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Photo courtesy of the Foreign Ministry

Foreign ministers from Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Palestine, Egypt, Morocco, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey and Malaysia, along with the secretary-general of the Arab League, pose for a group photo after the Ministerial Meeting in Support of Jerusalem and Its Holy Sites in Amman on Wednesday

Jordan, Arab, Islamic states condemn Israeli actions in Jerusalem, call for int'l intervention

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan and 13 Arab and Islamic countries on Wednesday condemned Israel's escalating violations in occupied Jerusalem, rejecting measures aimed at altering the occupied city's Arab, Islamic and Christian identity and calling for immediate international action to halt them.

In a joint statement issued after the Ministerial Meeting in Support of Jerusalem and Its Holy Sites in Amman, the foreign ministers of Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Palestine, Egypt, Morocco, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey and Malaysia, along with the secretary-general of the

Arab League, said that Israeli measures in occupied Jerusalem are "null and void, without legal effect, and a flagrant violation of international law and Israel's obligations as the occupying power".

The ministers said that the meeting addressed the "dangerous and unprecedented Israeli escalation" in Jerusalem and explored mechanisms for coordinated action to confront measures they warned are driving the region towards further conflict.

The statement reaffirmed that East Jerusalem is an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territory and that Is-

rael has no sovereignty over the city. It reiterated that East Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Palestine and stressed that establishing an independent and sovereign Palestinian state along the June 4, 1967, lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital, remains the only path to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on the two-state solution.

The ministers also reaffirmed their support for the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution.

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King calls for unified Arab-Muslim stance, joint effort to halt Israel's unprecedented violations in Jerusalem

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday received a delegation from the Arab Ministerial Committee tasked with mobilising international action in response to illegal Israeli policies and actions in occupied Jerusalem.

During the meeting, held at Al Husseinia Palace and attended by HRH Crown Prince Hussein, His Majesty called for a unified Arab and Muslim stance and a joint effort to halt Israel's unprecedented violations in Jerusalem, particularly at Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif, underscoring that Jordan will continue to undertake its historic and legal role in safeguarding Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, under the Hashemite Custodianship, according to a Royal Court statement.

The delegation included the foreign ministers of Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Palestine, Egypt and Morocco, as well as the secretary-general of the League of Arab States, alongside foreign ministers and representatives from Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey



Photo courtesy of Royal Court

His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday receives a delegation from the Arab Ministerial Committee tasked with mobilising international action in response to illegal Israeli policies and actions in occupied Jerusalem

and Malaysia, the statement said.

The King warned of the danger of unrest in the region being exploited to create new facts on the ground in Jerusalem, noting the risk of

the conflict spreading as a result of Israel's continued escalation in the West Bank and attempts to annex land and expand settlements there.

The meeting, attended by HRH Prince Ghazi,

His Majesty's chief adviser for religious and cultural affairs and personal envoy, also covered the importance of committing to the implementation of all phases of the comprehensive

peace plan in Gaza. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, and Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh attended the meeting.

Netanyahu says Israel did not agree to US-backed Gaza plan

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel did not agree to the US-backed plan for Gaza, even after receiving assurances that an Israeli pullout would only happen after Hamas disarms.

In a video posted to his social media accounts on Tuesday night, Netanyahu said the team of US President Donald Trump "believes that they can bring about the disarmament of Hamas and the de-militarisation of Gaza".

"We are checking this. They sent us a draft — we did not agree to it, it is not our draft. We sent our comments," he said.



Palestinian residential salvage what they can from an apartment targeted in overnight Israeli air strikes in Gaza City on Sunday

Netanyahu met with the US-backed Board of Peace on Monday and received guarantees that the Israeli army would

only be required to leave its current positions in Gaza after Hamas disarms.

But pressure has been

growing on the premier from the right flank of his ruling coalition to reject the deal.

Two far-right ministers

requested a new vote on the plan Tuesday, saying it does not reflect what had originally been discussed.

Israel's security cabinet, in which the two ministers sit, already voted in favour of the proposal, which would see among other things the deployment of international peacekeeping troops in the Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu had moved to convene his security cabinet on Tuesday but the meeting was postponed to Thursday, Israeli media reported, amid primary voting in his Likud Party ahead of October 27 elections, in which he faces a tight race.

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Prince Ali says FIFA faces 'crisis in leadership', calls for sweeping reforms

■ He says Jordan faced unfair treatment despite historic World Cup qualification

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince Ali, president of the Jordan Football Association (JFA), has accused FIFA's leadership of financial inequities, political blackmailing and ethical misconduct in a strongly worded statement posted on his X account.

Prince Ali said Jordan, which qualified for the FIFA World Cup for the first time in its history, faced significant challenges despite the milestone achievement.

"We are a small country with a minimal budget for our FA and had to deal with enormous hurdles," he wrote.

Among the issues the Prince highlighted were visa difficulties for Jordanian supporters travelling to the United States, saying some fans who had purchased match tickets were denied entry visas. He also criticised what he described as excessively high ticket prices.

The JFA president also said that that Jordan has been subjected to US taxation through FIFA because the national team was based in the United States during the tournament, unlike teams that established camps in Canada or Mexico.

"Money that should go to players and staff" is instead being lost to taxes, he said.

Prince Ali also accused FIFA of delaying prize payments owed to Jordan's players for reaching the final of the FIFA Arab Cup in Qatar. He said that the association has been waiting since Decem-



ber for the funds to be released.

He contrasted the delay with FIFA's reported financial reserves, saying the organisation continues to "brag about how many billions they have in reserve".

Prince Ali also said that FIFA officials linked assistance for the Jordan Football Association to his political support for FIFA President Gianni Infantino ahead of the governing body's next presidential election.

"It was verbally communicated to me during the World Cup that if I endorsed Infantino it would go a long way to helping our FA out," he wrote.

Describing the request as "blackmail", Prince Ali said Jordan would not compromise its principles.

"We pride ourselves in Jordan in upholding ethical values. We did not endorse him before and certainly will not now," he said.

Prince Ali said that football's governing

body is facing "a clear-cut crisis in leadership" and called for reforms to FIFA's presidential election process.

He urged the organisation to abolish the secret ballot used in presidential elections, arguing that votes should be conducted openly to improve accountability and protect member associations from coercion.

"Every other decision, including hosting the World Cup, is now done openly, except, of course, for presidential elections," he wrote.

Prince Ali also said that transparent voting would allow presidents of FIFA's member associations to be accountable to their football communities while reducing the possibility of pressure behind closed doors.

"It will empower each and every MA on the most critical vote we have — the leadership of the biggest and most popular sport in the world and the direction it takes in the future," he said.

Iran says has agreed new Hormuz route with Oman

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran and Oman have agreed a route for ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz and are putting the final touches on arrangements for jointly managing the waterway, Tehran's foreign ministry said on Wednesday.

But official sources briefing Iranian media stressed that any reopening of the strait would depend on the United States

fulfilling what Tehran sees as its commitment to end its own naval blockade of Iran's ports.

Iran has seized de facto control of the strait, a strategic waterway for global energy trade, since the United States and Israel launched their war against the country on February 28.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly insisted Tehran is keen to do

a deal to reopen the route to shipping, but Iran denies this and says it will instead make arrangements with its neighbour across the strait, Oman.

"The geographical coordinates of the route envisaged by the two sides have been agreed upon and, if certain third parties do not obstruct the process, the joint statement of the two countries, containing the main con-

siderations and points of agreement, is also in the final review and drafting stage," spokesman Esmail Baqaei said, according to state news agency IRNA.

According to the report, Baqaei told journalists that talks with Oman were moving forward, but that even if an understanding was reached, it would not mean that the strait had become safe for all passing vessels.

"The factors making the Strait of Hormuz insecure still exist on the part of the United States, particularly the naval blockade and other aggressive and threatening actions against Iran and its interests," he said.

Before the war, Hormuz carried around a fifth of the world's oil and LNG exports and prices have repeatedly surged since the dispute over the waterway erupted, piling economic and political

pressure on Washington.

After imposing an effective blockade on the strait, Iran has insisted ships take a route that hugs the Iranian coast.

Many vessels have instead chosen to take a southern route, close to Oman on the opposite side of the strait, occasionally coming under fire.

Iran wants to control the strait and charge tolls, powers it did not exercise before the war, a development that would be fiercely opposed by the US.

In what has become a regular pattern, Trump last week threatened to hit Iran "very hard", potentially with attacks against civilian infrastructure, only to pull back, hinting a deal was near.

But Iran's foreign ministry denied negotiations were taking place with Washington.



AFP photo

Vessels are seen anchored in the Strait of Hormuz, off the port city of Khasab on Oman's northern Musandam Peninsula on May 17



Minister of State for Public Sector Development Badriya Balbisi speaks at the Prime Ministry during the launch of the second cohort of the six-month programme on AI for government leaders

Government advances AI-driven public sector modernisation — minister

AMMAN (JT) — The government is pressing ahead with a qualitative leap in public sector operations, transitioning from traditional reactive responses to a proactive governance model by integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technology into the comprehensive administrative modernisation framework, Minister of State for Public Sector Development Badriya Balbisi said on Wednesday.

Speaking at the Prime Ministry during the launch of the second cohort of the six-month programme on AI for government leaders, Balbisi said that the initiative targets several secretary-generals and directors-general across various ministries and public institutions, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Participants represent key sectors including finance, digital transformation, cybersecurity, public administration, statistics, health, government procurement, integrity, social development, as well as regulatory and oversight bodies.

The programme is implemented by the Jordanian Academy for Public Administration, in partnership with the "Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Economic Development and Employment" project, executed by the German Agency for International Cooperation, in cooperation with the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship and Government Campus.

The initiative is co-

funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Union.

Balbisi underscored that the core pillars of the modernisation agenda aim to transform government operations into a system capable of predicting crises and challenges to prepare for them early, while placing citizens at the centre of focus by proactively determining their needs to build policies and services accordingly.

She highlighted the launch of the Future Skills Strategy and the development of the academy's offerings to reform the learning and qualification framework.

She stressed that technology and AI play a pivotal role in achieving this transition.

Balbisi pointed out that the value of governments no longer lies in executing routine procedures, but rather in adopting the role of an enabling, guiding and regulating entity that relies on data and risk

analysis to make more accurate decisions and deliver flexible, integrated services.

This approach, she added, aims to end institutional isolation and respond to citizens' aspirations even before complaints are lodged.

The minister noted that the modernisation plan includes a "key" component dedicated to emerging technologies, including AI, which relies on smart digital systems covering all stages of administrative decision-making, primarily legislative frameworks, detecting duplication and streamlining regulatory amendments.

