

THE JORDAN TIMES



CINEMA

The **Abdali** renews partnership with **Amman International Film Festival** – Awal Film for **7th** edition

2



FOOD

Jordan reports gains in global **food** security, nutrition **indicators**

3



COOPERATION

JCC, **Georgian** chamber sign agreement to establish joint **Jordanian-Georgian Business Council**

7

FOOTBALL

Jordan drops in FIFA ranks; **team** awaits **agenda** under new **coach**

8



Thursday, July 23, 2026 | Safar I 9, 1448 Hijri



His Majesty King Abdullah visits the Farnborough International Airshow 2026 in the United Kingdom, and is briefed on the latest advancements and technological innovations across the aviation and aerospace industries

King visits Farnborough International Airshow 2026

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday visited Farnborough International Airshow 2026, in the United Kingdom.

During a tour of the exhibition, which connects leaders and innovators in the global aerospace, defence, and space industries,

His Majesty viewed pavilions showcasing the latest advancements in the aviation and aerospace industries and technologies, according to a Royal Court statement.

The tour included visits to the exhibits of international companies specialising in the development

of electric propulsion systems for aircraft, drones and their systems, drone-based cargo services, AI-powered aircraft systems, electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) technology, the development of urban air mobility infrastructure, AI-powered drones and the field of

engineering design, the statement said.

More than 1,400 specialist companies from 41 countries are taking part in the Farnborough International Airshow 2026, which is one of the largest international exhibitions in the aviation and defence sectors.

Crown Prince meets with Karak youth

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein, the Regent, met on Wednesday with youth from Karak Governorate.

During the meeting, held at Prince El Hassan Cultural Centre in Karak, discussions were held on a range of issues of concern to young people, according to a Royal Court statement.

The Crown Prince emphasised the importance of empowering young people and unlocking their potential across various sectors, and called for the advancement of university-level academic, vocational and technical education programmes.

His Royal Highness expressed his pride in the capabilities and technical proficiency demonstrated by young Jordanians working in technical and technology fields.

The Crown Prince noted the importance of completing key development projects currently underway across various sectors in Jordan, highlighting in particular the critical role of tourism



HRH Crown Prince Hussein, the Regent, meets on Wednesday with youth from Karak Governorate

projects designed to enhance visitor experiences and stimulate tourism at archaeological sites.

His Royal Highness also underscored the potential for regional economic cooperation in various fields, highlighting energy as a key sector for collaboration, the statement said.

Discussions also

touched on regional developments, with the Crown Prince reaffirming that Jordan remains fully prepared to safeguard its security and the safety of its people through the efforts of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army and security agencies.

The meeting addressed youth-focused concerns

across sectors including tourism, agriculture, technology and engineering, along with Crown Prince Foundation (CPF) initiatives.

The attendees praised the CPF's role in empowering youth, noting His Royal Highness' active, ongoing commitment and engagement with young people nationwide.



JAF photo

JAF intercepts four Iranian drones, four missiles launched towards Jordan

AMMAN (JT) — The Royal Jordanian Air Force on Wednesday morning intercepted and shot down four drones launched from Iran towards Jordan, the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) said.

A military source said in a JAF statement that the operation was carried

out successfully, with no casualties or material damage reported.

Following the interception, teams from the Royal Engineering Corps were dispatched to the locations where debris fell. The teams secured the sites and handled the remnants in accordance with established techni-

cal and security procedures, the source added.

In a separate statement on Wednesday, a source from JAF General Command said that air defence systems detected six missiles launched from Iran on Wednesday towards Jordan.

Continued on page 5

Deputising for King, prime minister opens Jerash Festival

AMMAN (JT) — Deputising for His Majesty King Abdullah, Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday patronised the official opening ceremony of the 40th edition of the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts, held at the North Theatre in the ancient Roman city.

Hassan lit the festival torch, officially marking the launch of this year's edition, which is held under the theme "A Legacy Extends... Generations Meet", according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Minister of Culture and Chairman of the Festival's Higher Committee Mustafa Rawashdeh delivered the official address, while Chairman of the Greater Jerash Municipal Committee Mohammad Bani Yasin spoke on behalf of the local community.

Rawashdeh described the festival as a national, cultural and human milestone, as well as a vital platform within the Jordanian, Arab and international cultural landscape



Petra photo

Deputising for His Majesty King Abdullah, Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday patronises the official opening ceremony of the 40th edition of the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts

through programmes that foster intercultural dialogue and exchange.

He added that the festival, held under Royal patronage, embodies the role of culture and arts as a bridge connecting peoples, bringing together diverse languages and international arts to its

ancient colonnades.

Rawashdeh highlighted the significance of choosing Jerash, describing the ancient site as a historic crossroads for trade and cultural exchange that continues to serve as a safe and welcoming platform for artistic and intellectual

dialogue.

The minister noted that the festival reflects Jordan's vision of honouring the past, understanding the present and shaping the future, thereby documenting the national narrative of the land and its people.

He stressed that four

decades of the festival's continuity reflect Jordan's stability and resilience, noting that the number 40 symbolises maturity, wisdom, strength and continuous giving.

Rawashdeh praised the hospitality of Jerash's residents, noting that their welcoming spirit reflects authentic Jordanian values.

He added that the sustained staging of the festival amidst regional challenges demonstrates the Kingdom's capability to modernise its cultural offerings using modern technology to engage younger generations and showcase Jordan's heritage.

This year's theme, "A Legacy Extends... Generations Meet", aims to reinforce national identity, promote diversity and contribute to sustainable development, Rawashdeh noted, reaffirming Jordan's standing as a land of civilisation, culture and knowledge.

Continued on page 5

Jordan welcomes decisions by Netherlands, Belgium to ban Israeli settler products

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Saturday has welcomed decisions by The Netherlands and Belgium to ban imports of products from Israeli settlements, describing the measures as "consistent with international law and UN resolutions".

In a statement on Wednesday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Fuad Majali said the bans represent an "important" step towards enforcing international law, particularly UN Security Council Resolution 2334, which condemns Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem.

He also referred to the International Court of Justice's advisory opin-



AFP/Getty Images

View of Israeli settlement of Har Homa in the Israel-occupied East Jerusalem on December 7, 2025, with the West Bank city of Bethlehem in the background on right

ion, which found Israel's occupation and settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory to be unlawful.

Majali urged the in-

ternational community, particularly European Union member states, to adopt similar measures to help curb illegal settlement expansion and sup-

port efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace based on the two-state solution.

He reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to working

with regional and international partners to support the Palestinian people's legitimate right to freedom, end the occupation, and establish an independent Palestinian state on the pre-1967 lines with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Netherlands government announced on Tuesday that it would ban imports from Palestinian territories occupied by Israeli settlers from September 22.

The Netherlands will join Ireland, Belgium and Spain among European Union countries that have imposed restrictions on trade with territories occupied by Israeli settlers.

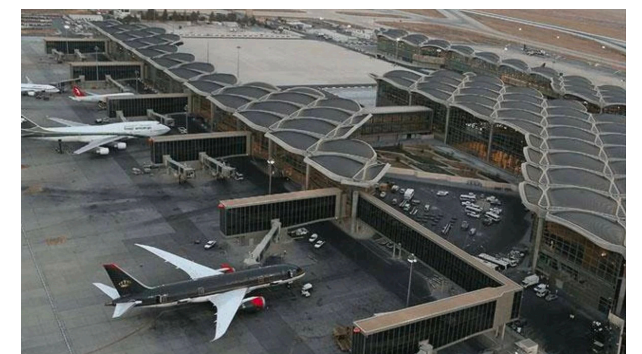
Continued on page 5

Air traffic operating normally despite regional developments — CARC

AMMAN (JT) — Air traffic through Jordanian airspace is operating normally and according to scheduled flight plans, according to Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission (CARC) Chief Commissioner Daifallah Farajat.

Farajat was quoted in the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that the commission's radar centre handled 176 aircraft transiting Jordanian airspace over a six-hour period between 8am and 2pm, "reflecting the smooth flow of operations and the effectiveness of the measures in place".

He added that CARC is closely monitoring devel-



RJ photo

Planes that belong to Royal Jordanian and other airlines are parked at Queen Alia International Airport in Amman

opments across the region while maintaining a high level of operational readiness.

"The commission is working in close coor-

dination with relevant authorities to ensure the continued safety and security of civil aviation in Jordanian airspace," he said.



King sends cable to Egypt president on July revolt anniversary

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah has sent a cable to Egypt President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi on the anniversary of the 23 July 1952 revolution, wishing him continued good health, and the people of Egypt further progress and prosperity, according to a Royal Court statement.

Army chief, US official reaffirm commitment to expanding security partnership

AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Wednesday met with US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Thomas G. DiNanno, on the sidelines of his official visit to Washington, DC.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation between Jordan and the US in security and defence fields, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

They also reviewed regional and international developments, alongside joint efforts to support security and stability in the region.

Huneiti underscored the depth of the strategic partnership binding the Kingdom and the US, stressing the importance of continued coordination and consultation to address shared security challenges and enhance regional and



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Wednesday meets with US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Thomas G. DiNanno

global stability.

For his part, DiNanno praised the high level of Jordanian-US relations and the Kingdom's pivotal role in supporting regional security and stability, reaffirming his country's commitment to expanding cooperation with Jordan across various areas of mutual interest.

The meeting falls within ongoing efforts to bolster the strategic partnership between the two nations and enhance coordination to serve shared interests and address regional and international challenges.

FAO, Jordan advance evidence-based irrigation planning through IRMA Initiative

AMMAN (JT) — The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), together with the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA), and the Dutch embassy in Jordan, on Wednesday opened a two-day national workshop in Amman to introduce the Mapping Irrigation Potential and Needs (IRMA) initiative and launch its implementation in Jordan, with support from the Regional Water Scarcity Initiative (WSI) Programme.

The programme, which supports nine countries across the Near East and North Africa in addressing water scarcity through advancing sustainable water management and improved agricultural water governance, is funded by the governments of Sweden and The Netherlands, according to a FAO statement.

The workshop brought together representatives of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, JVA, the Water Authority of Jordan, the Ministry of Agriculture, and key development partners, alongside FAO technical experts, to examine how the IRMA approach can help the country make more sustainable, evidence-based decisions on irrigation development.

Irrigation is vital to food



The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and partners on Wednesday open a two-day national workshop in Amman to introduce the Mapping Irrigation Potential and Needs initiative

security, livelihoods and sustainable development, particularly where rainfall is insufficient or unpredictable. Yet, declining water availability increasingly limits how far irrigation can expand.

Countries must therefore weigh difficult trade-offs, from selecting priority crops to improving water use efficiency and raising crop water productivity, in order to meet demand without compromising long-term sustainability.

