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King, Oman sultan discuss regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah and Sultan Haitham Bin Tarif of Oman, during a phone call on Friday, discussed current regional developments.

His Majesty affirmed that Jordan continues to take all necessary measures to safeguard its security and the safety of its citizens and territory, according to a Royal

Court statement.

The two leaders emphasised the need to de-escalate tensions and achieve comprehensive calm, in order to restore stability in the region.

Jordan condemns 'settler terrorism' against Palestinians in West Bank

Safadi says Israel pushing West Bank towards 'explosion'

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday condemned the escalating "settler terrorism" against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, most recently targeting several villages, burning homes, agricultural lands and vehicles, uprooting trees and attacking local residents.

In a statement, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali stressed Jordan's "absolute rejection of these condemned attacks by Israeli settlers", describing them as an extension of the extreme policies and illegal actions of the Israeli government in the occupied West Bank.

He also said that such actions fuel extremism and violence while undermining chances for peace based on the two-state solution, holding Israel, the occupying power, responsible for these attacks.

Majali called on the international community to uphold its legal and moral responsibilities by compelling Israel to stop settler attacks, holding



perpetrators accountable to ensure they do not escape punishment, and fulfilling the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to establish an independent, sovereign state on the June 4, 1967 lines with East Jerusalem as its capital as the sole path to achieving a just and comprehensive peace that guarantees security and stability in the region.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

Ayman Safadi warned that Israeli "illegal" actions in the West Bank are pushing the region towards another disastrous conflict that will reverberate beyond the occupied Palestinian Territories.

In a post on X platform, Safadi wrote, "The Israeli government is pushing the West Bank towards explosion. Its blatant violations of the historical and legal status quo at Jerusalem's Holy Sites are illegal and dangerous provocations."

Safadi also warned

against the consequences of the Israeli measures, saying "they are pushing the region towards another disastrous conflict that will reverberate beyond the occupied Palestinian Territories".

He also called on the international community to "act effectively and quickly against these Israeli measures before it is too late".

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Jordan condemns
Houthi attacks
on Saudi vessel,
reiterates support
for Riyadh

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan has condemned the attack launched by the Houthi militia against a Saudi vessel in the Red Sea.

In a statement on Saturday, the Foreign Ministry condemned the attack as a "flagrant violation of international law and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and a threat to the safety and security of maritime navigation".

The ministry affirmed Jordan's rejection and denunciation of the assault, emphasising Amman's absolute solidarity with Riyadh and its full support for all measures taken to protect Saudi Arabia's security, stability and assets.

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Jordan's local grain harvest hits 15-year-high with 110,000 tonnes received — official

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan has received around 110,000 tonnes of locally produced wheat and barley as the harvest season continues, with total deliveries expected to reach between 130,000 and 140,000 tonnes, the Jordan Silos and Supply General Company (JSSC) had said.

JSSC Director General Imad Tarawneh said that the current intake represents the Kingdom's largest locally produced grain harvest in nearly 15 years. Speaking to Al Mamlaka TV on Friday, Tarawneh attributed the strong yield to favourable rainfall during the agricultural season, expressing hope that similar weather conditions would continue in the coming years.

Jordan's annual consumption of wheat and barley is estimated at about 2 million tonnes, including around 1.1 million tonnes of wheat and between 800,000 and



File photo

Jordan Silos and Supply General Company Director General Imad Tarawneh says that the current intake represents the Kingdom's largest locally produced grain harvest in nearly 15 years

900,000 tonnes of barley, Tarawneh said.

He noted that domestic production accounts for approximately 10 per cent of the country's total grain needs, with this year's ex-

pected harvest enough to cover national consumption for between 25 and 30 days.

Tarawneh stressed that increased local production would not affect

grain imports, saying the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply continues to import wheat and barley to maintain and strengthen the Kingdom's strategic reserves.

Jordan's strategic reserves currently cover at least 10 months of wheat consumption and eight months of barley consumption, he said, adding that the local harvest would further enhance these reserves.

Addressing delays in receiving harvested crops, Tarawneh said the main challenge was a shortage of combine harvesters compared with the size of cultivated areas, particularly in Karak and the southern governorates.

He added that many farmers still use traditional harvesting and bagging methods, which increases the time needed for delivery and unloading.

"Unloading trucks carrying bagged grain takes between one and two hours per vehicle, while bulk grain can be unloaded in less than five minutes," Tarawneh said.

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JT file photo

In this undated photo, shipping containers are seen at Aqaba Port

Kingdom secures duty-free access for garment exports to US — minister

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah on Saturday announced that Jordanian exports of garments and textiles to the United States will be fully exempt from customs duties under the Reciprocal Trade Agreement signed in Washington last week.

The agreement grants a zero per cent tariff on all Jordanian garment and textile products, giving the Kingdom's largest export sector preferential access to the US market, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Under the deal, the United States will also reduce reciprocal tariffs on other Jordanian exports to 10 per cent.

Qudah said the agreement is expected to boost Jordan's exports to the US, particularly garments and textiles, which remained the Kingdom's leading exports to the American market, exceeding JD431 million during the first four months of 2026.

Jordan and the United States signed the Reciprocal Trade Agreement to strengthen bilateral economic relations,

expand market access for exports from both countries and facilitate trade.

Negotiated over nearly a year, the agreement builds on the longstanding economic partnership between the two countries, including the Jordan-US Free Trade Agreement, which entered into force on December 17, 2001.

Jordan will
continue to grant
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under the 2001
Free Trade
Agreement

Jordan and the United States signed last week a Reciprocal Trade Agreement aimed at strengthening bilateral economic relations, expanding market access and enhancing trade and investment between the two countries.

Under the agreement, the United States will

reduce reciprocal customs duties on Jordanian goods to 10 per cent and grant Jordan's garments and textiles sector more preferential access to the US market, according to a government statement.

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

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

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

The two sides also agreed to continue discussions on trade in services and investment with the aim of removing barriers and expanding bilateral trade and investment.

Syria bus crash toll rises to 35, Jordan extends condolences

AMMAN (JT) — The Foreign Ministry has expressed its deepest condolences and sympathy to the government and people of Syria following a deadly traffic accident on the Deir Ez Zor-Damascus highway that left several people dead and others injured.

Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali affirmed in a statement on Saturday Jordan's full solidarity with Syria during the difficult time, extending the Kingdom's support to the government and people of the country.

Majali offered sincere condolences to the families of the victims and

wished a swift recovery to those injured in the accident.

Syrian state media said at least 35 people were killed on Saturday when two buses collided in the central-eastern region of the country.

State television reported the death of 35 people from a collision of two passenger buses on the Damascus-Deir Ezzor road between the Sukhna and Palmyra areas, while the interior ministry said the crash was between "a bus carrying a number of internal security forces personnel and a civilian bus".



sana

Aqaba Marine Reserve inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Saturday celebrated the inscription of the Aqaba Marine Reserve on the UNESCO World Heritage List, following official adoption by the World Heritage Committee during its 48th session held in Busan, Korea.

The reserve was inscribed under World Heritage natural criteria nine and ten in recognition of its exceptional ecological processes, unique marine biodiversity, and globally significant contribution to protecting threatened marine species and ecosystems, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) announced in a statement on Saturday.

This inscription represents international recognition of one of the most critical marine ecosystems in the northern Red Sea.

It also highlights the global importance of the Gulf of Aqaba's coral reefs, which exhibit high climate resilience due to their tolerance to rising sea temperatures, giving them growing scientific and environmental significance amid global climate challenges.

The ASEZA noted that this national milestone reflects ongoing efforts driven by the directives of His Majesty King Abdullah, with direct follow-up from HRH Crown Prince Hussein, placing the establishment and protection of the Aqaba Marine Reserve among the Kingdom's top environmental priorities.

It also crowns years



Jordan on Saturday celebrates the inscription of the Aqaba Marine Reserve on the UNESCO World Heritage List, following official adoption by the World Heritage Committee during its 48th session held in Busan, Korea

File photo

of dedicated work by the government, the ASEZA, national institutions, researchers, local communities, and conservation partners.

The ASEZA Chief Commissioner Shadi Majali said that the inscription is a source of national pride and underscores Jordan's commitment to safeguarding a globally vital marine ecosystem for future generations.

Located at the northernmost point of the Red Sea, the reserve protects shallow and mesophotic coral reefs, associated habitats and seagrass meadows.

It hosts over 150 species of hard corals, more than 500 fish species, and nearly 1,000 mollusk species, alongside numerous endemic, rare and endangered species, making it one of the most biodiverse marine areas regionally and globally.

Majali emphasised that this achievement marks the beginning of a long-term commitment to preserving this global natural treasure.

He reiterated Jordan's full adherence to the World Heritage Convention and its intention to implement the committee's recommendations by enhancing the reserve's legal and administrative framework, advancing scientific research, supporting environmental monitoring, managing visitor traffic sustainably and involving local communities in protection efforts.

This inscription represents international recognition of one of the most critical marine ecosystems in the northern Red Sea

Looking ahead, focus will shift towards executing the second Integrated Management Plan for the Aqaba Marine Reserve (2027–2030), alongside expanding monitoring programmes that track water quality, pollution, desalination discharge, sea surface temperature, salinity, turbidity, sedimentation, underwater light intensity, and noise pollution to ensure long-term preservation.

Majali welcomed the World Heritage Committee's emphasis on boosting regional cooperation, adding that Jordan will continue working with international and regional partners to safeguard the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea, while exploring opportunities to protect transboundary marine ecosystems.

He expressed the Kingdom's gratitude to the World Heritage Committee, UNESCO, the World Heritage Centre, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Korea for hosting the 48th session, and all experts involved in preparing the nomination portfolio, reiterating the Kingdom's commitment to protecting the reserve as a national legacy and global natural asset.

JIEC, Morocco's MedZ sign agreement to boost industrial estate cooperation

AMMAN (JT)— The Jordan Industrial Estates Corporation (JIEC) signed a twinning agreement in Rabat on Saturday with "MedZ", a subsidiary of Morocco's Caisse de Dépôt et de Gestion (CDG) Group, to enhance cooperation and exchange expertise in managing and developing industrial estates.

The agreement builds upon earlier discussions and reciprocal visits, establishing a baseline for joint collaboration in industrial estate development, marketing and investment promotion, JIEC and MedZ said in a joint statement cited by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Both Jordan and Morocco offer similar expertise in industrial development alongside strategic geographical advantages, with Jordan acting as an investment gateway to the East and Morocco serving as a gateway to the West.

