



Army says three Iranian missiles intercepted, fourth landed in remote area

AMMAN (JT) — Air defence systems intercepted and destroyed three Iranian missiles launched towards the Kingdom, while a fourth missile fell in a remote unpopulated area in the southern part of the Kingdom, the Jordan Armed Forces–Arab Army (JAF) said on Sunday.

Continued on page 5

Jordan summons Iranian envoy over ‘repeated’ attacks, ‘inflammatory statements’

AMMAN (JT) — The Foreign Ministry has summoned Iran's chargé d'affaires in Amman to deliver a “strongly worded” protest over continued Iranian attacks on the Kingdom's territory and provocative statements by Iranian officials on Jordan.

In a statement on Sunday, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali said that Iranian chargé d'affaires was instructed to convey a clear message to Tehran demanding an immediate end to the attacks. He said that Jordan's security and the safety of



its citizens are "a red line" that cannot be crossed and called for an end to

the inflammatory official statements. The ministry con-

demned the alleged attacks as a flagrant violation of Jordan's sov-

ereignty and a breach of international law and the United Nations Charter, Majali said. The statement also condemned Iranian attacks targeting the Gulf Cooperation Council member states and reaffirmed its full solidarity with them and its support to any measures they take to safeguard their sovereignty, security, and the safety of their citizens and residents. Majali also said that Jordan would continue to take all necessary measures to protect its citizens, national security and sovereignty.

Iran avoids direct strike on Israel despite widening regional war

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — The United States said it expanded its military campaign against Iran overnight, launching an eighth consecutive round of strikes. Tehran said it also stepped up attacks across the region while continuing to avoid another direct assault on Israel.

The latest operation targeted Iranian air de-



AFP via Getty Images

Debris of missiles fired from Iran toward Israel leave trails in the night sky over Nabulus in the occupied West bank after being intercepted on June 13, 2025

fence systems, missile and drone facilities and

naval assets. US Central Command said the

attack on a US military base in Jordan and were also intended to reduce Iran's ability to threaten commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

The escalation followed Iranian attacks that killed two US service members in Jordan and targeted military facilities in Kuwait and Bahrain.

Continued on page 5

Aqaba airport, seaport operating normally, no evacuation ordered — Momani

AMMAN (JT) — Government Spokesperson Mohammad Momani on Sunday said that no evacuation orders had been issued for Aqaba Airport or the Aqaba seaport, affirming that both facilities continue to operate normally.

Momani said that the relevant authorities in the southern port city had not ordered the evacuation of either facility and stressed



JT file photo

The King Hussein International Airport in Aqaba

that any potential security threats would be communicated through official channels in accordance

with established emergency procedures.

Continued on page 5



Launch of a New Phase of the “Orange Coding Academy”

Orange Jordan announced on Thursday, in conjunction with World Youth Skills Day, the launch of a new phase of its leading national program, the “Coding Academy”, which aims to digitally empower Jordanian youth and reinforce their economic participation across the Kingdom.

The company declared that this phase of the program will be implemented in partnership with the Crown Prince Foundation (CPF), as the driver for youth outreach. This collaboration will ensure nationwide reach across the Kingdom's governorates and help a larger number of young people gain access to broader economic opportunities.

The three-year program will be carried out at the Orange Digital Center and the CPF offices located across the governorates. It will provide training for 370 youth aged 18-35, with 100 remote spots, with specialized sessions focusing on life skills, entrepreneurship, and employment, as well as intensive technical training in several fields including

web development, artificial intelligence, and freelance work, followed by practical training in cooperation with the private sector.

During the signing ceremony, Chief Executive Officer of Orange Jordan, Eng. Philippe Mansour, affirmed: “We are proud today to launch this national program in cooperation with the Crown Prince Foundation (CPF), reflecting our unwavering commitment to supporting and empowering Jordanian youth digitally and economically across the Kingdom. Our cooperation with CPF also highlights our shared vision to prepare a new generation of programmers and entrepreneurs who can compete in the modern labor market, which is undergoing rapid changes led by Artificial Intelligence technologies that are reshaping the work environment. We strongly believe that investing in youth digital skills is a direct investment in the future of Jordan, and we are determined to continue working with our partners to ensure high-quality

training and employment opportunities, which focus on practical application while integrating the training with market needs.”

For its part, the Crown Prince Foundation stated that digital empowerment and the development of programming and artificial intelligence-related skills are among the main pillars of its programs, as digital skills are globally recognized as key enablers of youth economic participation, strengthening their competitiveness in the labor market, and opening new opportunities for them.

It is worth noting that this step comes as an extension of Orange Jordan's ongoing digital empowerment efforts through its programs, including the Coding Academy, which has empowered more than 1200 young women and men since its launch and has enabled 80% of them to secure jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities within six months of graduation. Orange Jordan also invited youth to register for and benefit from the program.

Jordan’s potash and phosphate giants announce joint industrial complex project

Joint venture between APC, JPMC seeks to expand Jordan’s mining, chemical industries

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's two leading mining companies have announced a strategic partnership to develop a joint industrial complex in Aqaba and Al Shidiya, marking a major step towards expanding the Kingdom's mining and chemical industries and increasing the value added from its mineral resources.

In a joint statement on Sunday, the Arab Potash Company (APC) and the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) said that the partnership will include the establishment of the Jordanian Advanced Specialised Fertilisers Industries Company, which will oversee the development of the project.

The initiative aligns with the objectives of Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision, which identifies mining, chemical industries and industrial integration as key drivers of economic growth, Jordan's two mining giants said, describing the joint economic venture as among the major national industrial projects designed to support productive sectors and attract investment into high-value industries.

The planned industrial complex will create an integrated value chain, beginning with the extraction and processing of raw materials and extending through manufacturing and export. The project aims to develop advanced downstream industries based on the integration of potash and phosphate resources, producing specialised, high-value fertiliser products for regional and global markets, the statement said.

JPMC chairman of the board of directors, Mo-



APC photo

Chairmen and CEOs of the Arab Potash Company (APC) and Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC), during the signing of a strategic partnership between Jordan's two mining giants develop a joint industrial complex in Aqaba and Al Shidiya

hammad Thneibat was quoted in the statement as saying that the integration of the phosphate and potash sectors would create new opportunities for the development of mining and downstream chemical industries.

He also said that the joint investment would provide a strong foundation for future industrial projects based on adding value to Jordan's natural resources and strengthening links between national industries.

Shehadah Abu Hdaib, chairman of APC's board of directors, described the partnership as the beginning of a new phase of strategic cooperation between Jordan's major mining companies.

He said the joint industrial complex reflected both companies' commitment to developing advanced manufacturing and derivative industries that maximise the economic value of national resources, while supporting long-term operational and

financial sustainability in line with the Economic Modernisation Vision.

CEO of APC Maen Nsour also said that the project represented a practical implementation of the sector's growth strategy for fertilisers and derivative chemicals for 2024-2034.

Nsour said that the project was built around flexible operational plans designed to respond to global market changes while balancing sustainable profitability with risk management.

“It would support expansion in specialised fertilisers and derivative industries, diversify product offerings and improve access to major international markets,” he said.

Nsour added that the project would help Jordan move beyond the export of raw materials towards the development of advanced, high-value industries, strengthening the Kingdom's position as a regional centre for specialised chemical manufacturing.

Abdel Wahab AL Rawad, the CEO of JPMC, described the joint investment venture as a “significant milestone in industrial cooperation between Jordan's leading mining companies”.

“The new complex would enhance national export capabilities, increase production flexibility and generate sustainable economic value for both companies,” the CEO said.

Al Rawad added that the project reflected the companies' focus on developing specialised fertiliser industries linked to phosphate, phosphoric acid and potash, using advanced technologies and accumulated expertise.

The initiative, he said, would open new opportunities for downstream industries, strengthen Jordan's integration into global value chains, and support the country's role as a reliable supplier of specialised fertilisers to regional and international markets.

Rubio hails Lebanon for peace efforts after meeting president

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun in Washington on Sunday, praising the country for its "move towards peace" after the latest round of Lebanon-Israel talks.

It was the first trip to the US capital by a Lebanese head of state since Michel Sleiman was received by Barack Obama in 2009.

Aoun and Rubio held talks at the State Department, and Lebanese officials said Aoun is due to meet with US President Donald Trump on Tuesday.

Rubio said Aoun's government had made a "determined effort to reclaim Lebanon's sovereignty, disarm Hizbollah and dismantle its terrorist infrastructure, and move towards peace", according to a State Department release.

Israel and Lebanon — which do not have formal diplomatic relations — began US-sponsored negotiations in April aimed at reaching a peace deal and permanently ending the Israel-Hizbollah war.

On June 26, they reached a framework agreement in Washington under which the Israeli military is to withdraw from southern Lebanon and the Lebanese army is to deploy, starting with two "pilot zones".

Continued on page 5

Princess Alia inaugurates upgraded facilities at Princess Alia University College

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Princess Alia on Sunday inaugurated the newly rehabilitated gymnasium at the Princess Alia University College, affiliated with the Al Balqa Applied University.

The comprehensive rehabilitation project was completed at a total cost of JD280,000, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

During the opening ceremony, which was attended by University President Ahmad Ajlouni, Princess Alia listened to a detailed briefing regarding the project and its execution phases.

She toured the college facilities to inspect several ongoing works and projects.

Following the tour, Princess Alia inaugurated the new classroom building, where she unveiled the commemorative plaque and was briefed on its development stages.

The new building, constructed at a cost of some JD1.8 million,



HRH Princess Alia on Sunday opens the newly rehabilitated gymnasium at the Princess Alia University College

represents a qualitative addition to the college infrastructure, contributing to providing a modern and advanced learning environment for students.

Separate construction works were also executed at the college at a cost of some

JD825,000, where these efforts come as part of the university's ongoing commitment to upgrading its facilities and strengthening its infrastructure.