She highlighted the launch of the Future Skills Strategy and the development of the academy's offerings to reform the learning and qualification framework.

Under this initiative, a service management system will track operational efficiency and transaction performance, while the "Voice of the Citizen" platform will leverage big data analytics to automatically and proactively process between 50 and 70 per cent of incoming complaints and service requests.

The "AI for Government Leaders" programme covers six interconnected pillars, including AI fundamentals for decision makers, responsible AI governance, institutional readiness, AI-enabled public services, innovation ecosystems and public-private partnerships, alongside the broader economic impacts of AI.

Strategic food reserves sufficient for months — Industry Ministry

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply on Wednesday stressed the strength and sufficiency of the Kingdom's strategic food reserves, noting that basic commodities cover local needs for "comfortable" periods.

The statement follows immediate action to implement Royal directives aimed at boosting strategic reserves in partnership with the private sector to enhance national food security, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

A ministry report issued on Tuesday showed stability in basic food stocks in local warehouses, supported by ongoing contracts and incoming shipments coordinated with traders, importers and industrialists.

The report indicated that available wheat stocks in warehouses total some 610,000 tonnes, which covers local consumption for 6.4 months based on a monthly consumption rate of 95,000 tonnes.

Contracted wheat quantities currently on the way total 302,000 tonnes, covering an additional 3.2 months and



A Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply report indicates that available wheat stocks in warehouses total some 610,000 tonnes, which covers local consumption for 6.4 months

bringing total strategic wheat sufficiency to 9.6 months.

Barley stocks in warehouses stand at 609,000 tonnes, covering 7 months, with an additional 220,000 tonnes contracted on

the way covering 2.5 months, bringing total barley sufficiency to 9.5 months.

Stocks of other basic food commodities maintain safe levels ranging between two and four months.

The ministry said that securing strategic reserves results from direct coordination with the Jordan chambers of commerce and industry, traders, and importers to ensure stable supplies, diversify sources

and ease customs procedures.

The ministry added that inspection teams continue monitoring supply chains to respond quickly to market changes and maintain food security.

Army chief reviews readiness of Southern Military Region

AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Wednesday visited the Southern Military Region Command, where he was received by its commander.

Attended by senior officers of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF), Huneiti was briefed by the commander on the region's duties, the progress of operational, training and logistical affairs, and the readiness of its various formations and units, according to a JAF statement.

The army chief stressed the importance of maintaining maximum readiness, proceeding with operational and training plans according to the highest standards, and prioritising human resources.



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Wednesday visits the Southern Military Region Command and tours an exhibition featuring upgraded weapons and equipment

He also highlighted the need to advance

qualification and training, enabling personnel to execute their

duties efficiently and professionally.

Huneiti also toured

an exhibition featuring upgraded weapons and equipment used by the region's units.

He was briefed on their technical and operational capabilities, as well as their role in bolstering combat and defensive efficiency and supporting assigned tasks.

Commending the distinguished level and dedication of the region's personnel, the army chief stressed that the JAF General Command would continue to support all formations and units.

Huneiti noted that the General Command is committed to providing the necessary resources to upgrade various army units' operational and administrative capabilities in line with modern military requirements.

UpScrolled aims to build trust through alternative approach to social media — founder

‘People wanted a place where they could speak freely’: How UpScrolled is challenging social media’s approach to Palestine

By Francesca Maria Lorenzini

AMMAN — When Issam Hijazi launched UpScrolled in the summer of 2025, he wasn't trying to build the next Instagram or TikTok. In fact, he never dreamt of creating a social media platform at all.

"I saw people being shadow-banned, censored and unable to reach their audiences," Hijazi told The Jordan Times. "I felt there had to be another way."

A Jordanian-Palestinian tech entrepreneur based in the Netherlands, Hijazi spent more than a decade working in the technology industry, including positions at IBM, Oracle and Hitachi.

Before becoming the founder of UpScrolled, he had built a career developing enterprise technologies and data solutions for multinational companies. But the genocide in Gaza became a turning point in how he viewed the industry's role in shaping



Issam Hijazi launched the social media platform UpScrolled in mid-2025

public discourse.

"There have always been incidents where Palestinian voices were suppressed," he says. "October 7 made many more people notice something that Palestinians had been experiencing for years."

Questions over content moderation during the war have fuelled an intense debate among researchers, digital rights organisations and technology

companies.

Groups including Human Rights Watch and Access Now have documented cases in which Palestinian-related content was removed, restricted or experienced reduced visibility on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, while Meta has repeatedly said that it enforces its policies globally and acknowledges that moderation mistakes can occur during rapidly

evolving conflicts.

Hijazi argues those concerns created an opportunity for a different kind of platform.

Just over a year after its launch, UpScrolled has attracted millions of users, a growth that accelerated dramatically in early 2026 as uncertainty surrounding TikTok's operations in the US prompted many users to explore alternatives.

"I thought we would

see some movement," Hijazi recalls. "I never expected 2.5 million users within a week."

For a company that, only months earlier, consisted almost entirely of Hijazi himself, the sudden expansion forced rapid changes.

Today, UpScrolled has grown into a team of around 25 people working across different countries, including staff dedicated to engineering, moderation and user support.

At first glance, the platform resembles many existing social media apps. Users can publish videos and photographs, follow creators, comment on posts and build communities.

But Hijazi insists the company's philosophy, not its interface, is what distinguishes it.

"We wanted to provide a familiar experience," he says. "But the difference is in the principles behind the platform."

Unlike mainstream social media companies, UpScrolled does not currently rely on

recommendation algorithms to determine what users see in their feeds.

Hijazi argues that algorithmic systems can amplify some voices while invisibilising others, although he acknowledges that algorithm-free feeds also come with challenges in helping users discover new content.

"Other platforms want to maximise your screen time," he says. "We want users to come, find what they're looking for, interact with the people they want to follow and then log off."

Although UpScrolled has become closely associated with pro-Palestinian communities online, Hijazi rejects the idea that it is a political platform.

"We're not here to promote an agenda," he says. "We're here to provide a space where everyone can express themselves without fearing selective censorship."

Still, that positioning has brought scrutiny.

Hijazi says Up-

Scrolled's community guidelines prohibit hate speech, incitement to violence, scams and other forms of abusive content, and that the company has expanded its moderation capacity significantly since its rapid growth.

"When we suddenly had millions of users, we had to build those systems much faster," he says. "We action content that violates our community guidelines."

For Hijazi, however, the broader debate goes beyond any single platform. He believes social media has become one of the primary battlegrounds over who gets to tell the story of Palestine.

He points to earlier moments, including the 2021 protests in Sheikh Jarrah in occupied East Jerusalem, as examples where, in his view, Palestinian content faced disproportionate restrictions online.

Whether those perceptions are the result of moderation errors, automated systems

or deliberate policy decisions remains contested.

What is less disputed is that trust in major platforms has eroded among many users, creating space for smaller, values-driven alternatives.

Whether UpScrolled can maintain its rapid momentum remains an open question.

Building a global social media platform requires not only technological infrastructure but also sustainable financing, effective moderation and the ability to balance free expression with user safety — challenges that have tested even the world's largest technology companies.

Hijazi acknowledges the scale of that task but says the company's mission has remained unchanged since its first day online.

"If people are coming to UpScrolled," he concludes, "it's because they're looking for a platform they can trust".

Safadi says Arab, Islamic states to step up diplomatic efforts to defend Jerusalem

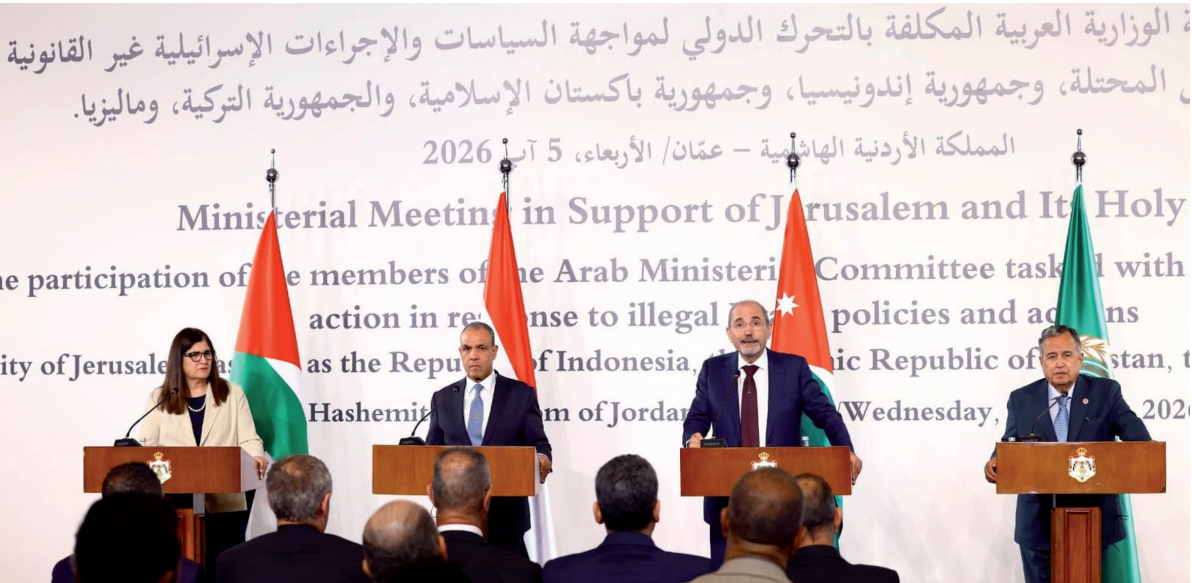
AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said on Wednesday that a ministerial meeting held in Amman to support Jerusalem and its Islamic and Christian holy sites underscored a unified Arab and Islamic stance against "illegal" Israeli policies in occupied Jerusalem and reaffirmed a collective commitment to confronting them through coordinated diplomatic action.

Speaking at a joint press conference alongside Palestinian Foreign Minister Varsen Aghabekian Shahin, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty and Arab League Secretary General Nabil Fahmy, Safadi said Jerusalem is occupied territory and that Israel has no sovereignty over the city, making its decisions concerning Jerusalem illegitimate.

He said that Israel is entrenching its occupation of East Jerusalem through settlement expansion, land confiscation, property seizures and restrictions imposed on Jerusalemites, while seeking to isolate the city from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory.

Safadi warned that Jerusalem's Islamic and Christian holy sites face growing threats, including restrictions on freedom of worship and measures targeting the historical and legal status quo at Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif.

