

THE JORDAN TIMES



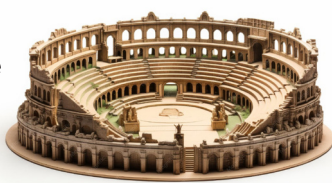
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Wednesday, July 22, 2026 | Safar 18, 1448 Hijri



King departs for UK

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Tuesday departed on a visit to the United Kingdom. During the visit, His

Majesty is due to meet with senior executives of leading companies to discuss prospects for expanding economic coop-

eration between Jordan and the UK. The King will also attend part of the Jordan-United Kingdom Business Forum, accord-

ing to a Royal Court statement. HRH Crown Prince Hussein was sworn in as Regent, in the presence of Cabinet members.

Air defences intercept three missiles, five drones from Iran — JAF

AMMAN (JT) — Air defence systems intercepted and shot down three Iranian missiles targeting the Kingdom on Tuesday, while Border Guard units earlier intercepted five drones launched from Iran, according to the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF).

A military source said in a JAF statement that the missile interceptions caused no casualties or material damage.

Royal Engineering Corps teams secured the sites where missile debris fell in accordance with established procedures, the source said.

The statement said that the Armed Forces continue to safeguard Jordan's airspace and remain at full operational readiness to respond to any threat to the Kingdom's



security and sovereignty.

In an earlier statement issued on Tuesday, a JAF source said Border Guard units intercepted five drones launched from Iran overnight between Monday and Tuesday.

The statement said that the drones were "successfully neutralised with precision in accord-

ance with operational procedures and defensive protocols", adding that no casualties or property damage were reported.

The military source urged the public to remain reassured, stressing that the JAF continues to closely monitor the Kingdom's airspace while maintaining a

high level of operational readiness.

The source added that the Armed Forces will take all necessary measures, in line with the applicable rules of engagement, to counter any aerial object that poses a threat to national security or the safety of citizens.

Jordan condemns Houthi claim that Saudi Arabia is besieging Yemen

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan has condemned Houthi militia's accusations against Saudi Arabia, describing claims that Riyadh was imposing a blockade on the Yemeni people as baseless.

In a statement on Tuesday, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali voiced Jordan's "strong rejection and condemnation" of the statements the military spokesperson for the Houthi

group, reaffirming Amman's full solidarity with Riyadh.

He also underlined Jordan's full support for all measures Saudi Arabia takes to safeguard its sovereignty, security, and the

safety of its citizens and residents.

Majali also called on the international community to fulfill its responsibilities by ensuring the implementation of relevant UN Security Council reso-

lutions, particularly Resolution 2216 on Yemen and Resolution 2722 on protecting rights and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

He stressed that freedom of navigation in in-

ternational waterways is a right guaranteed under international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

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Prime Ministry photo

Jordan and the United States on Tuesday sign a Reciprocal Trade Agreement aimed at strengthening bilateral economic relations, expanding market access and enhancing trade and investment between the two countries

Jordan, US sign Reciprocal Trade Agreement to boost bilateral trade

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan and the United States on Tuesday signed a Reciprocal Trade Agreement aimed at strengthening bilateral economic relations, expanding market access and enhancing

trade and investment between the two countries.

The agreement builds on the longstanding economic partnership between Jordan and the United States under the Jordan-US Free Trade

Agreement, which entered into force on December 17, 2001, following nearly a year of negotiations, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

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Prime minister reviews eco-tourism project, directs service upgrades in Jerash, Ramtha

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Tuesday inspected five tourism, youth and service projects in Jerash and Ramtha as part of his ongoing field visits across the Kingdom.

In Jerash, Hassan reviewed progress on the Jerash Eco-Tourism Village project during his third visit to the site, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The project, which is 60 per cent complete and scheduled for completion in 2027, is expected to become a major tourism destination in northern Jordan.

Accompanied by Public Works and Housing Minister Maher Abu Samen and Local Administration Minister Waleed Masri, the prime minister was briefed on the project's implementation.

The 210 dunnum development, located in a mountainous area over-



Photo courtesy of Prime Ministry

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan inspects progress on the Jerash Eco-Tourism Village project, which is 60 per cent complete and expected to be finished in 2027

looking the Jerash, Dibein and Tal Al Rumman forests and about 10 minutes from the Jerash Archaeological Site, is being implemented by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN).

The eco-tourism complex will feature a 55-room lodge, an eco-park,

a theatre, adventure and recreational areas, family facilities, a visitors' centre, restaurants, a 200-seat conference hall and dedicated spaces for local communities to market their products.

In Ramtha, Hassan visited the Ramtha Vocational Training Institute

with Minister of Transport and Minister of Labour Nidal Katamine, where he reviewed training programmes and stressed the need to modernise vocational curricula to better meet labour market demands.

The prime minister also called for providing

graduates with soft loans and in-kind grants, including tools and equipment, to help them establish micro-enterprises after completing their training.

He also directed officials to establish modern workshops for specialised trades and upgrade the institute's computer laboratory. The institute currently serves more than 140 trainees.

During a visit to the Ramtha Youth and Young Women Centre with Youth Minister Raed Adwan, Hassan highlighted the expansion of sports, educational and artistic programmes launched in 2025.

The initiative, which began in 15 centres, expanded to 60 centres in 2026 and is expected to reach 100 centres across all governorates next year.

Continued on page 5

Strait of Hormuz becomes focal point of US-Iran escalation

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — The United States launched a tenth consecutive night of strikes on Iran as Tehran expanded attacks across the Middle East. The latest escalation has pushed the Strait of Hormuz to the centre of the conflict, highlighting the growing importance of one of the world's most strategic maritime routes.

US Central Command (CENTCOM) said that American forces targeted Iranian command centres during the latest operation. It said that the strikes also hit naval capabilities, missile launch sites, drone launch sites and air defence systems.



AFP photo

A boat sails in the waters of the Strait of Hormuz off Khasab in Oman's northern Musandam peninsula on June 25, 2025

The US military said that the operation was intended to reduce Iran's ability to attack commercial shipping transiting the Strait

of Hormuz. CENTCOM added that commercial traffic through the strategic waterway remains uninterrupted despite the

latest escalation.

US forces have helped secure the transit of nearly 900 commercial vessels carrying around 450 mil-

lion barrels of crude oil since early May, according to CENTCOM.

The command also warned that American forces remain prepared to respond to any "unprovoked aggression" against civilian shipping in the strait.

The latest US operation came as Iran intensified attacks across the region.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard announced they had stopped two "non-compliant" oil tankers attempting to transit the Strait of Hormuz. The Guard said the action formed part of Tehran's blockade of the strategic waterway.

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UN condemns intensifying Israeli attacks in Gaza

GENEVA (AFP) — The United Nations condemned on Tuesday intensifying Israeli military attacks in Gaza that it said had killed at least 57 Palestinians, including six children, in the past week.

A ceasefire agreed in October remains in place between Israel and Hamas, but it has not halted the violence in Gaza.

"Nine months after the announcement of a ceasefire, still, nowhere is safe for Palestinians in Gaza," UN rights office spokesman Thameen Al Kheetan told reporters in Geneva.



AFP photo

A Palestinian man sprays water in an attempt to extinguish a fire in a house after an Israeli air strike in Gaza City on Tuesday

He decried that "the Israeli military has intensified its attacks in Gaza in recent days, killing

and injuring dozens of Palestinians".

Continued on page 5

Amman hosts Arab conference to follow up on Global Disability Summit outcomes

AMMAN (JT) — Under the patronage of HH Prince Mired, Lord Chamberlain and President of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD), the Arab Regional Conference to Follow Up on the Outcomes of the Global Disability Summit 2025 commenced on Tuesday.

The conference brings together ministers, senior officials, experts and representatives of Arab and international organisations, with the aim of discussing mechanisms for implementing the commitments announced during the Global Disability Summit, according to an HCD statement.

The conference also aims to strengthen regional and international cooperation in support of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The conference is organised through cooperation and partnership between HCD, the Arab League – Department of Social Development and Policies, and the Ministry of Social Development.

It is also supported by the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), with support from CBM (Christoffel-Blindenmission).

In his opening address, Prince Mired said that the conference offers an important opportunity to build on the outcomes of the Global Disability Summit 2025.

He noted that it can help translate the commitments announced during the summit, particularly the Amman–Berlin Declaration, into practical measures, which aim to advance the rights of persons with disabilities.



The conference brings together ministers, senior officials, experts, and representatives of Arab and international organisations, with the aim of discussing mechanisms for implementing the commitments announced during the Global Disability Summit

He also expressed hope that the conference would generate ideas and solutions to support implementation.

The prince emphasised that Arab countries have made tangible progress in advancing inclusion and rights, noting that significant challenges remain.

These include challenges in the fields of inclusive education, decent work, accessibility and ending practices that isolate persons with

disabilities from their communities.

He stressed that addressing these challenges requires a strong commitment to national ownership, including strengthening legislation, developing clear strategies and allocating the necessary resources.

It also requires ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations at all stages of planning and implementation, Prince Mired said, adding that disability issues must be placed among national priorities.

The prince noted that when these elements are in place, the international community and development partners can provide more effective support.

Without genuine commitment to national ownership, achieving the desired results will remain difficult, he added.

He also stressed the importance of preserving the spirit of the Global Disability Summit, which requires translating commitments into tangible outcomes.

It also involves raising ambition to achieve further transformative

progress through sustained institutional action, sound planning, effective implementation, and continuous follow-up.

Prince Mired concluded by saying: “We have the capacity to perform better in ensuring that all citizens with disabilities fully enjoy and exercise their fundamental rights.”