Ajlouni emphasised that Princess Alia's visit provides vital support to the university's

progress.

He added that it reflects Princess Alia's commitment to enhancing higher education institutions and elevating the university environment to better serve students.

Ajlouni added that the university contin-

ues to implement development plans aimed at modernising its academic and service facilities, focusing on providing a stimulating educational environment to improve learning quality, in line with the university's strategic goals.

Jordan remembers King Abdullah I

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Monday commemorates the 75th anniversary of the death of His Majesty King Abdullah I (1882-1951), the founder of the Kingdom, who was assassinated as he was entering Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem for Friday prayers on July 20, 1951.

King Abdullah I led the Arab forces of the Great Arab Revolt with his brothers Ali, Feisal, and Zeid against the Ottoman Empire.

By the end of World War I, he assumed the Throne of Transjordan, which was formed in 1921, establishing the first centralised government out of a mostly tribal and nomadic society.

Over the next 30 years, he focused on nation-building and developing the institutional foundations of modern Jordan.

During these three decades, King Abdullah I presided over a series of Anglo-Transjordanian treaties, cul-



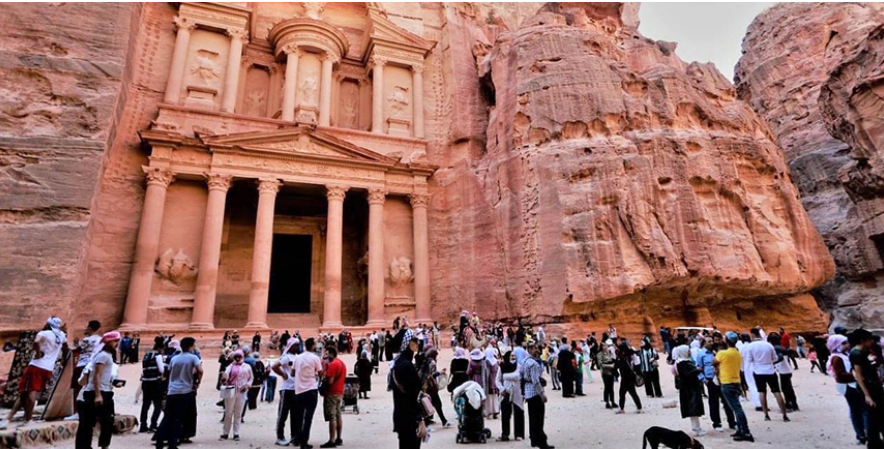
minating in the 1946 Anglo-Transjordanian Treaty, ending the British mandate and granting the new Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan full independence.

He is also remembered for promulgating Jordan's first Constitution in 1928 and holding the country's first parliamentary elections

in 1929.

He laid down the basis for democracy in the Kingdom and called for political pluralism. The first political party was formed during his reign.

A poet himself, he used to meet with poets, writers and scholars, and discuss the country's affairs.



File photo

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Jordan Tourism Board, in cooperation with tourism associations, on Sunday launch the integrated digital platform 'Ahlan Jordan'

Ministry, partners launch Ahlan Jordan platform to boost tourism, regional travel

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Jordan Tourism Board, in cooperation with tourism associations, on Sunday launched the integrated digital platform "Ahlan Jordan".

Head of the Jordan Society of Tourism and Travel Agents Mahmoud Khasawneh told Al Mamlaka TV that this initiative aims to support the tourism sector and mitigate the impact of regional challenges on travel.

The platform operates in Arabic and English, serving as a unified window for visitors to plan and book trips.

It provides various travel programmes ranging from three to eight days, with prices starting

from \$180 per person, as packages cover hotel accommodation, transport, tour guide services, and entry tickets to several archaeological sites.

To boost hotel occupancy, all promotional packages require an overnight stay in Petra, which has been significantly affected by the recent decline in tourism.

The platform aims to stimulate economic activity in the ancient city while encouraging visitors to explore other destinations across the Kingdom.

In its first phase, "Ahlan Jordan" targets visitors from Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Future expansions

will target new international markets, particularly African nations, to diversify source markets and ensure sustainable growth.

The launch was initially planned for April but was rescheduled to July to ensure full technical readiness for multiple markets.

Tourism officials highlighted that the platform leverages digital solutions to maintain Jordan's competitiveness as a safe, welcoming and accessible destination.

The initiative follows a strong performance in 2025, during which Jordan welcomed 7.04 million visitors and generated JD5.523 billion in tourism revenue, marking a 7.6 per cent increase.

UNFPA, Japan expand life-saving services for women, girls in southern Jordan

AMMAN (JT) — UNFPA Jordan on Sunday announced the completion of a project supported by the government of Japan, aimed at expanding access to integrated sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services for women and girls in southern Jordan.

Implemented in Maan, Aqaba, Karak, and Tafileh, the project helped bring essential, safe, and women-centered services closer to refugees and host communities, particularly women and girls who face barriers in accessing health and protection services, according to a UNFPA Jordan statement.

Through Japan's generous support, Women and Girls Safe Spaces in the southern governorates provided safe access to case management, psychosocial support, livelihood activities and referrals to specialised services.

The project also strengthened sexual and reproductive health services through the Women-Friendly Health Services approach, with 42 primary health centres mapped and assessed across the governorates to expand quality, wom-



UNFPA Jordan photo

Implemented in Maan, Aqaba, Karak, and Tafileh, the project helps bring essential, safe, and women-centered services closer to refugees and host communities

en-centered care.

In Karak, the project supported the comprehensive centre of the Institute for Family Health (IFH), UNFPA's implementing partner, strengthening its role in bringing integrated health care, protection, counselling, referrals, awareness sessions and outreach closer to women and girls.

The impact of this support was reflected in the voices of women who shared how accessible, integrated services supported their health, dignity and protection.

Government officials

and local partners also highlighted the importance of the centre in responding to community needs.

Chair of the Governorate Council in Karak Essmat Majali described it as "an important model for serving the local community and ensuring that people can access the services and information they need".

Head of the IFH Centre in Karak Munther Khreisha said that the centre "allows beneficiaries to access multiple services in one location, helping reduce barriers and encourage help-seeking

behaviour".

"Japan's support has been instrumental in helping UNFPA and its partners bring integrated, safe, and dignified services closer to women and girls in southern Jordan," said UNFPA Representative in Jordan Himyar Abdulmoghni.

"This partnership has not only responded to immediate health and protection needs but also contributed to strengthening national systems that uphold the rights, safety, and dignity of women and girls," Abdulmoghni added.

The Ambassador of

Japan to Jordan Asari Hideki reaffirmed Japan's commitment to supporting vulnerable communities and strengthening access to essential services.

"In collaboration with UNFPA and Jordanian stakeholders, we have successfully provided high-quality and specialised services, significantly improving the health and well-being of women and girls, including Syrian refugees, in a dignified and supportive environment," the ambassador said.

"This support has also contributed to strengthening the national health system in line with Jordan's National Strategy," he added.

UNFPA Jordan reaffirmed its commitment to working with national institutions, local partners, and communities to sustain and expand integrated services for women and girls, particularly in underserved areas.

The government of Japan has been a "vital" partner to UNFPA globally and in Jordan, supporting efforts to advance the health, safety, dignity, and rights of women and girls in Jordan, the statement added.

Anthropologist examines Bedouin perspectives on social media, modern society

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — The work of the anthropologist Geoffrey Hughes centres around everyday's life of Jordanian Bedouin communities and he spent decades studying Jordanian rural population and its interaction with social media.

Hughes on Wednesday presented his research at the CBRL Amman Institute under the title "What can Jordan's Bedouin teach the world about social media".

"I see my research as a process of coproduction," Hughes said, noting that he prefers not to use his interlocutors as a passive tool to theorise about, but to theorise with them about their daily life.

Hughes' talk draws on in-depth ethnographic fieldwork to explore how



Photo courtesy of the CBRL

Geoffrey Hughes at the lecture 'What can Jordan's Bedouin teach the world about social media', held at the CBRL Amman Institute on Wednesday

Bedouin have "domesticated" social media to fit their social and cultural realities.

He examines how online platforms intersect with key concepts such as tribalism, envy and mercy, and moves beyond simplistic views of technology to show "how social media reflects deeper cultural values and existing political and legal

frameworks".

Social media is not much different from traditional publishing media, Hughes said, adding that one of the most important things he learnt in Jordan is to understand the social media as part and parcel of a global renegotiation between the state-society divide that both preceded the emergence of social media platforms and in

turn, it feeds off of it.

There is a widespread idea in Western social theory that social media is making society more tribal, Hughes continued, noting that some theorists like Edward Said perceived tribalism as a colonial import whose role was to divide members of the same nation.

On the other hand, some Jordanian historians tend to see tribes as a tool of the Ottoman administration.

Regarding the concept of envy, some tribal contacts told Hughes that social platforms create envy and friction among different tribal communities as well as to cause conflicts within the same community.

"Social media involves a particular person from a particular tribe who is in front of the entire group

and this encourages jealousy and envy.

Facebook becomes a means of showing off...,"one of Bedouins told Hughes.

"Concept of tribalism, envy and mercy can help us understand collective predicament with the social media and see how we can control and shape these technologies," Hughes underlined.

"These are things that we are doing to ourselves. Technologies have affordances but we have power to control it for a bit," Hughes said, noting that the Internet for some is a symbol of free information but for others it's a field for manipulation and perfected control of masses.

"Frontiers don't exist but they are made by different state actors," Hughes said.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Public Works Ministry says 10 road projects implemented in H1 2026

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Public Works and Housing on Sunday said that it had completed 10 road rehabilitation and maintenance projects across the Kingdom during the first half of 2026.

Ministry Spokesperson Omar Maharmeh told Al Mamlaka TV that these projects covered main roads in Amman, Irbid, Balqa, Mafrag, Ajloun, Karak and Aqaba.

The executed tenders included targeted maintenance for 11 roads in the central region, and the teams serviced 10 roads in the northern region and 9 roads in the southern region.

