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Thursday, July 9, 2026 | Muharram 24, 1448 Hijri

## King invites Azerbaijan's president to visit Jordan



Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on Wednesday receives Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi in Baku

AMMAN (JT) — Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on Wednesday received Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi in Baku, where the two sides discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations and expand cooperation across several sectors.

Safadi conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Abdullah to President Aliyev and expressed the King's wishes for continued progress and prosperity for Azerbaijan and its people, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

President Aliyev returned the greetings to King Abdullah, reaffirming Azerbaijan's commitment to further strengthening ties with Jordan.

Safadi also delivered an invitation from King Abdullah for President Aliyev to visit Jordan, while President Aliyev extended a reciprocal invitation to the King to visit Azerbaijan.

The meeting also went

over ways to enhance cooperation in the economic, energy, investment and tourism sectors through continued high-level engagement and closer coordination.

Both sides stressed the importance of building on the outcomes of the Joint Jordanian-Azerbaijani Committee for Economic, Trade and Technical Cooperation, held in Baku on November 26, 2025, as well as expanding parliamentary cooperation and collaboration in the tourism sector.



## Crown Prince sworn in as Regent

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein was sworn in as Regent on Wednesday, in the presence of Cabinet members, according to a Royal Court statement.

## Jordan condemns Iranian attacks on Bahrain, Kuwait

AMMAN (JT) — The Foreign Ministry condemned on Wednesday the Iranian attacks on Bahrain and Kuwait, as a "flagrant violation of their sovereignty and a threat to their security, stability, and territorial integrity".

The ministry also condemned the attacks as well as a "dangerous escalation and an open breach of international law and the United Nations Charter".

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## 26 children from Gaza return home after completing treatment in Jordan

AMMAN (JT) — A group of 26 sick children from Gaza, accompanied by 54 family members, returned to the Gaza Strip on Wednesday via the King Hussein Bridge after completing their treatment in Jordanian hospitals, under the Kingdom's "Jordan Medical Corridor" initiative.

The children had been evacuated to Jordan by the Jordanian Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) in coordination with the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO).



Buses transport 26 children from Gaza back to the Strip via the King Hussein Bridge on Wednesday after they completed treatment in Jordanian hospitals as part of 'Medical Corridor' initiative

During their stay in the Kingdom, they received specialised medical care in accordance with internationally recognised standards, according to a JAF statement.

Family members expressed their gratitude to His Majesty King

Abdullah and the Jordanian Armed Forces for their humanitarian

and medical support, praising the quality of care and treatment

provided to their children in Jordanian hospitals.

Hundreds of children from Gaza continue to receive treatment in Jordan under the medical evacuation programme, which began in March 2025.

Since the launch of the initiative, Jordan had announced that patients and their escorts would return to Gaza after completing their treatment so that a new batch of patients may be evacuated for treatment in Jordanian hospitals.

The process is in line with Jordan's long-standing position in support of Palestinians' steadfastness on their land, the statement said.



A general view of Amman

## Jordan climbs investment climate rankings as foreign investment rises 25% — Dhaman

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan attracted more than \$2 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2025, marking an increase of more than 25 per cent on the previous year, according to the Arab Investment and Trade Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman).

Jordan received \$2.022 billion in inward FDI during the year and improved its position

in Dhaman's 2025 Composite Investment Climate Index, rising two places to rank seventh among Arab countries and 74th globally.

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## Jordan, Oman establish \$100 million joint investment company to boost economic cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan and Oman have launched an investment partnership aimed at expanding economic cooperation through the establishment of the Jordanian-Omani Investment Company, with a capital of 38.5 million Omani Rials (around \$100 million).

The agreement to create the company was signed by the Social Security Investment Fund (SSIF) and the Oman Investment Authority (OIA), with each side contributing an equal share of the capital.

According to an SSIF statement, carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the partnership will focus on identifying and developing



The Social Security Investment Fund (SSIF) and the Oman Investment Authority (OIA) have signed an agreement to establish the Jordanian-Omani Investment Company, with a capital of 38.5 million Omani Rials (approximately \$100 million)

joint investment opportunities in key sectors, including telecommuni-

cations and information technology, agriculture and food industries,

pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, energy, mining, tourism and logistics.

The initiative seeks to strengthen economic ties between the two countries, encourage investment exchange, and generate added value through projects with strong economic and development potential, the statement said.

SSIF Chairman Ezzedine Kanakrieh was quoted in the statement as saying that the agreement represents a significant step in expanding Jordan's investment partnerships at the regional and international levels.

He added that the joint company reflects a shared commitment

by Jordan and Oman to building long-term investment cooperation based on financial resources, expertise and support for productive projects.

The newly established company will serve as a platform for joint investments...

Kanakrieh said that the partnership would also enhance collaboration between investment institutions in both countries and

contribute to economic growth by targeting priority sectors, according to Petra.

Mulham Bin Basheer Al Jarf, deputy president for investment at OIA said that the agreement builds on the long-standing relations between Jordan and Oman and reflects the two countries' commitment to expanding economic cooperation and directing investments toward promising sectors.

The newly established company will serve as a platform for joint investments, supporting businesses and creating new growth opportunities by leveraging the economic strengths and competitive advantages of both countries, Petra said.

## Trump says Iran ceasefire 'is over'

ANKARA (AFP) — US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday the ceasefire with Iran was "over" after the two sides traded fire, but added that negotiators could keep talking to Tehran.

Trump blasted Iran as "scum" and "cuckoo" after Washington launched strikes on the Islamic Republic overnight and Iran's Guard said they had targeted US bases in the Gulf.

Oil prices jumped 5 per cent after Trump's remarks.

"I think it's over. I don't want to deal with them any more, they're scum," Trump said at a NATO

summit in the Turkish capital Ankara when asked if the truce with Iran was now finished.

"They're scum, they're sick people, they're led by sick people and they're vicious, violent people. And if they had a nuclear weapon, they'd use it. As far as I'm concerned, it's over."

Trump said he would speak to businessman-turned-negotiator Steve Witkoff and his son-in-law Jared Kushner, who have been dealing with the Iranians, but insisted it was up to Tehran to return to the table.

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# PDTRA marks 19th anniversary of Petra's selection as one of New 7 Wonders



The Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority on Tuesday evening marks the 19th anniversary of Petra's selection as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World

AMMAN (JT) — The Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA) on Tuesday evening marked the 19th anniversary of Petra's selection as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World by organising a Nabataean poetry festival.

PDTRA Chief Commissioner Adnan Sawair said that the anniversary represents an important national occasion to celebrate Petra's global achievement and reflects pride in the unique status of the rose-red city as one of the world's most significant cultural and historical landmarks, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He said that Petra's selection as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in 2007 was not only a recognition of its historical and archaeological signifi-

cance but also marked a turning point in enhancing its position on the global tourism map and increasing international interest in its rich cultural heritage.

Sawair said that PDTRA continues to implement plans and programmes aimed at developing the tourism and cultural product, enhancing the visitor experience and improving services at the archaeological site and its surrounding area in a manner that reflects Petra's global standing while preserving its historical and human value.

He added that the authority is working to boost the role of culture and heritage in supporting tourism development by organising high-quality events that connect visitors with Jordan's authentic heritage, stimulate tourism activity and

create economic opportunities for the local community.

The chief commissioner also stressed the importance of cooperation with national partners to reinforce Petra's position as a leading global tourism and cultural destination.

The featured performances by leading Jordanian Nabataean poets, who recited patriotic, heritage and social-themed poems that were warmly received by the audience.

The festival programme included performances by leading Jordanian Nabataean poets, the screening of the documentary Caravans of Petra, a musical performance by artist Okasha Hilalat, and an exhibition of traditional clothing, local products and handicrafts, providing artisans and local producers with a

platform to showcase their work and introduce visitors to Petra's cultural heritage.

symbolising the significance of the global milestone and Petra's status as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

The special illumination highlighted the city's enduring place on the international tourism map and created a distinctive atmosphere at the archaeological site.

The anniversary celebration reflects ongoing efforts to reinforce Petra's status as a global tourism and cultural destination and raise awareness of its historical and human significance.

Petra, which was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985 and named one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in 2007, remains a national symbol and a world-renowned destination attracting visitors from across the globe.

The festival programme included performances by leading Jordanian Nabataean poets...

As part of the celebrations, PDTRA illuminated Al Khazneh (The Treasury) with colourful lighting displays and designs

## Princess Alia launches initiative to boost Kingdom's climate resilience

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Princess Alia on Wednesday underscored the importance of adopting an integrated approach to managing Jordan's natural landscapes as a key national and international strategy to protect natural resources and strengthen the resilience of communities and ecosystems to climate change.

Princess Alia made the remarks during the opening workshop of the Jordan Integrated Landscapes Management Initiative (JILMI), according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The initiative is being implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and several national partners, with funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Princess Alia stressed that protecting the environment and natural resources is inseparable from safeguarding people's well-being and improving quality of life, noting that meaningful development must place local communities at its centre.



HRH Princess Alia on Wednesday opens workshop of the Jordan Integrated Landscapes Management Initiative

She also highlighted the need for stronger cooperation among national and international institutions to address mounting environmental and climate challenges, calling for sustainable solutions based on a balanced relationship between people and nature to preserve resources for future generations.

HRH Princess Basma, meanwhile, emphasised the importance of conserving biodiversity and protecting Jordan's natural ecosystems. She called for strengthening national partnerships and coordinating efforts to safeguard the Kingdom's environmen-

tal heritage while supporting initiatives that promote ecosystem restoration and long-term sustainability.

"We are fully committed to preserving natural vegetation cover at the national level," Princess Basma said, noting that the Royal Botanic Garden, through its programmes and initiatives, seeks to foster a culture of harmony between people and nature while conserving native plant resources, particularly endangered species.

Minister of Environment Ayman Suleiman said that the project marks a "significant" milestone in Jordan's

efforts to address climate change and advance the sustainable management of natural resources, particularly in light of the Kingdom's limited water resources and growing pressure on ecosystems.

He said that the initiative reflects Jordan's commitment to implementing nature-based solutions and strengthening the resilience of key sectors, particularly water and agriculture, thereby supporting water security, food security and sustainable development.

IUCN Regional Director for West Asia Hani Shaer said the project has moved from the

planning stage to implementation through a participatory approach involving government institutions, international organisations and local communities.

He said the initiative focuses on strengthening climate resilience in the Jordan Valley, restoring degraded ecosystems, and improving the management of water and agricultural resources to achieve a sustainable balance between environmental protection and development needs.

Representatives of UNEP, IUCN and the GCF highlighted the project as a model for international cooperation in climate adaptation, the application of nature-based solutions and the development of communities that are more resilient to environmental challenges.

The JILMI project aims to strengthen ecosystem resilience, improve natural resource management and support local communities through an integrated approach that combines environmental protection, sustainable development and community participation, in line with Jordan's long-term sustainability goals.

AID



The third phase of a project supporting cancer treatment for Syrian refugees at the King Hussein Cancer Centre concludes

## KHCC, KSrelief complete 3rd phase of Syrian refugee cancer treatment

AMMAN (JT) — The third phase of a project supporting cancer treatment for Syrian refugees at the King Hussein Cancer Centre (KHCC) has concluded, with funding provided by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief).

KSrelief covered the treatment costs of more than 526 Syrian refugee cancer patients in Jordan during the third phase of the project, providing essential medical care and support amid the difficult circumstances they face, where the total value of the assistance exceeded \$1 million, the Jordan News Agency, Petra,

reported.