To support countries in these decisions, FAO developed IRMA, which introduces a multi-criteria framework to assess and reconcile the potential and the needs of irrigation, placing it at the service of sustainable, long-term food security.

The approach maps existing irrigated areas using artificial intelligence and rests on three criteria: Biophysical suitability for irrigation development, the role of irrigation in the context of sustainable development needs and the

benefits of irrigation.

By identifying areas that are both suitable and justified for development, IRMA helps ensure that irrigation decisions are technically feasible, economically viable and aligned with broader development goals.

For Jordan, one of the most water-scarce countries in the world, improving irrigation management is not merely an operational goal but an existential imperative.

As agriculture accounts for much of the country's limited water resources, even marginal gains in irrigation efficiency can deliver significant benefits for national water security.

Through the Regional WSI Programme, FAO is supporting Jordan in raising irrigation water productivity, and tools such as IRMA enable decision-makers to allocate resources more accurately and to plan future investment.

Commencing the workshop, FAO Acting Representative in Jordan Paul Opio emphasised the crucial importance of evidence-based planning to address Jordan's water challenges.

"Jordan's increasing water scarcity, combined with the impacts of climate change and rising demand for water, requires innovative and science-based solutions," Opio said.

"Through the IRMA initiative, FAO is supporting the Government of Jordan with a practical decision-support tool that integrates geospatial, climate, water and agricultural data to strengthen irrigation planning, prioritise investments, improve water productivity and promote the sustainable management of the country's limited water resources," he added.

During the workshop, participants were introduced to the IRMA methodology, learnt from the best international practices and discussed pathways for its application in Jordan to support evidence-based decision-making, investment prioritisation, and sustainable agricultural development.

JVA Secretary-General Hisham Hisa stressed that "improving irrigation water use efficiency is a national priority to address Jordan's water scarcity challenges and strengthen both water and food security".

He noted that the IRMA initiative contributes to more efficient water management by leveraging artificial intelligence to support evidence-based planning and investment prioritisation, thereby enhancing water and food security while promoting sustainable agricultural development in Jordan.

Hisa also highlighted the importance of boosting the strategic partnership with FAO and drawing on international expertise and the best practices to improve water productivity and advance sustainable irrigation management.

He also stressed the need to expand the reuse of treated wastewater, promote the water footprint approach, and prioritise the allocation of limited water resources to high-value crops to maximise economic returns and ensure the sustainable use of Jordan's scarce water resources.

Delivering the opening remarks on behalf of the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, Regional WSI Programme Coordinator Mohamed Abdallah underlined the collaborative foundation of the Programme.

"Water scarcity is beyond the capacity of any single institution to address alone. The Regional WSI Programme is a partnership in practice: Led by FAO with the support of the governments of Sweden and The Netherlands, it brings together UNICEF, ESCWA, ICARDA, IWMI and ICBA, each contributing complementary expertise and works closely with national institutions so that this expertise responds to country priorities," Abdallah said.

"Supporting the implementation of IRMA in Jordan is a natural extension of that partnership, and its success will rest on national ownership and on close technical collaboration with the Jordan Valley Authority and its national partners," he added.

Over the course of the workshop, FAO technical experts presented the IRMA concept and its four components: the mapping of irrigated areas using artificial intelligence, the assessment of biophysical suitability, the evaluation of development needs, and the measurement of the benefits of irrigation development.

Sessions were complemented by a demonstration of the IRMA digital platform and by practical examples, results and lessons learnt from applications in other countries.

Participants also reviewed the strategic priorities for irrigation development in Jordan and the current status of the national irrigation sector.

The workshop marks another milestone in the long-standing partnership between FAO and Jordan to enhance water security, improve agricultural water management and build climate resilience through technical cooperation, innovation and capacity development.

It also marks the beginning of the implementation of the IRMA Initiative in Jordan under the Regional Water Scarcity Initiative Programme.

Royal Jordanian named official carrier for 40th Jerash Festival

AMMAN (JT) — The Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts has designated Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) as the official carrier for Arab and international guests, artists, and delegations participating in the festival's 40th edition, which opens on Thursday.

The partnership underscores the longstanding cooperation between two national institutions working to promote Jordan's cultural, tourism and civilisational message worldwide, RJ said in a statement to The Jordan Times.

Royal Jordanian Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Samer Majali met with Jerash Festival Executive Director Yazan Khudair to discuss the collaboration.

Majali said that RJ remains committed to its role as a strategic partner and official carrier of the Jerash Festival since its establishment, describing the airline and the festival as national institutions that jointly contribute to showcasing Jordan's heritage, culture and tourism potential internationally.

He added that the national carrier's sponsorship



The Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts has designated Royal Jordanian Airlines as the official carrier for Arab and international guests, artists, and delegations participating in the festival's 40th edition

ship reflects its continued support for national events and initiatives that enhance Jordan's cultural and tourism sectors.

The festival, he said, represents an important platform for promoting the Kingdom as a leading cultural destination, encouraging festival tourism, attracting international visitors, and supporting broader economic activity.

Khudair said that the partnership with RJ demonstrates the cooperation and integration of roles among national institutions in supporting one of Jordan's most prominent cultural events.

He highlighted the national carrier's contribution to enhancing Jordan's cultural presence abroad, noting that Royal Jordanian plays a key role in transporting artists, creators and Arab and international delegations participating in the festival's 40th edition.

Under the sponsorship agreement, RJ will facilitate the travel of renowned artists, cultural figures, and musical groups arriving in Jordan to participate in performances at the ancient city of Jerash.

The airline will also provide booking and ticketing support services for festival participants and guests.

The Abdali renews partnership with Amman International Film Festival — Awal Film for 7th edition

AMMAN (JT) — The Abdali said it has renewed its partnership with the Amman International Film Festival — Awal Film, hosting a range of activities from the festival's seventh edition at The Boulevard from July 26 to August 3.

Held under the theme "Beyond the Frame", the festival will feature film screenings, workshops and cultural activities as part of a programme designed to celebrate cinema and support the region's growing film industry, The Abdali said in a statement to The Jordan Times.

The renewed collaboration between The Abdali and the Amman International Film Festival — Awal Film builds on several years of partnership, reflecting a shared commitment to promoting arts and culture while providing audiences with opportunities to experience cinema in the heart of Amman.

As part of the festival programme, The Boul-



The Abdali says it has renewed its partnership with the Amman International Film Festival – Awal Film, hosting a range of activities from the festival's seventh edition at The Boulevard from July 26 to August 3

levard will host film screenings in its theatre area, alongside specialised workshops and related activities.

Festival-inspired installations and visual displays will also be placed throughout the destination, creating an atmosphere that reflects the spirit of the event and enhances the visitor experience.

President and Chairman of Abdali Investment and Development Amer Fayeze said in the statement that the partnership reflects The Abdali's commitment to supporting creative industries and cultural engagement.

"Cinema is a universal language that brings people closer together, connects cultures and gives voice to inspiring human stories. We are very proud to expand on our partnership with the Amman International Film Festival — Awal Film, which continues to grow as an important platform for creativity and emerging talent," he said.

"We look forward to welcoming festival visitors to The Boulevard this year and sharing in the activities of its seventh edition," Fayeze added.

The Amman International Film Festival — Awal Film has established itself as one of the region's prominent film events, with a focus on celebrating first achievements in filmmaking, particularly within Arab cinema.

The festival combines film screenings with professional programmes that support filmmakers, encourage collaboration and provide opportunities for project development.

Through hosting the festival's activities, The Abdali said that it continues to position The Boulevard as a destination that brings together culture, entertainment, lifestyle and business.

Its public spaces provide visitors, families and young audiences with opportunities to engage with artistic and cultural experiences in an accessible urban environment.



Aerial view of Zaatari refugee camp in Mafraq Governorate, some 90 kilometres east of Amman

UNHCR Jordan reports \$202 million funding gap as refugee operations continue

AMMAN (JT) — The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Jordan has received around \$77.7 million in funding to support its operations during the first half of 2026, covering only 28 per cent of its total financial requirements, the agency said.

The remaining funding shortfall stands at approximately \$202.3 million, representing 72.25 per cent of the required budget as of June 30, 2026.

UNHCR spokesperson Youssef Taha told Al Mamlaka TV that available resources remain significantly below the level needed to maintain operations in Jordan, as the agency continues providing cash assistance to refugees, vulnerable families and host communities.

During the second

quarter of 2026, UNHCR provided cash assistance to nearly 10,000 refugee families across several governorates to help them meet their basic needs, Taha said.

He added that 7,277 refugees living in the Zaatari and Azraq camps had benefitted from the agency's cash assistance programme supporting voluntary return by the end of May.

The programme provides JD210 per family, in addition to JD70 per individual for the most vulnerable families.

Post-distribution monitoring indicated an 89 per cent satisfaction rate among recipients, with most using the assistance to cover essential expenses, including food, transportation and debt repayment, Taha said.

He noted that 270 refugee families generated

nearly \$300,000 through the sale of 530 caravans in Zaatari camp before returning to Syria.

Regarding voluntary returns, Taha said that more than 203,500 registered Syrian refugees had returned to Syria between December 8, 2024 and June 30, 2026, with the total number exceeding 208,000 by July 18.

Return movements increased in recent months, with around 5,000 refugees returning in May and nearly 6,900 in June, according to Taha.

However, current return rates remain below last year's levels. Citing the regional update for April and May 2026, Taha said that weekly returns averaged between 1,000 and 1,300 individuals, compared with an average of around 3,000 individuals per week in 2025.

Jordan reports gains in global food security, nutrition indicators

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan has recorded steady improvements in food security and nutrition indicators, according to the 2026 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report, Agriculture Minister and Vice Chairman of the Higher Council for Food Security Saeb Khraisat

The report, published this month by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation in partnership with the World Food Programme, the World Health Organisation, UNICEF and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, shows progress across several key national indicators.

Commenting on the report, Kharisat was quoted in the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that the findings highlight a decline in undernourishment, continued low levels of acute malnutrition among children and improved affordability of healthy diets, reinforcing food availability and access across the Kingdom, he said.

The report also found that Jordan continues to maintain one of the region's lowest levels of acute child malnutrition. The child wasting rate remained unchanged at 2.3 per cent, well below global and regional averages, the minister said.

Kharisat said that the stability of this indica-



JT file

The Jordan Silos and Supply General Company

tor, considered one of the most sensitive measures of food security, reflects the effectiveness of child nutrition and health-care programmes and underscores the need to maintain and strengthen them.

The prevalence of stunting among children under five stood at 7.7 per cent in 2024, also below regional and global averages, indicating sustained progress in tackling chronic malnutrition, he added.

