



File photo
According to a report by ESCWA, the estimated additional financial cost for Jordan due to the regional conflict amounts to 0.691 per cent of its gross domestic product

ESCWA says Jordan faces region’s heaviest crisis-related financial burden

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan is bearing the “highest additional financial cost” among Arab nations relative to the size of its economy to mitigate the economic and social repercussions of the ongoing regional conflict, UN estimates showed.

The government has stressed it continues to absorb a “significant” portion of energy costs and implement precautionary measures to maintain price stability and secure citizen needs, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

According to a report by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the estimated additional financial cost for Jordan amounts to approximately 0.691 per cent of its gross domestic product.

This represents the highest ratio among Arab states, driven by national efforts to curb rising poverty rates and preserve household purchasing power.

The report noted that Jordan has taken several measures to cushion the impact of the crisis, including lowering flour and wheat prices to offset the effects of rising fuel costs, freezing gas prices and im-

plementing gradual oil price increases to limit the impact on citizens’ purchasing power.

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan had stressed that the government has not fully reflected the global spike in fuel prices onto the local market to protect citizens and the economy from the fallout of the war, noting that additional monthly costs in the energy and electricity generation sectors have exceeded JD150 million.

In the same context, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Saleh Kharabsheh said that disruptions in gas supplies forced Jordan to operate power plants using alternative fuel at an additional cost of nearly JD3 million per day, totalling around JD100 million in a single month.

The government has kept electricity tariffs unchanged, absorbing a “major” share of the financial burdens resulting from the crisis.

Government interventions have extended beyond the energy sector to bolstering the strategic stockpile of basic commodities to ensure supply continuity and market stability.

Industry, Trade and

Supply Minister Yarub Oudah said that the Kingdom’s current wheat reserves are sufficient for six months, rising to nearly ten months when including contracted quantities, reassuring the public that supply chains remain intact and there is no justification for panic buying.

Amid rising energy, transport, and supply costs, the government has also introduced public spending austerity measures, including limiting the travel of official delegations and cutting government expenditures in an effort to contain financial pressures without compromising essential public services.

ESCWA estimates indicate that Jordan faces the heaviest additional financial burden in the Arab region to contain the social impacts of the crisis.

It added that government measures demonstrate that this burden has translated into directly absorbing costs in the energy sector, maintaining stable electricity and fuel prices and enhancing food security to prevent the repercussions of the crisis from impacting citizens’ daily lives.

Queen Rania visits Asayel Charity Society, meets women from local community

AMMAN (JT) — Her Majesty Queen Rania visited the Asayel Bader Charity Society in Amman on Monday, where she met with a number of its beneficiaries and learnt about its efforts to empower the local community.

During the visit, the Queen met with the society’s president, Iman Al Abbadi, and several board members, who briefed Her Majesty on the inspiration behind Asayel Bader’s establishment, according to a statement from Office of Her Majesty.

She also spoke with a group of the society’s beneficiaries, who elaborated on how its programmes have impacted their lives.

Through its flagship empowerment and training programmes, Asayel Bader creates employment opportunities for local residents, produces and markets traditional food products and implements hands-on community initiatives for youth.

It also seeks to maximise the sustainable use of agricultural land by planting fruit-bearing trees and organising seasonal com-



Photo courtesy of Office of Her Majesty
Her Majesty Queen Rania on Monday visits the Asayel Bader Charity Society in Amman, where she meets with a number of its beneficiaries

munity harvests for essential crops.

Al Abbadi outlined the society’s development initiatives, which equip members of the local community with the training and resources needed to strengthen their livelihoods.

She also spoke about

Asayel Bader’s collaboration with academic volunteers and environmental activists, who support local farmers and help market their products.

While touring the society, Her Majesty visited a breadmaking station and learnt about a selection of the soci-

ety’s products prepared by local women.

She also dropped by a sewing workshop, as well as a pickle and jam-making workshop organised by the Vocational Training Corporation for the area’s young people.

Founded in 2019 in Bader Al Jadeedah, Am-

man, the Asayel Bader Charity Society is dedicated to economic empowerment, agricultural development, and the preservation of Jordan’s cultural heritage.

Its initiatives aim to promote sustainable agriculture and social development, according to the statement.

Jordan ranks 2nd regionally, 49th globally in Responsible AI Index

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan ranked second regionally and 49th globally in the Global Index on Responsible AI for 2026, scoring 40.46 out of 100 points, according to data recently released by the Global Centre on AI Governance.

The Kingdom outperformed the Middle East regional average of 32.07 points and placed sixth within its income group, surpassing 64 per cent of the 135

countries and regions covered by the index, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

Jordan achieved its strongest performance in the “Work and Skills” pillar, ranking 20th globally and first regionally with a score of 61.91 points, compared to a regional average of 34.73 points, highlighting the Kingdom’s strength in upskilling programmes, rehabilitation and AI literacy.

In the public services sector, Jordan ranked

34th globally and second regionally, scoring 43.44 points. This performance, which stands 14.7 points ahead of the regional average, was driven by advancements in public procurement and the development of public sector employees’ skills.

The Kingdom scored 39.03 points in trust and safety, ranking 61st globally and seventh regionally, while securing 30.82 points

in ethics and sustainability, placing 74th globally and seventh regionally.

The index offers a new international benchmark that focuses on governance, accountability, rights protection, and transparency, rather than just AI adoption or government readiness.

Under Jordan’s Artificial Intelligence Strategy and Implementation Plan 2023–2027, the Kingdom aims

to become a regional leader by providing an attractive technological and entrepreneurial environment.

Studies indicate that AI is projected to increase its contribution to the global economy by 5 to 25 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), depending on each country’s technological level, while enhancing entrepreneurship, creating jobs, and improving public service efficiency.

Culture Ministry commemorates 75th anniversary of King Abdullah I’s death

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Culture on Monday organised a symposium at the Royal Cultural Centre on the 75th anniversary of the death of His Majesty the late King Abdullah I.

Monday marked the 75th anniversary of the death of 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.

During the event, Minister of Culture Mustafa Rawashdeh said that the founder king laid the foundations of the Jordanian state through institution-building, legislation and the principles of the Great Arab Revolt, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

“The Kingdom continues to build on that legacy under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdul-



Petra photo
The Ministry of Culture on Monday organises a symposium at the Royal Cultural Centre on the 75th anniversary of the death of His Majesty the late King Abdullah I

lah,” he added.

Rawashdeh said that the founder king was ahead of his time in his vision for Arab and international relations, his support for the Palestinian cause and his approach to domestic affairs, which was based on democracy, dialogue, moderation and good governance.

He added that culture

had been a key pillar of the Jordanian state since the 1920s, noting that the founder king’s intellectual and cultural council brought together prominent scholars, writers, poets and jurists who contributed to the Kingdom’s national renaissance.

The symposium brought together academics, historians and re-

searchers who reviewed key milestones in the founder king’s life and his contribution to building the Jordanian state.

Speakers reviewed key milestones in King Abdullah I’s life, highlighting his role in the Great Arab Revolt, the establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan, Jordan’s independence in 1946 and the

unity of the two banks in 1950.

They also highlighted his commitment to defending the Palestinian cause, building state institutions and laying the foundations of constitutional governance.

Participants said that King Abdullah I pursued a pragmatic diplomatic approach based on dialogue, wisdom and a clear understanding of regional and international developments.

They also highlighted his contribution to Jordan’s cultural and literary movement, describing him as a pioneer of the Kingdom’s cultural renaissance whose patronage of writers, poets and intellectuals helped shape Jordan’s national identity.

The event also included a photo exhibition showcasing the life of the late founder King Abdullah I.



File photo
Tourism revenue rises by 7 per cent in June, reaching \$685 million, according to preliminary data released by the Central Bank of Jordan

Tourism income drops by 5.3% in H1 2026 — CBJ

AMMAN (JT) — Tourism revenue rose by 7 per cent in June, reaching \$685 million, according to preliminary data released by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ).

During the first half of 2026, total tourism revenue dropped by 5.3 per cent, amounting to \$3.5 billion, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

CBJ said that during the first half of 2026, tourism revenue went down from expatriate Jordanians by 12.1 per cent, US nationals by 25.6 per cent, European nationals by 28.2

per cent, Asian nationals by 3.5 per cent and other nationalities by 40.6 per cent.

The data showed that tourism revenue from Arab tourists increased by 6.5 per cent.

The data also showed a 6.7 per cent decline in outbound tourism expenditure by Jordanians and residents during June 2026, dropping to \$182.4 million.

For the first six months of 2026, outbound tourism spending decreased by 9.4 per cent to \$906.1 million.

Tourism revenue in

2025 grew by 7.6 per cent to \$7.790 billion, reversing a 2.3 per cent decline recorded in 2024, when revenues stood at \$7.239 billion, CBJ data showed in January.

The increase in 2025 was driven by a 15.3 per cent rise in the number of tourists.

The data indicated higher tourism revenue in 2025 from European nationalities by 39.8 per cent, Asian nationalities 32.7 per cent, American nationalities 18.8 per cent, Arab nationalities 4 per cent and other nationalities 32.6 per cent.

