035 training and volunteer programmes, organised 1,029 events and held 1,400 workshops attended by 30,796 beneficiaries.

It also created 892 jobs during 2025, while more than 3,340 volunteers were active across its branches.

She added that the centre works in partnership with more than 330 supporting organisations and partners, while the Zaha Volunteer Platform has attracted more than 86,000 volunteers and registered 1,467 organisations and 155 initiatives.

Army chief opens new military court buildings

AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Tuesday inaugurated the new military court buildings.

In the presence of several high-ranking Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) officers, the army chief listened to a briefing by the director of military justice on the implementation phases of the project, as well as its modern facilities and equipment designed to provide an integrated work environment.

The briefing highlighted how these facilities support judicial procedures, improve operational efficiency and enhance the quality of military judicial services, according to a JAF statement.

Huneiti toured the new buildings, inspecting the courtrooms, administrative offices, and halls designated for modern technologies and digital connectivity.

He noted that these facilities should foster an advanced work environment that expedites tasks and supports the



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Tuesday inaugurates the new military court buildings

development of the military justice system according to the best institutional practices.

The army chief stressed that the inauguration of the new buildings aligns with the vision of the JAF to develop and modernise its facilities and installations to enhance the efficiency of military institutions and enable them to perform their duties competently.

He pointed out that the development of military justice is a cornerstone in consolidating the rule of law, safeguarding rights and achieving justice in accordance with applicable legislation.

Huneiti underlined that the JAF is moving ahead with its development plans according to the latest institutional standards to provide a modern work environment that elevates performance and enhances the readiness of various formations and units.

At the end of the visit, Huneiti expressed his appreciation for the efforts exerted to complete the project, stressing the importance of maintaining readiness and efficiency to support the mission of military justice and achieve its goals with high efficiency and professionalism.

Gov't launches competency framework to modernise public sector workforce **AT A GLANCE**

New system shifts HR management towards skills-based approach

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — The government on Tuesday launched the Competency Framework for Standard Job Units in the Public Sector, a key initiative under the Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap aimed at shifting government human resources management towards a competency-based approach.

The framework, developed by the Public Service and Administration Commission (SPAC) with support from local experts and specialists, establishes unified national standards for the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for common government positions.

Minister of State for Public Sector Development Badriya Balbeisi said that the initiative represents a major step in the modernisation process by placing human capital at the centre of government reform efforts and recognising employees as the main drivers of institutional development.

She said that creating a more efficient, flexible and future-ready public sector cannot be achieved solely through legislation,



Photo by Ahmad Khleifat

The government on Tuesday launches the Competency Framework for Standard Job Units in the Public Sector, a key initiative under the Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap aimed at shifting government human resources management towards a competency-based approach

digital transformation or technological solutions, but requires investment in employees' capabilities and continuous development.

Balbeisi said the framework reflects a transition from traditional human resources practices, which have largely focused on academic qualifications and years of experience, towards a

system that assesses and develops employees based on the competencies required for their roles.

The minister said the framework provides a national reference for government institutions by defining the competencies required for different job functions and supporting a wide range of human resources processes.

These include recruitment and selection, developing job descriptions, assessing employee competencies, identifying skills gaps and designing targeted training and professional development programmes.

Balbeisi said the government is working in parallel to develop tools that will ensure the framework's effective

implementation, including competency assessment methods based on knowledge tests, simulations and practical case studies.

She added that competencies will be linked to structured learning pathways and training programmes to ensure that professional development addresses actual performance needs and

prepares employees for future workplace requirements.

President of SPAC Faiz Nahar said that the success of the framework will depend on its practical implementation and its ability to translate competency standards into measurable improvements in institutional performance.

He said competency-based human resources management is among the key reform priorities under the second executive programme of the Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap (2026–2029), as it supports more effective recruitment, evaluation and professional development processes.

Nahar said that establishing a comprehensive national competency system has become increasingly important amid rapid global changes, particularly in areas related to digital transformation, artificial intelligence and future skills.

He added that SPAC has worked on developing modern competency frameworks, reliable assessment tools and measurable indicators to support the application of the new approach.

CBJ says foreign reserves rise to \$26.1 billion at end of June

AMMAN (JT) — Foreign currency reserves increased by approximately \$585.4 million during the first half of 2026, reaching \$26.1 billion at the end of June, according to figures released by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ).

The CBJ said that the reserves are sufficient to cover the Kingdom's imports of goods and services for 8.6 months, nearly three times the international benchmark for reserve adequacy, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. The reserve level supports monetary and financial stability and strengthens Jordan's capacity to meet its external obligations, underscoring the resilience of the country's external sector.



Jordan, Trinidad and Tobago sign communiqué establishing diplomatic relations

AMMAN (JT) —

Jordan and Trinidad and Tobago on Monday signed a joint communiqué to establish diplomatic relations, aimed at enhancing friendly ties and co-operation between the two countries.

The agreement aims to institutionalise joint co-operation across various fields, particularly political, economic, social, cultural and scientific, to serve the mutual interests of both nations, according to a Foreign Ministry statement. The communiqué was signed on behalf of their respective governments by Ambassador Walid Obeidat, the permanent representative of Jordan to the United Nations in New York, and Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the UN Ambassador Neil Parsan. The signing ceremony took place at the headquarters of the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the UN in New York.



12,449 new commercial registrations recorded in H1 2026 — registry directorate

AMMAN (JT) — The Commercial Registry Directorate at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply recorded 12,449 new commercial registrations for individual enterprises during the first half of 2026, according to figures released on Monday.

The data also showed that 4,991 trade names were registered during the same period, indicating sustained demand for new business establishment, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The ministry said the figures reflect ongoing efforts to streamline administrative procedures and improve public services for applicants, in line with the Economic Modernisation Vision aimed at promoting sustainable economic growth and creating employment opportunities.

The Commercial Registry Directorate said that it continues to expand its digital services to accelerate transaction processing and improve



GAM photo

The Commercial Registry Directorate at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply records 12,449 new commercial registrations for individual enterprises during the first half of 2026

service efficiency, adding that the upgrades are intended to provide a more flexible business environment that encourages the establishment of new industrial, commercial and craft enterprises.

The directorate is responsible for registering merchants and commercial enterprises, a process aimed at enhancing transparency in business transac-

tions and safeguarding the rights of contracting parties.

It also records and publishes rights over movable assets, enabling buyers and financiers to verify whether assets are subject to registered claims before completing transactions, thereby supporting informed decision-making and strengthening commercial confidence.

Japan provides \$6m to sustain refugee assistance in Jordan — UNHCR

AMMAN (JT) — The UNHCR said on Tuesday that a \$6 million contribution from the Japan government will help sustain critical protection, healthcare and basic needs assistance for refugees in Jordan amid growing humanitarian needs and declining international funding.

The contribution will support around 330,800 refugees across Jordan, helping families access essential services, reliable information and assistance to meet their most urgent needs with dignity, according to a UNHCR statement.

UNHCR Representative to Jordan Maria Stavropoulou said many refugees in Jordan continue to require support to meet basic needs, including covering rent and bills, accessing healthcare and receiving reliable information to help them make informed decisions about their fu-



Photo Courtesy of UNHCR

A father holds his newborn child while sitting with his two other children at a UNHCR facility

ture, including possible return.

"Japan's contribution comes at a critical juncture, helping ensure that refugees in Jordan can continue to live in dignity, access essential services and make informed, voluntary decisions about their future," Stavropoulou said.

With Japan's support, UNHCR will

provide community-based protection services through community centres in refugee camps, help desks, counselling and outreach activities.

These services enable refugees, including women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, to access reliable information, participate in decisions affecting their

lives and contribute to social cohesion.

The funding will also help maintain access to essential healthcare for refugees in camps and urban areas, while supporting basic needs assistance through cash-based interventions for some of the most vulnerable refugee families in Jordan.

Japan's Ambassador to Jordan Asari

Hideki said that Japan, in partnership with UNHCR, remains committed to supporting refugees' dignity and safety through community-based interventions, improved access to healthcare and assistance that helps meet basic needs, contributing to Jordan's stability and resilience.

Jordan continues to host around 400,000 refugees, including approximately 380,000 Syrians. While voluntary returns have increased, many refugees remain in Jordan due to concerns over safety, housing, access to services and economic conditions in Syria.

For many refugees, humanitarian assistance remains essential to meeting basic needs, accessing healthcare and avoiding negative coping mechanisms, such as accumulating debt or withdrawing children from school, according to UNHCR.

Public Works Ministry completes 32 projects in H1 2026

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Public Works and Housing said on Tuesday completed 32 projects in the roads and buildings sectors during the first half of this year, while continuing work on 70 projects and tenders across various areas of the Kingdom.

Ministry spokesperson Omar Maharmeh said that the completed building projects were valued at JD41.9 million, while 62 projects worth nearly JD231.7 million are currently under implementation, in addition to eight tenders for road maintenance and rehabilitation works.