The report further

showed a slight improvement in the affordability of healthy diets, with the proportion of people unable to afford a healthy diet falling to 2.2 per cent in 2025 from 2.3 per cent a year earlier, Petra said.

Adult obesity also declined, with the prevalence among people aged 18 and over dropping to 35.4 per cent in the 2026 report, based on 2024 data, from 38.5 per cent in the previous edition, which was based on 2022 figures.

Kharisat said that the results reflect continued progress in Jordan's food security and nutrition performance, adding that the government will continue implementing policies to improve diet quality, expand access to healthy and sustainable food, support local agricultural production, strengthen supply chains and protect lower-income households in line with the Economic Modernisation Vision and the National Food Security Strategy.

Jerusalem Governorate condemns Nauru's planned embassy opening in Jerusalem

AMMAN (JT) — The Jerusalem Governorate has condemned the Republic of Nauru's announcement that it plans to open an embassy in Jerusalem, describing the move as a serious political and diplomatic escalation and a violation of international law and United Nations resolutions.

In a statement, cited by Al Mamlaka, the governorate said that the decision undermines the international position rejecting recognition of measures that would alter the legal and historical status of Jerusalem.

The governorate reaffirmed its position that East Jerusalem is part of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 and is the capital of the State of Palestine.

Nauru is an island nation and one of the Micronesian



AFP photo

This photo taken on May 10, 2021, shows a general view of the Dome of the Rock in occupied Jerusalem

states in the North Pacific, alongside the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and Kiribati.

The governorate said that Nauru's planned embassy opening would conflict with UN Security Coun-

cil Resolutions 476 and 478, which rejected Israeli measures aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem and called on countries to avoid establishing diplomatic missions in the city.

It added that actions taken by Israeli authori-

ties to change Jerusalem's legal, demographic, or geographic status have no legal validity under international law and relevant UN resolutions.

The statement also said that establishing or re-

sions to Jerusalem could be viewed as support for Israeli settlement and expansion policies, and cited issues including settlement activity, home demolitions, displacement, land seizures and tensions surrounding the Al Aqsa Mosque Compound as ongoing concerns.

The governorate reiterated that Jerusalem's status should be determined in accordance with international law and existing UN resolutions, and said that attempts to change the city's status would not affect the Palestinian people's historical and legal rights.

The announcement follows a statement by Israel's foreign ministry that Nauru plans to open an embassy in Jerusalem in the coming months. If completed, the move would make Nauru the 10th country to establish an embassy in the city.



BAU photo

HRH Princess Rahma on Wednesday visits Al Balqa Applied University and unveils the foundation stone for a project to develop the lecture halls and scientific laboratories building at the Princess Rahma University College

Princess Rahma reviews academic programmes, infrastructure upgrades at BAU college

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Princess Rahma on Wednesday visited Al Balqa Applied University (BAU) to review academic programmes at the Princess Rahma University College.

The princess was received by BAU President Ahmad Ajlouni, along with other officials, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Ajlouni stressed that the visit reflects continuous support for higher education in Jordan, as well as the princess' keenness to follow up on the development of university institutions and upgrade their programmes to align with community and labour market needs.

He noted that Princess Rahma University College is one of the university's specialised faculties, playing a key role in qualifying cadres in social, educational, and psychological sciences.

The BAU president added that the college has expanded its offerings to include bachelor's, higher diploma and intermediate diploma programmes

across various disciplines.

Her Royal Highness was briefed on the establishment and evolution of the college, which was founded in 1965 as the Jordan social work institute through cooperation between the Ministry of Social Development and the United Nations, before joining BAU in 1997.

Princess Rahma also inspected a project to develop the lecture halls and scientific laboratories building, aimed at providing a modern learning environment equipped with state-of-the-art classrooms, labs and support facilities.

Outlining the project's implementation stages, Ajlouni said that the expansion spans three phases covering a total built-up area of nearly 8,000 square metres, with an overall cost of approximately JD5.08 million.

He noted that the first phase, currently under way across four storeys and 4,000 square metres, includes 15 classrooms, seven computer labs, a cafeteria, student facilities

and a multipurpose hall, at a cost of around JD2.461 million.

Ajlouni added that the second phase, covering 1,710 square metres across four storeys, comprises an administrative building and an auditorium at an estimated cost of JD1.026 million.

He noted that the third phase, spanning 2,655 square metres over four storeys, is designated for scientific laboratories at a cost of JD1.593 million.

The BAU president highlighted that across all three phases, the project will feature lecture halls, computer and scientific labs, administrative offices, an auditorium and a multipurpose hall, elevating the quality of education and support services provided to students.

During the visit, Her Royal Highness unveiled the foundation stone for the project, listened to a detailed briefing on its components and execution phases, and reviewed several academic and community initiatives led by the college.

Digital economy minister opens Balqa Government Services Centre in Salt

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship Sami Smeirat on Wednesday inaugurated the Balqa Government Services Centre in Salt as part of the government's public sector modernisation efforts aimed at improving access to government services.

The centre began trial operations on May 21 to test its systems and operational procedures ahead of its official inauguration, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

During the opening ceremony, Smeirat said that government services cen-



Petra photo

Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship Sami Smeirat on Wednesday opens the Balqa Government Services Centre in Salt, which began trial operations on May 21

tres are a key pillar of the Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap.

He said that the government will continue expanding the network of

government services centres and enhancing their operating model to provide more efficient and flexible services, improve the customer experience and

boost public confidence in government services.

Smeirat noted that the results achieved during the trial phase reflected "strong" demand for the centre's services and "high customer satisfaction", stressing the importance of monitoring user feedback to further improve services and operational efficiency.

The Balqa centre offers 176 services provided by 27 government institutions, including the Civil Status and Passports Department, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Department, the Sharia Courts Department, the Residency

and Borders Department, the Health Insurance Directorate, the Ministry of Education and the Notary Public, among others, allowing citizens to complete multiple transactions in one location.

The centre received 6,603 visitors and processed 10,744 transactions during its trial phase, where customer satisfaction stood at 97 per cent, while the net promoter score reached 95.

The centre operates daily from 9:00am until midnight, offering extended hours to improve access and accommodate citizens' varying schedules.

Father, son charged over alleged drowning death of 13-year-old girl

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Criminal Court prosecutor on Wednesday charged a man and his son with premeditated murder in connection with the al-

leged drowning of their 13-year-old female family member in Karak Governorate last week, official sources said.

Police received a call from the victim's family that she allegedly fell in a

water well next to the tent they lived in on July 18, Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

"Emergency units were dispatched to the water well and pulled the girl, who died shortly after-

wards," Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

Police opened an inquiry into the incident, according to the police official and "concluded that the child was thrown intentionally into the wa-

ter well".

"Investigators concluded that the father of the victim and one of her brothers were the main perpetrators and summoned them for questioning," Sartawi maintained.

The two allegedly confessed to "plotting to throw the child in the well and to report it as an accident", he added.

The police official did not provide a motive behind the alleged murder,

adding that investigations are ongoing.

The Criminal Court prosecutor will summon the victim's family member for questioning, a senior judicial source said.

The suspects were ordered detained by the Criminal Court prosecutor for 15 days pending further investigation, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate.



A house is consumed by fire in Cotignac, southeastern France, on July 22, 2026

AFP photo

Wildfire in southern France contained — firefighters

PONTEVÈS, France (AFP) — A blaze that raced through wooded hills in southern France, forcing hundreds from their homes and devouring an area twice the size of London’s Heathrow airport, has been brought under control, firefighters said Wednesday.

“For the moment it’s been contained in its perimeter, meaning it’s not spreading much,” regional fire chief Eric Grohin told reporters of the fire that erupted the previous day in the Var region.

“Nevertheless, we still have many hot spots, flames in numerous places, so we are being very vigilant this morning,” he said.

The fire erupted Tuesday in the Var region and spread at an unexpectedly fast pace, forcing some 400 people to evacuate and devouring 2,550 hectares, an area roughly twice the size of London’s Heathrow airport.

Nearly 1,000 firefighters and specialised water aircraft battled to

contain the blaze in the region that lies along France’s Mediterranean coast between the cities of Marseille and Nice.

Very dry conditions in the area have caused an extreme forest-fire risk, according to the French weather service Météo-France.

Fuelled by repeated heatwaves and drought, the 2026 wildfire season began earlier than usual, and firefighters have been battling near-daily outbreaks across France in recent weeks.

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Tuesday the Iran war has cost the United States \$37.5 billion so far, up from a previous estimate of nearly \$29 billion in mid-May.

“The estimate we have as of today is \$37.5 billion,” Hegseth testified during a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing at which he defended a request for some \$67 billion in supplemental funding for the Pentagon.

Hegseth and General Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Congress the funding request is “urgent” and “necessary” to pay the Pentagon’s costs for the Iran war through the end of September.

But Democratic Senator Jeanne Shaheen challenged that assessment, saying Hegseth still has \$75 billion available in unspent funding.

“Why are you asking the American people to absorb the cost of a war they don’t support instead of asking for transfer authority for unspent reconciliation funding?” Hegseth said the unspent money was “otherwise allocated” for President



AFP photo

This screen grab made on Wednesday from handout video footage released by the US Central Command (CENTCOM) on Tuesday, shows US forces launching what the military says are precision strikes targeting Iranian military capabilities for the eleventh consecutive night

Donald Trump’s other priorities, like the “Golden Dome for America and hypersonics and other munitions investments”.

The requested funds do not include what it will

cost to rebuild US military bases in the Middle East.

Lawmakers voiced frustration as they pressed for details of the Trump administration’s strategy to win the war in

the Middle East.

Demands for transparency crossed partisan lines, with Republican Senator John Kennedy saying, “we need some hard answers and some straight talk” when he

asked what would happen if the US just left the Strait of Hormuz.

Hegseth and Caine did not offer specifics for whether Iran would impose fees for ships seeking passage.

Toll from Venezuela double earthquakes reaches 5,346 killed

CARACAS (AFP) — The death toll from the double earthquakes that struck Venezuela nearly a month ago has reached 5,346, according to the latest official tally on Tuesday.

The 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude quakes on June 24 hit the north of the country hardest, especially the coastal state of La Guaira, outside the capital Caracas.

National Assembly President Jorge Rodríguez said on Telegram the death toll was at least 5,346, an increase of 68 from the day before, while the number of people injured remained at 16,740.

The government has



AFP photo

A worker cuts metal amid the rubble of a residential building that collapsed following the June 24 earthquakes, in Caraballeda, Venezuela, on Monday

not given a figure for those still missing under mountains of rubble, but

the UN estimates that as many as 50,000 people may still be unaccounted

for.

There have been 1,405 aftershocks recorded

in the month since the earthquakes.

Over 23,000 people have been displaced from the earthquakes, with camps getting set up across affected areas from stadiums to sidewalks.