Education Ministry, UNHCR sign refugee student data-sharing agreement

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Education, through the Queen Rania Al Abdullah Centre for Education Technology and Information, and UNHCR on Monday signed a data-sharing agreement to facilitate the exchange of personal information on refugees and asylum seekers in support of their integration into the King-

dom’s national education system.

The agreement, signed by Minister of Education Azmi Mahafzah and UNHCR Representative in Jordan Maria Stavropoulou, establishes a framework for exchanging personal data collected and maintained by the Queen Rania Al Abdullah Centre for Education Technol-

ogy and Information and UNHCR.

It aims to support the integration of refugee and asylum-seeker students into Jordan’s national education system in line with UNHCR policies and the government’s education strategy, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Under the agreement,

UNHCR will provide technical support to enhance the student module within the Queen Rania Al Abdullah Centre’s Student Information System, enabling the ministry to verify the legal status of refugee and asylum-seeker students using information from the proGres v4 database.

The ministry said

that the agreement will also help policymakers evaluate the impact of education policies and initiatives, enhance evidence-based decision-making, and improve the design and implementation of education policies.

It also provides for linking UNHCR’s database with the Ajyal educational platform.



The initiatives include sending humanitarian aid for Lebanon

JHCO, Swiss charity launch humanitarian projects in Jordan, Lebanon

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO), in cooperation with Switzerland's Barakah Charity, said on Monday that it is implementing a series of humanitarian and development projects targeting underprivileged communities in Jordan and supporting relief efforts in Lebanon.

The initiatives include humanitarian aid for Lebanon, the distribution of hearing aids to underprivileged Jordanians and the upgrading of educational facilities in schools, according to a JHCO statement released on Monday.

As part of Jordan's continued humanitarian support for Lebanon, Barakah Charity contributed relief assistance that was delivered through JHCO aid convoys. The latest convoy, comprising 32 trucks, carried food and relief supplies to help meet the basic needs of affected communities.

In Jordan, the partnership provided hearing aids to 70 underprivileged beneficiaries with hearing impairments in the Amman and Maan governorates, helping improve their hearing, communication abilities and independence.

JHCO Secretary-General Hussein Shibli said the partnership with Barakah Charity reflects the value of humanitarian cooperation...

The cooperation also included renovating and equipping the library of a mixed basic school in Salt District, Balqa Governorate, to create a more supportive learning environment and improve students' access to books and educational resources.

JHCO Secretary-General Hussein Shibli said the partnership with Barakah Charity reflects the value of humanitarian cooperation that addresses urgent needs while contributing to sustainable development.

He said that the projects, spanning humanitarian relief, healthcare and education, highlight the importance of coordinated efforts between JHCO and its partners to ensure assistance reaches those most in need through practical interventions that preserve beneficiaries' dignity.

The JHCO said that it will continue strengthening its local and international partnerships to implement humanitarian and development programmes that support vulnerable communities in Jordan and abroad.

70% of planned railway routes on state land — DLS

AMMAN (JT) — Around 70 per cent of the land along planned railway routes is state-owned, while privately owned land accounts for about 30 per cent of the targeted routes, Land and Survey Department (DLS) Director Khaldoun Al Khaldi said on Monday.

Speaking to "Al Mam-laka" TV, Al Khaldi said proposed amendments to the Real Estate Ownership Law concerning railway land expropriation aim to support the implementation of strategic transport projects as Jordan moves towards establishing a railway network for freight and passenger transport and connecting the Kingdom with neighbouring countries.

He said the amendments stipulate that expropriation of railway land would be limited to the legally permitted quarter of a plot's area, while any additional area would be compensated in accordance with the Expropriation Law.

Khaldi noted that railway lines would be accompanied by service roads and railway corridors that would support industrial zones and investment projects, while helping reduce transportation costs.

Meanwhile, Head of the Lower House Legal Committee MP Aref Saaydeh said the committee approved the draft amended Real Estate Ownership Law for 2026 after reviewing its provisions and introducing amendments aimed at balancing citizens' rights with investment needs.

He said considering railway routes as roads is consistent with the need to provide infrastructure for major investment projects, noting that railway lines would include service roads and stations that would increase the value of surrounding land and improve investment opportunities, particularly in desert areas.

He added that the legally permitted quarter of land allocated for such projects follows the same principle applied to road expropriations, where no compensation is provided for that portion, while compensation is granted for any area exceeding the allowed percentage.



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Lower House speaker, EU ambassador discuss cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi on Monday met with EU Ambassador to Jordan Pierre-Christophe Chatzisavas to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation and partnership between Jordan and the European Union, particularly in the parliamentary field.

During the meeting, Qadi highlighted the strong partnership between Jordan and the EU, expressing the Lower House's appreciation for the EU's support for the Kingdom in various fields, according to a Lower House statement.

"Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, continues to implement its political, economic and public sector modernisation programmes, reflecting the state's commitment to expanding public participation in the decision-making process," he added.

He also highlighted



Lower House Speaker Mazen Qadi on Monday meets with EU Ambassador to Jordan Pierre-Christophe Chatzisavas

His Majesty King Abdullah's efforts to promote regional security and stability, reaffirming Jordan's steadfast position that the Palestinian issue must be resolved on the basis of the two-state solution, leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Schatzisavas described Jordan as a trusted strategic partner for the European Union, commending His Majesty King Abdullah's pivotal role in efforts to promote regional security and stability.

He also expressed the EU's commitment to continuing its support for the Kingdom and enhancing cooperation in various fields, including parliamentary, investment and development cooperation.



The SSC says that applications will be accepted until the end of September, urging eligible tourism establishments to submit their requests within the specified timeframe

SSC offers reduced-interest instalment plans to support tourism sector

AMMAN (JT) — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) on Monday began receiving instalment applications from establishments operating in the tourism sector and related activities, under exceptional financial facilities approved by its board of directors to support the sector.

In a statement, the SSC said that applications will be accepted until the end of September, urging eligible tourism establishments to submit their requests within the specified timeframe.

The corporation said that the facilities allow businesses operating in tourism and related sectors to settle outstanding dues through instalments at a reduced annual interest rate of 1 per cent.

It called on establishments engaged in tourism-related or supporting activities to obtain certificates...

The SSC added that beneficiaries may also

defer the start of instalment payments until April at the latest, a measure aimed at easing financial pressures and helping establishments sustain their operations.

It called on establishments engaged in tourism-related or supporting activities to obtain certificates confirming their sector affiliation from the Ministry of Tourism, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority or the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority, depending on their jurisdiction, before visiting SSC branches to submit their applications.

CBJ issues JD100m in treasury bonds

AMMAN (JT) — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), on behalf of the government, on Monday issued the 29th treasury bond auction for 2026, with a value of JD100 million.

According to CBJ data, the bonds will be settled on July 21, 2026 and mature on July 21, 2029.

Treasury bonds are medium to long-term government debt instruments issued to finance public spending, with maturities typically ranging from two to 20 years.

Treasury bills, by contrast, are short-term government debt instruments with maturities ranging from three to 12 months. Considered low-risk investments, they are issued at a discount and traded in financial markets.

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CRIME

Cassation Court upholds 4-year sentence for man convicted of assaulting teenager

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Court of Cassation upheld a February 2023 Criminal Court ruling, sentencing a man to four years in prison after convicting him of sexually assaulting a teenager in Amman in December 2021.

The court declared the defendant guilty of molesting the 19-year-old victim at knife point while at his apartment in Marka on December 26.

The defendant was handed a four-year prison term for his crime.

Court papers said the victim and the defendant were friends for over a year.

The defendant decided to molest the victim, so he lured him to his apartment, the court added.

"The defendant drew a knife and forced the victim to undress and molested him," the court maintained.

The defendant contested his verdict through his lawyer, who claimed that "there were legal errors and inconsistencies with the victim's".

Meanwhile, the Criminal Court's attorney general asked the higher court to uphold the sentence.

The higher court ruled that the Criminal Court proceedings were accurate and that the defendant was given the appropriate punishment.

The Court of Cassation was headed by Judge Mahmoud Ebtoush and included judges Nayef Samarat, Oassem Dughmi, Hammad Ghzawi and Mohammad Khashashneh.



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks to reporters before departing from Joint Base Andrews in Maryland on Sunday

Rubio says Iran using Hormuz as leverage, calls on other countries to 'step up'

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, United States (AFP) — US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Sunday that Iran is using the Strait of Hormuz as leverage in the ongoing Middle East conflict, adding that other countries needed to step up pressure to protect global shipping.

"It's clear that Iran, at least some people in Iran, want to control the straits and hold that as leverage against the world," Rubio told reporters ahead of traveling to the Philippines for a meeting of foreign ministers

with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

"The United States will do and continue to do what it needs to, to protect global shipping, but other countries need to begin to step up and provide, whether it's hardware or finances, to help carry that burden," he continued.

