



Photo courtesy of Royal Court

His Majesty King Abdullah offers condolences to Qatar Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani over the passing of his father, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, at Lusail Palace in Doha

King extends condolences to Qatar emir over passing of Sheikh Hamad

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday extended condolences to Qatar Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani at Lusail Palace in Doha, over the passing of his father Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, according to a Royal Court statement.

His Majesty was accompanied by HRH Prince Feisal, Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh and Jordan's Ambassador to Qatar Zaid Lozi.

Crown Prince attends 3rd Honorary Professors Forum at University of Jordan, inaugurates Science Venture Foundry

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein, the Regent, attended on Wednesday the opening of the Third Honorary Professors Forum at the University of Jordan (UJ).

The forum, held under the theme "Universities Driving National Innovation Ecosystems", brings together emeritus professors, university vice chancellors, and academics from 17 countries around the world, and aims to establish a scientific platform for the exchange of expertise and ideas across various fields, disciplines, countries and cultures, thereby enhancing opportunities for scientific research collaboration and training programmes, according to a Royal Court statement.

In his remarks at the forum, UJ President Nathir Obeidat said the university is adapting to scientific and technological advances by establishing tailored, high-quality programmes designed to cultivate the next generation of future-ready leaders, adding that UJ is also working on establishing a technical college.

The Crown Prince attended the forum's opening session, which featured a lecture by internationally acclaimed artificial intelligence (AI) expert Omar Hatamleh on the rapid AI-driven shifts in the labour market.

The two-day forum is focusing on bridging the gap between academia and the economy in Jordan, with panels highlighting entrepreneurship, university spin-offs and strategies for commercialising research into thriving ventures, university-industry collaboration, technology-integrated education, academic transformation and health biotechnology.

His Royal Highness also inaugurated UJ's Science Venture Foundry (SVF), a university-led platform that aims to convert science-based research and promising technologies into investment-ready, high-growth start-ups, and was briefed on several joint research and development initiatives linking the university with the private sector, the statement said.

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Cabinet approves new investor residency, citizenship rules

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet, during a session chaired by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday, approved amendments to the bylaws regulating the issuance of residency and citizenship to investors.

The decision, according to a Prime Ministry statement, aims to boost investment across the country.

Under the new rules, investors can obtain citizenship by purchasing new shares in Jordanian companies worth at least JD1.5 million.

The shares must be bought within four months of approval, cannot exceed 10 per cent in one company, and cannot be sold for five years, the statement said.

Investors can also qualify by starting new projects with a capital of JD700,000 in Amman or JD500,000 in other governorates, which will grant them a temporary three-year passport.

Investors can buy shares worth JD1 million in existing projects, provided new fixed assets reach JD500,000 and the investment is held for three years.

For existing projects, the investor's share of assets must average JD700,000 in Amman or JD350,000 outside over three years, while meeting 90 per cent of local employment targets.

Furthermore, investing JD3 million in pharmaceuticals or food logistics qualifies for citizenship, as does employing 150 Jordanians in Amman or 100 in other governorates.

The Amra City Project requires a JD1.5 million investment to qualify. Citizenship benefits extend to the investor's wife, dependent daughters, parents and unmarried sons under 24 years of age, or under 30 years of age if the investment exceeds JD2 million.

For residency, a five-year permit is granted for buying property worth at least JD200,000 from a developer, JD300,000 from non-developers, or JD150,000 outside Amman, which must be held for five years.

A total of 681 investors have gained citizenship since the programme began in 2018.

In other decisions, the Cabinet approved settling 663 pending tax cases to support businesses and improve the investment environment.

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UNCLASSIFIED

AFP photo

This screen grab made on Wednesday, from a handout video released by US Central Command on Monday, shows what the US military says is a strike in Iran

US resumes naval blockade as Trump vows more strikes on Iran

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — The United States has intensified its military campaign against Iran, launching a fourth consecutive day of strikes and reimposing a naval blockade on Iranian ports as President Donald Trump vowed the attacks would continue until he decides "enough is enough".

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Safadi, US's Rubio discuss bilateral relations, regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi held extensive talks on Tuesday with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

During the meeting, the two top diplomats emphasised the depth of the Jordanian-US partnership and their mutual commitment to developing cooperation across various fields.

They also discussed regional developments and ongoing efforts to end the escalation and restore calm in the region, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Safadi stressed the need to adhere to the ceasefire agreement between the United States and Iran.

He highlighted the importance of reaching a comprehensive solution that addresses the root causes of the conflict, guarantees freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz under international law, and establishes lasting security and stability.

The two ministers condemned the Iranian attacks targeting Jordan and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

They also discussed the situation in Gaza and efforts to ensure the implementation of all components of US President Donald Trump's plan.

Safadi stressed the need to intensify efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace based on the two-state solution, while Rubio praised the Kingdom's role in promoting regional security and stability.

Safadi expressed his appreciation to his US counterpart for the United States' continued support to Jordan.

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القوات المسلحة الأردنية - الجيش العربي

Army shoots down 3 missiles launched from Iran — JAF

AMMAN (JT) — Air defence systems intercepted and shot down three ballistic missiles that entered the Kingdom's airspace from Iranian territory at dawn on Wednesday, the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) said.

A military source was quoted in a JAF statement as emphasising that Jordanian airspace is an integral part of the Kingdom's sovereignty.

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Al Hussein Technical University signs an agreement with the British Council to launch a strategic partnership aimed at expanding access to high-quality English language education in Jordan

HTU, British Council launch English learning partnership

AMMAN (JT) — Al Hussein Technical University (HTU), an initiative of the Crown Prince Foundation, has signed an agreement with the British Council to launch a strategic partnership aimed at expanding access to high-quality English language education in Jordan through the opening of a new British Council training centre on the university's campus.

The partnership was launched during a ceremony attended by British Ambassador to Jordan Philip Hall, marking an “important” milestone that reflects the “strong” cooperation between HTU and the British Council, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported on Wednesday.

It also supports greater access to high-quality English language education within a specialised university environment that encourages learning and development.

Under the agreement, the British Council will offer English

language courses on the HTU campus, enabling learners to benefit from internationally recognised training programmes that develop the communication skills needed for higher education, professional growth, improved employability and confident participation in increasingly interconnected global workplaces.

The partnership reflects HTU's commitment to creating a comprehensive learning environment that extends beyond traditional academic programmes.

Through the collaboration, students, graduates, professionals and members of the wider community will have the opportunity to enhance their English language proficiency in a dynamic university setting that promotes lifelong learning, innovation and career readiness.

Speaking at the launch ceremony, HTU President Ismail Hinti said that the partnership represents a “val-

uable” addition to the university's broader learning ecosystem.

He stressed that proficiency in English has become an essential factor in enabling individuals to succeed academically and professionally while enhancing their presence in international environments.

British Council Country Director in Jordan Alex Lambert highlighted the importance of the partnership in expanding access to high-quality English language education, noting that the organisation is bringing its internationally recognised expertise in English language teaching to the HTU community and the wider public.

Lambert said: “Together, we are creating a learning environment that develops the communication skills learners need to unlock new academic and professional opportunities and engage confidently in an increasingly interconnected world.”

Queen Rania pays condolences in Qatar on passing of His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani

AMMAN (JT) — Her Majesty Queen Rania visited Al Wajba Palace in Doha on Wednesday to pay her respects to Her Highness Sheikhha Moza Bint Nasser on the passing of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani.

Queen Rania conveyed her heartfelt condolences to Her Highness on the passing of her husband, extending her sympathies to the entire family and to the people of Qatar, according to a statement from Office of Her Majesty.

She also expressed her prayers for the soul of the deceased to rest in peace.



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Digital Health Centre handles 97,000 telemedicine cases — director

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Digital Health Centre at the Ministry of Health has recorded around 97,000 telemedicine cases across various medical specialties since its launch in July 2025, improving access to specialised healthcare across the Kingdom.

The centre offers remote radiology reporting, dialysis supervision, intensive care monitoring and specialist consultations in diabetes, endocrinology, cardiology and nutrition at primary healthcare centres, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Centre Director Imad Abu Yaqin said that the centre operates in line with His Majesty King Abdullah's vision and under the direct



The Jordan Digital Health Centre at the Ministry of Health records around 97,000 telemedicine cases across various medical specialties since its launch in July 2025

support and follow-up of HRH Crown Prince Hussein, which has driven the project's expansion.

Since its launch, the centre has issued 43,082 remote radiol-

ogy reports, supervised 50,700 dialysis sessions for 630 patients and remotely monitored 1,964 intensive care patients, helping reduce waiting times, improve treatment quality, lower mortality rates and reduce transfers to other hospitals.

At the primary healthcare level, the telemedicine diabetes and endocrinology clinic served 843 patients, while the digital cardiology clinic treated 475 patients and the nutrition clinic recorded 91 consultations.

Abu Yaqin said that the services have reduced the need for patients to travel, improved the efficiency of healthcare spending, and significantly lowered referrals to hospitals and specialist outpatient clinics.

He said that the centre will continue expanding its services under the National Council for Future Technology in line

with Prince Hussein's directives to advance digital healthcare.

The centre currently serves 12 hospitals and three primary healthcare centres across the Kingdom, with plans to further expand the network.

Funded by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, the Jordan Digital Health Centre is a national model for effective integration between the health and digital sectors.

It represents a practical step towards delivering faster, higher-quality and more equitable healthcare services, improving patient experience and underscoring the government's commitment to using technology to serve citizens across the Kingdom.

Princess Taghrid Institute, Abdali Boulevard partner to empower women entrepreneurs

AMMAN (JT) — The Princess Taghrid Institute for Development and Training (PTI) signed a cooperation agreement with Abdali Boulevard on Wednesday to enhance women's economic empowerment by supporting the marketing of handicrafts and products made by women participating in the institute's income-generating programmes.

The agreement was signed by PTI Director General Aghadir Jweihan and Abdali Group CEO Amer Tarawneh, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Under the partnership, the open-air venue “The Boulevard's Corner” will be allocated from this month throughout the summer season to showcase and sell products made by beneficiaries of PTI's economic empowerment programmes.

The initiative will also host the “Nemah Market”, featuring



The Princess Taghrid Institute for Development and Training and Abdali Boulevard on Wednesday sign a cooperation agreement to enhance women's economic empowerment

handicraft, artistic, cultural and entertainment activities, providing participants with wider marketing opportunities and direct access to the public.

The partnership will also enable the PTI to promote its humanitarian and development mission to visitors at Abdali Boulevard, including members of the local community, tourists and private sector representatives.