Minister of Social Development Wafa Bani Mustafa, chair of the 45th Session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs, said that the conference represents an important regional

milestone.

It provides an opportunity to assess progress made since the summit and support building on its outcomes by developing implementation mechanisms.

These mechanisms aim to strengthen cooperation among Arab countries and support inclusive legislation, policies and services, the minister said, adding that they help translate commitments into practical results that promote the rights of persons with disabilities and their full participation in development.

She added that Jordan’s presidency of the 45th Session represents both a responsibility and an opportunity. It allows for strengthening joint Arab action in the social sector. This will be achieved through launching qualitative initiatives and activating partnerships with Arab, regional, and international organisations.

Bani Mustafa affirmed that, under the directives of His Majesty King Abdullah, Jordan continues to strengthen a human rights-based approach to disability.

She noted that the Ministry of Social Development is continuing to develop the social services system. This approach focuses on empowerment and community inclusion. It includes increasing the number of early intervention units and inclusive day-care centres from 70 centres in 2026 to 128 centres by 2028.

It also involves increasing family reintegration cases from 800 by the end

of this year to 4,134 by 2028.

United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women Sima Bahous reaffirmed the organisation’s commitment to supporting implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Amman–Berlin Declaration.

She also commended Jordan’s leadership in advancing the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

She stated that the rights of women and girls with disabilities are central to achieving equality and sustainable development. However, they continue to face barriers in education, employment, access to services, participation in public life and decision-making.

She stressed that the success of the Amman–Berlin Declaration will be measured by tangible improvements in the lives of women and girls with disabilities. It should not be judged solely by the commitments themselves. She emphasised that women and girls with disabilities must be equal partners in designing, implementing and monitoring policies and programmes.

IDA President and President of the Arab Organisation of Persons with Disabilities Nawaf Kabbara said that the conference provides an important opportunity to assess progress, including reviewing implementation of the outcomes of the Global Disability Summit and the Amman

Declaration.

Director of the Department of Social Development and Policies at the Arab League Tareq Nabulsi said that the conference offers an opportunity to link implementation of the Amman–Berlin Declaration with the Second Arab Decade for Persons with Disabilities (2023–2032).

He noted that the growing number of persons with disabilities resulting from armed conflicts, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, highlights the urgent need to accelerate implementation.

The opening session also featured a documentary that highlighted the role of HCD in organising and co-hosting the Global Disability Summit 2025.

The first day of the conference featured four main sessions. The first focused on Arab, United Nations, and international partnerships in implementing commitments from the Global Disability Summit 2025.

The second examined the Amman–Berlin Declaration and mechanisms to support its implementation.

The third explored ways to translate commitments into evidence-based action. It focused on situation analysis, data and indicators.

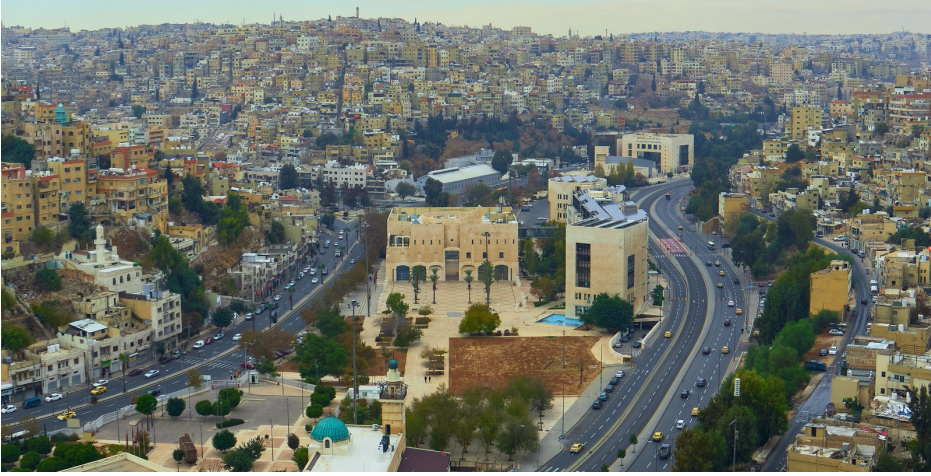
The fourth session addressed comprehensive social protection for persons with disabilities. It explored ways to strengthen and expand social protection systems in line with international commitments and Summit outcomes.

Amman tops Arab student cities in QS Best Student Cities Ranking

AMMAN (JT) — Amman has been ranked as the top student city in the Arab world, second in the Middle East, and 69th globally, according to the QS Best Student Cities Ranking 2027.

In a statement released on Tuesday, the University of Jordan (UJ) described the ranking as a “major” international indicator of the quality of the educational and living environment that Amman offers to local and international students, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The university noted that Amman outperformed several major regional cities in the



Amman is ranked as the top student city in the Arab world, second in the Middle East, and 69th globally, according to the QS Best Student Cities Ranking 2027

ranking, reinforcing its status as a leading and attractive educa-

tional destination in the region.

The QS Best Student

Cities Ranking is based on several rigorous indicators, including uni-

versity rankings and academic reputation, student mix and the proportion of international students, safety and quality of life, affordability, student view on their educational experience, and employer activity for graduates entering the labour market.

UJ noted that its own position, ranking 326th globally in the QS World University Rankings, directly contributed to elevating Amman’s standing and enhancing its global presence.

According to www.topuniversities.com, which published the ranking, Amman’s overall score stood at 69.6.

JSO records 454 earthquakes during first half of 2026

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Seismological Observatory (JSO), affiliated with the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, recorded a total of 454 earthquakes during the first half of 2026, including 49 local, 235 regional and 170 distant tremors.

According to the observatory’s semi-annual report released by the ministry, local earthquakes ranged between 1.4 and 4.5 magnitude on the Richter scale, concentrated mainly along the Dead Sea, the Gulf of Aqaba, Wadi Araba, the Jordan Valley, Lake Tiberias and adjacent border areas.

Regional earthquakes recorded magnitudes between 2.2 and 5.8, while distant quakes ranged between 4.0 and 7.8 magnitude, the Jordan News

Agency, Petra, reported.

Operating 24/7 through a network of 23 primary seismic stations, JSO detects both weak and strong seismic activity.

The observatory analyses seismic data to determine the time, location, magnitude and depth of quakes, issuing immediate reports to relevant authorities.

As part of its role in crisis management, JSO provides daily reports and specialised updates on felt earthquakes and their aftershocks to the Civil Defence Department (CDD) and the National Centre for Security and Crisis Management (NCSCM).

It also continues maintaining and upgrading the national monitoring network and expanding its strong-motion station

network.

During the reporting period, the observatory conducted awareness sessions for school and university students, offering scientific explanations and practical training opportunities.

It also collaborated with CDD on disaster response training and hazard identification, while continuing coordination with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation and participating in specialised international conferences and workshops.

JSO’s work falls within its mandate to monitor seismic activity across the Kingdom and evaluate potential hazards, as Jordan’s seismic activity is primarily concentrated along the Dead Sea Transform fault line.

RSS inaugurates pioneering educational model for permaculture at Ajloun National University

AMMAN (JT) — The Royal Scientific Society (RSS) inaugurated a pioneering educational model for permaculture at Ajloun National University, as part of the “Baraka” project funded by the European Union, to promote the concepts of sustainable agriculture adapted to climate change.

The permaculture intervention, implemented by the RSS on the university campus, aims to provide an educational and practical platform to train students, researchers, and the local community in innovative agricultural practices based on the integration of humans and nature, thus supporting efforts to protect natural resources and enhance food security, according to an RSS statement.

President of Ajloun National University Feras Hanandeh expressed his

appreciation to the European Union and the RSS for implementing this initiative at the university.

Hanandeh stressed the project’s importance in training future generations in sustainable agricultural practices capable of addressing the challenges of climate change and promoting the vision of the “Ajloun: The Oxygen of Jordan” initiative by supporting green environmental practices.

RSS Vice President Rafat Assi highlighted the “fruitful” partnership with the EU and its support for development projects in Jordan, particularly those that contribute to translating scientific knowledge into practical applications serving vital sectors and local communities.

He also thanked Ajloun National University for its cooperation and for hosting this applied model that

combines education, innovation, and sustainability.

EU Ambassador to the Kingdom Pierre-Christophe Chatzisavvas expressed his appreciation for the pioneering role played by RSS in employing applied science and innovation to serve sustainable development, through the implementation of initiatives that adopt the principles of the circular economy and promote adaptation to the effects of climate change.

He praised the role of Jordanian universities, especially Ajloun National University, in disseminating knowledge, fostering scientific and environmental initiatives, and preparing a generation of young agricultural engineers capable of leading the transition towards more sustainable development practices.

He also commended

RSS’s role in networking with research institutions and Jordanian universities, as well as with civil society organisations, to solidify the concept of science in service to society.

Acting Head of International Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Jordan Anne Laure Roche-Rault highlighted the importance of partnerships with research and academic institutions in Jordan to promote the green transition through the implementation of sustainable initiatives and models that can be built upon and scaled up.

She affirmed the EU’s continued support for development plans in Jordan, particularly those related to climate resilience and the green transition.

Director of the Water, Environment, and Climate Change Centre at RSS Almoayyed Assayed pre-



The Royal Scientific Society inaugurates a pioneering educational model for permaculture at Ajloun National University, as part of the ‘Baraka’ project funded by the EU

sented the key activities of the “Baraka” project, implemented by RSS over the past three years with EU support.

He noted that the project focuses on enhancing resilience through circular solutions and green innovations.

Assayed noted that

the project has sought to support climate-resilient agriculture, promote cleaner production, improve resource use efficiency, enhance water management efficiency, and disseminate circular economy concepts by applying practical models that combine scientific

research, innovation and community service.