When asked if there was still a diplomatic off-ramp to the escalating conflict, Rubio said: "I think we're always open to diplomacy. It has to be real. It has to be a deal that they're willing to live by."

A fragile truce between Iran and the United States broke down after reported attacks by Iran on ships in the Strait of Hormuz, the critical international waterway through which a fifth of the global oil and gas supply transited prior to the war.

"They can't have an MOU that's alive if they're violating the terms of it," Rubio said.

"What I will say is that the United States always remains open to a diplomatic solution. We've tried multiple times with Iran, and we'll continue to try."

Trump dismisses NY mayor's threat to arrest Netanyahu

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US President Donald Trump on Monday vowed that Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu would not face arrest at a UN summit in New York, after the city's new mayor said he was investigating the move.

Mayor Zohran Mamdani admitted he was unsure if he had the power to order police to detain a foreign leader but said he was discussing the matter with his legal team ahead of the UN General Assembly in September.

"Benjamin Netanyahu will not be arrested, in any way, shape, or form, while in the United States of America," Trump said on social media. "He is fighting against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The Hague-based International Criminal Court said in 2024 that it had reasonable grounds to believe Netanyahu was responsible for alleged



US President Donald Trump speaks to reporters after stepping off Air Force One upon returning to Joint Base Andrews in Maryland on Sunday

war crimes and crimes against humanity related to Israel's offensive in Gaza.

"I believe that Prime Minister Netanyahu belongs in The Hague," Mamdani told the New York Times on Saturday. "He's a war criminal."

Netanyahu's office also dismissed Mamdani's stance and said the ICC was a kangaroo court.

Fire forces evacuations in south France town

MARSEILLE, France (AFP) — A fast-moving wildfire in southern France forced the evacuation of dozens of homes on Sunday as more than 600 firefighters and a fleet of water-bombing aircraft battled to contain the blaze, authorities said.

Fanned by strong winds and dry vegetation after days of extreme heat, the fire broke out near the town of Draguignan in the Mediterranean Var region.



An Airbus Helicopters H125 helicopter flies over burnt trees following a wildfire in Taradeau, in Var department of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, south-eastern France, on Monday

The blaze burned 10 homes, damaged nine others and left one firefighter with minor injuries, according to the prefecture.

The wildfire comes as southern France endures another heatwave, with temperatures hav-

ing passed 40°C in parts of the Var region on Saturday.

The fire scorched around 60 hectares in Taradeau before jump-

ing to the nearby town of Les Arcs-sur-Argens, where it torched a further 120 hectares in less than two hours.

Around 615 firefight-

ers backed by reinforcements from four neighbouring departments, five Canadair water bombers, four firefighting helicopters and two

Dash aircraft were deployed against the blaze, Var prefect Simon Babre told AFP.

As the flames reached the edge of built-up areas, authorities evacuated 150 people from two affected towns, housing them in a community hall and a school.

By late Sunday, the fire had burned nearly 200 hectares and was still not fully under control, although authorities described the situation as "favourable".

Roads into Les Arcs-sur-Argens were closed, while rail traffic between Toulon and Les Arcs was suspended, disrupting train services along the Mediterranean coast.

Authorities maintained an orange heat-wave alert for Monday.



A Sudanese army soldier stands in front of a tank on display at the War Museum in Khartoum North (Bahri) that was damaged during fighting between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) on July 2

US sanctions Sudan for chemical weapons — what we know

PORT SUDAN, Sudan (AFP) — The US State Department imposed a new round of sanctions on the Sudanese government on Monday, accusing it of using chemical weapons in its war against rival paramilitaries.

Though Washington has not provided details on the chemical weapons used, international media have reported two chlorine gas barrels dropped in 2024.

Since April 2023, the war between the army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has drawn widespread reports of war crimes, with the US also sanctioning paramilitary commanders for committing genocide in Darfur.

owned carriers from using US airspace.

History of accusations

factory in a missile attack.

Past sanctions

Last year, the New York Times and France 24 reported the Sudanese army had used chemical weapons at least twice in the war.

The American outlet, citing four anonymous senior US officials, said the chemical agent used, with the direct approval of army chief Abdel Fattah Al Burhan, was chlorine.

In an October investigation, the French media outlet reported the army dropped two chlorine barrels in September 2024 around the Al Jailli oil refinery north of Khartoum.

It used open source data, social media footage and five experts to confirm two barrels of chlorine gas had been dropped by aircraft.

The RSF controlled the area and Sudan's largest oil facility at the time.

The army, which has been in control of Sudan for most of its post-independence history since 1956, has been accused of carrying out chemical attacks before.

In 2016, an Amnesty International investigation accused the army — then allied with the RSF — of using chemical weapons on civilians in the western region of Darfur.

Khartoum denied the accusations.

In 1998, the US claimed that the Al Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum was producing chemical components for Al Qaeda, before destroying the

Relations between the US and Sudan were strained for decades under the rule of Omar Al Bashir, who came to power in 1993 and whose Islamist-military rule was long accused of supporting Al Qaeda.

US sanctions imposed in the early 1990s were tightened in 2006 following accusations of genocide in the Darfur region, carried out on behalf of Khartoum by the RSF's predecessor militia, the Janjaweed.

After a popular uprising ousted Bashir in 2019, the US removed Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism and began to lift sanctions.

Some were reintroduced following a 2021 coup, led by Burhan alongside his then-deputy, RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, before the allies' power struggle erupted into all-out war in April 2023.

By January 2025, the US had imposed sanctions on both Burhan and Daglo, who is commonly known as Hemeti.

More than 400 drones target Moscow region, most 'neutralised' — mayor

MOSCOW (AFP) — More than 400 drones targeted the Moscow region overnight, the Russian capital's mayor said on Monday, adding that most of them had been intercepted.

"From 8:30 pm until 5:00 am, more than 400 enemy drones were flying in the direction of Moscow region. Most were neutralised by air defence forces at distant approaches. 85 UAVs were destroyed on approach to Moscow," Sergei Sobyenin wrote on the state-backed MAX platform.

Kyiv has in recent months intensified its strikes on Russian territory, describing

them as retribution for more than four years of bombardments against its territory.

Russia's TASS state news agency separately reported on Monday that six people, including three foreigners, have been hospitalised with blast injuries in the Moscow region.

"Six people with blast injuries of varying severity have been taken to Domodedovo Hospital, three of them foreign nationals," the hospital said in a statement, quoted by TASS.

Domodedovo is to the south of Moscow and home to an international airport serving the Russian capital.



Local residents walk past the smoke of a fire at the Russian e-commerce firm Wildberries' logistics complexes in the town of Elektrostal outside Moscow on Saturday

Crew abandons vessel on fire attacked in Hormuz — UK maritime agency



Crew abandons vessel on fire attacked in Hormuz

DUBAI (AFP) — Sailors safely abandoned a vessel set alight after it was attacked in the Strait of Hormuz, the UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency said on Monday, as the United States and Iran vie for control over the vital waterway.

"The vessel was struck by an unknown projectile. The crew safely abandoned the vessel and have been recovered by a tug boat. The fire has not been extinguished and the vessel is

currently adrift. There is no reported environmental impact," UKMTO said in an update to their earlier statement.

Earlier, the agency had reported the ship was "on fire" eight nautical miles northwest of Kumzar, Oman.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said that two oil tankers trying to transit the Strait of Hormuz "exploded and were brought to a halt".

During the war, Iran blockaded the Strait of Hormuz through which

one-fifth of the world's oil and LNG used to pass.

As part of a memorandum of understanding signed with the United States, it has to work with Oman on the waterway's future administration, which it has vowed will never be the same.

In recent weeks, Iran has hit tankers using a route hugging the Omani coast to traverse the strait, in a bid to strangle vessels into using its own waters and to pay for safe passage.



Images of Ismael Zambada Garcia known as 'El Mayo' released by the attorney's office, in Mexico City, on August 1, 2003. Zambada is expected to be sentenced on Monday in Brooklyn, NY

Last of Mexico's narco old guard, 'El Mayo', behind bars for life

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — After a life of humble beginnings, a journey to the top of the criminal world and a professed fear of imprisonment, Mexico's Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada will spend the rest of his days in a US jail.

Mexico's last old-school druglord was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for co-founding and leading the notorious Sinaloa cartel by a New York court on Monday.

Starting out as a poor farmworker and eventually becoming one of the world's most powerful and wealthy criminal bosses, Zambada was arrested at a US airport in July 2024.

He claims he was tricked by a cartel ally into boarding a plane that delivered him into the hands of US authorities.

Known for keeping a low profile and avoiding being photographed, Zambada, now 76, spent decades rising through the cartel ranks, evading both capture and multiple assassination attempts.

He was born in 1950 in Sinaloa — a rugged mountainous state of Mexico known for producing corn, beans, cattle and some of the world's most notorious drug traffickers.

His early years coincided with the emergence of Sinaloa as a marijuana and opium growing region — and eventually a transit point for Colombian cocaine going to the United States.

Mexico's drug violence has surged since then.

Since 2006, almost half a million people have been killed, and 130,000 are missing,

according to government estimates.

