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Risha gas field in the eastern region on the border with Iraq

Risha gas field output expected to surpass Jordan's grid demand by 2029 — minister

AMMAN (JT) — Production from Jordan's Risha gas field is projected to rise to about 418 million cubic feet per day by 2029, surpassing the country's national electricity grid demand, which currently ranges between 330 million and 340 million cubic feet daily, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Saleh Kharabsheh said on Sunday.

Speaking to Al Mamlaka, Kharabsheh said that the ministry is advancing

plans under the Economic Modernisation Vision and national energy security strategy to expand natural gas distribution to industrial centres across the Kingdom within the next three years.

He said that natural gas is being delivered to industrial facilities through direct pipeline connections and Compressed Natural Gas stations, which transport gas by tanker to areas outside major industrial clusters.

Gas supplies have already reached several industrial areas, including Aqaba's Southern Industrial Zone, Ouweira, the Caastal Industrial Cluster, and Hashimiyya, according to the minister.

Kharabsheh added that the ministry is preparing to award a tender and sign an agreement to extend natural gas supplies to the Muwaqqar Industrial Zone and the Ma'an Development Zone.

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PM visits Aqaba, launches gas projects, hails UNESCO listing

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday visited Aqaba, where he toured the Aqaba Marine Reserve following its inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List, inaugurated two natural gas stations and laid the foundation stone for a new onshore regasification unit.

During his visit to the Aqaba Marine Reserve, Hassan hailed UNESCO's decision to include the site on the World Heritage List, describing it as a national achievement that should be leveraged to strengthen Aqaba's tourism, environmental and economic position, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The reserve was inscribed in recognition of its exceptional marine biodiversity and its role in protecting marine ecosystems and coral reefs. It is home to more than 150 coral species, 500 fish species, and nearly 1,000 rare and threatened species, making it one of



Prime Ministry photo

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan lays the foundation stone for an onshore regasification unit at the Sheikh Sabah Liquefied Natural Gas Terminal in the southern port city of Aqaba

the world's most biodiverse marine areas, the statement said.

The World Heritage Committee approved the

listing during its 48th session in Busan, South Korea.

Hassan also inaugurated a natural gas

station in Ouweira Industrial City, built at a cost of JD8 million with an initial capacity of 30,000 cubic

metres per day, expandable to 90,000 cubic metres.

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UN chief urges immediate removal of all Syria sanctions

DAMASCUS (AFP) — United Nations chief Antonio Guterres on Sunday urged the removal of all sanctions imposed on Syria during the era of ousted ruler Bashar Assad, as he concluded a two-day visit to the country.

Syria's new authorities, who took power in December 2024, are trying to turn the page after more than 13 years of war, and to reboot the economy and rebuild infrastructure and institutions.

Western countries including the United States have announced the easing of sanctions on Syria, but investors have remained cautious, while the World Bank has estimated the country's post-war reconstruction could cost \$216 billion.

"I welcome steps that have eased sanctions, and opening new possibilities for economic recovery, but all these sanctions must be removed immediately," Guterres told a press conference in Damas-



AFP photo

Syria's President Ahmed Al Sharaa (right) receives UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at the People's Palace in Damascus on Saturday

cus, concluding what he called a "deeply meaningful and productive visit".

"The United Nations stands with the people of Syria at this pivotal moment. And I came car-

rying the strongest possible appeal to the international community, an appeal to spare no effort to support the Syrian people and to support the Syrian government," Guterres said.

"Syria today is at a crossroads."

Guterres is the first UN chief to visit Syria since his predecessor Ban Ki-moon in 2009, two years before the start of Syria's war, which killed

more than half-a-million people.

"Syria needs investment in its people, its economy and its institutions. Syria needs support to restore essential services, rebuild infrastructure, revive livelihoods," he said.

It also needs help "for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced people", he added.

Since Assad's ousting, some 1.7 million refugees have returned to Syria, according to the UN, while around 5.5 million people remain displaced inside the country and six million overseas.

'Right direction'

During his visit, Guterres met senior officials including President Ahmed Al Sharaa, Foreign Minister Asaad Al Shaibani and the speaker of the new transitional parliament which held its first session this month.

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DIPLOMACY

Safadi, Canadian counterpart discuss bilateral ties, regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi and Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand on Sunday discussed bilateral relations and the latest regional developments during a phone call.

The two ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the longstanding friendship between Jordan and Canada, and expanding cooperation across various sectors, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

They also reviewed the repercussions of the recent regional escalation, stressing the importance of maintaining the ceasefire between the United States and Iran and resuming negotiations aimed at reaching a comprehensive solution that addresses the root causes



Ayman Safadi



Anita Anand

of tensions and ensures freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

On Gaza, Safadi underscored the need to implement all provisions of US President Donald Trump's Gaza plan and to lift Israeli restrictions that continue to impede the delivery of sufficient humanitarian aid to the Strip, which he said remains in the grip of a humanitarian catastrophe.

Safadi also briefed Anand on the serious

deterioration in the occupied West Bank, attributing it to continued illegal Israeli measures that entrench the occupation and increase the risk of further escalation.

He commended Canada for its support of the two-state solution and its efforts to promote security, stability and a just peace in the region.

The two ministers also discussed a number of regional and international issues of mutual interest.

France, Spain battle 'unpredictable' wildfires as 325,000 evacuated

BORDEAUX (AFP) — France fought an "unpredictable" wildfire close to Bordeaux on Sunday while Spain warned of "difficult hours" in its own fiery battle, with evacuations from danger zones in both countries mounting to well over 325,000 people.

The forest infernos, raging for days unchecked in France's southwest and in central Spain near Madrid, were among the worst each nation has seen in peacetime.

France's major fire has caused an unprecedented "pyrocumulonimbus": A gigantic, untamable fire cloud that creates its own winds and packs lightning

that causes more blazes, according to the National Firefighters Federation of France (FNSPF).

"It's a David-versus-Goliath scenario: The idea is that, at some point, we'll find a weak spot and strike there," said FNSPF spokesman Eric Brocardi.

French President Emmanuel Macron has called a crisis Cabinet meeting for Monday morning to discuss responses to the fires, his office said on Sunday.

Spanish officials voiced optimism they were starting to get a grip on some of their fires — though on the weekend they were confronted with a new fire front, near the eastern

coastal city of Valencia, which forced 15,000 people to flee.

"Difficult hours lie ahead," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said as he visited the fire zone in Avila province west of Madrid.

A Spanish Cabinet member said the fire around the town of Avila was the largest in the country's history.

Other EU countries have been sending help to Spain and France in the form of aircraft, fire crews and vehicles.

Scientists say that such weather emergencies are being made more extreme and frequent by climate change.

The disasters, coming at the peak of the summer vacation period when tourists flock to both countries, were fuelled by woodland parched to tinder by successive heatwaves and lack of rain since May.

"When we flew into Madrid we could see the fire very close to the airport," said Pilar, a 69-year-old New Zealand tourist who declined to give her last name. She was carrying a mask in case the smoke situation in the city became worse.

Letisha Lucas, a 33-year-old tourist from Canada — which has its own wildfires happening — said the smoke smell was obvi-



AFP photo

An Air Tractor AT-802F Fire Boss aircraft dumps water over a wildfire burning near San Martin de Valdeiglesias, about 70km west of Madrid, on Sunday

ous on arrival in Madrid "and very irritating on the throat". She added that the

proximity of the blaze left her "kind of nervous".

The prefect of the Gi-

ronde department where France's fires are concentrated asked tourists to

stay away and look for "alternative destinations".

'Extremely intense' fire

France's Interior Minister Laurent Nunez warned "the situation remains very unfavourable" for fires across the country, where more than 250,000 people had been evacuated.

The main fire in the southwest Gironde region, where Bordeaux is located, was "extremely intense and unpredictable... generating its own winds and advancing erratically toward the Bordeaux metropolitan area", he said on X.

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HCD receives ISQua EEA international accreditation for national standards through 2030

AMMAN (JT) — The Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) has achieved a new national milestone that reflects Jordan's leadership in developing quality and accreditation systems.

The National Standards for Services Provided to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder have received international accreditation from the International Society for Quality in Health Care External Evaluation Association (ISQua EEA) under its International Accreditation Programme for the period 2026–2030, according to an HCD statement.

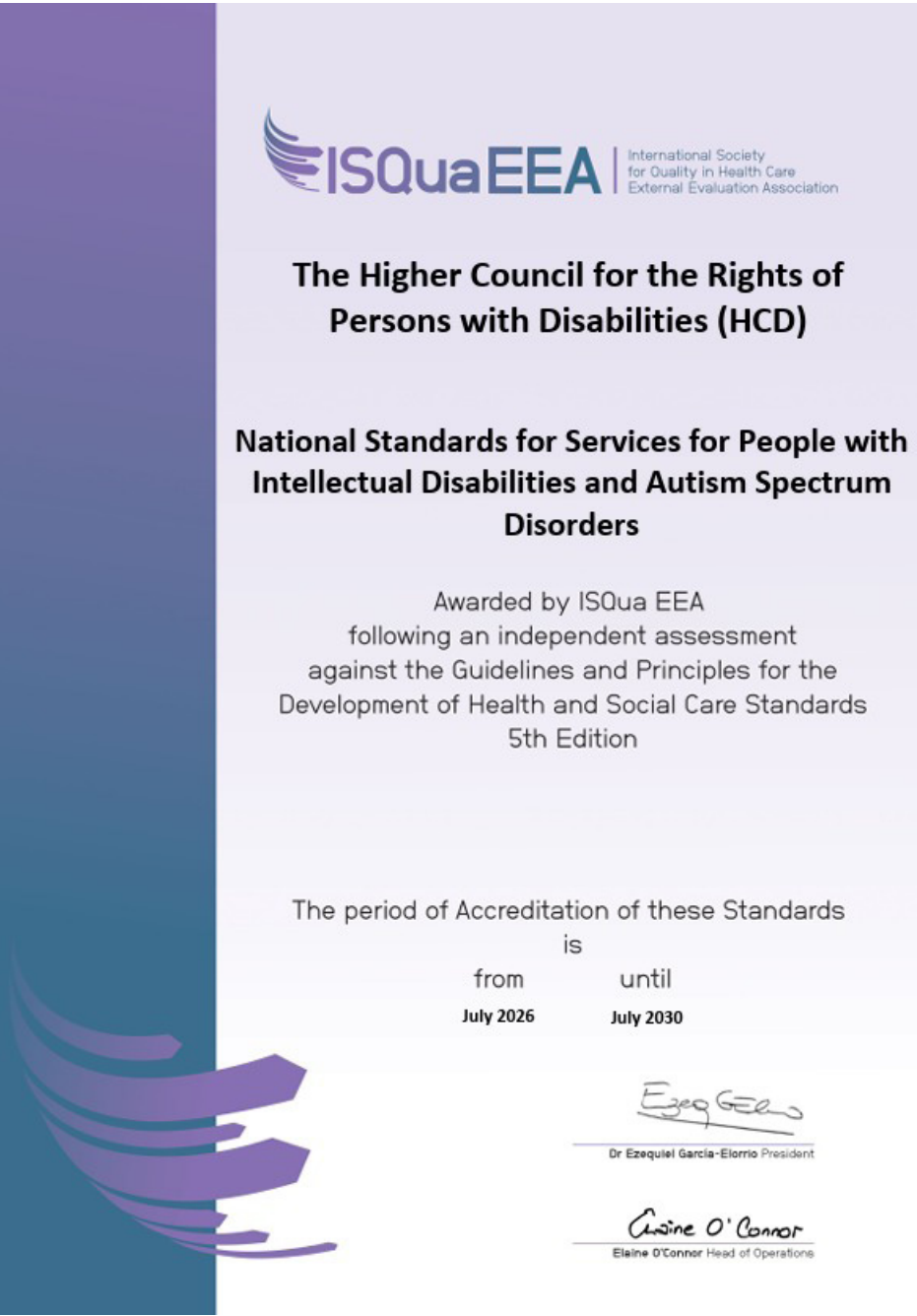
This recognition follows the “successful” completion of all stages of the external evaluation process and fulfilment of the accreditation requirements in accordance with the best international practices.