Interim President Delcy Rodríguez on Monday announced around 200 families who had lost their homes would be housed in an apartment complex in Caracas, vowing to assist with creating over 4,000 homes to help those affected.

More than 850 buildings were damaged and 190 collapsed completely in the earthquakes, according to official figures.



AFP photo

A group of women take shelter from the sun under umbrellas while waiting to cross a street in Tokyo on Wednesday

Japan suffers heat ‘disaster’ as cities hit by ‘cruelly hot’ days

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese cities are experiencing “cruelly hot days”, a new meteorological term devised this year to warn people of intense heat above 40°C, with emergency officials describing the soaring temperatures on Wednesday as “a disaster”.

Heatstroke alerts were issued across almost the whole country and emergency officials said at least 14 people had died from heat-related causes in the past week.

Three central cities logged scorching temperatures on Tuesday above the new threshold, called “kokushobi” and which translates to “cruelly hot day”, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA).

Large areas, including the central hub of Nagoya and communities near Tokyo in the east, were enduring temperatures approaching or above 40°C on Wednesday.

The new term was designed to draw greater public attention to heat-related warnings, although it does not trigger any official measures nationwide.

The JMA has issued heatstroke alerts in 41

out of Japan’s 47 prefectures, urging the public — especially the country’s many elderly — to take steps to stay cool.

Almost 11,000 people sought emergency medical care in Japan in the past week, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency.

Fourteen of those were pronounced dead upon arrival, the agency said, adding that the public must regard the extreme heat as a “disaster”.

“Temperatures have been rising since mid-July, and severe heat is expected to continue nationwide,” the disaster agency said.

“It is no exaggeration to call this extreme heat a ‘disaster’ with many people being rushed to hospitals or even dying as a result of heatstroke,” it said.

Minoru Kihara, the government’s top spokesman, said Tokyo was attempting to ease the impact of the extreme heat with measures that include installing air conditioners in school gyms and pressing businesses to adhere to sound workplace practices.

Japan experiences about 1,300 heat-re-

lated deaths annually and is aiming to halve that number by 2030, he said.

“We ask all citizens to check the status of heatstroke alerts in their local areas, use air conditioners and other cooling devices appropriately to stay in a cool environment, and frequently drink water and take some salt,” Kihara said.

“We urge everyone to take these life-saving precautions.”

In the rural Tochigi region, north of Tokyo, an 85-year-old man was found collapsed inside the greenhouse of his farm on Tuesday. He was later confirmed dead, a local fire spokeswoman told AFP.

“The greenhouse was extremely hot inside,” she said.

Scientists say human-induced climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme heat events in Japan and elsewhere.

Japan sweltered through its hottest summer on record last year.

Its highest recorded temperature was registered on August 5, 2025, at 41.8°C in Isesaki, north of Tokyo.

India student protests keep up pressure on Modi government

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Crowds of supporters of India’s online “cockroach” movement grew on Wednesday at a New Delhi protest site, while their demands for accountability and reform following examination scandals echoed in rallies across the country.

The protests, led by the social media-driven Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) movement, have emerged as one of the biggest challenges to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government since his reelection in 2024.

The campaign also got a boost on Wednesday inside parliament from opposition lawmakers including Rahul Gandhi of the Congress Party who demanded the government apologise for a police crackdown on a major rally on Monday.

Protesters demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan have refused to leave the Jantar Mantar site in the heart of the Indian capital, with crowds swelling to several thousand people on Wednesday, according to AFP correspondents.

“The government is ruining our future,” said Pooja Kushi, a 19-year-old student who came from the northern state of Haryana with her brother and two friends.

The movement has spread beyond the capital, with smaller demonstrations springing up across the country on Wednesday including in major cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru.

In eastern Patna city, police used tear gas and water cannons at a rally demanding Pradhan’s resignation, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.

The protesters, most of them young students, got a major boost on Tuesday after opposition parties threw their weight behind the movement, staging a sit-in outside the prime minister’s residence.

Gandhi, 56, who was briefly detained on Tuesday, appeared in parliament on Wednesday dressed in black, demanding accountability from the government.

He later told reporters students had his full support, “and we are going to

ensure that you are protected and your future is protected”.

The CJP movement, which has millions of followers on social media, emerged in May initially as a satirical response to Chief Justice Surya Kant reportedly likening young people to “cockroaches” and “parasites” during a court hearing.

The movement has broadened its agenda to include concerns over unemployment, opportunities for young people and what it describes as Modi’s increasingly authoritarian style of governance.

On Monday, police fired tear gas and baton-charged tens of thousands of demonstrators as they tried to march to parliament on the opening day of the monsoon session, in the capital’s largest street rally in five years.

As tensions escalated, protesters responded by hurling stones.

Rights groups have accused police of using excessive force, with Amnesty International questioning the “legality, necessity, and proportionality” of their actions.

At the Jantar Mantar site, where a group of activists has been camping for nearly a month, one protester on Wednesday said it was the first time the country’s youth had an opportunity to raise their voice.

“I am scared because on Monday I saw the police beating people and using force, but we have no choice but to keep our movement going,” Kavya, a 20-year-old student who gave only his first name, told AFP.

“If we stop, it will be hard to get the movement going again,” he said, adding it was difficult to imagine a future in India.

“As soon as you raise your voice, you’re silenced,” he said. “Who wants to stay in this country when you see what’s happening here?”

“The whole system has to change” and political leaders must be “held accountable for their actions”, Kavya added.

Minister promises ‘solutions’

The protests follow several exam irregularities, in-

cluding the leak of India’s medical entrance examination paper that forced more than 2 million candidates to retake the test.

Another dispute involving the online marking of examinations taken by nearly 2 million high school students has also fuelled public anger.

Pradhan, the education minister facing growing pressure particularly over the medical school examination, said the government remained committed to reform and discussing the issue in parliament.

“We owe them [students] answers, reforms and accountability,” he said in a social media post late Tuesday, in his first public comments since Monday’s protests.

“They deserve certainty over chaos, solutions over slogans and responsibility over disruption.”

At the Jantar Mantar protest site, where police set up yellow barricades, 25-year-old activist Aakash said he will keep going “until a new government is in place”.

“I want to build a new India... we have the support of all of India.”



Lebanese soldiers patrol at the entrance to Zawtar Al Gharbiya on Wednesday, after the army deployed to the southern village

Lebanon PM says Beirut working for 'complete Israeli withdrawal'

ZAWTAR AL GHARBIYAH, Lebanon (AFP) — Lebanon is working towards a "complete Israeli withdrawal" from areas it occupies, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said on Wednesday on a visit to a village where Lebanon's army recently deployed.

"We will continue mobilising our political and diplomatic efforts to secure a complete Israeli withdrawal from the south," he said in Zawtar Al Gharbiya.

Israeli forces were previously present on the outskirts of the village following the war with Iran-backed Hizbollah.

Salam visited the town a day after Lebanese President Joseph Aoun met with his US counterpart Donald Trump at the White House, where he "stressed the urgent need for a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory".

Under a US-sponsored agreement signed last month, Lebanon's army is meant to disarm Hizbollah and the Israeli military is to withdraw from "pilot zones" where Lebanese forces will subsequently deploy.

Hizbollah has repeatedly rejected the agreement and refuses to lay down its weapons.

The military said on Tuesday that Israeli forces

"opened fire" near troops deploying at Zawtar Al Gharbiya.

The Israeli military said it had only fired "warning shots into the air" after Lebanese soldiers entered an area that was "not part of the pilot area".

Hizbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war by attacking Israel in support of Tehran on March 2, prompting major Israeli air strikes and a ground invasion.

After planting a Lebanese flag in Zawtar Al Gharbiya on Wednesday, Salam said "in parallel with the army's deployment, we will continue opening roads, removing rubble and securing essential services, enabling our people to return safely and with dignity to their homes and villages".

'Heads held high'

The war caused widespread destruction, mainly in the south, though violence has declined since the signing of a framework agreement between the United States and Iran last month and the Lebanon-Israel deal.

According to the United Nations, more than 700,000 people have returned to their homes over the past few weeks.

In Zawtar Al Gharbiya, dozens of residents waited at the village's entrance for permission to go check on their homes.

"We will enter the town with our heads held high, thanks to the presence of the Lebanese army," Abbas Yaghi, 73, told AFP.

The military had told residents on Tuesday to avoid entering the village "until the security situation stabilises".

The army is conducting a sweep of the town, which is geographically contiguous with its Israeli-occupied neighbour, Zawtar Al Shariqya.

Israeli troops still launch intermittent strikes in surrounding towns, the latest on Nabatieh Al Fawqa.

"We will follow the army if it gives us permission to enter," Mostapha Ammar, a 60-year-old resident of Zawtar Al Shariqya said, hoping that Israel would withdraw from other areas.

Wafaa Ismail, 64, also from Zawtar Al Shariqya, was not granted permission to enter the neighbouring village as Salam visited. She expressed frustration at seeing the prime minister enter on his own, escorted by the army, saying: "He should have brought the people in with him so he could claim victory."

Jordan, Syria agree to renew, expand cultural cooperation agreements

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Culture Mustafa Rawashdeh and his Syrian counterpart Mohammad Saleh on Wednesday agreed to renew and expand cultural agreements between the two countries to keep pace with modern developments and encompass new areas of cooperation.

The Syrian minister and his accompanying delegation are attending the opening ceremony of the 40th edition of the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts as guests of honour, according to Al Mamlaka TV.

Rawashdeh expressed his pleasure and pride in hosting the Syrian minister and his accompanying delegation at the festival's opening, describing the event as a global cultural gathering bringing together diverse international cultures, reflecting Jordan's resilience and stability.

He added that there will be various forms of cultural cooperation between Jordan and Syria moving forward.

For his part, the Syrian minister underscored the significance of his visit to Jordan, saying: "There



Minister of Culture Mustafa Rawashdeh and his Syrian counterpart Mohammad Saleh on Wednesday agree to renew and expand cultural agreements between the two countries

is cultural networking between Syria and Jordan, and the two countries share many cultural files."

Saleh pointed out that discussions covered participation and cooperation across numerous cultural domains, includ-

ing the Amman International Book Fair and other joint initiatives.

Saleh lauded the role and significance of the Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts, highlighting the pivotal role of culture in building awareness and support-

ing political, economic, and social domains.

He expressed appreciation for His Majesty King Abdullah's role in supporting the rights and aspirations of the Syrian people during the Syrian crisis, as well as Jordan's solidarity with Syria and

its hosting of Syrians during that period.

The minister pointed out that the Syrian government is seeking to advance its cultural projects, particularly as the Syrian people are eager for the revival of cultural life.