The opening ceremony included a presentation by technical specialists from RSS and the National Centre for Agricultural Research on the concept of permaculture as an integrated and sustainable approach based on mim-

icking natural systems, enhancing biodiversity, improving soil health, and optimising resource use.

The permaculture model at the university includes agricultural terraces, ponds for producing azolla as poultry feed, and a system for raising poultry and treating its waste using earthworms to produce organic fertiliser, thus achieving an integrated cycle for resource reuse in accordance with the principles of the circular economy.

The implementation of this model aligns with RSS’s commitment to promoting the application of science and knowledge in addressing environmental and climate challenges, and supporting the transition to more resilient and sustainable agricultural systems through national and international partnerships.



Refugees at Zaatari Camp

Photo courtesy of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

615 refugees depart Jordan for resettlement in H1 2026 — UNHCR

AMMAN (JT) — A total of 615 refugees departed Jordan for resettlement countries during the first half of 2026, while 513 new resettlement cases were submitted over the same period, the United Nations high commissioner for refugees (UNHCR) in Jordan said.

According to UNHCR figures for June 2026, cited by Al Mamlaka TV, those resettled included 426 Syrian refugees and 189 refugees of other nationalities.

The new resettlement submissions comprised 116 Syrian refugees and 397 refugees of other nationalities.

Since 2014, UNHCR has submitted 120,064 resettlement cases from Jordan, while 79,239 refugees have departed the Kingdom for resettlement countries over the same period, the agency said.

UNHCR described resettlement as a durable

solution that enables refugees to move from a country of asylum to a third country that grants them permanent residence.

UNHCR estimates that around 32,000 refugees in Jordan are in need of resettlement...

It also called the programme a vital protection tool that reflects international responsibility-sharing and solidarity with Jordan.

The agency identifies refugees with the greatest protection needs,

assesses their eligibility and submits their cases to receiving countries. It also supports selection missions and facilitates departure arrangements in line with available quotas.

UNHCR estimates that around 32,000 refugees in Jordan are in need of resettlement, representing about 7 per cent of the refugee population in the Kingdom. However, due to limited global resettlement places, fewer than 1 per cent are expected to secure an opportunity for resettlement.

Legal or physical protection needs accounted for 49 per cent of resettlement submissions, followed by survivors of violence or torture (30 per cent), women and girls at risk (12 per cent), children and adolescents at risk (6 per cent), medical needs (2 per cent) and family reunification (0.4 per cent).

Jerash Festival opens 40th edition with new venues, diverse performances

Festival features enhanced visitor services, wider Arab, international participation

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — The 40th edition of the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts will feature expanded venues, enhanced visitor services and wider Arab and international participation, the festival's Executive Director Yazan Khudair said on Tuesday.

Speaking at a Government Communication Forum, Khudair said that this year's festival, which opens on Wednesday, July 23, reflects the Kingdom's vision of promoting culture and arts while strengthening Jordan's position as a regional cultural hub.

He noted that the festival, established in 1980, has built a strong reputation over four decades as one of the most prominent cultural and artistic events in the Arab world and the region.

Khudair also said that the festival's organisers introduced several upgrades to improve visitors' experiences, including the development of the Hippodrome Theatre, which can accommodate around 3,000 people and was built according to international standards.

The festival site will also include areas showcasing local products by women from the Jerash community, traditional crafts and food products, in addition to a pavilion for the Rehabilitation and Correction Department to display inmates' products.

He added that 11 embassies will participate in this year's edition, while the Oval Plaza has been redesigned to facilitate



JT file

Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts Executive Director Yazan Khudair says on Tuesday that the festival, established in 1980, has built a strong reputation over four decades as one of the most prominent cultural and artistic events in the Arab world and the region

tate movement and provide a more comfortable experience for visitors.

The festival will host performances on the Southern and Northern Theatres, including Arab and international artists such as Majida El Roumi, Tamer Hosny, George Wassouf, Abadi Al Johar, Ahmed Saad, alongside Jordanian artists.

The programme will also feature theatrical performances, including a production by Karak Theatre titled "One Thousand and One Nights" and a musical theatre performance on the life of legendary Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum.

Khudair said that more than 20 foreign countries will take part through

cultural exchange programmes, adding that no participating artist or group has cancelled their appearance.

Regarding transport, he said that organisers cooperated with JETT company to provide buses from Amman and several governorates to Jerash, with return trips costing JD6 per person. Additional shuttle buses will operate between approved parking areas and festival venues.

He added that ticket packages include several categories, including a new family and friends option costing JD15 per ticket when purchasing a minimum of four tickets, offering discounts for groups.

The festival has also increased the number of public facilities, including raising the number of toilets from six in previous editions to 16 this year, he said.

Khudair also highlighted the role of the local community, saying organisers worked with the Crown Prince Foundation's "Nahno" platform, receiving 231 applications for participation. After reviewing applications, around 115 participants from Jerash were selected.

He added that a new platform was introduced for young people interested in presenting festival events, with more than 90 applicants. A committee represent-

ing Jordan Television, the Artists Syndicate, the Ministry of Culture and the Jerash Festival Radio selected 10 new presenters.

The opening ceremony will celebrate the history of Jordanian music, from early pioneers such as Abdul Musa to contemporary generations, featuring new lighting techniques and three-dimensional visual effects, according to Khudair.

He stressed that the festival's success depends on partnerships with various national institutions, including security agencies, the Ministry of Interior, the Jerash Governorate, media partners and the Ministry of Culture.

Energy Ministry signs gas pipeline project to connect King Hussein Development Area to national network

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabshah on Tuesday signed an agreement with Engineering for the Petroleum and Process Industries to prepare tender documents for a project to supply the King Hussein Bin Talal Development Area with natural gas.

The project comes as part of efforts to advance the objectives of the Economic Modernisation Vision and implement the National Programme to Support Industries, which aims to extend natural gas supplies to industrial cities across the Kingdom, according to an Energy Ministry statement.

The agreement was signed during a meeting held by the project's specialised team from the ministry and representatives of the King Hussein Bin Talal Development Area.

The meeting reviewed



Petra photo

Located in Mafraq, the King Hussein Bin Talal Development Area lies 60 kilometres northeast of Amman and spans 21 square kilometres

progress on the programme to deliver natural gas to industrial cities and clusters, including the King Hussein Development Area, Al Muwaqqar Industrial Estate and Al Rawdah Industrial Estate.

The ministry said that the project would pro-

vide industries with a more cost-effective fuel source, reducing production costs and enhancing the competitiveness of Jordanian industries in local and international markets.

It added that the project would also contribute to creating new

job opportunities, reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality.

The project is funded by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, following the completion of technical and preparatory studies covering proposed gas pipeline routes

and an assessment of expected demand in the King Hussein Bin Talal Development Area.

The Ministry of Environment has also approved the preparation of a comprehensive environmental impact assessment for the project.

The project includes facilities to connect the area with the Arab Gas Pipeline, a secondary gas transmission pipeline and an integrated pressure reduction and metering station.

The appointed consultant will prepare the tender documents ahead of launching the tender for contractors and consultants, followed by the engineering, procurement and construction phase, with operations expected to begin in 2029.

The project includes constructing a 20 kilometre gas pipeline to connect the King Hussein Bin Talal Development Area to the national gas network.



JT file

Ministry of Labour Spokesperson Mohammad Zayoud says on Tuesday that the government launched measures on June 15, to legalise the status of irregular non-Jordanian workers of all nationalities, with the regularisation period set to end on September 30, 2026

Over 321,000 foreign workers hold valid permits — Labour Ministry

AMMAN (JT) — The number of valid work permits issued to foreign workers across various sectors has exceeded 321,000, with most concentrated in the agriculture, manufacturing and construction sectors, Ministry of Labour Spokesperson Mohammad Zayoud said on Tuesday.

Speaking to Al Mamlaka TV, Zayoud said that demand for regularising the status of irregular foreign workers remains "moderate" during the grace period approved by the Cabinet, despite more than two months remaining before the deadline expires.

He added that the government launched measures on June 15, 2026 to legalise the status of irregular non-Jordanian workers of all nationalities, with the regularisation period set to end on September 30, 2026.

Zayoud urged employers and households to take advantage of the financial exemptions approved by the Cabinet during the grace period and settle the

status of irregular workers before the deadline.

He said that there are no plans to extend the regularisation period, noting that the timeframe provided is sufficient for employers and households to correct workers' legal status and benefit from the available exemptions and incentives.

Under the Cabinet decision, employers and irregular non-Jordanian workers across various sectors and economic activities are granted a 50 per cent exemption from work permit fees for previous periods, including domestic workers.

The decision also provides a 100 per cent exemption from late-payment fines when renewing expired work permits or transferring workers to another employer.

Irregular non-Jordanian workers subject to the Law on Residence and Foreigners' Affairs are also exempted from 100 per cent of overstay fines if they regularise their status during the grace period.

The measures further allow irregular workers wishing to permanently leave the Kingdom to do so without paying work permit fees or accumulated fines for previous periods until the date of departure.

Foreign workers subject to the Residence and Foreigners' Affairs Law, including domestic workers, who leave the Kingdom permanently are also exempted from 100 per cent of overstay fines, provided their employment files are settled.

Starting October 1, the Ministry of Labour will begin deportation procedures against any irregular foreign worker who has failed to regularise their status in accordance with the Labour Law and the Law on Residence and Foreigners' Affairs, including domestic workers, he said.

The measure will be implemented through an inspection campaign in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Public Security Directorate.

Police arrest 17 suspects in eight drug cases across Kingdom

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Anti-Narcotics Department on Wednesday said police arrested 17 suspects in connection with eight illicit drug cases in various parts of the Kingdom in the past few days, according to officials.