JIEC Chairman Obaid Yaseen commended Morocco's experience in developing and preparing industrial estates, emphasising JIEC's keen-



The Jordan Industrial Estates Corporation signs a twinning agreement in Rabat on Saturday with Morocco's MedZ to enhance cooperation and exchange expertise in managing and developing industrial estates

Petra photo

ness to leverage this expertise, particularly as the company rolls out its transformation strategy to evolve from an industrial real estate developer into an integrated system developer covering logistics, sustainability, governance and innovation.

JIEC Director-General Oday Obeidat noted that the agreement will enable JIEC to utilise the best Moroccan practices in investment promotion, investor attraction, supply chain management and digital service delivery.

General Manager of MedZ Marouane Abdelati said that the agreement lays the groundwork for

institutional cooperation following joint field visits and discussions on global shifts in the industrial estate sector.

Under the agreement, both sides agreed to establish a framework for cooperation across all stages of industrial estate development, share the best practices in attracting investment, and enhance industrial and logistical service offerings for investors.

The agreement also focuses on exchanging expertise in sustainability, innovation, and digital transformation, including plans to create an investor networking platform to foster institutional sustainability and build value-chain logistics.

The two sides will also organise joint workshops, expert exchanges and seminars.

This agreement builds on a previous memorandum of understanding signed between JIEC and Morocco's CDG Group to boost technical and operational ties, focusing on marketing, training, governance and institutional evaluation mechanisms.



Jordan and the United Arab Emirates sign a memorandum of understanding to establish a joint committee for consular affairs

Petra photo

Jordan, UAE sign MoU to establish joint consular committee

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan and the United Arab Emirates have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish a joint committee for consular affairs.

The move aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation and improving consular services for citizens of both countries, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The agreement was signed at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Abu Dhabi by Jordanian Ambassador to the UAE Majed Oatarneh and UAE Assistant Undersecretary for Consular Affairs Faisal Lutfi.

The signing ceremony was attended by Jordanian Consul General in Dubai and the Northern Emirates Omar Otoum, Petra said.

The MoU reflects the strong ties and close partnership between Jordan and the UAE, underscoring the two countries' shared commitment to strengthening cooperation in the consular sector and enhancing services provided to their citizens.

Mexico showcases cultural diversity through traditional costume exhibition at Jerash Festival

AMMAN (JT) — The Mexican embassy in Jordan has opened the exhibition "Traditional Customs of Mexico" at the Diplomatic Pavilion of the 40th edition of the Jerash International Festival for Culture and Arts.

The showcase featured attire from eight Mexican states — Chihuahua, Quintana Roo, Oaxaca, Jalisco, Chiapas, Guerrero, Puebla and Veracruz — highlighting the country's cultural diversity and the history, craftsmanship and traditions preserved by its communities, according to an embassy statement.

The opening attracted "great" interest from Jordanian and international visitors, who explored an authentic expression of Mexico's cultural heritage.

Through textiles, embroidery, colours, and distinctive designs, visitors had the opportunity to discover the identity of different regions of Mexico, including indigenous traditions such as



The Mexican embassy in Jordan opens the exhibition 'Traditional Customs of Mexico' at the Diplomatic Pavilion of the 40th edition of the Jerash International Festival for Culture and Arts

Mexican embassy photo

those of the Rarámuri people of Chihuahua and the Maya heritage of Quintana Roo.

"Traditional costumes are more than garments; they are living expressions of history, identity and community. Through this exhibition, we were pleased to bring Mexico closer to the Jordanian public and share the richness of our cultural heritage," said Ambassador Jacob Prado.

Through its participation in the Jerash International Festival, the embassy continues to promote cultural exchange and share Mexico's heritage with audiences in Jordan.

The "Traditional Customs of Mexico" exhibition will be open to visitors from July 23 to 25, from 7:00 to 11:00pm, the statement added.

GAM to open two new walkways to expand pedestrian, sports spaces

AMMAN (JT) — The Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) plans to open two new walkways in the north and south of the capital soon as part of its strategy to expand pedestrian and sports spaces, GAM Construction Department Director Hani Marashdeh said on Friday.

Marashdeh told Al Mamlaka TV that the project aims to enhance the quality of life for Amman residents by providing safe outdoor environments for walking and cycling, both along green corridors and within public parks.

He noted that the Sixty Street walkway, opened in 2025, stretches over 500 metres and features two separate lanes for walking and cycling designed according to safety and usability standards.

Regarding the Abdoun Corridor walkway, Marashdeh emphasised that it is fully separated from the main road, buffered by green spaces from traffic and nearby residential areas, and equipped with



The Greater Amman Municipality plans to open two new walkways in the north and south of the capital soon as part of its strategy to expand pedestrian and sports spaces

GAM photo

dedicated parking lots to ensure pedestrian safety.

Addressing complaints about vehicles parking in neighbouring residential streets, Marashdeh said that the provided parking spaces are sufficient, attributing the issue to non-compliance by some visitors.

He added that GAM observed misuse of the walkways, such as using them for picnics and gatherings, noting that public parks across the capital are specifically designated for such activities.

Marashdeh highlighted that GAM recently opened several walkways, including the Al Rehab Street walkway six months ago and another inside the Al Nashama Park, stressing that work continues on new projects to expand walkways across the capital.

FM receives phone call from Moroccan counterpart

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi on Friday received a telephone call from Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco Nasser Bourita.

During the call, the two ministers discussed the dangerous escalation in Jerusalem and its holy sites resulting from illegal and provocative Israeli measures aimed at altering the historic and legal status quo in the holy city.

They emphasised joint efforts to address these actions, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The phone call falls within the framework of ongoing coordination between the two kingdoms regarding Jerusalem and its holy sites, drawing from the historic Hashemite Custodianship over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem exercised by His Majesty King Abdullah and His Majesty King Mohammed VI's chairmanship of the Al Quds Committee.



Petra photo

Safadi and Bourita reaffirmed Jordan's and Morocco's strong condemnation of incursions into the Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif by Israeli ministers, members of the Knesset and groups of extremist settlers under the protection of Israeli forces.

They also denounced systematic violations against the holy sanctuary and ongoing assaults on unarmed worshippers within its courtyards.

The two ministers rejected all attempts to undermine the historic

and legal status quo in Jerusalem and its holy sites, describing them as "flagrant" violations of international law and human values.

They stressed that the entire 144 dunnum Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif complex is an exclusive place of worship for Muslims, emphasising that the Jerusalem Waqf and Al Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department, under the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, is the sole legal authority managing all affairs of the mosque and regulating entry to it.

Jordan's airspace remains safe, flights operating normally — CARC

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's airspace remains safe and air traffic is operating normally without restrictions or disruptions, the Civil Aviation Regulatory commission (CARC) said on Saturday.

CARC Chief Commissioner Daifallah Farajat said that recent adjustments to the schedules of some flights were the result of operational conditions and precautionary measures adopted by authorities in destination countries, rather than any restrictions or procedures at Jordanian airports.

He said that all decisions regarding the operation of Jordanian flights are subject to regular reviews conducted in coordination with the relevant authorities to ensure the safety and continuity of air travel.

Providing the latest operational updates for Gulf destinations, Farajat said that Kuwait has temporarily suspended flights as a precautionary measure based on



JT file

CARC Chief Commissioner Daifallah Farajat says on Saturday that Jordan's airspace remains safe and air traffic is operating normally without restrictions or disruptions

the current security assessment, making it the only destination currently affected.

He added that Bahrain has resumed air traffic

after a three-day precautionary suspension, with flights returning to normal operations.

Flights to the United Arab Emirates and Qa-

tar continue to operate according to approved schedules without operational restrictions, he said.

Farajat urged travel-

lers to remain in contact with their airlines and check for any updates to flight schedules before heading to the airport.

Kingdom's agricultural exports rise 14% in H1 2026 — ministry

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian agricultural exports recorded notable growth during the first half of 2026, driven by an increase in shipments of fruits, vegetables and animal products, the Ministry of Agriculture announced on Saturday.

The ministry said that the figures reflect the expanding market access and export presence of Jordanian agricultural produce in international markets, despite persistent challenges, primarily high input, energy, transport and logistics costs, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Cumulative export indicators through the end of June 2026 showed a 14 per cent increase in fruit and vegetable exports compared with the same period in 2025, reaching some 281,700 tonnes.

Vegetable exports rose by 13.1 per cent, while fruit exports grew by 18 per cent.

Several key crops achieved remarkable growth.

In the livestock sector, hatching egg exports increased by 160 per cent to reach nearly 78 mil-



File photo

The Ministry of Agriculture on Saturday says that vegetable and fruit exports rose by 13.1 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively, during the first half of 2026

lion eggs, while table egg exports grew by 71 per cent to approximately 135 million eggs, reflecting the sustained competitiveness of Jordanian animal products in international markets.

Meanwhile, live sheep exports stood at approximately 163,000 head, down from 515,000 head during the same period last year, marking a 68.3 per cent decline.

The ministry noted that this drop resulted from regulatory measures implemented to ensure sufficient local market supply and meet consumer demand, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan and Eid Al Adha.

The ministry stressed that the export surge did not negatively impact domestic consumer prices.

Consumer Price Index data issued by the Department of Statistics showed a decrease in vegetable group prices during the first quarter of 2026 compared with the same period of 2025.

Also, prices for meat and poultry fell by 6.9 per cent despite higher animal product exports.

These outcomes demonstrate the success of government policies

aimed at balancing export promotion with local market stability, ensuring abundant domestic supply while supporting the competitiveness of Jordanian produce abroad, the ministry added.

On economic performance, gross domestic product (GDP) data at constant prices indicated that the agricultural sector recorded the highest growth rate among economic activities in the first three months of 2026.

Sector output rose to some JD608 million, up from JD570 million in the same period of 2025, marking an increase of JD38 million, representing a 6.7 per cent growth rate.

The ministry added that these indicators demonstrate the resilience of Jordan's agricultural sector and its ability to maintain growth despite operational headwinds, reiterating its commitment to supporting local producers, advancing sector sustainability, and boosting agriculture's contribution to food security and the national economy.



Petra photo

Lebanese singer Majida El Roumi on Saturday visits the Princess Taghrid Institute for Development and Training, where she is briefed on the institute's efforts to empower women and girls

Majida El Roumi visits Princess Taghrid Institute to support women's empowerment

AMMAN (JT) — Lebanese singer Majida El Roumi on Saturday visited the Princess Taghrid Institute for Development and Training (PTI), where she was briefed on the institute's efforts to empower women and girls and enhance their opportunities for education, employment and a dignified life.