It will highlight the success stories of

women and young people who have benefited from the institute's programmes in training, empowerment, education and social care, helping to broaden its base of supporters and potential partners while boosting the sustainability of its initiatives and humanitarian campaigns.

Jweihan said that the collaboration with Abdali Boulevard represents a “strategic” opportunity to expand PTI's reach and in-

troduce beneficiaries' products to a wider audience.

She added that through the partnership, the foundation will showcase the talents of women and young beneficiaries while introducing visitors to its mission and programmes, which are based on dignity, giving and protection.

Jweihan noted that the initiative will also provide women and youth-led enterprises with opportunities to market their products and showcase their traditional, cultural and artistic talents through the activities of the Nemah Market.

Tarawneh said: “We are proud at Abdali Boulevard to partner with the Princess Taghrid Institute as this co-operation aligns with our role in supporting national initiatives that create a direct positive impact on society.”

Hosting PTI's products at the Boulevard is not merely about

providing a space for display and sales; it also gives visitors the opportunity to discover “inspiring” human stories and products crafted by Jordanian hands that have transformed training and empowerment into genuine opportunities for production and self-reliance, he added.

PTI works to empower and equip disadvantaged groups, particularly young people leaving institutional care after the age of 18, as well as women, young people and persons with disabilities across Jordan.

The partnership forms part of an institute campaign that aims to enhance social protection and empower disadvantaged groups by expanding access to education, training and employment opportunities while building strategic partnerships that deliver sustainable development impact and promote self-reliance.



Minister of Justice Bassam Talhouni on Wednesday opens a two-day conference at Yarmouk University titled ‘Jordanian Legislation over 50 Years: Law between Responding to Change and Driving Transformation’

Yarmouk University hosts conference on Jordanian legislative development

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Justice Bassam Talhouni on Wednesday inaugurated a two-day conference at Yarmouk University titled “Jordanian Legislation over 50 Years: Law between Responding to Change and Driving Transformation”.

Speaking at the conference, which brought together legal experts and researchers from Jordan and across the Arab region, Talhouni said that Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah and with the support of HRH Crown Prince Hussein, is pressing ahead with its comprehensive modernisation drive to strengthen the rule of law, judicial independence and legislative development.

He added that continued legal reform requires stronger cooperation among stakeholders and greater investment in legal research to keep pace with digital transformation, artificial intelligence

and emerging legal challenges, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The event features specialised sessions and workshops examining the evolution of Jordanian legislation...

Talhouni noted that the conference coincides with Yarmouk University's golden jubilee and the 50th anniversary of Jordan's Civil Code, describing the code as a legislative “milestone”

that helped consolidate civil transactions while balancing Islamic Sharia principles with modern jurisprudence.

Yarmouk University President Malek Sharairi said that the conference addresses a range of contemporary legal issues, including civil law, constitutional amendments, private international law, public-private partnerships, digital transformation and cybercrime.

Chair of the conference's scientific committee Ibrahim Obeidat said that more than 50 research papers and abstracts were submitted, with around half accepted for presentation following peer review.

The event features specialised sessions and workshops examining the evolution of Jordanian legislation, its response to economic, social and technological changes, and ways to further develop the Kingdom's legislative framework.

PSD participates in Arab security media conference

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Wednesday participated in the 17th Arab Conference of Heads of Security Media Agencies, which commenced at the General Secretariat of the Arab Interior Ministers Council in Tunis.

Director of the Media and Community Police Department at the Public Security Directorate (PSD) Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi represented the Kingdom at the meeting, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Addressing the gathering, AIMC Secretary-General Mohammad Bin Ali Koman warned that rapid advancements in modern technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), present a pressing challenge for law enforcement worldwide.



He highlighted the potential misuse of AI in committing crimes, forging documents, cloning voices and fabricating digital media.

Koman also voiced the council's firm condemnation of Iran's ongoing aggression

against several Arab nations, describing it as a flagrant violation of international charters and a total disregard for the principles of good neighbourliness.

The participants are scheduled to discuss several issues, including mechanisms for digital outreach to youth, successful media strategies in countering terrorism, and various Arab experiences in employing communication to prevent crime and integrate modern technological tools.



The dispatch, which comprises medical consumables, supplies and pharmaceuticals, is bound for the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) field hospitals operating in Gaza

JAF receives Omani relief aid for field hospitals in Gaza

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF), represented by the Royal Medical Services (RMS) and in cooperation with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO), on Wednesday received a consignment of relief aid from Oman to support the Kingdom's ongoing humanitarian efforts in the Gaza Strip.

Omani Minister-Plenipotentiary and Deputy Head of Mission at the Omani embassy emphasised that

the assistance reflects Muscat's dedication to supporting the relief campaigns led by His Majesty King Abdullah, according to a JAF statement.

He added that Oman remains committed to providing continuous backing to bolster the capability of Jordanian field hospitals to carry out their humanitarian mission in the war-torn enclave.

For his part, the commander of field medicine and representative of the RMS expressed apprecia-

tion for the brotherly gesture, highlighting the "deep-rooted" ties between the two nations.

He noted that the donation will support the medical body's ongoing efforts to treat the wounded and sick in the strip, alleviating their suffering amid the current humanitarian crisis.

The dispatch, which comprises medical consumables, supplies and pharmaceuticals, is bound for the JAF field hospitals operating in Gaza.

Draft real estate ownership law imposes no new taxes, fees — DLS

AMMAN (JT) — The Department of Land and Survey (DLS) on Wednesday said that the draft Real Estate Ownership Law does not impose any new taxes or fees, stressing that confusion has arisen due to its being mistaken for the Buildings and Land Tax Law.

In a statement, the department said the draft law is intended to facilitate the resolution of joint ownership disputes and address long-standing unresolved cases.

The proposed legislation will also digitise all real estate procedures, including allowing electronic property sales and the use of digital signatures.

The draft further requires the government, municipalities and the Greater Amman Municipality to pay compensation for expropriated properties within a maximum of five years, in addition to delay compensation for each year payment is overdue.

The DLS stressed that the draft Real Estate Ownership Law is entirely separate from the Buildings and Land



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Tax Law, which the government withdrew in 2025, and does not introduce any new taxes or fees on real estate transactions.

The DLS also said

the legislation seeks to encourage investment, stimulate the real estate market and simplify procedures for citizens.

The draft law also

regulates promise-to-sell agreements and allows the sale of off-plan real estate units under a clear legal framework.

The department added that the amend-

ments are expected to revitalise the construction, contracting and real estate sectors while strengthening investment across the industry.

SSC approves relief measures for tourism sector

AMMAN (JT) — Social Security Corporation (SSC) Director General Hazem Rahahleh on Wednesday stressed that the corporation's work is based on partnership with the private sector, with efforts focused on balancing the sustainability of the social security system with supporting businesses facing economic challenges and regional developments.

During a meeting with representatives of the commercial and service sectors at the Amman Chamber of Commerce, Rahahleh said the SSC Board of Directors recently approved a package of exceptional facilities for the tourism sector and related activities.

The package allows businesses to reschedule outstanding obligations into instalments at a 1 per cent interest rate, with the option to delay the start of repayment until April next year, subject to specific criteria, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Rahahleh said that the facilities were introduced following an assessment of the challenges facing the tourism sector and consultations with relevant stakeholders.



Social Security Corporation (SSC) Director General Hazem Rahahleh says that the SSC Board of Directors recently approved a package of exceptional facilities for the tourism sector and related activities

He added that the SSC is prepared to review the circumstances of individual establishments and provide appropriate solutions within the applicable regulations, while protecting insured persons' rights and ensuring the sustainability of SSC funds.

He noted that the corporation continues to monitor the performance of various economic sectors, adding that any future decisions to grant exceptional facilities to other sectors will be based on objective assessments of the impact of economic challenges and in coordination with relevant government

entities.

Rahahleh also said the classification of affected sectors relies on accurate data and indicators to ensure that support reaches the sectors most in need, while maintaining the corporation's financial stability.

He added that expanding social security coverage will remain a priority during the next phase, noting that the SSC will begin notifying establishments employing workers with valid work permits who are not covered by social security, based on electronic data exchange with the Ministry of Labour.

Rahahleh urged em-

ployers to regularise their employees' status and benefit from the facilities provided by the corporation.

He also said that the SSC has launched a sector-based inspection programme covering various economic activities. The campaign began with pharmacies and will continue to include restaurants and other sectors.

The inspections aim to enhance compliance with the Social Security Law and expand coverage, while adopting a flexible approach focused on correcting violations before taking legal action, he said.

Amman Chamber of Commerce Chairman Khalil Hajj Tawfiq called for expanding the SSC's exceptional facilities to include other commercial and service sectors affected by regional developments.

He said the impact of the war and regional instability was not limited to the tourism sector, despite it being among the hardest hit.

Hajj Tawfiq also said that chambers of commerce and employers' associations had provided the government with data showing the impact on various sectors, including declining sales and reduced commercial activity.

He described the facilities approved for the tourism sector as an important step, calling for studying similar support measures for other affected sectors to help businesses maintain operations and preserve jobs.

He stressed the importance of continued coordination among the government, SSC and private sector to develop flexible solutions that support businesses while safeguarding the sustainability of the social security system.

Jordanian field hospital in Gaza carries out complex limb-salvage surgeries

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordanian Field Hospital South Gaza said on Wednesday that it has successfully carried out two highly specialised limb-salvage surgeries, saving the affected limbs of two patients in their forties who were suffering from unhealed fractures and advanced medical complications.

The operations were conducted as part of the hospital's ongoing humanitarian mission to provide specialised medical care and ease the suffering of people in the Gaza Strip, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army statement.

The first patient was treated for a severely comminuted, non-union fracture of the lower femur complicated by an acute, active bone infection.

The second patient suffered from a non-union fracture of the tibia. Both cases required complex surgical intervention to preserve the affected limbs and maximise the chances of restoring their function.

The procedures included surgical debridement to remove infected tissue, followed by open



The Jordanian Field Hospital South Gaza says on Wednesday that it has successfully carried out two highly specialised limb-salvage surgeries

reduction and internal fixation using metal plates and screws.

In the first case, surgeons also implanted antibiotic bone cement to fill the bone defect caused by the shattered femur and help control the infection. In the second case, a bone graft was used to stimulate healing and restore skeletal stability.

Both surgeries were successful, significantly improving the patients' prospects of regaining mobility and enhancing their quality of life after enduring prolonged pain and physical disability, the statement said.

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.

Cassation Court upholds over 4-year sentence for drug dealer

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Court of Cassation has upheld a May 2024 State Security Court (SSC) ruling, sentencing a drug dealer to four years in prison after convicting him of possessing illegal narcotics in Amman in December 2023.