KHCC Director-General Nisreen Qatamesh expressed her gratitude, saying: "We extend our sincere thanks to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its continued humanitarian support, which has given Syrian refugee cancer patients a genuine opportunity to receive treatment, and continue their journey with determination and resilience."

The support provided through KSrelief has been a "cornerstone" in providing medical care for patients who could not otherwise afford treatment, embodying the highest values of solidarity and hu-

manitarian generosity, Qatamesh added.

Meanwhile, Director of the Health and Environmental Aid Department at KSrelief Abdullah Al Muallam said that the partnership between KHCC and the centre began in 2018 and has become a "leading" model of joint humanitarian action.

He noted that a total of 645 Syrian refugee cancer patients have received treatment under the first, second and third phases of the programme combined, as part of Saudi Arabia's efforts and the directives of its leadership to support Syrian people inside Syria and abroad.

## Jordan Cultural Agenda: 9–16 July 2026

### ONGOING THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

Amman International Film Festival (AIFF) — Multiple venues, Amman

The festival's final stretch — AIFF runs through 10 July 2026 (Tripadvisor), making the first two days of this window its closing days. A major platform for Arab and international cinema, with competition screenings across the city. If you haven't gone yet, this is your last chance.

Image Festival Amman 2026: Mexican Photography | Various venues, Jabal Amman & Jabal Lweibdeh  
Still open throughout July.

### FRIDAY 10 JULY

Al Hannouneh Folk Arts

### — Heritage Evening | Cultural Palace, Amman

An evening of traditional songs and dabke folk dance performed by the Al Hannouneh Folk Arts ensemble. Starts 7:00 pm. Tickets available via Sajilni.

"Women Like You, Like Me" | Royal Cultural Centre, Amman (opens)

A contemporary dance work exploring the different facets of womanhood — individually and collectively. Runs Friday 10 and Saturday 11 July, 7:30 pm. Tickets via Sajilni.

### SATURDAY 11 JULY

"Women Like You, Like Me" (closing night) | Royal Cultural Centre, Amman

Final performance of this contemporary dance piece. 7:30 pm.

### MONDAY 13 JULY

Arab Community Orchestra (ARCO) | Amman

The Arab Community Orchestra, conducted by Maestro Lutfi Melhas, performs an evening concert described as a musical journey bridging cultures. 7:00–9:00 pm. Tickets via Sajilni.

### LOOKING AHEAD

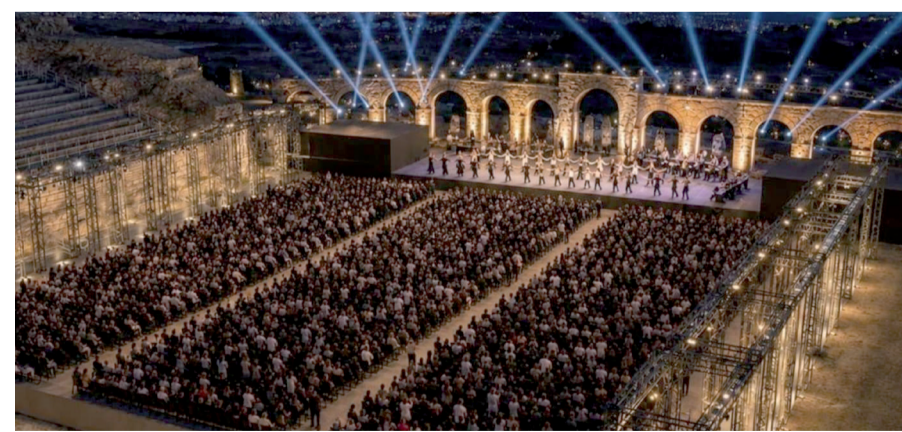
The 40th Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts opens on 22 July and runs through 1 August 2026 — one of the biggest cultural events in the region. Set among Jerash's Roman columns and ancient amphitheatres, the festival brings together Jordanian and international artists for music, dance, poetry and theatre.

## Jerash Festival prepares integrated plan to attract more visitors

AMMAN (JT) — The administration of the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts is working to enhance the visitor experience through an integrated plan aimed at improving access, transport services and facilities at the festival site, contributing to increased tourism and economic activity in Jerash Governorate.

Festival Executive Director Yazan Al Khudair made the remarks on Wednesday during a meeting with heads and representatives of cultural bodies in Jerash at the Jerash Cultural Centre, held in the presence of Jerash Culture Directorate Director Aqleh Al Qadri.

The meeting focused on strengthening coordination and cooperation during the current



Jerash Festival Executive Director Yazan Al Khudair says that the administration aims to deliver a comprehensive and diverse cultural experience that reinforces the festival's position, attracts visitors and supports local economic development

edition of the festival, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Al Khudair reviewed the festival's cultural programme and key events, noting that the plan seeks to improve

visitors' experience from their arrival at the site through to their engagement with handicraft displays, seating areas and cultural and artistic performances.

He said that the ad-

ministration aims to deliver a comprehensive and diverse cultural experience that reinforces the festival's position, attracts visitors and supports local economic development.

Participants discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the festival administration and cultural bodies to ensure the success of events and showcase Jerash's cultural and artistic activities.

Al Khudair highlighted the important role of cultural organisations in supporting accompanying programmes and activities, calling for unified efforts and teamwork that reflect the cultural and national importance of the Jerash Festival.

Representatives of cultural bodies presented proposals and ideas to enrich festival activities, expressing their readiness to cooperate with the administration to help achieve the festival's objectives.



Petra photo

The Jordanian Field Hospital South Gaza says on Wednesday that it continues to provide prosthetic and rehabilitation services to Palestinians through its prosthetics clinic under the Restoring Hope initiative

## Jordan field hospital fits 1,200 prosthetic limbs for Gaza amputees

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordanian Field Hospital South Gaza said on Wednesday that it continues to provide prosthetic and rehabilitation services to Palestinians through its prosthetics clinic under the Restoring Hope initiative, helping amputees regain mobility and resume their daily activities.

The clinic has been equipped with more than 1,000 advanced prosthetic limbs supplied by the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF), according to a JAF statement.

feet suitable for Gaza's damaged terrain, the statement said.

A specialised team of prosthetists and physiotherapists provides rehabilitation before and after fitting, helping patients regain mobility, balance and independence.

The initiative is part of the JAF's humanitarian and medical efforts to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians and support their return to normal life, the statement added.

Since the start of the current rotation, the clinic has fitted 126 upper and lower limb prostheses, bringing the total number of prosthetic limbs provided since the launch of the Restoring Hope initiative to more than 1,200, according to the statement.

Jordan runs two military field hospitals in Gaza, one in the Strip's north and was established in 2009 following the war in 2008, and the second is in Khan Younis in the south, which was established in November 2023 at the peak of the Israeli war of aggression on the coastal enclave that erupted on October 7, 2023.

Besides the field hospitals in Gaza, the JAF established the Jordanian field hospital in Nablus in late November 2023.

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

Since the start of the current rotation, the clinic has fitted 126 upper and lower limb prostheses...

Using advanced technology, the clinic assesses patients, manufactures permanent prosthetic limbs and fits them within two hours. Each prosthesis is individually tailored to meet the patient's functional needs while allowing adjustments to accommodate future physical changes.

The clinic also provides prosthetic limbs for children designed to adapt to different stages of growth, as well as flexible carbon-fibre

## Foreign minister, Azerbaijani counterpart discuss cooperation in economic, energy, tourism sectors

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Wednesday met with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov in Baku to discuss ways to further boost bilateral ties and exchange views on regional developments.

During the meeting, Safadi and Bayramov highlighted the "deep-rooted fraternal" relations between Jordan and Azerbaijan, stressing the importance of expanding cooperation in economic, energy, investment and tourism fields to serve the interests of both countries, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The two ministers also discussed the implementation of the outcomes of the Jordanian-Azerbaijani Joint Committee for Economic, Trade and Technical Cooperation, which convened in Baku on November 26, 2025, with the aim of increasing trade and boosting mutual investments.

Safadi and Bayramov co-chaired the second round of political consultations between the foreign ministries of the two countries.

During the visit, the ministers signed a mutual visa waiver agreement for citizens of both countries, describing it as an important step towards boosting tourism, facilitat-

ing business travel and strengthening people-to-people ties.

They also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in the energy sector.

The two ministers stressed the importance of supporting efforts to end regional escalation and achieve security and stability.

In joint press remarks, Safadi conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Abdullah to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, along with the King's wishes for continued progress and prosperity for Azerbaijan.

Safadi said that the King attaches great importance to the distinguished relations between Jordan and Azerbaijan, and is keen to elevate them further in a manner that reflects the significant potential for cooperation between the two countries.

He added that holding the second round of political consultations reflects the institutionalisation of efforts to deepen bilateral relations and expand cooperation across various fields, including trade, industry, investment, tourism and education.

On regional issues, Safadi stressed the need to adhere to the MoU that led to the ceasefire between the United States and Iran, noting that dialogue remains



Photo courtesy of Foreign Ministry

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Wednesday meets with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov

the only path towards resolving the crisis.

He reaffirmed Jordan's rejection of any aggression targeting the Kingdom or Arab Gulf states, stressing the need for a solution based on respect for international law and state sovereignty, addressing the root causes of regional tensions, and ensuring freedom of navigation and safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

Safadi commended Azerbaijan's support for the two-state solution, saying it remains the only path towards achieving a just peace through ending the occupation and establishing an independent, sov-

ereign Palestinian state on Palestinian national soil, living in peace and security alongside Israel in accordance with international law and relevant UN resolutions.

He also congratulated Azerbaijan on reaching a peace agreement with Armenia, describing it as a significant step towards consolidating peace between the two countries and across the region.

Responding to a question, Safadi highlighted opportunities for regional cooperation in areas including oil pipelines, railway networks, land transport, electricity interconnection, telecommunications

and information technology linking the Arab Gulf, Jordan, Syria, Turkey and Central Asian countries.

He said that Jordan's strategic location, stability and qualified human resources provide important advantages, adding that restoring Syria's stability and regional role would open the way for greater connectivity from the Gulf through Jordan and Syria to Turkey and Central Asia.

For his part, Bayramov stressed the importance of expanding cooperation with Jordan across areas of mutual interest, describing relations between the two countries as based on friendship, trust and mutual respect.

He said that Azerbaijan looks forward to launching direct, regular flights between the two countries to further strengthen ties and increase exchanges between the two peoples.

Bayramov also welcomed the visa waiver agreement, saying it would enhance people-to-people contacts, boost tourism and facilitate business travel, while noting the importance of the energy MoU in expanding bilateral cooperation.

During his visit to Baku, Safadi visited Victory Park and the Alley of Martyrs, where he laid wreaths in memory of Azerbaijan's fallen.

## Unified cancer treatment protocol to standardise care across public sector

AMMAN (JT) — Health Minister Ibrahim Bdour on Wednesday stressed that the newly launched Unified National Protocol for Cancer Treatment will eliminate discrepancies in diagnostic and therapeutic methods across public medical institutions.

The protocol establishes unified medical references, ensuring that all patients receive the same standard of care regardless of where they are treated, Bdour said.

In statements to Al Mamlaka TV on the sidelines of the launch, the minister noted that the project is the culmination of a 17-year effort, marking a major collaborative milestone between the Ministry of Health, the Royal Medical Services



JT file

Al Bashir Public Hospital in Amman

(RMS), the King Hussein Cancer Centre (KHCC) and university hospitals.

Variations in medical practices across different health centres previously led some patients to prefer specific hos-

pitals due to differing diagnostic approaches, treatments and drug qualities, Bdour said.

He emphasised that the new protocol standardises these procedures, ensuring cancer patients in any public institution are subject to the same globally approved clinical standards.