The completed works featured specialised engineering interventions, such as maintaining

Road 90 in Aqaba and managing structural landslides.

Crews also enhanced traffic intersections, implemented protection works along the Wadi Namira and Wadi Araba roads in Karak, constructed box culverts for rainwater drainage, expanded lanes and built safe pedestrian pathways.

The ministry is executing eight strategic tenders to further upgrade the network, which include treating landslides on the Madaba-Mujeeb road, maintaining the road leading to the iron tunnel in Aqaba and repairing sections of the Baghdad International Highway in Mafrag.

Other ongoing initiatives involve widening

the Kufranjah-Wadi Al Tawahin road in Ajloun alongside implementing asphalt mix maintenance programmes.

Contractors are also securing road protections, installing storm drainage systems in the northern and central regions, supplying precast concrete elements, and building dedicated pedestrian and bicycle lanes along the Airport Road in Amman.

Dozens of agricultural and village road projects are actively underway across various governorates, as these local infrastructure works are being financed and managed through the budgets of the respective governorate councils under the decentralisation framework.

Safadi, Arab, Islamic counterparts discuss regional developments

Top diplomats condemn Iranian attacks on Jordan, Gulf countries

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Sunday held phone calls with Saudi, Egyptian, UAE, Kuwaiti, Qatari, Bahraini, Omani and Turkish counterparts to discuss the dangerous regional escalation and efforts to end it.

During calls with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud, Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Expatriates Badr Abdelatty, UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Bahraini Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Bin Hamad Al Busaidi and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Safadi stressed the need for coordinated ef-



orts to stop the escalation through dialogue and diplomacy.

The ministers emphasised the importance of implementing the ceasefire agreement between the United States and Iran, returning to negotiations and reaching a comprehensive solution that addresses the root causes of the crisis, restores calm and ensures freedom of

navigation in the Strait of Hormuz in accordance with international law, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Safadi reiterated Jordan's absolute solidarity with Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states in confronting Iranian attacks, which he described as violations of state

sovereignty and threats to regional security and stability.

The ministers warned of the consequences of continued escalation and stressed the need to end tensions, protect regional and international peace and security, and resolve disputes through diplomatic means.

During separate calls with Abdelatty and Fidan,

Safadi discussed developments in Gaza and the occupied West Bank, stressing the need to implement all provisions of US President Donald Trump's plan regarding Gaza to ensure stability and end the humanitarian crisis.

They also called for lifting restrictions hindering humanitarian aid deliveries to Gaza and rejected Israeli measures in the occupied West Bank that entrench occupation and undermine the two-state solution.

They urged the international community to take effective steps to halt such measures, which they said violate international law and threaten regional stability.

The top diplomats also warned against actions that could alter the historical and legal status quo at Islamic and Christian holy sites in occupied Jerusalem, reaffirming that Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif is a place of worship exclusively for Muslims.



The Lower House on Sunday approved the amended Jordanian Universities Law for 2026

Lower House approves amended Universities Law for 2026

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — The Lower House on Sunday approved, by majority vote, the amended Jordanian Universities Law for 2026.

During the session, chaired by Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi and attended by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan and members of the government team, the House approved Articles 7 to 12 of the law after approving the first six articles on July 14.

parallel programmes.

Lawmakers also stressed the need to link incentives to clear criteria related to performance, efficiency and research output.

The House also approved an amendment allowing universities to allocate 1 per cent of existing allocations under Article 25 to promote their institutions abroad and attract international students through advertising, visits, exhibitions and other approved methods.

of trustees in shaping general policies and enhancing transparency and accountability in managing higher education institutions.

Under the amended law, the selection process for presidents of public universities will be revised, with university boards of trustees recommending candidates to the Higher Education Council, which will then submit nominations to the Prime Minister.

The amendments also expand the scope of the Universities Law to include university colleges and intermediate community colleges, granting these institutions legal personality as well as financial and administrative independence, with their affairs to be regulated through dedicated regulations.

'Zulfikar' exercise brings together Jordanian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Pakistani special forces

AMMAN (JT) — The joint military exercise "Zulfikar" kicked off on Sunday at a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) training ground, bringing together personnel from the King Abdullah II Royal Special Operations Command and special forces from Turkey, Azerbaijan and Pakistan.

The two-week exercise is part of ongoing joint military cooperation and training programmes aimed at enhancing operational readiness, strengthening the combat capabilities of participating forces, standardising operational procedures and improving joint planning and execution in spe-



The joint military exercise 'Zulfikar' kicks off on Sunday at a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army training ground

cial operations, according to a JAF statement.

The exercise also seeks to enhance command and control procedures, strengthen field coordina-

tion and facilitate the exchange of expertise among participating units.

The drills feature a range of tactical activities and scenarios simulating

diverse operational conditions, including joint planning and execution of special operations, urban assault missions, hostage rescue, counter-

terrorism operations and tactical live-fire exercises using light and medium weapons.

The exercise also incorporates unmanned aerial vehicles and advanced military systems in line with the latest special operations tactics and techniques.

The JAF also said that the exercise is the first of its kind to be hosted in Jordan and forms part of its training plan to maintain the highest levels of combat readiness, enhance operational capabilities and strengthen military cooperation with allied forces through the exchange of expertise in special operations.

Expat entrepreneurs call for institutional reforms to boost investment in Jordan

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian expatriate business leaders and investors have called for a more structured institutional framework to harness the diaspora's expertise and capital in support of the Kingdom's long-term economic development.

Speaking on the sidelines of the ninth Conference of Jordanian Businessmen and Investors Abroad, participants stressed the need to move beyond individual initiatives towards an institutional approach built on trust, transparency and strategic partnerships to attract high-value investments, create jobs and enhance Jordan's competitiveness.

They said that Jordan is well positioned to serve as a regional hub for innovation and investment, particularly in high-growth sectors such as financial technology, logistics, renewable energy and smart agriculture, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

CEO of Raboa Alayarmouk Agricultural Company and head of the Jordanian Businessmen Association in Oman Ammar Obeidat said that the next phase requires viewing expatriates not merely as sources of remittances but as active partners in investment and production.

He proposed establishing business committees within Jordanian embassies to develop



Petra photo

databases of investment opportunities and actively attract international investors.

Amal Daghlis, managing director of Adaa Sustainable Development Consultants and chair of the Business and Professional Women Association, said that Jordanian professionals are highly regarded across major regional economies, adding that countries that successfully integrate their diaspora into national development tend to achieve faster economic growth and technological advancement.

Zaid Darwazeh, a board member of the Jordan Business Council in Dubai, called for streamlining investment procedures through a one-stop investment window.

He also proposed introducing tax incentives and matching-fund programmes to encourage joint investments between expatriates and public or private sector partners.

Darwazeh added that Jordan's strategic lo-

cation and free trade agreements with the United States, Europe and Arab countries position the Kingdom as an ideal gateway for exports.

Munawar Zoubi, CEO of Medical East and a leading pharmaceutical executive in Europe, highlighted the strong ties between Jordanian expatriates and their homeland.

She said the international standing of His Majesty King Abdullah and Her Majesty Queen Rania has strengthened Jordan's global image and provides expatriates with a solid platform to serve as economic and cultural ambassadors.

Zoubi also urged Jordanian embassies to establish specialised advisory councils in fields including medicine, engineering and technology to strengthen links between European companies and Jordanian institutions, expand export opportunities and facilitate technology transfer to the Kingdom, Petra reported.

Ksasbeh sworn in as MP to fill vacant Aqaba seat

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — The Lower House on Sunday swore in Baker Ksasbeh as an MP representing Aqaba after the Independent Election Commission (IEC) named him the next eligible candidate to fill the vacant seat following the revocation of former MP Hassan Riyati's parliamentary membership.

At the start of the session, Speaker Mazen Qadi said that the IEC had declared Ksasbeh the next eligible candidate to fill the vacant seat after a final court ruling against Riyati.

Ksasbeh took the con-

stitutional oath before the House and pledged to uphold the Constitution, serve the nation and faithfully carry out his parliamentary duties.

In his maiden speech, Ksasbeh said that he accepted the responsibility with a commitment to serving Jordan and its people, describing parliamentary membership as a public trust rather than a personal privilege.

He stressed that he would work to advance reform, defend citizens' interests and support national causes, while reaffirming his party's backing for the Palestin-



Al Mamlaka TV photo

The Lower House on Sunday swears in Baker Ksasbeh as an MP representing Aqaba

ian cause.

Ksasbeh was named the next eligible candidate by the IEC after Riyati lost his parliamentary membership

following a final court ruling sentencing him to two years in prison.

The vacancy arose after the Lower House terminated Riyati's mem-

bership under Article 75 of the Constitution.

The IEC said Ksasbeh, who ran on the Islamic Action Front list in the Aqaba local electoral district for the party now known as the Ummah Party, was the next eligible candidate on the same list in accordance with the 2022 Election Law for the Lower House.

Riyati's membership was revoked after the Court of Appeal upheld a two-year prison sentence against him in an assault case brought by former MP Shadi Freij, making the sentence final under the Penal Code.

Climate-smart agriculture training programme launched in Madaba

AMMAN (JT) — The second phase of a capacity-building programme on climate-smart agriculture was launched in Dhiban District, Madaba Governorate, as part of efforts to strengthen local communities' resilience to climate change and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

The programme, implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) under the project "Building Resilience to Cope with Climate Change in Jordan through Improving Water Use Efficiency in the Agriculture Sector" (BRCCJ), aims to enhance the capacity of civil society organisations and local community-based organisations to support



Photo courtesy of FAO

The programme aims to enhance the capacity of civil society organisations and local community-based organisations to support sustainable agriculture and improve water use efficiency

sustainable agriculture and improve water use efficiency.

During the opening session, Samia Akroush presented an overview of the BRCCJ project, including its objectives and efforts to promote climate-smart agricultural practices, strength-

en local capacities and support communities in adapting to climate-related challenges, according to a FAO statement.