The court declared the defendant guilty of obtaining illegal narcotics with the intent of selling the drugs to an undercover agent on December 7.

The SSC handed the defendant five years in prison for the offence of possessing illegal narcotics and ordered him to pay JD5,000 in fines.

However, the court decided to reduce the fine to JD4,000 and the prison term to four years in prison to give the defendant a second chance

in life.

Court documents said the Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) learnt the defendant was in possession of illegal narcotics and sent one of its agents to pose as a buyer.

"The AND agent got in touch with the defendant via a mobile application and asked him for a stash of Hashish in return for JD30," court documents said.

When the two met, AND agents immediately arrested the suspect, court papers added.

Upon searching the defendant's home, officers found additional illegal narcotics, including Hashish and Crystal meth, the court added.

The defendant contested the SSC's ruling through his lawyer, who argued that the court "did not provide solid evidence to implicate his cli-

ent for drug trafficking".

The lawyer also called for a lesser sentence "because my client possessed the illicit drugs for his personal use".

Meanwhile, the SSC prosecution office asked the higher court to uphold the sentence and the fine imposed on the defendant.

The higher court maintained that the SSC had followed the proper procedures in issuing the sentence against the defendant.

"It was clear to the court that the defendant confessed willingly to possessing the illegal drugs to sell in the local market," the higher court said.

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

Army chief, US assistant secretary discuss cooperation

Huneiti opens 45th Jordan-US Joint Military Commission meeting

AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Wednesday received US Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs Daniel Zimmerman and his accompanying delegation at the General Command of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF).

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation between Jordan and the US and explored prospects for further developing the strategic partnership in areas of mutual interest, in a way that serves shared interests and supports regional and international security and stability.

Huneiti also inaugurated the 45th meeting



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Wednesday receives US Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs Daniel Zimmerman

of the Jordan-US Joint Military Commission (JMC 45), attended by the US ambassador, the defence attaché and several senior JAF officers, according to a JAF statement.

Huneiti highlighted the strength of Jor-

danian-US relations and their continued progress across various fields, stressing the importance of strengthening coordination and joint efforts to address current security challenges and enable Jordan to con-

tinue its pivotal role in supporting regional security and stability.

For his part, Zimmerman praised the capabilities and professionalism of the JAF, noting its high level of efficiency in carrying out its missions and

duties.

He reaffirmed Washington's commitment to continuing military and defence cooperation with Jordan and expanding areas of partnership in a manner that serves the interests of both countries.

The US ambassador also praised the level of partnership between the two countries, stressing the importance of building on achievements made in recent years to further strengthen military cooperation and advance shared security objectives.

The JMC meeting discussed several issues on its agenda, including ways to broaden cooperation between the two sides and achieve common goals.

Gibraltar and Spain end border checks

GIBRALTAR (AFP) — A new era began between Spain and the tiny British territory of Gibraltar on Wednesday, as border checks that have long been a source of tension and frustration were finally lifted.

An AFP journalist at the frontier said several dozen people and vehicles crossed the border from Spain for the first time without undergoing customs checks a few minutes after midnight.

Several hundred people gathered for the occasion, waving Spanish flags, while Gibraltar's chief minister, Fabian Picardo, announced: "Europe is back."

Gibraltar, a self-governing British territory at the southernmost tip of the Iberian Peninsula, is home to only about 40,000 people but relies on some 15,500 workers who cross from Spain every day.

During rush hours, long lines often formed at the land border as documents are checked — especially during periods of tension between Britain and Spain, which claims sovereignty over the territory, known as "The Rock".

But under an agreement reached between Brussels and London following Britain's exit from the European Union in 2020, border controls have now been eliminated.

The deal was signed on Tuesday in Brussels.

EU trade chief Maros Sefcovic took part in the signing ceremony alongside British and Spanish ministers as well as Gibraltar's Picardo.

In a radio interview beforehand, Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares said the agreement "opens a new era" for Gibraltar and the adjoining region of Spain, that will create "enormous opportunities".



Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez (third right) and Chief Minister of Gibraltar Fabian Picardo (second left) and other officials walk during a ceremony ending border controls between Spain and the British overseas territory of Gibraltar at the border crossing in La Linea de la Concepcion, southern Spain, on Wednesday

tar and the adjoining region of Spain, that will create "enormous opportunities".

'Very positive'

A smoother border will make it easier for Gibraltar businesses to recruit and retain workers who live in Spain, as the "hassle" of crossing the frontier can be "significant", said Owen Smith, head of the Gibraltar Federation of Small Businesses.

"It's been a big factor in retention, and certainly a fluid border is going to make life much easier," he told AFP, calling it "very, very positive".

The agreement will align Gibraltar with the rules of Europe's

passport-free Schengen travel area.

'It is important that this sword of Damocles disappears'

It was reached after years of talks between Spain, Britain and the EU.

Travellers arriving from outside the Schengen zone will

still have to show their passports to officials at Gibraltar's airport and port.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez is set to visit the frontier zone on Wednesday, where workers have in recent weeks taken down the old chain-link fencing separating the two sides.

He has hailed the new arrangements as bringing down "the last wall" inside the EU, saying they would create a zone of shared prosperity.

Picardo has described the agreement as removing "the physical barriers of a bygone era of friction" while keeping "the keys

to our own front door".

Sword of Damocles

The border was closed by Spanish dictator Francisco Franco in 1969 after Gibraltar, which relies on London for defence and foreign policy, voted overwhelmingly in a referendum to remain British.

The closure, which lasted 13 years, cut off the daily movement of workers from Spain into Gibraltar and separated families.

Since then, long queues have repeatedly formed at the Gibraltar-Spain border when diplomatic tensions over the territory's sovereignty have led to tighter controls by Spain.

"It is important that this sword of Damocles disappears," said Manuel Triano Paulete, secretary-general of the CCOO trade union in Spain's Campo de Gibraltar region which surrounds the British territory, saying cross-border workers often did not know how long it would take them to get to work.

With an economy based on financial services and online gaming, Gibraltar — which covers just under 7 square kilometres — has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world.

It has long been a lifeline for people who live in Campo de Gibraltar, which has historically had one of Spain's highest jobless rates.

London and Madrid have disputed control of Gibraltar since the tiny territory was ceded to Britain in the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht.



This handout photograph taken and released by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Service on Wednesday, shows Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky (centre) speaking to the leaders and representatives of Southeast European countries and Ursula von der Leyen (centre left) during the fifth Southeast Europe Summit in Kyiv

EU chief announces 'drone deal' with Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine (AFP) — EU chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday announced a "drone deal" with Ukraine to boost joint production of the key battlefield technology.

"This deal will bring together Ukrainian ingenuity and Europe's industrial scale," von der Leyen said in Kyiv, after receiving an award from President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Ukraine has already signed similar deals with some individual EU countries and Gulf nations looking to tap into the expertise Kyiv has developed during more than four years of war with Russia.

The deals are adapted to each country, but typically involve Kyiv providing blueprints for drone technology in exchange for royalties, investments and other military hardware.

"In Europe, we already have huge technological and industrial capacity that can be deployed, and we have safe and secure

production sites that can help to scale up," von der Leyen said.

"But we do not have the battle-tested knowledge and expertise that Ukraine has forged," she added.

"We can work on joint production, on making all of the components of the system work, and we can provide both defence industrial bases with the impetus needed to decisively step up investment and production."

The EU is pushing to bolster its drone capabilities after a series of incursions in countries along its eastern border neighbouring Ukraine and Russia.

"The knowledge you have gained on how to work drone and anti-drone systems is truly unique," von der Leyen told Zelensky in her speech.

"We must tap into this together, because we know the threats that Europe faces in this area."

Von der Leyen did not give any details on how much — if any — new

funding was involved in the deal.

Europe is Ukraine's main backer in its war against Russia, and recently starting paying out a 90 billion-euro (\$103 billion) loan to help Kyiv arm its troops and plug holes in its budget.

An initial 6 billion euros of the loan is going towards helping ramp up Ukraine's drone production.

Drones dominate the front line in Ukraine, inflicting heavy casualties on attacking Russian forces.

Kyiv has also honed its abilities to shoot down Russian attack drone targeting cities across the country.

Zelensky in a speech said that Ukraine was now producing 10 million drones a year and aimed to double that output.

"We will achieve this together with our partners, once again proving the success of Ukraine's defence industry, and of our partners' and of Europe's," he added.



German Financial Cooperation with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Ministry of Water and Irrigation
Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ)



Project:
Climate Adaptation and Protection: Azraq Wellfield and Main Transmission Pipeline

Prequalification - Expression of Interest for Consulting Services for Implementation Consultant (IC)
WAJ-Tender No. 38/2026, BMZ-No. 2021 68 094, Kf-Procurement No. 513948
Submission Deadline: Thursday, 3rd September 2026, 8 a.m. UTC (corresponding to 11:00 a.m. Jordanian time).

Project Measures:
Jordan is one of the water-scarcest countries in the world. While the resources decrease, the country faces a rising water demand, driven by population growth, the influx of refugees, and economic development. The water sector heavily relies on non-renewable fossil aquifers, making the exploration of new water sources as well as the reduction of technical water losses essential. Against the background of the described challenges within the country, the planned project aims at supporting the stability of the drinking water supply system, while contributing to climate protection and climate adaptation. The Project concerns the rehabilitation of the main transmission pipeline from Azraq to Khaw and the connected pumping station in Azraq, as well as measures to reduce the salinization of extracted groundwater from the Azraq Wellfield. The project "Climate Adaptation and Protection: Azraq Wellfield and Main Transmission Pipeline" shall focus on financing of following measures (preliminary list, the project list shall be analyzed by the

Implementation Consultant):
1. Transmission Mains around 60 km and Extension of Azraq PS, diameters and pressure regimes to be investigated during preparatory phase of IC
2. Well drilling, only minor extension of Azraq Wellfield, number of new wells to be investigated during preparatory phase of IC
3. Works in Wellfield and conveyance to Azraq PS

The total available budget for above-described measures is 66 million EUR.
WAJ in this tender process is seeking to engage a qualified consultant to perform consulting services to support the implementation of the above-described measures (Implementation Consultant, IC). The intended consultant's services can be summarized as follows (to be treated indicatively, further descriptions will follow with a subsequent Request for Proposal):

Stage 1: Preparatory Services:
Verification of existing documents and proposed measures
• Identification and liaising with stakeholders
• Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Installation GRM, ESHS methodology
• Technical, environmental, social, economic/financial considerations
• Final definition and selection of "cases"/variants, their costs and proposition of measures fitting into the available budget
• Final selection of project measures
• Verification of results matrix, indicators, their baseline and target values
• Procurement Concept, tender strategy
• Methodology for additional surveys
• Preparation of detailed time, cost and financing schedules

Stage 2: Detailed Design, DD-ESIA and Bidding Documents:
• Carry out additional surveys (can begin in parallel to Stage 1)
• Prepare detailed/concept design
• Prepare Detailed Design-ESIA, ESMP and all required ESHS documentation
• Prepare Bidding Documents

Stage 3: Assistance during Bidding and Contracting

Stage 4: Supervision of Works and Taking-Over including ESHS and financial monitoring

Stage 5: Supervision of Defects Notification Period, DNP
In parallel to all construction related Stages, the Consultant will ensure a professional project management during the complete assignment.