Law-enforcement officers also seized large amounts of illicit drugs and weapons with some of the suspects, according to Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen Amer Sartawi.

One of the cases, according to Sartawi, involved arresting three suspects



PSO photo

Police arrest 17 suspects in connection with eight illicit drug cases in various parts of the Kingdom in the past few days

following a surveillance operation in Amman.

The suspects were allegedly in possession of one kilogramme of Cryetal

meth, according to the police official.

"The arresting team also seized a weapon and illicit pills that were in the pos-

session of the suspects," Sartawi said.

In another drug bust operation, Sartawi said that police arrested an alleged drug dealer who possessed 20,000 illicit pills at his home in Mafraq.

"The suspect hid the illicit pills in a hole in the backyard of his home," Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

Meanwhile, police arrested three suspects in Central Badia who were in a tent allegedly selling illicit drugs, according to Sartawi.

"Officers found 3.2 kilogrammes of Hashish

in their possession," he added.

In other areas of the Kingdom, police arrested several suspects in several drug bust operations in Amman, Karak, Maan and Ramtha.

The law-enforcement officers seized various quantities of Hashish, Marijuana and Captagon pills, according to Sartawi.

All suspects were referred to the State Security Court prosecution office for further questioning and indictment, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate.



AFP photo
The headquarters building of Hungary's nationalist FIDESZ Party of ex-leader Viktor Orban is seen in Budapest, Hungary, on Tuesday

Hungary raids Orban's Fidesz Party servers in graft probe

BUDAPEST (AFP) — Hungarian prosecutors on Tuesday raided the data servers of nationalist ex-leader Viktor Orban's Fidesz Party as part of an investigation into alleged corruption.

Since ending Orban's headline 16-year rule, Prime Minister Peter Magyar's new pro-European conservative government has rushed to loosen the self-styled "illiberal" leader's lingering grip on the country.

Magyar has also vowed to pursue figures who enabled corruption, which watchdogs believe became endemic under his predecessor and recover public assets from those who "illegally acquired" them.

"Investigators from the prosecutor's office showed up unannounced at the data centre hosting Fidesz's servers with the intention of seizing the party's entire communications system and databases," a statement from Orban's party said on Facebook.

The Bacs-Kiskun County Prosecutor's Office was "conducting an investigation in a criminal case initiated in connection with the National Cultural Fund regarding the crime of embezzlement and other criminal offences," its spokeswoman Marianna Bodo told AFP.

Bodo added that no further information would be provided, "as this would compromise the interests of the ongoing investigation".

It was not immediately clear what Fidesz facility in the southern Bacs-Kiskun County had been raided.

The party claimed that "there has been no precedent for this in Hungary since 1990, the end of communism".

In the wake of the announcement, Magyar said on Facebook that he had learnt of the alleged raid from Fidesz.

'Investigators from the prosecutor's office showed up unannounced at the data centre hosting Fidesz's servers with the intention of seizing the party's entire communications system and databases'

'Regime change'

Magyar's Tisza Party swept the April elections on the promise of "regime change", winning a two-thirds majority in parliament.

After his victory, actor-rapper-activist Aron Molnar publicly alleged that the National Cultural Fund functioned as a state-run payment agency for members of Fidesz's inner circle.

After launching an investigation, the tax authority found that the fund's decision-making body had issued 1079 grants totalling more than 17 billion forints (\$54 million) in violation of the rules, according to a previous prosecutor's statement.

In June, six people were accused of embezzlement and taken into custody, including Fidesz politician Balazs Bus, who served as the culture fund's vice president.

Magyar's government has moved to turn the page on the Orban era, passing a swathe of anti-corruption measures and changing the constitution to effectively bar Orban from running again.

Magyar has also pushed to remove a host of Orban-allied figures he accuses of being "puppets", including unpopular ex-president Tamas Sulyok, ousted by constitutional amendment on Sunday.

Fidesz has decried Magyar's moves as "autocratic", a charge that was often levelled against Orban himself during his tenure.

But they have helped to smooth over ties with the European Union, frayed by Orban's closeness to the Kremlin.

Magyar's reform drive is seen as crucial to rapidly unblock 16 billion euros (\$18.3 billion) in EU funds frozen over rule-of-law concerns under his predecessor.

He has also approved a dramatic overhaul of public media, which under Orban had become a de facto Fidesz mouthpiece.

Trump 'not finished' with Iran as Tehran steps up strikes

TEHRAN (AFP) — President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that the United States was not finished attacking Iran, as Tehran stepped up its strikes across the Middle East.

The US leader projected that it would take the Islamic republic more than 20 years to rebuild from damage sustained in the Middle East war, two weeks after fighting between the decades-old foes resumed.

"If we left right now, it would take Iran 20, 25 years to rebuild," he said. "We're not finished at all... we're not leaving right now."

His comments came after Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain came under attack on on Tuesday.

Houthi threat

US President Donald Trump said he would "take care of" the Houthi rebels if the Iran-backed militant group followed through on its threatened blockade of Saudi ports.

"If something like that happens, we take care of it," Trump said. "You know, we've done that with the Houthis before and we haven't heard from them in a while since we did what we did originally."

Saudi Arabia strongly condemned the threat from what it called the "terrorist Houthi militia" and said it "continues to support the brotherly



AFP photo
This screen grab made on Sunday from handout video footage released by the US Central Command (CENTCOM) on Saturday shows US forces launching what the military says are precision strikes targeting Iranian military capabilities

Yemeni people and their legitimate government".

'Still struggling'

Following the deaths of at least three US soldiers in recent days, the US launched a new round of attacks against Iran on Monday it said was "de-

signed to further degrade Iranian military capabilities used to attack commercial shipping" in the Strait of Hormuz.

The deaths bring to 17 the number of fatalities among US service members. Nearly 100 US service members have been wounded since war re-

sumed on July 7, the Pentagon said on Monday.

Despite the latest fighting, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said diplomatic exchanges with Washington via mediators were ongoing.

Mediator Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif called for restraint from all warring sides during a meeting with Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni on Tuesday.

Sharif urged the sides to "refrain from actions that could further destabilise the region", his office said.

UN chief to head to Syria, first such visit since 2009

UNITED NATIONS, United States (AFP) — UN chief Antonio Guterres will travel to Syria later this week at the invitation of the government," the deputy UN special envoy to the country, Claudio Cordone, said during a council meeting.

During the visit, Gu-

terres will meet with Syrian President Ahmed Al Sharaa, who ousted long-time leader Bashar Assad in December 2024, as well as representatives of civil society and non-governmental organisations supporting women's issues.

"Throughout his stay, he will reaffirm the Unit-

ed Nations commitment to supporting the Syrian government and the Syrian people at this defining period in Syria's history," Cordone said.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric added that Guterres would also visit UN peacekeepers stationed in a buffer

zone in the Golan Heights since 1974 to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and Syria.

Guterres will be the first UN chief to visit Syria since Ban Ki-moon in 2009.

A UN Security Council delegation visited Syria in December.

Canada joins GCAP fighter jet programme as 'observer'

LONDON (AFP) — Canada has joined an initiative launched by Britain, Italy and Japan to develop a next-generation fighter jet as an "observer", Britain's defence ministry announced on Tuesday.

The Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) programme launched in 2022 aims to develop a supersonic sixth-generation stealth fighter by 2035, replacing the Eurofighter Typhoon used by some

European countries.

British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said in a statement that Canada would "join the programme as the first observer nation", which would make it "even stronger".

Canada will gain "direct insight" into the programme, including into "industrial collaboration" and "long-term delivery plans", the UK government said.

While Canada gets a non-decision-making role, the move "paves the way for discussions on Canada's future participation and contribution to GCAP", it added.

Newly appointed British defence minister Wes Streeting said the agreement would "strengthen the UK's defence cooperation with Canada".

At a press conference after a meeting hosted by Streeting in London, Jap-

anese counterpart Shinjiro Koizumi said Ottawa's participation was "monumental" and would "advance cooperation among our four nations".

Canadian defence minister David McGuinty said this "important milestone" would allow Canada to "deepen its understanding of next-generation combat air capabilities".

The programme gained momentum this month

after the three countries allocated £4.6 billion (\$6.2 billion) to continue its development.

A joint venture between Britain's BAE Systems, Italy's Leonardo and Japan Aircraft Industrial Enhancement Co. Ltd. is developing the aircraft.

Britain has pledged £8.6 billion to GCAP over the next four years in its long-awaited 10-year Defence Investment Plan unveiled at the end of June.



World Food Programme
Programme Alimentaire Mondial
Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برامج الأغذية العالمية

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) - WFP (EOI-PROC/JOR/2026003/)
For Operating and Managing a Retail shop in Azraq camp
Closing on Thursday 06 August 2026 at 16:00 hrs (Jordan Local Time)

A. Background

1.The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) is the largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger in the world. The program is currently working in Jordan to serve the most vulnerable refugees living in camps by providing monthly general food assistance through cash-based transfers to meet their essential food needs, which they can redeem through the contracted shops in the camp.

2.The World Food Program provides assistance to about thirty-two thousand beneficiaries in Azraq camp, however, given the current situation some refugees are voluntary returning to Syria with an estimated average of around Three hundred refugees monthly as of June 2026.

B.The purpose of this EOI

3.The purpose of this Expression of Interest (EOI) is for the WFP Procurement Unit in Jordan to identify retail vendors/ shops that have a minimum of three years of Retail experience to operate and manage a retail shop in Azraq camp, in addition to the technical and financial capacity to deliver the services required by WFP.