The ministry has worked to elevate and harmonise service delivery across all health facilities, ensuring uniformity in diagnosis, treatment and medication quality, he added, noting that approved drugs will strictly comply with international standards to achieve equity and upgrade healthcare quality.

Bdour also highlighted that standardising treatment protocols will significantly contribute to rationalising healthcare expenditure, particularly given the soaring costs of oncology medications, with some drugs costing up to JD10,000 per unit.

"Adopting a unified protocol will enable joint procurement operations among the Ministry of Health, RMS, KHCC and university hospitals," the minister said, adding that this mechanism will secure larger quantities of medicine at better prices, enhance the efficiency of pharmaceutical inventory management and curb individual, fragmented purchases.

Furthermore, the protocol will streamline the work of physicians by providing a clear therapeutic reference that outlines precise diagnostic and treatment steps, thereby minimising variations in clinical practice and ensuring consistent procedures across all institutions.

The minister revealed

that the actual implementation phase has already commenced, with guidelines distributed to healthcare institutions to serve as a unified reference.

He noted that the current launch marks the beginning of a continuous process to develop, update and expand clinical guidelines in the coming period.

Earlier on Wednesday, the health minister patronised the launching ceremony of the Unified National Protocol for Cancer Treatment in the Public Sector, which comprises 26 clinical guidelines aimed at standardising therapeutic practices, promoting equity in service delivery and upgrading cancer care in the Kingdom.

## American University of Madaba, ATF launch Mosaic Forum for Thought Leaders

AMMAN (JT) — The American University of Madaba and the Arab Thought Forum (ATF) on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and partnership aimed at boosting academic, intellectual and cultural cooperation between the two institutions.

The MoU also stipulates launching the Mosaic Forum for Thought Leaders as a national platform for constructive dialogue, knowledge production, and the development of youth's research skills and leadership capacities, according to an ATF statement.

The Memorandum was signed on behalf of

the American University of Madaba by its President Adi Arida and on behalf of ATF by its Acting Secretary-General Amani Jarrar.

Under the memorandum, the Mosaic Forum for Thought Leaders will be jointly organised on the university campus by the Deanship of Student Affairs and ATF.

It will serve as a recurring platform bringing together intellectuals, academics, policymakers, practitioners and civil society organisations, while enabling students to participate actively in discussions, research groups, and the preparation of reflective essays and policy papers.

The forum is expected to hold eight sessions during the 2026/2027 academic year, including open dialogues, multilateral discussions, structured debates, interactive sessions, live intellectual laboratories, and incubators for innovation and entrepreneurship in development-oriented thought, with live broadcasts made available to the public.

The sessions will address a range of contemporary intellectual and developmental issues, including the Hashemite Custodianship of Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, the solidarity economy and human dignity, the post-algorithmic age and the

ethics of technology, and the economics of human security.

The partnership is expected to generate a range of knowledge-based outputs, including policy papers, thematic reports and a digital knowledge repository documenting the Forum's activities, discussions and outcomes.

These initiatives will boost the position of the American University of Madaba and ATF as national platforms for intellectual dialogue and knowledge production, while helping connect university education with contemporary societal and developmental demands.

Arida said that the

signing of the Memorandum aligns with the American University of Madaba's vision of establishing strategic partnerships with leading intellectual and cultural institutions.

He noted that cooperation with ATF would open new opportunities for students and faculty members to participate in research, intellectual and cultural programmes.

He added that the Mosaic Forum for Thought Leaders would give students a role extending beyond attendance and listening, enabling them to become active agents in producing knowledge, facilitating dialogue, and preparing research

studies and intellectual papers, noting that this approach will boost their critical-thinking, leadership and active-citizenship skills.

Jarrar stressed ATF's commitment to expanding its partnerships with universities and higher education institutions.

She noted that the agreement represents an "important" step towards building a sustainable intellectual platform that brings together academic and intellectual expertise, policymakers and young people, while facilitating knowledge exchange and the examination of national, regional and international issues from multiple perspectives.



Petra photo

Minister of Interior Mazen Faraya arrives in Damascus on Wednesday to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations and expand cooperation

## Interior minister, Syrian counterpart discuss cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Interior Mazen Faraya arrived in Damascus on Wednesday to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations and expand cooperation, particularly in the security field.

Faraya was received at Tishreen Palace by Syrian Interior Minister Anas Khattab and senior Syrian officials. The visit marks the first by an Arab interior minister to Syria since the fall of the former regime.

Upon arrival, Faraya condemned the recent terrorist bombings in Damascus, reaffirming Jordan's full solidarity with Syria in confronting terrorism and protecting civilians, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He also expressed confidence in Syria's ability to advance reconstruction efforts and enhance security and stability.

During talks, Faraya and Khattab discussed mechanisms to strengthen bilateral cooperation, including joint training programmes, the development of border crossings and efforts to combat drug smuggling.

## JSC approves JD150m NEPCO sukuk issuance

AMMAN (JT) — The National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) has secured approval from the Jordan Securities Commission (JSC) to issue the second tranche of Islamic financing certificates (sukuk) worth JD150 million under a Murabaha structure.

According to a disclosure published on the JSC website, the issuance will be conducted

through direct placement and public subscription for entities specified in the prospectus.

The tranche comprises 150,000 sukuk, each with a nominal value of JD1,000, following the completion of all regulatory requirements and approvals from the Central Bank of Jordan and the Central Sharia Supervisory Board, the Jordan News Agency, Petra,

reported.

The JSC's approval, issued on July 5, was granted in accordance with the Securities Law and the 2013 Instructions for the Issuance of Islamic Financing Sukuk and their amendments.

The commission's Board of Commissioners approved the registration of the issuance and authorised the continuation of subscription pro-

cedures in line with applicable regulations.

The JSC also granted NEPCO exemptions from certain procedural requirements, allowing the company to distribute the prospectus directly to targeted entities through appropriate channels rather than publishing it in two local daily newspapers.

The company was likewise exempted from

publishing subscription results in newspapers due to the nature of the issuance and the limited group of targeted subscribers.

The commission required NEPCO to submit written notification of the final number and value of subscribed sukuk upon completion of the subscription process. The company must also coordinate with the

Securities Depository Centre to finalise registration and deposit procedures, the statement said.

Sukuk are Sharia-compliant financial instruments that enable institutions to raise funding through structures backed by tangible assets or commercial transactions, rather than conventional interest-based financing.

# Trump tempers fury to end NATO summit on high note

ANKARA (AFP) — US President Donald Trump offered NATO allies an unexpected warm embrace as they wrapped up a key summit on Wednesday after earlier lashing out at them over their response to his war on Iran.

It was an abrupt swing from antagonism to affection within the space of a few short hours, illustrating the wide range of emotions exhibited by the mercurial US leader.

"It was a great meeting, there was a lot of love in that room, a lot of unity," Trump told

reporters after the closed-door meeting of 32 heads of state at the NATO summit in the Turkish capital Ankara.

Behind closed doors, Trump had reassured them he wanted the US to stay in the military alliance, saying: "We want to remain with you," a source inside the session told AFP.

And that was reflected in the final declaration in which NATO leaders reaffirmed their "ironclad commitment" to the mutual assistance clause enshrined in Article 5 of the alliance treaty.

"An attack on one is

an attack on all," it said, in wording that sought to ease concerns about Washington's commitment to the alliance.

But the day had not begun well with Trump lashing out over NATO allies' failure to back his Iran campaign just before the session, threatening to cut trade with Spain and insisting he still wants NATO member Denmark's territory of Greenland.

"I'm very upset with NATO... because of what they did with Greenland, and... because of the fact that they didn't want to help

us with the number one state sponsor of terror, that's Iran," he said.

But once he came face-to-face with the leaders behind closed doors, his tone changed markedly, according to the source who attended the talks.

"There is a strong contrast between what Trump says in public and what he actually says inside," he told AFP.

He also dialled down his earlier rhetoric on Iran — in which he described them as "scum" and "vicious, violent people" — with his remarks on the matter "not as harsh", the source said.

And he made no further mention of Spain or Greenland.

Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal agreed that Trump's tone in the session was more moderated, telling AFP he had given a "kind of constructive message... that Europe must step up, invest more in defence".

"So it was kind of a good mood with sort of constructive messages," he said.

Lithuanian Foreign Minister Kestutis Budrys said Trump's outbursts should not necessarily be read as



US President Donald Trump meets Ukraine's President (not pictured) on the sidelines of the NATO Summit at Bestepe Presidential Compound in Ankara, on Wednesday

a sign of the alliance fragmenting.

"I wouldn't see it as an indicator that we are somehow weakening NATO and that the transatlantic bond is not there," he told AFP.

"I think we should dramatise things less."

Stalled efforts to halt the Ukraine war were also back on the agenda, with Trump pledging to give Kyiv "the right to make" Patriot air-defence missiles as he went into talks with

Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky on the sidelines of the summit.

"We're going to give a licence to you to make Patriots. That's pretty cool, right," Trump told Zelensky, whose forces have been struggling to shoot down Russian ballistic missiles as supplies of crucial US-made Patriot interceptors run low.

Despite Moscow's heavy bombardments in recent days, Kyiv appears to be turning the

tide by stabilising the front line and conducting strikes deep into Russia — strikes that Trump said could help end the war.

"It's an escalation, but it's also an escalation that can help lead to an end," he added, repeating his belief that both Zelensky and Russia's Vladimir Putin wanted to strike a deal to halt the fighting.

Also in the final NATO declaration, Europe and Canada

pledged to keep military support flowing to Ukraine to the tune of 70 billion euros (\$80 billion) a year in both 2026 and 2027.

Before leaving Ankara, Trump was also set to hold talks with Syrian President Ahmed Al Sharaa as he seeks to rebuild the country's international image as it emerges from years of civil war.

The summit comes at a fraught time for the 77-year-old transatlantic alliance, with Trump demanding members make good on a pledge to ramp up defence spending as Washington takes a step back from Europe.

Keen to avoid a new confrontation with Trump, NATO allies unveiled tens of billions in new arms contracts on Tuesday in a bid to prove they were making good on a pledge to hike defence spending.

NATO chief Mark Rutte insisted the alliance was emerging stronger from the summit in Turkey — despite the disagreements.

"I always felt that families where sometimes you have a heart to heart and sometimes you fight each other a bit are much stronger," he said.

**HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN**  
**Water Authority of Jordan**  
**National Conveyance Project (NCP) Readiness**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**for**  
**Provision of Engineering Consultancy Services for the**  
**Design and Supervision of the Water Transmission Systems**  
**for the Northern Governorates**  
**Tender NO. (1/SW/2026)**  
**INVITATION FOR BIDS**

In preparation for the integration of NCP water into the national water supply system, WAJ, supported by the United States Government (USG), has launched the National Conveyance Project Readiness Program. The Readiness Program aims to ensure that the bulk transmission, storage, and distribution infrastructure is adequately planned, designed, and sequenced to receive and distribute the additional water volumes delivered by the NCP. This includes upgrading and expanding reservoirs, transmission pipelines, and water distribution networks across the Kingdom.

These bulks are directly related to receiving and distributing water quantities from the NCP and involve the construction of new pipelines, pump station upgrades, ensuring a resilient bulk supply system across the northern governorates as summarized below.