Eligibility:
Eligible qualified independent consultants will be defined as follows:
a) Local consulting engineering firms satisfying the requirements as defined in this PQ document and classified as First Grade (1) in the field of Water and Wastewater and First Grade (1) in the field of Environment as per the Government Tender Directorate (GTD) classification system.
If the consultant does not have the classification in the field of Environment, then the consultant must nominate a consultant in form of a Joint Venture or as sub-consultant who is classified as First Grade (1) in the field of Environment as per the Government Tender Directorate (GTD) classification system; or
b) International independent consulting firms satisfying the requirements as defined in this PQ document; or
c) An association of local and international consulting firms or an international applicant with a local sub-consultant, all satisfying the requirements as defined in this PQ document. The local consulting firm, regardless of whether association member or sub-consultant, shall have at least one of the above-mentioned grade 1-classifications.

Further Information:
This prequalification for consulting services will be guided by the latest version of the Guidelines for the Procurement of Consulting Services, Works, Plant, Goods and Non-Consulting Services in Financial Cooperation with Partner Countries" (version of July 2024).
See <https://www.kfw-entwicklungsbank.de/International-Financing/KfW-Development-Bank/Publications-Video-Publication-series/Guidelines-and-contracts/>.
It is foreseen to assign the services to an independent consultant firm with proven experience in the sector and the region. Cooperation between international and national organizations is highly encouraged. The minimum average annual turnover of the last three years shall exceed 6,000,000 EUR (details see long notice).

For further information, please go to www.extitender.de and log on (or create a user profile). The integrated search function of extitender will allow you to find the tender and to register your interest, access the PQ Document and additional materials (if applicable). Should you require any technical assistance, please check <https://exticon.de/tender-procurement/> for user guides and help videos.

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

For other queries, please contact:
WAJ Tender Department Water Authority of Jordan Attention: Eng. Rua Alsoub
Email: Rua.Alsoub@mwi.gov.jo
Attention: Eng. Aaramia Nahar
Email: Aaramia.nahar@mwi.gov.jo

AND
Tender Agent for Azraq Pipeline
Email: yulia.cordes@LC-consult.net
Important note: The current tender will apply electronic submission by an e-procurement platform. Submission by email is not allowed and will lead to disqualification of the respective firm. For detailed information on the platform and procedures, please refer to the full Prequalification Notice.
At any time, the Employer either at own initiative or in response to clarifications requested by an interested consultant firm may clarify this invitation by issuing an addendum. Clarifications and addenda will be processed in the e-procurement platform.

Secretary General of WAJ
Eng. Sulyan T. Bataineh

Blasts heard near US consulate in Iraq's Erbil: AFP journalists

ERBIL, Iraq (AFP) — Several explosions were heard on Wednesday near the US consulate in Erbil, the capital of Iraq's northern Kurdistan region, AFP journalists said.

Air defences were activated near the consulate, which was a target of repeated drone and

rocket attacks during the Middle East war.

AFP journalists reported seeing several drones hovering over Erbil, before they were hit by the air defence system, followed by explosions and visible smoke.

No group has claimed responsibility for any attacks.

The blasts coincide with Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Al Zaidi's one-week visit to Washington, where he met President Donald Trump.

They also come against the backdrop of renewed military escalation between the United States and Iran.

During the Middle East war, the Kurdistan region, which hosts US troops and numerous foreign oil companies, was a primary target for drone attacks, carried out mostly by pro-Iran Iraqi armed groups.

Those groups targeted US facilities

in Iraq more than 600 times in support of Tehran.

Since the start of the war and even after a fragile ceasefire began in April, Iran has also repeatedly struck Iranian Kurdish rebel groups, which have camps and bases in Iraq's Kurdistan.

US Republicans unveil \$95 b pre-election spending push

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US House Republicans unveiled a \$95 billion spending framework on Wednesday, launching their final major push to pass defence, farm and voting restriction measures before midterm elections that could cost them control of Congress.

The plan would provide \$73 billion for the military and intelligence agencies, including funding tied to the war with Iran, along with \$12 billion in aid for farmers hurt by President Donald Trump's trade war.

It would also direct \$10 billion towards election-related grants, as Republicans try to revive parts of Trump's SAVE America Act, a voting restrictions bill that would require proof of citizenship to register to vote and photo identification at polling places.

The House has passed a different version of the SAVE Act separately, but it has stalled in the Senate, where some Republicans have warned that it lacks support and may not qualify for the fast-track budget process party leaders hope to use.

That process allows certain tax and spend-

ing bills to pass the 100-member Senate by a simple majority, avoiding the higher, 60-vote threshold usually needed to overcome Democratic opposition.

The budget resolution released on Wednesday is only a framework. If adopted by the House and Senate, it would allow Republicans to assemble a fuller bill later this summer and try to pass it without Demo-

cratic votes.

House Republican leaders want to pass the framework next week before lawmakers leave Washington for a long summer break, leaving only a narrow window to complete the package before November.

But the plan faces resistance from fiscal conservatives inside the party because it does not pair the new spending with cuts

elsewhere.

Representative Warren Davidson, a Republican fiscal hawk, has warned that the package could not advance without savings to offset the cost.

After the framework was released, Davidson posted a blunt prediction on X: "DOA", shorthand for "dead on arrival".

The fight underscores the competing pressures on Repub-

licans as they try to show voters action on national security, agriculture and election security while also maintaining their claim to fiscal discipline.

Trump had demanded far more defense spending than the House framework provides, but Republican leaders are trying to balance White House pressure with concerns from lawmakers wary of adding to the deficit.



A view of the US Capitol building on June 27, 2025, in Washington, DC



The blaze tore through the popular Rong Beer Na Lad Phrao restaurant and bar on Sunday night, rapidly engulfing the venue

Bangkok bar fire toll rises to 33 as PM vows venue overhaul

BANGKOK (AFP) — The death toll from a devastating Bangkok bar fire has risen to 33, authorities said on Wednesday, as Thailand pledged a nationwide overhaul of entertainment venue regulations.

The blaze tore through the popular Rong Beer Na Lad Phrao restaurant and bar on Sunday night, rapidly engulfing the venue.

Investigators have been looking at the cause of the fire and why it was so deadly, with many of the bodies found by the toilets.

In a video released by Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul's office of his visit to the scene, seen by AFP, he was told by an official that there were two functioning exit doors.

But one door was labelled for staff only, with no clear sign that it was to be used in an emergency, the official said.

"So this means people weren't aware that this was the emergency fire exit," Anutin can be heard saying.

One of the rescuers replied: "This might have been to prevent customers from escaping without paying."

Speaking on Tues-

day, Anutin suggested that another door that might have been used to escape was locked, saying: "How could this happen?"

'Businesses that do not comply with regulations are not sustainable, and the owner of this venue will face the utmost prosecution'

The government has ordered an urgent inspection of all entertainment venues across the country.

Anutin also said authorities would review regulations on how venues are classified after it emerged Rong Beer Na Lad Phrao was

not licensed to offer live music, despite doing so regularly.

"Businesses that do not comply with regulations are not sustainable, and the owner of this venue will face the utmost prosecution," the premier added.

The owner of the bar was admitted to intensive care immediately after the fire, but it was not clear if he was still in hospital.

Thailand's approach to health and safety regulations — particularly in bars and nightclubs — has long raised concerns.

In 2009, a blaze tore through Bangkok's Santika club during New Year celebrations, killing 67 people and injuring more than 200.

A building safety expert told AFP earlier that Rong Beer Na Lad Phrao lacked the safety systems required for the large crowds and live music events it hosted.

The Erawan Emergency Medical Centre, operated by Bangkok city authorities, said Wednesday the death toll has risen to 33 with around 70 injured, including more than a dozen who remained in critical condition in hospital.

Cuban lives cut short as health system flatlines

By Lisandra Cots
Agence France-Presse

HAVANA — Rosa Valentina Perez has been lying in a bed in Cuba's main cancer clinic for nearly three weeks, waiting for a CT scan to diagnose loss of mobility in her legs.

Perez underwent surgery for breast cancer two years ago.

She urgently needs a scan to know whether the cancer has spread to her spine, but the only working CT scanner in Havana is at the city's neurology hospital — and the waitlist there is long.

"You can't imagine what it's like to have this pain, to know that your life span is being diminished, and to hear them say: 'Let's see when we can do that scan,'" the 64-year-old told AFP.

Perez was born a few years after Fidel Castro and his comrades overthrew a US-backed dictator and installed a communist regime that provided free, high-quality healthcare and education for all.

The health system particularly was the crowning glory of the revolution, with Castro deploying doctors around the world to showcase Cuba's achievements.

But that system is now on life support, with the Covid pandemic, the tightening of US sanctions and an energy crisis exacerbated by US President Donald Trump's six-month-old fuel blockade pushing it to the brink.

Broken or obsolete equipment

Days-long power outages, acute shortages of medicine, an exodus of medical staff to better-paid jobs abroad or in the private sector, and serial breakdowns of ageing equipment have created the perfect storm in Cuban health facilities.

The cash-strapped government has concentrated resources on a handful of priority areas including cancer, cardiology, nephrology and maternal and child health.

But these departments too are at breaking point.



Children play football in the street in Havana during a general blackout on Tuesday

At the National Institute of Oncology and Radiobiology (INOR), the waitlist for radiotherapy tops 1,200 patients.

Eighty per cent of the equipment used in diagnostics and treatment is obsolete or broken, institute director Luis Eduardo Martin told AFP.

"We administer medication without at times being able to verify they are having the effect we expect... because we don't have the reagents or the equipment to monitor them," he said.

More children dying

Children are on the frontlines of the crisis, despite being prioritised for treatment.

The country's childhood cancer survival rate has fallen from 85 per cent pre-crisis to 65 per cent currently, according to government data.