4.Eligibility to participate in the proposed bid will be determined after reviewing the required documents submitted with an expression of interest.

5.WFP will evaluate the responses received and inform eligible participants of the evaluation outcomes.

6.Qualified food retailers will be invited to participate in the bidding process for the proposed bid.

C.How to prepare and submit your Expression of Interest

7.To participate in the exercise of pre-determination of eligibility; retailers are required to provide the following:

- A valid commercial registration which includes a related category.
- Profession license for the year 2026
- Financial Statements of 2025 and 2024
- Letter from the bank certifying the account details, where the business prefers to receive payments on.
- Willingness to sell to WFP's beneficiaries on credit for 2- 4 weeks.
- Willingness to accept payment through WFP systems (such as mobile money, paper voucher, blockchain, closed loop electronic voucher etc.)
- Willingness to share all WFP sales data.
- Willingness to share operational cost data in a confidential manner with the World Food Program.

All supporting documentation listed above shall be prepared in accordance with the instructions provided and sent by email to jordan.vendormanagement@wfp.org

8.WFP will not consider incomplete submissions. All responses and supporting documentation received will be treated as strictly confidential and will not be made available to the public.

9.This request for EOI does not constitute a solicitation. WFP reserves the right to change or cancel this procurement process or any of its requirements at any time during the process; any such action will be communicated to all participants.

10.Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us at:jordan.vendormanagement@wfp.org

India's 'Cockroach' movement vows to protest until education minister resigns

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's "Cockroach" Party movement vowed on Tuesday to press ahead for the resignation of the country's education minister, a day after at least 178 people were injured in protests in New Delhi.

Hundreds of protesters remained camped at the Jantar Mantar protest site on Tuesday, many of them calling for changes to the education system.

Thousands of protesters gathered in the heart of the Indian capital on Monday, demanding minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation, in a show of force by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) online movement.

The CJP has won millions of followers on social media since its launch in May, fuelling one of the biggest challenges to Hindu-nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi since he won his third term in office in 2024.

"We won't stop. Pradhan has to be sacked,"

CJP spokesman Ashutosh Ranka said in a social media post.

There were far fewer protesters than on Monday, when the CJP mobilised huge crowds to march on India's parliament.

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke on Tuesday urged protesters not to lose hope.

"They want to break our spirit," he said, perched on top of a lorry. "Do not let them silence you."

Police fired tear gas and baton-charged protesters on Monday to stop them from marching on parliament, marking the biggest street rally in Delhi in about five years.

At least 178 people were injured in clashes between protesters and security officials, Delhi Police said in a statement late Monday.

That included 118 police personnel, including senior officers, it said while criticising what it described as "unruly, aggressive and violent behaviour" by a "violent mob".

"During the scuffle, around 60 protesters were also reported to get injured," it added.

Protest organisers condemned the "high-handedness" of the authorities and said hundreds of protesters had been injured.

"It's a shameful day in the history of Indian democracy that people, honest students, who had come for a genuine issue were brutally beaten by the Delhi police," Ranka told AFP.

Ranka, who met senior minister JP Nadda on Monday, said the government had yet to respond to their demands.

Protesters said they would not relent.

"We have become even more fearless now," said Chandra Pratap Sishwi, 25, who is studying to be a lawyer.

"When I saw people being beaten up by the police like that, my blood boiled."

The opposition benches demanded on Tuesday a discussion in parliament

on the alleged "brutality unleashed on students".

"Students were beaten for asking legitimate questions about their own future," said Rahul Gandhi of the Congress Party.

"If parliament cannot discuss the future of India's youth, what is it for?"

Despite rapid economic growth, millions of people in the world's most populous nation still struggle to find stable and well-paying jobs, fuelling discontent.

The protests follow a series of examination scandals that have shaken confidence in the country's testing system.

Some 2.2 million aspiring medical students sat for a reexamination under tight security last month after the previous test was scrapped following the leak of a question paper.

That came on top of another scandal related to the online marking system of tests taken by nearly two million high school students.



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

New UK PM Burnham stamps authority with Cabinet shakeup

LONDON (AFP) — New UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham was set to convene his first Cabinet meeting on Tuesday after purging the government of his predecessor's loyalists, as he promised a 10-year plan to ease cost-of-living pressures and signalled a tilt to the left. He immediately got to work after replacing Keir Starmer in Downing Street, holding separate calls with US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky before appointing his ministerial team.

Burnham, 56, pledged to re-industrialise Britain and decentralise power as well as end sleeping rough on the streets after he met King Charles III at Buckingham Palace to become the head of government following Starmer's departure.

The monarch's fourth prime minister since he acceded to the throne in 2022 — and Britain's seventh in just over a decade — Burnham said the country needed to show the world it could “regain stability”.

Accompanied by his wife Marie-France van Heel, Burnham was greeted in Downing Street by resounding applause from supporters, including his mother.

Standing outside his new official residence at Number 10, he vowed to create “a new political model” and “build a new economy”.

And he promised to “give people some breathing space now, some help with the cost of living”,

which he said he would start to announce on Tuesday.

In his first call with Trump, Burnham underlined his “commitment to defence and security”, a UK government spokesperson said.

Trump said he had a “very good conversation” with Burnham and that the two leaders would meet “in the not too distant future”.

Burnham “has got a big job ahead of him, but he will be able to do it and, of course, the U.S.A. will be there to help!” Trump posted on Truth Social, noting they discussed trade, military cooperation and demining the Strait of Hormuz.

To Zelensky, Burnham reaffirmed Britain’s “resolute commitment” to Ukraine in its defence of Russia’s invasion, according to Downing Street.

French President Emmanuel Macron sent congratulations, urging Burnham to “give new momentum to the partnership” with the European Union.

Burnham moved swiftly to stamp his authority on the new government by sacking several Starmer loyalists from his Cabinet, including Rachel Reeves and David Lammy, while moving some ministers to other jobs and promoting allies.

‘Stronger and fairer’

Ex-defence secretary John Healey replaced Reeves as finance minister, Ed Miliband became foreign minister and left-wing figurehead An-

gela Rayner returned to government.

Wes Streeting, who abandoned plans to run against Burnham for the Labour leadership, is now defence minister.

Shabana Mahmood was reappointed interior minister to see through her headline reforms of Britain’s asylum system.

In his brief speech, Burnham said he would “bring forward a new plan for Britain, a 10-year plan”, without giving specifics.

Starmer had similarly talked of his intention to lead a “decade of national renewal” before Labour MPs ditched him last month in favour of Burnham, who only returned to parliament four weeks ago.

Burnham also said his first instruction would be a pledge to “end rough sleeping”, a measure he attempted to implement as a regional mayor in northern England, although it was not fully successful.

Other announcements included a vague promise to re-industrialise Britain through public procurement and to build more public housing.

He repeated his belief that “in the 1980s Britain took some wrong turns”, as he pledged to decentralise power away from Westminster and “put life’s essentials back under stronger public control to make them affordable”.

Starmer departed Downing Street with his wife, insisting his two years in office had made Britain “stronger and fairer”.

NEPCO electricity sales rise 2.2% in first half of 2026

AMMAN (JT) — National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) sales increased by 2.2 per cent in the first half of 2026 compared with the corresponding period in 2025, driven by higher electricity demand.

Total electricity sales reached 11,274.4 gigawatt-hours (GWh), up from 11,035.7 GWh during the same period last year, according to Jordan News Agency, Petra. Preliminary data showed that sales to the three electricity distribution companies, the Jordan Electric Power Company, the Irbid District Electricity Company and the Electricity Distribution Company, totalled 10,821.9 GWh, marking a 2 per cent increase compared with 10,604.5 GWh in the first half of 2025.

Sales to major consumers reached 266.4 GWh by the end of June 2026.

Electricity exports to the General Company for Electric Power Transmission in the Central Region, the Je-



National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) sales increase by 2.2 per cent in the first half of 2026 compared with the corresponding period in 2025

rusalem District Electricity Company and the Trebil border crossing reached 186.1 GWh during the same period in 2025.

Jordan condemns Houthi claim that Saudi Arabia is besieging Yemen

Continued from page 1

Saudi authorities on Monday condemned claims by a Houthi military spokesperson that the militant group had imposed a mari-

time blockade on Saudi Arabia.

They also condemned Houthi accusations that the Kingdom has besieged the Yemeni people.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry said, “The king-

dom affirms that it has worked over the past years with the legitimate government of Yemen to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people through the continuation of development

projects, support for the Yemeni government’s budget and the provision of petroleum derivatives to operate power plants.”

The ministry statement said that more than 300 ships carrying

a variety of food items, goods, fuel and construction materials arrived at ports in northern Yemen, including Hodeidah, Salif and Ras Isa, during the first half of 2026.

Prime minister reviews eco-tourism project, directs service upgrades in Jerash, Ramtha

Continued from page 1

Hassan said the programmes, which include specialised English-language courses, taekwondo, other sports and artistic training, should help identify young talent and improve employment opportunities. He also ordered upgrades to

the centre’s infrastructure, including a modern computer laboratory and additional equipment.

At Ramtha Government Hospital, Hassan instructed officials to maintain facilities, upgrade medical equipment and address staffing shortages.

In the presence of

Health Minister Ibrahim Baddour, he also directed the preparation of technical feasibility studies for the construction of an additional floor housing operating theatres and intensive care units.

The hospital serves more than 250,000 people and provides clinical

training for medical and nursing students from several universities.

Hassan also reviewed plans to rehabilitate the Forty Road (Tareeq Al Arbaceen), which links Ramtha with neighbouring areas, and stressed the need to accelerate work on the project, for which the Cabinet allo-

cated JD2 million during its session in Irbid last May.