This accreditation constitutes international recognition of the institutional methodology adopted by HCD in developing, managing, and reviewing its national standards.

It also confirms their alignment with internationally recognised principles for developing health and social care standards, including good governance, evidence-based practice, stakeholder engagement and continuous improvement.

The achievement represents a “significant” advancement in the development of Jordan's national quality system. It enhances the reliability and credibility of the national standards among government entities, service providers, regulatory bodies and international organisations.

It also strengthens confidence in Jordan's accreditation system and opens broader opportunities for international cooperation and the exchange of expertise, reinforcing Jordan's position as a regional model in developing quality standards for services



provided to persons with disabilities.

The final report issued by the international evaluation team showed that the national standards achieved an overall score of 96 per cent, reflecting an advanced level of compliance with ISQua's principles for the development of health and social care standards.

The report commended the institutional methodology adopted by the council, describing it as an integrated national framework that combines governance, quality, safety, risk management and continuous improvement, while being firmly grounded in a rights-

based approach to persons with disabilities.

The international evaluation team praised Jordan's clear institutional methodology for developing and reviewing standards, reliance on the latest scientific evidence and the best international practices, alignment with national legislation, and engagement of government entities, experts and service providers throughout all stages of development.

It also highlighted the emphasis placed on the rights and empowerment of persons with disabilities and on positioning them at the centre of the service-delivery process.

The accreditation is the result of two parallel pathways. The first spans approximately 10 years, during which the council worked to develop and issue the national standards and establish the national accreditation system.

This process began with the launch of the first version of the standards in 2016 and continued through their implementation and evaluation, training institutions and surveyors, collecting feedback and developing guidelines, policies, and procedures governing accreditation processes.

This pathway culminated in the launch of the

revised second edition in 2023, developed through a comprehensive scientific methodology that included a review of national legislation, scientific evidence, and regional and international standards, as well as the engagement of experts and relevant stakeholders and field-testing prior to formal adoption.

The second pathway involved obtaining international accreditation from ISQua EEA, which extended over nearly two years and included formal application, self-assessment, translation of standards and procedural guidelines, preparation of the technical portfolio, and evaluation by an international team of surveyors.

The process culminated in the approval of the accreditation decision and the granting of the international accreditation certificate for 2026–2030.

This accreditation marks the beginning of a new phase during which HCD will continue to maintain compliance with accreditation requirements, further develop and update the national standards, and expand their scope to cover additional service areas.

These efforts will contribute to embedding a culture of quality and accreditation, strengthening institutional efficiency, improving the quality of services provided to persons with disabilities, and building a sustainable national system that places people, their rights, and the quality of services at the heart of its priorities.

The achievement embodies the vision led by HH Prince Mired, Chief Chamberlain and President of HCD, and is aligned with Law No. 20 of 2017 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Economic Modernisation Vision, the Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap, and the Sustainable Development Goals.



Roman columns in the antique town of Tyre, located on the southern coast of Lebanon, 83 kilometres south of Beirut

UNESCO adds six heritage sites to danger list amid conflict, climate threats

AMMAN (JT) — Six cultural and natural heritage sites have been placed on UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger, amid growing threats from armed conflicts, climate change, development pressures and other challenges, according to a UNESCO statement issued following a meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Busan, Republic of Korea.

The committee decided to add three sites — the Boma-Badingilo Migratory Landscape in South Sudan, Mount Amel Castles in Lebanon and Sebastia in the State of Palestine — to both the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger through an emergency procedure.

UNESCO said that the use of the emergency procedure reflects the impact of multiple crises affecting heritage sites around the world, particularly armed conflicts and environmental pressures that threaten their preservation.

The committee also added three previously listed World Heritage sites to the danger list after determining that they face serious threats to the values that led to their original inscription.

The sites are the Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese and its Chora in Ukraine, the Historic Inner City of Paramaribo in Suriname and Tyre in Lebanon.

According to the UNESCO statement, the Boma-Badingilo Migratory Landscape is home to the world's largest known terrestrial mammal migration and represents an

ecosystem of exceptional global importance.

The site also reflects the cultural and linguistic diversity of communities that have managed the landscape through traditional herding, farming and fishing practices for centuries.

UNESCO identified infrastructure development, commercial poaching, wildlife trafficking and ongoing insecurity as major threats to the South Sudanese site, adding that limited institutional and financial resources have affected conservation efforts.

In Lebanon, Mount Amel Castles — a group of five castles documenting centuries of defensive architecture from the Crusades and Islamic dynasties to the 19th century — has suffered significant damage due to ongoing conflict, UNESCO said.

The site had previously received enhanced protection from UNESCO's Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict in November 2024.

Sebastia, located in the State of Palestine, was placed on the danger list due to concerns over planned development projects, including the proposed creation of the “Samaria” (Shomron) national park, which UNESCO said could affect the site's integrity.

The archaeological area preserves evidence of successive civilizations dating back to the 9th century BC, including the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, Crusader, Ayyu-

bid/Mamluk and Ottoman periods.

The UNESCO statement said that the Ancient City of Tauric Chersonese and its Chora in Ukraine faces serious conservation challenges linked to the inability to ensure protection and management of the site amid the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation.

UNESCO noted that satellite monitoring carried out with UNITAR/UNOSAT since 2014 has shown deterioration affecting the site's authenticity and integrity.

The Historic Inner City of Paramaribo in Suriname was added to the danger list after UNESCO identified concerns over construction projects that were carried out without adequate heritage impact assessments.

The committee said that certain structures, including the new National Assembly hall and the Yogh parking garage, have negatively affected the historic urban landscape.

In Lebanon, the ancient city of Tyre was placed on the danger list due to the continuing hostilities in the country.

UNESCO said that the conflict has created direct risks to the site's Outstanding Universal Value and urged all parties involved to avoid actions that could cause further damage and to respect obligations under international law.

UNESCO said the World Heritage Committee will continue reviewing additional nominations through July 27.

Korea, Jordan celebrate cultural ties at 'Ya Hala, Meet Korea!' festival

AMMAN (JT) — The Korean embassy and the Ministry of Culture co-hosted “Ya Hala, Meet Korea!” at the Haya Cultural Centre in Amman on Friday and Saturday, in what organisers described as the “largest” comprehensive economic and cultural festival ever held by South Korea in the Levant.

Jointly organised by the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, the event showcased South Korea's innovative products, advanced technologies and rich cultural heritage, while providing Jordanians with an opportunity to experience the country's creative industries, cuisine and traditions in one venue, the embassy said in a statement to The Jordan Times.

Around 20,000 visitors attended the two-day festival, which featured exhibitions of electronic appliances, vehicles, medical equipment, beauty products, food and other consumer goods.

A total of 117 South Korean companies, including Samsung, LG, KEPCO, Hyundai and Kia, participated alongside 37 Jordanian companies.

The exhibition enabled Korean firms to engage directly with Jordanian consumers while exploring business opportunities in the Jordanian market.

The festival culminated on the evening of Saturday with a cultural programme that blended



Korean embassy photo

The Korean embassy and the Ministry of Culture co-host ‘Ya Hala, Meet Korea!’ at the Haya Cultural Centre in Amman on Friday and Saturday

traditional and contemporary performances.

The finale featured Korean traditional music, including Samulnori percussion and fan dances, alongside K-pop performances by Korean artist Kisu and performances by Jordanian traditional dance troupes, highlighting the cultural ties between the two countries.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, South Korean Ambassador to Jordan Pilwoo Kim highlighted the importance of co-hosting the festival with Jordan.

“Korea and Jordan share a profound history of mutual understanding, and the generosity, hospitality and rich cultural heritage of Jordan deeply resonate with the Korean people,” he said.

Kim added that the festival was “not just about cultural exchange but also a vibrant showcase of economic and industrial innovation”, offering visitors a glimpse of Korea's strengths in technology,

mobility, energy, food and beauty industries.

Minister of Culture Mustafa Rawashdeh said that the festival introduced Jordanians to key aspects of Korean civilisation, heritage and folklore while providing a platform for dialogue and mutual understanding between the two countries.

He added that the event would help strengthen Jordanian-Korean relations across various fields, with particular emphasis on expanding cultural cooperation.

According to the embassy, the “successful” staging of the festival also underscored Jordan's ability to host major international events despite recent regional tensions.

The embassy reaffirmed its commitment to expanding cooperation and people-to-people exchanges with Jordan, particularly as the two countries prepare to mark the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations next year.

Oxfam says Gaza reconstruction may cost \$71b, calls for Palestinian-led recovery

By Osama Alkafri

AMMAN — Rebuilding Gaza will require an estimated \$71.4 billion over the next decade, more than seven times the combined cost of reconstruction following previous major conflicts in the Strip, according to a new report released on Thursday jointly by Oxfam and two Palestinian institutions.

The report, titled Building Gaza Anew, was produced by Oxfam in partnership with the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) and the Palestine Trade Centre (PalTrade).

It argued that Gaza's recovery must be led by Palestinians and accompanied by accountability measures, warning that externally imposed reconstruction models have repeatedly failed.

According to the report, the latest estimate is based on the April 2026 Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment prepared by the UN, EU and World Bank, which put total damage and economic losses in Gaza at \$57.9 billion and estimated recovery and reconstruction needs at \$71.4 billion over the next 10 years.

The report noted that previous reconstruction efforts following the 2008-09, 2014 and 2021 conflicts required the equivalent of around



AFF photo

Tents housing displaced Palestinian families are erected between the rubble of homes and businesses destroyed by the Israeli military, in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood of Gaza City on February 20

\$10 billion in today's prices.

However, those efforts were repeatedly undermined by restrictions on movement and access, funding shortages and renewed hostilities before reconstruction could be completed.

Beyond physical destruction, the report argued that the conflict has severely damaged Gaza's social and economic foundations.

Libraries, archives and cultural institutions

have also been lost, affecting the preservation of Palestinian history and identity.

The report also highlighted the humanitarian impact on women and vulnerable groups, estimating that around 58,600 households are now headed by women, while female unemployment has reached 92 per cent.

Women reportedly spend between eight and 12 hours each day performing unpaid care

work, including collecting water, preparing food under difficult conditions and caring for injured family members.

The report also added that around one in four injuries sustained during the conflict will have life-changing consequences, with more than 50,000 people requiring long-term rehabilitation.

Many people with disabilities have lost access to assistive devices, while overcrowded shel-

ters and damaged sanitation infrastructure have increased public health risks, according to the report.

Environmental damage has also been extensive, the report said, citing the destruction of orchards, farmland and greenhouses, contamination of agricultural land, deterioration of groundwater resources and untreated sewage flowing into the Mediterranean Sea.