He also said that Al Aqsa is facing systematic



(From left to right): Palestinian Foreign Minister Varsen Aghabekian Shahin, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Arab League Secretary General Nabil Fahmy speak at a joint conference held in Amman to support Jerusalem and its holy sites

attempts to undermine its Islamic identity, while Christian clergy and churches are also facing extremist attacks and attempts to seize church assets and lands through legislation that violates international law.

Safadi said these measures are part of a broader policy aimed at entrenching the occupation, undermining prospects for a two-state solution and pushing the region towards further instability.

He also stressed that the Arab-Israeli conflict is not a religious conflict but rather stems from Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and the denial of the Palestinian people's right to freedom and statehood.

Safadi also warned that continued violations against Al Aqsa Mosque

could fuel a wider religious conflict with serious regional and international consequences, urging the international community to take decisive action before it is too late.

He also called for efforts to uphold the Gaza ceasefire, expand humanitarian assistance and prevent further escalation in the occupied West Bank.

He reiterated the Arab states' commitment to achieving a just and lasting peace through the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Safadi reiterated that sovereignty over Jerusalem belongs to the Palestinian people, while the Hashemite Custodianship protects the city's Islamic

and Christian holy sites.

He stressed that protecting Jerusalem is a shared Palestinian, Jordanian, Arab, Islamic and international responsibility.

Safadi said that participants agreed to intensify diplomatic efforts by engaging with international capitals, exposing Israeli policies and mobilising support to stop violations in Jerusalem.

He also said that Arab and Islamic countries will launch a joint diplomatic initiative on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September, including a joint meeting of the League of Arab States and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

Participants also agreed to establish a platform, including a media initiative, to document Israeli prac-

esties King Abdullah on conveying their message through international forums.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty said that there was broad Arab and Islamic consensus on the need to move beyond statements of condemnation to concrete action to preserve the Arab, Islamic and Christian identity of East Jerusalem and its holy sites.

He said discussions also addressed Israeli violations in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, calling for intensified efforts to secure a ceasefire, expand humanitarian relief and advance reconstruction.

Abdelatty said participating countries support the U.S.-backed peace initiative and called for international efforts to ensure its implementation, including ending hostilities, securing Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, facilitating humanitarian aid and reconstruction, and upholding the principles of no annexation and no displacement.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Varsen Aghabekian Shahin described Jerusalem as the central issue and the greatest challenge to regional peace and stability.

She called for translating international support into practical measures that strengthen the resilience of Palestinians in Jerusalem, expose Israeli violations internationally and expand political and diplomatic efforts to protect the city and its holy sites.

He described the gathering as timely and said participants received guidance from His Maj-

AT A GLANCE

Army chief, German commander discuss cooperation



AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Wednesday received Commander of the German Joint Forces Team Lt. Gen. Alexander Sollfrank and an accompanying delegation. Huneiti and Sollfrank discussed a number of issues of mutual interest in military and defence fields, along with the latest regional and international developments, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) statement. Senior officers of the JAF and the German defence attaché in Amman attended the meeting.

Army thwarts infiltration attempt



AMMAN (JT) — The Northern Military Region command on Wednesday foiled an attempt by four individuals to illegally cross the border along its front. Border Guard forces detected the individuals, applied the rules of engagement, arrested them, and handed them over to the relevant authorities, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) statement. JAF reaffirmed its commitment to dealing firmly with all forms of infiltration and smuggling to protect the Kingdom's security and stability.

PSD destroys 16.89 million Captagon pills, tonnes of seized narcotics

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Public Security Directorate (PSD) on Wednesday announced that it had destroyed huge amounts of illicit drugs that were seized in over 1,100 cases, official sources said.

The illicit drugs were destroyed in special ovens following the completion of all legal procedures, Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

"The seized drugs involved trafficking, smuggling, and possession in 1,210 cases," Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

The destroyed narcotics included 16 million and 890 thousand Captagon pills, 793 kilogrammes of Amphetamine, 500 kilogrammes of hashish, 32.5 kilogrammes of synthetic hashish, 16.5 kilogrammes of mari-



The Public Security Directorate (PSD) on Wednesday destroys large quantities of illegal narcotics seized in 1,121 trafficking, smuggling and possession cases

juana, 1.5 kilogrammes of cocaine, 16.5 kilogrammes of crystal and 4,500 kilogrammes, 800 grammes of cocaine, 5,000 Joker bags and 95,000 narcotic pills, according to Sartawi.

The PSD affirmed its keenness to ensure professional and preventive cooperation

and operations in coordination with the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army, security agencies and the Jordan Customs Department, Sartawi added.

"All these law-enforcement agencies are in constant cooperation to ensure the prevention of such harmful

material from entering or passing through the Kingdom's territory," Sartawi maintained.

The PSD stressed that its war against illegal drugs is ongoing to protect "our citizens from these dangerous and harmful drugs", according to a statement by the PSD.

NEPCO says power grid ready to meet summer demand as peak load reaches 4,220MW

AMMAN (JT) — The maximum recorded electricity load on Tuesday reached 4,220 megawatts, according to data from the National Electric Power Company (NEPCO).

NEPCO said that the Kingdom's electricity system maintains a high level of reliability, adding that it is enhancing its preparedness, under dedicated plans, to meet rising electricity demand amid continued high temperatures.

The company also stressed the importance of rationalising electricity consumption, particularly during peak hours, to help maintain the stability and reliability of the national power grid, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

NEPCO Director General Sufian Bataineh had previously said that Jordan's electricity system is operating efficiently and is fully



The National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) says that the maximum recorded electricity load on Tuesday reached 4,220 megawatts

prepared to meet summer demand amid rising temperatures and increased loads.

He noted that all power generation units have completed their routine maintenance, with no scheduled or unscheduled outages, adding

that the Kingdom's available generation capacity stands at around 4,400 megawatts, with all units operating efficiently.

Bataineh said the expected peak electricity load during the summer, under the medi-

um-demand scenario, is projected to reach around 4,800 megawatts, stressing that the electricity system is capable of accommodating the increased demand and ensuring a continuous power supply.

FOOD STOCK

Agricultural production, strategic stocks ensure food security — minister

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan has sufficient strategic stocks of food commodities and agricultural produce to cover domestic demand for more than six months, Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khreisat said on Wednesday.

Khreisat said that Jordan's self-sufficiency rate in fruits and vegetables stands at around 62 per cent, with production of some vegetable crops exceeding 120 per cent of local demand, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

He said that supplies of locally produced and imported red meat are sufficient, while domestic poultry production meets local



Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khreisat says on Wednesday that Jordan has sufficient strategic stocks of food commodities and agricultural produce to cover domestic demand for more than six months

demand, with imports only needed in exceptional cases.

He also highlighted a

surplus in poultry and table egg production, alongside adequate supplies of all essen-

tial food commodities.

Khreisat said that His Majesty King Abdullah has directed the

government to maintain secure strategic food reserves to ensure uninterrupted supplies across the Kingdom.

He added that the government had briefed the King on measures to maintain sufficient stocks at affordable prices, noting that the Ministry of Agriculture continues to issue import licences for meat and agricultural commodities not produced locally and maintains reserves covering several months.

The minister said that the King also stressed the importance of strengthening coordination with the private sector and rel-

evant institutions to ensure the sustainability of food reserves and effective market oversight. He said these efforts are being carried out by the ministry in cooperation with the Higher Council for Food Security, chaired by the prime minister.

On market management, Khreisat said the ministry continuously monitors supply and demand, allowing exports when there is a surplus while increasing reserves and suspending exports when supplies tighten.

He noted that exports of live sheep have been suspended for about seven months to help maintain affordable

prices, adding that Jordan imports meat from about 22 countries to ensure stable supplies.

Khreisat said that domestic agricultural production has increased this year, with wheat and barley output exceeding 120,000 tonnes, around three to four times higher than in previous years. The increase is expected to strengthen grain reserves and reduce reliance on imports of the two strategic crops.

The minister highlighted the ministry's continued support for farmers through programmes aimed at enhancing food security.

He said more than JD1 million has been

paid in compensation to farmers affected by last winter's floods through the Risk Management Fund, while the Agricultural Credit Corporation provides concessional loans, including interest-free financing, to support the adoption of water-saving technologies and solar energy in agricultural production.

Khreisat added that the government has allocated JD45 million this year to purchase grain from local farmers, as part of efforts to support cereal producers, sustain domestic grain production and encourage expanded cultivation in the coming years.



Forensic technicians of the police (right) prepare the deployment of a bomb disposal robot near a Ukrainian aircraft at the German airport Leipzig-Halle in Schkeuditz, eastern Germany, after an explosives-laden drone was found near a Ukrainian cargo plane

Explosive drone found near Ukrainian plane at German airport

BERLIN (AFP) — German police raised the alarm at an airport overnight after an explosives-laden drone was found near a Ukrainian cargo plane and another aircraft collided with an unknown flying object nearby before landing safely.

All flights to Leipzig-Halle airport were diverted for several hours from around midnight as police deployed a bomb-disposal robot to remove the detonator from the explosive in the drone.

The unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) had been found on the tarmac.

The airport in eastern Germany plays a key role in the transport of military goods by the German armed forces and NATO allies. It also serves as a base for Ukraine's Antonov Airlines.

Video footage from a local news agency showed the bomb disposal robot near an Antonov plane painted with the yellow and blue of the Ukrainian flag. The words "Be Brave Like Kherson" were written on the side — a reference to a Ukrainian region battered by Russian strikes.

Ukraine's Ambassador to Germany Oleksii Makeiev blamed Moscow. "Who else could it be but Russia?" he said on Welt TV.

Authorities have said the investigation is ongoing. Moscow had made no comment so far.

Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt was

heading to the scene to confer with security officials, the Bild daily reporting he had cut short his holiday in Italy.

German police first reported on Wednesday morning that a "security-related incident" had temporarily halted flights to the airport, which is also a major hub for logistics company DHL.

"Shortly before midnight, an unidentified flying object was sighted near Leipzig-Halle Airport, prompting the diversion of several aircraft — including a passenger plane — to other airports," they said.

"In addition, an object was detected near the southern runway, which was initially examined by the federal police, a process that involved the deployment of an explosives disposal robot," police said.

Police later confirmed that a police unit using a robot had "removed the detonator from the explosive attachment".

Bild first reported that a DHL cargo plane had aborted its landing after the alarm then collided with an unknown object mid-air about 6 kilometres away at an altitude of 400 metres.

Police confirmed that "a suspected second unidentified flying object collided with a cargo aircraft" and that "minor damage to the aircraft was discovered after it landed in Hanover".

Regular traffic at

Leipzig airport resumed in the early hours of Wednesday but only on the northern runway, while investigators looked for clues on the southern runway.

Germany and other European countries have repeatedly observed UAVs flying over sensitive sites such as airports, military bases and industrial plants.