During the visit, Roumi toured PTI's facilities and viewed its key programmes and projects, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

She also listened to success stories illustrating the institute's impact on beneficiaries' lives and learnt about initiatives aimed at empowering women, supporting girls without family care, and enhancing opportunities for education and vocational training.

PTI Director General Aghadir Jweihan highlighted the institute's more than 15 years of work in serving underprivileged groups, noting that its development programmes and initiatives are designed to build beneficiaries' capacities and promote sustainability.

"The visit reflects the importance of cooperation among various sectors and influential figures in supporting humanitarian and development causes," she said.

Jweihan added that the institute continues to empower individuals and families while working towards a more stable and dignified future.

Roumi expressed appreciation for the humanitarian work of PTI, praising its efforts to serve the community and stressing the importance of supporting initiatives that make a real difference and give beneficiaries hope.

The visit is part of the institute's efforts to enhance community partnerships and raise awareness of humanitarian issues, with the aim of expanding support for its programmes and initiatives.

Jordan condemns terrorist attack targeting police in Pakistan's Khyber Region

AMMAN (JT) — The Foreign Ministry, in a statement, on Friday condemned the terrorist attack that targeted police personnel in the Khyber district of

northwestern Pakistan.

Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali affirmed the Kingdom's full solidarity with the government and people of Pakistan, reiter-

ating Jordan's firm rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism aimed at de-stabilising security and stability.

Majali expressed the

Kingdom's sincere condolences to the Pakistani government, its people and the families of the victims, wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

Army foils drug smuggling attempt using guided balloons in Eastern Military Region — JAF

AMMAN (JT) — The Eastern Military Region on Friday thwarted an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics using guided balloons within its area of responsibility, the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) said.

Border Guard units detected the balloons and took the necessary meas-

ures to bring them down inside Jordanian territory, recovering the narcotics cargo in coordination with security agencies and the Anti-Narcotics Department, JAF said in a statement.

The seized materials were handed over to the relevant authorities for further legal action.



JAF photo

The Eastern Military Region on Friday thwarts an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics using guided balloons within its area of responsibility

STATEMENT

OIC condemns Houthi attacks on Saudi commercial ships in Red Sea

AMMAN (JT) — The General Secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has strongly condemned Houthi attacks on Saudi commercial vessels operating in the Red Sea, calling them a blatant aggression and a grave violation of regional and international maritime security.

In a statement issued on Saturday, cited by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the OIC said that the attacks jeopardise global food and energy supply chains, and pose a direct threat

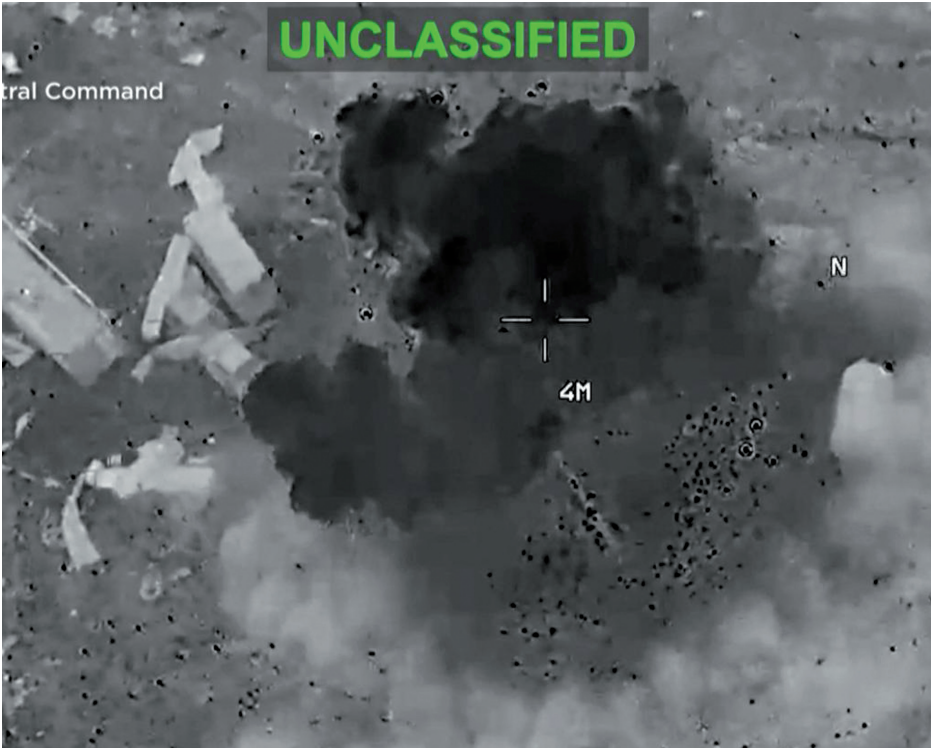


to international peace and security in clear violation of international law.

The Jeddah-based or-

ganisation called on the international community to take firm action to halt these violations, while reaffirming its

full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and supporting all measures taken by Riyadh to protect its security and interests.



AFP photo
This screen grab made on Thursday from handout video footage released by the US Central Command (CENTCOM) on Wednesday shows US forces launching what the military says are precision strikes against Iran for the twelfth consecutive night

Trump weighs harder Iran strikes as conflict widens

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US President Donald Trump said on Friday he had not yet decided whether to launch major strikes on Iran, as the renewed conflict threatened to widen across the region.

Trump said he would hold off on a major operation as Tehran was now getting “serious” in talks with Washington, for now dialing back reports that he was increasingly frustrated with the state of the war and mulling a large-scale military operation against Iran.

“No I haven’t,” Trump told journalists in the Oval Office when asked if he had made a decision on hitting Iran hard.

“Look, we’re talking to them right now. I think they’re getting more and more serious as the days go by, for maybe the obvious reason.”

Trump said Iran had a choice between making a deal or facing a “much higher level” of strikes, after nearly two weeks of US attacks that have left a ceasefire in tatters.

The war that Trump once predicted would last four or five weeks is now nearing its fifth month, and is weighing on the Republican’s approval ratings ahead of crucial US midterm elections in November.

Trump added that he did not know what the “tipping point” would be for a decision, but reiterated that his red line would be if Iran was close to developing a nuclear weapon.

The United States says it is carrying out the strikes to stop Iran clos-

ing the crucial Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has responded with strikes on US bases that have killed four service members.

The Iranian military said Friday it had carried out attacks targeting US military assets in Bahrain, Jordan and Kuwait in retaliation for Washington’s latest strikes.

‘The door to negotiations, once opened, should not be closed, and as long as there is hope for peace, it should not be given up’

Iran’s Revolutionary Guards, meanwhile, said they had targeted an Amazon data centre in Bahrain, according to state media, though neither the US tech giant nor Bahrain has commented on the claim.

There was also no confirmation from the US of any targeting of its facilities or personnel.

In Bahrain, sirens sounded again early Saturday, the interior ministry said.

“Citizens and residents are urged to remain calm and head to the nearest safe place,” the ministry said on X.

‘trust them’ -

In his comments, Trump also insisted Russia and China were not arming Iran, despite reports both were feeding Tehran intelligence to target US forces.

“President Xi (Jinping) said he will not partake, and President (Vladimir) Putin said the same thing... I trust them,” Trump told reporters. “I don’t think they’d want to have me disappointed.”

On the diplomatic front, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met his Iranian counterpart Seyed Abbas Araghchi in Kyrgyzstan.

Wang called for an early resumption of negotiations and the implementation of a memorandum of understanding aimed at easing tensions in the Middle East and the Gulf region, Xinhua reported.

This referred to the preliminary deal aimed at ending the war which has collapsed as the foes fight to break a deadlock over the Strait of Hormuz.

“The door to negotiations, once opened, should not be closed, and as long as there is hope for peace, it should not be given up,” Wang said.

Palestinians bury four killed in West Bank clash with Israeli settlers

RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Palestinians in the occupied West Bank village of Tell on Saturday buried four men killed during a clash with Israeli settlers in the village the previous day, local officials said.

“Families of the four martyrs held a common funeral early this morning, around 1:00 am (22:00 GMT), but the army restricted who could attend and only about 30 people were able to be there,” Walid Zidan, head of the Tell village council, told AFP.

Violence in the Israeli-occupied West Bank has surged since the Gaza war began on October 7, 2023.

On Friday, about 20 Israelis from a nearby settlement entered the village and clashed with residents of Tell defending their property, Zidan told AFP.

A Palestinian villager seized an Israeli’s weapon and shot dead one settler, leading an emergency response team from a nearby settlement to rush to the scene and more gunfire that left four Palestinians and a second Israeli dead, the Israeli military said.

Israeli forces closed gates and checkpoints throughout the West



AFP photo
A Palestinian firefighter and a resident douses a fire after a tent was torched in an attack reportedly by Israeli settlers in the Palestinian village of Sarra, west of the the city of Nablus in the Israeli-occupied West Bank

Bank, severely obstructing movement, AFP journalists reported.

By the time of the funeral, movement was still restricted, and Zidan told AFP that the military was still present in the village Saturday morning, having detained 51 residents for questioning, and released just six.

Ghassan Daghlas, the

governor of the Nablus region, which includes Tell, was able to attend the funeral.

“Daghlas participated in the funeral procession of the martyrs from the village of Tell, amid a large public turnout of residents from the village and across Nablus Governorate,” his office said in a statement.

Saudi-led coalition targeted Houthi military sites — Saudi media

AMMAN (JT) — Saudi-led coalition forces in Yemen carried out air strikes on Friday against Houthi military sites in the western port city of Hodeidah, in response to attacks on Saudi-linked shipping in the Red Sea, the coalition said.

“We carried out a proportionate military response operation against legitimate military targets belonging to the terrorist Houthi militia in Hodeidah governorate,” coalition spokesman Maj. Gen. Turki Al Malki said on X, adding that the operation had ended.

The strikes came after the Iran-backed Houthis threatened to target Saudi vessels that did not comply with their maritime blockade and claimed attacks this week on two Saudi ships. Saudi Arabia confirmed one of the attacks.

A Yemeni security source told AFP that a naval base in Hodeidah and a military camp on Kamaran Island were



AFP photo
A photo taken from the Yemeni coast southwest of the city of Taiz, shows a vessel anchored at Bab Al Mandab Strait, in the Red Sea, on Friday

among the targets.

Yemen’s Houthi-run foreign ministry said on Friday that the strikes marked the start of a phase of “escalation for escalation”.

“Residents reported hearing explosions, including near the port.”

The Houthi-run Al Masirah television said two people were injured — a worker in Hodeidah city and a woman on Kamaran Island.