- Bulk 8.2: Transmission - Hofa-Samad
- Bulk 8.3: Transmission - Samad-Ras Moneef
- Bulk 9A: The Expansion of Za'atary Reservoir (40,000 m<sup>3</sup>) in addition to upgrading Za'atary pumping station to transfer water to Um Lolo Tank.
- Bulk 9B: Expansion of Um Lolo Reservoir (16,000 m<sup>3</sup>) and the Construction of DN400 transmission pipeline to supply Bwaida reservoir, in addition to the construction of Um Lolo pumping station to transfer water to Bwaida. The project also includes the expansion of Bwaida reservoir (6,500 m<sup>3</sup>) and upgrading the existing PS.
- Optional measures as detailed below, will be activated after submission and approval of the preliminary report. (see Annex B in the TOR)

Measure Id	Description
Jerash P8	New Pipeline from Proposed Ras Muneef Res to Existing Gravity Pipeline 400mm
Irbid P13	New Pipeline DN400 from Bani Kananah Reservoir to connect with the existing DN400 line feeding Hibras reservoir
Jerash P2	New Pipeline DN300 parallel to the existing pipe 300/200 from the transmission Line 500 to Proposed Burma, proposed Gaza and Jamla Tanks
Jerash P10	New Pipeline from Existing Gravity Pipeline 400mm to Proposed Al-Manara Res
Ajloun P1	New/Upgraded Pipeline from Ras Muneef Res to Anjara and Qaida Reservoirs

Therefore, the Water Authority of Jordan now invites sealed Bids from Bidders for the as specified under request for proposal. The bidding procedure adopted for this tender is International Competitive Bidding (ICB), single stage, two-envelope procedure consisting of a separate Technical Proposal, and Financial Proposal. This shall not exclude international bidders with equivalent qualifications from participating.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from:  
 The Water Authority of Jordan  
 WAJ Tender Department / Sixth Floor Shmeisani PO Box 5012  
 Amman 11181 Jordan  
 Eng. Rua Alsoub, Email: Rua\_Alsoub@mwi.gov.jo  
 Eng. Eman Shalan, Email: Eman\_shalan@mwi.gov.jo

A complete set of bidding documents is available for interested Bidders. Documents in English may be purchased and collected upon payment of a non-refundable fee of 250 JD from 12/7/2026 to 16/7/2026 at (9:00-14:00). The method of payment shall be cash.

A pre-bid clarification meeting shall be held on 20/7/2026 at 10 AM in the fifth floor/WAJ. After that, any questions regarding the Bidding documents shall be sent to the Water Authority of Jordan, at the above address. All questions must be submitted in writing, fax or e-mail. No questions will be answered to if submitted through other means. All questions will be answered via addenda and will be sent to all Tenderers. All questions must be submitted and received no later than 6/8/2026. The Consultant shall submit the Proposal as follows:

(a) The Bid security, in original form, shall be placed in a separate envelope clearly marked "Bid Security"  
 (b) Technical Proposal: Technical Proposal: one (1) original, one (1) hard copy, one (1) digital copy CD and flashdisk, marked accordingly;  
 The original and copy shall be placed in a sealed envelope clearly marked "Technical Proposal".  
 (c) Financial Proposal: one (1) original, one (1) hard copy, one (1) digital copy (unalterable and printable PDF file on CD or DVD, and flashdisk, marked accordingly);  
 The proposals must be submitted no later than Wednesday, 19/8/2026, 12:00 PM (Jordanian time) to the below address.  
 The hard copy and digital version must be exactly the same; if there is any difference, the hard copy will be prevail.  
 Bids will be publicly opened at 13:00 hours Jordan local time in the same day.

The First Public Opening Session shall be limited to the opening of Envelope No. 1 – Technical Bid Envelopes and Financial Bid Envelopes shall remain sealed until the subsequent public opening sessions in accordance with the ITB.

Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Bidders may attend the opening session. Late bids will be rejected and returned unopened

**Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ)**  
 P.O. Box 2412, Amman 11183  
 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan  
 Tender Box First Floor  
 Attention: Eng. Rua Al-Soub

The bidding shall be carried out in accordance with the WAJ Procurement Guidelines. The bidders shall provide as part of their bids, an unconditional bid security in the name of His Excellency the WAJ Secretary General in the amount of JOD 15,000. The bid security must comply with the requirements stated in the Bid Documents and shall be on the letterhead of the issuing bank signed by a person competent to bind the bank. Any bid that is not accompanied by an enforceable and compliant bid security will be rejected as not responsive. A missing signed and stamped Declaration of Undertaking shall lead to exclusion. Eligible Bidders:  
 Sole Bidders:  
 Local Jordanian consultant shall be classified as First Grade in Water and Wastewater networks as per GTD Classification.  
 International Contractors shall at least demonstrate equivalent qualifications by experience for the scope described above.

All goods and items financed under USG shall have their source, and the suppliers of all goods and services financed shall have their nationality, in countries included in Geographic Code 937. Goods and services financed by USG must be available for purchase in the applicable Geographic Code at the time of purchase. Geographic Code 937 includes: the Grantee Country, the United States or a developing country. The intent of these specifications is to allow fair competition for suppliers in these geographical locations.

Or consortium (Joint Venture) (The JV agreement 'must be Stamped by notary in the CCD as pre condition for awarding) of an international and/or Local Contractor with experience in equivalent projects. Local Jordanian Contractors shall be classified as First Grade in Water and Wastewater networks as per GTD Classification. International Contractors shall demonstrate at least equivalent qualifications by experience for the scope described above.

If the Bidder or its parent company, or in the case of a JV, any member of the JV or its parent company, is a stock exchange-traded company, insert the following for each company: "The stock of [Name of Firm] is traded on the stock exchange in the name of the stock exchange." If neither the Bidder nor, in the case of a JV, any of its members, is a stock exchange-traded company, insert the following: "We are not a stock exchange-traded company".

The awarded Bidder shall bear the costs of the advertisement in the gazette for one time.

**Secretary General of MWI**  
 Dr. Jihad Mahamid

## Iraq's holy cities host funeral processions for Khamenei

NAJAF, Iraq (AFP) — Huge crowds thronged the streets of Najaf and packed the courtyards of its majestic shrine as they mourned on Wednesday late Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei during his funeral procession in Iraq.

Iran began six days of public funeral ceremonies for Khamenei on Saturday, including a dedicated day in neighbouring Iraq — a Shia powerhouse with close ties to Tehran and home to the faith's most sacred shrines.

The procession in Iraq came as the United States and Iran re-



Mourners carry the coffin of Iran's slain supreme leader Ali Khamenei at the Imam Ali shrine in Najaf on Wednesday

newed hostilities in the Strait of Hormuz.

The US military said it had struck dozens of Iranian targets in

response to Tehran's attacks on three ships in Hormuz, with Iran's Revolutionary Guard later saying they had

hit US military facilities in Bahrain and Kuwait.

After a massive procession in Iran's holy city of Oum, Khamenei's body was brought on Tuesday night to Iraq where authorities declared Wednesday a public holiday.

Since the early morning, despite the scorching heat, vast crowds filled the streets of Najaf, with some people pushing close hoping to touch Khamenei's coffin as it rode slowly in the back of a truck en route to the shrine of Imam Ali — the Prophet Mohammed's son-in-law and the

first Shia Imam.

There, the call for prayer echoed in the vast courtyards as hundreds of clerics in white and black turbans waited for hours to pray over Khamenei's remains.

Inside the shrine, thousands jostled to get closer to the coffin as it was carried away in the mausoleum's halls — its last stop in Najaf before being flown to the other holy city of Karbala.

Khamenei's funeral will conclude with his burial on Thursday in his hometown of Mashhad in northeast Iran.

## Venezuela quake survivor 'reborn' after eight days in rubble

By Paula Ramon  
 Agence France-Presse

CARACAS — Hernan Gil was working his shift as a security guard in the basement of a building in Venezuela on the afternoon of June 24 when he felt the earth shake.

The first tremor was short, Gil recounted in an interview with AFP from the hospital room where he was recovering after being rescued from the depths of a collapsed building.

Gil became a symbol of hope for Venezuela after he survived eight days of being buried alive by the double earthquake that devastated the north of the Caribbean country, leaving at least 3,535 dead.

"The second one was incredibly strong," said the 43-year-old, who remembers freezing inside his guard booth, overcome with nerves.

He heard a neighbor in the parking lot say it was an earthquake, and then "everything collapsed".

Gil felt everything crumble and stones hit the back of his head and eye.

"I lost consciousness for a moment. When I woke up, everything was dark... From then on, everything was uncertain."

Gil couldn't see anything or hear anyone. He tried calling the neighbor he had last seen before being swallowed by the earth, "but nothing",

"And at that moment, despair overwhelmed me," said Gil, who began shouting for help, but received no response.

In the darkness, partially kneeling, gasping for air and practically immobile, he suffered aftershock after aftershock.

"I felt like the wall was completely crushing me."

"I prayed a lot"

Despite the traumatic experience, Gil appeared in good spirits 72 hours after being freed from the hole where he was buried beneath a collapsing eight-story building.

Seated in an armchair, dressed in a blue hospital gown, with his left arm in a sling, the security guard said his faith sustained him during the harrowing hours.

"I prayed a lot. I cried out to God, and I said, 'My God, why me? Why like this? Please, at least let me see my children.'"

Trapped in an uncomfortable position, Gil tried to lie on either side of his hole, but he couldn't sleep.



This aerial view shows plots containing the coffins of victims of the June 24 earthquakes, at La Esperanza Cemetery in Carayaca, La Guaira state, northeast of Caracas, on Monday

The rocks he had fallen on bruised his legs, his nose bled, and his right eye was swollen and red, although he didn't realise that at the time.

In those lonely hours, he thought of his wife, Gusbimar Gonzalez, who was outside looking for any sign of life.

He also thought of his children and his deceased father.

"So many memories came flooding back," he said.

Gil lost track of time, but it was on the third day that he heard footsteps, "but very far away".

He began to shout and call for help, and finally, he heard a response. Gil remembers, smiling, that at that moment he thought, "Oh my God, there's a step. There's a

glimmer of hope." But then began a dramatic rescue that Gil described as "a fierce struggle".

"I was reborn"

While rescue teams from seven countries fought to reach Gil, keep him hydrated, and maintain his spirits, the 43-year-old felt the walls continue to shift, trapping him more and more.

But when two rescuers from Chile and the United States finally reached him after more than three days of complex operations, Gil couldn't bring himself to rejoice.

"The hardest part was getting out," recalled Gil, whose legs had been entangled in a chair.

Gil has no doubt that it was a life-changing miracle.

"I was reborn!" he said.

Now in the hospital, Gil managed to talk to his children via video call and can't wait to go home. But the doctors haven't given him a discharge date.

He sleeps more easily now, but sometimes the harrowing moments he experienced underground wake him.

Accompanied day and night by his wife, Gil isn't quite sure what comes next in his new life.

For now, all he knows is that he wants to celebrate his son's birthday on July 15th, take some long-awaited vacations at the beach, and that he'll never work in a basement again.



## Jordan condemns attacks against Pakistani security personnel in Balochistan

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday condemned the armed attacks targeting army and police personnel in Pakistan's Balochistan province.

Ministry spokesperson Fouad Majali re-

affirmed Jordan's full solidarity with the government and people of Pakistan, stressing the Kingdom's rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism aimed at undermining security and stability, according to a Foreign Ministry

statement. The ministry also extended its deepest condolences to the government and people of Pakistan, as well as to the families of the victims, and wished those injured a speedy recovery.

# Artificial cloud brightening could tame El Nino, but with risks — study

By Issam Ahmed  
Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON, United States — A brewing "Super" El Nino cycle is poised to unleash heat waves, floods and drought worldwide, with the effects amplified by long term human-caused climate change.

But what if it was possible to interrupt and effectively "switch off" the Pacific Ocean heating phenomenon as it starts to form?