Mariuska Forteza, head of INOR's pediatric oncology unit, said routine but essential blood tests were being cut back because of a lack of equipment and fuel to ferry samples between hospitals.

"It's very frustrating to know you can save

the child, achieve a better survival rate, and you can't do it because your hands are tied," she said.

In time-honoured Cuban tradition, technicians work to repair equipment as best they can.

'When you shorten the hemodialysis period, you are shortening life'

"Sometimes I have to come to the hospital at midnight or 2 am to repair equipment so the patient can begin their [cancer] treatment," said Alexis Amado Dominguez, a repair technician. Treatment of heart disease is also taking a hammering.

Jose Esteban Abreu, a doctor at the National Institute of Cardiology and Cardiovascular Surgery, said the number of heart surgeries conducted annually had fallen from more than 400 in 2018 to barely 100 currently.

Around 130 patients are waiting to be fitted with pacemakers.

In the hospital's maintenance department, technician Luis Alexis Duncan showed AFP a large array of equipment awaiting repairs, from anesthesia and cardiopulmonary bypass machines to heart monitors, some of which have been dismantled for spare parts.

"We're always inventing, working, innovating," he said.

Lives cut short

Inventiveness is not always enough though.

In the workshop where 80 per cent of Havana's medical equipment is repaired, faulty incubators and neonatal ventilators are piling up.

A personnel shortage has made an already dire situation untenable.

The health sector has hemorrhaged doctors,

nurses and technicians, unable to survive on pitance state wages paid in heavily devalued Cuban pesos.

In the dialysis unit of the Hermanos Ameijeiras Hospital, a beacon of Cuban medical excellence in Havana, nurses are overwhelmed.

The hospital's head of nephrology, Iamara Castro, told AFP some dialysis sessions had to be cut from four to two hours to ensure more patients receive treatment and "avoid overworking the only staff we have".

Deciding to trim a patient's life-saving treatment is excruciating, she said.

"When you shorten the hemodialysis period, you are shortening life," she said gravely, adding that the service was kept going by dint of sheer "compassion".

One of her patients, 81-year-old Nelson Companioni, said he often feared the equipment would cave in before his session was finished.

He described watching staff trying to coax a small pump back to life.

"You see the nurses kneeling there, hitting it to get it working."

Army shoots down 3 missiles launched from Iran — JAF

Continued from page 1

The interceptions were carried out within approved operational and defensive measures to protect the country's borders, airspace, and citizens, the source said,

adding that the incident resulted in no casualties or material damage.

The source said that Royal Engineering Corps teams dealt with the debris that fell in several locations according to established technical

and security protocols.

The sites were secured, and necessary measures were taken to ensure the safety of citizens and property, the source said.

The source stressed that JAF rejects any vio-

lation of the Kingdom's sovereignty or the use of its airspace in a manner that threatens its security and stability.

He added that JAF continues to monitor Jordanian airspace and track developments with

the highest levels of readiness.

The military urged citizens to rely only on official statements issued by the JAF and competent authorities, and to avoid spreading rumours or unverified information.

Crown Prince attends 3rd Honorary Professors Forum at University of Jordan, inaugurates Science Venture Foundry

Continued from page 1

During a tour of the SVF, His Royal Highness was briefed by UJ Vice President for Scientific Faculties Ashraf Abu Ka-

raky on the foundry's facilities and programmes, which focus on research, development, innovation, entrepreneurship, and private-sector collaboration, with the aim

of advancing the development of products that bolster the National Council for Future Technology's programmes as well as national economic modernisation plans.

US resumes naval blockade as Trump vows more strikes on Iran

Continued from page 1

The escalation came as Iranian state media reported exchanges of fire between the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and US forces in the Strait of Hormuz, further heightening tensions across one of the world's most strategically important waterways.

US Central Command (CENTCOM) said the strikes targeted missile and drone sites, naval capabilities and military infrastructure used to support Iranian attacks on commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iranian media reported explosions near Bandar Abbas, Qeshm

Island and several other locations along the Gulf coast. Local authorities also said US strikes hit four locations in Bushehr province, home to Iran's only civilian nuclear power plant, as well as border areas near Iraq and Kuwait.

An hour after the strikes began, the US military reimposed its naval blockade on vessels travelling to and from Iranian ports, saying more than 20 US Navy warships and hundreds of military aircraft remain deployed across the Middle East.

"American forces remain vigilant, lethal and ready," CENTCOM said.

Trump said the mili-

tary campaign would continue until Washington achieved its objectives.

"The strikes will continue until I say this is enough," Trump said. He also scrapped plans to impose a 20 per cent fee on ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz, opting instead for expanded trade and investment agreements with Gulf allies.

Iran condemned the renewed blockade, saying it effectively undermined the temporary understanding reached with Washington to create space for diplomatic negotiations.

Fighting also intensified at sea.

According to the International Maritime Organisation, Iranian

forces struck two commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, killing two crew members. A Norwegian tanker was also damaged by an explosion off the Omani coast, while Kuwait said one of its naval vessels was hit during an Iranian missile and drone attack, injuring four sailors.

Political analyst Amer Sabaileh said that "President Donald Trump appeared to have fully embraced military pressure as a tool to reshape future negotiations with Tehran".

He said that Washington is likely to expand both the scale and depth of its military campaign, targeting sites that had

previously been considered off limits.

"What was avoided during the previous 40-day war may now become legitimate targets," Sabaileh said.

"That could include energy infrastructure, strategic islands and oil facilities as the United States gradually pushes deeper into Iranian territory to force Tehran towards a political settlement."

Sabaileh explained that the latest escalation suggests both Washington and Tehran are seeking to strengthen their positions on the battlefield before returning to the negotiating table, leaving diplomacy increasingly overshadowed by military pressure.

Cabinet approves new investor residency, citizenship rules

Continued from page 1

It also approved the validating reasons for the amended Al Hussein Award for Voluntary Work for the year

2026 to enhance its governance.

The Cabinet approved the administrative organisation system for the Ministry of Awqaf and the newly

created Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, which merges the ministries of education and higher education.

Safadi, US's Rubio discuss bilateral relations, regional developments

Continued from page 1

Safadi explored ways to strengthen bilateral relations and discussed regional developments during a series of meetings on Capitol Hill.

In the Senate, he met

with the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senator Jim Risch, and the Chair of the Democratic Caucus Senator Jeanne Shaheen.

In the House of Representatives, he held

talks with the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Representative Brian Mast, and the Ranking Member of the committee Representative Gregory Meeks.

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Current account stability and future challenges

BY Raad Al-Tal

Jordan's external sector has long been regarded as one of the economy's most vulnerable areas. The country's limited natural resources, heavy dependence on imported energy, capital goods and intermediate inputs have historically exposed it to external shocks. Regional conflicts, border closures, disruptions in supply chains and fluctuations in tourism and investment have further intensified these pressures.

Yet, recent economic indicators suggest that Jordan's external position is becoming more resilient. This improvement is not merely the result of temporary factors but reflects gradual structural changes that have strengthened the economy's ability to withstand external shocks and reduced long-standing external imbalances.

The current account remains the most important indicator of external sector performance, as it measures the balance between a country's earnings from the rest of the world and its payments for imports, services, and income transfers. For decades, Jordan's current account deficit represented a structural challenge. However, recent data indicate a notable improvement. In 2024, the current account deficit stood at 5.9 per cent of GDP, while the cyclically adjusted deficit declined to 4.3 per cent of GDP, close to the 4 per cent benchmark that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) considers broadly consistent with Jordan's economic fundamentals. Consequently, the IMF concluded that Jordan's external position is broadly aligned with economic fundamentals and desirable policy settings, highlighting a significant improvement in the country's external sustainability.

This progress has been driven by several complementary factors rather than a single source. Merchandise exports have expanded considerably, with their contribution to GDP increasing from 20.2 per cent in 2021 to 26.2 per cent in 2022, before stabilizing at 24.9 per cent in 2024. Equally important, Jordan's export structure has become more diversified as manufactured and non-traditional exports have gained prominence, reducing reliance on traditional commodity exports alone.

Tourism has also re-emerged as a major source of foreign exchange. In 2024, tourism receipts reached the equivalent of 13.5 per cent of GDP, while the sector's value added accounted for 6 per cent of GDP. During the first half of 2025, tourism revenues reached approximately \$ 3.7 billion, with 49 per cent generated by Arab visitors and nearly 30 per cent by Jordanians residing abroad, underscoring the importance of regional markets in supporting the tourism industry.

Workers' remittances continue to provide another pillar of external stability. In 2024, remittance inflows represented approximately 7.1 per cent of GDP, maintaining their long-standing role in supporting household income, domestic consumption and the balance of payments, particularly during periods of weaker trade or tourism performance.

Foreign direct investment has also contributed to strengthening Jordan's external position. FDI inflows reached \$1.64 billion in 2024, while the cumulative stock of foreign direct investment increased to approximately \$44.1 billion, originating from more than 124 countries. More importantly, the financing structure of the current account deficit has improved significantly. The share financed through non-debt-creating inflows increased from 54.8 per cent during 2015–2019 to 67.9 per cent during 2020–2024, reflecting a healthier and more sustainable pattern of external financing with reduced reliance on debt accumulation.

Energy sector reforms have also played a critical role. Historically, energy imports represented one of the largest sources of pressure on Jordan's trade balance. Through diversifying energy sources and expanding the use of natural gas and renewable energy, Jordan has significantly reduced this vulnerability. The energy import bill declined from 45.8 per cent of GDP in 2022 to 42.3 per cent in 2023, before stabilising at 43.4 per cent in 2024, despite continued volatility in global energy markets. Beyond improving the trade balance, these reforms have enhanced industrial competitiveness by lowering production costs and strengthening the export sector.

Another important source of resilience is the Central Bank's strong foreign exchange reserves, which currently cover more than seven months of imports and exceed 100 per cent of the IMF's Assessing Reserve Adequacy metric. These reserves provide a substantial buffer against external shocks and reinforce confidence in the stability of the Jordanian dinar.

Despite these encouraging developments, significant challenges remain. Jordan continues to rely heavily on imported capital goods, intermediate inputs and essential commodities. In addition, geopolitical tensions and fluctuations in global energy prices remain important sources of external risk. Sustaining external stability will therefore require continued efforts to expand the productive base, increase value-added exports, attract higher levels of investment and diversify export markets.

Jordan's recent experience demonstrates that improving the current account is not simply a matter of reducing imports; rather, it depends on building sustainable sources of foreign exchange through exports, tourism, remittances and investment. If ongoing structural reforms continue, the external sector can evolve from serving merely as a safeguard against economic shocks into becoming one of the principal engines of long-term economic growth and sustainable development.