The report proposed a five-year framework for recovery centred on Palestinian leadership, calling for a unified national vision linking Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

It rejected international trusteeship or externally imposed governance models and instead advocated coordination with regional and international partners within the framework of international law.

Ahead of upcoming donor discussions and the 81st session of the UN General Assembly, the report urged governments financing Gaza's recovery to transfer decision-making authority to Palestinians, remove restrictions that have hindered previous reconstruction efforts and support a political process aimed at ending the occupation and achieving Palestinian self-determination.



Petra photo

Jordan Red Crescent Hospital helps wounded Gazans rebuild their lives

By Enad Abbadi

AMMAN — For dozens of wounded Palestinians evacuated from Gaza under the humanitarian medical corridor launched by the initiative of His Majesty King Abdullah, the Jordan Red Crescent Hospital has become more than a place of treatment. It is where life-changing injuries are being treated and recovery has begun.

Since the initiative was launched, the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JN-RCS) has received eight groups of patients from Gaza and their accompanying family members, according to Chief Resident Physician at the hospital Najm Al Din Oudah.

Speaking to The Jordan Times, Oudah said that the hospital has treated a total of 214 people, including patients and their companions, providing “specialised medical care, surgery, rehabilitation, physiotherapy and psychosocial support”.

Among those who received treatment were 112 children, including young amputees.

Oudah said, “Each child had received individualised medical care tailored to their condition, while rehabilitation programmes include the provision and fitting of prosthetic limbs for patients who have undergone amputations or sustained mobility-impairing injuries affecting their functional abilities.”

For one father, Jordan

made possible an operation his son could not receive in Gaza.

“My son suffered a serious eye injury and needed a corneal transplant. Because of the blockade and the war, donor corneas could not reach Gaza,” he said.

'When I saw my son receive his prosthetic leg and begin walking again, I was overjoyed'

Through the Royal initiative, his son underwent a successful corneal transplant at the Jordan Red Crescent Hospital.

“The medical team monitored him closely, made sure he received his eye drops on time and allowed me to stay beside him throughout his recovery,” he said. “I would like to thank His Majesty King Abdullah, the medical staff and especially the sur-

geon who performed my son's operation.”

Another father arrived in Jordan after an attack that killed his daughter, left him with a head injury and resulted in his son's leg being amputated.

“The most important thing is that we survived,” he said.

He described the moment his son was fitted with a prosthetic limb as one of overwhelming relief.

“When I saw my son receive his prosthetic leg and begin walking again, I was overjoyed,” he said.

“He can play football again, move around independently and live without relying on crutches. The prosthetic has given him his life back.”

He said that the care his family received extended beyond medical treatment.

“The staff at the Jordan Red Crescent have been wonderful. From the moment we arrived from Gaza, they welcomed us warmly, treated us with kindness and never fell short in meeting our needs,” he said.

“Although we suffered greatly in Gaza, here in Jordan we feel safe.”

According to Oudah, JNRCS continues to oversee every patient's journey from arrival to rehabilitation, with the primary objective of helping them to restore the highest possible level of functional independence, enhance recovery and improve their overall quality of life.

PM calls for faster delivery of Aqaba development projects

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday called for intensified efforts and closer coordination among all relevant entities to ensure the timely implementation of economic, development and tourism projects in Aqaba, while continuing to strengthen the role of the private sector and attract investment.

Chairing a meeting at the Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC), the prime minister said that the pace of development in Aqaba was gathering strong momentum under the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah and the close follow-up of HRH Crown Prince Hussein.

He described Aqaba as a cornerstone of several strategic national projects in the water, energy, transport and railway sectors, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Hassan said that work on both the National Water Carrier and railway projects is expected to begin in the coming months following extensive government preparations, highlighting their strategic importance to the Kingdom's



Petra photo

Chairing a meeting at the Aqaba Development Corporation, Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday calls for intensified efforts and closer coordination among all relevant entities to ensure the timely implementation of economic, development and tourism projects in the coastal city

economy and long-term development.

The prime minister also called for accelerating expansion and development projects at Aqaba's ports and logistics facilities, including shipping and storage services, to enhance the city's regional competitiveness.

He stressed the importance of upgrading public beaches and organising events to boost both domestic and international tourism.

Hassan also highlighted recently launched gas projects, saying they form part of the government's strategy to supply industrial

zones across the Kingdom with natural gas, reducing energy costs for factories by between 35 and 60 per cent.

ADC Chief Executive Officer Hussein Safadi briefed the meeting on current and future plans covering logistics, port management, real estate and transport, in

line with the Economic Modernisation Vision.

Safadi also outlined a number of strategic projects and international partnerships with the private sector aimed at attracting foreign investment and strengthening Aqaba's position as a regional logistics and investment hub.

Amman recognised as regional model for zero-emission bus transition in UITP 2026 report

AMMAN (JT) — Amman has been recognised as a pioneering model in the Middle East and North Africa region for the adoption of zero-emission buses, according to the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) 2026 report.

The recognition highlights the Jordanian capital's progress in developing sustainable public transport systems and advancing environmentally friendly mobility solutions, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The report praised the Greater Amman Municipality's (GAM) strategic approach to transforming Amman into a smart and



GAM photo

Amman has been recognised as a pioneering model in the Middle East and North Africa region for the adoption of zero-emission buses

sustainable city through initiatives aimed at reducing carbon emissions, improving infrastructure

efficiency and enhancing residents' quality of life.

According to the UITP report, GAM shared first

place regionally with Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority in governance and ownership models. The report placed GAM in the highest sovereign contractual category, noting that the municipality is the sole owner of electric buses, charging stations, and related data networks.

It also recognised GAM's hybrid operational model, which it said helps protect municipal transport systems from dependence on private-sector monopolies.

The report ranked GAM among the top three municipal authorities in the region for operational maturity, alongside authorities in Mecca, Jeddah, Ras

Al Khaimah and Muscat. The ranking reflects GAM's shift from a regulatory role to direct operational involvement through its executive arm, the Amman Vision Transport Company.

The report also noted that Amman has moved ahead of several regional municipalities that remain in the early planning stages of developing green transport strategies.

In integrated urban planning, GAM ranked first among non-GCC municipalities in the region for its efforts to link the Bus Rapid Transit network with parking facilities and broader digital transformation projects.

Lower House passes 2026 Professional Work Regulation Law

AMMAN (JT) — The Lower House on Sunday approved the 2026 Professional Work Regulation Law by majority vote after introducing a series of amendments, including a provision exempting applicants for vocational practice permits and related examinations from all fees.

During the session, Minister of Political and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Monem Odat said that the government had responded to MPs' calls to include a binding provision waiving fees for vocational practice permit applications, renewals and examinations, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

“The government highly values the efforts of MPs

in proposing measures to ensure applicants are not burdened with additional costs,” Odat said.

He also said that “while the minister of labour had previously pledged under the Dome [Lower House] that applicants would be exempt from such fees, the government had agreed to enshrine the commitment in the law following broad parliamentary support”.

Odat stressed that the law is intended to regulate and upgrade the vocational sector rather than generate revenue, saying its primary objective is to restructure the labour market and enhance the skills and competitiveness of the Jordanian workforce at both the local and regional levels.

He added that a committee, chaired by the minister of labour, would be established to consider grievances and oversee centres authorised to provide vocational training and issue practice certificates, ensuring compliance with approved standards and examination procedures.

The Cabinet approved the validating reasons for the draft law on 25 January 2026.

The legislation seeks to regulate the vocational and technical labour market by requiring workers to obtain a practice permit through three main pillars.

The first requires graduates of recognised vocational training institutions, including the

Vocational Training Corporation, the National Company for Employment and Training, the Advanced Vocational Training College and licensed private training centres, to obtain a practice permit before entering the labour market.

The second requires companies, institutions and other providers of vocational and technical training to obtain licencence from the Ministry of Labour.

The third focuses on accrediting training programmes and instructors, with ministry approval required for official recognition.

Under the law, the Ministry of Labour will be responsible for licensing, supervising, regulating

and evaluating vocational and technical training providers, while overseeing programme delivery, examinations and professional licensing.

The ministry will also establish licensing standards for public and private training providers, register vocational qualifications, classify trainers and introduce a single-window system to coordinate licensing requirements and professional examination standards with relevant authorities.

The law is also expected to strengthen labour market regulation by enhancing inspection and monitoring mechanisms across vocational establishments to ensure compliance with its provisions, Petra said.

Army foils drug smuggling attempt in Southern Military Region — JAF

AMMAN (JT) — The Southern Military Region on Sunday thwarted an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics loaded onto guided balloons within its area of responsibility.

Border guard units detected the balloons, handled the situation, and brought them down along with their cargo inside Jordanian territory in coordination with security agencies, military authorities and the Anti-Narcotics Department, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) statement.

The seized items were referred to the relevant



JAF photo

The Southern Military Region on Sunday thwarts an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics loaded onto guided balloons within its area of responsibility

authorities for legal action.

JAF said it continues to utilise all capabilities and resources to

counter various forms of infiltration and smuggling to safeguard the security and stability of Jordan.

Run Jordan, PSD finalise traffic plan ahead of Madaba Mosaic Race

AMMAN (JT) — Run Jordan, in coordination with the Central Traffic Department of the Public Security Directorate (PSD), said on Sunday that it had finalised traffic arrangements for the inaugural Madaba Mosaic Race 2026, scheduled to take place on Friday in Madaba Governorate.

Held under the pa-



tronage of HH Prince Firas, chairman of Run Jordan's board of directors, the event forms

part of the organisation's efforts to promote sports tourism while showcasing Madaba's

rich historical and cultural heritage.

The race is expected to attract participants

from Jordan and abroad, offering a sporting experience that combines athletic competition with the city's unique historical and cultural landmarks, according to a Run Jordan statement.

Run Jordan said that the traffic management plan had been developed in close coordination with the relevant authorities to ensure the

safety of participants and residents while maintaining the smooth flow of traffic across the governorate.

The organisation urged motorists to follow traffic instructions and use alternative routes during the scheduled road closures.

Run Jordan Director General Lina Elkurd said that the ongoing co-

ordination with the PSD and the Central Traffic Department reflected a shared commitment to organising the event in accordance with the highest standards of safety and operational efficiency, while minimising disruption to residents' daily journeys.

She added that the success of major sporting events depended on

close cooperation among national institutions, praising the PSD, the Central Traffic Department and all partner organisations for supporting what she described as a “national sporting initiative”.

According to the organisers, road closures will be in effect from 1:00am until 12:00pm on Friday.



AFP photo
A child holds a placard during a gathering in solidarity with Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) to celebrate the resignation of India's Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in Mumbai on Sunday as protests over the alleged NEET exam irregularities were called off

India clears protest site after 'cockroach' movement scores a win

NEW DELHI (AFP) — New Delhi municipal workers were busy painting over anti-government graffiti on Sunday after the youth-led "cockroach" movement had left a landmark protest site, satisfied with the government acceding to their demands.

The social media-driven Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) had drawn thousands of demonstrators, mainly students, to the capital's Jantar Mantar site, forming one of India's largest anti-government protests in recent years.

Weeks of protests over exam irregularities and other issues affecting young Indians culminated on Saturday with the resignation of the education minister and the government accepting other key demands.

On Sunday, dozens of municipal workers were washing the pavements along the road leading to the site, where activists had camped for weeks and where just hours earlier the crowd sang protest songs, chanted slogans and painted acerbic graffiti.

"We have been here since midnight when the protestors left," a municipal worker who declined to be identified told AFP.