Jordan welcomes UNESCO decision to keep Jerusalem's Old City on World Heritage in Danger list

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Wednesday welcomed the unanimous adoption of a UNESCO World Heritage Committee resolution to maintain the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls on the List of World Heritage in Danger, citing continued threats to the city's cultural heritage and historic character.

The decision was adopted during the committee's 48th session in Busan, Republic of Korea, following concerns over measures that Jordan says threaten the cultural heritage of the Old City and seek to alter its historic and legal status quo.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali said in a statement that the resolution reaffirmed the illegality and invalidity of Israeli violations against Islamic and Christian holy sites, as well as the rights of worshippers to freedom of worship and unrestricted access to holy places, according to a ministry statement.

Majali said that the decision addressed Israeli interference in the mandate of the Jerusalem Awqaf and Al Aqsa



The Dome of the Rock at the Al Aqsa Mosque Compound in East Jerusalem

Mosque Affairs Department, affiliated with the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places.

He added that the resolution also raised concerns over projects and excavations that threaten the cultural heritage and identity of the Old

City. The UNESCO document stressed the importance of preserving the historic and legal status quo of Jerusalem and its sanctuaries, while safeguarding the city's heritage. It also recalled previous UNESCO decisions expressing re-

gret over Israel's failure, as the occupying power, to halt excavations, tunnelling and other works in East Jerusalem.

The resolution reiterated UNESCO's rejection of Israel's refusal to implement the organisation's request to appoint a permanent representa-

tive in East Jerusalem to report regularly on issues within UNESCO's areas of competence. It also stressed the urgent need to dispatch a UNESCO reactive monitoring mission to the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls.

Majali said that all Israeli measures aimed at changing the Arab, Islamic and Christian identity of occupied Jerusalem or altering its historic and legal status quo were "null and void".

He called on Israel to halt violations against Islamic and Christian holy sites, saying such actions violate international law and undermine efforts towards achieving a two-state solution and a just, comprehensive peace in the region.

The spokesperson said the adoption of the resolution followed intensive Jordanian diplomatic efforts, in coordination with the State of Palestine and Arab and Islamic groups at UNESCO, reflecting the Kingdom's continued commitment to protecting the Old City of Jerusalem and its Islamic and Christian holy sites.

India tunnel collapse death toll rises to 20

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The death toll from a tunnel collapse at an under-construction hydroelectric project in India's remote northeast has risen to at least 20, officials said on Wednesday.

The incident occurred on Monday in Namchi district in the Himalayan state of Sikkim, where workers were constructing a tunnel for a state-run hydro-power project on the Teesta river.

"Out of the 25 who were trapped, 13 bodies have been recovered so far," Rajiv Roka, direc-

tor of the Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority, told AFP.

"The rescuers have also seen seven to eight more bodies inside but they have not been able to retrieve them so far."

Water-logging and methane gas leaking from underground rock formations at the site were hampering rescue efforts, officials said.

"There was a collection of water... it was around two-and-a-half feet [0.76 metres] so it's been difficult to retrieve the bodies," Roka said.

"Looking at the condition, I don't think there could be any survivors."

The region has seen torrential monsoon rains in recent days.

The collapse was triggered by an "explosive release of suspected methane gas trapped/embedded in the rocks, resulting in the generation of dense smoke and toxic gases", the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation said in a statement.

"A detailed investigation will be conducted to ascertain the cause of the incident," the company added.

JAF intercepts four Iranian drones, four missiles launched towards Jordan

Continued from page 1

The source said that four of the six missiles were intercepted, while the remaining two landed in remote, uninhabit-

ed areas without causing casualties or damage.

Teams from the Royal Engineering Corps were deployed to the impact sites and to locations where debris from the

interceptions had fallen. The teams secured the areas and handled the remnants in accordance with established technical and security procedures.

The source said that Jordan's airspace remains under continuous operational surveillance and that the Armed Forces will respond to any aerial threat targeting

the Kingdom in accordance with the rules of engagement, in a manner that ensures the protection of the Kingdom's sovereignty and the safety of its citizens.

Jordan welcomes decisions by Netherlands, Belgium to ban Israeli settler products

Continued from page 1

There have been growing calls for the 27-nation bloc to impose EU-wide restrictions over Israel's military action in Gaza and increased violence in the occupied territories, but some EU members are reluctant.

Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories is considered illegal under

international law. And the Dutch foreign ministry said, "With the proposed measures, The Netherlands is reinforcing its commitment to fulfilling its international legal obligation not to contribute to this unlawful situation."

The ban will apply to "the import, purchase and sale of goods originating from illegal Israeli settlements located in the Pal-

estinian territories", the ministry said.

Belgium's federal government has approved a ban on importing goods produced in Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The decision came at the government's final cabinet meeting before the summer break, the Belgian News Agency (Belga) reported on Saturday.

The move fulfils a commitment made last year over the scale of Israel's bombardment of Gaza and its death toll.

Israel has occupied the West Bank since 1967 and more than 500,000 settlers now live in the territories alongside some three million Palestinians. Violence in the West Bank has increased since the eruption of the Gaza war after the

October 7, 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel.

The Global Echo non-government group, which pursues legal cases for Palestinians against the occupation, said in a report released in June that The Netherlands accounted for a third of agricultural exports from Israel's settlements and nearly half of the total sent to the European Union.

Deputising for King, prime minister opens Jerash Festival

Continued from page 1

For his part, Bani Yasin emphasised that Jerash remains a city of history and civilisation, preserving timeless memories among its pillars.

He described the festival as a national showcase of Jordanian cultural identity, stressing that culture fosters dialogue and builds awareness.

Investing in culture, he added, is an investment in human capital, noting that local institutions in Jerash are key partners in the festival's success.

The ceremony featured a special opening show celebrating the festival's 40th anniversary, charting the evolution of Jordanian music from traditional folklore through inde-

pendent and alternative genres to contemporary productions.

The festival's activities begin on Thursday and run through 2 August

Combining live performances, an orchestra, a choir, visual projections, and modern lighting, the production presented an artistic narrative highlighting four decades of

creativity. Divided into five consecutive chapters moving from roots and memory to regional and global reach, the performance concluded with the official 40th-anniversary song and the lighting of the festival torch, an annual tradition symbolising the enduring cultural mission of the festival and its role in consolidating Jordan's position on the Arab cultural map.

A lineup of prominent Jordanian artists participated in the performance, including Omar Al Abdallat, dubbed "the Voice of Jordan", alongside Hussein Salman, Aziz Maraka, Nedaa Shrara and Issam Najjar.

The festival's activities begin on Thursday and run through 2 August.

THE JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975

Chairman of the Board
Samih Maaitah

Director General
Hasan Jazzazi

Editor-in-Chief
Raed Omari

Editorial and advertising offices
Jordan Press Foundation

The Jordan Times is published daily except Saturdays

Published by the Jordan Press Foundation

Queen Rania Al Abdullah Street
P.O. Box 6710
Amman 11118

E mail: editor@jordantimes.com
jotimes@jordantimes.com
Website: jordantimes.com

Follow us on X Platform: [@jordantimes](https://twitter.com/jordantimes)
Like our facebook page: [thejordantimes](https://www.facebook.com/thejordantimes)
Youtube: [thejordantimes](https://www.youtube.com/thejordantimes)

National Library registration number:
D/1998/2062
Telephone: **5600800 ext. 2392**
Facsimile: **5696183**
Advertising facsimile: **5696183**
Circulation Department:
5600800 ext. 2383

Industrialising tourism:
Building Jordan’s next great
industry around faith

By Fares Braizat

Jordan has long regarded tourism as an important economic sector. It is time to think bigger: Tourism should no longer be viewed simply as a service industry — as important as it is — but as a strategic national industry, one that deserves the same long-term planning, investment and policy priority afforded to education, health, ICT, mining, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy and advanced tech-manufacturing.

The economic case is compelling. Tourism directly employs nearly 60,000 Jordanians while supporting the livelihoods of more than 300,000 others through its supply chain in transportation, agriculture, food production, handicrafts, retail, construction, cultur and hospitality. It contributes more than 13 per cent of Jordan’s GDP, generates billions of dinars in foreign exchange and creates economic opportunities in virtually every governorate. Tourism also has one of the highest economic multipliers in the Jordanian economy: Every dinar spent by a visitor circulates through hotels, restaurants, transport, farms, cultural industries, retailers and local communities. Few sectors combine employment, exports, regional development, investment attraction and broad-based economic spillovers as effectively.

Yet tourism’s greatest contribution, as a labour-intensive industry, is not measured by visitor arrivals alone. It lies in its ability to become a long-term engine of employment, investment, social stability and inclusive economic growth, particularly in underdeveloped areas.

Like every successful industry, tourism requires a durable competitive advantage. Jordan already possesses one that cannot be replicated. It is one of the world’s great sacred landscapes.

Within its borders lie approximately fifty-two Islamic heritage sites of profound significance to Muslims and nearly ninety Christian heritage sites associated with the prophets, the ministry of Jesus, John the Baptist, the early church, and the dawn of Christianity. Few countries possess such a remarkable concentration of sacred history shared by two of the world’s largest religions.

Together, Christianity and Islam are followed by approximately 4.6 billion people, well over half of humanity. This is not merely a tourism market; it is a global community connected to Jordan through faith, history and spiritual identity.

Jordan’s long-term tourism strategy should therefore move beyond promoting individual attractions and embrace a larger national vision: Positioning Jordan as a Holy Land for Muslims and Christians, a living geography of faith whose significance spans both religions.

Successful tourism industries sell narratives before they sell destinations. Switzerland evokes the Alps. Japan and France sell culture. Egypt embodies ancient civilisation. The United States offers extraordinary natural and cultural diversity. Jordan has the rare privilege of bringing all of these dimensions together: Ancient civilisations, magnificent landscapes, biblical history, Islamic heritage, living traditions, and monuments that continue to shape the cultural and spiritual imaginations of billions of people.

The narrative should begin where every generation begins: With the family. If every Muslim and Christian mother knows that Jordan forms part of her faith’s sacred geography, that knowledge will naturally be passed to her children. Such intergenerational awareness creates something that no marketing campaign can purchase: A lifelong aspiration to visit the land that helped shape one’s spiritual heritage. Over time, pilgrimage becomes more than a journey; it becomes a family tradition transmitted across generations.

Faith tourism also offers an important economic advantage. Pilgrims are generally more resilient than leisure travellers during periods of regional uncertainty. While conventional tourism often contracts sharply in response to geopolitical tensions, pilgrimage is driven by enduring spiritual motivations and long-term religious aspirations. This makes faith tourism one of the most stable segments of the global travel industry. It can also reduce the damaging effects of seasonality by creating steadier visitor flows throughout the year.