A national quantum technology strategy for Jordan

By Mwaffaq Otoom

At this point in time, artificial intelligence (AI) is the most talked-about topic in discussions about the future of technology. Governments, educational institutions and businesses are investing heavily in the development of AI. But now, alongside AI, we are also seeing the beginnings of another technological revolution.

Quantum technology extends beyond the creation of powerful computers. It also covers quantum communications, ultra-sensitive sensors, advanced materials and cyber-defense systems that safeguard against future quantum attacks. Even though most potential applications are still at an early stage of development, governments around the world are developing national plans to promote expertise, support research and manage the risks associated with this technology.

Jordan should do the same.

Jordan must not try to compete with the US, China and Europe in an expensive race to develop large-scale quantum computers. Rather, Jordan should focus on developing a practical national plan that allows its universities and government agencies to understand quantum technologies, mitigate the risks associated with them and take advantage of future economic opportunities. Jordan does not need to develop a quantum computer from scratch in order to benefit from this technology. However, a well-thought-out plan would position Jordan to benefit from the opportunities these technologies may offer.

The Central Bank of Jordan has articulated an action plan for the financial services industry to begin its transition to quantum-resistant encryption. Quantum computers of sufficient power could eventually break some of the current public-key encryption methods used to protect banking transactions, online payments, electronic money transfers, secure digital signatures and other sensitive communications.

The availability of such machines does not necessarily present an immediate danger. However, there is still a risk today because sensitive information encrypted now may be collected and stored by malicious parties for future use, after these machines become commercially available. In addition, replacing existing cryptographic systems across banks, ministries, hospitals and critical infrastructure will take considerable time because of the complexity of moving from one security infrastructure to another.

As such, the Central Bank's initiative should be embedded in a much broader national dialogue. Quantum readiness is far more than a banking issue. It has implications for government systems, telecommunications, healthcare, education, research, the entrepreneurial ecosystem and national security.

An effective case study of a country developing a national quantum technology strategy can be found in Chile, through its National Quantum Technologies Strategy 2025-2035. The strategy covers quantum computing, quantum sensing, quantum communications, quantum cybersecurity and quantum-based scientific applications. Importantly, Chile does not attempt to replicate the level of investment made by the world's largest technological powers. Rather, it has chosen to concentrate on developing a skilled workforce, creating advanced research infrastructure, encouraging collaboration and establishing national governance.

Inflation — comparing coffee prices from the 1970s, expressed in the dollars of that day, with prices expressed in today's dollars. By that standard, everything is at a record high, always.

Even Nature's own reporting on coffee undercuts its ominous headline detailing "how scientists are fighting to save it from extinction". Ethiopia keeps more than 12,000 arabica plants in living gene banks for breeding heat- and drought-tolerant varieties. "I believe we have enough gene pool to fight climate change," the Ethiopian plant geneticist leading the effort says. Farmers in hotter regions are already switching to hardier coffee species that professional tasters can't distinguish from fine arabica. That isn't extinction. It is what agriculture has always been: Adaptation and improvement.

The supposed olive-oil crisis collapses under the same scrutiny. According to United Nations' food statistics, global olive-oil production has tripled since 1961 and doubled since 1990. Last year and this year, together with the exceptional 2018 harvest, mark all-time high record highs for production of olive oil. Meanwhile, inflation-adjusted prices have not increased and have even slightly declined since 1990. Again, better farming and expanded cultivation outweigh any climate effect.

Food scare stories follow a formula: Take an isolated weather event, attribute it to global warm-

Companies and universities in Jordan can already use quantum computing hardware and simulators through international cloud services. As such, Jordan can begin developing knowledge in the field without having to acquire expensive hardware.

A Jordanian national quantum technology strategy should contain several practical elements.

To begin with, education and workforce development should come first. Quantum computing, quantum information, post-quantum cryptography and quantum communication should be offered through university courses and professional certificates. Such courses and programme should not be offered solely by physics departments. Computer scientists, engineers, mathematicians and cybersecurity professionals will all play an essential role in this effort.

In addition, Jordan should create a comprehensive national cybersecurity initiative focused on quantum-safe protection. This initiative can build on the Central Bank's existing plans. However, all concerned parties, including government ministries, medical facilities, power companies and other critical infrastructure providers, should evaluate their cryptographic security measures and develop a phased approach to implementing quantum-safe solutions.

The third recommendation is for Jordan to provide shared research infrastructure. Instead of investing in an early quantum computer, a national cloud-access program could be established for universities, research institutions and businesses. The initial function of a shared center would be to provide training, testing, simulation and other relevant quantum computing activities.

Fourth, the strategy should identify applications of particular concern to Jordan, including water-resource management, renewable-energy planning, logistics, traffic optimisation, pharmaceutical research, financial modelling and secure communication.

Nevertheless, such applications should be pursued with caution. Quantum computing is not a cure-all, and many claimed benefits remain uncertain. Jordan should support small pilot projects and comparative studies to determine whether quantum, classical or hybrid technologies offer meaningful improvements.

Fifth, it is important to promote innovation in quantum software, cybersecurity, education and related fields in Jordan. The country is likely to be in a stronger position in innovation, applications and services than in the production of quantum processors.

Finally, Jordan needs a governance framework for this purpose. This could be achieved by establishing a national task force that includes relevant ministries, the Central Bank, the National Cyber Security Centre, universities, financial institutions, telecommunications companies and technology firms. The task force's first responsibility should be to assess the current situation and develop a five- to ten-year roadmap with specific and measurable objectives.

Establishing a national quantum technology strategy would allow Jordan to become an active participant in the emerging quantum ecosystem rather than simply a consumer of quantum technologies.

The writer is a professor of computer engineering with interests in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, emerging technologies and technology transfer, and a former vice president.

ing, skip inflation adjustment and ignore the long-term data. Natural year-to-year swings driven by economics, trade policy and subsidies get repackaged as apocalyptic trends. Rarely mentioned: Much of the real price pressure on food comes from fertiliser and transport costs — inflated, ironically, by climate policies that raise fossil fuel energy bills for the essentials of farming.

Never mentioned: The ways climate change helps crops. Carbon dioxide is plant food, which is why commercial growers pump extra CO₂ into greenhouses to produce more tomatoes. NASA satellites show that the planet has been greening for four decades, meaning the world has added additional leaves with an area equivalent to that of at least two times the Amazon rainforest.

Climate change will, on balance, hurt agriculture. But its impact is dwarfed by rising productivity. One highly cited study in Nature finds that without any climate change, global food-calorie production will increase 51 per cent between 2010 and 2050. With extreme, unrealistic warming, it still increases by 49 per cent. Across all models and scenarios, the difference in calories available per person amounts to one-tenth of 1 per cent.

That's because humanity keeps getting better at growing food. Cereal production has more than quintupled over the past century while real food prices

have more than halved. The Green Revolution of the 1960s turned famine-prone nations into exporters through the widespread adoption of high-yield crop varieties, alongside expanded use of chemical fertilisers and improved irrigation. India, once written off as a basket case dependent on food aid, quadrupled its rice production between 1961 and 2023 and is today the world's largest rice exporter. Daily calorie availability per person has climbed from less than 2,200 in 1961 to more than 2,900 now. Global undernourishment has plummeted from roughly one in four people in the developing world in the early 1990s to fewer than 10 per cent today.

The task now is to finish the job. Innovation should extend to under-researched crops like sorghum, cassava and millet — staples for 2 billion people in the developing world that have been largely ignored by commercial breeders. Investment in biotech, precision agriculture and drought-resistant crop varieties will do far more for the world's poor — and for your grocery bill — than any emissions target.

We can keep feeding more people, better, by doubling down on what actually works: innovation.

Bjorn Lomborg is president of the Copenhagen Consensus, visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, and author of "False Alarm" and "Best Things First".

Jaime Garcia, whose 17-year-old son Alvaro also has ichthyosis, remembers realising the impact of the condition during his son's first summer.

Alvaro's face was very red and when he cried "It was as if the sweat was coming out through his tears, as though he needed to sweat," said Garcia, who heads the Spanish Ichthyosis Association.

When Alvaro started school, he was seated near a fan from April onwards to help keep him cool. By June, the afternoon heat became too much and he stopped attending classes in the afternoons.

Even a trip to the swimming pool requires careful planning.

Although swimming is not prohibited, Alvaro can spend only a few minutes in the water before showering, rubbing down his skin and discreetly applying moisturising cream.

Now a teenager, he never leaves home without a tube of moisturising cream, a small but constant reminder that for people with ichthyosis, surviving summer requires vigilance every day.

Climate change is not taking food off your table

By Bjorn Lomborg

No morning ritual is safe from climate alarm. The Journal Nature just declared that coffee is "critically threatened by climate change" and described scientists racing to save your espresso from "extinction". The New York Times blames sky-high coffee prices on climate-driven supply crunches in Brazil and Vietnam. And your olive oil? CNN and Bloomberg wall about a seemingly permanent "crisis", with Mediterranean droughts foretelling a future in which an everyday staple vanishes for good.

The message is unmistakable: Global warming is coming for your family's dinner table, and only sweeping climate policy can save it. The message is also wrong. Cut through the hype, and food is not only more plentiful, but its inflation-adjusted cost is near historic lows relative to any time since 1900.

Start with coffee, supposedly on its deathbed. This year, global coffee production is expected to set yet another record — more than double the world's output of 50 years ago. Crops on the brink of extinction don't deliver record harvests. And despite recent price bumps, the real price of coffee has trended downward since 1960. Adjusted for inflation, coffee this century has cost on average half of what it cost in the last century.

How do media outlets get it so wrong? By inexcusably ignoring

By Marie Giffard

Agence France-Presse

MADRID — Every summer, Alberto Gomez lives with a fear most people never consider.

The 36-year-old Spanish physics and chemistry teacher has a rare genetic skin disorder that leaves him unable to sweat properly, and therefore unable to cool himself naturally during extreme heat.

"If you're having a hard time, imagine what it means for me. My fear is suffering a heatstroke and not being able to recover from it," he told AFP at a gym near his home in Arroyomolinos near Madrid.

As Spain's increasingly intense summers bring more frequent and prolonged periods of extreme heat, Gomez is among a small number of people living with the condition.

For them, a day that is merely uncomfortable for most people can quickly become life-threatening, forcing them to constantly monitor their bodies and avoid situations that could trigger dangerous overheating.

"When summer comes, we have a series of warning signs telling us something could happen if we don't start regulating our temperature," Gomez said.