"The walls have been painted, but may require another coat of paint as some lines [from the slogans] are still visible," he said.

The movement sparked by a call for education reforms evolved to include concerns over unemployment, opportunities for young people and what critics brand as Prime Min-

ister Narendra 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.

'I feel that this government will now face the electoral consequences of its recent actions'

Nayan Thakrele, 19, one of many young people who had come from across India to join the movement, finally reached Jantar Mantar on Sunday morning.

"It's a shame that the protest is over by the time I reached here," Thakrele, who took a 20-hour train journey from the central state of Madhya Pradesh, told AFP.

'Face the consequences'

"I first heard about it on Instagram and saw the electrifying atmo-

sphere, colourful walls, posters and wanted to be here and experience it myself," Thakrele said.

Amish, 35, had also hoped to join the protests but reached the site when it already being painted clean.

"I had booked the flight from Mumbai before Pradhan's resignation," he told AFP.

Amish said that the Modi government had backed itself into a corner with its response to the protests, which at times escalated into brief clashes and outbursts of violence.

"Had they not tried a crackdown, the protest wouldn't have become as big as it did," said Amish.

"I feel that this government will now face the electoral consequences of its recent actions."

A Delhi police constable at Jantar Mantar said that only a few people came there on Sunday morning, "mostly locals who are curious to see the site they'd seen in protest videos online".

Now painted red, the wall behind the constable was used by demonstrators to put up posters and notes, including of police officers who had baton-charged or used tear gas against protesters.

"We want everything to be documented and remembered," protester Rahul told AFP on Saturday near the so-called "wall of shame".

"We have taken photos and videos of these posters and hope everyone shares them widely."

Iran says halts Middle East attacks as US holds fire

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran said on Sunday it has halted retaliatory attacks across the Middle East after Washington stopped its strikes on the country for the past two nights.

The Iranian declaration came after Washington paused a war nearing its fifth month and reports emerged that concerns over dwindling munitions were restraining plans for further escalation.

"These attacks continued until two nights ago, but over the past two nights the Americans have stopped their attacks," said army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia.

"Since... our strategy has essentially been retaliatory, we have also halted our retaliatory operations."

Fighting over the strategic Strait of Hormuz derailed diplomatic efforts between Washington and Tehran, but the conflict then expanded beyond the vital energy corridor to include attacks on US bases, regional shipping and Gulf allies.

But the recent lull has revived hopes of a return to negotiations after nearly two weeks of consecutive nightly US bombardments, although US media reported the pause could also reflect pressure on stockpiles of Patriot interceptors and other defensive weapons.

Meanwhile, US operations against Iran were "on a hold", CNN reported, quoting an unidentified Pentagon source, even as US President Donald



AFP photo
This screen grab made on Sunday from undated handout video footage released by the US Central Command (CENTCOM) on Saturday shows what CENTCOM says are operations enforcing its naval blockade against Iran

Trump threatened a "much higher level" of strikes on Friday.

Plans to escalate the campaign have been shelved in part because of those shrinking supplies, The New York Times reported, citing two people briefed on the matter.

Vice President JD Vance and top US general Dan Caine both raised concerns about escalation at a White House meeting on Friday, CNN reported.

Caine told Trump the military could carry out the options available

to him successfully but warned of the possible implications, according to the network.

Iran's army however warned on Sunday that the war would widen even further if the US chose to restart its attacks, ahead of a visit by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Washington on Tuesday.

'Much higher level'

Trump said on Friday he had not decided whether to return to an all-out operation.

"We're talking to them right now. I think they're getting more and more serious," he told journalists.

Trump said Iran faced a choice between a deal and strikes at a "much higher level".

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.

The Pentagon had presented Trump with a plan

for a 14th night of strikes but he declined to authorise it in favour of a push for talks, Axios reported.

Iran said on Sunday it had made progress in talks with neighbouring Oman on "common principles and operational mechanisms" for shipping in the Strait.

In June, Oman and Iran said they would discuss imposing service fees, a move Washington opposes, but Muscat also said ships could transit Hormuz via its waters, angering Tehran.

Russian and Ukrainian strikes kill at least 10

KYIV, Ukraine (AFP) — Russian and Ukrainian strikes killed at least 10 people on Sunday, with Kyiv saying Moscow attacked a supermarket in northern Ukraine and Russia accusing Kyiv of striking a bus stop in the occupied east.

The strikes came a day after 20 people were killed on both sides of the front-line, with both Kyiv and Moscow intensifying attacks while diplomacy to end the war — launched by Russia in 2022 — is at a deadlock.

Kyiv said Moscow attacked a supermarket in the northern city of Chernigiv.

"As a result of the strike, two people were killed, including a 10-year-old child," the head of the city Dmytro Bryzhynsky said on social media



AFP photo
A passenger plane flies past smoke rising from a warehouse for a Russian e-commerce giant near Saint Petersburg after being hit by Ukrainian drones early on Friday morning, triggering a fire that sent smoke pouring over the historic city, according to local officials

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said 13 people were wounded in what he called a "deeply cynical drone strike on an ordinary supermarket".

Zelensky also said Rus-

sia had launched ballistic missiles at Kyiv, wounding several people and that Moscow's strikes killed one person in Zaporizhzhia and another in Kharkiv — where officials

said Moscow targeted a residential building.

"This is deliberate Russian terror with absolutely no military justification," Zelensky said.

In Gorlivka, Russian au-

thorities said a Ukrainian drone strike killed four people.

Local authorities said the strike had hit a bus stop and that seven people were also left wounded.

Another person was killed in the occupied part of the Kherson region, Moscow said.

Authorities in Russia's border Belgorod region said one person was killed by a Ukrainian drone in the village of Smorodino.

The attacks came a day after Moscow said a Ukrainian strike on an occupied town on the Azov Sea killed 12 people.

US-led talks on ending fighting have stalled. The Kremlin occupies swathes of eastern and southern Ukraine and has repeatedly said it intends to seize the rest of east Ukraine by force.



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

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) - WFP (EOI-PROC/JOR/2026003/)

For Operating and Managing a Retail shop in Azraq camp

Closing on Thursday 06 August 2026 at 16:00 hrs (Jordan Local Time)

A. Background

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

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

B. The purpose of this EOI

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

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

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

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

C. How to prepare and submit your Expression of Interest

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brazil's right-wing party nominates Bolsonaro son to battle Lula

SAO PAULO (AFP) — Brazil's right-wing Liberal Party has formally nominated Flavio Bolsonaro, a 45-year-old senator and son of imprisoned ex-president Jair Bolsonaro, as its candidate in the October presidential election.

He is set to face off against leftist incumbent Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, 80, who is seeking a fourth term and has gained momentum in recent weeks as the younger Bolsonaro faced a series of crises.

Far-right firebrand Jair Bolsonaro anointed his eldest son Flavio as his political heir after being sentenced to 27 years in prison for plotting a coup following his 2022 election loss to Lula.

"I may be calmer, more cheerful, more composed and more moderate, but Bolsonaro blood flows here!" Flavio, touching his arm, declared to a cheering crowd in a Sao Paulo warehouse.

He warned that Brazil — Latin America's largest country in population, area and economy — "could take giant strides



AFP photo
Brazil's right-wing presidential hopeful Flavio Bolsonaro (C) speaks next to his wife Fernanda Bolsonaro (C R) during the launching of his candidacy within the Liberal Party (PL) convention, in Sao Paulo, Brazil on July 25, 2026

toward a dictatorship" if Lula wins reelection.

That alarmist rhetoric was echoed by Argentina's libertarian President Javier Milei, who joined the convention in person to lend support to Flavio Bolsonaro.

"I firmly believe there is no one else capable of putting an end to the Lula risk hanging over Brazil," Milei said in a typically fiery speech.

Wearing Brazilian national team jerseys, which have become a symbol

of the Bolsonaro movement, supporters beat drums and waved flags inside a warehouse next to Sao Paulo's Pacaembu Stadium.

"We would have liked our candidate to be Jair Bolsonaro, but today Flavio is the best choice," Fernando Moeno, a 50-year-old retired military police officer attending the convention, told AFP.

Flavio Bolsonaro teared up as he referenced his father, who appeared in an AI-generated video. Courts

have barred the ex-president from making political statements while he serves his sentence under house arrest.

Promising to crack down on crime and inflation, Flavio was neck-and-neck with Lula in the polls until he was hit by a series of scandals: Ties to a disgraced banker, a family feud, and new tariffs imposed by ally US President Donald Trump.

Pollster Datafolha published a survey Friday showing that in a runoff election, Lula would win 48 per cent of votes to Flavio's 43 per cent.

Flavio's troubles began in May when an audio recording leaked of him asking banker Daniel Vercara — accused in a multi-million-dollar fraud case — to finance a film about his father.

Flavio had denied any contact with Vercara and, just hours before the recording was published, told a reporter that the accusation was "a lie". He now maintains their relationship was limited to the movie.



A resident surveys the extensive damage inside his burned-out home, which sits on a plot used for storing scrap metal, following a devastating wildfire in Pelayos de la Presa, 65 kilometres west of Madrid, on Sunday

Close to Madrid, those who escaped flames worry what is next

By Margaux Bergey
Agence France-Presse

VILLAVICIOSA DE ODON, Spain — Elvira Menendez slept little last night. Her local municipal gym is nothing like home.

"There are dogs here, people snoring," says the resident of the village of Chapineria, evacuated on Friday to escape to the out-of-control fire west of Madrid.

Like some 200 other people, she found refuge in this large gymnasium in Villaviciosa de Odon, 30 kilometres from her home in the capital's suburbs.

Even tens of kilometres away from the blaze ravaging the Madrid countryside, the sky remained hazy with smoke on Saturday morning before the winds cleared the air.

The historic El Escorial monastery — a major tourist attraction — was shrouded in a grayish, smoke-filled mist.

The fire has "surpassed all possible and imaginable limits", said Mar Nicolas, mayor of the nearby small town of Brunete, which is hosting around a hundred evacuees.

"The priority" was "saving lives", she said, though she made no secret of her concern regarding "the immense natural disaster this is causing".

Inside the Villaviciosa de Odon gymnasium, volunteers tried to keep children occupied with games and colouring activities,

while others distributed meals after the evacuees had spent their first night sleeping on cots.

The volunteers "are taking good care of us; we were given blankets and facilities to shower", Elvira Menendez said.

"I'm 80 years old and I've never seen anything like this," she said. As the flames advanced, she was terrified that her "whole life" would go up in smoke.

By Saturday, the fire had already ravaged more than 25,000 hectares, and some 60,000 people had to be evacuated from her home in the Madrid region and the province of Avila.

Victoria Hurtado, a 61-year-old home care worker, had to flee Chapineria with the elderly, sick man she cares for daily.

The two of them only had time to grab a small bag each, containing a few clothes and some medication.

"They welcomed us with open arms," she told AFP, though the uncertainty over when she might be able to return home still worried her.

But she remained optimistic, hopeful that the situation will improve "because firefighters are working night and day to put out the fire".

The fierce fires ravaging parts of France and Spain are the result of forests and vegetation becoming more flammable because of drought and a series of record-breaking heat-

waves that have hit Western Europe since May.

Antonio-Luis Rodriguez spent the night in the Villaviciosa de Odon sports hall with his son.

Having left with only the clothes he stood in, he was consumed with worry for his dog, left behind at his farm on the outskirts of the village of San Martin de Valdeiglesia, which was also evacuated.