The second phase builds on the first phase by providing participants with practical skills in climate-smart agriculture, sustainable

water management and the planning and implementation of local initiatives aimed at enhancing community resilience.

The training brings together 25 representatives from civil society organisations and local community-based organisations in Dhiban District, with the aim of enabling them to transfer knowledge and encourage the adoption of climate-smart practices within their communities.

Implemented by FAO in partnership with Advance Consulting and funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the BRCCJ project seeks to support a more efficient and sustainable agricultural sector through improved water man-

agement, enhanced food security and stronger climate adaptation measures.

The programme will also be delivered in Madaba, Karak, Tafleleh and Ma'an governorates, providing local organisations with practical tools and field-based solutions to support sustainable agriculture, natural resource management and climate adaptation.

The BRCCJ project is part of the Executive Programme for Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision and aims to enhance the resilience of agricultural communities and water management systems while supporting sustainable development across the Kingdom.

US military launching new air strikes against Iran

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The United States announced Saturday it was launching new airstrikes to punish Iran for attacks against US forces in Jordan after its first military deaths since renewing its hostilities with Tehran.

US Central Command (CENTCOM) said on X that the strikes began at 22:00 GMT and “are designed to further degrade Iran’s ability to threaten commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and swiftly punish Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps forces who launched attacks against American service members in Jordan last night.”

The Iranian news agencies Fars and Tasnim simultaneously reported US attacks on Sirik, a port located on the Strait of Hormuz in southern Iran.

Earlier Saturday, CENTCOM announced the deaths of two US servicemen , the first since the resumption of hostilities on July 7 , and that a third American was missing during “Iranian missile and drone attacks” on Friday in Jordan.



A heavily-damaged bridge which was hit by a US strike is pictured along the road connecting Roudan and Bandar Abbas in southern Iran on Saturday

Iraq PM to visit Iran this week after trip to US

BAGHDAD, (AFP) — Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Al Zaidi is scheduled to visit Iran later this week following a trip to the US where he met President Donald Trump, Iraqi state media reported Sunday.

A businessman, he has vowed to boost Iraq’s fragile economy and disarm pro-Iran groups that have targeted US facilities

intensifying attacks in recent days.

Iraq’s national news agency INA quoted the foreign ministry as saying Zaidi will visit Tehran “at the end of this week” and is expected to sign memorandums of understanding “to strengthen bilateral ties”.

It will be his first trip to Iran since coming to power this year with Washington’s blessing after Trump vetoed another candidate.

Zaidi returned to Iraq on Sunday after his one-week trip to the United States, having struck 48 agreements and partnerships with American companies.

A businessman, he has vowed to boost Iraq’s fragile economy and disarm pro-Iran groups that have targeted US facilities.

In recent days, attacks blamed on Iran have rocked Iraq’s autonomous Kurdistan region, which hosts US troops and foreign oil companies, as well as exiled Iranian Kurdish rebels.

India floods and landslides kill at least 19

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — Flash floods and landslides caused by monsoon rains killed at least 19 people in India on Sunday, officials and local media said, as authorities mounted rescue operations in affected regions.

Eight people were killed in the northeastern state of Nagaland, next to Myanmar, while 11 others died in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir.

“We have recovered four of the eight bodies, and rescue work is

ongoing,” Wennyei Kon-yak, district magistrate of Nagaland’s Mon district, told AFP.

At least 15 others were injured, he said.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah “expressed profound anguish over the massive flash flood in Rajouri” in the Jammu region of the territory, his office said in a statement.

The flood “has caused extensive damage to public and private property, including the bus stand, and disrupt-

ed countless lives,” his office added.

Indian broadcaster NDTV said at least 11 people died and “several others went missing” in Jammu.

Army personnel and state emergency responders rescued 11 people, including five children, in Jammu’s Rajouri district, the army said.

The India Meteorological Department warned on Sunday of the potential for “extremely heavy rainfall” in Jammu and Kashmir

over the next two days.

Officials also announced the “temporary suspension” of annual Hindu Amarnath pilgrimage in the Kashmir region.

The pilgrimage was suspended “in the interest of the safety and well-being of all” pilgrims, the local government said in a statement on Sunday.

It “will resume only after weather conditions improve and the routes are declared safe,” it added.

More than 400,000



Residents look at damaged vehicles after flash flood and landslide triggered by heavy rains wreaked havoc at Rajouri district in India's Jammu region on Sunday

In a Lebanon museum, 'keys without homes' evoke destruction in south

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — Tears streamed down south Lebanon resident Fatima Hajj Ali’s face as she stared at a host of keys hanging like wind-chimes from the ceiling of a Beirut museum , each one symbolising a home, like her own, destroyed by Israel.

Hajj Ali is among the thousands of southerners who lost their houses in the recent conflicts between Israel and Hizbollah, the first of which broke out in 2023 when the group launched attacks in support of its ally Hamas, and the second in March when it entered the Middle East war on the side of its backer Iran.

“We were supposed to go home and open the door with the key, but there is no door anymore,” the 23-year-old said.



Visitors tour ‘Hkeeli ya Jnoub’ (tell me, O south) exposition, which aims to preserve the memory of villages destroyed by Israel in southern Lebanon, in Beirut on Friday

Despite a lull in fighting following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the United States and Iran on June 17,

intermittent Israeli strikes continue, as do widespread demolitions in and around occupied villages, making it impossible for many

people to return.

The exhibition “Hkeeli ya Jnoub”, or “Tell me, O South”, features pictures and videos preserving the memory of southern Lebanon at the capital’s Beit Beirut museum.

Walking through, Hajj Ali reminisced on her home in Nabatieh al-Fawqa, which she was only able to visit once after an April truce that ultimately failed to stop the fighting.

“Half the house collapsed and half remained,” she told AFP.

“I long for sunset and to hear the call to prayer in our garden while I drink my coffee,” said the psychologist, adding that Beirut had “beautiful” places, but “they are not home”.

One of the projects on display is “Keys Without Homes”, which comprises videos of three southerners who kept the keys to their houses, even though they no longer exist.

The artist, 36-year-old Adeeb Farhat, him-

self from the south, said the idea came to him during the previous war in 2024, when he feared losing his own home.

“I was constantly haunted by the question: What will happen to my house? Will it be bombed? And how will my relationship with my house key change? Will we become the new Palestinians?” he said.

There is a longstanding tradition among Palestinians of keeping the keys of homes they lost during the Nakba — or “catastrophe” in Arabic — which saw the flight and expulsion of an estimated 760,000 Palestinian Arabs during the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

‘What remains’

Within the exhibition halls, a bedroom, liv-

ing room and kitchen , complete with a glass jug, coffee pot, and spice containers , recreate details of daily life in the homes of southern Lebanese residents.

The exhibition also includes an old photograph of the coastal city of Tyre, a black-and-white video of Nabatieh, and notebooks in which visitors wrote down their memories of the south.

In another work called “What remains”, Sama Beydoun, 29 and living in Paris, showed pictures of her grandfather’s now-destroyed home in Bint Jbeil, near the border with Israel, which she last saw in 2025.

However, a technical glitch resulted in most of the images appearing blurry, making them look like a

“dream”, Beydoun said.

“I remember how many people this house brought together, how my family grew up there, how many generations it witnessed, and how life changed, while some things remained constant”, like the weekly Sunday gatherings, she said.

“Life was very simple, but it was beautiful.”

In a photo essay called “Manufacturing Estrangements”, Rawan Mazeh, 29, tells the story of a couple detained in the notorious Khiam Prison, run by the South Lebanon Army, an Israeli proxy militia, during Israel’s 22-year occupation of south Lebanon that ended in 2000.

To Mazeh, the exhibition “created a comfortable place where people could come and feel close to their land”.

Death toll from Venezuela quakes rises to 5,119

CARACAS (AFP) — The death toll from Venezuela’s twin earthquakes last month has risen to 5,119, according to an official tally released Saturday.

That was an increase of 50 deaths since Friday and comes 24 days since the June 24 disaster when back-to-back earthquakes struck, most severely affecting La Guaira, a coastal state near the capital Caracas.

The number of injured remains unchanged at 16,740, according to information posted on Telegram by the president of the Venezuelan parliament, Jorge Rodriguez.



Volunteers and rescuers search for bodies amid debris of buildings damaged by the June 24 earthquakes, in Tanaguarena, state of La Guaira; Venezuela, on Saturday

In La Guaira, the recovery of bodies continues from the rubble of dozens of collapsed buildings. Thousands of people are homeless and others are

staying in temporary camps.

Venezuelan authorities have not provided an estimate for the number of people still missing.

CONFLICT

At least 50 Malian soldiers killed in rebel attack — officials

BAMAKO (AFP) — At least 50 Malian soldiers were killed in an attack by Tuareg separatists as they left the strategic northern town of Anefis, officials said on Sunday.

The attack on the army convoy leaving Anefis occurred on Saturday, following weeks of fighting with both sides attempting to take control.

In early July, fighters from the Tuareg separatist FLA and the Al Qaeda-affiliated Group for the Support

of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) briefly captured the town and encircled a military base used the Malian army and Russian paramilitaries from Africa Corps.

JNIM and the FLA claimed responsibility for the attack.

“The provisional toll of the attack is extremely heavy — more than 50 soldiers killed and at least 24 prisoners,” a local elected official, close to the ruling junta, told AFP.

The official, who

asked to remain anonymous, said it was the deadliest attack suffered by the Malian army in years.

‘Some of our men were simply executed’

“Some of our men were simply executed,” said a source within

the Malian army, adding that an investigation was underway to determine any tactical failures.

“We are trying to see what could really have made our men so vulnerable,” he said.

The Russian paramilitaries supporting the army had already arrived in Gao, their destination, when the attack happened and did not suffer any losses, sources told AFP.

“No Russians were killed. The dead are from the army and the

state-backed militias,” said a community leader from the Gao region.