Ichthyosis is a rare inherited disorder that leaves the skin excessively dry, rough and red.

Gomez's skin peels from head to toe, while other patients develop sores or blisters. One of the condition's most dangerous consequences is that many patients sweat little or not at all.

"Sweat protects us when it's very hot because through perspiration, we release heat," said dermatologist Angela Hernandez, an ichthyosis specialist in Spain who estimates around 300 people in the country have the disorder.

"If we cannot release that heat, the body overheats to such an extent that it literally collapses. All the cells are destroyed," she said, describing the risk as potentially fatal.

Usually diagnosed at birth, the genetic disorder lasts for life, although its severity varies widely. There is no cure.

It affects the skin's ability to shed normally, causing thick, dry scales to build up and making patients more prone to dehydration, infections and painful cracking.

Beyond the immediate threat posed by extreme heat, the condition requires constant care.

Many patients spend hours each day applying moisturising creams to relieve cracked skin, while its visible symptoms can also expose them to unwanted attention and stigma.

Patients must also avoid overheating and prolonged exposure to the sun.

To cope with Spain's increasingly hot summers, Gomez rarely goes outside without a UV-blocking umbrella.

"Caps are useless for me because they trap heat around my head instead of letting it escape," he said.

Gomez has not given up exercising, but only works out in an air-conditioned gym.

After just a few minutes of activity, small water-filled bumps appear on parts of his skin.

Spaniard's rare skin disorder ups danger of summer heat



Jordan's capital market is undergoing a significant recovery, driven by higher market capitalisation, stronger liquidity, increased trading activity and rising stock indices, according to a report by the Jordan Economic Forum

ASE recovery lifts market capitalisation to record JD30.5b — JEF

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's capital market is undergoing a significant recovery, driven by higher market capitalisation, stronger liquidity, increased trading activity and rising stock indices, according to a report by the Jordan Economic Forum (JEF).

The report "Amman Stock Exchange: Market Transformations, Growth Drivers and Sustainability" noted that the recovery has lifted the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) to its highest level in almost two decades, reflecting renewed investor confidence and the market's growing ability to attract capital.

The JEF said the gains support the objectives of the Economic Modernisation Vision by strengthening the financial services sector, improving access to finance and expanding capital markets, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

Market capitalisation of listed companies reached around JD30.5 billion at the end of May 2026, up from JD19.5 billion a year earlier, an increase of more than 56 per cent. The ASE exceeded JD30 billion for the first time, surpassing its previous peak of JD29.2 billion in 2007.

The number of listed companies fell to 155 from 162, indicating that higher company valuations and stronger liquidity, rather than new listings, drove the market's growth.

The ratio of market capitalisation to GDP rose to 69.7 per cent in May 2026 from 51.5 per cent a year earlier, highlighting the market's expanding role in the national economy.

The report also highlighted a shift in market composition as the

industrial sector increased its share, led by mining and basic materials companies. The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Arab Potash Company together account for about 42.5 per cent of the ASE's market capitalisation, reflecting a concentration of market value in a small number of blue-chip companies.

Jordanian investors held 53.7 per cent of the market at the end of May, while Arab investors accounted for 29.6 per cent and foreign investors for 16.7 per cent, underlining the exchange's continued appeal to regional and international investors.

Trading activity also strengthened. The value of traded shares rose to JD1.279 billion during the first five months of 2026 from JD687.5 million in the same period of 2025, while trading volume increased to 445.6 million shares from 359.5 million.

The average value of traded shares climbed to JD2.9 from JD1.9, while average daily trading reached JD12.9 million, compared with JD8.8 million in 2025 and JD4.9 million in 2024.

The financial sector accounted for 38 per cent of trading activity during the period, followed by the industrial sector at 32 per cent and the services sector at 30 per cent.

The report said the ASE outperformed several regional and international markets in 2025 as the ASE General Index climbed 45.1 per cent, supported by strong performances in the financial and industrial sectors.

On sustainability, the JEF said the ASE continues to strengthen its

environmental, social and governance (ESG) framework.

The exchange now requires companies on the ASE20 index to publish sustainability reports in line with Global Reporting Initiative standards and has introduced a climate disclosure framework in cooperation with the International Finance Corporation.

The ASE has also prepared guidance based on International Sustainability Standards Board standards. It will encourage companies to adopt the standards voluntarily in 2026 before requiring mandatory reporting in 2027.

The report also highlighted the Stock Market Resilience and Momentum Index, which it described as Jordan's first index to measure the resilience of listed companies alongside overall market momentum. The index has accelerated since mid-2024, reflecting stronger company valuations, higher investor confidence and positive market prospects.

To sustain growth, the JEF recommended further regulatory reforms, encouraged more large family-owned businesses to list, called for greater financing through public shareholding companies, and urged authorities to develop the bond and sukuk markets.

It also called for stronger financial literacy, completion of the exchange's digital transformation, greater market liquidity, a broader range of listed companies and financial products, and higher ESG, disclosure and transparency standards, according to Al Mamlaka TV.

Aqaba truck traffic tops 445,000 trips in four months — ASEZA

AMMAN (JT) — The Aqaba Special Economic Zone's (ASEZA) truck entry and exit management project, operated by the new service provider Maqta Ayla, recorded around 445,000 truck trips between March 1 and June 30, 2026, with an average of around 3,700 trips a day over the four-month period.

June recorded the highest monthly volume, with nearly 125,000 completed permits, up 20 per cent from around 105,000 permits issued in May, according to an ASEZA statement.

Completed permits totalled around 106,000 in March, 108,000 in April, 105,000 in May and 125,000 in June.

The average daily number of truck trips rose to around 4,200 in June, compared with the four-month average of 3,700 trips, while the highest single-day volume reached 4,920 trips.

Average truck traffic during the March-June



Photo Courtesy of ASEZA

The Aqaba Special Economic Zone's truck entry and exit management project, operated by the new service provider Maqta Ayla, records 445,000 truck trips in four months

period rose 23 per cent from the 2025 daily average of around 3,000 trips, reflecting stronger freight flows into

the ASEZA.

The figures highlight growing logistics activity through Aqaba amid regional develop-

ments, reinforcing the zone's role in supporting trade, transport and supply chains, while underscoring

the need to continue improving truck traffic management and maintaining smooth cargo flows.

Dutch tech giant ASML posts gain in second-quarter profits

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Dutch tech giant ASML, which makes cutting-edge machines to manufacture semiconductor chips, Wednesday posted a gain in second-quarter net profits compared with the same period in 2025.

ASML is a critical cog in the global economy and a key bellwether for the tech sector, as the semiconductors crafted with its tools power everything from smartphones to missiles.

Europe's biggest tech firm by market value said net profits came in at 2.9 billion euros, compared with 2.3 billion in the second quarter of last year.

The firm also hiked its sales forecast for the full year, projecting total turnover of between 43 and 45 billion euros, compared to a previous range of 36-40 billion.

Investors were watching the results especially closely after several sharp sell-offs in the tech sector over



AFP file photo

fears the AI bubble might be approaching its bursting point.

But the firm's Chief Executive Officer Christophe Fouquet said AI was still pushing his business forward.

"Ongoing AI-related investments and continued progress in AI technologies are driving demand for advanced Logic and

Memory chips, further strengthening the semiconductor industry's growth outlook," said Fouquet in a statement.

The firm recorded total net sales in the second quarter of 9.3 billion euros, compared with 7.7 billion euros in the same three months of last year.

This was better than the firm's expectations of net sales between

8.4 and 9 billion euros.

ASML said it expects net sales of between 11 and 12 billion euros for the third quarter of the year, as Fouquet noted "a continuous, very strong demand from our customers".

The company has been caught in the crossfire of a tech spat between the United States and China and has previously warned

its Chinese sales would "decline significantly" this year.

Washington is leading efforts to curb high-tech exports to China over fears they could be used to bolster the country's military.

Beijing has reacted furiously to the measures, describing them as "technological terrorism".

Last month, ASML denied reports of US concerns that one of its advanced chipmaking machines was in China, potentially violating the restrictions.

Chief Financial Officer Roger Dassen said ASML expected China to represent around 20 percent of its sales for 2026.

In January, ASML announced a shake-up in its organisation that was expected to result in the loss of around 1,700 jobs in the Netherlands and United States, mainly from leadership roles.

The firm employs roughly 44,000 staff worldwide.

Tech stocks lead gains, oil prices rise

LONDON (AFP) — Tech stocks led gains in mixed equity markets on Wednesday while oil prices rose as the US launched another wave of attacks on Iran.

Seoul led gains across Asian equity indices as tech firms rebounded, helped by a softer-than-expected US inflation print that soothed worries about a possible interest rate hike this month that could weigh on the AI-linked sector.

The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite led gains on Wall Street as trading got under way in New York, adding 0.6 per cent. European markets were mostly lower in afternoon trading.

"The divergence between... (equity markets) seems to be driven

mainly by technology stocks, which are outperforming again," noted Swissquote bank analyst Ipek Ozkardeskaya.

China's leading memory chipmaker became the latest company to seek huge investment to grow.

ChangXin Memory Technologies is seeking to raise up to \$9.8 billion in an initial public offering as China counts on home-grown hardware to boost its position in the artificial intelligence race.

It comes as shares in Dutch tech giant ASML rose more than two per cent, as Europe's biggest company by market value said strong demand for AI systems pushed up its sales forecasts and drove a gain in second-quarter profits.

Seoul's stock market, which has borne the brunt of recent losses for the tech sector, jumped as much as seven per cent at one point Wednesday before paring the gains.

That came on the back of an 8.8-per cent rally in chip giant SK hynix.

"The AI stock market rally has a 'winner takes all' mentality right now," said Kathleen Brooks, research director at XTB trading platform, pointing to the nearly 25 per cent plunge in its shares on Tuesday after revealing disappointing uptake of its latest AI mainframe processors.

She said that companies that were AI laggards or looked like they will be left behind by the AI boom were getting

sold off.

But investors are also concerned about the high valuations and the vast sums being spent on in artificial intelligence, with tech shares also being occasionally hit by painful selloffs.

"AI uncertainty remains one of the major themes for markets as we lead up to some key tech earnings reports in the coming weeks," said Brooks.

"If you can't win AI, and you can't win at AI, either through the production of AI-necessary components, or investments in AI, then you are at risk," she added.

The dollar was mostly lower against its main rivals as expectations of a US rate hike this month recede.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD14.1 million spread over 5.8 million shares that traded through 4,924 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.26 per cent, closing at 3902.46 points.

Out of 98 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 26 companies rose while the share price of another 27 declined.