So far, they have been suspected of being on surveillance missions or there to confuse and intimidate.

Authorities in Germany, one of Ukraine's biggest military supporters, have said they suspect Russia of orchestrating many of the incidents as part of a campaign of sabotage, espionage and disinformation.

Russia has denied being behind any such incidents.

Marc Henrichmann, the conservative chairman of the German parliament's intelligence oversight committee, said that the latest incident looked like "an attempt to target a company of importance for Ukraine".

If the details are confirmed, it "would represent a new level of escalation in these sorts of attacks", he told the Rheinische Post newspaper.

In July 2024 a parcel burst into flames on the ground at Leipzig airport before it could be loaded onto a DHL cargo plane, part of what security services treated as a suspected Moscow-linked arson sabotage plot.

Israeli forces raid Palestinian refugee camp near Jerusalem

QALANDIA REFUGEE CAMP, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Israeli occupation forces on Wednesday raided a Palestinian refugee camp next to Jerusalem where tensions have been growing as residents fear eviction, the military and local leaders said.

AFP journalists saw about a dozen armoured military jeeps going into the Qalandia camp, which Israeli soldiers did not allow press or residents to enter, in the occupied West Bank.

Mohammad Aslan, spokesman for the committee that runs the affairs of Qalandia camp, told AFP that the Israeli army had arrested at least 20 people and took up positions on the roofs of a number of houses inside the camp.

Footage shared by the Jerusalem Governorate, the Palestinian local authority for the region encompassing Qalandia camp, showed alleys inside the camp blocked off by rubble and boulders to impede



The Israeli settlement of Pisgat Zeev (left), built in a suburb of the mostly-Arab east Jerusalem, is pictured near the Shuafat camp for Palestinian refugees (right), with Israel's controversial separation barrier in the middle, on Tuesday

movement, with furniture and other property strewn across the interior of one raided house.

In 2023, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government advanced plans for the construction of a 9,000-unit settlement on the grounds of Jerusalem's former Atarot airport, adjacent to Qalandia.

Palestinian residents have since voiced fear that raids and home

demolitions could be tied to a strategy of eviction ahead of settlement construction, without any official word from Israeli authorities.

More than 800,000 displaced Lebanese returning home after war — UN

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — More than 800,000 people displaced by war in Lebanon have begun returning to their hometowns following a lull in violence amid the Israel-Hizbollah war, the United Nations said.

The announcement late on Tuesday came as Lebanon and Israel began a new round of US-sponsored talks in Rome aimed at ending the fighting, which are scheduled to run until Thursday.

UN humanitarian agency the OCHA said "821,077 people have begun the return to their areas of origin as of 30 July", but added that more than 360,000 remained displaced, around 26,000 of them in government shelters.

Hizbollah drew Lebanon into the wider Middle East war in March



Displaced families in Beirut, the capital of Lebanon

by firing rockets at Israel in support of its backer Iran.

Israel responded with heavy air strikes and a ground invasion that Lebanon says have killed more than 4,300 people and displaced more than a million at the peak.

Violence has decreased since the signing in June of a preliminary US-Iran agreement on the wider regional conflict, which includes a ceasefire in Lebanon, and following a US-sponsored deal between Israel and Lebanon.

But Lebanon continues to report intermittent Israeli strikes and shelling, as well as detonations of explosives and demolitions in southern villages, with Israeli troops occupying a swathe of the area.

The OCHA said damage to water and elec-

tricity infrastructure from the war has severely affected access to water for more than 700,000 people in south Lebanon, home for most of those displaced by the war.

During negotiations in Washington in June, Israel and Lebanon agreed to a framework deal that involves the disarmament of Hizbollah, a gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon's south and the deployment of the Lebanese army to the region, starting in test areas known as "pilot zones".

But Hizbollah has rejected the agreement and refuses to disarm, with leader Naim Qassem saying the direct negotiations will bring "nothing but shame, humiliation, and successive compromises" for Lebanon.

India monsoon floods, landslides kill more than 100 since July — officials

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Floods and landslides triggered by monsoon rains have killed more than 100 people across India since July, official data showed on Wednesday, with thousands forced to flee their inundated homes.

While the annual monsoon brings rainfall that farmers depend on, scientists say climate change is making the phenomenon more erratic, unpredictable and deadly across the South Asia region.

India's northeastern state of Assam is among the hardest hit by the annual rains, with at least 87 people killed, according to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

In the state's worst-affected Sivasagar district, some 47 people have been killed as several areas remain under water.

State authorities have appealed for financial donations from the public to support relief and rehabilitation



Residents waded through a flooded street following heavy monsoon rains in Guwahati on Wednesday

efforts.

"The devastation here is unlike anything these areas have witnessed before," Sarma posted on X.

"Material losses can be restored, but no compensation can replace a loved one."

Severe weather

AFP images showed residents using rafts and inflated boats to reach higher ground with the help of the state's disaster response officials.

In India's southern state of Kerala, Chief Minister VD Sathesnan said at least 15 people have been killed and another seven were missing after heavy rains over several days.

More than 300 relief camps have been set up in the state, sheltering over 10,000 people, after rains triggered landslides and swollen rivers breached their banks.

In the Himalayan territory of Jammu and

Kashmir, at least 31 people have been killed in several short bursts of extremely intense rainfall, according to a report by the public state broadcaster.

Monsoon-related disasters are an annual occurrence across India after the region's long summers when many parts of the country face water scarcity and drought.

Neighbouring Sri Lanka has also seen unusually heavy mon-

soon rains that have caused flash floods and mudslides, claiming the lives of at least eight people since Monday, according to the Disaster Management Centre.

Some 12,000 people have been driven out of their flooded homes in the central region.

At the same time, the country's eastern regions were in the grip of a severe drought, with authorities having to transport drinking water for residents in tanker trucks.

The government last month said the severe weather events were due to this year's El Nino weather phenomenon, which warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean.

The government is yet to estimate the potential loss to Sri Lanka's economy from the effects of El Nino, but has set up a ministerial task force to mitigate its impact.

WHO chief in DRC for talks on Ebola reponse

KINSHASA (AFP) — The head of the World Health Organisation (WHO) has arrived in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) for a meeting with President Felix Tshisekedi, as the Ebola epidemic intensifies, the UN agency said on Wednesday.

The DRC declared its 17th Ebola outbreak on May 15 and at the weekend the WHO warned that it was spreading at an "exceptional" pace, urging a scaling-up of the health response.

There have been 3,874 confirmed cases and 1,751 deaths since the start of the outbreak, the world health body said.

The deadliest outbreak was between 2018 and 2020, with nearly 2,300 deaths out of 3,500 recorded cases.

WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus arrived in the DRC capital, Kinshasa, on Tuesday, and was due to meet Tshisekedi on Wednesday, a spokesman told AFP,

without giving further details.

Tedros was previously in the country at the end of May in the north-eastern province of Ituri, where nearly 90 per cent of Ebola cases have been identified.

The current outbreak has been caused by the Bundibugyo variant of the virus, for which there is currently no vaccine or treatment.

The five provinces in eastern DRC affected have a weak state presence and healthcare infrastructure is largely lacking.

"The outbreak is unfortunately still expanding beyond the capacity of the response," WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told reporters in Geneva on Saturday.

"We need more support in terms of finances, but also other resources to scale up all areas of response: treatment capacity, field investigation teams, safe burial teams and community workers."

Ebola is spread by contact with bodily fluids and causes a haemorrhagic fever. It has killed more than 15,000 people in Africa in the last 50 years.

On Tuesday, Canada gave the go-ahead to US pharmaceutical giant Moderna to begin clinical trials of a vaccine against the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola.

The vaccine, said by the WHO as "the most promising" — the rVSV Bundibugyo — will also be developed by Singapore-based Hilleman Laboratories.

At the end of July, a volunteer received the first dose of another vaccine against Bundibugyo, developed by Britain's Oxford University using the same technology as the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

Several initiatives also aim to rapidly test treatments against the Bundibugyo strain, including the antiviral drugs remdesivir and obeldesivir, as well as a monoclonal antibody called MBP134.

Ceuta warns of ‘unsustainable’ situation for child migrants after influx

CEUTA, Spain (AFP) — The leader of Spain's north African territory of Ceuta on Wednesday said the number of children left there after last week's rush of migrants was “unsustainable”, pleading for government aid.

Spain said 70,000 of the 72,000 people who had entered Ceuta from Morocco in a sudden rush last week had now returned, after an incident that led to a spat between Spain and some other EU countries seeking a harder line on immigration.

But the roughly 2,500 who remain include hundreds of unaccompanied minors who are enduring dire conditions with limited access to food, water, shelter and sanitation.

Ceuta's leader Juan Jesus Vivas, of the main opposition conservative Popular Party (PP), told public broadcaster RTVE that authorities were taking care of 1,100 youngsters against a theoretical capacity of 90.

“This is an absolutely unsustainable situation,” said Vivas, adding that there was “a high risk for order and public security” as reception centres were overwhelmed.

Groups of young migrants continued to roam the streets of Ceuta on Wednesday, gathering in parks and beaches as authorities worked to identify and accommodate them, an AFP re-



Relatives and friends wait by a fence topped with barbed-wire for the return of people who had previously crossed into Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta, at Morocco's Bab Sebta border crossing on the outskirts of Fnideq on Sunday

porter saw.

The Spanish government's top official in Ceuta, Miguel Angel Perez, conceded those youngsters were “a priority, a source of great concern”.

The charity Save the Children estimates that around 1,000 “unprotected” minors are among the migrants still in Ceuta.

“We are asking for help, for assistance from the rest of Spain” through the leftist central government, said Vivas.

Any redistribution of the children to the rest

of Spain under existing legal provisions is likely to meet resistance from regions governed by the PP and the anti-immigration, far-right Vox party.

Socialist deputy prime minister Carlos Cuerpo insisted on public television that the PP and its regional governments “must comply with the law just like everyone else”.

‘Serious trouble’

The ministry for youth and children has announced 25 million euros (\$29 million) of emergency funding for Ceuta to help the territory of 84,000 inhabitants to care for the minors.

Vivas also said he had contacted Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's office on July 27 to warn that hundreds of migrants had entered Ceuta from Morocco and “we were headed for serious trouble”.

The office said it would get in touch with “the relevant ministries” to address the matter, he

Armed man arrested at Trump LA golf course before president’s visit

LOS ANGELES, United States (AFP) — An armed man was arrested at President Donald Trump's golf course in Los Angeles two days before the US leader's visit on Tuesday, the local sheriff's office said.

The suspect, identified as 38-year-old Jeanine John Taele from nearby Downey, California, was arrested on Sunday afternoon at the golf course in Rancho Palos Verdes.