On Saturday, the army acknowledged the convoy had “fallen into an ambush laid by terrorist armed groups”, without providing casualty figures.

Mali has been ruled by a military government since back-to-back coups in 2020 and 2021.

The junta has struggled to deliver on its promise to restore security after years of unrest.



People attend the opening of a national memorial site in remembrance of the victims of the terrorists attack, at Johan Nygaardsvolds plass in the government quarter in Oslo, Norway, on Sunday

Norway unveils memorial to victims of 2011 massacre

OSLO (AFP) — Norway unveiled on Sunday a memorial to the 77 victims of the twin attacks carried out nearly 15 years ago by a neo-Nazi extremist, the deadliest peacetime massacre in the country's history.

On July 22, 2011, Anders Behring Breivik set off a bomb in a van near the government headquarters killing eight people, before gunning down 69 others, mostly teens, at a youth wing summer camp on the island of Utoya.

Survivors, bereaved relatives, Crown Prince Haakon and government officials attended the ceremony in Oslo on Sunday.

"July 22, 2011 was a brutal attack not only

on individuals, but also on our democracy," said Merete Stammeshagen, head of a support group for victims and survivors.

The artwork was created by Norwegian artist Matias Faldbakken...

The memorial, located in the capital's renovated government district, features a 12 metre-high mosaic depicting a small wading bird and blades of grass reflected in

water.

The artwork was created by Norwegian artist Matias Faldbakken, who said he had seen the bird on Utoya.

The names of all 77 victims are engraved on the memorial.

Crown Prince Haakon also visited the new 22 July Centre, Norway's national memorial and education centre dedicated to the attacks.

Breivik was sentenced in 2012 to 21 years in prison, then Norway's maximum sentence, which can be extended indefinitely if he is still deemed a threat.

Now 47, the far-right extremist said he killed his victims because they supported multiculturalism.

Floating igloo leaves France for polar exploration mission

LORIENT, France (AFP) — A floating research station resembling a giant aluminium igloo on Sunday set out from France to begin a long-term mission in the Arctic that will see it drift with the polar ice in the most hostile of environments.

The Tara Polar Station's specific shape enables it to withstand ice pressure and drift for months on end in a controlled fashion with the pack ice to explore biodiversity and the impact of climate change.

While the vessel was built in France, some 30 research centres from 12 countries — including Germany, Canada, Spain, the US, Switzerland and Japan — are participating in the expedition.

"The Arctic is an ocean that has been little studied and is already changing significantly. It is undergoing a major transformation," said Romain Trouble, executive director of the Tara Ocean Foundation.

"You cannot understand the environment if you only spend two months a year there," he added.

The vessel sailed from France's western port of Lorient with French Minister for the Sea Catherine Chabaud in attendance and hundreds of people cheering on the quayside.

The floating laboratory — shaped like an igloo perched on a large buoy — is designed to withstand sea-ice pressure and endure temperatures as low as -52°C.



While the vessel was built in France, some 30 research centres from 12 countries are participating in the expedition

Starting in mid-August, the station will travel eastward along the Russian coast, with an icebreaker clearing the way. Trapped in the pack ice by early September, the station is expected to drift at an average speed of 10 kilometres per day, eventually reaching the Fram Strait — located between Greenland and Svalbard — by the end of 2027.

Ten such expeditions are planned between 2026 and 2045, taking place every two years.

The vessel will carry 12 people during the winter, including six scientists,

and 18 in the summer.

'Lose entire chapter of evolution'

The international crew was carefully selected following medical and psychological aptitude tests and team-building.

"We weren't looking for adventurers who want to head to the North Pole alone. The idea is rather to have people who get along well to experience this confined human environment together," said Clementine Moulin, the expedition director.

Those staying through the winter will have

to contend with five months of not just total darkness, claustrophobia and extreme cold, but also the presence of polar bears.

"Bears are a serious matter," said Eric Pelletier, a 58-year-old geonomics researcher and crew member. "It's not a simple thing — the bear is on its home turf and it's used to hunting and hides behind blocks of ice."

Every crew member has received firearms training to deal with potential attacks while a specially trained dog will accompany the crew

to help spot approaching animals.

Using an opening in the hull and a wide array of onboard instruments, scientists will collect over 10,000 samples from the water, the atmosphere, and sea ice.

"There is biodiversity at the North Pole that is uniquely adapted to this environment. If the environment changes, that biodiversity might disappear," said Trouble.

"We could potentially lose an entire chapter of the evolution of life on this planet without even having had time to document it," he warned.

Earthquake of 5.1 magnitude kills five in Peru

LIMA (AFP) — A 5.1 magnitude earthquake in the Andes region of Peru killed five people, officials said on Sunday.

The Saturday night tremor injured another 21 people as it shook the town of Chongos Bajo about 300 kilometres east of Lima, the Geophysics Institute of Peru said.

The epicenter's depth was 24km.

"The earthquake destroyed our home. Here there are many adobe houses that collapsed," an unnamed resident of Chongos Bajo told the N television network.

Because the epicenter was at a shallow depth and many houses in that area

are made of adobe or a wood, cane and mud blend called "quincha", some towns suffered significant damage, said Gen. Luis Vasquez, the director of the National Civil Defence Institute.

"Forty-eight houses were destroyed and 300 people were left homeless," he said.

Peru is situated on

the so-called Pacific ring of fire — an arc of intense seismic activity stretching from Japan through Southeast Asia and across the Pacific basin.

Seismologists say Peru experiences at least 400 earthquakes per year, three quarters of which are so weak people do not feel them.



This handout photo released by Peru's defence ministry shows first responders searching through collapsed houses on the outskirts of Huancayo, in Junin department, about 300 km east of Lima, on Sunday

Ferry capsizes off Guyana, 66 people missing

GEORGETOWN, Guyana (AFP) — An ageing ferry carrying more than 100 people capsized off the coast of Guyana, with 67 saved and rescue teams searching for the rest, officials said on Sunday.

The ferry MV Barima

left the small English-speaking country at the northeast corner of South America Saturday afternoon with 133 people aboard for a trip from the capital, Georgetown, to the town of Port Kaituma.

Port Kaituma is in-

land in the oil-rich Essequibo region and the ferry travels along the coast in the Atlantic before heading upriver to reach its jungle destination.

Initial signs are that the ship flipped over after being hit by a big wave, Pub-

lic Works Minister Juan Edghill said on Facebook.

"Search and Rescue Advancing. 67 persons, inclusive of 15 children rescued so far," he said.

The accident is a major trauma for this nation of about 1 million people.

The authorities are listing the other 66 people as missing, rather than dead.

Wayne Kitson, an 18-year-old who was among those rescued, said the tragedy struck while the passengers were asleep Saturday night.

Aqaba airport, seaport operating normally, no evacuation ordered — Momani

Continued from page 1

He added that warning sirens would be activated immediately if necessary and said Jordanian authorities had not recorded any potential threats over the past hours.

The US embassy in Am-

man said on Sunday that Jordanian authorities had evacuated Aqaba's international airport and seaport due to what it described as "a specific and credible threat".

"Due to a specific and credible threat, Jordanian authorities evacuated

the international airport and seaport in Aqaba. We strongly advise all Americans to refrain from travelling to either the airport or seaport. Continue to follow all Jordanian authorities' security directives," the embassy said in a statement.

Iran avoids direct strike on Israel despite widening regional war

Continued from page 1

Gulf states condemned the attacks, warning they threatened civilian infrastructure, regional security and global energy supplies.

Political analyst Amer Sabaileh said that Iran recognises that opening another direct front with Israel could fundamentally alter the conflict.

"Iran understands that any direct attack on Israel would trigger a response unlike previous rounds," Sabaileh said.

"Iran knows another direct strike could provoke Israel's largest

military response yet," he said.

"Tehran's remaining leverage lies in increasing pressure on Washington rather than opening another front with Israel, he said. That strategy includes targeting US military interests while using the Strait of Hormuz to increase political and economic pressure."

In remarks to The Jordan Times, Sabaileh said that such an approach allows Tehran to demonstrate its ability to challenge US interests without crossing what it considers Israel's red lines, which could rapidly transform the con-

frontation into a much broader regional war.

Sabaileh added that Iran has traditionally preferred confronting Israel indirectly through allied groups in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, the occupied West Bank and Yemen. The current confrontation, however, is increasingly direct, making any new strike on Israel far more consequential."

Political analyst Areej Jaber said that Tehran is deliberately managing the conflict to avoid a full-scale confrontation with the United States, Israel and their Western allies.

"The issue is not ca-

pability or intent, but timing and strategic calculations," she said.

"Tehran wants to keep the confrontation centred on the United States because expanding the conflict with Israel could provide Washington with greater justification for a much broader military campaign."

She added Iran is seeking to raise the military and political cost for Washington by targeting locations linked to US military operations and logistical support across the region while avoiding actions most likely to trigger a direct regional war with Israel.

Army says three Iranian missiles intercepted, fourth landed in remote area

Continued from page 1

A military source from JAF said in a statement that no casualties or material damage were reported following the in-

terception operation.

The source added that teams from the Royal Engineering Corps had begun securing and handling the missile impact site, following established

technical and security procedures.

The armed forces are continuing to closely monitor Jordanian airspace and maintain the highest level of operational readi-

ness, the source said.

The source reaffirmed that JAF would take firm measures against any threat to the Kingdom's security and the safety of its citizens.

Rubio hails Lebanon for peace efforts after meeting president

Continued from page 1

But the agreement is contingent on the disarmament of the Iran-backed militant group Hizbollah, which has flatly rejected both the deal and the Israel-Lebanon negotiations that underpin it.

At Sunday's talks, the Lebanese president stressed that Lebanon

and the United States must "align... regarding the implementation of the tripartite framework, through achieving the first Israeli withdrawal from the first pilot zone".