Deeply affected by the ordeal and still in shock, the 48-year-old did not mince his words regarding the authorities, who he believes failed to sufficiently clear the undergrowth in the surrounding countryside.

"It rained a lot this winter; the pastures were very overgrown," Rodriguez said. He also lamented the fact that so many farms in Spain have been abandoned.

As a result, fallow fields are in a "deplorable state, and at the slightest spark, the blaze spreads like wildfire" due to vegetation dried out by the heat.

He put sheep in his fields when the grass was tall so they would clear away the vegetation, he said. Thanks to their grazing, he believed his farm was still standing, even if he knew "the surrounding plots were reduced to ash".

He was convinced that keeping more herds of goats and sheep in the mountains "would really help a lot" in controlling wildfires.

Palestinian officials say Israeli settlers torch 2 mosques in West Bank

QUSRA, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Palestinian officials said Israeli settlers set fire to two mosques in the occupied West Bank overnight on Sunday, after deadly clashes in the territory left six people dead this week.

Violence in the Israeli-occupied West Bank has surged since the Gaza war began with Hamas' October 7, 2023 surprise attack on Israel.

Abdel Azim Wadi, mayor of the town of Qusra, south of Nablus, told AFP that settlers torched a mosque under construction in the southern part of the town.

"The fire destroyed the mosque's entrance and even damaged its stonework," Wadi said.

He added that the attackers spray-painted Hebrew graffiti on the mosque's walls, including the word "revenge".

The Israeli military said troops were dispatched to the outskirts of Qusra after receiving a report that a mosque had been set ablaze.

"The soldiers searched for suspects who had fled prior to their arrival and identified signs of arson and graffiti at the scene," it said, adding that Israeli police would investigate and collect evidence.

In a separate incident, Israeli settlers set fire to a mosque in the village of Kour, near Tulkarem, and spray painted racist slogans on its walls, according to the Palestinian ministry of endowments and religious affairs.

The ministry said "groups of settlers burned a mosque in the village of Kour in Tulkarem governorate and wrote racist slogans on its walls".



A Palestinian man prepares to pray at a mosque allegedly burned by Israeli settlers in the village of Qusra, south of Nablus in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Sunday

burned a mosque in the village of Kour in Tulkarem governorate and wrote racist slogans on its walls".

Deadly clashes

On Friday, deadly clashes broke out between Israeli settlers and Palestinians in the village of Tell that left four Palestinians and two Israelis dead.

The Israeli military subsequently raided the city of Nablus and several nearby towns, announcing the arrest of dozens of Palestinians as it launched what it described as a "counter-terrorism" operation in

the West Bank.

On Saturday, the city had largely ground to a halt, with long queues of vehicles forming at petrol stations as fuel supplies dwindled, an AFP journalist reported.

Late on Sunday, the military said its troops had apprehended more than 130 wanted individuals across the West Bank over the weekend.

They included "weapons traffickers, Hamas terrorist operatives, individuals involved in incitement and terrorists planning to carry out imminent attacks", it said.

According to the military, troops operated at

hundreds of locations and questioned hundreds of suspects.

The military also said troops had mapped the homes of two Palestinians it identified as being responsible for Friday's clashes.

It added that it had observed "an increase in incitement on Palestinian social media platforms, alongside growing motivation to carry out copycat terrorist attacks".

Also on Sunday, a funeral was held for Major Yuval Ezra, one of the two Israelis killed in the Friday clashes, following the burial in the West Bank on Saturday of the

four Palestinian men killed.

Since the start of the Gaza war, at least 1,097 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli troops or settlers, according to Palestinian figures.

Official Israeli data shows that at least 48 Israelis, both civilians and security personnel, have been killed in attacks by Palestinians or during Israeli military operations.

Excluding occupied East Jerusalem, around 3 million Palestinians live in the West Bank alongside more than 500,000 Israelis residing in settlements that are illegal under international law.

PM visits Aqaba, launches gas projects, hails UNESCO listing

Continued from page 1

The station forms part of the government's strategy to reduce energy costs in industrial cities by between 35 and 60 per cent. Phase one of the Quweira Industrial City project, covering more than 300 dunnums, included infrastructure works and a pressure reduction and

metering station connected to the Arab Gas Pipeline at a cost of JD25 million, according to the statement.

The prime minister also inaugurated a second natural gas station in Aqaba's Southern Industrial Zone. Completed in nearly 10 months at a cost of JD3.5 million, the facility is intended

to lower energy costs and support national industries.

The two stations are expected to supply factories in Aqaba with cleaner and more sustainable energy, helping reduce production costs, improve industrial competitiveness and attract investment in line with the Economic Modernisa-

tion Vision.

Hassan also laid the foundation stone for an onshore regasification unit at the Sheikh Sabah Liquefied Natural Gas Terminal. The project, valued at nearly JD90 million, is scheduled for completion by mid-2027 and will have a capacity of up to 700 million cubic feet per day.

The facility will serve as a strategic alternative to the existing Floating Storage and Regasification Unit, strengthening Jordan's energy security by diversifying supply sources, expanding storage capacity and reducing operating costs for the National Electric Power Company, the statement said.

Risha gas field output expected to surpass Jordan's grid demand by 2029 — minister

Continued from page 1

Technical studies are also under way for future connections to the Mafraq Development Zone and the New Zarqa

Industrial Zone.

The expansion of natural gas distribution is expected to increase demand for locally produced gas from the Risha field, operated by

the National Petroleum Company. The company has already awarded tenders for the drilling of 80 wells and is preparing another tender to build a pipeline linking the field

to the Arab Gas Pipeline. Kharabshah also pointed to the recently inaugurated onshore regasification unit in Aqaba as a key part of Jordan's gas infrastruc-

ture. The facility will replace the rented floating storage unit by converting imported liquefied natural gas into pipeline-ready gas for distribution.

France, Spain battle 'unpredictable' wildfires as 325,000 evacuated

Continued from page 1

Meanwhile, French weather forecasters say another heatwave could hit the country starting Tuesday, with temperatures reaching 40°C in parts of the country.

At least 240 homes have been destroyed in surrounding areas, many of them in the village of Le Porge. But Bordeaux's mayor said there were no plans to evacuate the city's urban area, home to 850,000 people and currently sheltering thousands evacuated from zones close by.

Though the fire was 15 kilometres from Bordeaux's suburbs, it "is largely to the south. It is not advancing on the

western side", said the mayor, Thomas Cazenave, adding that local officials remained "vigilant".

But France's defence ministry said it has taken special steps to protect industrial sites in the Bordeaux region, a key centre of the country's aerospace industry.

The principal freeway to the south of Bordeaux and rail services have been cut.

Some 2,500 firefighters, 1,500 military personnel and around 1,200 police have been deployed to the Gironde region.

King decries damage

In Spain, the head of the civil protection service

said the country was fighting a "monster".

"Across this national wildfire crisis, we are dealing with a perimeter of 280 kilometres encompassing 77,000 hectares," Virginia Barcones told state broadcaster TVE.

King Felipe VI, visiting an emergency shelter for evacuees on Madrid's western outskirts, said the wildfires had caused "incalculable" damage to his country's natural heritage.

Around 75,000 residents have been evacuated from the Madrid region, Avila, Toledo and from the eastern region of Castellon in Valencia.

Olga Congacha, 50, who had to flee her

village of Robledo de Chavala west of Madrid with hastily grabbed documents and clothes, told AFP she felt "panicked" when told to leave her home.

"I didn't know whether to cry or what. It was a moment when you feel awful," she said.

She added she was allowed a brief visit to her house on Sunday to get medicine, to find it covered in ash and the streets deserted.

Authorities said winds were pushing the wildfires near Madrid to the south, away from the capital for now, but forcing more evacuations of villages in their path.

Hundreds of kilo-

metres away, the new Valencia fire was proving "very intense", Pilar Bernabe, the central government delegate to Valencia wrote on X.

On Saturday, one person was killed near Valencia in a separate, smaller fire.

That was the only civilian death so far reported in the wildfires. In France the death toll was two firefighters killed near Bordeaux on Tuesday.

Pope Leo IV, in his prayers on Sunday, expressed solidarity with all those affected by the "devastating" Spanish and French fires and called on people to pray for them and for first responders.

UN chief urges immediate removal of all Syria sanctions

Continued from page 1

Also in Damascus, he met members of the UN peacekeeping force deployed in the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights, as well as representatives of Syria's civil society, diverse communities, women and young people.

He also visited Sednaya prison near the capital, Syria's most notoriously brutal facility under Assad.

Since Sharaa took power, the international community has urged the new Islamist authorities to establish a governance system

that includes all components of Syria's multiethnic, multiconfessional society.

'I have no doubt to say this transition is going in the right direction'

"I have no doubt to say this transition is going in the right direction," Guterres said. He also reiterated

that "violations of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity are unacceptable", hours after Syrian state media said Israeli forces had carried out an incursion and artillery shelling in the country's south.

After Assad's overthrow, Israel sent troops into the UN-patrolled buffer zone that had separated Israeli and Syrian forces on the Israeli-occupied Golan since 1974.

It has also carried out strikes and repeated incursions deeper into southern Syria, where it seeks a broader demilitarised zone.

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Queen Rania Al Abdullah Street
P.O. Box 6710
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E mail: editor@jordantimes.com
jotimes@jordantimes.com
Website: jordantimes.com

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From the Gulf to Jordan: Iran’s search for new pressure points

By Amer Sabaileh

Jordan's entry into Iran's circle of direct targeting should not be viewed as an isolated development. Rather, it marks a new phase in the regional confrontation, one that is likely to deepen in the coming weeks as Tehran seeks to compensate for the strategic setbacks it has suffered across multiple theatres.



Amer Al Sabaileh

For years, Iran has treated the spread of instability and controlled chaos as a central pillar of its regional strategy. As its ability for manoeuvre in the Gulf has narrowed under growing military deterrence and an expanded Western presence, Tehran has increasingly shifted its attention towards countries such as Bahrain and Kuwait, calculating that any reduction or redeployment of US forces in the Gulf would inevitably increase Jordan's importance as a safer strategic hub.

From this perspective, Jordan becomes a natural target. It is not only one of Washington's closest strategic partners in the region but also occupies a pivotal geographical position in the regional security architecture, sharing Israel's longest land border and playing a central role in any future security arrangement.

At the same time, Tehran has closely monitored Jordan's domestic landscape since the outbreak of the Gaza war. This explains the growing Iranian political and media messaging directed at the Jordanian public, aimed at testing the resilience of the state while projecting the image that Iran still possesses the capacity to influence the stability of one of the region's most strategically important countries.

The objective extends well beyond threatening Israel directly. Tehran seeks to reinforce the perception that it remains capable of destabilising territories that are critical to both Western interests and Israel's security, despite the increasing pressure it faces across the region.

Jordan's principal challenge, however, remains internal. The absence of a strong and coherent national narrative has created space for regional actors from Hamas previously to Iran today to address the Jordanian public directly and compete for influence over public opinion. Strengthening a unifying national discourse has therefore become an essential component of protecting Jordan's internal front against external attempts at political and ideological penetration.

This does not necessarily mean that Jordan has become the logistical centre for US military operations against Iran. From Tehran's perspective, the issue goes far beyond the presence of American forces. Iranian efforts to pressure Jordan predate current military developments and have long included weapons and narcotics smuggling networks operating through Syria and Iraq. This suggests that Jordan is targeted not because of temporary military deployments, but because of its broader strategic value within the American regional architecture and Israel's security environment.