That's the premise of a new Science Advances study published on Wednesday, which uses computer models to show that artificially brightening clouds over the Pacific, when timed right, could neutralize the influential weather pattern and blunt its worst impacts.

While previous research on so-called geoengineering has focused on cooling the planet as a whole, the new paper instead proposes more targeted interventions.

"These shorter timescales of interventions could be a very powerful way that geoengineering enters this portfolio of responses to climate change," lead author Jessica Wan, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Chicago, told AFP.

Prior research had shown that the "Black Summer" bushfires that scorched Australia in 2019-2020 played a key role in creating a multi-year La Nina, the cool phase of the El Nino-Southern Oscillation cycle.

As smoke particles entered the clouds, they set off chain reactions that actually made the



Computer simulations found that brightening clouds over the Pacific could dampen El Niño's effects, though researchers stress more study is needed before any real-world use

clouds brighter, bouncing more of the Sun's energy back to space.

Motivated by this "natural experiment", Wan and her colleagues wondered whether solar geoengineering could achieve a similar effect.

They used a powerful forecasting model to gauge what impact artificial marine cloud brightening over a vast rectangular zone in the equatorial Pacific would have had on the 1997-1998 and 2015-16 El Nino events.

This could theoretically be achieved by using ships fitted with nozzles that spray sea salt into the lower atmosphere.

El Ninos are linked with warming sea surfaces in the eastern tropical Pacific, with knock on effects globally including drier conditions and drought in

Australia, wetter winters in East Africa, and warmer overall global temperatures.

After running several simulations, they found the intervention worked best when started early — in June — and continued through the following February.

"But the reason people would ever care about this is not temperature in a box in the Pacific, but how the impacts translate over land," said Wan.

Extreme weather events linked to El Nino have caused loss of life and trillions of dollars of economic damage.

The modeled cloud brightening reversed most of the temperature and precipitation effects — those areas that got warmer under an El Nino were cooler, regions that got wetter in-

stead became drier, and vice versa.

### So what's the catch? Unknown consequences

For starters, the technology isn't yet ready.

Teams around the world are developing the nozzles to spray sea salt into the sky, but the devices can't yet shoot nearly enough volume. Even if a nozzle is perfected, it would take roughly 2,400 ships to make the required impact.

Beyond the engineering challenges, there are further risks.

Not all regions of the world would benefit from reversing El Nino conditions, and the models showed unintended consequences, including warming over Europe and Asia.

"The other catch I would say is that we

didn't look at long-term impacts," said Wan, including what would happen if marine cloud brightening was used repeatedly to suppress El Ninos.

Geoengineering has many detractors, who argue it creates a moral hazard by giving polluters a free pass to keep emitting if the climate can be artificially cooled. Wan disagrees.

"We're beyond the point now where we could just turn off emissions today and be totally fine, we're locked into warming already, and so the way that I viewed geoengineering is 'how can we reduce the worst of those impacts while we work on a long-term solution?'" she said.

"I think it would be irresponsible to not do the research, given that's the context we're in."

## US to remove Syria from terror blacklist, in new boost to Sharaa

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The United States said on Wednesday it will delist Syria as a state sponsor of terrorism, a decades-old designation that severely impeded investment, in a new vote of confidence in leader Ahmed Al Sharaa.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio formally informed Congress of the long-expected move, which will be effective in 45 days unless lawmakers take the unlikely step of blocking it.

The step came as President Donald Trump met on the sidelines of a NATO summit in Turkey with Sharaa, a former

jihadi who has sought to recast himself as a unifying figure after the 2024 toppling of the Assad family, which ruled with an iron fist for a half century.

"This is yet another historic step by President Trump to give the Syrian people a chance at greatness," Rubio said in a statement.

"Lifting sanctions on Syria will unlock international trade and investment, give Syria a chance to rebuild, and open up a new chapter for the Syrian people," he said.

Trump's embrace of Sharaa comes despite misgivings from Israel,

which has repeatedly launched airstrikes in Syria, one of its historic adversaries.

Trump had earlier publicly pressed for Syria to make peace with Israel but went ahead with the delisting decision despite a lack of tangible progress.

Rubio said in his statement that "a stable, unified Syria at peace with itself and its neighbors benefits not only the region, but the entire world".

A year ago, Trump started lifting most sanctions on Syria after Turkey and Saudi Arabia both encouraged him to meet Sharaa.

## What routes are vessels using to cross the Strait of Hormuz?

LONDON (AFP) — Traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway between Iran and Oman, has been heavily disrupted since the start of the Middle East war in late February.

Daily crossings are currently around a third of pre-war figures, with the situation further complicated by rerouted shipping lanes and the ongoing risks posed by sea mines and attacks on vessels.

Here is what we know about how vessels are currently crossing.

### What are the different routes?

Vessels crossing the strait are using at least two different routes.

One is the Iranian route, a designated corridor in Iran's waters in the northern part of the

strait near Larak Island.

Around 32 per cent of ships crossing the strait currently use this route, data up to July 1 from maritime tracking firm Kpler shows.

The second route is the Omani route, a very narrow southern passage "constrained by the Omani coast on one side and mine-risk areas on the other", according to Kpler analyst Ana Subasic.

Around 23 per cent of vessels currently cross the strait using this temporary route announced in June and coordinated by Oman, the United Nations and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

The Joint Maritime Information Centre, run by a Western naval coalition, as well as NATO's Naval Cooperation Guidance for Shipping,

also offer guidance on using the route.

Since the start of the war, around 46 per cent of vessels crossed the strait with their transponders turned off, according to the Kpler data, making their itinerary difficult to track.

Analysts told AFP that vessels recently crossing with their transponders turned off tended to favour the Omani route.

They likely turned off their transponders to avoid "broadcasting their position ... while passing within Iranian reach", Subasic told AFP.

### Where were recent attacks?

At least five commercial vessels have been attacked since a memorandum of understand-

ing was signed on June 17 between the United States and Iran.

These attacks have been carried out against ships transiting the strait using southern routes, which Iran has said it does not approve.

Of these, three tankers were hit off Oman and the UAE between Monday and Tuesday, according to the IMO, prompting a renewed exchange of strikes between the US and Iran that led to US President Donald Trump saying the ceasefire was over.

### How has traffic changed since the war?

Before the Middle East war, vessels crossed the strait freely via the Traffic Separation Scheme, a two-way route through the centre of the waterway adopted by the IMO

in 1968.

These designated shipping lanes saw, on average, 120 daily transits in peacetime, but are not currently in use because of the risk of sea mines.

Shipping experts have said that the strait was unlikely to return to normal before traffic through this main corridor was restored.

However, Tehran has insisted there will be no return to pre-war arrangements, and said in June that Iran and Oman were considering charging costs related to operating the strait.

### What do ships have to do to cross?

Vessels crossing the strait must follow different procedures depending on their chosen route.

## Jordan condemns Iranian attacks on Bahrain, Kuwait

Continued from page 1

The ministry confirmed in a statement Jordan's

absolute solidarity with Bahrain and Kuwait, emphasising its full standing alongside them in all

steps they take to protect their sovereignty, security, and the safety of their citizens and residents.

## Jordan climbs investment climate rankings as foreign investment rises 25% — Dhaman

Continued from page 1

In a statement issued from its headquarters in Kuwait on Wednesday, Dhaman said that the average ranking of Arab states remained unchanged at 102nd worldwide, leaving the region around 23 places below the global average, despite improvements by 13 Arab countries, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

In its 41st Annual Investment Climate Report 2026, the organisation called for comprehensive and flexible reforms to strengthen the investment environment across the Arab world.

The report identified four priority areas for reform: political and security conditions; institutional, legislative and administrative frameworks; the wider economic environment; and the availability of production factors.

Dhaman said that the value of new FDI projects across Arab countries fell by 9 per cent to US\$112 billion in 2025, citing geopolitical tensions as a key factor behind the decline.

Dhaman recommended policies aimed at controlling inflation, maintaining cur-

rency stability, reforming tax and customs systems, improving infrastructure and logistics, expanding the role of the private sector and providing additional incentives for priority industries.

The report ranked the United Arab Emirates first in the Arab world and 17th globally, followed by Qatar (38th globally), Saudi Arabia (40th), Oman (51st), Kuwait (52nd), Bahrain (57th), Jordan (74th) and Morocco (75th).

Tunisia and Egypt also performed better than the Arab average, ranking 95th and 100th globally, respectively.

The remaining 11 Arab countries; Algeria, Lebanon, Djibouti, Mauritania, Iraq, Libya, Palestine, Syria, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen were ranked between 104th and 158th worldwide.

Established in 1974 as a joint Arab multilateral institution owned by Arab member states and four major regional financial bodies, Dhaman operates as the world's pioneer multilateral investment insurance provider, dedicated to mitigating political and commercial risks to stimulate capital flows into the region.

## Trump says Iran ceasefire 'is over'

Continued from page 1

"Frankly, I don't want to waste my time with them. Now, I'll let our wonderful negotiators keep talking if they want, but I don't see it," Trump said.

"As far as I'm concerned, it's just a waste of time dealing with them. They're liars."

Trump accused the Iranians of repeatedly misrepresenting what had been agreed in the ceasefire that Washington and Tehran signed on June 17.

"Everyone's agreed, no nuclear weapon. We make a deal. They go outside, joke to the press, they say we never even talked about it. There's something wrong with them, they're cuckoo," Trump



This frame grab made from a UGC video footage of an unknown source posted on social media on Wednesday show explosions going off in Iran's major port city of Bandar Abbas

added. NATO chief Mark Rutte, with whom Trump was meeting when he made the comments, backed the US strikes on Iran.

"I think what you did last night was absolutely necessary. It was a very strong response, and I'm with you on this," Rutte told reporters.

But despite Rutte's efforts to placate Trump — whom he called "Daddy" at a NATO summit last year — the US leader again hit out at NATO for fail-

ing to get involved in the Iran war.

"I'm not happy with NATO because of the fact that they didn't want to help us with the number one state sponsor of terror, that's Iran. They were unwilling to help us," Trump said.

"I spoke with UK, and the prime minister said, 'well, we don't want to help you now, but we'll help you when the war is over.' I said that's not good. And likewise, I spoke to Germany, they didn't want to help. Spoke to France, didn't want to help."

The US military said it had struck over 80 targets including Iranian speedboats in response to Iranian attacks on ships in the vital Strait of Hormuz.

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## Concessional finance is needed more than ever

By **Muhammad Al Jasser**

**J**EDDAH — The global development landscape is under severe strain. Aid flows are tightening, financing gaps are widening, debt pressures are mounting and climate shocks are hitting vulnerable economies with growing intensity.

For many of the Islamic Development Bank's 57 member countries, these converging forces are limiting investment in resilience, human development and long-term growth. The challenge is particularly acute for our 27 least-developed members and those affected by conflict and institutional fragility.

With heavy debt burdens eroding fiscal space for spending on health, education and infrastructure, governments are forced to divert scarce public resources away from development priorities. The consequences extend far beyond national borders, threatening the prosperity and stability of our entire community.

At a time of shrinking aid budgets and rising vulnerability, the case for concessional financing has never been stronger. International research has consistently shown that investments in resilience generate significant long-term economic and social returns by reducing the human and financial costs of future shocks, which in turn enables countries to protect hard-won development gains and invest in the future. Yet, concessional finance has not kept pace with rapidly growing needs, particularly in countries grappling with debt distress and climate-related risks.