Following the latest round of talks last week in Rome, Israel and Lebanon agreed on guidelines for implementing the pilot zones, accord-

ing to the United States.

The State Department added on Sunday that Washington was committed to the framework and to backing "Lebanon's efforts to deliver peace".

Hizbollah pulled Lebanon into the Middle East war on March 2, when the militia group began striking Israel in support of its backer Iran.

Israel responded with air strikes and a ground invasion, and despite a ceasefire it continues sporadic attacks and holds territory in the south.

The United States carried out air strikes Sunday on Iran after the first US military deaths since open hostilities rekindled the Middle East war.

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Escalating strikes inside Iran: From military pressure to reshaping the battlefield

The expansion of direct strikes inside Iranian territory under President Donald Trump signals a significant shift in the nature of the confrontation with Tehran. The escalation does not appear to represent merely another phase of military pressure, but rather a broader attempt to reshape the dynamics of the conflict and redefine the balance of power surrounding Iran.



Amer Al Sabaileh

At one level, this approach reflects a return to the strategy of “negotiating under fire”, in which military pressure is used as a tool to strengthen a negotiating position and create new realities on the ground. However, the significance of these operations extends beyond their immediate political purpose. The pattern and selection of targets suggest a deeper effort aimed at limiting Iran’s strategic capabilities and reducing its ability to use regional pressure points as instruments of influence.

The targeting of coastal areas, military formations, logistical centers, and ports along the Gulf indicates an attempt to contain Iran’s ability to threaten international navigation or exploit the Strait of Hormuz as a strategic bargaining mechanism. The objective appears to be not only deterrence, but also the gradual erosion of the infrastructure that enables Tehran to project power beyond its borders.

At the same time, the expansion of strikes deeper inside Iran, including transportation networks, bridges, and logistical support facilities, reflects a transformation in the rules of engagement. Areas previously considered outside the scope of military operations are increasingly becoming part of the potential target landscape. This shift aims to increase the cost of continued confrontation and place greater pressure on Iran’s internal ability to sustain prolonged conflict.

The geographic distribution of operations from southern regions to Ahvaz, Lorestan, and Kurdistan also suggests a broader operational calculation. The objective is not limited to degrading military assets, it also involves disrupting the networks that connect Iran’s strategic regions to its central command structure. By targeting supply routes, transportation links, and support infrastructure, these operations could limit Tehran’s ability to maneuver forces, maintain logistical continuity and respond effectively across multiple fronts.

Taken together, these developments indicate a gradual transition from a policy of limited deterrence towards a strategy designed to shift the centre of gravity of the conflict into Iran itself. This approach could have implications for internal power dynamics, particularly given the complexity of Iran’s decision-making structure and the existence of multiple centres of influence within the state.

From Tehran’s perspective, available responses appear increasingly constrained. One option remains the continued use of maritime pressure, whether through allied actors in the Bab Al Mandab region or through threats against the Strait of Hormuz. Another involves expanding regional tensions by attempting to draw Gulf states more directly into the confrontation. However, both approaches face growing limitations. The security of international waterways is a global concern, making prolonged disruption difficult to sustain, while Gulf states have demonstrated increasing capacity to absorb and manage security challenges.

The broader U.S. approach also appears to extend beyond Iran’s borders. Increased pressure on financial networks, weapons transfers, and logistical channels connected to Iran’s regional allies in Iraq and Syria reflects an effort to reduce Tehran’s strategic depth and restrict the operational space available to its regional partners. The objective is not only to weaken individual actors, but also to disrupt the wider network that allows Iran to maintain influence across the region.

Ultimately, the emerging strategy appears to rest on three interconnected objectives: Weakening Iran’s military capabilities, reducing the effectiveness of its regional network, and shifting the pressure directly onto the Iranian homeland. If this trajectory continues, the current phase may represent more than a series of military operations. It could mark the beginning of a broader effort to reshape the strategic environment around Iran and redefine the future balance of power in the region.

Gold is back... but the dollar is here to stay



ECONOMIC REVIEW

Yusuf Mansur

If we are to look to the future from both an economic and strategic perspective, the key question is not whether the US dollar will collapse, nor whether gold will continue its upward trajectory. Rather, the real question is: How will the global monetary system evolve over the next decade?

Since the end of the Second World War, the US dollar has served as the backbone of the international financial system. It remains the world’s leading reserve currency, the principal denomination for strategic commodities such as oil, natural gas and wheat and the dominant currency in international trade and finance. Although its share of global official foreign exchange reserves has gradually declined over the past two decades, the International Monetary Fund reports that the dollar still accounts for approximately 57 per cent of disclosed global foreign exchange reserves held by central banks — far exceeding the share of any competing currency.

At the same time, however, the world is witnessing a remarkable resurgence of gold at the heart of the international monetary system. Central banks no longer view gold merely as a historical relic or a passive reserve asset. Instead, it has become an essential hedge against geopolitical uncertainty, economic sanctions, sovereign debt risks and currency volatility. According to the latest survey by the World Gold Council, 84 per cent of central banks expect the share of gold in their reserves to increase over the next five years. Moreover, central banks have purchased an average of nearly 1,000 metric tonnes of gold annually over the past four years — roughly double the average recorded during the previous decade.

The US dollar, on the other hand, continues to enjoy structural advantages that remain difficult to replicate

Gold, meanwhile, is likely to remain one of the principal beneficiaries of this transformation. Several structural forces support its long-term outlook. Persistent geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, Europe, and Asia continue to strengthen demand for safe-haven assets. Rising sovereign debt levels across advanced

economies have further increased investors’ preference for assets that are not liabilities of any government. In addition, should global economic growth weaken, central banks may eventually resume cutting interest rates — a development that has historically supported gold prices.

Nevertheless, gold is not without its limitations. It is a highly volatile asset that generates no regular income, unlike bonds or dividend-paying securities. For this reason, the International Monetary Fund has cautioned against viewing gold as a complete substitute for liquid financial assets.

The US dollar, on the other hand, continues to enjoy structural advantages that remain difficult to replicate. The United States possesses the world’s largest and most liquid government bond market, the deepest capital markets, and the strongest financial institutions. Most international trade, global capital markets, and cross-border banking transactions continue to be conducted in dollars. Even countries seeking to reduce their dependence on the US currency find it difficult to replace it because no alternative currently combines the same degree of liquidity, institutional credibility and financial depth.

This does not mean, however, that the dollar will be free from challenges. Its share of global reserves is likely to continue declining gradually — not because it is collapsing, but because other currencies and reserve assets are gaining ground. The Chinese yuan may play a larger role in bilateral trade, the euro could strengthen its international position and central bank digital currencies may become increasingly important in cross-border payments. Yet , these developments are more likely to produce a more balanced global monetary system than to replace the dollar altogether.

Another noteworthy development is that the traditional inverse relationship between gold and the dollar has become

less pronounced than it once was. Investors have long assumed that a stronger dollar leads to weaker gold prices, and vice versa. Yet, in recent years, both assets have appreciated simultaneously during several periods, driven by heightened demand for safe-haven assets amid geopolitical conflicts and by unprecedented central bank purchases of gold. This suggests that official demand for gold has become an independent force influencing prices alongside interest rates and the value of the US dollar.

Looking ahead to the next decade, the most plausible scenario is one in which the dollar retains its position as the world’s leading reserve currency while gold continues to gain prominence within official reserve portfolios. In other words, the world appears to be moving toward a financial system that remains dollar-led, but in which gold occupies a far more important strategic role than it has for many decades.

For investors, the most important lesson is that gold and the dollar should not be viewed as rivals, but as complementary assets serving different purposes. Gold remains one of the most effective hedges against geopolitical conflict, inflation, and financial instability. The dollar, meanwhile, continues to provide the world’s primary source of liquidity and remains the principal currency for pricing international trade and financial assets.

The future, therefore, is unlikely to belong exclusively to either gold or the dollar. Instead, it is likely to be a future with more gold within a global financial system that continues to be led by the US dollar. Based on current data, central bank behaviour, reserve management strategies, and ongoing geopolitical and economic developments, this remains the most credible and likely path for the international monetary system.

The writer is a former Jordanian minister of economic affairs.

Syria’s reintegration meets Washington’s regional ambitions

In less than two years, Syria has undergone a remarkable transformation under President Ahmad Al Sharaa. From joining the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS to securing the gradual easing of Western sanctions and renewing diplomatic engagement with regional and international partners, Damascus has rapidly shifted from international isolation towards gradual regional reintegration. The recent Ankara NATO Summit further reinforced this trajectory, fuelling speculation that Syria could soon be removed from the US list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, a designation it has held since 1979.

In this context, President Donald Trump’s suggestion that Syria could play a greater role in addressing the challenge posed by non-state armed actors in Lebanon marks a notable shift in US policy. Rather than reflecting confidence in Syria’s readiness, it aligns with Washington’s broader strategy of shifting regional security responsibilities onto local partners, a core pillar of the 2026 US Counterterrorism Strategy. Yet, this raises a fundamental question: is a country still rebuilding its institutions, economy and security apparatus after more than a decade of conflict in a position to assume such a role? More importantly, would becoming entangled in Lebanon once again risk setting Syria’s own recovery back to square one?

Syria’s involvement in Lebanon dates back to 1976, when Hafez Assad intervened in the Lebanese civil war under the pretext of restoring stability. The intervention gradually evolved into a prolonged military presence and extensive influence over Lebanese political

affairs that lasted until 2005. Decades later, the relationship took on a new dimension during the 13-year Syrian civil war, when Hizbollah emerged as one of the Assad regime’s principal military allies. The group deployed thousands of fighters, trained pro-Assad militias, and helped government forces recapture strategic territory, cementing its association with the regime’s military campaign and leaving a legacy of resentment that continues to shape Syrian perceptions of Hizbollah. While Syria’s new leadership has sought to distance itself from the interventionist policies of the Assad era and has repeatedly emphasised respect for Lebanon’s sovereignty any departure from that approach would risk reopening historical grievances and drawing Syria back into the very sectarian and regional dynamics it is seeking to escape.