In a statement, Al-Malki said on Saturday that Hodeidah Port had not been targeted and that all Yemeni ports, including Hodeidah, Ras Issa and Salif, remained open to maritime navigation and were receiving commercial ships.

He also said that no airport had been targeted in order to keep airports open to air traffic, but accused the Houthis of refusing to

allow flight operations at Sanaa International Airport.

The Saudi coalition said it would continue taking necessary measures to protect its ships and Saudi Arabia’s interests, and would respond “uncompromisingly” if the Houthis continued what it described as hostile actions.

The escalation marked the first reported exchange of fire between

tional law — has soared.

Excluding East Jerusalem, more than 500,000 Israelis live in settlements in the West Bank, home to around 3 million Palestinians.

According to an AFP tally based on data from the Palestinian health ministry, Israeli soldiers or settlers have killed at least 1,094 Palestinians.

coalition forces and the Houthis in years, threatening a fragile truce that has largely held since 2022 despite formally expiring.

On Friday, Saudi state media cited a transport authority official as saying the Saudi-owned vessel NCC MASA had been targeted while sailing in the Red Sea, causing minor damage to its hull. The ship resumed its journey, SPA reported.

The latest flare-up comes as disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has increased the importance of the Red Sea route for Saudi Arabia, the world’s top oil exporter.

In April and May, all of Saudi Arabia’s seaborne crude exports departed from its Red Sea port of Yanbu, according to Kpler data. The port accounted for 92 per cent of seaborne crude exports in June and 78 per cent so far in July.

This article was first published in the Riyadh-based Arab News.

At least 16 killed in Ukrainian and Russian strikes as attacks intensify

MOSCOW (AFP) — At least 16 people were killed in Ukrainian and Russian strikes on Saturday, in a deadly fifth summer of war as both sides intensify attacks, with diplomacy at a deadlock.

Ukrainian drones also targeted a Siberian oil refinery and the Urals city of Yekaterinburg, escalating strikes deep inside Russia , which it says are aimed to weaken Russia’s war effort and force the Kremlin to negotiate.

The deaths , in Russian-occupied Ukraine, north-eastern Ukraine and Russian border villages , come as the UN has warned of civilians dying in larger numbers recently in the almost 4.5-year war.

US-led talks on ending the fighting are at a deadlock, with Washington focused on the Middle East and Moscow intent on seizing the whole



AFP photo
Attendees with placards sing the national anthem of Ukraine during a demonstration to protest against Ukraine’s president’s decision to dismiss Ukraine’s former defence minister, in Kyiv on Friday

of eastern Ukraine.

Russian occupational authorities in southern Ukraine said a Ukrainian strike on an Azov Sea village killed eight people, including two children.

Yevgeny Balitsky, the Moscow-installed head of the Russian occupied part of Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia region, said Kyiv had struck “tourist camps” in the seaside village of Kyrylivka.

Balitsky said the strike also wounded 14 people in Kyrylivka , seized by Russia in the first days of its offensive.

Kyiv has not yet commented on the strike. Ukraine has intensi-

fied attacks in the Azov Sea in recent weeks, targeting Russian ships there.

Siberian oil refinery hit

Kyiv, meanwhile, said a Russian drone strike on its private courier service Nova Poshta in the north-eastern city of Sumy killed three drivers.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said it was a “double-tap” drone strike.

Two more people were killed in southern Ukraine, Kyiv said, as Moscow reported two villagers killed in border areas and one more person in the occupied part of Ukraine’s Kherซอน region.

Far from the battlefield, Ukrainian drones struck an oil refinery in Siberia’s Tyumen region, more than 1,000 miles east of Moscow, in one of its furthest hits so far.

Ukraine’s strikes deep inside Russia have caused fuel shortages and disrupted ordinary life in Russia more than at any point during the 4.5-year war.

The governor of the Tyumen region, Alexander Moor, said a Ukrainian drone fell “on the territory” of an oil refinery, causing a fire.

Moscow said Ukraine had launched more than 300 drones into Russian territory, including on regions far from the border.

Zelensky announced Kyiv had also struck a factory in Kirov , hundreds of kilometres east of Moscow , for the second day in a row, a day after a deadly strike there.

“Once again, a plant in Kirov was struck — the one supplying components for the weapons Russia uses to attack our people,” Zelensky said.

‘Unite us against the enemy’

Kirov Governor Alexander Sokolov earlier declared three days of mourning in the region, which has so far not been affected by Ukraine’s strikes.

Sokolov said the final death toll from Friday’s strike was five and not six, after a man believed to be dead was found alive.

He called the dead “heroes of the labour front”, saying the strike would only “unite us against the enemy” and that Russia was fighting “the collective West.”

Further west in the Urals city of Yekaterinburg, Russian online retail giant Wildberries, hit by Ukrainian strikes this week , said it had evacuated its staff.

Yekaterinburg is one of Russia’s biggest cities and lies just before Siberia.

Wildberries said it had “suspended” work at its “logistics facility” in the city after a “timely evacuation”. It said its facility was not damaged.

Ukrainian drones have hit Wildberries warehouses around Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Crimea and southern Russia this week, causing fires and business losses.

The head of the Sverdlovsk region, of which Yekaterinburg is the capital, Denis Pasler, confirmed the city had been attacked.

Pasler said there were no casualties and that the drones had caused a fire at a parking lot.

Russian President Vladimir Putin did not comment on Saturday’s attacks.

Ukraine says its retaliatory strikes are fair retribution for Russia’s daily barrages on Ukrainian cities for more than four years.



Police officers stand guard at the entrance of the Venezuelan embassy in Lima as a group of Venezuelans living in Peru protest against Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's new term in office on January 10, 2019

Peru and Venezuela restore diplomatic ties

LIMA (AFP) — Peru and Venezuela will resume diplomatic relations after severing ties over now-ousted Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro's disputed election win in 2024, both foreign ministries announced Friday.

Caracas had cut bilateral relations in July of that year after Lima recognised Venezuela's opposition leader as the election winner, and not then-incumbent Maduro as electoral authorities had concluded.

In January of this year, however, US forces abducted Maduro, who has since been replaced by interim president and Washington ally Delcy Rodriguez.

Peru and Venezuela's diplomatic relations

were set to resume gradually, both foreign ministries said.

'Venezuela must engage in international relations through Bolivarian diplomacy for peace'

"The Government of the Republic of Peru

and the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are pleased to announce that they have decided to begin a gradual process for the full resumption of bilateral relations," a joint statement read.

"Venezuela must engage in international relations through Bolivarian diplomacy for peace," Rodriguez said on Friday during a military ceremony.

The announcement comes days before Peru's conservative president-elect Keiko Fujimori takes office on July 28.

After Colombia, Peru is the largest recipient of Venezuelan migrants, with more than 1.6 million living in the Andean country.

166,000 evacuated as wildfires spin out of control in France, Spain

LÈGE-CAP-FERRET, France (AFP) — Over 166,000 people were evacuated in France and Spain as unprecedented forest fires raged near Madrid and Bordeaux, a French city flanked by tourist havens and world-renowned vineyards.

French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday asked the army to mobilise to help contain the worst wildfire the country has ever seen after seeking European Union help, as a local official warned the blaze was heading towards Bordeaux.

Some 44,000 people fled the up-market Cap Ferret Peninsula south of Bordeaux on the Atlantic coast, with the only road threatened by flames.

Boats moved hundreds of people away from the fires, while others drove off the peninsula, known for its millionaire residences. More than 50 houses there have been destroyed.

At least 141,000 people have been evacuated in southwestern France and 25,000 in the Madrid region, among them more than 1,200 elderly and disabled people, French and Spanish officials said.

Madrid and Paris have called in EU help as flames whipped up by strong winds and boosted by drought tore through tinder-dry forests.

French Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said France had never before seen such fires on this scale and pledged to "do everything" to protect Bordeaux.

Madrid fire 'at its peak'

Carlos Novillo, the Madrid regional government's emergency management chief, said the wildfire near the capital was "at its peak and is currently beyond the capacity of firefighters to contain".



Local residents rest at the Parc des Expositions de Bordeaux after being evacuated due to wildfires in the region, in Bordeaux, on Saturday

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez will go to the zone early Saturday to visit the emergency coordination centre there.

His French counterpart Sebastian Lecornu called a crisis meeting of key ministers late Friday and said a total of 1,000 military personnel will be deployed to confront the flames, which have already ravaged 22,000 hectares.

In addition, "1.5 million FFP2 masks will be delivered as of tonight to Gironde in order to protect the personnel involved and the populations exposed to smoke that is harmful to health," he said on X.

About 40 of the 1,000 firefighters battling the Cap Ferret blaze have been injured, authorities said. Three firefighters have died in wildfires in France and Italy this week.

Two of the three major wildfires west of Madrid

have merged into one, threatening a suburban town, said officials.

Some European regions have suffered at least two heatwaves since May. And drought blamed on human-fuelled climate change has heightened the threat from wildfires this year, the World Weather Attribution group said in a study published this week.

Emergency shelters were set up in schools and gymnasiums in south-western France for tourists and residents left wondering what they would return to.

In the village of Andernos, Maria Lalanne, a 90-year-old from Lege Cap Ferret, sat on a camp bed in a gym without her glasses or hearing aid, which she had left behind.

"I have heart disease, high blood pressure and problems with my eyes," she said. "I don't know how long all this will last. I

don't know how my house is, whether it has burnt."

EU help

Firefighting reinforcements have been sent from across France and, following appeals for assistance, the European Commission said it was sending four water-bombing planes to Spain and three to France.

The fires burning around Madrid are the worst in the region's history, regional president Isabel Diaz Ayuso said as she announced more evacuations.

Two fires west of Madrid had merged and were heading for the town of Navas del Rey, around 50 kilometres from the capital.

The new blaze was close to combining with another wildfire in neighbouring Castilla y Leon region, officials said.

"The smoke was incredibly thick," Jose Cobos, who

fled his home southwest of Madrid with his wife and three dogs, told Antena 3 television. "You couldn't breathe."

Spain has been hit by a series of wildfires in recent weeks.

The largest active fire was still burning in Guadalajara province, around 100km north of Madrid, where it has scorched about 32,000 hectares.

The French fires at Cap Ferret and around the town of Biscarosse have already burned more than 13,500 hectares while another 6,000 hectares has been lost in the Madrid region.

Italy has also been battling wildfires this week with dozens raging on the island of Sicily in recent days. One of the firefighter victims was killed in Sicily. Two others died tackling a fire near Bordeaux airport.