'Systematic assassinations'

Zambada began his criminal career with the Guadalajara and Juarez cartels, working alongside Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo and "The Lord of the Skies" Amado Carrillo Fuentes — both also from Sinaloa.

But he eventually struck out, working alongside another Sinaloan, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, to establish the Sinaloa cartel in the 1980s and 1990s.

With Zambada playing a key role in paying off officials, setting up distribution networks across the US, and moving billions of dollars back to Mexico, the Sinaloa cartel soon became the world's largest.

It is one of six Mexican drug gangs that US President Donald Trump has designated as Foreign Terrorist Organisations.

US court documents paint him as not just smart, but violently ruthless.

He allegedly ordered the killing of his own nephew, who was then found dead in a car by the side of the road.

According to US prosecutors, Zambada also engaged in "systematic assassinations" of fellow cartel members, police, and the military.

In 2010, he gave a rare interview to the Mexican magazine Proceso, revealing that the Mexican army had come close to capturing him four times.

Known as the "man in the hat", Zambada said that he feared jail more than death, and his arrest or murder would not change Mex-

ico's drug trafficking landscape.

Almost a year after being detained in the US, he pleaded guilty to drug trafficking and organized crime charges and agreed to pay a \$15 billion forfeiture as part of his plea deal.

In exchange for pleading guilty, US authorities waived their right to seek the death penalty.

"I stand before you today knowing that my actions caused harm," Zambada told the packed courtroom. "I chose this path and I understand that today I'm being held accountable for those decisions."

War, suspicion

His former partner Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman is already serving a life sentence in the United States.

El Chapo's demise prompted an internal war within the Sinaloa cartel between Zambada's supporters and El Chapo's sons, killing about 2,000 people.

El Chapo's son, Joaquin Guzman Lopez, was on the same plane that brought Zambada to the US.

Lopez was arrested and admitted to having kidnapped Zambada as part of his own plea deal.

The operation continues to raise questions nearly two years later, especially amid US-Mexico tensions over the FBI's alleged participation.

The United States has denied any role in the operation to bring Zambada onto US soil. However, the recent display of the aircraft that brought him there as part of an FBI operations collection prompted Mexico to seek explanations.

New UK PM names ex-defence secretary as finance minister

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's new Prime Minister Andy Burnham on Monday appointed John Healey, who was defence secretary under his predecessor, to the top Cabinet job of finance minister, Downing Street said.

Burnham, who became prime minister earlier in the day on the promise of bringing stability and reducing homelessness, sacked Rachel Reeves as chancellor and instead picked Healey, a Labour party veteran who has previously served in economic briefs in more junior positions.

Healey piled pressure on former prime minister Keir Starmer last month when he announced he was stepping down as defence secretary in a stinging criticism of the government's defence budget — and the Treasury, which he will now oversee.

He will be tasked with boosting Britain's sluggish economy amid strict financial rules set by Reeves to balance government spending with revenue, and promises by the previous administration not to raise taxes.

Markets showed some signs of unease on Monday before Healey was appointed.

UK government bond rates rose after Burnham told British media



Britain's new Prime Minister Andy Burnham gives his first speech in front of 10 Downing Street in central London on July 20, 2026, after being asked by the king to form the next government

there could be some "flexibility" allowed under the government's balance-budget rules — which he insists he intends to uphold.

Earlier on Monday, Burnham announced his aim to set into motion a 10-year plan to ease cost-of-living pressures and end sleeping rough on the streets.

Healey will also face the daunting challenge of finding £4.7 billion (\$6.3 billion) over the next four years to fill a

funding gap in Starmer's Defence Investment Plan and further boost defence spending to match NATO ambitions.

The 66-year-old politician was well-regarded as a defence secretary, conducting high-profile visits to Ukraine and NATO allies.

Blunt in his assessment of the state of Britain's armed forces, Healey was a vocal advocate for overhauling the military infrastructure, boosting defence

spending and tougher responses to Russian aggression.

First elected as MP in 1997, he served in junior ministerial positions in the Treasury under Tony Blair, as a local government and housing minister under Gordon Brown, and later held health and housing portfolios in opposition.

Keir Starmer left Downing Street Monday, saying he was leaving Britain "stronger and fairer" as he stepped

down as PM to make way for Andy Burnham.

"I am confident that Britain is now stronger and fairer than it was two years ago," Starmer told reporters in his farewell speech outside his No. 10 office in central London.

"I go with good grace, I go with a smile, and I go proud of everything that we have achieved," he added, before heading to Buckingham Palace to offer his resignation to King Charles III.

Zelensky faces deepening political crisis as protests dig in

KYIV, Ukraine (AFP) — As protestors gathered across Ukraine for another demonstration against the ousting of a reformist defence minister, President Volodymyr Zelensky is trying to strike a solution that satisfies all sides to avoid divisions in the face of the ongoing invasion.

The fifth day of demonstrations — the longest sustained protests, and most directly related to the conduct of the war — were sparked by the dismissal of Mykhailo Fedorov, a popular defence minister sacked in a reshuffle after repeatedly clashing with the army's top command.

Hundreds have shown up in the capital Kyiv since last week, beating makeshift cardboard signs and singing the Ukrainian anthem — gathering despite Russia launching nightly air attacks.

"This will continue for as long as it takes, it will

end when our president gives us an answer," protester Iryna Kostyuk told AFP.

As the anger among the young crowds in Kyiv shows little sign of fading, Zelensky is trying to strike a solution that satisfies all sides to avoid divisions in the face of the ongoing invasion.

For days, he has been locked in meetings with his top advisers and military hierarchy.

On the agenda — according to Ukrainian media and experts — whether to bring back Fedorov, and the fate of under-pressure commander-in-chief Oleksandr Syrsky.

A spokesperson for the presidency said a decision would not be expected on Monday.

"The situation is undoubtedly serious... we are seeing the list of demands grow," said Oleksandr Salizhenko, an expert within the Chesno

movement.

Crowds had first gathered spontaneously on Thursday morning in support of Fedorov, a tech-savvy young minister whose efforts to modernise the armed forces often put him at odds with the military establishment.

In a subsequent scathing press conference, Fedorov said Syrsky had put an ultimatum to Zelensky to engineer his removal.

The deputy head of the air force resigned in support of Fedorov and a top commander, Mykhailo Drapaty, also criticised the decision.

Fedorov in turn called for Syrsky's dismissal — and supporters rallied on social media and on the streets, increasingly chanting "Syrsky out!".

"Syrsky is a butcher... He likes fighting with manpower more than with drones," one protestor, Viktoria Osypenko, said.

Syrsky "has become hostage to the situation", analyst Anatolii Oktysiuk said.

"The longer Zelensky keeps Syrsky in his position, the deeper the social and political conflict becomes."

Ukraine's European allies are also concerned.

Solomiia Bobrovska, an opposition MP sitting in the parliament's defence committee, said meetings to discuss a replacement to Syrsky were ongoing, but cautioned the situation was changing rapidly.

Zelensky over the past days has been holding meeting after meeting with his military leadership, and has appealed for "unity".

"He is searching for an option that would demonstrate change in the military leadership while remaining broadly similar to Syrsky: Loyal, free of political ambitions and

respected by the military," political analyst Volodymyr Fesenko said.

The pressure is compounded by frustration among some military figures.

"It is particularly painful to hear peremptory judgements from people who have never issued combat orders, never taken responsibility for the lives of personnel," commander Oleg Apostol said.

Even if a compromise is found over the fate of the army chief, Fedorov's future remains a thorny question.

The crisis has turned Fedorov into a symbol of the protesters and a rallying figure calling for reforms in the military.

"The situation on the street is starting to be unhealthy," Bobrovska, the MP, said.

"The president and Fedorov have to find a way to solve this together."

MSF demands Israel release detained Palestinian health workers

Continued from page 1

The statement came after a United Nations investigative team and several UN rights experts raised the alarm about the case.

About 50 people, including doctors, trade unionists and pro-Palestinian activists, gathered outside France's

foreign ministry in Paris on Thursday to call for his release.

MSF said that its orthopaedic surgeon Mohammed Obeid "has been detained in Israel for more than 600 days, in difficult conditions, and without any contact with his family".

Doctors Without Borders said he was ar-

rested by Israeli forces on October 26, 2024 by Israeli forces while on duty at the Kamal Adwan Hospital.

It reiterated its call for his immediate and unconditional release.

"The practice of arbitrarily detaining, torturing and abusing Palestinian medical staff in Israel is unac-

ceptable. For too long, too many world leaders have failed to condemn Israel's conduct in Palestine," the non-governmental organisation said.

"We call for the release of all arbitrarily detained medical personnel immediately. Pending their release, they must be granted

access to adequate medical care and dignified detention conditions."

MSF added that 15 of its colleagues had been killed since the start of the war in the Gaza Strip between Israel and Hamas, sparked by the Palestinian militants' unprecedented attack on Israel on October 7, 2023.