Sectarianism has long been one of the defining features of both Syrian and Lebanese politics, shaping domestic power structures and regional alignments alike. This makes any prospect of renewed Syrian intervention in Lebanon particularly consequential. Were Syria’s Sunni-led government to become directly involved in confronting Hizbollah, a Shiite movement, the conflict would almost certainly be interpreted through a sectarian lens. Such a development risks transforming a political and security dispute into a broader sectarian confrontation, deepening polarisation within Lebanon while potentially reigniting tensions inside Syria among communities still recovering from more than a decade of civil war.

Beyond the risks it poses to



Farrah Al Abdallat

has weakened, the group remains one of Tehran’s most important regional allies.

Syria and Lebanon, renewed Syrian intervention would also carry significant regional consequences. Although Iranian support for Hizbollah

Tehran, with Lebanon remaining one of the principal sticking points between Washington and Tehran. Any Syrian move against Hizbollah would therefore be difficult to isolate from the wider confrontation involving Iran, Israel and the United States. Rather than remaining a Lebanese issue, it risks turning the country once again into an arena for regional competition. At a time when Washington and Tehran continue to disagree over Hizbollah’s future and the wider regional security order, drawing Syria into Lebanon would add another layer of uncertainty to an already volatile regional landscape.

Syria’s greatest strategic priority is not projecting influence beyond its borders but consolidating stability within them. More than a decade of conflict has left the country’s institutions fragile, its economy devastated, and its military in the early stages of reconstruction. Rather than becoming entangled in Lebanon w’s security challenges, Damascus has a rare opportunity to redefine its relationship with Beirut on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty rather than intervention. Re-entering Lebanon would not demonstrate Syria’s return as a regional power; it would risk repeating one of the very policies that contributed to its isolation in the first place and undermining the fragile progress made since the fall of the Assad regime. If Damascus is serious about turning the page on the Assad era, its success will depend not on returning to Lebanon’s conflicts, but on resisting them. Syria’s path back to regional relevance will ultimately be defined not by the conflicts it joins, but by the ones it chooses to avoid.

The negotiations preceding the US-Iran Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding further underscored Hizbollah’s strategic importance to Tehran...

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BUSINESS

Monday, July 20, 2026



JT photo

Jordan's Consumer Price Index reaches 2.03 per cent during the first half of 2026 according to the Department of Statistics

Jordan's inflation rises by 2.03% in H1 of 2026 — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's Consumer Price Index (inflation) reached 2.03 per cent during the first half of 2026, reflecting a slight increase compared with the 1.98 per cent recorded during the same period in 2025.

According to the monthly report issued by the Department of Statistics (DoS), the annual inflation rate for the month of June 2026 rose to 2.79 per cent, comparing with the 2.02 per cent registered in June 2025.

On a monthly basis, the inflation rate in June 2026 edged up by 0.14 per cent when compared with May, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported on Sunday.

During the first half of 2026, the increase was primarily driven by the rents compo-

nent, which contributed 0.70 percentage points.

The calculation of the inflation rate relies on a consumer basket containing 850 items

Transport followed with a contribution of 0.43 percentage points, while oils and fats added 0.26 percentage points, and personal effects contributed 0.14 percentage points.

For the month of June 2026 specific-

ly, transport was the leading driver of annual inflation, contributing 1.27 percentage points.

Rents followed next with a contribution of 0.76 percentage points, while oils and fats accounted for 0.28 percentage points.

A decline in the prices of several other commodities helped limit the overall surge in June. Notably, the meat and poultry component lowered the monthly inflation rate by 0.23 percentage points.

The calculation of the inflation rate relies on a consumer basket containing 850 items. This selection comprises 325 food items and 525 non-food commodities, with data gathered from a survey sample of 3,400 commercial establishments, Petra reported.

ACT reports 'strong' first-half performance as transit cargo surges 155.1%

AMMAN (JT) — Aqaba Container Terminal (ACT) has reported "strong" operational and commercial performance during the first half of 2026, driven by growth in cargo volumes, continued infrastructure investments, high safety standards, and progress towards its sustainability and community development goals.

During the first half of 2026, ACT handled 472,680 TEUs, compared with 468,062 TEUs during the same period in 2025, while transit cargo volumes reached 60,178 TEUs, a 155.1 per cent increase from the 23,593TEUs in H1 2025.

This performance was supported by consistently high productivity across terminal operations despite evolving regional trade dynamics.

The terminal also recorded 188,927 trucks in and out movements during the six-month period, in comparison to 182,490 movements in H1 2025, reflecting continued cargo flow efficiency across the supply chain.

ACT attributed the performance to investments made over the past year, including the refurbishment of quayside infrastructure and the deployment of new ship-to-shore (STS) cranes, which have enhanced vessel handling capacity and operational productivity despite geopolitical challenges affecting regional shipping schedules and changes in vessel sizes.

The terminal also strengthened its po-



Photo Courtesy of ACT

Aqaba Container Terminal transit cargo volumes reach 60,178 TEUs during first half of 2026, a 155.1 per cent increase from the 23,593TEUs during the first half of 2025

sition as a regional logistics hub by handling eight vessels carrying more than 5,000 TEUs, including one vessel that recorded a throughput of 10,884 TEUs, the highest container throughput handled at the terminal, according to the statement.

During the reporting period, ACT also welcomed the KOTA ODYSSEY, Jordan's first LNG-powered container vessel to make a maiden call, while handling 4,412 TEUs of transshipment cargo in response to evolving regional trade patterns.

Commercially, ACT reported continued customer confidence, reflected in a high Net Promoter Score. The company also advanced the rollout of APM Ter-

minals' global Contract Lifecycle Management system, aimed at improving contract management, transparency, compliance, customer collaboration and operational efficiency.

Health, safety, security, and environmental (HSSE) performance remained a key focus throughout the reporting period. ACT conducted several emergency preparedness exercises, including oil spill and bromine release response drills in cooperation with key stakeholders.

The exercises received positive evaluations from the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA). The company also completed multiple external safety and security audits, including assessments by ASEZA-

appointed auditors, the Social Security Corporation, and a comprehensive security audit conducted under Maersk's global standards, it said.

On the sustainability front, ACT reported a 29 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared with its 2022 baseline, including a 75 per cent reduction in electricity-related emissions. The progress was supported by ongoing work toward ISO 50001 Energy Management System certification, development of a 6-megawatt solar power project, deployment of reefer electricity monitoring system, and the expansion of electric-powered equipment to reduce diesel consumption.

The company said

that these initiatives support its targets of reducing emissions by 65 per cent by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2040.

"Our performance in the first half of 2026 reflects the strength of our operational capabilities, the trust of our customers, and the dedication of our people," said Jose Rueda, chief executive officer of Aqaba Container Terminal.

He said that the company remains focused on delivering reliable and efficient services while advancing safety, sustainability, and community impact, adding that ACT will continue strengthening Aqaba's position as a strategic gateway for Jordan and the wider region as regional trade dynamics evolve.

'Holding back is evil' — Gen-Zers revive Japan's corporate machismo

By Tomohiro Osaki
Agence France-Presse

TOKYO — Huddled together shoulder-to-shoulder, Gen-Z hires at a Tokyo firm roared "Hell yeah!" to cap their morning rally, displaying the kind of corporate machismo that fuelled Japan's post-war economic miracle.

Once a bastion for "corporate warriors" fiercely devoted to their jobs, Japan has spent the past decades shifting towards a better work-life balance with greater emphasis on mental health.

But a small cohort of Gen-Z workers in the world's fourth-largest economy is seeking to emulate that bygone zeal, disenchanted with "soft" modern workplace culture they see as hindering growth.

At Global Partners, a business support and development firm, workers form a circle every morning, sway rhythmically and rapid-fire mantras like "build up sales!" in throat-shredding screams, with someone randomly chosen to pep-talk the crowd in a test of mettle.

The company has become an internet sensation and draws young hires longing to be toughened up, including 26-year-old employee Kotaro Kawabata.

"Here, it's like 'boom' right off the bat. Everyone is like 'Alright, let's all get to work!' — I absolutely love it," he told AFP.

One of a dozen motivational Post-it notes adorning his computer reads, "Kotaro, you're the



AFP photo

Tomoya Nagareo and Yasuharu Kato joke with a visitor as he introduces himself to the staff during a daily meeting, part of routine corporate practices aimed at boosting productivity, at the Global Partners office in Tokyo on June 1

number one salesman." "I can really grow here. They're strict with me and they even get mad at me for the sake of my development," Kawabata said.

Asuka Obri Okabe, too, welcomed wholehearted scoldings, which she treated "as a form of love", the 28-year-old told AFP.

"What's truly scary is an environment where I'm never corrected, and left to move forward in the wrong direction."

A 2023 survey by research firm Recruit Works Institute showed that 64 per cent of middle managers in Japan scold their subordinates no more than "a few times" a year.

Gone are the days when tough love and the "homogeneity of male full-timers" steered corporate Japan, Shoto Furuya, the institute's chief researcher, told AFP.

A rapidly greying population has left the country reliant on wide-ranging talent, includ-

ing those who "don't see work as the main focus of their lives", he said.

The 2015 suicide of an exhausted 24-year-old employee at advertising giant Dentsu also forced Japan's corporate world to reckon with "karoshi" — death from overwork.

"But the laid-back, low-pressure environment wasn't the right answer for everyone," with some young go-getters now quitting in frustration and desiring a return to "that 'gung-ho' sports-team atmosphere", Furuya said.

GP's high-energy culture "is a reminder of what Japan lost" and "how its post-war companies used to function as extremely tight-knit communities," he said.

Quiet quitters

At GP, workers unite over "zoss" — a radical, masculine abbreviation of "otsukaresama-desu [Thank you for your work]" — that they incessantly exclaim as

their go-to greeting.