Irish police find explosive device in car near border

DUBLIN (AFP) — Irish police said on Friday found an "extremely significant" explosive device in a vehicle near the border with Northern Ireland and had charged the woman driver.

The car had been stopped on Wednesday as part of an operation targeting "dissident republican activity", they said in a statement.

The driver, a woman in her 20s, was arrested and officers later also arrested a man in his 40s linked to the probe. He was still in custody in the Dublin area, they added.

"To be clear, what we found was an extremely significant seizure," Garda (Irish police) commissioner Justin Kelly told journalists earlier Friday, confirming it "was

an explosive device".

"Any seizure of this nature is really concerning," said Kelly, suggesting that the case was linked to Irish republican dissidents.

The device "could have potentially caused significant damage", he added. "The interception of an explosive device... has prevented devastation," said Michelle O'Neill, the

first minister of Northern Ireland, posting on X.

"Those responsible have no support and no vision for our island and our communities," added O'Neill, who leads the pro-Irish unity Sinn Fein Party.

Ireland's Justice Minister Jim O'Callaghan said the discovery showed that there was

still a threat from dissident republican elements.

Irish broadcaster RTE reported, citing police sources, that the bomb was being transported to Northern Ireland and was expected to be used as an under-car explosive for an attack.

The Garda told AFP they could not give any further details.

The police also declined to confirm reports that the device was being taken to the border city of Derry.

Northern Ireland was torn apart by civil conflict between the pro-Irish republicans and the pro-UK unionists until the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

The agreement required rival paramili-

taries to decommission their weapons, but dissident factions persist on both sides.

Dissident republican groups are smaller than the Provisional Irish Republican Army, which ended its violent campaign in 2005, but have used improvised explosive devices and mortars in past attacks.

"There's a small minor-

ity of these individuals, I would describe them as radicalised republicans, and this is a threat that we're going to continue to face for some time," said Kelly.

Earlier this year, Northern Irish police blamed dissident republicans for two separate attacks on police stations near Belfast which caused no casualties.

India's education minister resigns, end called to Delhi protests

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned on Saturday after mass youth-led protests demanded his ouster in anger over a string of irregularities in potentially life-changing exams.

Thousands of young people gathered in the capital and in other parts of the country this week, under the banner of the social media-driven Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), demanding an overhaul of the education system and Pradhan's resignation.

"I am pained to see the events of the past 10 days. This is not a matter of personal prestige for me," Pradhan said in a statement posted on social media platform X.

"I have sent my resignation letter to the prime minister," Pradhan said in his letter in Hindi.

The CJP said after Pradhan's resignation that all their demands had been met in another round of talks and that they were calling off the protests that were centred on the Jantar Mantar demonstration site in central New Delhi. Police had fired tear



Cockroach Janta Party supporters celebrate the resignation of India's Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Saturday

gas and charged with batons at protesters as they tried to march from the site to parliament this week.

The government held two rounds of talks with CJP leaders on Monday and Friday but little headway was made initially, with the youth-led movement sticking to their demands.

Pradhan announced his resignation before the third round of talks.

"India's youth power is the real strength of this nation. My resolve is that we will not let the country's youth get trapped in a vicious cycle of confusion," he said.

'We have done it'

Protesters erupted in joy after Pradhan's announcement.

"We have done it," CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke said to a thunderous re-

sponse by hundreds of protesters.

Senior minister JP Nadda, who met the CJP leaders for the third time on Saturday after Pradhan's announcement, said, "we have accepted their demands".

The youth-led movement has evolved to include concerns over unemployment, opportunities for young people and what critics brand as Prime Minister Naren-

dra Modi's increasingly authoritarian style of governance.

The protests became one of the biggest challenges to Hindu nationalist Modi's administration since his 2024 reelection.

The protesters' other demands included compensation for those affected by examination irregularities and for legal cases against protesters to be dropped, CJP spokesman Ashutosh Ranka.

India's opposition leader Rahul Gandhi threw his weight behind protesters in support of their cause, calling Pradhan's resignation a "huge step".

Gandhi called for Modi to "apologise" and respect students and India's future generations.

"Action should be taken against those guilty of violence against students," he said.

Sunil, 27, who came to the protest site for the first time on Saturday to "experience the atmosphere", said it was "truly electrifying, especially after the minister's resignation".

"What the young people did was commendable," he told AFP.

Jordan condemns 'settler terrorism' against Palestinians in West Bank

Continued from page 1

The minister's warning came amid rising violence in the West Bank with the Israeli far-right government threatening of a large-scale military operation in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the establishment of new settler outposts in the occupied West Bank on Friday.

Friday's violence erupted near the settlement of Havat Gilad and the neighbouring Pal-

Jordan condemns Houthi attacks on Saudi vessel, reiterates support for Riyadh

Continued from page 1

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels claimed a missile attack on Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

The Saudi-led coalition hit Houthi military sites threatening Red Sea shipping after the rebels targeted vessels there.

"The terrorist Houthi

military... targeted commercial ships in the Red Sea," Turki Al Maliki said in a statement on X, adding the coalition had "carried out a decisive and strong response" targeting Houthi military sites used to threaten Red Sea shipping and that the "military response is now over".

estinian village of Tell, in territory occupied by Israel since 1967, AFP reported.

Jordan's local grain harvest hits 15-year-high with 110,000 tonnes received — official

Continued from page 1

He also said that delays in deliveries do not affect crop quality, noting that locally produced wheat remains of high quality and can maintain its condition under proper storage, whether stored in bags or in bulk.

Jordan's silos have a total storage capacity of around 750,000 tonnes, while ground storage bunkers can hold approximately 1.25 million tonnes, bringing the Kingdom's overall storage capacity to more than 1.8 million tonnes, according to Tarawneh. Tarawneh said that

the main operational challenge during the harvest season is managing the large volume of deliveries within a limited timeframe, as receiving committees must inspect grain quality to ensure it meets the standards required for government-subsidised purchases.

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Jordan–UK Business Forum

By Raad Mahmoud Al Tal

As global competition to attract investment continues to intensify, investors are no longer driven solely by tax incentives or low production costs. Instead, they increasingly prioritise political and economic stability, clear and predictable public policies, institutional efficiency and seamless access to international markets. Against this backdrop, international business forums have become increasingly important, serving as practical platforms that connect capital with investment opportunities while transforming strong political relations into sustainable economic partnerships.

The Jordan–UK Business Forum, held in London in the presence of His Majesty King Abdullah II, conveyed a clear economic message: Jordan views investment as one of the key engines of economic growth in the years ahead and strengthening partnerships with advanced economies has become a strategic priority rather than merely an exercise in economic diplomacy.

Economic relations between Jordan and the United Kingdom provide a solid foundation for deeper co-operation. Nevertheless, bilateral trade and mutual investment remain well below the potential of both economies. The United Kingdom is one of the world’s leading financial and investment centres, while Jordan offers a strategic geographic location, political and institutional stability, and an extensive network of free trade agreements that provide investors with access to regional and global markets comprising hundreds of millions of consumers.

The true significance of this forum, however, lies not in the number of participating companies or the volume of bilateral meetings, but in the economic message it delivers. Modern economies no longer compete solely to attract capital; they compete to attract knowledge, technology and innovation. These are the essential drivers of productivity, competitiveness and the creation of high-value employment opportunities.

Accordingly, the forum’s emphasis on sectors such as infrastructure, renewable energy, mining, food manufacturing, chemicals, information and communication technology reflects a strategic focus on industries capable of driving long-term economic growth. Investment in these sectors not only expands gross domestic product but also generates substantial multiplier effects throughout supply chains, labor markets, exports, government revenues and technology transfer.

Jordan possesses numerous competitive advantages. Monetary stability, a resilient banking sector, a continuously improving investment framework and a highly qualified workforce all strengthen the country’s position as an attractive investment destination. Nevertheless, these strengths must be complemented by continued improvements in the business environment, faster administrative procedures, lower indirect costs for investors, and stronger partnerships between the public and private sectors.

At the same time, Jordan should prioritise attracting British investment in research and development, the digital economy, artificial intelligence, financial technology and green industries, all of which are expected to shape the global economy over the coming decades. Investment in knowledge-based industries generates significantly greater economic returns than traditional investment by increasing labor productivity, strengthening competitiveness and fostering domestic innovation.

Conversely, Jordan offers British investors considerable value as a regional production and export hub. Through its extensive network of free trade agreements with the United States, the European Union, Arab countries and other international markets, Jordan provides companies with a competitive platform to access multiple markets from a single production base.

Jordan’s economy is entering a new phase that requires a transition from simply attracting investment to building long-term strategic investment partnerships and from competing through incentives alone to competing through productivity, innovation and value creation. If Jordan succeeds in transforming the outcomes of the Jordan–UK Business Forum into productive investments and high-quality projects, it will not only strengthen its economic relationship with the United Kingdom but also establish a new model of economic diplomacy, one that is built on knowledge, technology and value-added activities as the fundamental pillars of sustainable economic growth.

Jordan makes history with UNESCO marine heritage listing

By Yazan K. Mahadin

On July 25, Jordan achieved a historic milestone as the Aqaba Marine Reserve was officially inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List during the 48th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Busan, Republic of Korea. Recognised under UNESCO’s natural criteria (ix) and (x), the Reserve earned global recognition for its outstanding ecological processes, extraordinary marine biodiversity and exceptional contribution to the conservation of one of the world’s most resilient coral reef ecosystems. This inscription marks Jordan’s first natural World Heritage Site, adding a new dimension to the country’s internationally celebrated cultural heritage.

This achievement extends far beyond international recognition. It positions Jordan at the center of one of the defining global challenges of the twenty-first century: Climate change. While coral reefs around the world continue to suffer unprecedented bleaching events caused by rising sea temperatures and ocean acidification, the coral reefs of the northern Red Sea have demonstrated an extraordinary ability to withstand environmental stress. Scientists increasingly regard the reefs of Aqaba as among the most climate-resilient coral ecosystems on Earth, offering valuable insights into the future survival of tropical reefs worldwide.

The Aqaba Marine Reserve is therefore more than a protected area. It is a living laboratory for international scientific research and a beacon of hope in the global effort to understand, protect and restore marine ecosystems. The reserve safeguards hundreds of coral species, over five hundred species of fish, and an extraordinary diversity of marine life that continues to thrive in conditions that threaten reefs elsewhere. At a time when the world is searching for solutions to biodiversity loss and climate adaptation, Jordan now hosts one of the planet’s most significant natural assets.