With the gradual erosion of what Iran once described as the "Unity of Fronts" strategy, and the containment of several of its traditional theatres of influence, Tehran may increasingly view the opening of new fronts as the most practical means of restoring its deterrence. In this context, Jordan emerges as one of the arenas capable of generating pressure on both Israel and the United States.

At the same time, the Houthi front appears set to regain greater strategic importance, whether through renewed threats to international shipping in the Red Sea or increased pressure on Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Available indicators suggest that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has spent recent weeks reactivating this theatre after the declining effectiveness of both the Lebanese and Syrian fronts.

In Iraq, Iran is also likely to continue relying on non-traditional armed groups capable of conducting limited operations while preserving a degree of plausible deniability. Simultaneously, the West Bank may remain a potential arena for reviving what remains of the "Unity of Fronts" concept. Despite the diversity of these theatres, they all serve the same strategic objective: Expanding regional instability as an instrument of political leverage.

Yet, there are clear limits to this strategy. The international community is unlikely to tolerate sustained attacks on global maritime navigation or the normalisation of maritime piracy. Such tactics may provide Tehran with temporary leverage, but they could equally become the catalyst for rebuilding a broader and more cohesive international coalition. With Britain moving closer to the American position and existing maritime coalitions already in place, Europe may also find itself compelled to move beyond its largely reactive posture towards a more active security role in the Red Sea and the Gulf.

The coming weeks are therefore likely to see a new phase of Iranian escalation, centred on expanding regional instability, increasing pressure on the Gulf states Jordan and opening additional theatres of tension designed to burden both the region and its strategic partners, particularly the United States.

Public debt: Its impact on the economy

By Haider Majali

Public debt is defined as the money borrowed by a government to finance its expenditures, and it has various implications for the national economy. When borrowed funds are directed toward financing infrastructure and productive projects, borrowing can stimulate economic growth and positively affect different aspects of life. On the other hand, when borrowed funds are used for non-productive purposes, their impact on the economy can be negative. The accumulation of debt leads to higher costs and interest on domestic and international borrowing and may reduce government spending on healthcare and education, thereby slowing economic growth and harming the economy.

Economic analysis generally measures the size of public debt by comparing it with Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which represents the total value of goods and services produced by a country. The debt level is considered moderate and safe as long as the debt-to-GDP ratio remains within internationally accepted limits. However, when it rises significantly above those levels, it becomes a substantial burden. Therefore, the real risk does not lie merely in the total amount of debt, but rather in its size relative to the economy.

Public debt has different effects, including positive effects such as supporting economic growth, enabling governments to build infrastructure projects, creating employment opportunities and financing responses to crises to overcome periods of economic recession. However, excessive borrowing can have negative consequences. These include increasing borrowing costs and crowding out the private sector in commercial lending to individuals and businesses, which con-

tributes to higher financing costs. It also increases the government's debt-servicing burden. Public debt may also affect inflation and taxation negatively. Governments may resort to printing money or raising taxes to meet debt obligations, which can reduce citizens' purchasing power. Another negative consequence is the potential loss of economic sovereignty.

The report also indicated that public debt levels have maintained a considerable degree of stability over recent years despite the challenges and geopolitical circumstances affecting the region

When countries borrow excessively, creditors, such as international financial institutions, may impose strict conditions whose consequences can be borne directly by citizens.

For these reasons, public debt becomes a concern when it exceeds safe limits. Interest payments may consume a large share of government resources that could otherwise be spent on public services. Excessive debt can also expose a country to financial crises and

drain the state budget because of the interest payment. These financial pressures may ultimately affect citizens directly on raising taxes or interest rates. However, Public debt should not necessarily be considered alarming when it is used to finance productive projects that increase government or national income, when the debt-to-GDP ratio remains within safe limits, and when government revenues grow faster than debt obligations.

Economic growth is decisive factor in the public debt equation. It is considered a positive indicator when the economy grows at a rate higher than the interest rate on the debt. This contributes to the strength of the local currency and demonstrates the country's ability to meet its financial obligations more easily.

Therefore, debt-to-GDP ratio is important because a country's ability to repay its debts is assessed by comparing its total debt with the overall size of its economy. Developed economies may be able to sustain debt levels equivalent to 70 per cent to 80 per cent of GDP, while emerging markets countries generally prefer lower ratios.

Reliance on domestic debt, is generally less risky than external debt because it is not exposed to fluctuations in foreign currencies and does not impose foreign-currency pressures on the domestic economy.

In general, the cost of servicing public debt, including the amounts allocated to paying debt principal and interest, should remain manageable and ideally represent only a limited proportion of total public expenditure.

At the local level, Jordan's public debt balance has risen to approximately JD49.508 billion, including an increase of JD1.831 billion since beginning of the year, representing approximately 108.8 per

cent of GDP when Social Security Investment Fund holdings are included. The debt balance excluding approximately JD11.821 billion of Social Security money stands at around JD37.687 billion, according to recently published government report. The data indicated that the calculation of the public debt balance follows internationally adopted standards.

The report also indicated that public debt levels have maintained a considerable degree of stability over recent years despite the challenges and geopolitical circumstances affecting the region. International agencies have praised Jordan's measures and its ability to meet financial obligations both domestically and internationally. Furthermore, the report clarified that the increase in public debt has resulted from the government's reliance on borrowing instruments to meet its financial requirements, finance the budget deficit, cover losses incurred by certain public institutions such as the National Electric Power Company, and issuance of new bonds.

I believe Jordan needs a constructive economic recovery and reform plan aimed at reducing the public debt ratio to below 70 per cent of GDP. Such a plan should be aligned with the Economic Modernisation Vision and should focus on creating economic opportunities that contribute to increasing income levels. Meanwhile, the government has announced that it is working to reduce the public debt ratio to 80 per cent of GDP by 2028. However, the mechanism of reduction has not been clearly explained, nor have sufficient justifications been provided regarding the proposed action plan for reaching the stated target.

Haider Majali is finance and investment expert

Rethinking education in the age of artificial intelligence: From answers to better questions

By Zaid K.Maaytah

Artificial intelligence has rapidly become part of the classroom, students now use AI to explain concepts, solve mathematical problems, summarize textbooks and draft assignments within seconds, much of the discussion has focused on plagiarism and academic integrity, but these concerns overlook a far more important question, if students can access answers almost instantly, what should schools teach them that artificial intelligence cannot?

The answer is not less knowledge, knowledge remains the foundation of education, students still need to understand mathematics, science, languages, history and every other subject before they can apply what they learn, however, artificial intelligence has changed one important aspect of learning, finding answers is no longer the greatest challenge, knowing

what to ask has become equally important, education must therefore evolve from rewarding students only for producing correct answers to helping them develop the ability to ask better questions.

Anyone who has experimented with artificial intelligence quickly discovers that the quality of the response depends almost entirely on the quality of the prompt, a vague request produces a generic answer, while a clear and well-structured question generates responses that are more accurate, relevant and useful, writing such a prompt is not simply a technical skill, it requires students to define their objective, organise their thoughts, provide context, and identify exactly what information they need, before artificial intelligence begins thinking, the student must think first.

This is where schools have an opportunity to adapt, teaching students how to ask better questions should become a deliberate

part of education rather than an accidental outcome of it, students should learn how to break complex problems into smaller questions, refine a prompt when the response is unsatisfactory, verify the accuracy of AI-generated information, and recognise the difference between an acceptable answer and a meaningful one, teachers could incorporate simple classroom exercises in which students compare different prompts for the same task, analyse why one produces a stronger response than another, and progressively improve their questions through discussion and feedback, just as students learn how to write an essay or solve an equation, they can also learn how to construct questions that lead to better thinking, these are practical skills that will determine whether artificial intelligence becomes a shortcut for completing assignments or a powerful tool for learning.

The benefits extend well beyond

artificial intelligence, learning how to formulate thoughtful questions strengthens curiosity, encourages deeper understanding, and develops the habit of exploring ideas rather than accepting information at face value, students who know how to ask better questions become more independent learners because they take ownership of their learning instead of waiting to be told what to think, these are abilities that will remain valuable regardless of how technology continues to evolve.

Artificial intelligence has changed the way students learn, and education must change with it, schools will always have the responsibility of teaching knowledge, but they must now give equal attention to teaching students how to seek that knowledge effectively, in the age of artificial intelligence, success will depend not only on knowing the right answers, but on asking the right questions.

From neutrality to strategy

Mohammad Abu Rumman

The recent Jordanian-Gulf statement condemning the Iranian attacks and reaffirming states' right to self-defence came after Iranian strikes expanded against Jordan and the Gulf, while pressure on maritime security in the Gulf intensified. On one level, the statement can be read as a political response to those attacks. More importantly, however, it reflects a growing recognition that the region has moved beyond the post-war phase and entered a new strategic environment with different priorities, dynamics, and calculations.

Over recent months, regional debate centred on Iran's nuclear programme, the future of understandings between Washington and Tehran, and the scale of military exchanges between Iran and Israel. Today, however, the centre of gravity has shifted to the Strait of Hormuz and, increasingly, the Bab Al Mandeb Strait — placing the strategic interests of the Gulf states, and the arteries of global energy and commerce, at the heart of the conflict.

Viewed from this perspective, the Jordanian-Gulf statement appears less like a routine diplomatic declaration and more like an acknowledgement that one regional phase has ended and another has begun. During the recent war, the Gulf states and Jordan adopted a policy of

constructive neutrality and damage containment. That approach made strategic sense when the confrontation revolved around Iran's nuclear programme and direct military exchanges. Once Hormuz and Bab Al Mandeb become the principal theatres of confrontation, however, the assumptions of the previous phase no longer hold. The danger is no longer passing through the region; it is directly targeting it.

This transformation becomes even more significant as the geographical scope of the conflict expands into the Red Sea through the Houthis, effectively linking the region's two most critical maritime chokepoints into a single strategic equation. That equation threatens not only oil exports and global trade but also redefines the very concept of regional security.

Within this new environment, Jordan's strategic importance becomes increasingly evident. The recent war demonstrated, more clearly than ever, that Jordanian and Gulf security are deeply interconnected. Jordan is no longer merely the Gulf's geographical hinterland; it has become an integral component of its security architecture because of its location, its military and security capabilities, and its role in preserving regional stability. Conversely, Gulf stability is no longer simply an economic interest for Jordan; it has become a fundamental

pillar of Jordan's national security. Any future regional security framework will therefore remain incomplete without Jordan as a central participant.

Recognising these shifts does not imply advocating confrontation with Iran. On the contrary, the policy of neutrality adopted by Jordan and the Gulf states during the recent war proved both prudent and responsible, sparing the region costs far greater than the significant economic losses it nevertheless sustained. Yet, maintaining neutrality should not mean remaining absent from shaping the region's emerging security order. There is an important distinction between staying out of a war and staying out of the negotiations that define its aftermath.

This is where the real challenge lies. The objective should not be the creation of another military bloc but the articulation of an independent political and strategic position rooted in the shared national interests of Jordan and the Gulf states. Such a position should engage both Washington and Tehran without becoming dependent on either. The future of the Strait of Hormuz and Bab Al Mandeb cannot be treated as an exclusively American-Iranian matter; it is, first and foremost, an Arab issue, since the costs of either escalation or accommodation will be borne primarily by the states of the region.