Maharmeh said that the Roads and Bridges Maintenance Direc-

torate, along with the ministry's directorates in the governorates, completed 10 road maintenance and rehabilitation projects during the first half of the year, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The completed works covered the maintenance and rehabilitation of vital roads in Irbid, Balqa, Mafraq, Ajloun, Aqaba, Karak and Amman, as well as the maintenance of key roads in the Central Region.

They also included addressing damage on Road No. 90 in Aqaba, carrying out protection works on Wadi Numaira and Wadi Araba roads in Karak, constructing pedestrian crossings, expand-

ing roads, improving traffic intersections, treating landslides and building box culverts.

The ministry also said that it is currently implementing eight road maintenance tenders, including projects to address landslides on the Madaba-Mujib Road, maintain the road leading to the Iron Tunnel in Aqaba, rehabilitate sections of the Baghdad International Road in Mafraq and complete the expansion of the Kafranja-Wadi Al Tawahin Road in Ajloun.

The ongoing works also include asphalt maintenance programmes, road protection and rainwater drainage projects in the Northern and Cen-

tral regions, the supply of precast concrete elements and the construction of dedicated pedestrian and cycling lanes along Airport Road in Amman.

In the buildings sector, the ministry completed 22 projects during the same period, with a total value of JD41.9 million. These included 15 projects in the education sector valued at JD34.1 million, one health sector project worth JD3.5 million and six government buildings projects worth JD4.2 million.

The ministry is currently implementing 62 building projects worth nearly JD231.7 million, including 31 education sector projects valued at JD91 million, 13

health sector projects worth JD100.2 million and 18 government buildings projects valued at JD40.5 million, Maharmeh said.

The ministry has also completed studies and prepared tender documents for 43 projects worth JD116.4 million, which have been referred for procurement procedures. In addition, it completed studies for eight projects worth JD14.8 million and handed them over to the relevant authorities.

The number of projects currently under study and scheduled to be tendered by the end of the year stands at 97, with an estimated total cost of nearly JD311 million.

Cold Cases Unit uncovers 11-year-old murder case in Amman

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Criminal Court prosecutor on Tuesday charged a woman with premeditated murder in connection with the murder of her husband in Amman 11 years ago, official sources said.

The suspect confessed to murdering and burying her husband in the backyard of their house in an east Amman neighbourhood, Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

The police official said the case was discovered when the Cold Cases Unit at the Public Security Directorate (PSD) decided to reopen

a case of a man who was reported missing by his wife in 2015.

"The team concluded that his wife was involved in his disappearance," Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

The wife was summoned by detectives and, upon cross-examination, the police official maintained, "she confessed to murdering her husband following a domestic dispute".

"The suspect told investigators that she struck her husband with a blunt object on his head then stabbed him," according to Sartawi.

The woman allegedly told investigators that

she "buried her husband in the backyard of their home and reported him missing".

The Criminal Court prosecutor was notified and a special investigation team was dispatched to the suspect's house to search for the body, he added.

The Criminal Court prosecutor will summon the victim and the suspect's family members for questioning, according to a statement by the PSD.

The suspect was ordered detained by the Criminal Court prosecutor at a women's correctional and rehabilitation centre for 15 days pending further investigation.



This handout photo taken and released on Tuesday by the Turkish Presidency Press Office shows Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) meeting with US President Donald Trump (left) at Bestepe Presidential Compound in Ankara, on Tuesday, on the sidelines of the NATO Summit

Trump berates NATO, praises Erdogan as summit starts

ANKARA (AFP) — US President Donald Trump praised his “chemistry” with Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan as he arrived in Ankara for a NATO summit Tuesday, while hitting out at European allies for their response to his war in Iran.

Trump was greeted personally by Erdogan on the tarmac as he descended from Air Force One, before being escorted through the empty streets of the Turkish capital by a guard of riders on white horses.

The summit comes at a fraught time for the 77-year-old transatlantic alliance, as Trump has lashed out at allies and Washington steps back from Europe.

“I was very disappointed with NATO,” Trump said, sitting next to Erdogan at the Turkish leader’s vast presidential palace.

“Frankly, if it [the summit] weren’t held in Turkey, where my friend happens to be a very strong leader, a very strong person, it’s possible that I wouldn’t have attended.”

NATO officials are hoping Trump’s strong relationship with the Turkish leader could help smooth over the bad blood caused by the Iran war.

“It’s a chemistry that works between us,” Trump said.

In a potentially major boost for Erdogan, Trump said Washington would consider selling F-35 fighter jets to Turkey, after booting it out of the programme in 2019 over Ankara’s purchase of a Russian system.

Turkey has long sought to resolve the question of its readmittance to the F35 programme and the lifting of US sanctions that have soured ties and hampered Turkish defence projects — and has looked to Trump’s visit to break

the deadlock. “Mr Trump has also personally given us his word on this matter,” Erdogan said through a translator.

European leaders are aiming to avoid a bust-up with the mercurial US leader that could deal a further blow to NATO’s credibility, after Trump repeatedly cast doubt on Washington’s commitment to protecting its allies.

But ahead their main session on Wednesday, the US president was clearly still smarting over the restrictions some allies placed on US forces using bases at the start of the Iran conflict.

‘I think they both want to make a deal’

“I was testing to see whether or not they’d be there, because I’ve long said that we helped them,” he said.

“Italy turned us down, and Germany turned us down, and France turned us down.”

Trump also risked reopening another old wound with NATO when he reiterated his stance that Greenland “should be controlled by the United States, not by Denmark”.

In a bid to prove to Trump that they are making good on a pledge last year to ramp up defence spending, NATO allies unveiled tens of billions in arms deals ahead of his arrival.

NATO chief Mark

Rutte has insisted European countries are “delivering” by bolstering military budgets and moving to take more responsibility for the defence of their continent in the face of Russia.

“These are billions that are invested in our security, boosting our economies and supporting hundreds of thousands of new jobs,” Rutte said at a glitzy industry forum.

Zelensky makes pitch While NATO wanted to focus Trump’s attention on its surging defence budgets, the stalled US efforts to try to halt the war in Ukraine also rose back up the agenda.

Trump spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin ahead of the NATO gathering and is expected to meet Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelensky on the summit sidelines on Wednesday.

“I think they both want to make a deal,” Trump said.

“It’s too bad it took so long, but I think something’s going to come out.”

Zelensky for his part urged NATO to step up help for the country’s air defences as it struggles with shortages of crucial interceptors to shoot down Russian missiles.

“Please let more determination and more decisions for air defence be one of the key outcomes of this NATO summit,” he said.

The Ukrainian leader also made a new pitch for Kyiv to become a member of the alliance, despite Trump previously shutting the door.

“Do you really believe it would be right to live outside NATO, a country and a people with this level of defensive capability?” Zelensky said.

“Ukraine in NATO is a source of extraordinary defensive capability.”

Gaza’s future still unclear after Hamas dissolves governing body

GAZA CITY, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Hamas made a political move by dissolving its governing body in Gaza this week, but experts say the decision does not resolve the main issue of the stalled ceasefire process: The Islamist movement’s weapons.

Hamas announced on Monday that it was dissolving the 15-member committee that has administered civil affairs in the Gaza Strip since 2007, when it seized power in the territory following elections and clashes with rival Palestinian movement Fatah.

The body oversaw Gaza’s ministries and public services, which were devastated by two years of war with



Tents and shelters are pictured next to rubble of collapsed buildings at a camp for people displaced by war in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood of Gaza City on Monday

Israel.

Hamas says it wants to transfer these responsibilities to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), a body made up of Palestinian technocrats and meant

to manage the territory during the transition period.

On paper, this means that Hamas agrees to no longer be in charge of Gaza’s day-to-day governance.

A Hamas official told

Macron says Syria must not be destabilised after bombs wound 18

DAMASCUS (AFP) — French President Emmanuel Macron warned on Tuesday that Syria must not be destabilised after twin bomb attacks near the Damascus hotel where he spent the night, during a landmark state visit to a country emerging from years of civil war.

The attacks cast a shadow over the first trip of a European Union head of state since Bashar Assad was toppled in late 2024, as President Ahmed Al Sharaa tries to rebuild the country’s image after more than a decade of conflict.

The two leaders vowed to step up economic and diplomatic ties with new ambassadors to be installed in each country.

In a joint press conference with his Syrian counterpart, Macron said we must “not let ourselves be destabilised” by such attacks, before which he had already left for the presidential palace in the heart of the Syrian capital, and reiterated Paris’ support for the country.

Sharaa saluted Macron’s “courage” for carrying on with his visit despite the bombings.

An AFP team saw Macron arrive for a meeting with Sharaa, while other journalists heard at least one blast echo through Damascus before seeing a plume of smoke rising near the hotel, where security forces closed a road and ambulances rushed to the scene.

Syria’s interior ministry said one bomb had been placed inside a car parked on the side of a road, while the second was planted in a garbage container.

It said they exploded “while preparations were under way” to dismantle them.

Syria state media said the blasts wound-



Syrian President Ahmed Al Sharaa (left) welcomes France’s President Emmanuel Macron for a joint press conference in Damascus on Tuesday

ed 18 people, including four police officers.