The UNESCO inscription also carries profound implications for Jordan’s tourism sector. Across the world, World Heritage design

ation is recognised as a symbol of quality, authenticity and long-term conservation. It strengthens international confidence, raises global visibility and attracts travelers seeking meaningful, sustainable and environmentally responsible experiences. Increasingly, today’s visitors are choosing destinations that demonstrate a genuine commitment to protecting nature and preserving cultural identity. The Aqaba Marine Reserve perfectly reflects this global shift toward sustainable tourism.

For Jordan, this recognition presents an opportunity to diversify its tourism economy beyond traditional cultural attractions. Aqaba can now establish itself as a premier international destination for marine ecotourism, diving, underwater photography, scientific expeditions, educational travel and conservation-focused experiences. Universities, research institutions, environmental organisations, and climate scientists from around the world are likely to view the reserve as an increasingly important destination for collaboration and discovery. Such partnerships generate knowledge, investment, employment opportunities and long-term economic benefits while reinforcing Jordan’s reputation as a responsible steward of global heritage.

Perhaps the greatest opportunity lies in integrating this achievement into Jordan’s broader tourism vision through the Golden Triangle — the internationally renowned destinations of Aqaba, Petra and Wadi Rum. Few countries possess such an extraordinary concentration of globally significant heritage within such a compact geographical area. Within only a few hours, visitors can dive among some of the world’s most climate-resilient coral reefs, stand before the timeless grandeur of Petra and experience the breathtaking desert landscapes of Wadi Rum. Together, these destinations offer an unparalleled journey through sea, stone and desert, where nature, culture, history and adventure come together in one seamless experience.

The Golden Triangle now tells a more compelling story than ever before. Aqaba represents the re-

silience of nature. Petra embodies the resilience of human civilisation. Wadi Rum showcases the dramatic geological forces that have shaped the landscape over millions of years. Together, they present Jordan as a destination where natural heritage and cultural heritage complement one another, creating a tourism model that is both economically powerful and environmentally sustainable.

Jordan has shown that conservation and economic development are not competing priorities but complementary objectives

Petra and Aqaba, in particular, share a remarkable narrative despite representing different forms of heritage. Petra stands as one of humanity’s greatest achievements in adapting to an arid environment through sophisticated engineering, water management and urban planning. Aqaba demonstrates how nature itself has adapted to environmental extremes, preserving coral reefs that continue to flourish despite rising sea temperatures. One tells the story of human resilience; the other tells the story of ecological resilience. Together, they position Jordan as a global symbol of adaptation, innovation, and coexistence between people and nature.

This achievement also reinforces Jordan’s international leadership in heritage conservation. With six UNESCO World Heritage properties — five cultural and now one natural — the Kingdom demonstrates that protecting heritage

is not limited to preserving monuments and archaeological sites. It extends equally to safeguarding ecosystems, biodiversity and the natural landscapes upon which future generations will depend. The inscription of the Aqaba Marine Reserve broadens Jordan’s global identity from a country renowned for its ancient civilisations to one that also contributes meaningfully to international environmental conservation.

Yet UNESCO inscription is not the conclusion of the journey — it is the beginning of a greater responsibility. Global recognition brings with it an obligation to strengthen conservation efforts, enhance scientific monitoring, carefully manage tourism growth, regulate coastal development and ensure that local communities remain active partners in protecting this remarkable marine environment. Sustainable management must remain the foundation upon which future tourism development is built.

Jordan has shown that conservation and economic development are not competing priorities but complementary objectives. Protecting nature creates opportunities for scientific innovation, sustainable investment, local employment and responsible tourism. The Aqaba Marine Reserve now stands as a global example of how environmental stewardship can generate lasting social and economic value while preserving irreplaceable natural heritage.

As the world confronts the realities of climate change, biodiversity loss and increasing environmental uncertainty, Jordan offers a powerful message of optimism. The inscription of the Aqaba Marine Reserve is more than a national achievement — it is a contribution to humanity’s shared future. Together with Petra and Wadi Rum, it establishes the Golden Triangle as one of the world’s most remarkable destinations, where ancient civilisations, resilient ecosystems and extraordinary landscapes unite to tell a story of hope, sustainability, and the enduring relationship between people and the natural world.

Yazan K. Mahadin is commissioner for Petra Archeological park and Tourism -PDTRA

Energy security from Hormuz to Bab Al Mandab

By Hasan Dajah

The ongoing conflict surrounding the Straits of Hormuz and Bab Al Mandab has evolved beyond a limited military confrontation into a geopolitical crisis affecting the structure of the global economy, energy security and international trade. Together, these two straits serve as the twin pillars of energy transit from the Arabian Gulf: Hormuz acts as a primary outlet for oil and gas exports, while Bab Al Mandab links these flows to the Red Sea, the Suez Canal and European markets. Consequently, their simultaneous disruption would trap global trade in a “geopolitical pincer”, constricting the flow of energy and goods between Asia and Europe.

The strategic significance of the Strait of Hormuz stems from the fact that approximately one-quarter of global seaborne oil trade—along with over 110 billion cubic metres of liquefied natural gas (LNG), representing nearly one-fifth of the global trade in that commodity—is projected to pass through it in 2025. Furthermore, around 80 per cent of the oil transiting the strait is destined for Asia, whereas the capacity of available alternative routes ranges only between 3.5 and 5.5 million barrels per day. Its importance extends beyond energy; over 30 per cent of global urea trade, as well as significant quantities of ammonia and phosphates pass through the strait, directly linking its security to global food security.

As for the Bab Al Mandab Strait, it controls access to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal and serves as the natural outlet for transporting Saudi oil—diverted via the East-West Pipeline—to Red Sea ports. Therefore, the expansion of the conflict to this area undermines the effectiveness of one of the most critical alternatives to the Strait of Hormuz. Recent threats and attacks have prompted tankers to alter their routes and sail around the Cape of Good Hope — a longer, costlier journey — while Brent crude has surpassed the \$100

mark, with some physical cargoes approaching \$110 per barrel.

Economically, the crisis impacts consumers not merely through oil prices, but via a complex chain involving rising war-risk insurance premiums, tanker charter rates, fuel costs, extended delivery times, and storage and port fees. These costs filter through to the prices of electricity, transport, raw materials, fertilisers, food and manufactured goods. Furthermore, this new wave of inflation compels central banks to maintain high interest rates, thereby slowing investment and growth while increasing debt-servicing costs — particularly for energy-importing developing nations. Electricity prices in the European Union and Japan surged by over 30 per cent year-on-year during the second quarter of 2026, driven by the LNG crisis.

However, rising oil prices do not guarantee gains for all producing nations. While countries capable of shipping exports via secure routes may reap additional revenue, producers reliant on the Strait of Hormuz could face production cuts due to full storage tanks and the inability to load tankers, alongside refinery shutdowns and escalating costs for insurance, maintenance and military protection.

Some nations are particularly vulnerable due to the lack of alternative maritime routes for their massive LNG exports. Conversely, producers outside the region—such as the United States, Norway and certain African states—may temporarily benefit from increased demand, though they remain exposed to the risks of a global economic slowdown and contracting consumption. Politically, the crisis is reshaping the distribution of influence in the energy market, compelling China, India, Japan and South Korea to diversify suppliers, increase stockpiles, and link energy security to their diplomatic and naval presence.

It also provides major powers with a pretext to expand their military footprint in Arab waters, potentially transforming the protection of navigation into a tool for long-term influence. Meanwhile,

non-oil Arab economies face a compounded burden, manifested in soaring import bills, a decline in activity across the Suez Canal, ports and the tourism sector, and rising costs for food, transportation and government subsidies.

Addressing this dilemma requires a phased strategy based on five interconnected tracks:

It must be emphasised that the Strait of Hormuz remained open to international navigation and faced no closure or major disruption until the outbreak of the US-Israeli war against Iran. Consequently, the navigation crisis is not an isolated event but a direct result of the military confrontation expanding to maritime corridors and energy facilities. The United States and Israel bear primary responsibility for halting the war and finding a political solution that reopens the Strait and ensures freedom of navigation. Based on this, the following approach is proposed:

Halting US-Israeli military operations against Iran as the key step toward reopening the Strait of Hormuz, and launching direct or indirect negotiations—sponsored by the United Nations and Gulf states—that include mutual guarantees against targeting ships, oil facilities and ports.

Obliging the parties responsible for expanding the war to address its consequences, rather than merely demanding that regional states protect navigation or shoulder the costs of insurance and energy. Furthermore, the use of “protecting the straits” as a pretext to entrench a permanent foreign military presence or impose security arrangements that infringe upon the sovereignty of littoral states must be rejected.

Establishing a joint international system for maritime corridor security that is defensive in nature—encompassing early warning, surveillance, information sharing, rescue operations and mine countermeasures—provided that it does not become a party to the war or a tool serving the agenda of any international power.

Precautionary measures to address the crisis include reviving

the “Tapline” (Trans-Arabian Pipeline) route—extending through Jordan, Syria and Lebanon to Europe—expanding networks that bypass the straits, and enhancing coastal storage and export capabilities. However, these proposals remain mere stopgaps that do not obviate the need to end the war and restore navigation to its normal course.

This entails coordinating the temporary release of oil reserves and establishing an international and regional fund to cover shipping risks and assist affected nations—with major contributions from the powers whose military operations caused the disruption to navigation and the surge in energy prices.

It also requires protecting communities from economic fallout through targeted financial support, securing stockpiles of fuel, wheat and fertilisers, and accelerating investment in renewable energy and electrical grid interconnections—thereby reducing the future capacity of wars to hold the global economy hostage.

Consequently, the solution must not be reduced to military escorts for ships or the militarisation of the strait; as such, measures address the symptom while ignoring the root cause. Reopening the Strait of Hormuz begins with halting the US-Israeli war on Iran, followed by establishing political and security arrangements that guarantee freedom of navigation and prevent the peoples of the region—and the world—from bearing the cost of a war they played no part in instigating.

Protecting the Straits of Hormuz and Bab Al Mandab is not solely the concern of the littoral states; it is an international responsibility linked to global economic stability. Yet, a sustainable solution lies not in militarising these straits, but in insulating them from conflicts, diversifying energy routes, and building a security and economic framework that prevents any party from weaponising maritime geography to hold the world to ransom.

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Petra photo

The Amman Chamber of Commerce and West London Chambers of Commerce sign an MoU to expand direct communication channels between Jordanian and British companies to foster new joint ventures and partnerships

ACC, West London Chambers of Commerce sign MoU to boost trade, investment cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — The Amman Chamber of Commerce (ACC) and West London Chambers of Commerce have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance economic, trade, and investment cooperation between the Jordanian and British business communities.