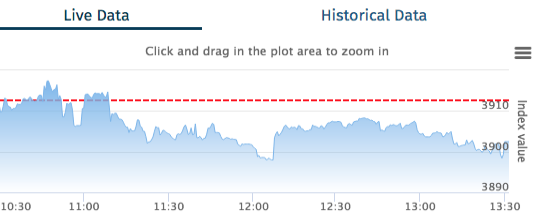
Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Philadelphia Pharmaceuticals by 7.43 per cent, United Cable Industries by 5.45 per cent, Arab International for Education and Investment by 4.76 per cent and First Insurance by 4.17 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordan French Insurance by 5 per cent, Jordan International Investment Company by 4.76 per cent, Specialised Jordanian Investment by 4.31 per cent, Shareco Brokerage Company by 3.13 per cent, and Injaz for Development and Projects by 2.56 per cent.



THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↓ 3902.46 0.26% July 15, 2026



DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market		OTC Market	
Trading Value (JDs)	14,090,736		
Trading volume	5,786,313		
No. of Transactions	4,924		
No. of Securities	98		

FOOTBALL

Local ‘hero’: Bellingham’s hometown buzzing ahead of semifinal clash

STOURBRIDGE, United Kingdom (AFP)—As England gears up for the World Cup semifinal on Wednesday, there will be one name on everyone’s lips: Jude Bellingham, the star midfielder who powered the Three Lions through to the marquee clash against Argentina. In packed stadiums in North America and pubs back home, people belt out the Beatles’ “Hey Jude” and don t-shirts with slogans like “Bend it like Bellingham” — a play on the iconic 2000s film “Bend it like Beckham”. But nowhere is the 23-year-old midfielder more feted than his hometown of Stourbridge, a quiet market town in central England, west of Birmingham. Wheeling his bike past the town’s shopping centre, retiree Keith Hall blows a kiss towards a superhero comic-style mural of Bellingham. “He’s a local lad,” Hall told AFP, adding Bellingham “keeps in touch with his roots” despite now playing for Real Madrid. Bellingham launched his football career playing for the Stourbridge Juniors, before joining Birmingham City’s youth side and becoming the club’s youngest first-team player. “It doesn’t surprise me that he’s become an international sensation because he’s the coolest man currently living,” gushed grocery store worker Sam Holden, 21.

BADMINTON

India’s Sindhu targets medal at home world championships

TOKYO (AFP) — Indian badminton star Pusarla Venkata Sindhu said on Wednesday that “everybody is beatable” as she targets a medal at the world championships on home soil in New Delhi next month. Sindhu won the world title in 2019 and also captured Olympic silver in Rio in 2016 and bronze in Tokyo five years later. The 31-year-old is a massive star in her home country and will be the focus of attention at the world championships from August 17 to 23. She told AFP in Tokyo, where she is playing at the Japan Open, that she expects to be in the mix for a medal. “Right now, with the game I’m playing, I think I just need to do a little bit of small tweaks and stick to my game plan, irrespective of who the other player is,” said the world number 10. “Just keep fighting for every point. I feel that everybody is beatable.” Sindhu arrives in Tokyo after reaching the semifinals of the Australian Open last month. Her last title came in December 2024 at the Syed Modi India International in Lucknow.

‘Immense disappointment’: Mbappe

rues end of World Cup dream

ARLINGTON, United States (AFP) — Kylian Mbappe rued the end of France’s World Cup dream on Tuesday, blaming tactical and technical blunders for his side’s 2-0 semifinal defeat to France.

Mbappe had emerged as one of the stars of the tournament during France’s run to the last four, rattling in eight goals at the tip of a free-scoring attack that delighted fans worldwide.

But the 27-year-old French captain’s dreams of a third straight World Cup final appearance ended abruptly as Spain outplayed Les Bleus at the AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

Mbappe told French broadcaster M6 that the loss had been a “huge disappointment” for the French squad.

“I don’t think we played the match we wanted to play — whether tactically, technically or in terms of our overall performance level,” Mbappe said.

“And when you don’t do what you’re supposed to do in a World Cup semifinal, you don’t win,” the Real Madrid star added.

“Our goal was to press them high up the pitch to prevent them from settling into that slow, controlled rhythm — because when it comes to controlling the game, they are better than us. We failed to do that.”

Mbappe pinpointed the crux of the prob-



AFP photo

Lamine Yamal #19 of Spain is fouled in the box for a penalty by Lucas Digne #3 of France during the FIFA World Cup 2026 semifinal match between France and Spain at Dallas Stadium on Tuesday in Arlington, Texas

lem in midfield, where France’s duo of Adrien Rabiot and Aurelien Tchouameni rapidly found themselves overrun by Spain’s triumvirate of Rodri, Dani Olmo and Fabian Ruiz.

“We kept finding ourselves outnumbered 3-on-2 in mid-

field,” Mbappe said. “And against Spain, that’s a real problem... When you put it all together, the result is a defeat. It’s a huge disappointment.”

Mbappe said France’s crestfallen squad was determined to bounce back after digesting the

lessons of the loss.

“It was a dream for us to reach the final, to give our country the chance to keep dreaming and to make history,” he said.

“Now, it is something we have to face with our heads held high. I believe that when

you win, you win with your head held high; so when you lose, you have to lose with your head held high, too.

“But right now, there is immense disappointment. I find it hard to put into words just how disappointed the squad and I are.

“Yet, even if it might seem a bit robotic at times, we have to pick ourselves up, go on vacation and move on to the next chapter. Because football waits for no one. We have to start over, put this failure behind us and learn from it.”

THE JORDAN TIMES

LIFE

Fontainebleau: French forest of kings, painters and hikers

By Sofia Bouderbala

Agence France-Presse

PARIS, France — A massive wildfire near Paris has torched swathes of a forest that has lured admirers for centuries, from royal hunting parties to impressionist painters, rock climbers and nature lovers.

Fontainebleau is no stranger to fire but this inferno — fanned by strong winds and heat-wave conditions — is among the worst in decades, destroying nearly 5 per cent of the 25,000 hectare forest.

Fontainebleau attracts between 15 and 18 million visitors a year — nearly twice as many as the Louvre Museum in Paris.

Most travel from the French capital 60 kilometres away but 30 per cent come from outside France.

Rock art dating back to prehistoric times has been discovered in its caves.

Fontainebleau became a royal estate around the year 1000 under Robert II “the Pious” of France. Later, a grand palace was built to host hunting parties.

The hunting paths are still used today by firefighters to access



AFP photo

This aerial photo shows the Cross of Lorraine in the Fontainebleau forest, near Paris in 2025

the forest, said Sophie David, an archaeologist who heads the environment and visitor services department at the state-run National Forestry Office.

Around 200 years ago, swathes of the forest had been cleared for agriculture, reducing it to roughly one-third of its current size.

“In the 19th century, trees were planted to fill in the gaps. Pines were chosen, trees with shallow roots” capable of growing in Fontainebleau’s sandy soil, said David.

The character of this new, more open forest was captured by the

painters of the Barbizon Impressionist school.

The invention of the paint tube and rise of leisure travel among France’s growing bourgeoisie, helped make Fontainebleau attractive for walkers and artists.

“The railway arrived in 1849 and the world’s first signposted [hiking] trails were created” in Fontainebleau shortly after, said David.

Rosa Bonheur, a renowned French artist of this era, painted her iconic “Fairy Pond” in Fontainebleau.

The forest is home to oak and beech woods as well as coniferous for-

ests, open heathland, fossil dunes, ponds and wetlands.

Thirty million years ago, the forest was an ocean. As the sea receded, it left behind sand which, over millennia, formed the sandstone blocks that now attract rock climbers.

“What makes the Fontainebleau massif unique is the diversity of its landscapes and the richness of its biodiversity,” said David.

It hosts more than 6,500 known animal species — hares and deer to birds like warblers and tawny owls and rare insects, such as the stag beetle.

UNESCO designated Fontainebleau a “biosphere reserve” in 1998.

Around 1,000 hectares are designated strict nature reserves, with no human intervention. One of those reserves has been among the hardest hit by the fire.

Fire was first recorded in Fontainebleau in the 13th century.

David said detailed records had been kept since 1863 and the current blaze — which has burned some 1,000 hectares already — was among the largest in the history books.

In the early 20th century, surveillance towers were erected to address the problem, helping reduce the area burned.

More recently, six 10,000 litre water tanks have been installed in the forest to enable a more rapid response to fires.

Around 30 fires break out each year, most often caused by cigarette butts or unauthorised campfires.

For the past two years, the fire service has been testing an AI surveillance system which can detect smoke and quickly locate the source to notify the fire department.

Six women accuse French ex-model boss of rape, human trafficking

PARIS, France (AFP) — Six foreign women, mostly American, filed legal complaints in France on Wednesday accusing ex-modelling agency boss Gerald Marie of rape and human trafficking in the 1980s and 1990s, their lawyer said.

They are the latest allegations against the former European head of Elite, a modelling agency known for managing supermodels Naomi Campbell, Claudia Schiffer and Cindy Crawford.

The women — now in their mid-forties to sixties — include two who are accusing him for the first time, lawyer Mathias Darmon said.

One of them has accused Marie, now in his mid-70s, of abusing her when she was a minor, he added.

Wednesday’s complaints, seen by AFP, highlight similarities between the accusations of the six plaintiffs.

“Marie, then head of an international modelling agency with a major presence in Paris, is alleged to have, over several decades, used the authority, influence and power conferred on him by his role to obtain forced sexual relations with numerous young women, some of whom were underage,” it said.

The new complaints follow former top model Carre Otis, now 57, last



AFP photo

The women — now in their mid-forties to sixties — include two who are accusing him for the first time

month formally accusing Marie of human trafficking and raping her when she was 17 in the mid-1980s, Darmon said.

She said she was abused at his home while Marie’s then girlfriend, top model Linda Evangelista, was away.

Investigators in 2023 closed another probe into accusations Marie committed sexual abuse in the 1980s and 1990s because it was too long ago to be prosecuted.

Among his accusers then were Otis as well as former BBC journalist Lisa Brinkworth, who alleged Marie sexually assaulted her in public in Milan in 1998 when she was a reporter.

Marie’s lawyer Celine

Bekerman said her client categorically denied any wrongdoing and the allegations had already been investigated.

“There is no reason whatsoever to call on the courts to again revisit a case that is both time-barred and closed, nearly 40 years after the alleged events,” she said.

Brinkworth and 14 other women in March urged France to investigate Marie for possible links to late convicted US sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, the subject of a French investigation into human trafficking.

Activists have urged France to lift all time limits within which sexual crimes can be investigated under French law.

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