An AFP photographer near Syria’s tourism ministry, opposite the hotel, saw windows damaged by one of the explosions, amid a heavy security presence.

Economic forum

France’s Elysee Palace said Macron would continue his trip until his expected departure on Tuesday evening, when he travels to Ankara for a NATO summit and holds talks there the following day with Turkey’s president.

The explosions are the second in the Syrian capital since Thursday, when 10 people were killed in a bombing in a Damascus cafe.

The French president had postponed announcing the date of his visit until his plane landed on Monday, for security reasons.

Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Al Shaibani said that Macron’s

visit marked a “pivotal point” in the two countries’ relations, vowing to continue to “confront terrorism in all its forms”.

Sharaa also announced “our agreement to begin the process of exchanging resident ambassadors between Damascus and Paris as soon as possible, signalling the return of diplomatic relations to their normal state”.

The blasts came moments before Syrian state television announced Macron’s arrival at the palace.

The visit included an economic forum during which the two sides signed 15 bilateral agreements in several sectors, including civil aviation, health, banking, water infrastructure and roads, although French investors remain cautious about the situation.

“After the Strait of Hormuz crisis, the world realises the value of a safe and stable

corridor,” Sharaa said at the forum.

“Here the importance is highlighted of the geography of Syria, which today has regained its vital role as an indispensable link in the global corridors market.”

Macron was accompanied by several economic players including Rodolphe Saade, chief executive of maritime transport giant CMA CGM, and TotalEnergies head Patrick Pouyanne.

Before the Damascus blasts, Pouyanne said that “the security situation still doesn’t allow us to operate, but I think it is a positive initiative to come here, to Damascus”.

Civil society

Before arriving at the presidential palace, Macron held a meeting Tuesday morning with civil society representatives at the Four Seasons Hotel.

The French leader

had said on X that “nothing can smother the aspiration of Syrian women and men to live in a fully sovereign, safe, pluralistic and united Syria”.

While Sharaa has repeatedly vowed to protect minorities, sectarian violence in the Alawite-majority coast in March 2025 and clashes in Druze majority Sweida in July that year killed thousands of people.

The last French president to visit Syria was Nicolas Sarkozy in 2009, before Assad brutally crushed prodemocracy protests in 2011, sparking a conflict that killed more than half a million people and devastated the country’s infrastructure and industry.

In May 2025, Macron hosted Sharaa in France on his first official visit to a European country, a move that preceded the Syrian leader’s trip to Washington last year to meet US President Donald Trump.

Hungary pro-Orban public media halt broadcasting — Magyar

BUDAPEST (AFP) — Hungarian public broadcasters close to Viktor Orban have halted broadcasting as part of efforts to undo the longtime nationalist leader’s hold on the media, Prime Minister Peter Magyar said on Tuesday.

Control of the media was a key pillar of Orban’s 16-year rule, during which he transformed the central European country into a self-styled “illiberal” democracy.

Restoring the independence of Hungary’s public broadcasters was a key campaign promise for Magyar, who ousted

Orban as prime minister at the ballot box in April.

“A historic day. Today marks the end of propaganda broadcasts on public media platforms,” Magyar said on Facebook.

“They lied at night, they lied during the day, they lied on every wave length. That is now over,” he said.

Both the Kossuth radio station and M1, the main public television channel in Hungary, had halted transmission by Tuesday afternoon.

The latter showed a black screen with the message: “Public media should not lie. We are

sorry for doing it for so long.”

“Public media now will be reformed so it will be independent and trustworthy. Our news programme is currently suspended. Stay tuned!” it added.

Kossuth’s frequencies were broadcasting Bartok Radio, a classical music programme, AFP journalists heard.

The websites for both M1 and Kossuth were also down.

According to a statement from Hungary’s state media umbrella group MTVA, M1 television will resume broadcasting in the evening without news

programmes. News bulletins will be re-introduced gradually alongside the establishment of a new editorial team, it added.

Other public service programmes will be unaffected by the changes.

“Another example of Tisza tyranny!” Orban posted on social media, suggesting that viewers “interested in the truth” should watch the Hir TV channel linked to his Fidesz Party instead.

Magyar’s Tisza Party swept the elections in April on the promise of “regime change” and a clean break with the Orban era, winning a two-thirds majority in

parliament.

Magyar’s government has moved swiftly to undo the former leader’s grip on the Hungarian state, including by passing a swathe of anti-corruption measures and changing the constitution to effectively bar Orban from running again.

Besides the public media, the new government has also targeted private outlets owned by Orban-allied businessmen.

Top private broadcaster TV2 has seen its main news anchors replaced and its news director pushed out since Magyar’s election victory.

AFP that ministry officials were already coordinating with the NCAG to prepare for the transfer of their powers.

The NCAG’s chairman Ali Shaath, who like the rest of the committee has been stuck in Egypt for months and unable to enter the territory, says he is ready to assume his duties.

“It’s coming during full stagnation and zero progress vis-a-vis advancing the Trump plan,” said Muhammad Shehata, a visiting fellow with the European Council on Foreign Relations, pointing to daily violations of the ceasefire agreement by Israel.

“From Hamas’s perspective, this serves several purposes: it

shows they are moving the [ceasefire] process forward and highlights what they describe as Israel’s failure to fulfill its commitments,” a diplomatic source told AFP.

Hamas regularly says that Israeli authorities do not allow sufficient aid into Gaza, as provided for under US President Donald Trump’s ceasefire plan. Israel denies the accusations.

“The aim is to deprive Israel of its arguments,” said Iyad Al Qarra, a Gaza-based academic specialising in political communication, who believes that Hamas’s administration is used by Israel as a “pretext” to continue the war.

“It is also a message

to the mediators, as well as to the people of Gaza,” said Jamal Al Fadi, a professor at Gaza’s Al Azhar University, who noted that if the NCAG does not soon take over the administration of Gaza, the move could appear to be “nothing more than a tactical manoeuvre”.

For Shehata, Hamas is “still the dominant force in Gaza, but they’re basically in a corner”.

The movement’s members “don’t have the resources or [the] open supply chains like Hizbollah does in Lebanon with Iran, so they cannot provide for their civil servants or for the Gaza population and so that’s why they’re very invested into that

sort of relinquishing of power,” he said.

Hamas’ civil administration is only one component of its power in Gaza, where it continues to maintain its fighters and weapons arsenal.

In Israel, both media outlets and government officials described the announcement as a “ruse”.

Israel believes the war can only truly end once Hamas has surrendered its weapons and Gaza has been completely demilitarised.

But Hamas says it won’t give up its principal source of leverage until a Palestinian governing authority has been established and the start of an Israeli military withdrawal

from Gaza.

Since the ceasefire came into effect last October, Israeli forces have further extended their control over more than 60 per cent of the tiny territory.

Trump’s phased peace plan for Gaza, which was endorsed by the United Nations, envisions the possibility of a full withdrawal of Israeli troops only in the very long term.

“I think this is simply a symbolic gesture by Hamas to show that it is prepared to give up governing Gaza, but the issue is not the dissolution of its governing committee — it is whether it agrees to disarm,” said Gaza-based political scientist Mkhaimar Abusada.

Israel, Lebanon to hold talks in Rome in mid-July

ROME (AFP) — Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors are due to hold direct talks in Rome this month, Italy's foreign ministry said on Tuesday, after several rounds of discussions in Washington aimed at de-escalation.

"We welcome with pleasure the announcement that the next round of talks between Israel and Lebanon mediated by the US will take place in Rome," Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said on X.

A ministry spokesman said the talks would take place at the ambassador level on July 15 and 16.

This round of talks will be the sixth since spring between the two neighbours, which do not have diplomatic relations and are technically in a state of war.

The two countries and the United States signed



Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli air strike on the southern village of Nabatieh Al Fouqqa on Sunday

a framework agreement last month aimed at "lasting peace", five

days after the entry into force of a fragile ceasefire in the fighting be-

tween the Israeli army and the pro-Iranian Hezbollah that has been

going on since March 2.

This framework agreement stipulates that the Lebanese army will restore its authority in the south of the country, subject to Hezbollah's disarmament, starting with "pilot zones" from which the Israeli army would withdraw.

Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the regional war on March 2 by attacking Israel, claiming it was acting in retaliation for the death of Iran's supreme leader, killed in US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28.

Israel responded with a large-scale bombing campaign and a ground offensive, while repeatedly calling for the evacuation of entire areas of southern Lebanon.

Israeli operations have killed nearly 4,300 people, according to Beirut.



This handout photo taken and released by Masum Dhali shows a damaged structure in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Bavi in Sinapalo on the island of Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands on Monday

Thousands without power in US Pacific islands after super typhoon

UNITED STATES (AFP) — Tens of thousands of people were without power Tuesday on Guam and the Northern Marianas after a super typhoon tore through the US Pacific territories, with no deaths reported.

The small island of Rota was the worst affected after a direct hit from Super Typhoon Bavi with winds up to 290 kilometres per hour on Monday, bringing down trees and power lines and knocking out water supplies.