Trump warns Iran will pay 'many times over' for US troop deaths

Continued from page 1

Iranian authorities reported more than 3,000 deaths, attributing the violence to "terrorist acts" orchestrated by the United States and Israel.

Foreign-based NGOs, however, put the death toll much higher.

US strikes hit several locations in Iran's southern port city of Bushehr, home to the country's only civilian nuclear plant, state media reported on Monday.

"A few minutes ago, several locations in Bushehr city were hit by American enemy's projectiles," said Bushehr governor Mohammad Mozaffari, as quoted by official state news agency IRNA.

Iran said on Monday that diplomatic exchanges with the United States via me-

diators were ongoing despite US military strikes on the country.

'A few minutes ago, several locations in Bushehr city were hit by American enemy's projectiles'

"We have been informed by mediators, we have received messages — without going into details — but the main point is that the diplomatic apparatus has been active in recent days and ideas have been conveyed to us by certain mediators," said Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei at a press conference in Tehran attended

by AFP.

Bahrain and Kuwait reported intercepting Iranian attacks on Monday, as the United States and Iran traded the latest strikes in more than a week of escalation.

A shaky US-Iran ceasefire has all but collapsed as Iran began attacking vessels using an Omani route in the Strait of Hormuz to force them to use its waters.

In response, the US has attacked Iran, which has responded with strikes on the Gulf and other Arab countries. Bahrain said its air defences "intercepted and destroyed a number of Iranian aerial aggressions", while Kuwait's military reported a "heinous Iranian aggression".

Bahrain has accused Iran of targeting civilians, while Kuwait has reported Iranian attacks on water and electricity plants as well as oil facilities.

Lebanon army begins taking over southern 'pilot zones' — US

Continued from page 1

Hizbollah has rejected the framework, with the Iran-backed group insisting any arrangement in Lebanon be linked to wider negotiations between Washington and Tehran. It has not said whether it will resist implementation in the designated areas.

The agreement does not set a timetable for Israel's withdrawal.

Israeli officials have

also vowed that their forces will remain in a "security zone" 10 kilometres deep along the frontier for as long as Hizbollah remains armed.

Lebanon and Israel, which have no formal relations, started negotiations after Iran-backed Hizbollah drew Lebanon into the broader Middle East war by attacking Israel in March.

Lebanon's military

said last week that troops had begun intensifying patrols in several villages adjacent to areas occupied by Israeli forces in southern Lebanon, including Froun.

Israeli forces are however present on the outskirts of Zawtar Al Gharbiya.

In a statement shared following the state department's announcement, the Lebanese military said troops

"continue to carry out their missions in the southern regions, including the towns of Froun and Srafa".

"In parallel, coordination is underway with the Military Coordination Group for Lebanon to begin deployment in the town of Zawtar Al Gharbiya," awaiting Israel's withdrawal from there, the army added, warning citizens against heading to the town.

The framework agree-

ment was reached following a fragile ceasefire in the Israel-Hizbollah war.

Israel still launches occasional strikes in southern Lebanon and carries out detonations in villages it occupies near the border.

The talks in Rome came ahead of Lebanese President Joseph Aoun's planned meeting with President Donald Trump in Washington on Tuesday.

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Accounting as a political choice

Accounting cannot be viewed merely as a neutral technical tool for organising figures and preparing budgets; rather, it is inherently a par excellence political instrument used to direct power and distribute wealth.

The selection of specific accounting standards over others is a direct reflection of the dominant ideology within a state or the global economic system, as these rules actively determine who wins and who loses.

For instance, the methodology by which assets and liabilities are measured, and how depreciation and taxes are calculated, reshapes economic reality and reinforces the interests of particular groups such as major investors or transnational corporations — at the expense of the labour force or local communities. Consequently, we realise that international standards are not static but evolve to serve the objectives of market actors.

Even the new standard, IFRS 18, concerning the presentation and disclosure in financial statements, will introduce a fundamental shift since its implementation next year, providing users with greater information and transparency to compare corporate performance.

This proves that the very method of organising and presenting numbers is a strategic choice designed to steer global investment decisions and redistribute resources.

The political dimensions of accounting manifest vividly during the formulation of public policies and structural adjustment programs. Accounting figures serve as the legal and moral pretext through which fateful decisions such as enforcing austerity measures or privatising vital sectors like education and healthcare are passed.

When governments, under pressure from international monetary institutions, choose to classify social spending as burdens and losses that must be curtailed, rather than viewing it as an investment in human capital, they are making a political choice aligned with a specific economic model.

This accounting orientation infuses purely political decisions with a facade of false mathematical rationality, shielding policymakers from direct accountability and portraying harsh political choices as unavoidable numerical inevitabilities. Hence, account ledgers transform intense ideological conflicts over rights and social gains into dry, technical equations. This primarily aims to bestow scientific legitimacy and objectivity upon policies of economic bias, while marginalising the weakest parties from the actual negotiation table.

Furthermore, this political engineering of numbers extends to modern-day challenges, foremost among which are climate change and social justice, where a quiet conflict rages over what accounting reports should include and what they should exclude.

The capitalist system's insistence on ignoring the negative externalities of corporations — such as environmental pollution and the depletion of natural resources and excluding them as actual financial liabilities in accounting statements is a political decision that protects corporate profits at the expense of the planet.

Conversely, attempts to integrate green accounting and sustainability reporting emerge as a counterpolitical project seeking to redefine value and responsibility.

This underscores that the arena of balance sheets and accounting ledgers has never been the exclusive domain of accountants; rather, it is an open battlefield for shaping social justice and choosing the identity of our economic future.

Moreover, this political dimension is sharply amplified in the contemporary digital economy. The way accounting frameworks struggle to quantify intangible assets — such as massive user data, algorithmic sovereignty and digital intellectual property is not a mere technical oversight. It is a deliberate political compromise that allows big-tech monopolies to accumulate untaxed, off-balance-sheet power while hiding their true market dominance behind traditional metrics. By reducing complex socio-digital networks into simplified revenues, modern accounting actively sanitizes data exploitation. Therefore, re-politicizing the ledger is no longer an academic luxury; it is an urgent democratic necessity to reclaim public control over global wealth.



Hossam Haddad

Let the ‘fine steed; of AI gallops with both speed and stability under a global governance framework

From July 17 to 20, the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference and High-Level Meeting on Global AI Governance were held in Shanghai, China. Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the opening ceremony and delivered a keynote address. Official representatives from more than 100 countries and international organisations, along with participants from academia, industry and research institutions, attended the conference. During the event, 29 countries signed an agreement to officially establish the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organisation (WAICO), marking a landmark achievement in global AI governance.

China’s vision leads global AI governance

President Xi noted that the new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation is advancing at a faster pace and the world has entered an unprecedented period of active innovation on AI technologies. All this carries within it great opportunities as well as challenges to governance. All countries should take a people-centered approach and develop AI for the positive and for good. It is vital to ensure that AI is an important driver for shared prosperity and common security. The world needs to join hands to build a just and equitable system for global AI governance. President Xi shared four observations to this end, stressing the need to adhere to the principle of openness and win-win and boost innovation-driven development, strengthen risk-awareness and ensure that AI is secure and controllable, encourage inclusiveness and promote mutual learning between civilisations, and advocate solidarity and improve global governance.

China’s proposals reflect the shared aspirations of the international community

China encourages open source,



Guo Wei

should be always under human control. AI development and its application should not erode or undermine the diversity of world civilisations or the uniqueness of cultures of different countries. Efforts should also be made to bridge the AI and digital divides, promote sustainable development and prevent creating new historical injustice in AI.

China’s technology drives innovation

In recent years, China has identified AI as a key engine for fostering new quality productive forces and promoting high-quality development. China's 15th Five-Year Plan proposes the full implementation of the AI Plus Initiative. China has become the world's largest holder of AI patents, accounting for 60 per cent of the global total. Leveraging its vast application scenarios, China has accelerated the deep integration of AI with economic and social development, with manufacturing serving as a key sector for AI deployment. AI has already been integrated into more than 70 per cent of business scenarios in China's lighthouse factories. From smart manufacturing and digital agriculture to intelligent healthcare and smart ports, AI is revitalising thousands of industries across China.

China’s development creates opportunities for the world

The cumulative downloads of

openness, collaboration and sharing of AI technologies, so that all sectors and businesses can benefit from AI. AI should be a trusted tool for humanity and

China’s open-source large language models have surpassed 10 billion, creating enormous opportunities for global cooperation in AI innovation. China is both an advocate and a practitioner of global AI governance, committed to ensuring that the benefits of intelligent technologies are shared more broadly and equitably among all nations.

President Xi emphasised that AI development should not be a solo performance by a single country, but a symphony of international cooperation

Since President Xi proposed the Global AI Governance Initiative in 2023, China has launched to establish the Group of Friends for International Cooperation on AI Capacity Building, announced the AI Plus International Cooperation Initiative, published Global AI Governance Action Plan, and advocated for establishing the World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organisation. During the conference, 29 countries including China, Russia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Algeria and Oman

became founding members of the WAICO. As the world’s first intergovernmental international organisation dedicated to artificial intelligence, WAICO is a major move by China to answer the call of the Global South and unite the international community together to promote AI development and governance. It marks a significant milestone in the history of AI development.