He also instructed officials to complete rehabilitation of the Ramtha-Jaber road linking Ramtha with Mafraq Governorate, including the installation of street lighting and other traffic safety measures.

Jordan, US sign Reciprocal Trade Agreement to boost bilateral trade

Continued from page 1

Under the agreement, the United States will reduce reciprocal customs duties on Jordanian goods to 10 per cent and grant Jordan’s garments and textiles sector more preferential access to the US market, the statement said.

The agreement is expected to boost Jordanian exports to the United States, particularly garments and textiles, while facilitating access for US agricultural products and vehicles to the Jordanian

market.

Jordan will continue to grant duty-free access to US exports under the 2001 Free Trade Agreement.

The agreement also includes provisions aimed at facilitating bilateral trade through stronger environmental enforcement, better protection of workers’ rights, enhanced intellectual property protection and improved customs procedures, according to the statement.

The two sides also agreed to continue discussions on trade in services and investment

with the aim of removing barriers and expanding bilateral trade and investment.

The agreement also highlights the importance of maintaining high standards in digital trade to support an open and competitive digital economy.

It also includes commitments on digital trade, with Jordan pledging not to impose taxes or customs duties on digital services and to continue supporting the World Trade Organisation’s moratorium on cus-

tom duties on electronic transmissions.

Both sides also agreed to strengthen supply chain resilience and innovation through cooperation on policies affecting global trade, investment security, export controls and efforts to combat customs fraud, the statement said.

The agreement reinforces more than two decades of economic cooperation under the Jordan-US Free Trade Agreement, which has strengthened bilateral trade, investment and commercial ties.

The United States remains a key market for Jordanian industrial exports, with exports to the US reaching JD595 million during the first four months of the year, driven by garments and textiles, jewellery, machinery and electrical equipment and pharmaceuticals.

Officials said the agreement is expected to boost trade, create new opportunities for exporters and investors, and further strengthen the strategic economic partnership between Jordan and the United States.

Continued from page 1

The Israeli attacks had killed “at least 57 Palestinians, including six children and eight women” from July 13 to 20, Kheetan said.

The Israeli army has in recent days announced a series of strikes in the Gaza Strip targeting Hamas and Islamic Jihad members who it said were involved in the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel, that set off the war, or the holding of hostages after.

It also reported striking a weapons depot, an arms manufacturing site, and a rocket-launching position, saying that this infrastructure posed a threat to its troops.

Kheetan said the strikes had targeted residential buildings, at least one tent sheltering internally displaced people, and other crowded areas, with 34 of the victims “killed far away from the Israeli-imposed yellow line”.

War crimes?

In attacks on July 17 and 18, for instance, he said the UN rights office had determined that 10

Israeli attacks in Gaza City, middle Gaza, north Gaza and Khan Younes had killed at least 21 Palestinians.

“In one of these attacks, on an apartment in Gaza City, five members of one family, were killed together: both parents and three siblings, reportedly aged eight, 15, and 17,” he said.

The UN rights office has so far verified the killing of 685 Palestinians between last October and April

Kheetan stressed that “the killing of civilians in these attacks raises concerns of continuing violations of international humanitarian law, war crimes and other possible atrocity crimes in Gaza”.

“Under international law, deliberately attacking civilians is a war crime.”

The spokesman also warned that the Israel’s constant moving of the “yellow line” westwards had left the Palestinian population in Gaza “trapped in an ever-shrinking area”.

This, he stressed, presents “a continuous threat to life as the Israeli military appears to routinely fire on Palestinians for mere presence in the vicinity of that line, in violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law”.

More than 1,100 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the truce took effect in October, according to Gaza’s health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations.

The UN rights office has so far verified the killing of 685 Palestinians between last October and April, Kheetan said.

Restrictions imposed on media outlets and limited access in Gaza prevent AFP from independently verifying tolls or freely covering the violence there.

Strait of Hormuz becomes focal point of US-Iran escalation

Continued from page 1

The latest developments point to an increasing focus on maritime security and global energy routes. They also underline the strategic significance of the Strait of Hormuz as tensions between Washington and Tehran continue to grow.

Political analyst Amer Sabaileh said that the

latest escalation reflects Iran’s attempt to shift pressure towards international shipping lanes and global energy markets rather than limiting the confrontation to military operations alone.

“Hormuz has become Iran’s strongest pressure card because it gives Tehran leverage over international maritime navigation, global ener-

gy markets and the Gulf states,” Sabaileh said.

“By making the Strait of Hormuz the centre of the confrontation, Iran is giving the conflict a broader international dimension.”

Sabaileh added the latest developments have also highlighted different strategic priorities for the United States and Israel.

“For the United States, protecting freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz has become an immediate priority,” he said. “For Israel, the nuclear programme, Iran’s ballistic missile capabilities and its regional role remain the primary strategic concerns.”

He said that the latest escalation does not di-

minish the importance of Iran’s nuclear programme within the wider confrontation.

“However, the current phase of the conflict is increasingly centred on maritime security, energy supplies and freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, making the strategic waterway the immediate focus of the crisis,” he added.

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By Mohammad Aburumman

The first major war fought in such close strategic coordination between Washington and Tel Aviv may well have achieved important military objectives. Yet it also accelerated the erosion of the old bipartisan consensus, reopening fundamental questions about money, influence and the independence of American decision-making. In that sense, Israel may have won battles on the battlefield while beginning to lose something far more consequential in Washington.

By Hasan Dajah

By Ramzy Baroud

Yet, even as fierce criticism of Israel reaches the very apex of American politics, a profound, schizophrenic rupture divides Washington. While the American public, influential media personalities and top-tier politicians

This is explicitly evident in Congress, where establishment politicians remain busy acting as defence contractors for Tel Aviv. Lawmakers are quietly pushing forward with Section 219 of the National Defence Authorisation Act for Fiscal Year 2027. Far from distancing the US from the ongoing regional bloodbath, this legislation aims to permanently integrate and synchronise the US and Israeli militaries under a joint "Defence Technology Cooperation Initiative".

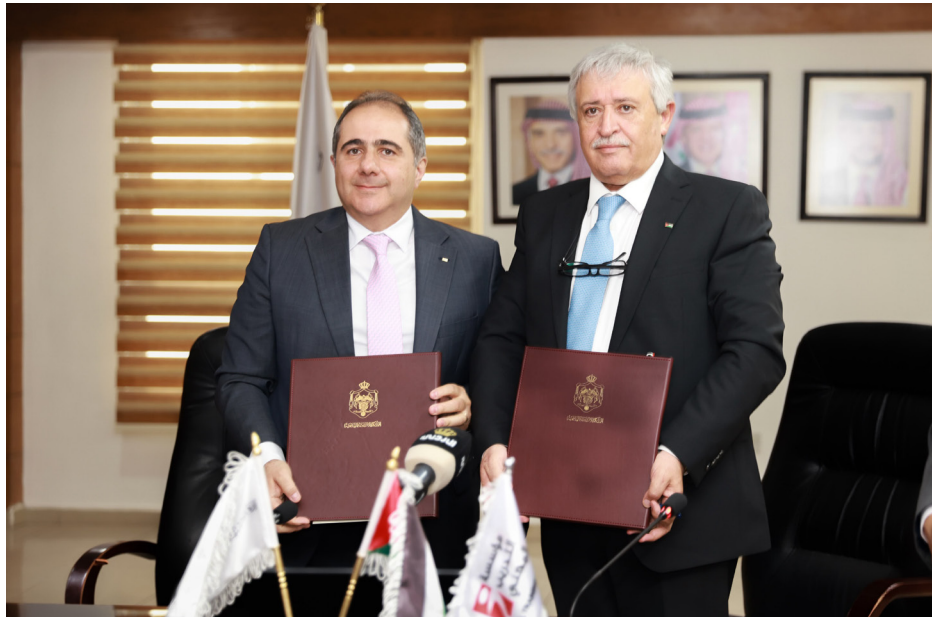
Yet, this dependency runs deeper, rooted in the 1967 USS Liberty incident. During the Six-Day War, Israeli forces launched a relentless two-hour attack on an unarmed US intelligence ship, killing 34 American sailors and wounding 171. Instead of demanding accountability, the Johnson administration accepted Israel's excuse of a "mistake" and covered up the truth to protect its ally. This established

Hasan Dajah is a professor of strategic studies at Al Hussein Bin Talal University

There must be a profound political awakening in America. If the American public and its leaders fail to reclaim their foreign policy from this destructive alliance, the only path forward will be one of perpetual conflict, economic ruin and endless war.

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

Wednesday, July 22, 2026



Memorandum of Understanding is signed by Minister of Labour Nidal Qatamin and Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh

Ministry, VTC cooperate to link manpower needs of investment projects with training programmms

AMMAN (JT) — A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed on Monday between the Ministry of Investment and the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), establishing a framework to link the manpower needs of investment projects with targeted training and employment programmes.

The agreement aims to develop and qualify Jordanian competencies, expanding job opportunities while supporting the growth, success and sustainability of investments across the Kingdom, according to a Ministry of Investment statement.

The MoU was signed by Minister of Labour Nidal Qatamin and Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh at the Ministry of Investment's, in the presence of VTC Director General Raafat Sawafin and Secretary General of the Ministry of Investment Zaher Qatarnah.

Qatamin stressed that the MoU represents a "qualitative" initiative to empower Jordanian youth across various vocational and academic levels, enabling them to meet the requirements of "diverse" investments and enhancing their readiness to capitalise on job opportunities generated by new projects.

The minister pointed out that the agreement ensures the provision of required specialisations and vocational skills required by investors.