Rota's Mayor Aubry Hocog said she had been told that two people sustained non-fatal injuries but that "there were no deaths confirmed".

Hocog said that over "50 per cent of our island has undergone damages, and it could be more," adding that it could take "two to three months" to fully restore power supply.

"There is still a very long line of our people lining up to get water. [Utilities company] CUC is rationing the water up to 95 litres per household just so we can be sure to have enough for everybody," she added.

Rota resident Masum Dhali, 24, said that "many homes have suffered severe damage, with countless roofs completely torn off".

"Across the island, there is no electricity, no running water, and no mobile network service," Dhali told AFP via Facebook, adding that "numerous water pipelines have been broken, and many power poles have fallen, leaving the entire island without essential services".

Local media showed a long line of cars on Rota — home to some 1,500 people — queuing to get drinking water as temperatures hit a hot

and humid 29C.

Saipan and Tinian, the two main islands of the Northern Marianas home to around 40,000 people, also lost power as did parts of nearby Guam, a separate US territory home to major military bases.

On Guam, less than 80 kilometres from Rota, fallen trees, bits of streetlamps and rocks were strewn over the roads late Monday and AFP saw at least one car flipped on its side.

With the exception of Rota, the damage in the region of around 210,000 people was less severe than after Sinkalu, a super typhoon that hit in April.

Guam resident Marie and her partner, who were clearing up the debris with an excavator, had to move out of their house after Sinkalu and were living in a van when Bavi struck.

Sudan drone strikes on vehicles kill 15 civilians: rights group

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Drone strikes on vehicles in Sudan's North Kordofan state killed 15 civilians, including five women, in two areas controlled by the paramilitary forces, a rights group said on Tuesday.

The attacks come as the southern Kordofan region has seen some of the deadliest fighting in recent weeks between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid

Support Forces (RSF), which have been at war since April 2023.

The violence also coincides with what residents and aid groups describe as the fiercest RSF assault yet on El Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan, where the paramilitary group has been carrying out near-daily drone attacks on the strategic city.

The Emergency Lawyers, which has docu-

mented abuses throughout the conflict, said one of the vehicles was carrying wedding guests when it was struck on Monday, while the second was transporting water when it came under attack early Tuesday.

The group did not specify who was behind the attacks.

The claims could not be independently verified and neither the Sudanese military nor the RSF im-

mediately commented.

Both locations are situated north of El Obeid, which sits on a key route linking RSF-controlled areas in the western Darfur region with army-held territory in eastern Sudan.

In recent weeks, the United Nations has warned that atrocities similar to those committed during the RSF's assault on the Darfur city of El Fasher in October

last year could be repeated in El Obeid.

Earlier this year, a UN independent fact-finding mission concluded that the siege and capture of El Fasher bore "the hallmarks of genocide".

On Monday, the UN Human Rights Council ordered an urgent inquiry into alleged violations and abuses in El Obeid, warning of a growing risk of "large-scale atrocities".

Jordan denounces Iranian attacks on Saudi, Qatari tankers in Hormuz

Continued from page 1

US news outlet Axios reported late Monday that Iran had "fired at least two missiles at commercial ships", citing two unnamed US officials.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment.

Maritime traffic had tentatively resumed after Washington and Tehran signed a memorandum of understanding last month aimed at ending the conflict and reopening the strategic route.

However, Iran has insisted there will be no return to pre-war arrangements, under which vessels could pass freely through

the strait.

Under the 14-point US-Iran memorandum of understanding, Iran and Oman, which border Hormuz, must hold talks "to define the future administration and maritime services" in the key waterway with other Gulf states.

Qatar had previously refused to enter into mediation under Iranian fire as Tehran launched an unprecedented aerial bombardment against Gulf states in retaliation for the US-Israeli strikes.

However, Doha has played an increasingly active role in negotiations, hosting indirect talks between Iran and the United States last week.

Suspected extremists kill at least 22 soldiers, militia in Burkina Faso

ABIDJAN (AFP) — At least 22 soldiers and civilian militia were killed in suspected attacks by extremists at the weekend in northern Burkina Faso, security sources told AFP on Tuesday.

Around 14 military personnel and seven civilian army volunteers were killed at a military base in Di, near Dedougou, on Saturday morning, while there were several deaths at Solhan, two sources said.

One described "heavy human and material losses", without elaborating.

Burkina Faso has been led by a military junta since September 2022 but has been battling deadly offensives by terrorists affiliated with Al Qaeda and the Daesh terror group for more than a decade.

The military has brought in civilians to help them in the fight but they have paid a high

price.

A police source said there was a third attack on Sunday targeting a military post in Segouega, near Kaya in the north-central region.

"These assaults in different regions were carefully coordinated to inflict the greatest possible losses but the vigorous response on all sides succeeded in thwarting all these attacks," they added.

"Since Saturday, the response and pursuit conducted in coordination with the high command made it possible to neutralise several dozen terrorists and to recover various military equipment and logistical resources."

The group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), which is affiliated to Al Qaeda, on Monday claimed responsibility for several attacks "against positions of the Burkinabe army"



Burkina Faso army officers patrol near a French armoured vehicle parked in Kaya, the capital of Burkina Faso's north-central region, on November 20, 2021

and "the deaths of several Burkinabe soldiers".

Burkina Faso's junta has stopped reporting the number of soldiers killed in attacks for several years but occasionally reports figures for its counterattacks, which AFP cannot verify from independent sources.

Last week, for exam-

ple, the army high command said it had killed "more than 400 terrorists" after "complex and coordinated attacks" against its positions in the Sirba and Sebba regions.

It linked the attacks with the breaking off of diplomatic relations with former colonial

power France, accusing it of supporting the jihadists and "fuelling the distorted narrative of the security situation".

Ougadougou has severed its ties with Paris after years of tensions, accusing France of "relentless activism" against its interests.

France in response

said it "regretted" the "hostile and unfounded" decision from the military government, then announced that it had withdrawn all its diplomats from Burkina Faso.

It also said all Burkinabe diplomats should leave France by Monday night. Claims that France supported jihadist groups, it added, were "completely false".

As early as 2023, the junta demanded the recall of France's ambassador to Ouagadougou.

It also kicked out French forces who were deployed in Burkina Faso to help fight extremist groups across the Sahel region.

Burkina Faso has since forged ties with new partners, including Russia, and formed the Alliance of Sahel States with Mali and Niger, which are also run by the military.

Jordan, UK agree measures to deepen trade, investment cooperation

Continued from page 1

The two sides underscored the longstanding strategic partnership between Jordan and the UK, noting that bilateral relations had entered their second century as a model of sustainable economic cooperation, according to a statement from the Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply.

Trade figures reviewed during the meeting showed that Jordan's exports to the UK surged by 88 per cent to \$37.2 million during the first four months of 2026, compared with \$19.8 million in the same period last year. Imports from the UK declined by 17 per cent to \$115.2 million, narrowing Jordan's trade deficit with the UK to \$78.1 million.

Oudah said the

meeting reflected the strength of the economic partnership between the two countries and their shared commitment to expanding cooperation.

The two countries agreed to establish a joint technical committee to develop practical proposals on the issue...

"Jordan is pressing ahead with the Economic Modernisation Vision and efforts to improve the investment environment," he said, adding that simplifying

the rules of origin would help increase the utilisation of preferential trade arrangements, boost exports and attract high-value investments.

The minister also called for extending the simplified rules of origin arrangement for 15 years beyond 2030 and expanding its scope to cover all products manufactured in Jordan, as well as processed agricultural and food products.

The two countries agreed to establish a joint technical committee to develop practical proposals on the issue within three months.

The Partnership Council also approved restructuring the agreement's governance framework by replacing its four subcommittees with a single Partnership Committee aimed

at streamlining implementation and accelerating decision-making.

Oudah commended UK support for a services trade development project implemented in cooperation with the International Trade Centre.

The Jordanian delegation also presented key initiatives under the Economic Modernisation Vision, including the industrial policy, the National Export Strategy and the Industry Support Fund. It also highlighted Jordan's potential to serve as a regional logistics and reconstruction hub through projects such as the planned Mafrq Free Zone and the Mafrq inland port.

The two sides cited exports by the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Arab Potash Company to the UK

market as successful examples of bilateral trade cooperation.

Falconer reaffirmed the UK's commitment to strengthening its economic partnership with Jordan and expanding cooperation in trade, investment and services. He said Britain would continue supporting initiatives that promote trade, strengthen institutional cooperation and facilitate knowledge exchange.

The meeting concluded with both sides agreeing to address obstacles affecting bilateral trade, reactivate the Jordanian-British Business Council, encourage greater private sector engagement and support the Jordanian-British Business Forum, which is scheduled to be held in London later this month.

Jordan condemns terrorist bombings in Damascus

Continued from page 1

Ministry spokesperson Fouad Majali reiterated Jordan's full solidarity with the government and people

of Syria, stressing the Kingdom's rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism aimed at undermining security and stability, according to a Foreign Ministry

statement.

Majali reiterated Jordan's firm support for Syria's security, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the safety of its citizens.