Meeting this challenge requires more than additional resources; it calls for sustainable, predictable financing mechanisms capable of mobilising collective support. The Islamic Development Bank recently took a vital step in that direction by establishing its IsDB Concessional Fund (ICF). Launched at the second Al Ula Conference on Emerging Market Economies in Saudi Arabia in February, the ICF was created as a means to respond more effectively to the evolving financing needs of our least-developed members.

The ICF provides an institutional framework for South-South solidarity within a member-owned, multilateral development bank. Its distinctiveness lies in its governance — it is Shariah compliant — and burden-sharing model, through which members with greater financial capacity support those facing severe development constraints, thereby promoting stability, opportunity and regional cooperation.

But such a model is viable only when underpinned by institutional commitment. For that reason, the IsDB pledged to allocate 10 per cent of its annual financing approvals to concessional operations and 20 per cent of its annual net income to the ICF through 2030. By investing its own resources alongside member contributions, the Bank has established a credible, replenishable platform that expands the fiscal space available to our least-developed members while creating a stronger foundation for collective action.

The value of this approach is already becoming evident. For many low-income countries, high debt burdens mean that ordinary lending terms are not suitable for financing urgent development priorities. Concessional finance helps bridge that gap. The IsDB's inaugural portfolio of more than \$137 million illustrates how concessional finance can support investments in climate resilience, social infrastructure and human development.

But no replenishment mechanism can succeed through institutional commitment alone. It also depends on the willingness of member countries to invest in a shared future. Notably, the ICF's early progress has been made possible through the support of member countries, including Algeria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Their contributions signal confidence in the ICF as a transparent and accountable platform for channeling concessional resources where they are needed most.

That same spirit of solidarity also shaped the discussions at the IsDB's annual meetings in Baku, held in June under the theme "Regional Integration for Sustainable Prosperity". Participants repeatedly highlighted a simple yet critical point: Investing in the resilience of our least-developed member countries is not only a development imperative but also a prerequisite for regional stability, connectivity and shared growth. As the ICF enters its first replenishment cycle, that principle must continue to guide our collective efforts.

The creation of the ICF builds on the IsDB's longstanding commitment to development cooperation by becoming a platform for concessional support. Against this backdrop, the first replenishment cycle represents an opportunity to turn a shared understanding of member countries' interconnected challenges into concrete, sustained action.

At a time of rising development pressures and scarcer concessional resources, the need to scale such mechanisms is clear. All IsDB member countries should support the replenishment effort now under way. By doing so, we can expand the ICF's reach, strengthen climate resilience, and help place vulnerable economies on a firmer path toward stability, sustainable development and lasting prosperity.

Muhammad Al Jasser is chairman of the Islamic Development Bank Group. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2026. [www.project-syndicate.org](http://www.project-syndicate.org)

## Israel debated: Why Palestine is rewriting the rules of domestic US politics

By **Ramzy Baroud**

**A** major showdown on the House floor see medimminent. An amendment, advanced by the Rules Committee, was poised to force a rare and telling record vote on stripping Israel of \$3.3 billion in annual US military aid.

Brought forward by Republican Representative Thomas Massie and drawing support from key progressive Democrats like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Greg Casar, the measure was set to put every lawmaker's stance on unconditional foreign assistance under a public microscope.

However, the high-stakes vote never actually happened. On June 30, the entire legislative package collapsed under the weight of Washington's internal political warfare. In a dramatic procedural twist, a coalition of Democrats and disgruntled conservative Republicans voted down the mandatory "rule" required to even begin debating the underlying State Department spending bill.

But even if the vote on Massie's amendment had occurred, the result would have been entirely predictable. It would have been defeated, as support for Israel on both sides of the congressional aisle remains structurally entrenched — even as the American public shifts against Israeli policy in historic numbers.

According to a watershed Gallup poll published on February 27, a plurality of Americans now sympathise more with the Palestinians than the Israelis, leading by a margin of 41 per cent to 36 per cent. This marked the first time since Gallup began tracking the metric over two decades ago that Israel did not hold the upper hand in public sympathy.

Yet, the shift is part of a broader, undeniable trend. A nationwide survey published in late June 2026 by Quinnipiac University revealed that an unprecedented 48 per cent of American voters now think the United States is "too supportive" of Israel — the highest percentage recorded since the pollster first began tracking the question in 2017.

This is precisely why Massie's amendment carries such pro-

found weight. It is significant not because US politicians have suddenly developed a collective moral conscience, but because recent election cycles represented the first time in modern American history where Palestine factored as a major, decisive variable in how citizens cast their ballots.

'The fact that this word is even in our discourse... demonstrates the mass inhumanity that Gaza is facing'

For years, conventional political analysts dismissed pro-Palestinian mobilisation, claiming Americans only vote based on immediate socioeconomic interests and rigid party loyalties. That assessment has since proven faulty.

The political cost of Washington's complicity became undeniable following the fallout of the 2024 presidential race, a reality later confirmed by those within the inner sanctums of power. In the post-election debates, senior administration insiders admitted that the handling of the Gaza genocide alienated core voter blocks.

The political cost of Washington's complicity became undeniable after the 2024 presidential race. According to Axios, top Democratic strategists conducting the party's post-election audit explicitly admitted to advocacy groups that internal party data proved the administration's Gaza policy was a "net-negative" on the ballot.

This finding — disclosed during internal briefings by DNC autopsy author Paul Rivera —

confirmed that the party's unconditional backing of Israel directly fractured its base and ultimately contributed to its loss of the elections.

The upcoming November elections are expected to be fiercely contested and Gaza will, once more, be on the ballot. Following a series of progressive, anti-war victories in local primaries, The Guardian reported that US foreign policy towards the conflict has effectively "turned into something of a litmus test for the left".

This historic transformation in the popular American perception of Palestine and Israel does not indicate that a political rupture is soon to follow, as US politicians are notorious for their moral flexibility and their ability to spin language in whatever way is necessary to remain in power.

Indeed, the evolution of the language used by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez regarding the word "genocide" in Gaza tells the entire story of how the Democratic establishment is never compelled by genuine moral urgency, but rather by sheer political expediency.

In the early months of the genocide, Ocasio-Cortez hesitated to adopt the term, acutely aware of the deep sensitivities surrounding such language in US media and mainstream society.

"The fact that this word is even in our discourse... demonstrates the mass inhumanity that Gaza is facing," she stated, attempting to navigate an acceptable rhetorical middle ground in January 2024 during an appearance on NBC's Meet the Press.

Yet, under the relentless weight of pressure from an increasingly mobilised progressive constituency, she systematically upgraded her language in March of the same year, declaring on the House floor: "If you want to know what an unfolding genocide looks like, open your eyes. It looks like the forced famine of 1.1 million innocents."

This linguistic shift continued to intensify until it reached the Munich Security Conference last February, where Ocasio-Cortez finally deployed the term without any qualification. Unconditional US aid, she flatly

argued, "enabled a genocide in Gaza".

Ocasio-Cortez is just one of many Democratic progressives who carefully filtered their vocabulary to avoid the political fallout of using the term genocide too early, or too late. Her position was eventually corrected not because of a sudden moral awakening or the discovery of new information regarding the "unfolding genocide", but because the margins of error allowed by a newly conscious American public have completely closed.

'If you want to know what an unfolding genocide looks like, open your eyes. It looks like the forced famine of 1.1 million innocents'

Therefore, the strategic focus must remain on reaching out to the public, who hold the true power to influence — and even coerce — politicians into making the right choices.

Ultimately, the current movement serves as a crucial barometer, proving that sustained, grassroots, anti-war pressure is successfully destabilising Israel's traditionally unquestioned shield in Washington.

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

## Manufacturing: Jordan's next engine of economic growth

By **Raad Mahmoud Al Tal**

**F**or decades, discussions of Jordan's economy have been dominated by services, trade and tourism, while manufacturing has often received less attention than its strategic importance deserves. Yet, recent economic indicators suggest that this narrative is beginning to change. Manufacturing is reemerging as one of the country's principal drivers of economic growth, strengthening not only GDP but also exports, investment and employment. More importantly, this revival signals a broader structural transformation that could play a central role in delivering the objectives of Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision.

Recent data illustrate this shift. After years of relatively modest performance, manufacturing has regained momentum. In the first quarter of 2026, the sector accounted for around 30 per cent of the overall contribution of economic sectors to GDP growth, reaffirming the importance of productive, high-value-added industries in building a more resilient and sustainable economy.

The significance of manufacturing extends well beyond factory output. Industrial activity generates strong linkages across the economy, stimulating demand for transportation, logistics, warehousing, financial services, insurance, professional services and trade. In economic terms, this is reflected in the multiplier effect, whereby growth in one sector creates additional economic activity throughout the wider economy.

According to estimates by the Central Bank of Jordan, manufacturing has one of the highest economic multipliers among the Kingdom's major sectors. With a multiplier of approximately

2.5, every additional Jordanian dinar generated by manufacturing creates more than two-and-a-half dinars of direct and indirect economic activity. This helps explain why countries that have achieved sustained economic success have consistently relied on strong industrial bases to drive growth, expand exports and create quality employment.

Jordan's manufacturing sector has not reached this point without overcoming significant challenges. During the past decade, regional instability disrupted traditional export markets and cross-border transport, while high energy costs, increasing import competition, financing constraints and supply-chain disruptions placed additional pressure on industrial producers.

Conditions have gradually improved in recent years. The reopening of regional markets, improvements in the domestic energy landscape, expanded trade agreements and stronger export promotion efforts have all supported the sector's recovery. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally reshaped global thinking about industrial policy by exposing the risks of excessive dependence on international supply chains, reinforcing the strategic importance of domestic manufacturing.

Manufacturing also remains the backbone of Jordan's export sector. High-value-added exports including pharmaceuticals, chemicals, fertilisers, processed food, garments and engineering products continue to dominate the country's export basket. As exports expand, they generate foreign exchange earnings, ease pressure on the current account and strengthen macroeconomic stability. Consequently, any credible strategy

to accelerate economic growth in Jordan must place industrial expansion and export competitiveness at its core.

This explains why Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision prioritises high-value-added industries such as pharmaceuticals, medical technologies, advanced chemicals, and manufacturing linked to renewable energy and the emerging green hydrogen economy. These industries not only generate greater economic returns but also create higher-skilled and better-paid employment opportunities.

The latest economic indicators leave little doubt that manufacturing has once again become one of the principal engines of Jordan's economy

Looking ahead, productivity not size will determine the future of Jordanian manufacturing. Recent improvements in total factor productivity suggest that structural reforms and new investments are beginning to yield tangible results. Maintaining this momentum,

however, will require continued investment in technology, innovation, digital transformation and workforce skills.

Large-scale investment projects will also play an important catalytic role. Beyond their direct contribution to capital formation, they create additional demand for locally manufactured goods, strengthen domestic supply chains and stimulate private-sector investment. Projects in renewable energy, green hydrogen, transport and infrastructure could significantly enhance the competitiveness of Jordan's industrial base.

Despite these positive developments, important challenges remain. High financing costs, the need for stronger technical skills, greater innovation capacity and improved market access continue to constrain industrial expansion. Meanwhile, geopolitical uncertainty and increasingly aggressive industrial policies around the world highlight the importance of diversifying export markets and continuously improving competitiveness.

The latest economic indicators leave little doubt that manufacturing has once again become one of the principal engines of Jordan's economy. The challenge now is to move beyond recovery towards a new phase of industrial development built on productivity, technology, innovation and value creation. The global economy increasingly rewards countries that compete through knowledge, advanced manufacturing and high-value production rather than low costs alone. If Jordan succeeds in seizing this opportunity, manufacturing can evolve from an important contributor to growth into the principal engine of the country's long-term economic transformation.