Such strategic independence also requires a balanced assessment of regional threats. While Iranian policies in Hormuz and Bab Al Mandeb present an immediate challenge to Arab security, the regional project pursued by Benjamin Netanyahu — aimed at establishing Israeli strategic, political, and security dominance across the Middle East — poses no lesser challenge over the longer term. Aligning fully with either project will not produce genuine Arab security; it will merely replace one form of dependency with another.

The central challenge, therefore, is not simply how to respond to the current escalation, but how to formulate an independent regional vision before the next political settlement takes shape. Whether through an American-Iranian understanding or an Israeli-led restructuring of the regional order, any future arrangement reached without an effective Arab role will once again be negotiated at the expense of the region itself.

Indeed, these developments may accelerate the emergence of a broader Arab-Islamic strategic axis — bringing together Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, Pakistan, Jordan, and Syria — to articulate the collective interests of these states and secure them a seat at the table where the region's future will be decided, rather than allowing others to decide that future on their behalf.

Monday, July 27, 2026



President of the Jordan and Amman Chambers of Commerce, Khalil Haj Tawfiq, hold talks in London with Secretary General of the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce Rita Massoud to explore avenues for deepening economic cooperation

Jordan, UK business leaders map strategy to boost trade, investment ties

AMMAN (JT) — President of the Jordan and Amman Chambers of Commerce, Khalil Haj Tawfiq, held talks in London with Secretary General of the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce (ABCC) Rita Massoud to explore avenues for deepening economic cooperation between Jordan and the United Kingdom.

Meeting at the ABCC headquarters, the two sides discussed frameworks to expand the presence of Jordanian enterprises within British markets while driving foreign direct investment into the Kingdom, according to a statement issued on Sunday by the Jordan Chamber of Commerce.

Haj Tawfiq, who also serves on the ABCC board, emphasised the need for a structured, institutional roadmap that aligns priorities, connects business communities in both nations and translates prospective opportunities into concrete commercial ventures.

He outlined key sectors with high growth potential, including informa-

tion technology, tourism, engineering and advisory services, logistics, halal goods, creative industries, pharmaceuticals and agrifood processing.

Future initiatives will focus on high-yield sectors, targeted B2B networking, market access support...

Haj Tawfiq called for a comprehensive matrix mapping UK market demands against Jordanian goods and services holding a competitive edge. Parallel efforts, he added, should highlight Jordan's investment incentives to potential investors.

Haj Tawfiq praised the chamber for bridging business communities, providing market intelligence and uncovering new trade channels. He also stressed the importance of human capital development, advocating for joint training programmes, British corporate apprenticeships for Jordanian youth, and labour market data exchanges to better match skill sets with UK industry needs.

For her part, Massoud reaffirmed the ABCC's commitment to partnering with the Jordan and Amman Chambers of Commerce to launch targeted programmes.

Future initiatives will focus on high-yield sectors, targeted B2B networking, market access support, sector-specific trade missions, and bilateral delegation exchanges.

Established in 1975, the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce serves as a primary pillar promoting trade, investment, and commercial partnerships between the United Kingdom and Arab nations.

INTERVIEW

Geopolitical uncertainty keeps Jordan's gold market on edge — JJSJO

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — Escalating geopolitical tensions, global economic uncertainty and shifting investor sentiment continue to shape gold prices and consumer behaviour in Jordan, according to Akram Shehab, member of the administrative board of the Jordanian Jewelers Syndicate (JJSJO).

In an interview with The Jordan Times, Shehab said that developments in international politics remain the primary driver of gold price volatility, leaving both traders and consumers uncertain about the direction of the market.

"Global prices are fluctuating because of ongoing geopolitical tensions, particularly the conflict involving the United States and Iran," he said. "Markets are reacting to every development, and people simply do not know what will happen next."

Shehab noted that periods of military confrontation and subsequent diplomatic developments have created sharp swings in international gold markets, with investors closely monitoring every geopolitical signal.

Beyond regional tensions, broader global economic factors, including US monetary policy, inflation concerns and movements in the US dollar, continue to influence gold prices worldwide, with direct implications for Jordan's market.

Shehab said that political developments in Washington have heightened uncertainty for investors, contributing to sharp market fluctuations.



The selling price of a gram of 21-Karat gold on the local market on Sunday stand at JD83.1 in goldsmiths' shops, compared with JD79.1 for buying according to Al Mamlaka TV

"The uncertainty has caused significant losses in financial markets, forcing many investors to liquidate assets," he said, adding that market volatility has weighed heavily on investor confidence.

Domestically, Jordan's gold market has experienced a noticeable slowdown compared with previous years.

"There is a general slump in demand," Shehab said, attributing the decline to uncertainty over whether regional conflicts could widen.

"The market is volatile, it improves at times and then falls again."

The surge in gold prices has also altered consumer behaviour.

According to Shehab, purchases of gold jewellery have become largely

confined to essential social occasions such as weddings and engagements, with consumers limiting purchases because of concerns over continued price fluctuations.

"Buying gold jewellery has become very limited. People are only making small purchases when necessary."

He added that investment patterns have also shifted.

"While gold coins and lira pieces were previously popular among retail investors, their appeal has declined."

He said that people are no longer buying gold coins as much as they used to. "Instead, many are turning to silver bullion as a more affordable investment."

Shehab said that predicting the future direction of gold prices remains exceptionally difficult, given the number of political and economic variables affecting global markets.

"Political stability is far too uncertain. No analyst can accurately predict developments involving major economies such as China and India or the impact of central bank gold reserves."

Despite the uncertainty, he believes gold will continue to attract investors seeking protection against global economic turbulence.

"There is economic turmoil around the world. People are increasingly turning to gold as a safe haven to preserve their savings."

Market analysts broadly agree that the outlook for gold will depend on a combination of geopolitical developments, central bank policies, inflation trends and the trajectory of US interest rates, all of which will continue to influence investor sentiment in the months ahead.

The selling price of a gram of 21-Karat gold on the local market on Sunday stood at JD83.1 in goldsmiths' shops, compared with JD79.1 for buying, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

According to the General Syndicate of Jeweller and Jewellery Shop Owners, the selling price per gram of 24-Karat and 18-Karat gold at goldsmiths' shops stood at JD95.1 and JD73.2, respectively.

Gov't expands natural gas network to boost industrial competitiveness — minister

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources is advancing a series of strategic projects to expand natural gas supplies to industrial clusters across the Kingdom as part of the Economic Modernisation Vision, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Saleh Kharabsheh said on Sunday.

In a press statement, Kharabsheh said the initiative aims to reduce energy costs, strengthen the competitiveness of Jordan's industrial sector and enhance the security of energy supplies.

The government is working to diversify energy sources at reasonable costs, he said, noting that replacing diesel with natural gas can reduce fuel costs for industries by up to 50 per cent.

Kharabsheh said the natural gas network has already been extended to the Qastal Industrial Zone and Hashemiyeh.

He added that Prime Minister Jafar Hassan recently inaugurated a pressure reduction and metering station in the Ouweirah Industrial Zone, along with the southern region station in Aqaba, enabling factories to receive natural gas and supporting efforts to attract new industrial investments.

The minister said work is under way to extend the natural gas network to the Muwaqqar Industrial Zone and the Maan



The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources is advancing a series of strategic projects to expand natural gas supplies to industrial clusters across the Kingdom says Energy and Mineral Resources Minister

Development Zone.

He added that a consultancy services agreement has been signed to prepare the technical studies needed to supply gas to the Mafraq Development Zone and the new industrial zone in Zarqa, with the projects across the targeted industrial clusters expected to be completed within three years.

To serve industrial facilities located outside major industrial zones, the ministry is also establishing compressed natural gas (CNG) stations, Kharabsheh said. The stations will compress natural gas and transport it by tanker to factories and other economic sectors.

On domestic production, Kharabsheh said development of the Risha gas field is progressing according to schedule.

He noted that the National Petroleum Company is implementing a programme to drill 80 wells, with the goal of increasing production to around 418 million cubic feet per day by 2029, exceeding the electricity sector's current daily demand of 330 to 340 million cubic feet.

He added that the ministry is constructing a pipeline linking the Risha field to the Arab Gas Pipeline to strengthen the Kingdom's gas infrastructure and facilitate

the use of locally produced natural gas.

Kharabsheh also highlighted the newly inaugurated regasification plant, describing it as a key component of Jordan's permanent energy infrastructure. The facility converts imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) into its gaseous state for transmission through the national pipeline network.

He said the plant replaces the floating storage unit used in previous years, providing a permanent solution that enhances the flexibility and reliability of the Kingdom's natural gas supply system.

Industrial exports rise 8.2% in first five months of 2026 — JCI

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's industrial exports grew by 8.2 per cent during the first five months of 2026, reaching JD3.668 billion compared with JD3.392 billion during the same period last year, according to figures released Sunday by the Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI).

The Chamber said the JD277 million increase reflects the sector's continued resilience and growing competitiveness despite regional and global economic challenges,

supported by market diversification and higher-value industrial products.

Exports posted strong growth in several international markets, including Switzerland (306.1 per cent), China (62.7 per cent), The Netherlands (60.1 per cent) and Belgium (42.3 per cent).

Among Arab markets, exports increased to Syria (38.3 per cent), the UAE (27.3 per cent), Palestine (19.9 per cent) and Qatar (11.2 per cent), the Jordan News Agency, Petra,

reported.

Jordanian products expanded into emerging markets such as Kenya, Indonesia, Pakistan, South Africa and Argentina.

The growth was driven by higher exports of key industrial products, including raw potash, fertilisers, iron and steel products, organic chemicals, copper, aluminium, cement and other manufactured goods.

The JCI attributed the performance to Jordan's network of free

trade agreements, improved product quality and the ability of local manufacturers to meet international market requirements.

It said the diversification of export markets and products has strengthened the sector's resilience and called for continued efforts to enhance competitiveness, reduce production costs, expand trade promotion initiatives and open new markets to sustain export growth and support economic development.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

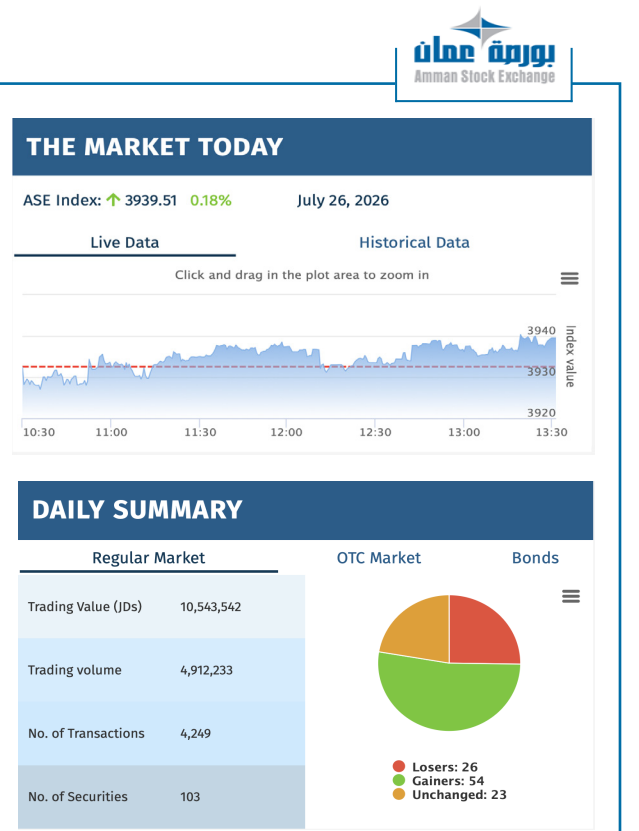
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Sunday amounted to JD10.5 million spread over 4.9 million shares that traded through 4,249 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.18 per cent, closing at 3939.51 points.