Jordanian referee Adham Makhadmeh impresses on World Cup stage

Continued from page 1

Throughout the tournament, Makhadmeh has demonstrated a measured refereeing style, maintaining control of matches with relatively few disciplinary sanctions while allowing play to flow whenever possible.

Reactions on social media have been largely positive, with many fans praising his composure and consistency, although, as is common in major tournaments, supporters of some teams questioned individual decisions.

No significant controversies or wide-

spread criticism have emerged regarding his performances.

Makhadmeh's World Cup campaign represents a landmark achievement for Jordanian football and further highlights the growing standing of AFC referees on the global stage.

THE JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975

Published by the Jordan Press Foundation

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Editor-in-Chief

Raed Omari

National Library registration number:
D/1998/2062

Editorial and advertising offices
Jordan Press Foundation

Telephone: 5600800 ext. 2392
Facsimile: 5696183

The Jordan Times is published daily
except Saturdays

Advertising facsimile: 5696183
Circulation Department:
5600800 ext: 2383

Israel is the big loser in New York

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has long held sway in elections, threatening and intimidating any opposition. When a critic of Israel was defeated, they boasted of victory as a lesson for others. In last week's Democratic primary elections in New York City, three insurgent critics of Israeli policies defeated AIPAC-endorsed candidates, pointing to the potential end of an era for the pro-Israel lobby.



WASHINGTON WATCH

James J. Zogby

AIPAC's approach to politics and elections was smart. Formed by the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, they were connected from the outset to an impressive national network of American Jewish leaders, activists and donors they used to effectively influence members of Congress to embrace pro-Israel positions.

They'd visit elected officials in Washington seeking endorsements of legislation and enlist local leaders in a congressperson's district to make the pitch. They'd have local representatives offer to help write new candidates' Middle East policy positions. Implicit were the promise of support if the official or candidate did what was asked — and the threat of opposition if they didn't.

AIPAC also spawned a network of PACs — political action committees — to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to distribute for or against candidates depending on their positions on Israel.

Strategic in their operations, not everyone benefited from AIPAC's largesse. Chairs of important congressional committees and very supportive congressmembers facing tough reelections received bundled contributions. When elected officials repeatedly stepped out of line, their opponents would benefit from PAC monies and bundled contributions from individual pro-Israel donors.

Overall, the amounts were not overwhelming but sufficient to send a message. When an election went their way, the lobby would crow about the victory, whether or not their support had been a factor. Their goal was communication: "Fear us, or you too can be defeated."

With the end of federal oversight of independent election expenditures, AIPAC and other pro-Israel groups created "super-PACs" to raise and spend tens of millions of dollars each cycle. In 2022 and 2024, they effectively targeted a few candidates critical of Israel and spent millions to defeat them.

After Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, we've witnessed a dramatic collapse of public support for Israel — especially among Democrats. AIPAC can no longer make examples of just a few candidates, with well over 100 electeds now critical of Israel. Add to this that AIPAC has become so toxic they've been forced to create new entities or rely on alternates to distribute funds to candidates.

Meanwhile, Israel's behaviours alienate more voters. And the more money AIPAC spends, the more toxic its brand — even when they win, their heavy-handed tactics lead to declining support.

This brings us to last week's New York primaries, a turning point in US politics when two prominent pro-Israel members of Congress were defeated by challengers critical of Israeli policies and supporters of Palestinian justice, and a former leader of pro-Palestinian campus protests won an open race. Not only did AIPAC and its allies spend millions and fail, but also these elections were up-front about Israeli policies and Palestinian rights.

A hallmark of pro-Israel groups' past campaign involvement was the lengths they'd go to not make support for Israel a public issue. They'd raise money from their supporters based on Israel, but their expenditures would pay for ads criticising a candidate's age or "radical agenda", never mentioning the candidate's position on Israel. In these NY contests, many issues mattered to voters, especially frustration with the Democratic establishment's failed policies — but they were also about Israel, and voters knew it.

In predictable reactions from the pro-Israel side, some accused the targeting of AIPAC's money and influence as unfair or even antisemitic — ignoring decades of AIPAC boasting about its money and influence as the source of its power. Others claimed that with the election's results, "Jews no longer feel safe in New York", ignoring that the most prominent contest's victor is Jewish — a self-proclaimed progressive Zionist who strongly opposed Israel's genocide against Palestinians. Finally, some desperately attempted to dismiss the entire election as just about New York with no larger significance, ignoring the changed national political landscape as similar contests emerge everywhere.

The bottom line is that after a half-century AIPAC's hold over politics has been weakened. It won't go away anytime soon, but a real debate over US Middle East policy can now take place. Thank you, New York voters

James J. Zogby is president of the Washington-based Arab American Institute

Is public debt a burden on future generations or an investment in their future?

By Yusuf Mansur

One of the most influential theories in macroeconomics over the past five decades is the Ricardian Equivalence theory, reformulated by economist Robert Barro in 1974 based on an idea first introduced nearly a century-and-a-half earlier by David Ricardo. The theory is built on a deceptively simple yet far-reaching proposition: If a government finances its spending through borrowing rather than taxation, rational citizens will anticipate that today's debt will eventually be repaid through higher future taxes. Consequently, they will increase their savings today, offsetting the government's fiscal stimulus. In this framework, public borrowing and taxation become economically equivalent.

This idea has profoundly influenced modern fiscal thinking and has become one of the intellectual foundations for advocates of fiscal discipline and limited government borrowing. Yet an important question remains: Does this theory truly describe the functioning of modern economies? Are all forms of public debt really the same?

I believe the answer is no. The elegance of the theory lies in its mathematical rigor, but it rests on a set of assumptions that rarely hold in the real world. It assumes that households are perfectly rational, make decisions across generations, care about the welfare of their grandchildren as much as their own, have unrestricted access to credit and savings markets, operate in perfect capital markets, trust governments to manage debt efficiently and can accurately anticipate future taxation. If all these conditions held, Barro's conclusion would be persuasive. The real economy, however, is far more complex than theoretical models.

More importantly, the principal weakness of the theory is not its assumptions alone, but its failure to distinguish between two fundamentally different types of public debt. Not all debt is created equal.

Borrowing to finance public-sector wages, consumer subsidies and recurrent operating expenditures is fundamentally different from borrowing to build a seaport, a power plant, a railway, a university, a telecommunications network, a green hydrogen project or digital infra-



ECONOMIC REVIEW

Yusuf Mansur

structure. In the first case, the current generation consumes resources while leaving future generations to pay the bill. In the second, debt finances productive assets that benefit both current and future generations. The critical question, therefore, is not how much debt has been accumulated, but rather what that debt has financed. In accounting, financial health is not assessed by examining liabilities alone; assets must also be considered. The same principle applies to public finance. If a government borrows one billion dinars to finance a project that raises GDP, creates jobs and generates additional tax revenues for decades, future generations inherit not only the debt but also the productive asset that helps repay it.

By treating debt and taxation as equivalent, Barro's framework overlooks one of the most important elements of a nation's balance sheet: Public assets. This criticism is hardly new. Ironically, David Ricardo himself, the economist whose name is attached to the theory, was not convinced that it accurately described actual human behaviour. He regarded it more as a theoretical possibility than an empirical reality.

Likewise, Adam Smith, the father of modern economics, warned against excessive borrowing to finance wars and unproductive expenditure. Yet he never opposed public investment that expanded national wealth and strengthened productive capacity.

John Maynard Keynes offered an entirely different perspective. During periods of recession, the central problem is not excessive public debt but insufficient demand and investment. If governments borrow to finance productive projects and employ idle labour, economic output rises, tax revenues increase and the burden of debt may ultimately become smaller than it would have been had governments refrained from investing.

Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Laureate in Economics, argues that discussions of public debt often begin with the wrong question. Instead of asking, "How much have we borrowed?", policymakers should ask, "What have we invested in?" Spending on education, scientific research, infrastructure, clean energy, and healthcare should not be viewed merely as fiscal costs but as long-term investments that raise productivity and improve future living standards.

Mariana Mazzucato goes even further, arguing that governments are not merely market correctors but market creators. Public investment has played a decisive role in many of the world's most transformative innovations, from the internet and GPS to advanced medical technologies. From this perspective, debt that finances innovation is not a burden but an investment in creating entirely new industries and markets.

Ultimately, future generations will inherit more than public liabilities

Recent developments in macroeconomic thinking have reinforced this view. Olivier Blanchard has demonstrated that debt sustainability depends not only on the size of public debt but also on the relationship between the cost of borrowing and the rate of economic growth. When an economy grows faster than the interest rate paid on government debt, the debt burden becomes far more manageable, particularly when borrowing finances productive investments.

This reasoning has revived interest in an important fiscal principle known as the Golden Rule of Public Finance. Under this principle, governments may borrow to finance capital investment but should avoid borrowing to finance current expenditure.

The rule embodies an important concept of intergenerational fairness. Capital projects gener-

ate benefits for decades, making it reasonable for future generations that enjoy those benefits to share part of the financing burden. By contrast, borrowing to finance wages and day-to-day operating expenses merely shifts the cost of today's consumption onto future generations that had no voice in the original decision.