Plainclothes federal agents spotted him “walking throughout the golf course grounds taking photographs and videos and appearing to monitor security-planning activities”, the sheriff's office said in a statement.

Trump arrived by helicopter at the golf club on Tuesday evening to attend a fundraising dinner hosted by the Republican National Committee.

Weapons found

During the suspect's detention, deputies recovered a 16-round magazine containing hollow-point ammunition from the suspect's pants pocket, according to the statement.

Deputies then searched the suspect's vehicle and recovered a loaded pistol, along with an additional loaded magazine containing hollow-point ammunition.

Investigators from

the sheriff's department and the FBI's counterterrorism unit later searched Taele's home, where they found an assault-style rifle, a pistol, a bullet-proof vest, high-capacity magazines, ammunition, two radios and “multiple notebooks containing concerning statements”.

The president is expected to tout his record and raise campaign funds for the upcoming midterm elections

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office will decide whether to file charges after investigators presented the case on Tuesday morning.

Trump has been the target of multiple assassination attempts since launching his most recent presidential campaign.

In July 2024, Trump was targeted during a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

A gunman killed an audience member and lightly wounded the then-candidate in the ear.

A few months later, another armed man was arrested on a West Palm Beach golf course where Trump was playing a round.

In April, Trump was evacuated from a reception in Washington after an armed man attempted to enter the venue, triggering a shootout with security personnel.

Trump's visit to his California golf club on Tuesday is closed to the press.

The president is expected to tout his record and raise campaign funds for the upcoming midterm elections, in which his Republican party is trying to maintain its grip on the US Congress.

Trump's visits to California, a Democratic stronghold he has long cast as the antithesis of his vision for America, are rare.

Hours before Trump's arrival, California Governor Gavin Newsom, a Democrat widely expected to run for president in 2028, urged Trump to release long-delayed federal reconstruction funding for communities devastated by the Los Angeles wildfires, saying the issue should transcend politics and that Trump should honor his pledge to help affected families.

‘Quit or stay?’ Tennessee Democrat fights redistricting

By Victoria Lavelle
Agence France-Presse

CORDOVA, United States — When Justin Pearson announced his bid for US Congress in his hometown of Memphis, the African American Democrat never imagined he would have to campaign more than 300 kilometres away, in the county where the Ku Klux Klan was founded.

In May, following a divisive US Supreme Court decision, Republicans in the state legislature dramatically redrew the boundaries of Tennessee's 9th Congressional

District.

Majority-Black Memphis was split into three districts stretching across the state, diluting its heavily Democratic electorate.

Under the new map, the 9th District is now widely expected to favour Republicans.

So Pearson, 31, a Tennessee state lawmaker, asked himself: “Do I quit or stay in the fight?”

Republicans “never want to see Black political power. They never want to see us being able to choose representatives of our own”, he told AFP in an inter-

view last week.

In the end, Pearson chose to stay in the race.

The ruling by the conservative-dominated Supreme Court in April further weakened the Voting Rights Act, the landmark civil rights law protecting minority voting power.

Almost immediately following the ruling, several Republican-led Southern states, including Louisiana and Alabama, moved to redraw their congressional districts, extending a broader nationwide push by both Republicans and Democrats to

redraw maps in states they control ahead of the midterm elections.

From 1.5 counties to 15

Raised in Westwood, a predominantly Black neighborhood in southwest Memphis, Pearson said that when the electoral map was redrawn, he went from representing a district covering “1.5 counties to 15 counties”.

Instead of campaigning almost exclusively in Memphis, he now canvasses the sprawling district, meeting with farmers in the town

of Savannah, Tennessee, one day, and then traveling the next day to the deeply Republican Giles County, where the Ku Klux Klan was founded in the 1860s.

“I've had to travel a whole lot more, go to communities I'd never been to before,” Pearson said.

According to the University of Tennessee, 78 of the state's 95 counties are rural and generally vote Republican. Democrats have traditionally drawn most of their support from the state's two largest cities, Nashville and Memphis.

‘A function of politics’

Steve Hickey, chairman of the Williamson County Republican Party, lives at the opposite end of the 9th District.

He dismissed claims that race drove the redistricting, describing it instead as a straightforward political calculation.

“Now there's a lot of consternation about that,” Hickey acknowledged. “But I think it's very important to understand that this happens in every state.”

He noted that Tennessee Democrats also ap-

Somalia's Puntland attacks gov’t-held army base

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Somalia's semi-autonomous Puntland state on Wednesday attacked a northern government-held camp, the local president and police said, the latest flare-up between regional leaders and the federal government.

The country is deeply fractured along regional lines, with Puntland president Said Abdullahi Deni a vocal opponent of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's push to centralise governance.

Heavily armed Puntland forces, backed by military vehicles, launched an operation on Wednesday morning against a military camp near the airport in northern Galkacyo city.

The camp was occupied by troops formerly aligned with Puntland authorities but whose commanders recently pledged allegiance to Mogadishu.

Deni told a press conference in regional capital Garowe the assault was “a planned security operation” to send a “clear message to anyone working against the

Puntland Government”.

“The operation targeted a camp where the federal government has recently been transporting weapons, military equipment and troops in an attempt to undermine Puntland's security and stability,” he said.

Deni said his administration had repeatedly raised concerns over the Somali president's decisions, but did not elaborate.

“These actions are disrupting Somalia's already fragile peace and, in particular, threatening the long-standing stability of Puntland, which has remained peaceful for many years,” he said.

In a short statement, Puntland police said local forces had “successfully concluded a planned security operation”, leading to the arrest of more than 100 people.

The statement said the Puntland forces had also “seized weapons, vehicles and military equipment, including firearms, ammunition, police uniforms, handcuffs, police boots and other supplies”.

Jordan, Arab, Islamic states condemn Israeli actions in Jerusalem, call for int’l intervention

Continued from page 1

They also condemned Israeli violations at Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif, including attempts to alter the site's historic and legal status quo and impose temporal and spatial division.

The statement also denounced escalating incursions by extremist settlers, Israeli ministers and officials under the protection of Israeli occupation authorities.

The ministers also condemned restrictions on worshippers' access to the mosque, assaults against them, interference with the work of the Jerusalem Awqaf and Al Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department, and continued excavations beneath and around the holy site.

The statement reaffirmed that Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif, encompassing its entire 144-dunum area, is a place of worship exclusively for Muslims. It also stressed that the Jerusalem Awqaf and Al Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department, affiliated with Jordan's Ministry of Awqaf, is the sole legal authority responsible for administering the site.

The ministers also condemned Israeli violations targeting Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, including restrictions on access to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, inter-

ference in church affairs, restrictions on church institutions and properties, and attacks on clergy, worshippers and religious symbols.

The statement reiterated support for the historic Hashemite Custodianship of the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, praising its role in protecting the sites, preserving their Arab, Islamic and Christian identity, and maintaining the historic and legal status quo.

The ministers also voiced support for strengthening the resilience of Jerusalemites through development assistance and efforts to reinforce Palestinian institutions in the city.

Warning of broader consequences, the statement said that attacks against Islamic holy sites in occupied Jerusalem constitute “a blatant provocation to the sentiments of around two billion Muslims worldwide” and risk fuelling a wider religious conflict that could threaten regional and international peace and security.

The ministers called on the international community, particularly the UN Security Council, to act immediately to halt Israel's illegal measures in Jerusalem and throughout the occupied West Bank, as well as alleged violations of the Gaza

ceasefire agreement.

The statement said that Israeli is pursuing a systematic policy to entrench the occupation through settlement expansion, land annexation, economic restrictions on Palestinians, targeting Palestinian national institutions, escalating settler violence and actions against UNRWA.

It also reaffirmed rejection of any unilateral decision affecting the legal status of occupied Jerusalem, including the establishment or relocation of diplomatic missions to the city, saying such moves violate international law and relevant UN resolutions.

he's an active player maybe in trying to block some ideas, but Israel is not putting anything on the table.”

US pressure on Israel to curb attacks in Gaza ahead of a partial withdrawal under the plan appears to be yielding results.

Netanyahu says Israel did not agree to US-backed Gaza plan

Continued from page 1

The request from finance minister Bezalel Smotrich and Settlement Minister Orit Stroomer to hold a new vote should be viewed merely “as a campaign move” to put pressure on Netanyahu, accord-

ing to Tal Elovits, a researcher at Israeli think tank Molad.

“The Israeli right-wing has always tried to postpone a scenario in which this conflict becomes an international conflict. Obviously, the IDF's behaviour will be different

once you have soldiers from Kosovo, from Indonesia” and other countries, Elovits said, referring to Israel's military.

However, Israel has no concrete possibility of tearing up the US-sponsored plan, given the country's isolation

in the international arena, Elovits added.

“Netanyahu has no other option besides listening to his only friend left in the diplomatic community,” he said, referring to Trump.

“Netanyahu is not a very active player here

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US dairy industry muscles up thanks to protein craze

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON, United States — Whey protein used to be considered a mere byproduct of cheesemaking, but the dietary supplement is now coveted due to high-protein diets popularised across social media, an explosion that is radically reshaping the American dairy industry.

Long sold as a mix-in powder or protein bar, whey can now be found across US supermarket shelves in products ranging from breakfast cereals and bagels to pretzels and instant noodles.

Some of the biggest food brands have hopped on the trend, like chip giant Frito-Lay offering “Protein Nacho Cheese” Doritos and Starbucks debuting a line of “high protein” beverages.

“Seven years ago, a lot of people would take it for training, but now I feel like it’s very commonplace for everyone,” Architectural Design Coordinator Carly Rowcotsky told AFP.

The 25-year-old said she lives an active lifestyle, and takes whey to help repair her muscles after working out.

“I don’t have a lot of time to prepare my own meals, so it’s just kind of like convenient to have some type of supplement,” Rowcotsky said, downing a neon-pink Whey Protein shake whose label promised 15 grammes of protein per serving.

‘Protein-maxxing’

For Chuck Nicholson, a professor of supply chain management at Penn State University, the frenzy is fuelled by several factors.

“Social media is really driving a lot of people to think that protein is a really healthy alternative,” Nicholson told AFP, pointing to diet trends like “protein-maxxing”, in which online users try to maximise their protein intake, often to excessive levels.

On top of that, US demand for whey and other protein supplements “is driven a lot by the GLP-related drugs and the dietary advice that people are getting”, he added, as users of weight loss drugs including Wegovy and Ozempic are advised to increase protein in their diets to preserve muscle mass.

Protein mania is even reflected in the US government’s nutrition guidelines, which updated in March to raise the recommended levels of daily protein intake from 0.8 grammes per kilogramme of body weight to 1.2-1.6 grammes per kilogramme.