# BUSINESS

Thursday, July 9, 2026



Deniz Igan, division chief in the International Monetary Fund Research Department speaks during an AFP interview at the IMF Headquarters in Washington, DC, on Tuesday

## IMF cuts 2026 world growth forecast, flags risks from new Mideast fighting

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The IMF cut its 2026 global growth projection again on Wednesday, flagging "uncertainty and risks" to the economic outlook as fighting reignited in the Middle East.

Global economic growth is estimated at 3 per cent this year, said the International Monetary Fund (IMF), down from 3.1 per cent in its April forecast.

The projection, in its World Economic Outlook update, was made before renewed exchanges of fire between the United States and Iran in recent hours.

"Developments overnight illustrate the uncertainty and risks that surround the outlook," said deputy director at the IMF's research department, Petya Koeva Brooks.

"We're going to be monitoring developments very closely," she told reporters. Her comments on Wednesday came after US President Donald Trump declared Washington's ceasefire with Tehran over, before adding that US forces would strike Iran hard in the coming night.

It is the second time this year that the fund has lowered its overall growth expectations. The growth rate marks a cooling from 2025 as well.

Global inflation is anticipated to accelerate to 4.7 per cent this year, higher than earlier projected.

Koeva Brooks expects normalisation from the war to gradually unfold over three quarters of a year, although shocks that lead to higher oil prices and inflation expectations could take further tolls on the global economy.

### AI offset

For now, the overall growth downgrade is modest, as momentum in artificial intelligence — driven by demand — partially offsets the war's effects.

The IMF expects global growth to pick up in 2027 to 3.4 per cent.

Division Chief at the IMF's research department, Deniz Igan, describes the bounce back as "a V-shaped recovery".

For this year, a delayed recovery from war on Iran, longer disruptions and higher costs is part of the reason the world economy will take a bigger hit, she told AFP.

Yet, fallout varies widely.

"Energy exporters outside the conflict zone benefit from favorable terms of trade, whereas economies plugged into the technology-led upturn experience stronger activity even if they are energy importers," the fund said.

"In contrast, activity weakens for energy importers with limited participation in the technology value chain," it added.

US-Israeli strikes targeting Iran since February 28 sparked Tehran's retaliation in virtually blocking off the Strait of Hormuz, plunging the Middle East into war.

As traffic stalled in the key waterway, global oil prices soared — weighing on economies.

Oil and gas shipments resumed as a temporary US-Iran deal paused hostilities, but fighting has restarted.

### 'Glaring differences'

Although the world economy has weathered

shocks from the war better than feared, the IMF warned: "The global picture blurs glaring differences across countries."

Retail gasoline costs jumped by 30 per cent in emerging Asia after the onset of war, and only by 15 per cent in Latin America.

While the US economy is still set to expand 2.3 per cent this year, growth in the Middle East and central Asia was downgraded by 1.2 percentage points to 0.7 per cent.

The euro area is set to grow 0.9 per cent this year, also a downward revision. Growth in France is pegged at 0.6 per cent — 0.3 percentage points lower than earlier expected.

The world's second biggest economy, China, saw its growth projection adjusted upwards slightly to 4.6 per cent.

Still, the IMF warns that effects of the war have not fully passed through.

The release of strategic reserves has provided some relief amid reduced energy flows, but there could still be weakness ahead.

Trade fragmentation could accelerate too, risking higher prices.

Nonetheless, there were some bright spots, the IMF said.

There was a "positive surprise" from some economies key to global technology supply chains, despite their exposure to disruptions from the war.

The top four net exporters of AI-related hardware — Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand and Malaysia — saw resilient growth.

Igan added that expectations of higher inflation this year merely mark a pause, "not a break from the disinflation trend".

## Syrian-Jordanian Joint Free Zone revenue rises to \$3.96m in H1

AMMAN (JT) — The Syrian-Jordanian Joint Free Zone's total revenue rose to nearly \$3.96 million during the first half of 2026, driven by higher investment income, occupancy fees and trust fund revenues, according to financial indicators.

During the company's board meeting on Wednesday, Secretary General of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply and Chairperson of the Board Dana Zoubi said the results reflected the strong growth achieved last year.

Trade through the free zone increased by 67 per cent compared with 2024, while the investment base expanded to 277 active contracts across the exhibition, commercial and services sectors. Industrial contracts remained stable at 22, the Jordan News



The Syrian-Jordanian Joint Free Zone's total revenue rises to \$3.96 million during the first half of 2026

Agency, Petra, reported.

Zoubi said transport activity also recorded strong growth, reflect-

ing improved operational efficiency. Passenger vehicle traffic surged by 423 per cent

to 86,510 vehicles, while truck traffic increased by 56 per cent to 42,163 in 2025.

She said the company had adopted a series of measures to enhance the free zone's investment appeal and improve services for investors. These include expanding digital transformation initiatives and automating services to streamline and accelerate investment and logistics procedures, alongside upgrading infrastructure, roads, pavements and warehouses.

Zoubi added that the company also plans to launch targeted promotional campaigns to attract "high-value" industrial and commercial investments, address challenges facing investors and reinforce the free zone's position as a leading regional logistics hub that supports bilateral trade and contributes to economic growth in Jordan and Syria.

### TECH

## AI boom drives intangible investment to record level — UN

GENEVA (AFP) — The AI boom has helped drive investments in intangible assets such as software, data and research to a record high in 2025, the United Nations' patent and innovation agency said on Wednesday.

These investments, which encompass research and development, software and data, brands, design and organisational know-how, represent a large and growing share of the global economy, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) said.

Across the 29 economies studied, which account for 57 per cent of global GDP, intangible investment "reached an all-time high" of over \$10 trillion in 2025, according to WIPO.

The study included the United States, EU nations, Britain, Japan, India as well as other countries. However, China, the world's second-largest economy, was not among the nations covered.

The record figure was detailed in the World Intangible Investment Highlights 2026, which WIPO co-



This photograph shows the headquarters of the World Intellectual Property Organisation, a specialised agency of the United Nations dedicated to promoting and protecting intellectual property worldwide, in Geneva on Tuesday

published with the Rome-headquartered Luiss Business School.

Since 2008, intangible investment has grown by 3.5 per cent annually in real terms; way ahead of tangible investments, which saw annual growth of just 0.98 per cent over the same period, the study said.

"These figures point to a durable structural shift in the composition of investment, with intangible assets playing a growing role in value creation,"

Japan and the Philippines recorded the fastest growth, said WIPO.

The report said intangible investments proved more resilient than tangible ones in the face of high interest rates, trade tensions and the economic slowdown seen in recent years.

Between 2020 and 2025, they grew by 5.5 per cent annually in real terms, compared to 3.2 per cent for tangible investments.

The report said artificial intelligence was playing a major role in the transformation.

While it initially drives physical investments in data centres, semiconductors and energy infrastructure, WIPO estimates that its lasting impact stems primarily from investments in software, data, research and development and corporate reorganisation.

Investment in software and databases recorded the highest aggregate real growth rate across all intangible asset categories between 2013 and 2023, at 7.3 per cent annually, ahead of organisational capital (4.9 per cent) and brands (4.4

per cent).

The report also highlights the economic importance of brands, with investments across the 29 economies reaching \$1.4 trillion in 2025.

'These figures point to a durable structural shift in the composition of investment, with intangible assets playing a growing role in value creation'

The US leads global brand investment by a wide margin, exceeding \$566 billion in 2025 — more than four times the figure for Britain, in second place on \$137 billion, followed by Japan on \$112 billion.

Established in 1967, Geneva-based WIPO helps creators and entrepreneurs protect their intellectual property across borders.

## Oil prices surge, stocks slide as Trump says Iran ceasefire over

LONDON (AFP) — Oil prices soared and stock markets slid on Wednesday after US President Donald Trump said the ceasefire with Iran was over, following renewed strikes in the Middle East.

The latest bout of fighting was sparked by Iranian attacks on ships in the vital Strait of Hormuz shipping route.

Trump said at a NATO summit in Turkey the ceasefire was "over" but left the door open to more talks.

International benchmark Brent North Sea crude jumped more than 5 per cent to around \$78 a barrel.

The main US contract, West Texas Intermediate, also rallied 5 per cent.

In Europe, Paris and Frankfurt shed around two per cent while London was down nearly 1.5 per cent around midday.

"Geopolitical risks are rising" for markets, noted Kathleen Brooks, research director at trading group XTB.

The US launched extensive strikes on Iran this week following attacks on ships in the strait, triggering a wave of reprisals against American bases in the Gulf.

Washington also revoked a temporary sanctions waiver for Iranian oil.

Brooks added that "for the Brent crude oil price to extend gains above \$80 per barrel, we would need to see another US naval blockade

of the Strait of Hormuz, which would stop Iran from selling its oil and cause a major escalation in tensions".

Equities in Asia also suffered, with the geopolitical tensions coming on top of a retreat from the tech sector on concerns over the eye-watering sums being invested in AI.

Seoul's Kospi — which has been Asia's poster child for the tech rally — sank more than 5 per cent and has lost more than 20 per cent since hitting a record high last month.

Samsung took another hit following a rout Tuesday that came despite the firm forecasting a roughly 19-fold jump in second-quarter operating profit from

a year earlier on the back of strong AI chip demand.

The company and rival SK hynix both tumbled around six per cent.

"Investors have been spooked in recent weeks by fears of excessive spending in the AI world and rich valuations in parts of the tech space, causing widespread profit-taking," said Dan Coatsworth, head of markets at AJ Bell.

There were losses also in Tokyo and Shanghai.

However, Hong Kong rose three per cent as traders chased beaten-down Chinese tech stocks, with Alibaba piling on more than 12 per cent, and JD.com and Tencent each up almost four per cent.

## AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

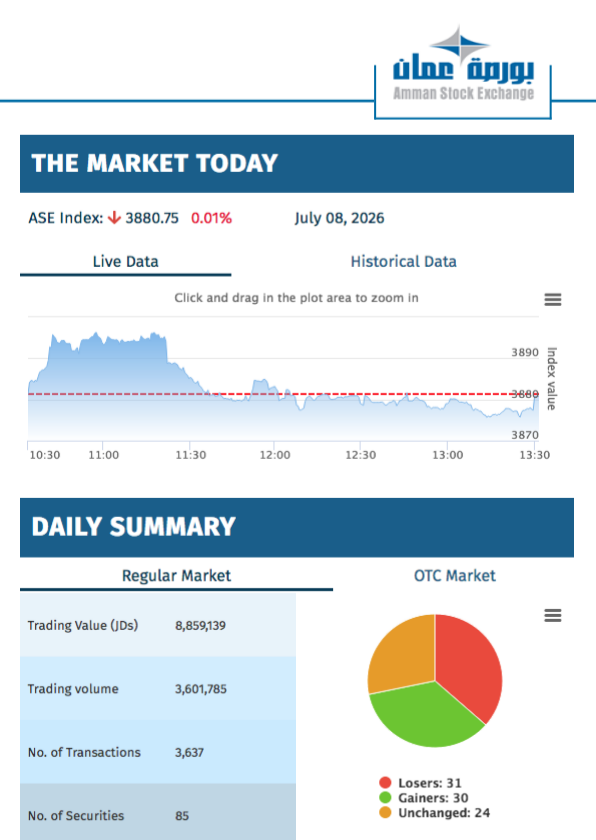
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD8.9 million spread over 3.6 million shares that traded through 3,637 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.01 per cent, closing at 3880.75 points.