International experience strongly supports this distinction. Following the Second World War, the United States, as well as South Korea, Singapore and China, did not view public borrowing as either a virtue or a vice. Instead, they used debt strategically to finance infrastructure, education, energy systems, industrial development and scientific research. These investments generated productivity gains and economic growth that ultimately exceeded the cost of borrowing itself.

Successful economies therefore do not simply distinguish between countries with high debt and those with low debt. They distinguish between debt that creates productive assets and debt that merely finances consumption. Accordingly, the appropriate measure of fiscal policy should not be the size of public debt alone but rather the quality of that debt, the economic and social returns it generates, and its contribution to productivity and national wealth.

Ultimately, future generations will inherit more than public liabilities. They will inherit the roads, ports, electricity grids, universities, hospitals, factories, digital infrastructure and clean energy projects that today's borrowing has made possible. If these assets generate income, employment and sustained economic growth, public debt should be viewed not as a burden on the future but as an investment in it.

Conversely, when borrowing merely finances current consumption, it becomes exactly what Barro feared — a deferred tax imposed on generations that played no role in incurring it.

The question that should guide fiscal policy, therefore, is not "How much have we borrowed?" but "What have we built with that borrowing?" That is the question that ultimately determines whether public debt is a burden on future generations or a gift to them.

The writer is a former Jordanian minister of state for economic affairs

After Ankara: Where is Gulf national security heading?

By Hasan Dajah

The question being asked in Gulf capitals today is no longer whether the United States will remain a key security partner, but rather to what extent it can be relied upon in times of crisis. The US-Israeli war against Iran, and the accompanying limitations in achieving its declared strategic objectives, have revealed a profound shift in the regional security environment. While it is true that Washington still maintains the largest military presence in the Gulf, possessing military bases does not necessarily translate into possessing the political will to use them or the ability to impose decisive strategic outcomes.

The NATO meetings in Ankara come in this context, as an indication of the beginning of a new phase in which the Gulf States are seeking a more diversified security architecture, based on risk distribution and multiple partners, rather than near-total reliance on the US security umbrella. The summit also presents Turkey with an opportunity to strengthen its role as a bridge between the Alliance and the Middle East, leveraging its standing within NATO, the development of its defence industries and its balanced relations with most regional actors.

In light of these shifts, three main scenarios can be outlined for the future of Gulf national security.

Scenario One: Multipartner Security

This scenario is based on the Gulf States' transition from a "single ally" model to a "multi-partnership" model. Instead of replacing the United States with another power, the Gulf States will distribute their defence relationships among the United States, European countries and Turkey, while expanding cooperation with Asian powers in the ar-

reas of technology, cybersecurity and military manufacturing.

In this context, the outcomes of the NATO summit in Ankara could become a platform for enhancing cooperation with the Alliance in maritime security, energy security, air defence and cybersecurity, and for revitalising the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative more effectively, without necessarily leading to a new defence alliance. The probability of this scenario is approximately 55 per cent.

This scenario represents a qualitative shift in the Gulf security philosophy...

The conditions for its realisation include a continued decline in Gulf confidence in the US military commitment; the readiness of European countries and Turkey to assume greater security responsibilities in the region; the continuation of maritime and missile threats without the outbreak of a full-scale regional war; and the success of the Gulf States in maintaining a policy of balance among international powers.

This scenario is characterised by achieving the greatest degree of strategic flexibility, granting the Gulf States a wider margin for manoeuvre without becoming entangled in conflicting axes.

Scenario Two: Building an Independent Gulf Deterrent System

This scenario assumes that the Gulf States will draw the most important lesson from the recent war: That security cannot be entirely imported from abroad. Therefore, they will accelerate military manufacturing projects, unify air and missile defence sys-

tems, establish a more effective joint operations command and increase investment in local defence industries, drones and military artificial intelligence.

In this scenario, external partnerships become tools for support and technology, while self-deterrence becomes the cornerstone of Gulf security. The probability of this scenario being realised is approximately 30 per cent.

Conditions for realisation include the availability of Gulf political will to overcome internal disputes; increased spending on local defence industries; the development of a unified Gulf command and control system; and the transfer of military technology from international partners instead of merely purchasing weapons.

This scenario represents a qualitative shift in the Gulf security philosophy, but it requires years of institutional development and massive investments, as well as a high degree of political coordination.

Scenario Three: Security Based on Regional Understandings and De-escalation

This scenario assumes that the cost of military confrontations will compel all regional parties to adopt a policy of crisis management rather than escalation, making dialogue with Iran an integral part of the Gulf security framework, alongside continued defence relations with the West.

Thus, the concept of security shifts from military deterrence alone to managing regional balances through diplomacy, ensuring maritime and energy security, and preventing a slide into wider confrontations. The chance of realisation is approximately 15 per cent.

Conditions for realisation include continued Gulf-Iranian dialogue; Iran's commitment to reducing regional tensions; the success of regional mediations, particularly those of Tur-

key and Oman; and the existence of international guarantees that safeguard maritime security and freedom of trade. Although this scenario is the least likely, it remains the least costly economically and the most aligned with Gulf development priorities. However, it remains contingent on the level of mutual trust among the region's stakeholders.

The NATO meetings in Ankara are not merely a routine gathering of the Alliance; they reflect the beginning of a redrawing of the Middle East's security map. The recent war demonstrated that military superiority alone does not guarantee the achievement of political objectives, and that possessing military bases does not equate to the ability to impose stability or provide absolute protection for allies.

It also revealed that the United States has become more inclined to manage conflicts and reduce direct involvement, rather than wage protracted and costly wars.

Therefore, the Gulf States appear to be entering a transitional phase, redefining the concept of national security from reliance on an external guarantor to building an interconnected network of alliances, self-reliance and regional understandings. Ankara may well be the starting point of this transformation, not because NATO will replace the United States, but because the Gulf security system itself is entering a new phase based on diversifying sources of power, sharing burdens and increasing self-reliance.

The next phase will not witness the end of the Gulf partnership with Washington, but rather the end of the American monopoly on Gulf security and the beginning of a more pluralistic security system, more closely linked to the changing calculations of regional and international interests.

The writer is professor of Strategic Studies at Al Hussein Bin Talal University

BUSINESS

Wednesday, July 8, 2026

Real estate trading tops JD3b in first half of 2026 — DLS

AMMAN (JT) — The volume of trading in the Kingdom's real estate market reached JD3.042 billion during the first half of 2026, according to the monthly report issued by the Department of Lands and Survey (DLS).

According to the report, the department's revenues increased by 5 per cent during the first half of 2026, reaching around JD129 million, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The report showed that real estate sales in the Kingdom rose by 12 per cent in June compared with the same month last year, and by 13 per cent compared with May.

The department's revenues during June also saw a 39 per cent increase compared with the same month in 2025, totalling JD24 million.

The report indicated that apartment sales



The volume of trading in the Kingdom's real estate market reaches JD3.042 billion during the first half of 2026

during June rose by 12 per cent compared with the corresponding month last year.

Similarly, land sales during June grew by 12 per cent compared with the same period last

year. The report also noted that the number of properties sold to com-

panies in the Kingdom during the first half of the current year reached 4,633 properties.

JSMO processes 62 tonnes of gold and silver products in H1 2026

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Standards and Metrology Organisation (JSMO) processed around 62 tonnes of locally produced and imported gold and silver jewellery and bullion during the first half of 2026 as part of its inspection, hallmarking and legal purity verification services.

Acting Director General of JSMO Wafaa Momani told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the organisation hallmarked 4,850 kilogrammes of locally manufactured gold jewellery and 1,750 kilogrammes of imported gold jewellery during the reporting period.

She said JSMO also inspected 2,650 kilogrammes of gold bullion and 49,100 kilogrammes of silver bullion, while the total volume of silver jewellery processed reached 3,450 kilogrammes.

Momani added that the organisation carried out 211 inspection visits to jewellery shops and workshops during the first half of the year.

She said the use of



The Jordan Standards and Metrology Organisation processes around 62 tonnes of locally produced and imported gold and silver jewellery and bullion during the first half of 2026

portable X-ray fluorescence analysers during inspection campaigns has strengthened field oversight by enabling inspectors to verify instantly the legal purity of precious metals without the need to collect samples or damage the inspected items, while also improving the efficiency of inspection operations.

Momani urged consumers planning to purchase gold jewellery to ensure that each item bears the official JSMO hallmark and to request a detailed invoice show-

ing the jeweller's name or official stamp, the date of sale, the type of jewellery, its legal purity, weight in grammes, the daily gold price according to the Jordan Jewellers Association's official bulletin, manufacturing charges and the total purchase price.

She also encouraged consumers to report any violations through JSMO's hotline, official website, the government's "Bekhedmetkom" platform or the organisation's social media channels.

Syria, France say want Damascus to emerge as transit hub

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrian President Ahmed Al Sharaa and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday they were aiming for Damascus to become a transit hub for global trade, as countries look for alternatives to the Strait of Hormuz.