“Protein and healthy fats are essential and were wrongly discouraged in prior dietary guidelines,” Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said earlier this year.

More whey, more cheese

However, this upsurge in whey protein demand is facing a reality check from the dairy industry.

Since whey is a refined product resulting from cheese production, “there’s kind of a capacity constraint, both in terms of what the cows are making, the amount of cheese capacity that we have and the amount of capacity that we have to actually make those products from the whey,” Nicholson explained.

Beyond that, the whey sold in consumer products requires specialised, expensive equipment to filter it into high-protein concentrates and isolates.

“For a long time we didn’t actually do much with the whey,” Nicholson said. “In some cases, it was fed to animals or was actually thrown away.”

The dairy industry foresaw this growing trend, with International Dairy Food Association CEO Michael Dykes saying “dairy companies have invested \$13 billion in new capacity, technology and supply chain optimisation” to meet demand.

White gold

Joshua White, an expert at dairy product marketer T.C. Jacoby & Co., said despite the increased capacity for whey production, “the market has still demanded more”.

Prices have skyrocketed as a result, with industry data showing cost jumps of around 40 per cent in recent months, with the largest hike seen for high-concentrate whey protein, which has soared 150 per cent in price.

As a domino effect, those higher prices have increased the product’s profitability for cheese makers, incentivising them to make more liquid whey.

“Sometimes people say, you know, I make the money on the whey and I... cover my costs based on making the cheese,” Nicholson said.

An oversimplification perhaps, he added, but “it’s definitely true that the return on whey right now relative to the return on cheese is larger”.

But dairy industry expert Kathleen Noble Wolfley cautioned that cheese production still outweighs whey production in the United States.

“Are we going to start making cheese for the whey? I always think about it as like...is the tail wagging the dog rather than the dog wagging the tail,” she said.

“But I say we’re probably closer to that commentary than we were five years ago.”

Protecting the economy, not fuel prices

At first glance, Jordan’s decision to freeze fuel prices for August may appear to be little more than an administrative pricing measure. In reality, however, it represents something far more significant: An economic policy designed to protect confidence, stabilise expectations and shield the domestic economy from an external shock.

Economic performance is driven not only by measurable indicators such as inflation, interest rates and growth, but also by expectations. Businesses invest based on what they anticipate will happen tomorrow, not simply on what exists today. Consumers make spending decisions according to their confidence in future prices and incomes. In many cases, the expectation of higher prices can inflict greater economic damage than the price increase itself.



ECONOMIC REVIEW

Yusuf Mansur

Viewed through this lens, freezing fuel prices is not primarily about maintaining the price of gasoline or diesel. It is about stabilising expectations. In modern macroeconomics, expectations are among the most closely watched variables because they influence inflation, investment, consumption and ultimately economic growth.

Oil occupies a unique position in every economy. Unlike most commodities, it is embedded in virtually every stage of production and distribution. It powers transportation networks, agricultural machinery, industrial production, logistics and a wide range of services. Consequently, an increase in fuel prices rarely affects a single product; instead, it cascades through supply chains and eventually reaches consumers across almost every sector of the economy.

For this reason, temporarily stabilising fuel prices during a period of geopolitical uncertainty and elevated global oil prices acts as an economic shock absorber. Rather than allowing international price volatility to feed immediately into domestic inflation, it slows the transmission mechanism and provides businesses and households with valuable time to adjust.

The benefits extend well beyond consumers. Producers also gain from greater certainty. Manufacturers can prepare production schedules and pricing strategies with greater confidence. Transport companies can honour contracts without repeatedly recalculating operating costs. Farmers can estimate seasonal production expenses more accurately. In an uncertain economic environment, predictability is often as valuable as lower costs.

This stability is particularly important for productive sectors. Diesel remains a critical input for freight transportation, agriculture, construction and many industrial activities. By reducing the likelihood of abrupt cost increases, temporary price stabilisation enables firms to plan investments, man-

age cash flows and maintain production without unnecessary disruption.

The government’s decision to continue supporting liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) used by industry further reinforces this objective by helping productive sectors absorb part of the external energy shock while preserving competitiveness.

From a broader macroeconomic perspective, freezing fuel prices resembles a form of economic insurance. Just as households purchase insurance to avoid potentially devastating financial losses, governments may choose to absorb a limited short-term fiscal cost in order to prevent much larger economic losses arising from inflation, declining consumption, weakened business confidence and slower economic growth.

ventions during periods of exceptional energy volatility. Australia introduced temporary fuel support measures for freight operators during the recent energy shock before allowing them to expire. France relied extensively on temporary fuel and energy subsidies during the European energy crisis, while Spain and Portugal intervened directly in electricity generation costs by capping the price of natural gas used for power production. Although these policies differed in design, they shared a common objective: Preventing extraordinary external shocks from inflicting disproportionate damage on domestic economies. The key lesson from these international experiences is that emergency interventions should remain precisely that — temporary emergency measures rather than permanent policy frameworks.

Ultimately, long-term economic resilience cannot depend on price stabilisation alone. It requires sustained investment in renewable energy, greater energy efficiency, expanded public transportation and technological innovation that reduces dependence on imported fossil fuels. Temporary stabilisation buys valuable time, but structural reform determines future resilience.

Perhaps the most important lesson is that successful governments are judged not by how frequently they intervene in markets, nor by how rigidly they avoid intervention, but by their ability to intervene at the right moment and in the right manner. Under normal conditions, markets allocate resources efficiently. During extraordinary external shocks, however, carefully designed and temporary government intervention can prevent economic losses that far exceed its immediate fiscal cost.

Jordan’s decision to freeze fuel prices should therefore not be interpreted merely as an attempt to keep fuel artificially inexpensive. Rather, it should be understood as an effort to preserve economic confidence, stabilise expectations and provide the economy with the time it needs to absorb an external shock. In an increasingly uncertain global environment, economic stability has itself become a strategic asset — and protecting that stability is often more valuable than protecting prices alone.

The writer is a former Jordanian minister of state for economic affairs.

The benefits extend well beyond consumers. Producers also gain from greater certainty. Manufacturers can prepare production schedules and pricing strategies with greater confidence

Does this imply that fuel prices should remain frozen indefinitely? Certainly not. Sound economic policy distinguishes between temporary shocks and permanent structural changes. If higher oil prices result from short-lived geopolitical events, absorbing part of the shock can be economically justified. However, if elevated prices become permanent, maintaining artificially low domestic prices for an extended period would impose increasing fiscal costs, weaken market incentives and eventually create economic distortions.

Jordan is by no means unique in adopting temporary inter-

Who will lead the economy of programmable money?

By Hamza Alalakik

At every critical juncture in global financial history, a dominant question emerges: Who will lead the next system? Yet historical experience proves this question is often misleading. Major transformations rarely end with the total victory of one player and the elimination of another. Instead, they trigger a redistribution of power between old and new institutions adapting to a rapidly evolving reality.

Today, the world stands at a similar crossroads. After more than fifty years being dominated by the traditional SWIFT correspondent banking model, change is no longer just about transfer speeds or transaction costs. It is about redefining the very nature of money. Money is shifting from a simple medium of exchange into a programmable digital asset — carrying within itself execution terms, compliance rules, settlement mechanisms and operational logic that were previously handled outside the transaction. This shift will fundamentally reshape the relationship between central banks, commercial institutions, payment networks and capital markets.

Analysing current global initiatives reveals three potential scenarios for the financial landscape of 2035.

Scenario 1: Institutional Evolution and Tokenised Infrastructure

In the first scenario, global financial institutions successfully modernise existing infrastructure without replacing it. SWIFT evolves from a messaging network into a global coordination layer for tokenised assets. Meanwhile, initiatives like Project Agorá build programmable platforms uniting central bank reserves and tokenised commercial bank deposits while preserving

the two-tier banking system.

Here, tokenisation becomes embedded within traditional financial structures rather than serving as an alternative. Smart contracts, atomic settlement, and continuous operation integrate seamlessly into existing regulatory frameworks.

Analysing current global initiatives reveals three potential scenarios for the financial landscape of 2035

This scenario offers maximum stability by leveraging established institutional trust, though it may adopt radical innovations more slowly. Current trends in SWIFT and Project Agorá suggest strong support for this path among central banks and international institutions.

Scenario 2: Financial Multipolarity and Regional Corridors

The second scenario assumes the continued growth of regional trade and local currency usage, giving rise to specialised financial corridors. SWIFT retains its global significance, but platforms like mBridge and systems like CIPS expand to handle growing shares of regional trade.

The objective here is not to replace the global system entirely,

but to reduce dependence on a single settlement channel. Instead of a unified global framework, a multilayered ecosystem emerges where global and regional networks coexist, connected through interoperability standards. This scenario aligns closely with current geopolitical trends, allowing nations to diversify their settlement options without completely disconnecting from the broader international financial order.

Scenario 3: Agentic Economy and AI-Driven Capital

The third and most transformative scenario involves the rise of programmable money within an agentic economy. Financial transactions cease to be manual instructions; instead, they become autonomous operations executed by intelligent software agents operating under defined mandates.

Artificial intelligence systems actively manage liquidity, negotiate exchange rates, execute payments, verify compliance and assess risk in real time. Smart contracts become core operational tools in international trade, while tokenised money interacts dynamically with data streams, digital identity frameworks and supply chains. However, this scenario demands robust legal frameworks addressing algorithmic liability, data governance, cybersecurity and privacy. Technology alone cannot construct institutional trust.

From a governance perspective, the decisive factor will not be technology itself, but the ability to build shared standards. Future success will not be measured by the number of nodes on a distributed ledger or transaction speed. It will depend on achieving four essential conditions simultaneously: Trust, compliance, interoperability and crisis resilience. Failing on any single front

will undermine technical superiority.

The fundamental lesson for central banks is clear: Investing in the future requires building institutional frameworks capable of interacting across multiple platforms, standards and monetary models. Nations that anchor their legal structures in technological neutrality, adopt open standards, and develop capabilities in tokenisation, digital identity and artificial intelligence will adapt most effectively.

By 2035, financial power will be measured by the ability to design the digital architecture through which value moves across borders

History shows that financial revolutions are rarely won by the boldest technology, but by the institutions best able to translate technology into trusted, stable rules. By 2035, financial power will be measured by the ability to design the digital architecture through which value moves across borders. The competition between SWIFT, BRICS, or Project Agorá is far more than a battle between platforms — it is a race to write the rules that will govern global money, trust and the digital economy.