The firm uploads videos of its high-octane pep rallies and workers being reprimanded to promote zoss culture, prompting social media users to label it "cult-like" and "sadistic".

GP founder and CEO Koji Yamamoto, 54, bemoaned what he described as Japan's embrace of Western woke values that he believes began around 2000.

Political correctness and cancel culture, he said, "eviscerated the mental grit" behind Japan's post-war economic success.

Workers today are left "too afraid to even say 'do your best' to [each other] or to shake hands" for fear of being accused of harassment, Yamamoto said.

Hence GP's internal motto: "Holding back is evil."

"If you don't say anything because you don't want to rock the boat, you end up 'quietly quitting,'" he told AFP.

A recent survey by job-matching service My-navi showed that half of Japanese workers in their 20s and 30s say they have mentally disengaged from their jobs.

GP employee Yuna Nagano, 19, agreed that workers in her generation "tend to lack enthusiasm, doing only what they are told to do".

"But here, we don't work just to be compensated for our time, so our productivity is much higher. I think this kind of mindset is conducive to Japan's economy," she told AFP.

JIFCO expansion set to boost demand for Jordanian phosphate

AMMAN (JT) — The technical committee set up for the Jordanian-Indian Fertiliser Company (JIFCO) expansion project discussed, during its technical meetings on Sunday, the implementation plans of the project, which is estimated to cost one billion dollars.

Representatives of international companies specialising in sulfuric and phosphoric acid plant expansions presented the project's engineering and technical designs, implementation timetable and mechanisms for enhancing co-operation and monitoring progress.

The expansion aims to increase the JIFCO's



Photo Courtesy of Al Mamlaka TV

The technical committee set up for the Jordanian-Indian Fertiliser Company expansion project discusses, during its technical meetings on Sunday, the implementation plans of the project, which is estimated to cost one billion dollars

production efficiency and meet growing global demand for phosphate fertilisers, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) Chairperson Moham-

mad Theibat underlined the JPMC's commitment to strengthening cooperation with its Indian partners and mobilising all available resources to implement the expansion in accordance with

the highest international standards.

Indian Ambassador to Jordan Manish Chauhan praised the efforts of the JPMC, the JIFCO and their joint technical teams to advance the project.

He also underscored India's commitment to expanding economic and investment cooperation with Jordan in support of both countries' shared interests.

The meeting also underscored the JIFCO's strategic importance as a successful investment reflecting the depth of Jordanian-Indian relations and its vital role in supporting the fertiliser and mining industries, Petra reported.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Sunday amounted to JD16.2 million spread over 5 million shares that traded through 5,374 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.57 per cent, closing at 3897.78 points.

Out of 93 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 25 companies rose while the share price of another 40 declined.

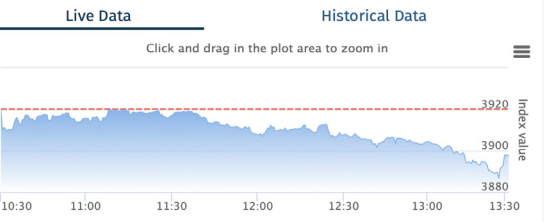
Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Afaq for Energy Company Plc. by 7.14 per cent, Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 5.26 per cent, Arab Phoenix Holdings by 3.57 per cent, Arab Investors Union Company for Real Estates Developing by 3.45 per cent, and Universal Modern Industries by 3.33 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordan Insurance by 7.41 per cent, Real Estate and Investment Portfolio Company by 4.85 per cent, Noor Capital Mkrtks for Diversified Investments by 4.76 per cent, Jordan Petroleum Refinery by 4.74 per cent, and Arab East Investment by 4.13 per cent.



THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ▼ 3897.78 0.57% July 19, 2026



DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market		OTC Market	Bonds
Trading Value (JDs)	16,203,285		
Trading volume	5,046,076		
No. of Transactions	5,374		
No. of Securities	93		

Losers: 40
Gainers: 25
Unchanged: 28

FOOTBALL

Moroccan Badou Zaki appointed as new head coach of ‘Nashama’

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Football Association (JFA) Board of Directors, chaired by HRH Prince Ali, has appointed Moroccan coach Badou Zaki as head coach of the national senior team to lead the “Nashama” in upcoming competitions, including the AFC Asian Cup finals in Saudi Arabia in early 2027. Zaki has signed a one-year contract following the board’s approval of the resignation of former coach Jamal Sellami and his technical staff. The new coach will be introduced with his technical staff, selected based on his recommendations. Zaki, a former Morocco goalkeeper, led the team to the 1986 World Cup knockout stage, was named African Player of the Year that year and played for Real Mallorca. As a coach, he guided Morocco to the 2004 Africa Cup of Nations final and managed clubs including Wydad Casablanca and FUS Rabat, as well as Sudan and Niger’s national teams.



CYCLING

Tour de France rivals Pogacar, Vingegaard given night-time doping controls

CHAMPAGNOLE, France (AFP) — Tour de France leader Tadej Pogacar and his main rival Jonas Vingegaard both confirmed on Sunday that they were visited in the middle of the night by anti-doping controllers, just hours before a crucial mountain stage. French newspaper Le Parisien had said that both four-time winner Pogacar and two-time former champion Vingegaard, were targeted by International Testing Agency (ITA) officials at their hotels during the night. “I got four hours of sleep today. Not [at] 2:00 am in the morning, because they were [there at] 5:00 in the morning,” he said before the start of Sunday’s 15th stage from Champagnole in the Jura to Plateau de Solaison in the Alps when asked about the report. “But I always go to sleep late. It was a big shock for me also to get four hours of sleep today. But I had a very cool long morning. I couldn’t fall back to sleep, so I was chilling, listening to some old Eminem hits, and making coffees, so I over-cafeinated.

EAST RUTHERFORD, United States (AFP) — Ferran Torres scored an extra-time winner as Spain defeated holders Argentina 1-0 to win the World Cup on Monday and shatter Lionel Messi’s dreams of a triumphant farewell to football’s greatest stage.

Barcelona striker Torres lashed home a thumping finish in the 106th minute to reward a dominant display by Spain against an Argentina team which failed to register a single shot on target in 120 minutes.

A star-studded crowd of 80,663 that included US President Donald Trump packed East Rutherford’s MetLife Stadium to see if Argentina captain Messi could crown his glittering career with a second World Cup victory.

But the 39-year-old maestro — almost certainly playing in his final World Cup game — was reduced to irrelevance as Spain took control early on against an Argentina team which committed a catalogue of cynical fouls throughout.

The South Americans’ skulduggery ended with midfielder Enzo Fernandez being sent off after a brutal challenge on Spain defender Pau Cubarsi in injury time.

For long periods though it looked as if Argentina may somehow hold on for a penalty shoot-out as Spain struggled to make the



AFP photo

Spain’s midfielder #16 Rodri lifts the trophy with his teammates after winning the 2026 World Cup football tournament final match between Spain and Argentina at the New York/New Jersey Stadium in East Rutherford on Monday

breakthrough.

But after Nico Williams had a goal controversially disallowed in extra-time, Spain struck.

A lofted cross to the back post by Pedro Porro found Williams who nodded into the path of Torres to crash home the goal that would clinch Spain’s second World Cup title after its maiden 2010 triumph.

Earlier, a clear sign of Argentina’s frustration came in the 15th minute when Alexis Mac Allister went flying in with a studs-up challenge that struck

Dani Olmo’s ankle.

Mac Allister escaped an early yellow card although after Slovenian referee Slavko Vincic only awarded a foul.

Spain made its presence felt moments later though, with Alex Baena poleaxing Messi with an elbow to the back that again escaped sanction.

Argentina continued to test referee Vincic’s patience with a series of niggly challenges, and Nicolas Tagliafico was lucky not to be cautioned after raking Lamine Yamal’s calf in a clumsy challenge.

Lopsided half

Spain, meanwhile, continued to probe for openings but Mikel Oyarzabal failed to seriously test Emi Martinez with a low shot that the Argentina goalkeeper gathered easily in the 39th minute.

Eventually though Vincic did reach for a yellow card, with Lisandro Martinez booked for a cynical challenge on Oyarzabal.

Martinez was substituted shortly afterwards with an apparent injury, veteran Nicolas Otamendi com-

ing on in his place.

The final’s controversial extended half-time show featuring the likes of Madonna, Shakira and Justin Bieber stretched to 27 minutes but did little to upset Spain’s rhythm.

The Spanish piled on the pressure in a lopsided second half as Argentina hung on grimly.

Spain coach de la Fuente sent on Pedri and Ferran Torres for Fabian Ruiz and Oyarzabal and the chances continued with Argentina in full siege mode.

Yamal twisted away and chipped a cross for Torres, whose downward header was saved by Martinez.

Pedri and Cubarsi both lashed long-range shots that Martinez failed to grasp at the first attempt but somehow Argentina continued to hold on.

But the arrival of substitutes Williams and Mikel Merino gave fresh life to Spain’s attacking momentum, and the onslaught continued.

Fernandez was booked for dissent in the 82nd minute before Torres and Rodri both fired long-range shots from Martinez.

Fernandez’s dismissal left Spain down to 10 men heading into extra-time.

Martinez had one last save deep in stoppage time when Yamal’s superb whipped free-kick was clawed wide.

The Spanish dominance continued in extra-time, with Williams almost opening the scoring with a glancing header that Martinez got down well to save one-handed.

Moments later it looked as if Spain had made the breakthrough when Williams slid a low finish into the net but referee Vincic blew for a marginal foul on Nicolas Otamendi.

But the breakthrough came with Torres’s winner on 106 minutes. Argentina made a desperate last raid on Spain’s goal but La Roja held firm to seal victory.



SPAIN CROWNED 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP CHAMPIONS



Spain secured their second FIFA World Cup title by edging past defending champions Argentina 1-0 after extra time in the final at the New York/New Jersey Stadium in East Rutherford on Monday



AFP photos



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