Industrialising tourism therefore means far more than expanding airports or building hotels. It means investing in heritage conservation, pilgrimage infrastructure, interpretation centres, museums, digital storytelling, international partnerships, education and global faith-based engagement. More importantly, it means launching a Jordan Faith Economy 2050 strategy. Which should be an integrated economic cluster built around pilgrimage, archaeology, hospitality, faith-related conferences, cultural industries, wellness, local crafts, research, heritage conservation and innovation.

Countries become prosperous by industrialising sectors where they possess enduring comparative advantages. Jordan’s sacred geography is one such advantage. The opportunity before us is much larger than increasing visitor numbers. It is to build a resilient national industry capable of generating investment, creating year-round employment, strengthening local communities, and ensuring that future generations of Muslims and Christians grow up knowing that part of their spiritual inheritance lies in Jordan. Hence, Jordan’s greatest untapped natural resource is not buried beneath its soil. It is written across its sacred landscape.

This war is not ours again: Who is opening
the doors to entangling the Arabs?

By Hasan Dajah

On March 10, I wrote an article in The Jordan Times titled: “This War Is Not Ours: Why Is the Region Paying the Price for American and Israeli Ambitions?” In it, I warned against turning Arab lands into arenas for settling scores between the United States and Israel on one side, and Iran on the other, and against the peoples of the region bearing the cost of a war they did not participate in igniting and over which they have no control. Today, months after those warnings, developments on the ground confirm that the danger has not diminished; rather, it has become more apparent and imminent.

The American-Iranian confrontation is entering a highly dangerous phase, not only because of the expanding scope of military operations, but also because the centre of gravity of the war is gradually shifting toward Arab lands. Every time American forces and interests are attacked by Iran, political and military pressure mounts on Arab states with defence ties to Washington, turning their territories, airspace, bases and national ports into part of the theater of operations, even if their governments haven’t officially decided to participate in the war.

The problem is not the right of Arab states to defend their territories, airspace and populations; this is an indisputable and legitimate sovereign right. The danger lies in gradually pushing them from a position of self-defence to one of direct involvement in a confrontation they did not initiate and over which they have no control regarding its objectives, pace or end date.

Recent developments have shown that Iran uses attacks on regional states as a means of pressuring Washington, while avoiding a direct confrontation with American naval vessels or reopening a broad military front with Israel. This equation places an increasing burden on Arab states to bear the cost of the war, trans-

forming their security, economies, and infrastructure into tools of reciprocal pressure between Tehran and Washington.

However, American policy could lead to an even more dangerous outcome: Transforming the confrontation from an American-Iranian war into an Arab-Iranian war. Western countries, regardless of their political stance, would then become involved.

The cost of Arab involvement will be enormous; a large-scale war means threats to energy and water facilities, ports and airports...

As the escalation continues, events could begin with the interception of a missile in defense of national airspace, then progress to targeting a launch site, before escalating into a series of strikes and counterstrikes leading to a full-blown conflict that would be difficult to contain.

This possibility is no longer a theoretical assumption; Arab countries have already been sub-

jected to attacks targeting bases, facilities and infrastructure, and several Arab regions have become forward operating bases as a result of the American military presence. This equation grants Washington significant operational and strategic depth, but leaves Arab societies vulnerable to missiles, drones, and security and economic instability.

Conversely, Israel today appears to be further removed from direct confrontation than in the initial stages, despite its officials’ daily pronouncements about readiness and a desire to engage alongside the United States. With no practical implementation of these statements, they seem more like deterrent messages intended for media consumption, while the Arab states bear the actual consequences of the war. Herein lies the most serious question: Has President Donald Trump succeeded in gradually extricating Israel from direct confrontation, then begun to shift the burden onto Arab states, paving the way for reduced American involvement and standing by Israel to observe the region being torn apart, drained and bearing the full cost of the war?

There may not be a declared American plan in this regard, but the facts on the ground necessitate caution. Washington seeks to protect its forces, minimise its losses and expand its deterrent against Iran, and may find in involving its Arab allies a way to achieve these objectives without bearing the cost alone. At the same time, Israel can observe the attrition of its adversaries and its regional environment from a less exposed position, while the Arab states shoulder the human, economic and strategic losses.

The cost of Arab involvement will be enormous; a large-scale war means threats to energy and water facilities, ports and airports; increased insurance and maritime transport costs; a decline in investment and tourism; disruption of supply chains; and increased pressure on public budgets and citizens’ living stand-

ards. Furthermore, expanding the confrontation to the vicinity of the Straits of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb will expose Arab and global trade to an unprecedented crisis. Therefore, the Arab position must be clear and unified: Protecting sovereignty, land and people is an indisputable duty, but participating in offensive operations or allowing the region to become a platform for open warfare is something entirely different. A distinction must be made between legitimate defensive cooperation and involvement in escalating the confrontation, while emphasising to both Washington and Tehran that Arab states are not battlegrounds, bargaining chips or mailboxes for exchanging military messages.

What we said in March, we reiterate today with even greater conviction: This war is not our war and it should not become so under any political or security pressure. The Arab interest does not lie in siding with one party over another, or in joining alliances that drain the region’s resources, but rather in preventing the conflict from spilling over into its territories, and in protecting its sovereignty, its people, its vital infrastructure and the future of its generations. Defending one’s homeland is a duty, but it is fundamentally different from engaging in a war that serves the interests of external powers.

Major Powers may withdraw once they achieve their objectives, or when the cost of confrontation rises and their calculations change, leaving behind exhausted states, damaged economies and societies facing instability. As for the Arab states, they alone will endure the most of the devastation, division, and attrition. Therefore, wisdom dictates adhering to positive neutrality, activating diplomacy, and rejecting the use of Arab land as an arena for conflict or a platform for exchanging military blows and messages.

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

value while transferring historical records into the public domain on a predictable timetable rather than leaving them closed indefinitely.

Italy offers one useful model. By law, government records are transferred to the Central Archives after forty years according to a fixed schedule. A similar approach would allow every Jordanian institution to contribute its chapter to the national story when the appropriate time arrives while ensuring that none of it is permanently lost.

Jordan should also look beyond its borders. Türkiye’s State Archives preserve extensive Ottoman records relating to the territories that now comprise Jordan. British repositories, including The National Archives at Kew and the Middle East Centre Archive at Oxford, contain thousands of files documenting the Emirate and Mandate periods. Building formal digitisation partnerships with these institutions would allow Jordan to bring copies of its documentary heritage home without moving a single original document.

Prince Hassan’s own record of institution-building — from the Royal Scientific Society to the Arab Thought Forum and decades of scholarship devoted to Jordan’s history — demonstrates that the country’s intellectual and civil-society foundations already exist. The institutional capacity is there. The legal framework is there. The expertise is there.

What is missing is sustained investment.

Jordan already recognises roads, water and borders as critical national infrastructure. Its documentary memory deserves to be treated no differently. Archives rarely compete with more immediate priorities, which is precisely why Prince Hassan chose to make the case himself. A nation that does not preserve its documentary memory eventually finds others writing its history for it.

By Malik Abo Rashid

When His Royal Highness Prince Hassan visited the National Library Department last week, he delivered a message that was anything but ceremonial.

Prince Hassan reminded staff that a national library is not merely a repository of books but the nation’s memory. In the age of artificial intelligence, he warned, preserving Arab heritage means ensuring it is represented in the digital databases on which tomorrow’s knowledge systems will rely. Otherwise, the region risks allowing outside platforms and algorithms to shape its history instead.

He also introduced a concept that deserves far wider discussion: Memoricide, the deliberate erasure of historical memory through renamed places, confiscated archives or the replacement of one narrative with another. He concluded by calling for a comprehensive framework to preserve, digitise and make Arab archives accessible to future generations.

That appeal should be understood not as a ceremonial observation but as the beginning of a serious policy conversation.

A nation’s documentary record is what allows it to tell its own story, particularly in a region where borders, governments and political narratives have often changed faster than the paperwork recording them. Archives are not simply collections of old documents; they are evidence of continuity, sovereignty and identity.

Jordan does not need to build this capacity from scratch. The National Documents Law of 2017 already requires public institutions to deposit their records and obliges private holders of nationally significant documents to preserve them. Jordan’s Access to Information Law, enacted in 2007, was the first of its kind in the Arab world and remains one of the region’s most ambitious transparency initiatives.

The National Library has also created Watheq, an online platform through which citizens can

upload photographs, documents, recordings and other historical material for permanent preservation. Prince Hassan is not asking Jordan to invent new institutions; he is asking it to make the ones already built work at the scale the country’s history deserves.

The challenge is not institutional neglect. During the visit, Director General Firas Darabah described a library that continues to expand its digital preservation work despite limited resources. Yet a 2019 study of Jordan’s records management found that ministries still operate disconnected archival systems, despite legal requirements to coordinate them, because the National Library has never been given the authority or resources to fully enforce those standards. The gap is one of capacity, not commitment.

Some of Jordan’s history does not physically reside in Jordan at all. The Mesha Stele — the ninth-century B.C. inscription documenting the Kingdom of Moab, discovered near Dhiban in 1868 — has been housed in the Louvre for more than a century. Nabataean inscriptions, Roman-era collections and centuries of Ottoman provincial records relating to today’s Jordan remain dispersed across Istanbul, Paris, London and elsewhere.

That is a gap in custody, not in history.

It also illustrates precisely what Prince Hassan meant by memoricide: The historical record survives, but too often beyond the reach of the society whose past it documents.

The immediate priority begins at home. Providing the National Library with modern digitisation equipment, integrated cataloguing systems and adequate staffing is a governmental responsibility.

Promoting Watheq is a broader national one. Most Jordanians have likely never heard of the platform. International experience demonstrates what is possible when public participation is actively encouraged. The US National Archives’ Citizen Archivist programme enlisted volunteers to digitise hundreds of thousands of

pages, while Wales paired its People’s Collection with universities that trained students to help preserve community archives.

The immediate priority begins at home. Providing the National Library with modern digitisation equipment, integrated cataloguing systems, and adequate staffing is a governmental responsibility

The immediate
priority begins at
home. Providing the
National Library with
modern digitisation
equipment, integrated
cataloguing systems,
and adequate staffing
is a governmental
responsibility

Malik Abo Rashid is an adviser specialising in US-Middle East policy, business and security issues

Thursday, July 23, 2026

JCC, Georgian chamber sign agreement to establish joint Jordanian-Georgian Business Council

AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce (JCC) Khalil Haj Tawfiq met on Wednesday with Georgian Ambassador to Jordan Archil Dzuliashvili to discuss expanding bilateral economic and commercial cooperation between the business communities of both countries.