President Xi emphasised that AI development should not be a solo performance by a single country, but a symphony of international cooperation. China announced that, in the next five years, China will provide developing countries with 5,000 opportunities in AI training and seminar programmes; China will develop international AI application cooperation centers with the League of Arab States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the African Union, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and BRICS.

Both China and Jordan are members of the Global South. China’s 15th Five-Year Plan and Jordan’s Economic Modernisation Vision are highly complementary in areas such as digital transformation, technological innovation and talent development. China stands ready to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with Jordan in artificial intelligence, making AI a new engine of growth for the China-Jordan strategic partnership. China is also willing to deepen coordination with Jordan on strategy, rules and standards, jointly advance global AI governance, to make sure that this fine steed of AI gallops with both speed and stability and ensure that the benefits of AI development are shared more widely by people around the world.

The author is Chinese ambassador to Jordan

The invisible wealth of nations

By Fares Braizat

As a young child, I lived in a traditional black goat-hair Bedouin tent, in a cave, and later in a nineteenth-century stone and mud house built near that very cave, much as my father and many of my tribesmen had before me. In many parts of Jordan, permanent modern homes did not become common until the latter half of the twentieth century, and many communities continued to live under conditions that had changed little over centuries. Yet within only eighty years of independence, Jordan transformed the lives of its people. That transformation did not happen by chance. It happened because Jordan built effective institutions.

This is perhaps the country’s greatest yet least appreciated achievement. We often measure nations by the size of their economies, the wealth beneath their soil or the scale of their infrastructure. Experience around the world points to a deeper conclusion. The invisible wealth of nations lies in the quality of their institutions.

Institutions do far more than administer government. They create confidence, uphold the rule of law and execute it, reduce uncertainty and expand opportunity. Above all, they enable people. Roads, schools, healthcare, security, courts and public administration are not ends in themselves. They are the foundations upon which citizens build better lives for themselves and for future generations.

Jordan’s institutions compressed centuries of social transformation into the lifetime of a single generation. Roads connected isolated communities. Schools reached villages that had never known formal education. Healthcare became increasingly accessible. Electricity, communications and public services transformed daily life. The opportunities available to today’s Jordanians would have been unimaginable to many of their grandparents.

Modernity is not measured by the artifacts of modernisation such as infrastructure, skyscrapers or technology. It is measured by the opportunities

available to ordinary people. Good institutions enable the son of a shepherd to become a physician, the daughter of a remote village to become a distinguished doctor and university professor, and the child of a refugee to become an entrepreneur and a minister. The ultimate purpose of the state is not merely to govern society. It is to expand the horizon of what each generation believes is possible.

Jordan’s first eighty years demonstrate what resilient institutions can achieve. The coming decade must demonstrate what high-performing institutions can accomplish

Institutions enable people. That principle defines the proper role of the modern state. The state should neither dominate society nor withdraw from it. It should enable it. Its first duty is security, but its enduring purpose is opportunity. It should protect without suffocating initiative, regulate without obstructing enterprise and govern without discouraging innovation. Governments rarely create prosperity directly. They create the institutional conditions under which entrepreneurial citizens and productive enterprises create prosperity.

Markets create wealth. Insti-

tutions create the conditions in which wealth can be created. An enabling state is one that expands the capacity of society and the private sector to solve problems, create value and improve lives while preserving justice, security and equal opportunity.

Countries such as Singapore, Sweden and Ireland demonstrate that prosperity depends less on natural resources than on capable institutions. Jordan belongs in that conversation for a different reason. It has built resilient institutions while living in one of the world’s most turbulent regions.

Since independence, Jordan has endured more than sixty major domestic and external crises, nearly a crisis every 1.3 years. Jordan has rarely enjoyed prolonged strategic calm. Few countries of comparable size have faced such a sustained sequence of shocks while preserving political stability, social cohesion and state functionality.

Engineers evaluate bridges under maximum load, not under ordinary conditions. States should judge their institutions the same way. Jordan’s institutions have spent most of the country’s modern history operating under extraordinary pressure. Their resilience is not accidental. It is the cumulative product of thousands of sound institutional decisions made over decades.

Jordan’s experience has generally favoured evolution over rupture, reform over revolution, continuity over discontinuity, inclusion over exclusion and prudence over adventurism. Stability and reform are not competing objectives. Reform without stability risks disorder. Stability without reform eventually loses momentum. Durable statecraft preserves continuity while continuously improving performance.

Institutional resilience preserves the state. Performance unlocks its potential. Jordan’s security institutions have repeatedly demonstrated exceptional resilience. The next challenge lies in raising the performance of civilian institutions. Municipal services, healthcare, education, public works and ministerial bureauc-

racy must become faster, simpler, more responsive and more accountable.

Jordan’s greatest domestic challenge today is youth unemployment. Every unnecessary procedure, delayed approval, or bureaucratic obstacle imposed on investors delays investment, postpones employment and reduces opportunity. Every investment that never materialises because of unnecessary bureaucracy represents jobs that are never created, innovations that never emerge, taxes that are never collected and futures that are never realised. Investment is therefore more than an economic priority. It is a strategic imperative for social cohesion, optimism and long-term domestic stability. Security without opportunity may preserve stability for a time. Security combined with opportunity sustains stability across generations.

Public trust remains one of Jordan’s greatest strategic assets. For decades, surveys have consistently shown high confidence in the Armed Forces, security agencies, the judiciary and other core institutions. Refugees repeatedly chose Jordan as a place of safety. Investors repeatedly brought capital during times of regional uncertainty. Businesses follow opportunity. Families follow trust.

Jordan’s first eighty years demonstrate what resilient institutions can achieve. The coming decade must demonstrate what high-performing institutions can accomplish. Bureaucratic simplicity, digital government, merit, accountability, investment facilitation and relentless service to citizens must become national priorities.

The invisible wealth of nations is not found beneath their soil. It is found in institutions that enable people. Jordan has already demonstrated remarkable resilience. The challenge of its second century is to transform that resilience into institutional excellence, economic dynamism, and expanded opportunity. In the end, the invisible wealth of nations is measured not by what governments own, but by what their institutions enable their people to become.

BUSINESS

Tuesday, July 21, 2026



Minister of Transport and Labour Minister Nidal Qatamin says that the Aqaba Port Railway Project is a mega strategic project that enhances Jordan's economic security and its position as a regional transport and logistics hub

Aqaba Port Railway Project promotes Jordan as regional logistics hub — minister

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Transport and Labour Minister Nidal Qatamin said that the Aqaba Port Railway Project is a mega strategic project that enhances Jordan's economic security and its position as a regional transport and logistics hub, during a seminar held by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan

The seminar was entitled with "The Aqaba Port Railway: Regional Connectivity, Security and Economic Development in Jordan", and was attended by a selected group of academics, economic experts and transport and logistics sector stakeholders, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

During the seminar, the minister stressed that the project is a "key" pillar within the Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV), and is in response to the rapid transformations in global trade routes and supply chains, the ministry said.

He said Jordan has the potential to become a major logistics corridor linking the Arabian Gulf with the Levant

and global markets. Its geographical location is attracting attention from its Gulf neighbours, which requires a modern infrastructure, particularly railway projects, to link between production and consumption markets in the region.

Qatamin added the railway project's impact extends beyond developing the transportation system as it constitutes a comprehensive economic and developmental project to reduce logistics costs, enhance the competitiveness of national exports, stimulate investment, create direct and indirect job opportunities, and support the industrial, mining and agricultural sectors.

Furthermore, it will boost economic development in the governorates through which the project passes, he said.

Qatamin said the project is the nucleus of the national railway network, which will eventually connect various regions of the Kingdom and extend to neighbouring countries, thus strengthening regional economic integration

and boosting Jordan's status as a regional logistics hub.

Jordan, with a modern railway network linking the Port of Aqaba to production centres and local and regional markets, will give it a strategic edge and provide a more efficient and sustainable transportation system supporting long-term development, he pointed out.

The railway project, estimated to cost about \$2.3 billion, is one of the pivotal ventures within the EMV. It runs for nearly 360 kilometres, connecting the Port of Aqaba to phosphate and potash production areas, with a capacity of up to 16 million tonnes annually, said the minister.

It is implemented through an equal Jordanian-Emirati partnership, with each party holding a 50 per cent stake, he said, adding that Jordan's share is distributed among the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company, the Arab Potash Company, the Social Security Investment Fund, and the Government Investments Management Company, Petra reported.

Expat remittances rise 14.5% in first five months of 2026

AMMAN (JT) — Preliminary data released by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) shows that total worker remittances to the Kingdom increased by 14.5 per cent during the first five months of 2026, reaching \$2,062.1 million.

Meanwhile, outbound remittances from the Kingdom rose by 15.0 per cent to reach \$806.7 million, according to the CBJ.