The MoU aims to expand direct communication channels between Jordanian and British companies to foster new joint ventures and partnerships, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported on Saturday.

The agreement was signed in London on the sidelines of the Jordanian-British Business Forum by ACC Chairman Khalil Hajj Tawfiq and West London Chambers Chief Executive Alan Rides, in the presence of Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah and Minister of Investment Tariq Abu Ghazaleh.

Hajj Tawfiq noted that the signing of the agreement within the framework of the forum, which was attended by His Majesty King Abdullah, reflects keenness to translate distinguished Jordanian-British relations into practical economic partnerships and leverage available opportunities to boost bilateral trade and investment.

He emphasised that the ACC views the MoU not as a mere protocol agreement, but as an institutional work plan designed to yield tangible

results through increased corporate communication, trade delegation exchanges, B2B meetings, and expanding access for Jordanian goods and services in the British market.

The agreement also stipulates the exchange of market, trade, investment, and economic information...

Highlighting Jordan's competitive advantages, modernised business environment and strategic position as a gateway for British companies seeking access to regional markets, Hajj Tawfiq stressed the importance of capitalising on the momentum generated by King Abdullah's meetings with British investors to translate discussions into actionable projects.

Under the MoU, the two sides will cooperate to establish a joint business council representing various economic sectors.

The council will serve

as a permanent platform to connect Jordanian and British companies, identify priority sectors and follow up on joint projects to build sustainable economic partnerships.

For his part, Rides said that signing the MoU with the ACC marks an important step towards enhancing institutional relations between the business communities of West London and Jordan, highlighting broad opportunities for cooperation in trade, investment, services and technology.

Rides expressed the West London Chambers' commitment to working with the ACC to implement the MoU's provisions, primarily establishing the joint business council, organising trade delegations and direct business matchmakings, exchanging expertise, and developing joint capacity-building and training programmes.

The agreement also stipulates the exchange of market, trade, investment and economic information, as well as relevant legislation and policy data, to help businesses on both sides better identify opportunities.

West London Chambers of Commerce is a key institution representing and supporting the business community in West London, primarily covering Hounslow, Ealing, and Hammer-smith & Fulham, with historical roots dating back to 1908.

Jordan records strongest FDI growth since 2017 as inflows rise 25% in 2025 — minister

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan has recorded its highest annual growth in foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows since 2017, with investment increasing by 25 per cent in 2025, Minister of Investment Tariq Abu Ghazaleh said.

Speaking to Al Arabiya news channel on the sidelines of the Jordanian-British Business Forum in London, Abu Ghazaleh said the Kingdom continues to attract new businesses, with the number of companies establishing or relocating operations to Jordan rising readily each month.

He attributed the growing investor confidence to Jordan's security and stability, as well as economic opportunities emerging across the region, particularly in Syria and Iraq, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Abu Ghazaleh said that the government has updated its investment map to include 100 opportunities spanning infrastructure, logistics, transport and technology.

He highlighted the National Railway Project as a key component of Jordan's broader vision to connect with regional transport networks, while capitalising on the Kingdom's skilled workforce and investment-friendly legislation in the technology sector.



File photo

Minister of Investment Tariq Abu Ghazaleh says that Jordan has recorded its highest annual growth in foreign direct investment inflows since 2017, with investment increasing by 25 per cent in 2025

The minister said that Jordan is also strengthening partnerships between local and foreign private sector companies to help mitigate investment risks.

He added that the Kingdom aims to position itself as a regional hub for investments directed towards Syria, supported by a robust banking sector, the development of the Jaber

border crossing [with Syria] and increasing trade flows.

Abu Ghazaleh said government reforms, improvements to the business environment, updated legislation and support for both domestic and international investors have contributed to raising economic growth from 2.7 per cent to 3 per cent under the Economic Moderni-

sation Vision.

On Jordan's economic ties with the United Kingdom, the minister said that several British companies have expressed interest in investing in the Kingdom's tourism and financial services sectors.

He added that the Jordanian delegation visited the London Stock Exchange to explore opportunities for

Jordanian companies and enhance investor confidence.

Abu Ghazaleh also announced that the Ministry of Investment plans to target European markets through a Jordanian-European Investment Conference scheduled for November, where new investment opportunities will be unveiled and a number of agreements signed.

London Stock Exchange welcomes Jordanian business delegation

AMMAN — The London Stock Exchange on Thursday welcomed a Jordanian delegation led by Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh during a visit to the United Kingdom for the Jordan-UK Business Forum.

According to a statement from the London Stock Exchange, the forum brings together Jordanian and British companies across multi sectors including healthcare and pharmaceuticals, information and communications technology, engineering and electronics, film and entertainment, tourism, medical tourism, infrastructure and textiles and apparel to explore opportunities for strategic partnerships, trade, investment and long-term economic cooperation.



Photo Courtesy of Ministry of Investment

The London Stock Exchange welcomes a Jordanian delegation led by Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh during a visit to the United Kingdom for the Jordan-UK Business Forum

Addressing participants, Abu Ghazaleh said Jordan should be viewed not simply as a domestic market but as a strategic gateway to the wider Middle East.

"Jordan is not a small market—it is the region's gateway. When you invest

in Jordan, you are not investing in one economy; you are connecting to the wider Middle East," he said. "Our strategic location provides investors with a stable, secure base, which is beneficial for investors weighing regional

exposure against regional risk."

Jordan's strategic location at the crossroads of the Gulf, Iraq, Syria and North Africa enables businesses to access markets representing hundreds of millions of consumers. Officials said the Kingdom offers investors preferential trade agreements, established logistics corridors and industrial zones that extend beyond its borders, positioning Jordan as a regional hub for trade and investment, a statement from the London Stock Exchange said.

About Jordan

According to the statement, Jordan's economy is showing its resiliency in real time. Even amid regional headwinds, FDI

grew 25 per cent in 2025, exports were up 11 per cent and average daily trading on the Amman Stock Exchange was up 176 per cent.

"These results are the product of a conscious, forward-looking investment agenda built on openness, transparency, predictability, competitiveness and long-term economic stability. The Kingdom has pursued significant policy reforms, established a clear investment roadmap, and introduced lucrative incentive packages. Continuing to widen opportunities for the private sector, strengthen regulatory framework, and building the conditions for sustainable, diversified investment across priority sectors," the statement said.

Middle East escalation triggers oil price surge

TEHRAN (AFP) — The United States launched fresh strikes on Iran recently after Tehran-backed Houthi rebels attacked oil tankers in the Red Sea, marking an escalation that pushed crude prices past \$100 a barrel.

The US military insisted that the Strait of Hormuz — through which one fifth of the world's oil passed before the war — was "open for transit" after Iran pressed on with attacks on tankers using the route in a bid to strongarm them into paying for safe passage.

But the Houthis opened a new front in the war this week when they attacked vessels in the Red Sea, intensifying fears over world crude supplies.

The international oil benchmark Brent crude surged past \$100 a barrel on Thursday for the first time since May, up eight percent, as world leaders expressed alarm over the rebels' attacks.



AFP file photo

The price per liter of unleaded gasoline and diesel is displayed in front a Shell gas station in Wrotham Heath, south east England, May 7

cendary precedent".

The warning came as the US military said it had completed its thirteenth night in a row of attacks on Iranian military targets to "hold Iran accountable and diminish threats from the

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to commercial shipping".

Iranian state media reported that US missiles hit the southwestern city of Ahvaz, and explosions were heard in nearby Omidiyeh, as well as the

port city of Bandar Abbas and the island of Qeshm on the Strait of Hormuz.

'Out of control'

Trump said the United States would hold Iran responsible for the Houthis' actions and warned both would soon receive a "major military punishment".

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned against further escalation.

"The situation is getting out of control. It is teetering on the edge of the unimaginable," he told a meeting of the UN Security Council.

"One crisis feeds another. One escalation triggers the next."

European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde warned "the energy shock could intensify further" and push up inflation, feeding speculation about a September eurozone interest rate hike.

German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius warned of "dire consequences" for oil-importing economies and said "nothing — absolutely nothing — suggests that a ceasefire, let alone peace, could be reached".

The war resumed this month after a ceasefire that had lasted just a few weeks, throwing the region back into chaos as Iran and the United States battled for control of the Strait of Hormuz.

Yemen's Houthis joined the conflict this week, declaring a blockade of Saudi ports and claiming attacks on tankers.

"The armed forces' retaliatory attacks will continue as long as the US attacks on the country's infrastructure and coastal areas continue," Iran's army spokesperson Mohammad Akraminia said, according to state television.

US allies Jordan and Kuwait reported intercepting strikes as Iran's

military and Revolutionary Guards claimed to be targeting American assets in both countries.

Houthis step in

While Trump has returned to war and his fierce rhetoric, the conflict is proving increasingly unpopular at home.

With midterm elections looming in November, the US House of Representatives passed a symbolic vote, backed by opposition Democrats and a handful of Republicans, calling for the president to halt the war. Kuwait, meanwhile, reported a drone attack against one of its border posts with Iraq, and said later that its air defences were "intercepting hostile missile and drone attacks following the wrongful Iranian aggression".

The Houthis said Wednesday they had carried out missile and drone strikes on two Saudi tankers in the Red

Sea, the Encelia and the Layla, with Riyadh confirming a vessel had been hit.

The new threat in the Red Sea endangers top oil producer Riyadh's ability to bypass the strait for some crude exports.

On the sidelines of a Southeast Asian summit in Manila, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the Houthis had been "suckered" into attacking Red Sea shipping by Iran.

"The Houthis largely were smart and stayed out of all this throughout the conflict, but they now apparently have gotten themselves suckered into this, going after Saudi Arabia and their ships," Rubio said.

Oman, a key mediator in the longstanding war between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia, said it was working to resume talks between the two sides, as it voiced "great concern" at the situation in the Red Sea.

RUGBY

Varane concussions motivate Como to ban heading in academy teams

PARIS, France (AFP) — Italian Serie A club Como have announced they are banning heading until the under-11 team after consultation from board member the former France star Raphael Varane. Varane retired in 2024 after a glittering career with Les Bleus, Real Madrid and Manchester United but suffered head injuries during his time as a player. Heading will be banned in training and games with throw-ins taken by passing the ball on the floor with feet for youngsters in the under-8, under-9 and under 10 set-ups. "From my experience, when I was 16 I had two big concussions so I was aware of the risk," Varane said in a video posted by Como on Friday. "I had the luck during my career to meet some very specific staff; some medical professionals. I learned a lot from them. I learned a lot from them about the effect of concussion," the 33-year-old added having finished his career with the side based on the famous lake in the Alps. Governing bodies across Europe have introduced similar rules due to a worry about brain development. England's FA is phasing out all heading in youth football up to under-11 level and in France it is prohibited until under-10. "At a young age when everything is developing it's really important to delay the amount of heading and the amount of impact there is," Como's head of player and coaches' development said.