According to a JCC statement, the meeting addressed strategies to increase bilateral trade volume, foster "direct" linkages between private sector organisations and establish "regular" information exchanges regarding "available" investment opportunities.

Discussions covered joint potential across key sectors, including tourism, services, information technology, higher education and agriculture, according to a JCC statement.

Haj Tawfiq highlighted the prospects for economic collaboration, emphasising the need for "intensified" delegation visits and joint trade exhibitions.

He proposed signing a formal cooperation agreement with the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and establishing a joint Jordanian-Georgian Business Council to provide a structured institutional framework for private sector engagement.



Chairman of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce Khalil Haj Tawfiq meets Wednesday with Georgian Ambassador to Jordan Archil Dzuliashvili to discuss expanding bilateral economic and commercial cooperation

Haj Tawfiq positioned the Kingdom as a regional trade gateway for Georgian enterprises, strategic location and network of free trade agreements.

He affirmed the JCC's readiness to host prospective Georgian investors and provide detailed insights into investment landscapes across the country.

Ambassador Dzuliash-

vili expressed Tbilisi's keen interest in developing ties with Jordan, pointing to significant potential for growth in trade and mutual investment.

He underscored the strategic importance of establishing a direct, scheduled airline route between both countries to facilitate tourism and commercial movement, noting that current flights operated by private Jordanian carriers

remain insufficient to meet growing demand.

The ambassador noted that Georgia hosts a substantial number of Jordanian medical students alongside thousands of annual Jordanian tourists.

He confirmed that the embassy will collaborate with the JCC to facilitate business match-making and provide market intelligence to both commercial sectors.

Dzuliashvili extend-

ed an invitation to Haj Tawfiq to lead a Jordanian trade delegation to Georgia.

Both sides agreed to convene a "virtual" joint meeting next month involving the JCC, the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Jordanian Embassy in Baku, and the Georgian Embassy in Amman to finalise a strategic economic roadmap, according to a JCC statement.

EBRD appoints Hashem Abdel Hakim director for eastern Mediterranean region

AMMAN (JT) — The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has appointed Hashem Abdel Hakim as the Regional director for its eastern Mediterranean region, heading the Bank's operations in Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza.

Hakim will take up his new role on 1 September 2026 and will be based in Amman, reporting to Mark Davis, managing director for the southern and eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) region, according to EBRD statement.

An Egyptian national, Hakim joined the EBRD in 2022 and is currently deputy head of Egypt and head of Financial Institutions for the country.

He brings more than 25 years of international experience in development finance, financial institutions, capital markets and economic policy.

As Deputy Head of Egypt and Head of Financial Institutions Hakim has led the Bank's Financial Institutions business in Egypt, helping to advance private-sector development, expand financial inclusion and support the EBRD's strategic priorities in the country.

Hakim said "I am



Hashem Abdel Hakim

delighted to take on this role and contribute to the EBRD's mission in the eastern Mediterranean."

He added "I look forward to working closely with our clients, partners and stakeholders to support sustainable growth, strengthen economic resilience and expand opportunities for private-sector development across the region."

Before joining the EBRD, he held senior positions at the International Finance Corporation, a member of the World Bank Group.

Earlier in his career, he worked in sovereign and financial institutions risk analysis at Fitch Ratings and in investment banking, ad-

vising on debt capital markets and corporate finance transactions.

Hakim brings to the role deep sector expertise, strong leadership credentials and a proven ability to deliver impact across diverse markets and operating environments.

He succeeds Gretchen Biery, who has led the EBRD's operations in the eastern Mediterranean since September 2023.

The EBRD launched its operations in the SEMED region in 2012 and supports the development of resilient, inclusive and sustainable economies through investment, policy engagement and support for private-sector growth.

Jordan-US Trade deal to boost investment, business partnerships

AMMAN (JT) — The newly signed Reciprocal Trade Agreement between Jordan and the United States marks a "significant" step in strengthening bilateral economic ties beyond tariff adjustments, creating new opportunities for trade, investment and long-term business partnerships, the Chairman of American Chamber of Commerce in Jordan (AmCham-Jordan) Samer Judeh, said on Wednesday.

Judeh stated that the agreement builds on the two countries' "long-standing" economic partnership by expanding frameworks for trade and investment, creating new opportunities for Jordanian and US companies, and strengthening cooperation in services, digital trade, innovation and supply chains, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He said the agreement "goes beyond" improving market access by giving the business community greater confidence to establish long-term commercial partnerships, explore new investment

opportunities and expand operations in both markets.

On its future vision, Judeh said AmCham looks forward to working with public and private sector partners to translate the agreement into "tangible" opportunities for economic growth, investment, job creation and higher bilateral trade.

He noted the agreement builds on the Jordan-US Free Trade Agreement, which entered into force in 2001 after Jordan became the first Arab country to sign such a pact with the United States, providing Jordanian exports with tariff and tax privileges.

Judeh said the new agreement is designed to benefit both countries by facilitating Jordanian exports and entry of US products, technology and expertise into Jordan.

The pact, he stated, also spurs American companies to invest locally and partner with Jordanian businesses to expand into regional markets, as well as supporting Jordanian companies seeking to establish a commercial

presence in the United States.

Jordan's exports to the US around reached \$3 billion in 2025, while imports totalled about \$2 billion, reflecting the "depth" of bilateral economic interests and the importance of maintaining a clear and predictable framework for businesses and investors, he said.

Judeh called for expanding the number of sectors and companies benefitting from the agreement, adding that "its success should be measured not by tariff rates alone but by the volume of new trade it generates across all sectors".

As for its scope, the agreement is projected to streamline movement of goods between the two countries, supporting increased Jordanian exports to the US market, including apparel and garments, while easing access for American products, including agricultural goods and vehicles, to Jordan.

The US based on the agreement will cut reciprocal tariffs on Jordanian

goods to 10 per cent and grant the apparel and garments sector more preferential access to the US market, supporting Jordanian exports.

Noting that the exports totalled JD595 million during the first four months of 2026, led by apparel, jewellery, electrical machinery and pharmaceutical products. Jordan will continue providing tariff exemptions for US exports under the 2001 Free Trade Agreement.

The agreement also features measures to facilitate bilateral trade by enforcing environmental laws, protecting labour rights, launching stronger intellectual property safeguards, fair trade practices, improving customs procedures, removing trade barriers and enhancing market access for US goods, including agricultural products and vehicles.

Jordanian Exporters Association

Jordan Exportes Association (JEA) President Ahmad Khudari stated that US customs duties



The newly signed Reciprocal Trade Agreement between Jordan and the United States marks a 'significant' step in strengthening bilateral economic ties beyond tariff adjustments, says Chairman of AmCham-Jordan Samer Judeh

on Jordanian exports have been reduced from 20 per cent to 10 per cent, positioning Jordan among nations subject to the lowest tariff tiers and granting local manufacturers a distinct competitive edge

globally.

The tariff reductions will directly benefit several key industries, including the food, medical supplies, and pharmaceutical sectors, while granting the garment and textile in-

dustry an immediate advantage over regional competitors.

The JEA is considering organising a dedicated national trade delegation to an upcoming US medical supplies exhibition, building on

more than two decades of promotional participation in major trade expos in New York, San Diego and Las Vegas.

Beyond manufacturing growth, the accord is anticipated to improve Jordan's trade balance, boost foreign currency inflows and create new employment opportunities.

However, Khudari noted that fully realising these advantages will require addressing ongoing maritime shipping disruptions, specifically scheduled vessel cancellations affecting international trade lanes.

The bilateral agreement, finalised on Tuesday following nearly a year of consultations, builds upon the foundational US Jordan Free Trade Agreement enacted in December 2001.

In addition to expanding market access for Jordanian goods, the agreement facilitates the entry of US imports into the Jordanian market, including agricultural products and motor vehicles, Petra reported.

Oil prices surge on Mideast war, stock markets diverge

LONDON (AFP) — World oil prices soared on Wednesday, with the benchmark international contract Brent North Sea crude surpassing \$95 for the first time in nearly six weeks as the United States and Iran carried out more strikes.

Crude futures went on to give up some of the gains but still banked gains of about 3.5 per cent.

Fresh US strikes triggered air defences in Tehran after President Donald Trump warned he was "not finished" with a war with Iran that has already cost his nation \$37.5 billion.

After the foes' fighting over the strategic Strait of Hormuz led to the collapse of a preliminary



An employee of the Kuwait Oil Company looks at 25 January 2005 the Gathering Centre No.15 of Al Rawdain field, 100 kms north of Kuwait City

deal, the Middle East war has expanded to include the region's other key chokepoint for global oil supplies.

Still, top US diplomat Marco Rubio reiterated Washington's statement that it is willing to use diplomacy to find an agree-

ment with Tehran.

Oil futures have risen strongly in recent weeks, after having fallen back to pre-war levels on hopes that a deal to end the conflict would hold.

The escalation in violence has made a return \$100 crude a realistic prospect should tensions not ease.

While stock market traders kept a close watch on the Mideast war developments, focus was also firmly on the technology sector, as has been the case for several weeks.

"European stock indices are brushing off the rise [oil prices]... after a stunning rally for US chip stocks on Tuesday," noted Kathleen Brooks, research director at traders XTB.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD13.8 million spread over 3.8 million shares that traded through 3,715 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.47 per cent, closing at 3931.12 points.

Out of 98 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 40 companies rose while the share price of another 21 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 5.26 per cent, National Steel Industry by 4.85 per cent, Jordanian Management and Consulting Company by 4.62 per cent, Jordan Phosphate Mines by 3.83 per cent, and Al Shamekha for Real Estate and Financial Investments by 3.45 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Amwaj Properties by 5 per cent, Jordan Masaken for Land and Industrial Development Projects by 4.29 per cent, Arab Investors Union Company for Real Estates Developing by 3.39 per cent, Transport and Investment Barter Company by 2.99 per cent, and Al Tahdith for Real Estate Investments Company by 2.67 per cent.

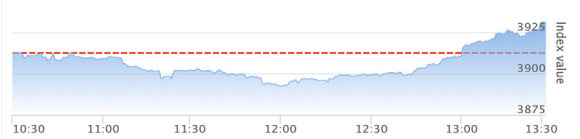


THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↑ 3931.12 0.47% July 22, 2026

Live Data Historical Data

Click and drag in the plot area to zoom in



DAILY SUMMARY

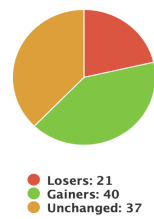
Regular Market OTC Market Bonds

Trading Value (JDs) 13,799,021

Trading volume 3,812,871

No. of Transactions 3,715

No. of Securities 98



FOOTBALL

Italian FA chief says in touch with Guardiola over coaching vacancy

ROME (AFP) — The head of Italy’s football federation has confirmed he held discussions with legendary coach Pep Guardiola over the vacancy at the Italian national side but added he was “not sure that this will come about” Giovanni Malago revealed the talks had taken place in an interview with the website Cronache di Spogliatoio (Dressing Room Chronicles) published on Wednesday. Asked whether the budget for the coach’s salary could be increased in the case of Guardiola, he said: “Yes, and that is the exception for obvious reasons. I won’t go into detail here but it’s not sure that this will come about. However, I still believe it was the right thing to do. It was important to open a dialogue and keep it alive,” he added. Guardiola has firsthand knowledge of Italian football having played for Brescia and AS Roma (2001-03). Already at a low ebb, Italian football was sent into a tailspin in March after the men’s national team failed for a third consecutive time to qualify for the World Cup. Italy has won four World Cups.