The cooperation boosts investor confidence in the availability of qualified and trained Jordanian human resources capable of meeting project de-

mands, alongside with the draft vocational and handicrafts training law reaching its final legislative stages.

The minister said the agreement lays the groundwork for a more "integrated approach" to serving investors and facilitates their access to the human resources required for their projects, noting that the "availability" of a trained national workforce is a "key" factor influencing investment decisions.

He emphasised that investing in the skills of Jordanians is a "direct" investment in the competitiveness of the national economy and its capacity to attract high-value, sustainable investments.

The cooperation areas include assessing investment project requirements regarding workforce size, required specialisations and skills...

Abu Ghazaleh noted that the MoU aims to develop skills, increase employment and productivity rates, and align training programmes with the needs of economic sectors and actual job opportunities created by investments, delivering a sustainable

developmental impact across the Kingdom's governorates.

For his part, Sawafin noted that the agreement reflects the integration of national institutions' efforts and contributes to enhancing the investment environment by providing the qualified Jordanian skills required by investment projects.

He added that the corporation, through its institutes across the Kingdom's governorates, will work to align its training programmes with the needs of investors and the labour market.

It will also update and modernise vocational programmes to expedite meeting projects' needs for technical and vocational skills, thereby boosting employment prospects for Jordanians.

The cooperation areas include assessing investment project requirements regarding workforce size, required specialisations and skills, developing specialised training and qualification programmes for various investment sectors, exchanging relevant information and data in accordance with applicable legislation, as well as organising joint meetings, workshops and events to support training and employment.

The agreement serves as a national model for institutional integration, linking investment with training and employment, empowering Jordanian talent, enhancing workforce readiness and strengthening the national economy's capacity to generate sustainable jobs, according to a ministry statement.

JBA, Omani ambassador discuss economic, investment cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) President Ayman Alawneh and Omani Ambassador to Jordan Sheikh Fahad Bin Abdul Rahman Alojaili discussed ways to strengthen economic and investment cooperation and expand private-sector partnerships between the two countries.

According to the JBA statement issued on Tuesday, Alawneh said the "strong" Jordanian-Omani ties, backed by both countries' leadership, provide a "solid" foundation for advancing economic and investment relations.

Alawneh called for translating those ties into "feasible" projects and partnerships that serve mutual interests, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He highlighted significant opportunities to deepen cooperation in key sectors, including tourism and medical tourism, citing Jordan's "advanced" healthcare and tourism capabilities.

JBA president also noted opportunities in enhancing banking and financial services between the two countries



Jordanian Businessmen Association President Ayman Alawneh and Omani Ambassador to Jordan Sheikh Fahad Bin Abdul Rahman Alojaili discuss ways to strengthen economic and investment cooperation

to facilitate trade, investment and financing for joint ventures.

He said the JBA is "committed" to expanding engagement with Oman's private sector and building sustainable partnerships between business communities to increase trade, encourage joint investments and capitalise on opportunities across various

economic sectors.

Alawneh stated that Jordan offers an "attractive" investment environment supported by modern legislation, competitive incentives, a strategic location, and free trade agreements that provide investors with access to regional and global markets.

He also expressed the JBA's interest in organ-

ising joint business delegations and economic meetings to further strengthen cooperation.

For his part, Alojaili reaffirmed the "strength" of Jordanian-Omani relations, calling for increasing contacts between business leaders, exchanging visits, and launching joint investment projects in priority sectors to boost trade

and deliver mutual economic benefits.

Trade between Jordan and Oman reached \$167 million in 2024, up from \$157 million in 2023, according to official data.

Fertilisers, live animals, chemical products and garments are among Jordan's leading untapped export opportunities in the Omani market, Petra reported.

IEA says Mideast fighting increases energy concerns

PARIS, France (AFP) — The head of the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Tuesday that renewed fighting in the Mideast increases concerns over energy supplies but that the market still has cushions to absorb the impact.

"The escalation in hostilities affecting the Strait of Hormuz and energy infrastructure in the region increases security of supply concerns and uncertainty over the market outlook," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said in a statement.

"For the moment, crude oil markets continue to benefit from several cushioning factors," he added, pointing to increased exports from several countries and Saudi and United Arab Emirates oil reaching markets by alternative routes.

However, Saudi Arabia's main alternative route of using a pipeline to load tankers in the Red Sea port of Aden — as they did during the Gaza war — cutting off yet more crude



International Energy Agency Chief Fatih Birol

Houthis, declared they would blockade Saudi Arabia's ports.

Oil markets have for months feared that the Houthis would return to attacking shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden — as they did during the Gaza war — cutting off yet more crude

from global markets.

The initial market reaction to announcement by the Houthis was restrained, however, as Iran indicated that mediation efforts were still underway, calming investor jitters.

"Threats to the Bab El Mandeb Strait, which

has become increasingly important as a route to bypass the Strait of Hormuz, exacerbate these concerns further," said Birol, referring to the narrow passage between the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

The IEA, in addition to advising its industr-

ialised nation members, also helps them coordinate the release of their strategic oil reserves in reaction to market disruptions.

Birol noted that ongoing government releases from these reserves have provided considerable relief to markets, and that nations continue to hold ample reserves.

However, he warned "there is no room for complacency on oil security" and pointed to a drawdown of available commercial inventories, with low refining activity contributing to tighter supplies of refined oil products like petrol and diesel than for crude oil.

Birol noted that additional supplies of liquefied natural gas from the United States and Canada have offset about 70 per cent of lost supply via the Strait of Hormuz.

However, further delays in resuming Gulf exports "will be felt by all LNG importers, including Europe as it looks to refill its gas storage for next winter", he warned.

US trade envoy says acting 'soon' on new tariffs as 10% levy to expire

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US trade envoy Jamieson Greer said on Tuesday that there would be "action soon" regarding new tariffs on dozens of countries, with President Donald Trump's temporary global levy due to expire this week.

The Trump administration has readied fresh tariffs targeting 60 trading partners over their alleged failures to act against forced labour, as officials push to rebuild the US leader's trade agenda after legal setbacks.

"The US has laws to prohibit trading goods with forced labour. Other countries, most don't have a law, those that do don't re-



A fishing boat passes a container ship floating off the Port of Los Angeles on Friday in Los Angeles, California

ally enforce it," Greer told CNBC.

"We expect to see some action soon," he added, although adding that he cannot specify a timeline.

While Trump imposed a 10-per cent global duty this year after a swath of his tariffs were struck

down by the Supreme Court in February, this levy expires Friday.

Analysts expect that the planned tariffs over forced labour concerns — which range between 10 per cent and 12.5 per cent — would replace the temporary duties.

Greer added Tuesday that the new action will cover the vast majority of US trade.

But the moves could reignite tensions with trading partners. The European Union, China, Taiwan, Vietnam and Japan are all among targeted economies.

The move also comes as Washington last week announced a 25-per cent tariff on various Brazilian products, while setting a 50-per cent duty on many Canadian goods.

Besides the probes on forced labour, separate US investigations into excess manufacturing capacity are also ongoing and could lead to further action.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

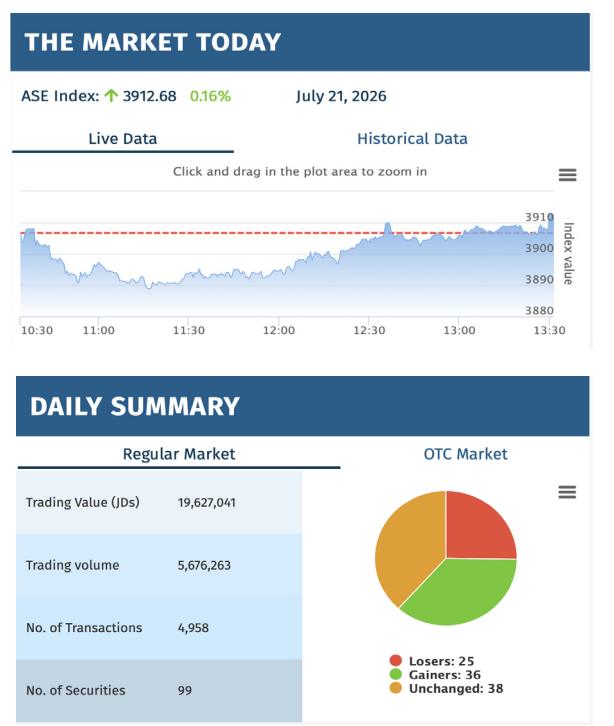
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Tuesday amounted to JD19.6 million spread over 5.7 million shares that traded through 4,958 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.16 per cent, closing at 3912.68 points.

Out of 99 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 36 companies rose while the share price of another 25 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Specialised Jordanian Investment by 4.9 per cent, Al-Shamekha for Real Estate and Financial Investments by 4.5 per cent, Arab East Investment by 4.39 per cent, Real Estate and Investment Portfolio Company by 4.08 per cent, and National Steel Industry by 4.04 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 5 per cent, Arab Phoenix Holdings by 4.6 per cent, Zara Investment Holding by 4 per cent, Arab Investors Union Company for Real Estates Developing by 3.28 per cent, and Ihdathiat Co-ordinates by 3.13 per cent.



FOOTBALL

Garcia departure leaves Belgium facing ‘generational change’

PARIS, France (AFP) — Rudi Garcia has left his role as Belgium coach after his side were knocked out of the World Cup quarter-finals, the Belgian football federation (RBFA) said. Garcia, 62, took over the Red Devils in January 2025 before guiding them to a last-eight loss to eventual tournament winners Spain. The Frenchman replaced Domenico Tedesco and also helped Belgium secure its place in Nations League A with an ageing generation of big names players such as midfielder Kevin De Bruyne, forward Romelu Lukaku and goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois. “We sincerely thank Rudi Garcia and his staff for their dedication, professionalism and commitment over the past 18 months,” the RBFA said. “And wish them every success in the future,” it added. Garcia’s spell in charge was his first job in international football having had notable stints with Lille, Roma and Marseille. In 2023, he lasted just five months at Napoli before being sacked after only 16 games. At the World Cup, he was unable to take Belgium further than the last eight. Their third-place finish in 2018 remains their best performance at the competition.