The data reveals that inbound remittances from the United Arab Emirates ranked first, accounting for 21.9 per cent of the total, followed by the United States at 19.9 per cent, Saudi Arabia at 17.9 per cent, Qatar at 9.5 per cent and Kuwait at 5.4 per cent.

Other countries accounted for the remaining 25.4 per cent of total inbound remittances, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.



Preliminary data released by the Central Bank of Jordan shows that total worker remittances increased by 14.5 per cent during the first five months of 2026, reaching \$2,062.1 million

Regarding outbound remittances, Egypt was the primary destination for transfers from the Kingdom, accounting for 41.1 per cent of the total. Bangladesh followed at 11.8 per cent, the Philippines at 4.9 per cent, and Palestine at 4.1 per cent, while other countries made up the remaining 38.1 per cent of total outbound transfers.

Oil price gains ease after Iran points to mediation

LONDON (AFP) — Oil prices hit one-month highs Monday before scaling back as Iran said diplomatic exchanges with the United States were ongoing via mediators to dial back renewed conflict in the Middle East.

That helped boost sentiment on Wall Street, while European equity markets largely stabilised.

However, Asian stock markets ended the day mostly lower under the weight of higher oil prices which briefly shot above \$91 per barrel, alongside lingering concerns that the AI sector may be overbought.

"The Iran war has escalated and driven oil prices back above \$90 a barrel," noted Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell.

"That means inflation fears are back on the table."

Crude futures have surged over the past week as Washington and Tehran traded fire, raising fears of a sustained disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, through which around one fifth of the world's oil normally passes.

The benchmark international crude contract, Brent North Sea, rose above \$91 a barrel Monday, its highest price since June 11.

But it gave up those gains after Iran indicated that diplomacy with Washington was continuing through mediators, even as it struck Gulf targets and was targeted by US strikes.



A digital display shows the price of petrol at an Aral petrol station in Berlin on July 19, 2026

"We have received messages — without going into details — but the main point is that the diplomatic apparatus has been active in recent days and ideas have been conveyed to us by certain mediators," Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei told a news conference in Tehran.

Meanwhile, Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni was set to travel to mediator Pakistan's capital on Monday, a Pakistani interior ministry source told AFP, without confirming the reason.

Such "reports have reset the temperature for oil prices to simmer from boiling," said Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare.

The drop in oil prices came despite Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels on Monday announcing a maritime embargo of their foe Saudi Arabia.

As part of the Gaza war, the Houthis attacked shipping in the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea, which leads to Europe via the Suez Canal, forcing ships to take lengthy detours around Africa.

If the Houthis were to do so again they could block oil exports from the Saudi Red Sea port of Yanbu to Asia.

More tech companies report earnings this week, with Google-parent Alphabet to release its quarterly figures on Wednesday, after a week where tech shares fared poorly as investors worry about whether AI investments are going to pay off and justify sky-high stock valuations.

"The buy-the-dip crowd is congregating among the semiconductor stocks," said Briefing.com's O'Hare.

The VanEck Semiconductor ETF, an exchange-traded fund of semiconductor stocks that is a proxy for the sector, was up 1.7 per cent as in morning trading in New York after having lost nearly nine per cent last week.

"The next two weeks will be a tussle between conflict news and big-name earnings, and the tug of war between these two is likely to keep volatility elevated," said Chris Beauchamp, chief market analyst at online trading and investing platform IG.

The British pound dipped against the dollar as Andy Burnham took over as Britain's prime minister, with the markets waiting expectantly for his pick as finance minister.

London's blue-chip FTSE 100 shed 0.7 per cent as investors faced down "a renewed oil shock, rising shipping fears around the Strait of Hormuz and uncertainty over the policy direction of Britain's new prime minister," said Patrick Munnally at Tickmill.

Why does Brazil's PIX payment system bother Donald Trump?

BRASÍLIA — Whether buying a chilled coconut at the beach or paying rent, Brazil's free PIX system has become the dominant way of making payments in Latin America's largest economy, with just a smart phone.

US President Donald Trump does not like it one bit.

The payment system, launched in 2020 by the central bank, has become a bone of contention between Washington and the government of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who is seeking reelection in three months.

The United States argues that PIX amounts to unfair competition and hurts US credit card companies.

"You don't have to pay any fees for PIX; with banks, you have to pay credit card fees, annual fees, banking fees, fees for this and that," Paulo Ricardo Conceicao told AFP at his drinks kiosk on Copacabana beach.

The perceived unfairness of the PIX system and other alleged discriminatory trade practices has led the US to threaten a 25 per cent tariff on some Brazilian exports.

A decision on this measure is expected in the coming days.

According to the central bank, PIX accounts for 54 per cent of all payment transactions in Brazil, with millions of transfers per day — just six years after its launch.

Major financial institutions are obliged to offer the service to their clients, who simply open their banking app and send a payment in seconds using an identifier such as an identity number, key, or e-mail address.

Payments can be even easier using a merchant's QR code.

Ryanair quarterly profit slides on Mideast war impact

LONDON (AFP) — Irish no-frills airline Ryanair on Monday said net profit slumped 34 per cent in its first quarter as the Middle East conflict sent jet-fuel prices soaring and impacted ticket sales.

Profit after tax dropped to 538 million euros (\$616 million) in the three months to the end of June, from 820 million euros one year earlier, the carrier said in a statement.

Ryanair, which is Europe's biggest airline by passenger numbers and flies mainly across the continent, said the cost of its fuel not insured by price spikes had soared owing to the US-Iran war.

"Operating costs rose



11 per cent to 3.81 billion euros as the price of our 20-per cent unhedged jet-fuel more than doubled" in the first quarter, chief executive Michael O'Leary said in the earnings statement.

While passenger traffic grew six per cent,

fares dropped six per cent.

Fares "required stimulation as the Middle East conflict led to consumer hesitancy, concerns about EU jet-fuel shortages, economic uncertainty and later bookings", O'Leary said.

He added that Ryanair's net profit for the remainder of its financial year "remains highly sensitive to... conflict escalation in the Middle East and Ukraine, the price of unhedged jet-fuel, macro-economic shocks" and European air traffic control strikes.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

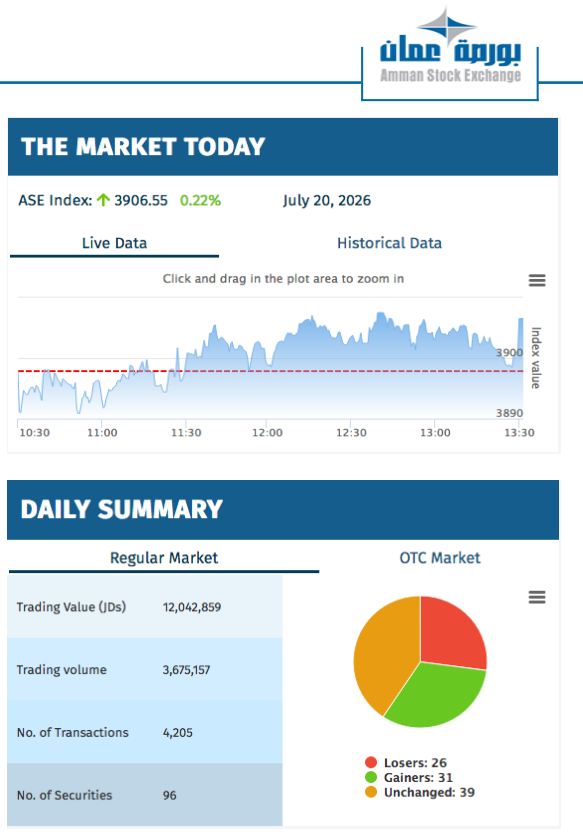
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Monday amounted to JD12.0 million spread over 3.7 million shares that traded through 4,205 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.22 per cent, closing at 3906.55 points.

Out of 96 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 31 companies rose while the share price of another 26 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Noor Capital Markets for Diversified Investments by 5 per cent, Arab Company for Investment Projects by 4.84 per cent, Babylon Investments Company Plc. by 4.27 per cent, National Steel Industry by 4.21 per cent, and Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 3.64 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Amoun International for Investments by 4.55 per cent, Specialised Jordanian Investment by 3.77 per cent, Jordan Insurance by 3.33 per cent, Al Entkaeya for Investment and Real Estate Development Company Plc. by 3.13 per cent, and Jordan Commercial Bank by 3.1 per cent.