CYCLING

Philipsen snaps ‘horrible’ drought with Tour de France stage 17 victory

VOIRON, France (AFP) — Jasper Philipsen admitted he had been feeling the pressure before sprinting to a dominant victory from a reduced bunch at the end of the Tour de France’s Alpine 17th stage on Wednesday, to end a “horrible” run of near misses. Set up by a strong lead-out from team-mate Mathieu van der Poel, Philipsen surged several bike lengths clear of Mauro Schmid and Olav Kooij, who had each already won a stage at the Tour. This was an 11th Tour stage victory overall for the 28-year-old Belgian, who won the sprinters’ green points jersey in 2023. It meant that he has won at least one stage in each of the last five editions of the Tour. He had come close on several other sprint stages this year, finishing five times in the top five. He said that the first part of the Tour had been “horrible, I couldn’t find myself, I couldn’t find the form I was hoping for”. And he admitted that he had been feeling the pressure to deliver: “Of course, the team is not saying that I have to win but... we did the preparation, we have a full lead-out squad, we are here for stage wins not for the GC [general classification] and there’s always expectations,” Philipsen said.

By Aline Bannayan

AMMAN — With the 2026 World Cup behind them, the new FIFA rankings were issued as teams arrived home, with a time for assessment as international and local agendas start soon.

In its World Cup debut, Jordan played in a tough Group J losing 3-1 to Austria, 2-1 to Algeria and 3-1 to three-time holders Argentina. In the leadup to the World Cup, Jordan played two friendlies, losing 2-0 to Columbia and 4-1 to Switzerland. As post World Cup FIFA rankings were announced, Jordan dropped 10 spots to 73rd.

The Kingdom is now the 10th ranked Asian team and 9th among Arab sides, with the World’s top 10 led by newly crowned champions Spain followed by Argentina, France, England, Brazil, Morocco, Portugal, Belgium, Netherlands and Mexico.

Morocco achieved a new highest rank at 6th, Norway which impressed fans was the biggest climber 12 spots to 19th, Egypt moved up five spots to 24th while Tunisia had the biggest drop of 12 spots to 57th. Top 10 Asian teams are Japan 17, Iran 22, Australia 28, South Korea 32, Saudi Arabia 58, Qatar 59, Uzbekistan 60, Iraq 63, UAE 68, Jordan 73. Top 10 Arab teams are: Morocco 6, Egypt 24, Algeria 29, Tunisia 57, Saudi Arabia 58, Qatar 59, Iraq 63, UAE 68, Jordan 73 and Oman 79.



Referee Adham Makhadmeh (centre) with his colleagues upon their return to Amman following the 2026 World Cup

The latest edition of the World Cup brought a record eight Arab nations including 2022 semifinalists Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq and Jordan. Teams advancing to the Round of 32 were Morocco, Algeria and Egypt. Morocco exited the quarters to France. Egypt failed to make it to the quarterfinals, losing a dramatic and controversial match in which it squandered their 2-0 lead to lose 3-2 to Argentina, while Algeria lost to Switzerland and failed to make it to the Round of 16.

Apart from match results, a remarkable Arab and Jordanian highlight was the impressive performance of Jordanian referee Adham Makhadmeh who was chosen for the Spain vs Argentina final. On the other hand,

the heated discussion locally remains by game experts and fans alike of news of the Nashama squad parting ways with Moroccan head coach Jamal Sellami and compatriot Ezzaki Badou taking over.

The unexpected announcement came days after the team’s arrival back home and was posted by HRH Prince Ali, president of the Jordan Football Association

(JFA) on his personal X account, thanking Sellami for his leadership that played “a pivotal role in securing the national team’s historic qualification to the World Cup”.

While it was not clear if Sellami had resigned or if JFA had terminated the coach’s contract which extended after the January 2027 Asian Cup, most concurred it was probably the latter although near everyone concurs

Objective observers note the first World Cup qualification should serve as a competitive starting point rather than a winless streak, where some tactical mistakes, late substitutions, not enlisting the reserve goalies, the choice of some ageing players over others, the relative competitive experience and the absence of key players, especially Yazan Nue’imat, considered a leading striker in Asia, were the reasons for not advancing further and ultimately pushing a successful coach out.

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

JFA photo

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

The sudden departure left observers puzzled after the coach was recently granted Jordanian citizenship, and often discussed the future of Jordanian football with reactivation of football academies as part of building a solid base to serve the game for future generations. Sellami’s exit, echoed similar ones of compatriot Hussein Ammouta as well as the former Iraqi coach Adnan Hamad earlier.

Objective observers note the first World Cup qualification should serve as a competitive starting point rather than a winless streak, where some tactical mistakes, late substitutions, not enlisting the reserve goalies, the choice of some ageing players over others, the relative competitive experience and the absence of key players, especially Yazan Nue’imat, considered a leading striker in Asia, were the reasons for not advancing further and ultimately pushing a successful coach out.

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

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

‘Beautiful game’ provides Venezuelans with welcome distraction in wake of tragedy

By Patrick Fort

Agence France-Presse

VALENCIA, Venezuela — “Today more than ever, we remain united” reads the banner brandished by the players of Venezuelan club UCV prior to the first major sporting event hosted by the country since the twin earthquakes that killed over 5,000 last month.

Universidad Central de Venezuela (UCV) played a South American Cup match against Brazilian legend Pele’s former club Santos in Valencia, 170 kilometres west of Caracas, because its stadium in the capital was damaged in the disaster on June 24.

It was not also material damage the club suffered but the tragic loss of one of their brightest young stars as midfielder Yimvert Berroteran, an Under-17 international, was killed.

As a tribute, they withdrew his number 20 shirt, and all players now wear a small number 20 on their jerseys.

“That was a heck of a hit, morale-wise,” UCV goalkeeper Giancarlo Schiavone told AFP.

“He had a great future ahead of him. We still pray for him, we play with him in our hearts, always thinking of him.”



AFP Photo

Universidad Central may have lost, but by hosting the first major sporting event in Venezuela since the deadly earthquakes, they provided a welcome distraction

“With the image on the shirt [number 20], Yimvert will always be with us,” added the 32-year-old.

The 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude quakes on June 24 hit the north of the country hardest, especially the coastal state of La Guaira,

outside Caracas.

The government has not given a figure for those still missing under mountains of rubble, but the UN estimates that as many as 50,000 people may still be unaccounted for.

Over 23,000 people have

been displaced from the earthquakes, with camps getting set up across affected areas from stadiums to sidewalks.

Some of the displaced are in the stadium for the match.

Lizmar Mejias, 42, her

husband Raymond Gosling, and their two children, aged seven and 13, found sanctuary with Mejias’s brother in Valencia after their apartment in Catia del Mar was destroyed.

“Our building stayed upright, but the inside walls collapsed,” she told AFP.

“My brother welcomed us into his home.

“We live a day to day existence.”

Mejias says they decided to attend the game “above all for the children”.

“They were hit hard by the disaster. A lot of their friends sadly died,” she said.

“I do not know if I am going to feel guilty, because it is not easy owing to the losses we have suffered.

“Friends, family... anyway, we needed a distraction, mostly for the children and their mental health.”

‘Despite the grief’

Mejias says the catastrophe has brought the best out of her compatriots.

“What is wonderful about Venezuelans is we are united,” she said.

“The catastrophe took place in La Guaira, but all of Venezuela came together after what happened.

“We are all part of one

very large family.”

“Venezuela is as one,” added Mejias, who was proudly sporting the Venezuelan national side’s shirt.

Eduardo Rodriguez, 39 and a professor of social sciences, supports another club Carabobo, but he came along to “support national football” in what is the “first event post the earthquakes”.

“Supporting sport after the earthquakes is fundamental,” he said.

“Despite the grief... one understands human activities are precisely those which help in the cathartic process and what Venezuela requires in order to get over the tragedy.”

UCV, despite their best efforts to further honour Berroteran’s memory, were unable to deliver victory, but ultimately the 4-1 loss was irrelevant in the greater scheme of things.

“It is not an excuse but the first days following the disaster were tough,” said an understandably emotional Schiavone.

“We downed tools for a week and a half.

“My teammates and I helped out at the central collection centre: We brought food, clothes, we tried to help everywhere.

“Now, I think the show should go on”.

TRIAL

Sydney court dismisses defamation case against film star Rebel Wilson

SYDNEY (AFP) — A Sydney court dismissed on Wednesday a defamation case against Australian film star Rebel Wilson by another actor.

Charlotte MacInnes, who had featured in Wilson’s directing debut “The Deb”, accused the star of defaming her in 2024 by suggesting she had changed an account of having been a victim of sexual harassment in order to advance her career.

The federal court case focused on an incident where MacInnes, who was 25 at the time, and the producer and financier of the film, Amanda Ghost, then 49, had shared a bath in an apartment after swimming at Bondi Beach.

Wilson alleged that MacInnes had complained to her the next day about being uncomfortable that she was asked by Ghost to take the bath.

Justice Elizabeth Raper on Wednesday dismissed the case against Wilson — star of Hollywood hits including “Bridesmaids” and “Pitch Perfect” — and ordered MacInnes to pay costs.

“To say that the circumstances surrounding how they came to be in the bath are unusual would be an understatement,” Raper said in the judgement.

The court found that while one of Wilson’s 2024 Instagram posts had suggested MacInnes “changed her story about feeling uncomfortable about what happened in the bathroom”, this was not defamatory and was also “substantially true”.

“It is obvious that Ms Ghost, a 49 year old woman, should have appreciated the inappropriateness of her conduct regardless of whether there was any sexual motivation or conduct,” the judgement read.

On Instagram, Wilson thanked the judge and Australian legal system for a “substantial win today”.

“I’m looking forward to getting back to what I love most, my family and my work,” she wrote.

“Thank you to the Judge and the Australian legal system who I have the utmost respect for.”

DOWNLOAD OUR APP NOW

Available on the App Store

ANDROID APP ON Google Play