Celtic, Rangers charged after Scottish Cup mayhem

LONDON (AFP) — Celtic and Rangers have been hit with disciplinary charges after an independent review of the shocking incidents that marred a violent Scottish Cup clash between the bitter Glasgow rivals last season. A report commissioned by the Scottish Football Association concluded that “crushing” and “life-threatening violence” were narrowly avoided in the chaotic Old Firm derby at Ibrox. Police and stewards were injured after Scottish champions Celtic won the quarter-final in a penalty shoot-out on March 8. Celtic fans spilt on to the pitch to celebrate and Rangers supporters charged towards them, with fireworks thrown back and forth. At least 37 people were arrested and one steward is still receiving treatment for an inner ear injury after being struck by a masked Rangers fan. The report said it was a “minor miracle” no-one suffered more serious injuries. Lead author of the report Mark Blackburn detailed two “near-misses” when Celtic ‘Green Brigade’ ultras “overwhelmed” police and stewards outside the stadium in an “already overcrowding area” and “created real and foreseeable crushing risk”. Fans rushed turnstiles and forced exit gates open and a steward was arrested on suspicion of taking payment to help them gain entry.

Evenepoel wins ‘special’ Tour de France individual time-trial

THONON-LES-BAINS, France (AFP) — Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel stormed to victory in Tuesday’s 26.1km individual time-trial at the Tour de France to shave valuable seconds off Tadej Pogacar’s overall lead. Belgian Evenepoel, 26, blasted over the stage 16 course along the shores of Lake Geneva 28 seconds quicker than reigning champion Pogacar in second. Everyone else finished more than a minute back, with Dane Mattias Skjelmose taking third at 1min 04sec. That performance by the world and Olympic time-trial champion — on Belgium’s national holiday — cut four-time Tour winner Pogacar’s overall lead to 4min 32sec. “It’s amazing, it was a very nice TT [time-trial], a lot of people on the side of the road,” said Evenepoel. “My whole family from both sides being here, my parents came just today. My wife is here with her parents and the siblings as well.



UAE Team Emirates - XRG's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar celebrates on the podium with the overall leader's yellow jersey after the 16th stage of the 113th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, on Tuesday

“And also on the Belgian national day is pretty special — I read this morning it’s been a while since Belgium won on National Day, so I’m proud to be the one.” It was Evenepoel’s second successive stage victory after he triumphed on Sunday’s mountainous 15th stage. It was his fourth Tour stage victory overall, and his third in time-trials. He also extended the gap to third-placed Isaac del Toro to more than two minutes.

But it was a miserable day for Evenepoel’s Red Bull-Bora Hansgrohe teammate Florian Lipowitz. Two days after two-time former winner Jonas Vingegaard crashed out of the Tour while sitting second overall, German Lipowitz went down hard on a bend and was forced out of the race. He had been fifth overall until that point and had set the fourth fastest time in the three intermediate

time-checks. But several minutes after he crashed, Lipowitz was escorted to a medical vehicle holding his left arm. “That’s very unfortunate, it’s like a bittersweet pill to swallow with this victory, so I wish him all the best and I hope it’s not too bad,” Evenepoel said of his teammate. Both Pogacar and Del Toro had a scare going through the same bend where Lipowitz fell but managed to stay upright.

‘Mixed emotions’

From the moment Evenepoel began his time-trial, it was clear he was on course to do something special. Once the top 10 contenders began their races against the clock, Skjelmose set the fastest time, well ahead of the best of the rest. Lipowitz, Del Toro and French teenage prodigy Paul Seixas were only a handful of seconds behind at the three time-checks.

But when Evenepoel went through the first, it was clear that he was riding at a different pace. Only Pogacar could stay within potential touching distance but he was seven seconds down at the first time-check, with Skjelmose 22sec back. Those gaps ballooned to 14sec and 56sec by the second time-check. That was the uphill part of the course and was where Evenepoel gained most of his time.

On the following descent and then a flat run to the finish, he gained only eight seconds on Skjelmose, 10 on Seixas and 13 on Pogacar. “I think it was a really good execution from start to finish, he had good control,” said Red Bull sporting director Klaas Lodewyck. “It’s mixed emotions, let’s say. We’re over the moon with the win from Remco, but the loss of Lipo was a big blow for the team.”

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

Cubes and lubes: Europe’s Speedcubers’ twist for glory

By Richard Carter
Agence France-Presse

ARNHEM, Netherlands—Brows knitted with concentration, Juliette Sebastian clasps her trusty Rubik’s Cube, her fingers moving at a head-spinning speed before flipping the solved puzzle onto her table in just 25.03 seconds. Welcome to the world of competitive Rubik’s Cube solving — “speedcubing” for those in the know — where players compete in disciplines ranging from the blindfold challenge to solving cubes with oven gloves on their hands. French national champion Sebastien is pitting her skills against 1,200 competitors from 53 countries in the 11th European speedcubing championships in Arnhem, eastern Netherlands. She trains for at least an hour a day, but has been putting in three or four hours daily in the run-up to the competition, her preparation marred by an unfortunate wasp sting to the hand. “I do training blocks of 100, 200, sometimes 300 solves,” the 25-year-old student told AFP. “There are always new techniques that you can learn.” Her time in the 4x4



Participants react at Rubik’s WCA European Championship 2026

event — slightly bigger and harder to solve than a standard Rubik’s cube — is respectable, but the speeds in the fastest disciplines are mind-bending. Chinese speedcuber Ziyu Ye holds the 2x2 world record at a staggering 0.39 seconds. The clacking of cubes echoes through the five cavernous sports halls hosting the championships. Competitors in national speedcubing uniforms wander the corridors absent-mindedly solving puzzles without looking, often one-handed. “There are more cubes here than people,”

quipped one competitor, 31-year-old programmer Jeroen Plug from The Netherlands. But this is serious business: the competition is closely regulated and run with military precision. Before stepping out onto stage, competitors hand over their precious cubes to the “scramblers”, who secretly set them to exactly the same position for everyone, ensuring a level playing field. Two players sit side by side, each under the eagle eye of a referee and with a camera tracking their every move, as a digital clock records their time to the hundredth of a second.

The freshly scrambled cube arrives concealed in a box. When the box is overturned, competitors have 15 seconds to examine the state of the cube before placing their hands on a sensor to start the clock and begin their solve. The speedcubing world was recently rocked by the “Sliding Scandal”, a cheating technique where players would surreptitiously slide their hands from the sensor to the cube, gaining critical tenths of seconds. World records were erased from the history books in the wake of the scandal, which was still

being whispered about in hushed tones on the sidelines in Arnhem.

‘Sandy’ feeling

The surprising secret to a prize-winning cube? Lube. Each player applies a precise amount of lubrication to their cube to ensure it moves at exactly the speed they prefer, explained Loes Wentink, staffing the lubrication stand. “It makes a big difference to the competition,” said the 21-year-old electrical engineering student. Some lubes actually increase the friction because “some cubes are very fast out of the box”. “Sometimes you can’t control it... and if you can’t control it, then your solve won’t be as good,” she told AFP. Other lubes are used to get rid of the dreaded “sandy” feeling, when the cube feels “rough” when turning in the hands, said Wentink. The cube/lube set-up is as personal as the tension on a tennis racket or the weight of a cricket bat or snooker cue. Recent technological advances have enhanced the sport: many players wear GoPro cameras on their heads so they can watch back their “solves” and improve technique.

Uproar in France over reintroduction of bee-harming pesticides

PARIS, France (AFP) — Environmentalists in France were outraged on Tuesday as parliament looked set to authorise some farmers to use two bee-harming pesticides banned in France but allowed in the European Union. Environment Minister Monique Barbut could resign if the Senate later in the day approves the reintroduction of acetamiprid and flupyradifurone, her team has said. Proponents say French sugar beet, apple and hazelnut farmers need the insecticides — forbidden in France since 2018 and 2019, respectively — to help them compete with their European counterparts. But opponents argue they are dangerous to bees and human health. The National Assembly early Tuesday approved an agriculture bill that includes the measures, and the right-leaning Senate was expected to back the measure in a final vote on Tuesday. The vote comes after the Constitutional Council, the country’s highest court, last year struck down a provision in another bill trying to reintroduce acetamiprid, saying it posed risks to human health, after more than two million people signed a petition against it.



Campaigners say that cetamiprid and flupyradifurone are dangerous to bees and human health

“The government and its allies are trampling on science, health, the environment, and the will of the people,” said Greenpeace after the National Assembly passed the farming bill. Henri Clement, of the French Beekeeping Union, told regional media outlet IciGardLozere the measure was “absolutely catastrophic”. Research has found acetamiprid can poison honey bees, affecting their foraging capacity and memory, while a 2024 study suggested flupyradifurone could be lethal to some bees. Most leftists in the lower house this week voted against the reintroduction of the two pesticides,

but backing from the far right and many centrists meant it passed. The left has said it would appeal to the Constitutional Council if the Senate approved the measure. Agriculture Minister Annie Genevard has defended the agriculture bill as necessary to address discontent among farmers after protests this winter. She has stressed health authorities would only approve use of the pesticides in certain areas for limited periods “on the condition there is no impact on human health or on the environment, there is an emergency situation” and “there is no alternative”.

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