FOOTBALL

‘Legendary’ former Liverpool and England star Keegan dies aged 75

LONDON (AFP) — Former Liverpool and England star Kevin Keegan has died aged 75 after battling cancer, his family announced on Monday. Keegan, regarded as one of the greatest players of his generation, was diagnosed with stage four cancer and underwent treatment in January. “It is with immense sadness that we announce that Kevin Keegan has passed away at the age of 75,” a statement from Keegan’s family said. “The former England player and manager had been battling cancer and was surrounded bȳ his wife and daughters in his final moments.” Keegan, a dynamic striker nicknamed “mighty mouse”, won the English top-flight title three times with Liverpool after starting his legendary career with lowly Scunthorpe. He also won the European Cup in 1977 and the FA Cup in 1974 during an iconic six-year spell at Anfield before joining German club Hamburg in 1977. Keegan, who scored 21 goals in 63 games for England, won the Bundesliga title with Hamburg in 1979 and helped them reach the European Cup final the following year

CRICKET

McCullum confident he can work with new England Test coach

LONDON (AFP) — Brendon McCullum insists he can work alongside England’s next Test coach despite being sacked from the role. McCullum was dismissed as Test boss following England’s 2-1 defeat by New Zealand in a series that culminated in the international retirement of red-ball captain Ben Stokes. But McCullum remains in charge of England’s white-ball teams and oversaw a 4-0 T20 series whitewash of world champions India. On Sunday, there was more success for McCullum’s team, with a 27-run win at Lord’s to seal England’s first one-day international series victory over India since 2018. England posted 387-3 — the highest ODI total at Lord’s — thanks to Ben Duckett’s 141, with both Jacob Bethell and Joe Root contributing fifties. But while England’s white-ball teams are making progress, the Test side are on a run of seven defeats in nine matches heading into a home series with Pakistan starting next month. Asked how he would work with a new Test coach in a potential awkward situation, McCullum said: “Collaboratively, I think”.

World Cup champs Spain lap up adulation of a million on bus parade

MADRID (AFP) — New World Cup champions Spain began their celebration parade on an open-top bus through the streets of Madrid on Monday early evening, with a jubilant crowd of over a million people out to celebrate, local authorities told AFP.

The players, some shirtless, others holding drinks, set off on their procession under a blazing sun, along the main arteries in the city centre where a sea of fans in red and yellow were waiting, with the destination Cibeles square.

After flying back from the United States to Madrid, the players were received by King Felipe VI and the royal family, and then Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, before kicking off the parade.

Players passed around the gleaming World Cup trophy and waved to a sea of delighted Spain fans in red and yellow, the day after defeating Argentina 1-0 in extra-time in New Jersey.

Ferran Torres’s strike in extra-time was enough to bring Spain their second World Cup, following a first victory in 2010.

“You have shown your grit, your resilience and your courage, always backed by your technical skill, your control and command of the game, combining head and heart,” the king told La Roja’s stars, who were dressed in suits but changed to more



Spain’s players parade onboard an open-top bus through the streets of Madrid on Monday, one day after the national football team won their second World Cup title following a 1-0 victory against Argentina

casual clothing for their parade on a hot summer’s day.

“Kings of the world” ran the words on the front of their vehicle, with fans chanting “champions” to their heroes.

Spain captain Rodri held the World Cup trophy aloft at the top of the stairs as he descended from the Iberia plane that flew the team home after clinching their second star.

Later at Moncloa, Manchester City midfielder Rodri said

this was the crowning achievement of his career.

“I’ve always said it, winning with your country is the most beautiful thing there is, above all a World Cup,” said Rodri.

“This generation grew up watching [Iker] Casillas and [Andres] Iniesta lift the cup and that we can do it today is the biggest thing you can do in football.”

Many younger supporters were not yet born when Iniesta’s extra-time goal against

The Netherlands secured Spain’s first World Cup in South Africa 16 years ago.

Match-winner Torres joked he was “flying, literally” after the team returned from the United States after beating Argentina in New Jersey.

“I’m very happy to see how excited all of the children are... [and] to have the parade and celebrate with all of the Spaniards,” he added.

Destination Cibeles

Spain’s World Cup

winners bus parade started at Moncloa before heading towards Cibeles square, where hordes of fans had reserved their spots hours in advance.

A ceremony involving the players and a concert will then be held at the square, the traditional gathering point for celebrations by the Spanish national team and its supporters. Over 120,000 people were estimated to be waiting there.

Spain’s women’s side won the World Cup in

2023, meaning for the first time a country has both trophies at the same time.

In 2030, Spain will defend their crown on home soil, as one of the World Cup hosts along with Portugal and Morocco.

“It’s two for two,” said Prime Minister Sanchez, of Spain’s record in World Cup finals. “Why not dream of a third in 2030, especially with Spain as hosts?”

The Spanish press was running out of superlatives to describe its heroes after they overcame favourites France in the semi-finals before downing Argentina.

“The kings of all-time!” wrote Marca, celebrating a “second star that will now be stitched onto the Spanish jersey after yet another masterclass in collective play”.

Argentina, despite the presence of all-time great Lionel Messi, failed to create clear chances against Spain’s well-organised and more positive side in the final.

Messi had a sensational World Cup but drifted through the final like a ghost, shedding tears at the end.

“The pain is immense and it’s going to be hard for this wound to heal,” wrote Messi on Instagram.

In Madrid, tears also flowed on Monday night, but they were tears of joy.

FAMILY FLAVOURS MAGAZINE

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

Life beyond the screen

By Dr Said Qabbaah,
Medical writer and public health expert / expert contributor/
Family Flavours Magazine

Technology is part of everyday life. From checking messages in the morning to unwinding with a favourite television series in the evening, screens have become part of our daily routines. They help us work, learn, connect and relax. Yet, as screen time increases, so does the conversation about its effect on our health.

This is not about blaming technology. It is about understanding how it influences our habits and learning to use it in ways that support our well-being.

How much is too much?

Research suggests that excessive recreational screen use, particularly late in the evening, may affect sleep, mood and physical health.

There is no single number that defines “too much” screen time. It depends on what you are doing and how it affects you. An hour spent video calling a loved one is very different from an hour spent scrolling mindlessly.

Screens used for work, education and meaningful connection, however, can provide many benefits.



Rather than asking only, “How long?”, it may be more helpful to ask, “How does it make me feel?”

The endless scroll

Many people find that screens interfere with sleep. Blue light can reduce the production of melatonin, the hormone that helps regulate sleep. Engaging content can also keep the brain active when it should be winding down.

You may plan to check one message, only to find yourself scrolling an hour later. Your mind feels busy and sleep becomes more difficult.

A simple solution is to create a screen curfew about an hour before

bedtime. Reading, gentle stretching or listening to music can be relaxing alternatives. If you do use a device, switching to night mode or reducing screen brightness may help.

Eyes under strain

Digital eye strain is becoming increasingly common. Symptoms include dry eyes, blurred vision, headaches and difficulty focusing. This often happens after spending long periods looking at screens without taking breaks.

One helpful habit is the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Remember to blink regularly and position your screen slightly below eye level. Good

lighting can also reduce eye strain.

Movement matters

Screens often keep us sitting longer than we realise. Whether working at a desk or relaxing on the sofa, long periods of sitting can affect posture, muscles and overall health.

Many people recognise the feeling of stiff shoulders or neck pain after spending a day working on a laptop.

Over time, a sedentary lifestyle increases the risk of conditions such as heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. Standing up regularly, stretching and taking short walks throughout the day can make a real difference.

If you work at a desk, a supportive chair, a well-positioned screen and a separate keyboard can improve posture and reduce strain.

Technology and mental health

Technology can support mental well-being by helping people stay connected, access reliable information and find supportive communities.

Someone living with a long-term condition, for example, may benefit from connecting with others facing similar challenges.

Mental health apps can also provide guided exercises, mood tracking and stress management tools.

However, constant notifications, social media comparisons and exposure to distressing news may increase stress and anxiety. You may notice this after spending time

online and feeling more tense or less satisfied than before.

Personalising your feed, switching off non-essential notifications and taking regular breaks from social media can all help create a healthier relationship with technology.

Children & Screens

Too much screen time may affect sleep, attention and social development. It can also replace activities that support healthy growth, including physical play, reading and face-to-face interaction.

Parents and caregivers can focus on the quality of screen time rather than simply the quantity. Watching an educational programme together and discussing it with others offers far greater value than passive viewing.

Digital overload at work

For many, work now takes place almost entirely on screens. E-mails, online meetings and documents all compete for attention, creating what is often called digital overload; where the steady flow of information starts to feel overwhelming and difficult to manage.

Simple habits can make work feel more manageable. Checking emails at set times rather than constantly throughout the day can reduce interruptions. Working in focused blocks with short breaks in between can also improve concentration.

Finding balance

Technology is not something to avoid. It is about using it intentionally and in ways that support your health. Here are a few simple ways to create balance:

Being aware of your

habits. Noticing when and why you reach for your phone or computer is the first step towards change

Creating tech-free moments. Meals, conversations and time outdoors can be opportunities to step away from screens.

Prioritising sleep. Try to keep screens out of the bedroom or limit their use before bed

Moving regularly. Always include small movements into your day, such as stretching or walking

Using technology intentionally. Choose activities that add value, whether that is learning, connecting or relaxing

Creating a healthy balance

Technology is neither good nor bad. It depends on how we use it. Screens are an important part of modern life and offer convenience, connection and opportunity. At the same time, they can quietly shape habits that affect our health.

The goal is not perfection. Small, realistic changes can help create a healthier balance over time.

You can contract Dr Said Qabbaah at said.qabbaah@gmail.com

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