Out of 85 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 30 companies rose while the share price of another 31 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Jerusalem Insurance by 7.43 per cent, Specialised Jordanian Investment by 4.9 per cent, Latent Energies for Investments by 4.4 per cent, Al Entkaeya for Investment and Real Estate Development Company Plc. by 3.23 per cent, and Ubour Logistic Services Plc. by 2.7 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Amwaj Properties by 5 per cent, Dar A-Aman for Investment by 4.44 per cent, Al-Manara Islamic Insurance Company by 3.13 per cent, Al Tajamout for Catering and Housing Company Plc. by 2.9 per cent, and Shira Real Estate Development and Investments by 2.56 per cent.



# THE JORDAN TIMES SPORTS AT A GLANCE

## Jordan's squad awaits new coach appointment

### FOOTBALL

#### Former Real Madrid coach Arbeloa named Fulham manager

LONDON (AFP) — Former Real Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa has been appointed manager of English Premier League side Fulham, the club announced on Wednesday. The 43-year-old former defender — a member of Spain's 2010 World Cup-winning squad — signed a three-year contract. "The Club is delighted to announce the appointment of Alvaro Arbeloa as the new Head Coach of Fulham," Fulham said in a statement. Arbeloa enjoyed a highly-successful career as a player at Real, winning the Champions League twice, but fared less well in the Bernabeu dug-out when he replaced Xabi Alonso as coach in January this year. Arbeloa, who knows the Premier League having played for Liverpool, replaces Marco Silva, who stepped down after last season, having guided them to 11th in the table, and is now in charge of Portuguese giants Benfica. Silva filled the vacuum left by Jose Mourinho, who took over at Real Madrid and who Arbeloa previously said he would not work under. "It is a real honour for me to be embarking on this new stage at Fulham FC, the oldest club in London," Arbeloa said in a statement.

### BIGOTRY

#### FIFA probes racist abuse targeting US streamer IShowSpeed

ATLANTA (AFP) — FIFA has launched a probe into alleged racist insults directed at the streamer known as IShowSpeed at last week's World Cup match between Argentina and Cape Verde. The global football body said in a post on Tuesday on X that it was "made aware of an incident involving a supporter and #IShowSpeed at Miami Stadium during the Argentina vs Cabo Verde match on 3 July 2026 and immediately initiated an investigation". The African-American streamer, whose real name is Darren Watkins Jr, has over 57 million subscribers on YouTube, with tens of millions more on other video platforms. The boisterous 21-year-old has been attending and streaming live from World Cup matches under a special deal with FIFA, YouTube, and US broadcaster Fox Sports. "FIFA strongly condemns racism, hate and discrimination in all forms. These actions have no place in football, at the FIFA World Cup, or anywhere in society," the statement added.

By Aline Bannayan

AMMAN — As the 2026 World Cup enters the quarterfinals on the weekend, with only Morocco left from eight Arab nations competing, Jordanian fans are still discussing their team's earlier matches and the vibe the World Cup created. However, the heated discussion has shifted to news of the Nashama squad parting ways with Moroccan head coach Jamal Sellami and what lies ahead.

The unexpected announcement was posted by HRH Prince Ali, president of the Jordan Football Association (JFA) on his personal X account, thanking the coach and noting his "leadership played a pivotal role in securing the national team's historic qualification to the World Cup". Observers and fans are awaiting an announcement by the JFA assessing the World Cup participation, shedding light on the coach's sudden dismissal as well as the incoming coach.

The absence of a strategic JFA media led to widespread speculation regionally as to if Sellami had resigned or had his contract terminated as only last week JFA officials noted it extends till after the January 2027 Asian Cup. Also under question were the football academies and Sellami's part in building a solid base for Jordan to serve the game for future



Jamal Sellami, exiting as Jordan's head coach since 2024

JFA photo

generations. They noted the manner of Sellami's exit, was similar to his compatriot Hussein Ammouta as well as the former Iraqi coach Adnan Hamad earlier.

Jordan impressed fans in its World Cup debut playing hard fought Group J matches in which they scored by Ali Olwan, Nizar, Rashdan and Mousa Ta'mari. Jordan kicked off with a 3-1 loss to Austria, lost 2-1 to Algeria after leading 1-0 up to minute 69, and went down 3-1 to 18-time

qualifier and 3-time reigning champions Argentina led by the iconic Lionel Messi.

With every match, expectations grew higher, and with it the disappointment in the coach's choice of many players on the lineup who were below par, especially lead goalie Yazeed Abu Laila. Objective observers, however, note the first World Cup qualification should serve as a competitive starting point rather than noting a winless streak.

However, it seems tactical mistakes, late substitutions, not enlisting the reserve goalies, the choice of some ageing players over others who had excelled in the league, as well as the absence of key players especially Yazan Nue'imat, considered a leading striker in Asia, coupled with overall competitive experience were the reasons for not advancing further and ultimately enduring the rath that pushed a successful coach out.

Sellami who took over in 2024 is credited with building a disciplined identity for the national team, making it to the final of the 2025 Arab Cup and fulfilling a decades-long footballing dream of advancing to the World Cup.

The Nashama have had a steady upward climb in the past two years, nearly crowned 2023 Asian Cup champs for the first time, but settling for runner-up in their fifth participation. Their previous

best past performances was reaching the quarterfinals twice while the team's best ever FIFA ranking was 37th in 2004.

Since 1986, Jordan's previous best time was the 2014 World Cup when they nearly qualified before losing to then 6th ranked Uruguay in an intercontinental qualifying tie. Round 3 was the furthest they reached in earlier editions. Jordan's qualification to the current edition came after the expansion of the World Cup from 32 to 48 teams allowed more teams from Asia and Africa to qualify to football's most prestigious competition. Other newcomers were Cape Verde, Curacao and Uzbekistan. This edition, a record eight Arab nations took part: 2022 semifinalists Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq and Jordan. Teams advancing to the Round of 32 were Morocco, Algeria and Egypt. Now, Morocco is the only one still in contention. They eliminated The Netherlands to advance to the Round of 16 and beat Canada to set up a quarterfinal clash with France. Egypt failed to make it to the quarterfinals, losing a dramatic and controversial match in which they squandered their 2-0 lead to lose to Argentina 3-2 while Algeria lost to Switzerland and failed to make it to the Round of 16.

# LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

## UK museums at 'sharp end' of climate change challenge

By Helen Rowe  
Agence France-Press

LONDON — As visitors peered at skeletons and preserved animals in a London zoological museum during a UK heatwave, staff focused on a different attraction: A computer screen glowing with red and green temperature indicators.

With each one linked to a sensor in a different display case, the system allows staff to see when an exhibit is in danger of overheating.

Last year during a hot spell, staff arrived one morning to find an antique specimen jar — containing a nearly two-centuries-old tabby cat — had "blown out" amid the heat.

By monitoring temperatures in the display cases, staff at the Grant Museum of Zoology hope they can prevent damage to other exhibits by identifying any needing to be preventively decanted. "They are very precious and valuable to us," said Tannis Davidson, head of zoology at the 200-year-old collection home to some 100,000 specimens covering every major animal group.

"We want to safeguard them for the next 200 years at least so students and researchers and members of public can



Staff at the Grant Museum of Zoology monitor temperatures inside display cases to prevent damage

enjoy the collection and learn more about the natural world," she told AFP.

But she said curators were having to deal with a whole "new set of challenges due to climate change and extended long periods of high temperatures within our spaces".

Emma Howard Boyd, chair of the independent National Heat Risk Commission, says the impact of climate change is no longer a distant threat but a present-day reality with the cultural sector at the "sharp end". Last month's UK heat-

wave forced the closure of a number of London cultural attractions including the Young Victoria & Albert (V&A) museum, The CuttySark museum ship, Tower Bridge and some galleries at the V&A.

And the Met Office said Monday that the UK was entering its third heatwave of the year, although it was not expected to break any records.

### Heat, flooding

Art works also require careful monitoring of temperature and humidity

levels to prevent damage, according to Claire Teasdale of the National Trust heritage body.

"We're having more storms. We're having more wet weather and more extreme weather which is affecting everything," said Teasdale who manages the collections at Craggside, a 19th century mansion in north-eastern Northumberland.

Craggside is home to an important art collection that includes works by J.M.W. Turner and John Everett Millais. It was built to cope with

"Victorian rainfall levels and not with 21st century rainfall levels," she said, adding rain and sunshine both hiked levels of potentially damaging humidity.

Six of the UK's 10 wettest years have occurred since 1998, the Met Office says. Flooding poses another threat to cultural treasures.

The Museum of Making in the central city of Derby suffered major flooding in October 2023 during Storm Babet.

None of the industrial heritage museum's collections were damaged, but the cost of damage to the building was estimated at over £100,000 and the museum closed for nearly three months.

"Heat waves often end with flash flooding because of intense rainfall," added Howard Boyd who chaired a 2024 review of London's preparedness for more extreme weather commissioned by mayor Sadiq Khan.

### 'Windcatcher'

John Calautit, lecturer in sustainable and low carbon technologies at University College London, said installing air conditioning was not a silver bullet for large spaces and historic buildings often subject to highly restrictive building regulations.

## OpenAI to launch new model after US freeze

SAN FRANCISCO, United States (AFP) — ChatGPT-maker OpenAI said its latest and most powerful artificial intelligence model will be released to the public on Thursday, as the US government reportedly approved a broader launch.

The company's new GPT-5.6 offerings and other cutting-edge AI models, including Anthropic's Mythos series, have drawn concern over what researchers have described as an unprecedented ability to identify weaknesses in code that hackers can exploit.

That has raised national security fears, and OpenAI said in late June it had shared preview access to GPT-5.6 with a limited group of trusted US-based partners at Washington's request.

Large language models are the technology that underpins chatbots and many other AI tools, with their capacity to crunch through colossal amounts of digital data.

The GPT-5.6 series has three tiers: Sol, the company's new flagship model; Terra, a mid-range version for everyday work; and Luna, a fast, low-cost option.

"GPT-5.6 Sol, along with Terra and Luna, will launch publicly this Thursday. We're expanding preview access globally now," OpenAI said

in an X post on Tuesday, without giving further details.

US news outlet Axios reported, citing a source familiar with the situation, that the Trump administration had given the company the green light for a broad launch of GPT-5.6, following technical testing and meetings between the company and government officials.

In response to a query from AFP, a White House official insisted that the wider rollout of GPT-5.6 was not an approval, saying the company had submitted its models for scrutiny on a voluntary basis.

### Frontier models

There have been deep divisions within the White House on how to handle the releases of these increasingly powerful models, with some officials insisting on a soft touch from government, while others have expressed concerns about their potential impact on security.

The delay in release echoes a similar situation at OpenAI's archrival Anthropic, the startup behind the Claude chatbot.

Last week, Anthropic said it would begin restoring access to its most powerful AI models, Fable 5 and Mythos 5, after Washington lifted a restriction on where they

could be released. Before Mythos arrived, President Donald Trump's administration wanted fewer rules on AI companies, not more, hoping that would help the US beat China in the AI race.

The government is now drawing up criteria for which AI models would fall under new security restrictions, in accordance with an executive order from the White House.

OpenAI said in June that "we don't believe this kind of government access process should become the long-term default" as it "keeps the best tools" from users, businesses and others who need them. The company added that it was working with Washington "to develop the cyber Executive Order framework and a repeatable process for future model releases".

OpenAI has said Terra, once broadly available, will be priced at half the cost of its predecessor GPT-5.5, as the company seeks to lock in customers amid fierce competition from Anthropic and Google.

Both OpenAI and Anthropic have filed confidential IPO documents with US regulators and are targeting public listings at valuations approaching \$1 trillion, raising the commercial stakes of the AI arms race between them.



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