ATHLETICS

Lyles wins US 100m title in world-leading 9.79sec

NEW YORK (AFP) — Olympic gold medallist Noah Lyles powered to his third US 100m title in a world-leading 9.79sec on Friday at the US athletics championships. Lyles, trailing at the start, surged over the final 30 metres for a convincing victory over veteran Ronnie Baker, who edged Kenny Bednarek for second. Both were credited with a time of 9.88, with Bednarek taking third. Former world champion Christian Coleman came in fourth in 9.93. "In my head, the distance was already made up," Lyles told broadcaster NBC of the early gap he erased. "Coach said 'put my hand in their pocket, don't let 'em get away.' I saw where Christian was and I said: 'Oh yeah, my hand is all the way in there,' and I just pulled him back and I did what I do," added Lyles. He matched the personal best he set in winning Olympic gold in Paris in 2024 and improved on the previous world leading time this year of 9.82 set by Oblique Seville at the Jamaican championships in June.

‘Amazing’ Pogacar-Del Toro friendship lights up Tour de France

L'ALPE D'HUEZ, France (AFP) — Tadej Pogacar and Isaac Del Toro crossed the Tour de France finish line arm-in-arm on Saturday, highlighting their special friendship.

The UAE Emirates-XRG team-mates then raised their index fingers either side of their racing helmets to replicate Del Toro's signature "bull's horns" celebration.

Del Toro had spent most of the last three weeks helping Pogacar to the brink of a record-equaling fifth Tour crown, and the Slovenian had just returned the favour to ensure the Mexican will finish the race on Sunday in third place overall and with the best young rider's white jersey.

"It really was an epic day, because what Tadej did was simply immense," said UAE team principal Mauro Gianetti.

On what was the toughest stage of this year's Tour with more than 5,000 metres of elevation gain and four monstrous climbs, Pogacar had spent most of the last 60km at the front of a group of overall favourites, helping his teammate defend his position.

"He concentrated more on helping Isaac save his third pace to put him on the podium [in Paris], and the white jersey, rather than going for another stage win himself," Gianetti said.

"It really was a brilliant stage and the friendship between Isaac and Tadej is amazing," he added.

Pogacar had already won five stages during the Tour, but only after first



ATFP photo

This photograph taken on July 27, 2025, shows UAE Team Emirates - XRG team's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey cycling with the pack of riders (peloton) past the Arc de Triomphe on Place Charles de Gaulle

gifting a stage victory to his 22-year-old teammate — on his Tour debut — on the opening weekend in Barcelona.

After that second stage, Pogacar had seemed happier than he was for any of his own stage wins, falling into his teammates arms before waving a Mexican

flag. "We clicked quite quick when he came to the team. We had good energy around each other, good relationship, good humour," said Pogacar.

"Then we did some races together, he was always there for me 100 per cent. "He comes to the Tour,

he could go to Giro, Vuelta, whatever, but he comes here and he's committed to win the biggest goal of the team, to win the yellow.

"He achieved the white jersey and podium, it's just incredible.

"I'm super, super happy for him."

‘Massive respect’

For once, the shoe was on the other foot with Pogacar.

His teammates had done so much work to control stages to set him up for his successes, but they have been diminished this week.

Brandon McNulty had to leave the Tour on Thursday with flu-like symptoms, Adam Yates suffered from stomach problems, Tim Wellens felt unwell and Florian Vermeersch was carrying an injury.

That put a huge amount of strain on Felix Grossschartner and Nils Politt.

When they could no longer keep up on Saturday, Pogacar took over pace-setting duties for Del Toro.

With seventh-placed Spaniard Juan Ayuso in a breakaway five minutes up the road, Pogacar said he had started to worry Del Toro's third place could come under threat.

"So, I committed for Isaac and I realised in the end how really important are the teammates that I have and I must say massive respect to each one of them," said the 27-year-old world champion.

For once he had the chance to feel how hard the job of a teammate is in keeping their leader shielded from the wind.

"I think the cycling world doesn't realise how important is the team and how hard it is for the team that is riding for [the] yellow jersey and then also [the] white jersey.

"Today I realised that they're maybe better than most of the champions and they put everything for the team.

"I cannot explain more how grateful I am for the teammates after today."

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

SpaceX carries out successful Starship test flight, first since going public

NEW YORK (AFP) — SpaceX's Starship on Friday sailed through its first test flight since the company went public.

"Starship is intact, floating in the ocean and transmitting telemetry!" company head Elon Musk said on X.

The ship serenely splashed into the Indian Ocean to wild cheers from SpaceX employees, who were watching live footage from the company's Starbase.

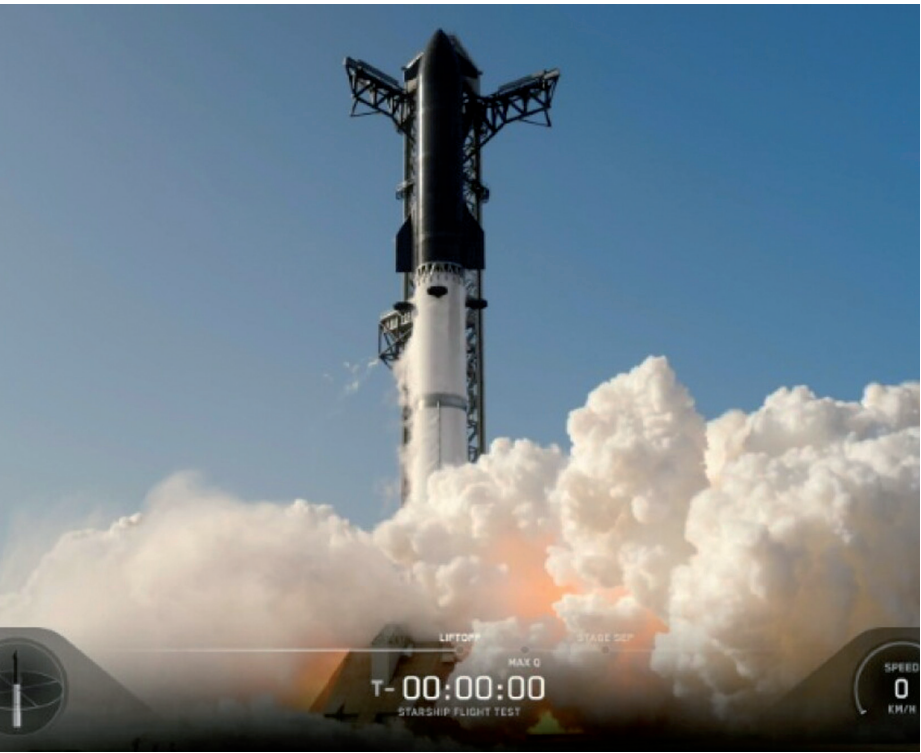
"I'm losing my mind right now," spokesperson Dan Huot said on the livestream. "This is the first time we've put an intact Starship in the water."

"This is a dream scenario for the team that's trying to get this heat shield data."

The flight aims were similar to those of a mostly successful voyage carried out in May, which debuted the latest edition of the powerful Starship, its third-generation model.

The primary goals of this 13th test launch were to once again demonstrate those redesigns in flight, this time without any hiccups.

The upper stage deployed 20 Starlink V3 satellites, a test SpaceX



AFP photo

This still image taken from a SpaceX broadcast shows the SpaceX Starship launching from SpaceX Starbase in Starbase, Texas, on Friday

said "will provide critical data as we prepare to expand our Starlink constellation" of the company's satellite internet service.

The approximately one-hour flight also tested upgrades to the mammoth ship's heat shield.

The company had said after its May test that it

had made "several modifications to hardware and software to address issues seen on the previous flight".

The landing burn of the booster was still a bit harder than the company hoped.

"Just looking at the booster real quick, it didn't look like we lit all 13 engines that we were

planning for that initial land and burn," said Huot.

"We were targeting a softer splash on it, and as you saw, it came in with quite a bit of velocity."

Moon-bound?

A previous attempt at launch was abruptly

scrubbed just as the booster began to ignite, in an automatic stoppage that occurred after some engines did not start.

The launch was then further delayed over weather and visibility concerns.

Friday's flight was the first after Musk's SpaceX went public on Wall Street in June, with a record initial public offering.

The rocket company has rapidly expanded its satellite internet service and voiced lofty ambitions for AI data centres in space.

There's a lot riding on SpaceX's progress: The company is under contract with NASA to produce a modified version of Starship to serve as a lunar landing system.

Sharing an image of the Starship rocket passing the Moon, NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman commented that "pretty clear from this shot that SpaceX knows where we are going!"

"When Starship comes online, its capabilities will be game-changing, not least of which will be ensuring we never give up the Moon again!"



AFP Photo

US singer Chris Brown departs after attending a hearing at Southwark Crown Court in London on Friday

US singer Chris Brown admits new affray charge, avoids UK trial

LONDON (AFP) — American R&B singer Chris Brown on Friday pleaded guilty to a public order offence following an alleged brawl at a London nightclub in 2023.

"Guilty", replied Brown, 37, dressed in a beige suit and dark brown tie, after the charge of affray was put to him as he stood in the dock at Southwark Crown Court in London.

He will now not face trial on several other charges, including attempting to cause grievous bodily harm with intent and possession of an offensive weapon, namely a bottle, in connection with the incident.

Those charges, which he had denied at earlier hearings, will be dropped at a later date, the prosecutor said.

Brown, who had a troubled relationship with singer Rihanna, will now be sentenced on October 26.

The 37-year-old, who has been on £5 million (\$6.7 million) bail, spent nearly a week in jail in May 2025 before being released.

Police had arrested him at a five-star hotel in the north-western UK city of Manchester hours after he reportedly flew in by private jet.

But Judge Tony Baumgartner last year gave him the green light to continue a scheduled tour which had begun in June in Amsterdam.

The charges all relate

to the same alleged incident at Tape, an exclusive private members' club in London's Hanover Square, on February 19, 2023, while Brown was touring in the UK.

The victim was allegedly struck several times with a bottle before being pursued, punched and kicked.

Brown appeared in the dock on Friday with co-defendant Omololu Akinlolu, 40, also a US national.

He had also faced the same assault charges as Brown and also pleaded guilty to affray. Both men will be sentenced on the same date.

Brown was released again on bail ahead of the sentencing hearing.



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