Jordanian mobile game developer Tamatem Games takes part in ChinaJoy 2026, held in Shanghai, marking its fourth consecutive participation in the gaming and digital entertainment exhibition

Mobile gaming firm represents Arab gaming industry at Chinese exhibition

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian mobile game developer Tamatem Games takes part in ChinaJoy 2026, held in Shanghai, marking its fourth consecutive participation in the annual gaming and digital entertainment exhibition.

According to a Wednesday statement issued by Tamatem Games, which specialises in publishing Arabic-language mobile games across the Middle East and North Africa, the exhibition attracts thousands of companies, developers, publishers and investors from around the world.

The company stated that its pavilion was the largest Arab pavilion at this year's exhibition, reflecting its expanded presence compared with previous editions, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Tamatem Games founder and chief executive officer, Hussam Hammo, said the company's continued participation supports its efforts to expand internationally and increase the visibility of the Arab gaming industry.

Hammo highlighted the importance of the Chinese market, noting that a sustained presence there creates opportunities for cooperation and growth.

He indicated that the company aims to strengthen ties between Arab gaming companies and Chinese industry partners and expand the international reach of Arab games and talent.

JLGC, IIAB strengthens supply chains with 'new' retail credit guarantee initiative

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Loan Guarantee Corporation (JLGC) and the Islamic International Arab Bank (IIAB) on Wednesday signed an agreement to launch the "Retail Traders Guarantee" programme in support of supply chains.

The initiative aims to enhance the capacity of retail establishments, particularly micro and small enterprises, to secure necessary funding for operational requirements and working capital, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

According to a JLGC statement, the agreement was signed by JLGC Director General Adnan Naji and IIAB General Manager Eyad Asali.

Patronising the ceremony, Governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Adel Al Sharkas emphasised that the central bank continues to back initiatives promoting financial inclusion and expanding access to finance for micro and small businesses, in alignment with national economic development priorities.

Sharkas noted that loan guarantee schemes serve as crucial mechanisms to mitigate credit risks for commercial banks, boosting their ability to extend facilities to productive sectors, as this reinforces supply chain sustainability, stimulates economic growth and generates job opportunities.

The programme's rollout forms part of efforts to advance financial inclusion and empower the retail



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sector, a cornerstone of local supply chains by guaranteeing credit facilities extended to merchants, helping them maintain inventory levels and sustain business operations.

For his part, Naji underscored that the agreement reflects the corporation's commitment to developing guarantee options tailored to various economic sectors, whilst expanding access to finance for small-scale enterprises to foster their continuity and growth.

Asali highlighted the significance of collaborating with the JLGC to provide financial solutions that support traders in meeting operational demands, thereby driving economic activity and stabilising supply chains.

The agreement falls within joint efforts to bolster cooperation between the banking sector and the JLGC, aiming to broaden the beneficiary base of guarantee schemes, stimulate economic performance and enhance enterprise growth ultimately benefiting the national economy.

India central bank holds rates as it assesses Mideast shock

MUMBAI, India (AFP) — India's central bank kept interest rates unchanged on Wednesday as it waits to see whether volatile oil prices caused by the Iran war feed wider inflationary pressures.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the benchmark repurchase rate, the level at which it lends to commercial banks, would remain at 5.25 per cent after a unanimous vote by a six-member panel.

Emerging and frontier market central banks from Indonesia to Sri Lanka have raised rates to curb price rises and boost their currencies since the outbreak of the Middle East crisis in February.

Limited and staggered fuel price hikes by the Indian government have so far shielded citizens from the worst of the war's economic impact but there are signs that this may not hold.

Retail inflation rose to 4.4 per cent in June — breaching the central bank's medium target of 4 per cent for the first time in 17 months — though it remains within RBI's 2-6 per cent tolerance band.

Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra said economic growth was supported by "resilient domestic demand" and inflation was not "broad-based" yet.

"The MPC [Monetary Policy Committee] noted that even though headline inflation is projected to increase, it is primarily on account of supply side pressures caused by food and fuel. It is not getting broad-based," Malhotra said in a televised address from the financial capital Mumbai.

"There is a need for greater clarity to emerge, especially regarding inflation, its path and composition before taking any policy action."

Analysts said Malhotra's speech had a dovish tinge.

"What stood out just as much as the tone itself was what was missing from it," Sneha Pandey of Quantum AMC said.

With the war still unresolved and already influencing both oil markets and yields, there were ample reasons for the central bank to express greater concern, she said.

"It didn't... and that comfort is a genuine positive for equities."



A Reserve Bank of India logo is seen outside the The Reserve Bank of India Head Quarter in Mumbai

Adding to the central bank's calculations is pressure on the Indian rupee, which slid to a record low before its June policy meeting.

Instead of raising rates, the RBI chose to announce a range of moves aimed at wooing dollar inflows, including a deposit scheme for the Indian diaspora.

These measures have brought in more than \$40 billion since June, according to central bank data released last Saturday, boosting the RBI's forex buffers.

While the steps have helped stop the rupee's losses, the currency has faced fresh challenges.

India, the world's third-largest buyer of oil, normally sources about half of its crude through the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively closed since the beginning of the war in February.

Analysts say this makes New Delhi among the most vulnerable economies to a global energy shock, as higher crude and fertiliser prices drive up India's import bill.

Economic Social Council, ILO talk labour laws, market cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — President of the Economic and Social Council, Musa Shteivi, and International Labour Organisation (ILO) expert Amin Wreidat explored on Wednesday expanding cooperation on labour market issues.

Shteivi pointed to the council's role as a national dialogue platform bringing together the government, employers and workers to build consensus on socioeconomic policies, support decision-making and promote decent work standards.

He stated the council's eagerness to broaden its partnership with the ILO, leverage international expertise to update labour legislation, and enhance social protection and workplace safety, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Wreidat, who is in Jordan to assess the country's labour inspection, occupational safety and health systems, lauded the council's efforts to foster social dialogue and involve stakeholders in labour policy discussions.

He said the ILO is committed to supporting the Kingdom's national initiatives to align labour inspection and safety frameworks with international standards.

Both sides agreed to maintain coordination to improve Jordan's work environment, update labour policies and boost economic competitiveness and sustainable development, Petra reported.

BEIJING (AFP) — China announced restrictions on drone exports to the United States and blacklisted six companies on Wednesday in response to trade sanctions imposed by Washington over forced labour and national security concerns.

The move comes days after the United States imposed fresh tariffs on China and 59 other countries, adding to a series of recent trade measures.

The US actions "seriously harm China's legitimate rights and interests", a commerce ministry spokesperson said in a statement.

"China can only take necessary countermeasures in response, including strengthening export controls on drones and their key components and technology to the US."

Beijing's measures also include suspending factory follow-up inspections by Chinese certification bodies, blacklisting US compliance testing companies, and launching national security investigations into imports of office printers and copiers, according to the ministry.

It also imposed sanctions on six US businesses; including Biotech Company Applied DNA Sciences and geoscience research firm Stratum Reservoir, barring organisations and individuals within China from "engaging in relevant transactions, cooperation, or other activities with them".

The six entities "have assisted and supported illegal US sanctions related to Xinjiang; the nature of their actions is egregious", the commerce ministry said.

The UN has warned of possible crimes against humanity in Xinjiang region targeting the mostly Muslim Uyghur minority — accusations China vehemently denies.

China's top trade official He Lifeng expressed "serious concern" to US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer in a call over the recent restrictions, state news agency Xinhua reported.

China also accused the United States last week of seeking to "suppress" Chinese companies, after Washington banned imports of humanoid and quadruped robots manufactured abroad in a move separate from the new tariffs.

Stocks mostly rise tracking earnings, US-Iran hopes

LONDON (AFP) — Stock markets mostly climbed on Wednesday as investors digested a wave of company earnings that have broadly surpassed expectations, while assessing the chances of a US-Iran deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

A few minutes into trading on Wall Street the Dow was up 1.2 per cent at 54,592.44 points while the broader S&P 500 and the tech-heavy Nasdaq both gained — despite a 12 per cent fall for Elon Musk's Space X.

Musk's rocket and satellite company slid after posting its first quarterly earnings report, amid questions on what returns huge investments on artificial intelligence will ultimately produce.

While revenues jumped 92 per cent, investors focused on the more than \$18 billion in SpaceX spending during the quarter.

In Europe, London, Paris and Frankfurt all made modest gains around two hours from the close, as oil prices edged slightly higher after Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis said they had attacked a Saudi oil tanker in the Red Sea.

Frankfurt and Paris had joined Madrid and Milan in hitting fresh highs earlier in the session.

London's FTSE 100 index was weighed down by a 6 per cent drop in HSBC shares as analysts said investors were disappointed by the size of the bank's share buyback announced on Tuesday.

But Swiss resources giant Glencore rose almost 4 per cent in London after it reported a return to profit in the first half of the year.

Asian equities benefited from a recent revival in technology stocks after a month-long rout, tracking gains on Wall Street on Tuesday that sent both the Dow and the S&P 500 to new records.

Seoul, which has been at the forefront of extreme volatility in the tech sector over the past month, while Tokyo was up more than 3 per cent and Hong Kong and Shanghai also saw gains.

Oil ticked higher after falling sharply on Tuesday after US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said a deal could be reached imminently with Tehran on reopening the Strait of Hormuz to shipping traffic.

But "fresh attacks and threats from the Houthi rebels on Saudi's oil export from the Red Sea" rattled confidence in a lasting Hormuz deal, said analysts at DNB Carnegie.

Investors are also keeping tabs on this week's release of US jobs data that should provide a fresh idea about the state of the economy and guide the Federal Reserve as it considers its next move on interest rates.

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AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD15.5 million spread over 5.3 million shares that traded through 3,791 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.45 per cent, closing at 3969.14 points.

Out of 107 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 27 companies rose while the share price of another 37 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Northern Cement Company by 7.32 per cent, Salam International Transport and Trading by 7.09 per cent, International Arabian Development and Investment Trading Company by 5 per cent, Shira Real Estate Development and Investments by 5 per cent, and Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 4.65 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Amwaj Properties by 5 per cent, Jordan Dairy by 4.76 per cent, Noor Capital Markets for Diversified Investments by 4.17 per cent, Al Tahdith for Real Estate Investments Company by 4.05 per cent and Specialised Jordanian Investment by 3.96 per cent.