During an economic forum on Syria's post-war reconstruction attended by Macron in the Syrian capital, Sharaa said that "after the Strait of Hormuz crisis, the world realises the value of safe and stable corridors".

"Here the importance is highlighted of the geography of Syria, which today has regained its vital role as an indispensable link in the global corridors market," he added.

"We want France to be our primary partner on this path."

Sharaa said "the strategic partnership that we are establishing today with France... is the model we want for the relationship with Europe and with the whole world".

Macron, on the second day of a visit to Damascus accompanied by several heads of major French companies, said he hoped to "make Syria a long-term regional



The Jordan Standards and Metrology Organisation processes around 62 tonnes of locally produced and imported gold and silver jewellery and bullion during the first half of 2026

hub".

"That is to say a place where broader strategies can be developed and in particular where new logistics chains can be built, energy or data routes can be constructed," Macron added.

The French leader said such a hub would "reduce the risks inherent in the functioning of the region today and what is still happening, even if at a lesser intensity, in the Strait of Hormuz".

But he stressed that Syria was facing several challenges in maintaining stability and spurring reconstruction.

"The opportunities and interests of French companies are aligned with this challenge," Macron said.

The two countries

signed a number of bilateral agreements during the forum, although French investors appeared to be approaching the opportunities with caution.

In May last year, Syria signed a 30-year contract with French logistics giant CMA CGM worth 230 million euros.

A year later, it signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ConocoPhillips, France's TotalEnergies and Qatar's QatarEnergy, regarding offshore oil and gas exploration.

Addressing the French delegation at Tuesday's forum, Sharaa said "what we are asking of you today is to build and develop real and organic partnerships with the Syrian private sector".

US trade gap in May widens to biggest in over a year

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The US trade deficit widened sharply in May to its largest in over a year as imports rose, government data showed on Tuesday, with analysts noting that businesses could be gearing up for further tariffs.

The shift came as the world's biggest economy grappled with fallout from war in the Middle East, while imports of tech goods linked to the country's data centre buildout remained strong.

The overall trade gap surged from the month prior by 42.2 per cent to \$77.6 billion, according to data from the Commerce Department. This was slightly less than a consensus forecast by Briefing.com.

In May, imports climbed by 3.3 per cent to \$395.3 billion, while exports dipped by 3.2 per cent to \$317.7 billion.

While imports of capital goods like computer accessories and semiconductors showed just a modest increase, "they are up 42 per cent year-over



Shipping containers are stacked at the Port of Long Beach on March 4, 2025 in Long Beach, California

year, thanks to ongoing demand for AI hardware", said Economist Grace Zwemmer of Oxford Economics.

She added that the latest imports uptick was broad-based and led by consumer goods, with "about half the strength at-

tributed to pharmaceutical preparations".

"This could be a sign that businesses are beginning to frontload pharmaceutical imports ahead of the 100 per cent tariffs that are set to go into effect on July 31, although there are many exemptions

embedded in the policy," Zwemmer noted.

US trade data has been fluctuating widely over the past year as President Donald Trump imposed sweeping tariffs on various trading partners, sending businesses scrambling to

avoid them. "Imports convey solid US domestic demand," said National Market Economist Oren Klachkin in a note.

But he added that companies' attempts to get ahead of planned tariff hikes "likely lent a hand".

Meanwhile, US exports of crude oil and petroleum products advanced after US-Israeli strikes on Iran from late February, which triggered Tehran's retaliation in virtually blocking the Strait of Hormuz.

The strait is a key waterway for energy transit, sending prices soaring at the time.

While crude exports were still up in May, the partial reopening of the strait after the United States and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding helped push petroleum exports towards prewar levels, Zwemmer said.

For now, the temporary deal saw a pause in hostilities while officials seek a longer term solution, and energy costs have cooled.

Seoul dives on tough day for Asia as Samsung fails to ease tech woes

HONG KONG (AFP) — Seoul once again led losses in Asian stocks on Tuesday as chip giant Samsung tumbled despite an eye-watering rise in profit, stoking fears that the record-breaking, AI-fuelled rally might have reached the end of the road.

Investors were unable to take up the baton from their counterparts on Wall Street, where all three main indexes reopened after a long weekend to rally on the back of gains in market heavyweights including Amazon and Apple.

The gains eased worries over a tech retreat over the past few weeks amid questions over whether the vast sums pumped into artificial intelligence

will see suitable returns. South Korean titan Samsung appeared to have answered some of those on Tuesday as it said it expected to post a jump in second-quarter operating profit of more than 1,800 per cent thanks to sustained AI-driven demand for memory chips.

However, the company's shares tumbled as much as 10 per cent at one point before ending down more than 6 per cent, dragging the Kospi index down nearly 5 per cent and deepening a rout that has hammered the market for the past two weeks.

The Kospi had more than doubled this year to a record high in June, but has since shed around 20

per cent. The results came at the start of a much-anticipated earnings season that will be closely followed for an idea about firms' outlooks for AI in light of the huge investment made in the sector.

"Strong earnings are no longer enough," wrote Saxo Markets' Charu Chananana.

"For AI-linked stocks, the market now wants strong earnings, strong guidance and clear evidence that pricing power can last."

She added: "Investors are not paying for what has already happened. They are paying for what happens next."

And Petra Capital Management's Albert Yong said the plunge suggests

"investors might have already priced in solid results and are increasingly focused on the longer-term trajectory of the memory cycle".

There were also losses in Tokyo — another tech-heavy market — Hong Kong, Shanghai, Sydney, Taipei and Bangkok.

But there were gains in Singapore, Manila, Jakarta and Mumbai.

London and Paris rose but Frankfurt edged down.

Oil prices climbed more than one per cent after British maritime security agency UKMTO said an "unknown projectile" had struck and caused a fire on an oil tanker off the coast of Oman near the Strait of Hormuz on Monday.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

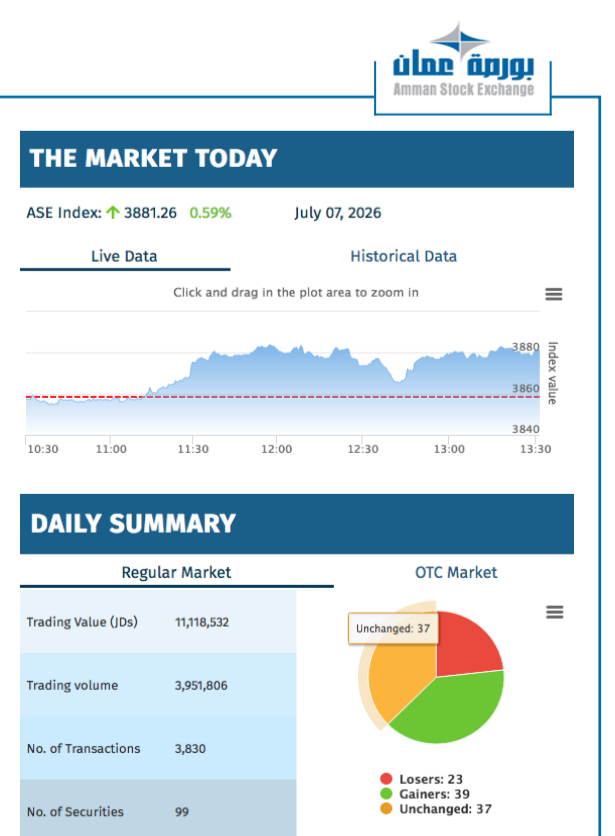
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Tuesday amounted to JD11.1 million spread over 4 million shares that traded through 3,830 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.59 per cent, closing at 3881.26 points.

Out of 99 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 39 companies rose while the share price of another 23 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Dar Al Aman for Investment by 4.65 per cent, Safwa Islamic Bank by 4.62 per cent, National Aluminium Industrial by 4.17 per cent, Specialised Jordanian Investment by 4.08 per cent and United Cable Industries by 3.87 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordan Decapolis Properties by 5 per cent, Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 4.92 per cent, Amwaj Properties by 4.76 per cent, Ubour Logistic Services Plc. by 3.90 per cent and Jordanian Expatriates Investment Holding by 3.17 per cent.



Argentina produces epic World Cup fightback to beat Egypt, reach quarters

CRICKET

Afghanistan cricketer Shapoor Zadran dies aged 38

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Former Afghanistan fast bowler Shapoor Zadran, who shaped the country's early rise in international cricket, died Tuesday after a prolonged illness, the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) said. Zadran died a day before his 39th birthday at a hospital outside New Delhi where he had been treated for a rare immune-system disorder for the last few months. "With profound grief and deep sorrow, the Afghanistan Cricket Board mourns the passing of former Afghanistan fast bowler Shapoor Zadran," the ACB said in a statement. The board hailed him as "one of the foundation-laying figures of Afghanistan cricket" whose dedication and commitment helped propel the national team onto the international stage. A strapping left-arm quick with long hair, Zadran played 44 One-Day Internationals and 36 Twenty20 matches between 2009 and 2020, representing Afghanistan during a period of rapid growth for the sport in the country. Zadran also featured in four T20 World Cups between 2010 and 2016, taking nine wickets in as many matches. "He was among the proud cricketers who stood at the heart of Afghanistan's early cricket journey and helped build the path that brought Afghan cricket to the international stage," the ACB said.