Out of 103 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 54 companies rose while the share price of another 26 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Amad Investment and Real Estate Development by 7.33 per cent, Jordan Worsted Mills by 6.76 per cent, Masafat for Specialised Transport by 6.41 per cent, International Arabian Development and Investment Trading Company by 5.56 per cent, and First Insurance by 4.8 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Sabaek Invest Company Plc. by 3.9 per cent, Sinjora Food Industries Plc. by 3.53 per cent, Transport and Investment Barter Company by 3.13 per cent, High Performance Real Estate Investments by 2.86 per cent, and Professional Company for Real Estate Investment and Housing by 2.27 per cent.



ACCIDENT

Two Bosnian climbers killed, three missing on Russia's highest peak

MOSCOW (AFP) — Two Bosnian climbers died and three were missing in bad weather on Russia's highest mountain, Mount Elbrus, authorities and state media said on Sunday. Seven people made an attempt on Saturday on the 5,642 high peak in the Russian Caucasus, but one returned to base to report two people were sick, a prosecutor in Bardino-Balkaria said. A rescue operation found two bodies and was looking for three more climbers, the prosecutor added. Tass news agency said that two of the seven had been rescued but that the bodies of the two dead had not been brought down because of bad weather. Bosnia's Foreign Minister Elmedin Konakovic confirmed reports of the deaths which he called "a major tragedy".

FORMULA ONE

Malaysia steps in to host Bahrain F1 GP in October

BUDAPEST (AFP) — The Bahrain Grand Prix, which was cancelled in April due to the Middle East war, will be held in Malaysia in early October, Formula One organisers announced on Sunday. Formula 1 and the FIA can confirm that Malaysia will host the... Bahrain Grand Prix at the Sepang International Circuit from October 2-4 2026," F1 and motorsport's world governing body said in a statement. The original F1 calendar featured 24 races but those in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia were cancelled because of the war. Upcoming events in neighbouring Qatar and Abu Dhabi also remain in doubt. Sepang circuit, to the south of Kuala Lumpur, returns to the calendar for the first time since 2017 to host what will be called the "Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix in Malaysia". "This is fantastic news for our fans. They will continue to enjoy a full and exciting Formula 1 calendar, while also seeing the sport return to a great venue," said Formula One chief executive Stefano Domenicali. "Malaysia is an incredible country, and Sepang holds a special place in Formula 1 history. It will provide a spectacular setting for racing and an unforgettable experience for fans at the circuit and watching around the world." Uncertainty still hangs over the end of the season, as the last two rounds are supposed to take place in Qatar and Abu Dhabi on November 29 and December 6. These two races could be cancelled, and several options are on the table to replace them, such as staging two consecutive Grands Prix in Las Vegas at the end of November, or even holding one or two final races in Europe.

LONDON (AFP) — Eddie Hearn says the long-awaited showdown between British heavy-weight rivals Tyson Fury and Anthony Joshua must take place in the UK under the terms of the fight deal signed three months ago.

Saudi boxing chief Turki Alalshikh reportedly wants to stage the fight — which is expected to take place in October or November — at a time that would attract the largest global audience.

But were the fight to take place at Wembley Stadium, any plans to stage the bout with a 2:00 am (2:00 GMT) start would require an exemption to the London venue's curfew restrictions.

There is now talk the fight could take place at New York's Madison Square Garden.

But Hearn, the promoter of Joshua, insists his man has signed up for a UK fight only and the contract would have to be renegotiated to move elsewhere.

"There's a reason we put contracts together," Hearn said after Joshua's second-round stoppage of Kristian Prenga in Jeddah on Saturday kept him on course for a Fury showdown, little more than 24 hours after fellow former world heavyweight champion had stopped Mariusz Wach in Thailand.

He added: "We insisted that this fight was in the UK. I know that AJ will sometimes want to be a little bit of a peace-



Britain's Anthony Joshua (left) and Albania's Kristian Prenga trade blows during their heavyweight boxing fight at the Jeddah Superdome in Jeddah on Sunday

keeper, but the reality is he said to me, 'I want the fight in the UK. This is a British fight'. I can't agree more.

"Turki Alalshikh is our partner and has been an unbelievable supporter of Anthony Joshua... We would have conversa-

tions, but the only way the fight doesn't take place in England is if Anthony Joshua and myself agree to it because we have a legally binding contract that took a long, long time to negotiate

"Let's be honest this

is a fight for the British public."

Joshua insisted Wembley, a 90,000 capacity stadium in north London best known as the headquarters of English football, was the only choice for his fight with Fury.

"When these conversations started, there was no other venue or location that was ever mentioned," he said. "It was simple. This is the road map. You fight, come back, fight, and then providing you're victorious, you'll be fight-

ing Tyson Fury in the UK, basically Wembley. "I wouldn't expect it to be at Tottenham [Hotspur Stadium] or the Principality Stadium [Cardiff] respectfully. It's just got that history when you think of Wembley."

FAMILY FLAVOURS MAGAZINE

THE JORDAN TIMES

LIFE

Beyond the scale: Obesity as a disease-misconceptions about weight loss medications

By Dr Naser Gharaibeh

Endocrinologist and obesity medicine consultant Valley Health System – New Jersey, USA metabolic medicine and weight loss director

Many people still see obesity as a personal failure. They assume that a person simply eats too much, exercises too little or lacks will-power.

This view is outdated and harmful.

Obesity is a chronic disease influenced by genetics, hormones, sleep, stress, medications, food access and the environment in which we live. Like diabetes or high blood pressure, it often requires long term care. More than 1 billion people worldwide now live with obesity, making it one of today's greatest public health challenges. As an endocrinologist and obesity medicine physician with a focus on menopause care, I see its effects every day. I also see what happens when we stop blaming people and start offering proper treatment.

A disease, not a lack of discipline. Our bodies defend their weight more strongly than most people realise. When a person loses weight, hunger can increase and the body may burn fewer calories. This is not an excuse or a sign of weakness. It is biology.

Genes also affect appetite, fullness, fat storage and the way the body responds to food. Sleep



deprivation, stress, certain medications and hormonal conditions may add to the problem.

Where a family lives also matters. Some communities have safe parks, affordable fresh food and easy access to healthcare. Others do not. Work schedules, income, transport and caregiving responsibilities can all affect a person's ability to manage their health.

Telling someone to "eat less and move more" ignores this reality.

Are we starting to turn the tide?

Obesity rates remain high and continue to rise in many parts of the world. Yet there are early signs of change in some populations.

A large analysis published in 2024 found a small decline in obesity among American adults in 2023, the first recorded decline in more than a decade. However, other national data

still show that about four in ten American adults live with obesity. One encouraging change does not mean that the problem has been solved. It does show that progress may be possible.

Public awareness is improving. Healthcare professionals understand the disease better. Families are talking more openly about weight, food, sleep and mental health. We also have more treatment options than we had a decade ago.

No single medication or public policy will solve obesity. However, changes across schools, workplaces, healthcare systems and communities can add up. When society changes the environment and provides effective treatment, people have a better chance of improving their health.

More than 'weight loss medications'

The phrase "weight loss medication" can be mis-

leading. It makes the treatment sound cosmetic, as though its only purpose is to change someone's appearance.

I prefer the term anti-obesity medication.

These medications treat a chronic disease and may improve many of its complications.

Obesity can affect the body in several ways:

Metabolic complications include type 2 diabetes, fatty liver disease, high blood pressure and abnormal cholesterol levels.

Physical complications include sleep apnoea, joint pain, reduced mobility and difficulty completing everyday activities.

Emotional and social complications may include low confidence, anxiety, depression, isolation and the effects of weight related stigma.

Antiobesity medications are not antidepressants, and they do not directly treat every condition on this list. However, treating obesity may improve blood sugar, liver health, breathing during sleep, mobility and overall quality of life. Some medications now have specific approvals for conditions such as obstructive sleep apnoea in adults with obesity.

The goal is not simply to produce a lower number on the scale. The goal is to help the person live a healthier and more active life.

GLP 1 medications are

only one option

GLP 1 medications have received enormous attention because they can produce significant weight loss and improve several health conditions.

They are not the only anti-obesity medications. Other medicines work through different pathways and metabolic surgery remains an important treatment for some people.

GLP 1 medications should not be treated as a desperate last resort. They are evidence based medical treatments for people who meet the appropriate criteria. They should also not be viewed as a quick solution for anyone who wants to lose a few kilograms.

Marketing and social media have created two opposite problems.

Some people use these medications without a clear medical need or proper follow up. Others who have obesity and serious health complications cannot obtain them because of cost, limited insurance coverage or availability. The World Health Organisation has warned that access remains unequal, even as production expands.

Buying unapproved products or taking doses without proper guidance also carries real risks. Health authorities have reported dosing mistakes, severe side effects and hospital admissions linked to some compounded GLP 1

products.

Medication does not replace lifestyle

I regularly meet people whose lives have changed after starting an antiobesity medication.

They may sleep better, move with less pain, control their diabetes or take part in family activities they once avoided. These results can be life changing.

However, medication does not replace healthy habits. It can make those habits more achievable by reducing hunger and helping a person feel full sooner.

Nutrition, physical activity, strength training, sleep and stress management remain the foundation of care. This foundation also protects muscle, supports bone health and helps the person maintain progress.

Good treatment requires more than a prescription. Depending on the person's needs, the care team may include a physician, dietitian, physical therapist, pharmacist and mental health professional.

The team should monitor side effects, blood pressure, blood sugar, nutrition, muscle health and other medications. Regular follow up also helps the person adjust the treatment safely.

Clinical guidelines recommend using antiobesity medications alongside lifestyle treatment, not instead of it.

Families and communities have a role

The words we use matter. Comments about body size, jokes about weight and constant criticism can push a person away from care. Weight stigma may cause people to avoid medical appointments, exercise in public or discuss their struggles with family members. Support does not mean policing someone's plate or repeatedly asking how much weight they have lost.

It means listening without judgement. It may mean preparing balanced meals together, joining a family member for a walk or helping them attend medical appointments. It also means recognising that treatment decisions belong to the patient and the healthcare team. Parents and caregivers should be especially careful when discussing weight around children and teenagers. The focus should remain on health, energy, strength and healthy routines, not shame or appearance.

What needs to happen next?

We need better public understanding of obesity as a disease.

We need more research into long term treatment, muscle preservation, mental health and the needs of different communities. We also need fair access

to evidence based medications for people who are likely to benefit from them. Most importantly, we must replace blame with proper care. Obesity is not a simple disease, and it will not have a simple solution. Medications are one part of treatment. Lifestyle, family support, community resources and regular medical care are equally important.

When we treat obesity seriously, safely and without judgement, we give people more than an opportunity to lose weight. We give them a better opportunity to regain their health.

Sidebar: Before starting an anti-obesity medication Ask these questions:

- Do I have a medical reason to take this medication?
- Who will monitor my progress and side effects?
- Could it interact with my other medications?
- How will I protect my nutrition, muscles and bone health?
- What is my plan for food, movement, strength training and sleep?
- How often will I have follow up appointments?
- What is the long term plan if the medication works?
- Never share medication, use someone else's prescription or change the dose without guidance from a qualified healthcare professional.

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