TENNIS

Serena wants to play again before US Open, says coach

LONDON (AFP) — Serena Williams wants to play singles tournaments before the US Open, unlike her preparation for Wimbledon, the American legend's coach Rennae Stubbs said on Tuesday. Williams, 44, played two doubles matches in preparation for her comeback to singles tennis at the All England Club, but lost in the first round last week. The 23-time Grand Slam champion then had to withdraw from the doubles with sister Venus due to a knee injury suffered in the defeat by Australian Maya Joint. "I'll leave it to her to discuss her medical stuff and how she's feeling but I know that for her trying to play, certainly something before the US Open will be something she would like to do," Stubbs told reporters at Wimbledon. "She doesn't want to go and do what she did here, which was just play singles, at the US Open, but at the same time it's going to depend on physically how she's doing."

ATLANTA (AFP) — Argentina staged a stunning comeback from 2-0 down to avoid a stunning exit at the hands of Egypt and prolong Lionel Messi's World Cup career with a 3-2 win to reach the quarter-finals.

The holders looked down and out when goals from Yasser Ibrahim and Mostafa Ziko, either side of Messi having a penalty saved, put the Pharaohs in sight of a historic victory in Atlanta.

However, Cristian Romero's header sparked the comeback as Argentina struck three times in the final 11 minutes plus stoppage time.

Messi smashed home the equaliser to score for a ninth consecutive World Cup game and retake the lead for the Golden Boot with eight this tournament.

Enzo Fernandez completed the turnaround with a superb header two minutes into stoppage time.

At the end, Messi shed tears of joy as he embraced his teammates.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni was almost too choked up to speak afterwards, saying: "I'm really emotional right now. What a group of players, man."

Egypt was left furious after a number of controversial calls went against them, including a disallowed goal early in the second half, and a member of their coaching staff was red-carded in the aftermath of the winning goal.

But despite a second almighty scare against



Argentina's midfielder #24 Enzo Fernandez scores his team's third goal during the 2026 World Cup round of 16 football match between Argentina and Egypt at Atlanta Stadium in Atlanta on Tuesday

African opposition, Argentina will face either Colombia or Switzerland in the last eight on Saturday.

Scaloni attempted to refresh a side that looked dead on their feet in the closing stages of a 3-2 win over Cape Verde in the last 32 on Friday.

Nicolas Tagliafico, Leandro Paredes and Julian Alvarez came in from the team that started in Miami, but Argentina got off

to another slow start. Marwan Attia's deep cross to the back post was powered home by Yasser.

Argentina had the chance to level five minutes later when Tagliafico was wiped out by Haissem Hassan inside the box.

However, there was another chapter to Messi's misery from the penalty spot at World Cups. The eight-time Ballon

d'Or's strike was tentative and Mostafa Shobeir flew to his left to save, meaning Messi has now missed four of his eight non-shootout penalties at World Cups. He also became the first player to miss two in a single tournament, having also failed to hit the target against Austria in the group stages.

The penalty save was just the start of Shobeir's inspired afternoon.

Alexis Mac Allister's powerful header from point-blank range was next to be parried by the Al Ahly stopper. Shobeir then produced one of the saves of the tournament to prevent Alvarez's shot finding the bottom corner. Egypt thought they had doubled their lead on the hour mark after a brilliant counter-attack. Mohamed Salah played in Mostafa Ziko, who

dinked the ball perfectly over the onrushing Emi Martinez.

However, Egyptian celebrations were cut short by a hugely controversial VAR intervention for a foul on Lisandro Martinez, just outside the Egypt box, at the start of the build-up to the goal.

The decision finally fired up the majority Argentine crowd, but they were silenced once more moments later by another blistering Egyptian break.

Salah again led the charge before feeding Hassan and his cross was swept in by Zico.

Argentina looked like a beaten side with Messi among those who head was bowed during the second-half drinks break.

Yet, Romero's header — that Shoubir just failed to keep out — sparked a remarkable revival as the defending champions hauled themselves off the canvas.

Moments later a dazzling run by Messi teed up Lautaro Martinez, who headed just wide and Messi was to have his moment of redemption seven minutes from time.

Gonzalo Montiel fed the ball back for his captain to strike sweetly on the half volley.

Shoubir again got a touch but couldn't get it out as the ball cannoned in off the bar for Messi's 21st World Cup goal.

Then Fernandez's bullet header from Lautaro Martinez's cross completed the fightback and Argentina's relief was on full display after the final whistle.

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

Study points to likely route for Hannibal's legendary Alpine crossing

BERLIN (AFP) — Just how Hannibal managed to lead war elephants and a full army over the Alps to attack the Romans remains a mystery, but a new modern biology study points to a potential route.

The bold and legendary crossing in 218 BC, which allowed the ancient Carthaginian leader to strike Rome from the north, has long remained one of the most astounding and celebrated achievements in warfare.

Calculations about the energy requirements of Hannibal's force — especially the elephants — points to the Col de la Traversette as the most likely route, according to a study released on Monday by a group of German and British researchers.

The Col de la Traversette is a high-altitude mountain pass in the Cottian Alps at 2,947 metres on the border between modern-day France and Italy.

Researchers from the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (iDiv), the University of Jena and the University of Oxford used route models and



A map showing Hannibal's route into Italy crossing the Alps

elevation data to weigh the physical demands on Hannibal's army of roughly 40,000 men, thousands of horses and a reported 37 war elephants, using body mass data from modern African elephants.

"The new analysis does not eliminate all ambiguity, but it does strengthen the case for the Traversette route by demonstrating that it would better accommodate the demands of moving a large army

that included elephants through extremely difficult alpine terrain," said co-author Emilio Berti of iDiv and the University of Jena.

Other routes considered — such as the Col de Montgenevre, the Col du Clapier, and the Col du Mont Cenis — would have required 11 per cent, 16 per cent, and 19 per cent more energy, respectively, for the army to traverse.

The study also highlighted the immense

physical strain the march through the Alps almost certainly imposed on Hannibal's army.

According to the models, the soldiers on the Traversette route would have lost around 19 per cent of their body fat reserves, which could explain the high death toll.

In contrast, calculations for the war elephants indicated a loss of only about four per cent of their energy

reserves. Many of the animals reportedly survived the mountain crossing.

The successful crossing of the Alps allowed Hannibal to bypass Roman defences and pull off a string of stunning victories on the Italian peninsula during the Second Punic War.

Rome, however, managed to weather the setbacks and defeat Carthage in the conflict as well as the subsequent Third Punic War.

Blazy's Chanel fairy tale continues with whimsical couture show

By Esther Sánchez
Agence France-Presse

PARIS, France — Franco-Belgian designer Matthieu Blazy delved into fairy tales as inspiration for his second Chanel Haute Couture show from "Jack and the Beanstalk" to "Goldilocks".

The 42-year-old has won rave reviews from fashion experts since being appointed in December 2024 to start a fresh chapter in the life of the venerable Parisian fashion house.

"Much like the story of [Chanel founder] Gabrielle Chanel, Matthieu Blazy's tenure at the maison writes itself like a fairy tale," Elle magazine's fashion editor wrote on Tuesday.

His first collections have been snapped up by buyers worldwide, helping the group report a slight rise in sales last year when many of its peers were struggling with lower demand.

For the Autumn/Winter Haute Couture collection, unveiled at the Grand Palais exhibition space in central Paris, Blazy sent out models against a backdrop of colourful flowers, climbing plants and magic mirrors.

The collection featured pieces with direct references to fairy tales: coats made to look as though they were craft-



Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh poses during a photocall prior to attend the Chanel Women Haute Couture Fall/Winter 2026-2027 collection as part of the Paris Fashion Week, in Paris, on Tuesday

ed from straw, evoking scarecrows, and almost transparent dresses embroidered with climbing vines.

Other details, such as a handbag shaped like a sleeping teddy bear or a row of buttons showing a duck transform into a swan, hinted at other stories.

"I asked myself whether Gabrielle Chanel's life was a fairy tale. In her library I found the little book 'Les Fées, contes des contes' [which translates as 'Fairies, Tales of Tales' by Charles Perrault] and, together with the Haute Couture ateliers, we explored the idea of clothes that carry stories, like books," the designer said in a statement.

The model who opened the show was carrying a copy of Perrault's book. Celebrities at the show

included Teyana Taylor, Tilda Swinton, Pedro Pascal and Lupita Nyong'o.

Armani

The show was one of the most eagerly anticipated of this haute Couture week, alongside Jonathan Anderson's presentation for Dior.

Anderson scooped his rivals for one of the biggest prizes in the fashion industry this year — designing Taylor Swift's wedding dress for her ceremony in New York last weekend.

Another highlight on Tuesday will be the Armani show.

Following the death of founder Giorgio Armani in September 2024, his niece, Silvana Armani, took charge of the brand's Haute Couture collections.

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