CYCLING

Reusser holds lead as Vollerling wins in Tour de France hills

BELLEVILLE-EN-BEAUJOLAIS (Rhône), France (AFP) — Race favourite Demi Vollerling won a three-way sprint for stage five on the Tour de France Femmes on Wednesday as Marlen Reusser held a slender 12-second overall lead on the day's winner. Former champion Kasia Niewiadoma sprinted first as Reusser refused to attack, but a determined Vollerling overtook the fading Pole at the line, Niewiadoma however is now third at 1min 17sec despite missing out on a first stage win. "I somehow made it. I think it was a relief after the finish line," Vollerling said of the cat-and-mouse finale. The Dutchwoman was already looking to the days ahead. "Marlen has not won a Tour yet, and she will have to work for it. I'm sure it will be a hard battle, because she is not the rider who you can beat easily, because she is very strong," she said of the Swiss overall leader. Pauline Ferrand-Prevot's title defence took another battering over eight hills through the Beaujolais region. The slightly-built French climber dropped over two minutes on the time-trial Tuesday and another 2min 35sec on Wednesday's stage five, seriously damaging her hopes.

GOLF

CEO says funding secured to play beyond 2026

NEWYORK (AFP) — LIV Golf has reached a deal with a lead investor to keep the series playing beyond the end of the 2026 season, LIV Chief Executive officer Scott O'Neil said on Wednesday. Speaking at this week's LIV Golf New York event at Trump National in Bedminster, New Jersey, O'Neil provided the first glimpse of what LIV might resume after the pullout of financial support by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund. "LIV Golf has an agreement in place with a lead investor, signed by the investor and approved by the board, to anchor the transaction and play a key role in supporting the path forward for the league's next era, driven by and for the players," O'Neil said in a statement. "We're also seeing strong interest from more than a dozen additional parties to potentially serve as minority investors, creating a multi-partner model built for long-term stability and growth."

Sabalenka tops Uchijima in WTA Toronto opener

TORONTO, Canada (AFP) — World No.1 Aryna Sabalenka returned to her hard court comfort zone with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Japanese qualifier Moyuka Uchijima in the WTA 1000 in Toronto on Tuesday.

It was a solid start for Sabalenka in her bid to bounce back after falling in the quarter-finals at Roland Garros and in the round of 16 at Wimbledon.

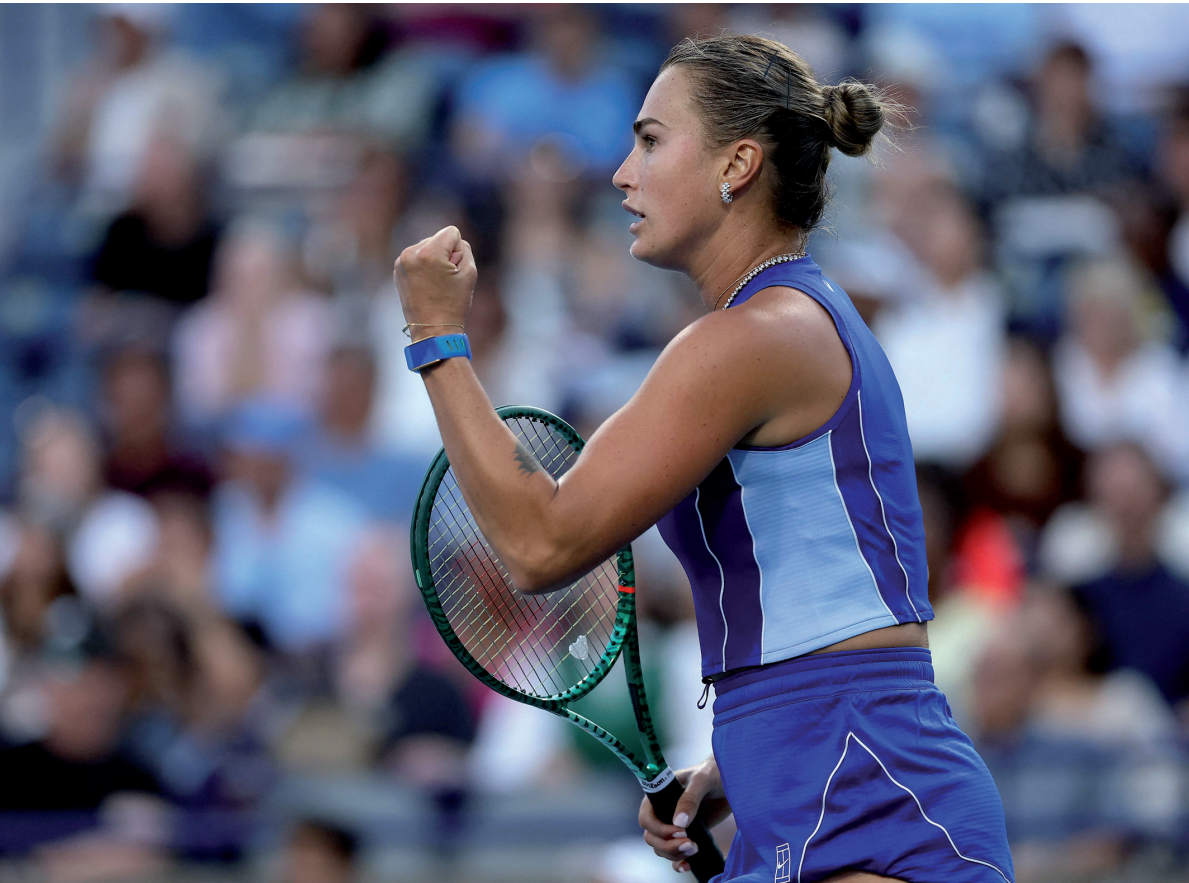
The Belarusian star has dominated on hard courts this year and on Tuesday notched her 24th win in 25 matches on the surface. The lone defeat was her loss to Elena Rybakina in the Australian Open final.

Now she's eyeing a North American hard court run that could include a three-peat at the US Open, the final Grand Slam of the year that starts on August 30 in New York.

"I'm happy with the performance, I'm happy with the fight," Sabalenka said after her second-round opener. "I knew going into this match I might struggle a little bit after a little break, but I was ready for that."

"I'm happy that mentally and physically I was ready to go."

Sabalenka didn't have it all her own way against the 111th-ranked Uchijima. But she emerged from an exchange of five breaks of serve that opened the second set with a 3-2 lead and made the ad-



AFP Photo

Aryna Sabalenka celebrates while playing Moyuka Uchijima of Japan during day three of the National Bank Open Presented by Rogers at Sobeys Stadium on Tuesday in Toronto, Ontario

vantage stand up.

She held for 4-2, and when she had her first chance to serve it out she pounced, sealing the match on her second match point with an overhead winner.

Uchijima had surprised the Belarusian in the opening game of the match, clawing back from 40-15 down to break on the way to a quick 2-0 lead. But Sabalenka won

the next five games and polished off the opening set with a confident hold of serve.

In the third round she'll face China's Zhang Shuai, who was leading Jelena Ostapenko 6-0, 4-0 when the Latvian retired from their match.

Former world number one Iga Swiatek survived some nervy moments to launch her US Open build-up with a 6-0, 6-3 victory over Sara Bejlek.

In her first match since her Wimbledon title defense ended with a third-round exit, Poland's seventh-seeded Swiatek was rolling through the first nine games, appearing in total control with a double-break for a 3-0 lead in the second.

Pretty physical

But her Czech opponent dug in and disrupted Swiatek's rhythm, win-

ning two straight games before Swiatek pulled off a great escape — fending off nine break points in a 22-minute sixth game to hold serve for a 4-2 lead.

"I'm happy that I stayed in the game and stayed solid because I felt at the end it got pretty physical," Swiatek said.

Swiatek has slipped from third in the world at this time last year to her current eighth.

Her Wimbledon disappointment came just four weeks after the four-time French Open champion bowed out in the last 16 at Roland Garros.

In fact, Swiatek has, yet, to reach a Tour-level final this season. She'll continue her quest to change that when she takes on Switzerland's Viktorija Golubic, a 5-7, 6-2, 6-3 winner over Croatian Donna Vekic.

Eighth-seeded American Amanda Anisimova reached the third round by walkover when scheduled opponent Lanlana Tararudee of Thailand withdrew because of illness.

Ninth-seeded Ukrainian Elina Svitolina rallied from a set and a break down to beat Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/4), 6-4.

And 10th-seeded Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk, who reached the semi-finals at Roland Garros and Wimbledon, shook off a slow start to beat Canadian wild card Katherine Sebov 7-6 (7/4), 6-0.

Kostyuk, seeded 10th, was broken twice to trail 4-1 in the first set before rebounding.

"Obviously the first set wasn't easy, but I'm happy to have that type of match coming back because [if] you kind of pull through difficult moments you know you can do it," said Kostyuk, who next faces former Australian Open champion Madison Keys.

Total eclipse gives scientists chance to probe Sun's mysteries

By Frederic Bourigault and Daniel Lawler
Agence France-Presse

PARIS, France — Scientists plan to use a total solar eclipse that will be visible in Spain next week as a rare chance to learn more about the stormy, unpredictable nature of our star.

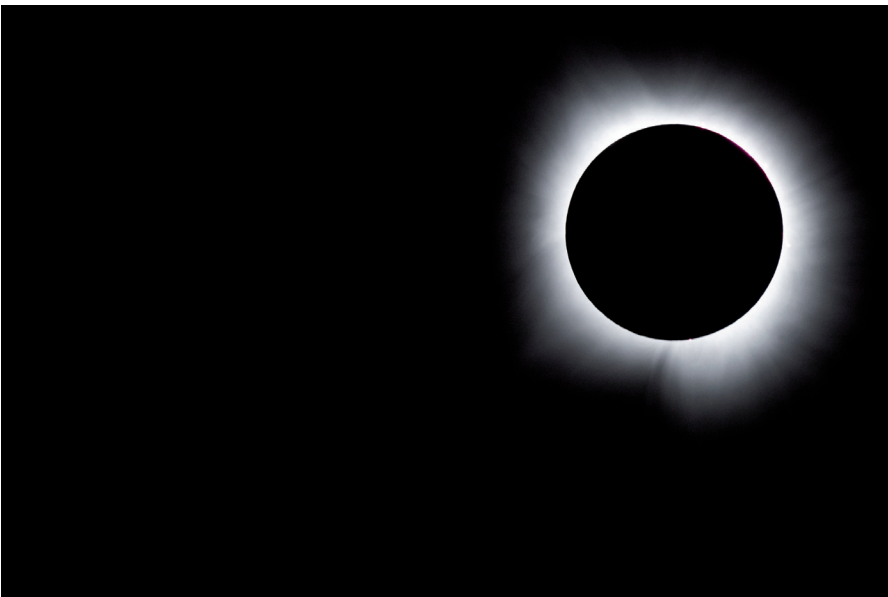
When the Moon blots out the Sun on August 12, teams will leap into action studying its magnetic field, atmosphere and furious weather that sometimes causes disruptions back here on Earth.

There is a long history of using eclipses to make scientific breakthroughs.

It was while watching an eclipse on May 29, 1919 on the West African island of Principe that British astronomer Arthur Eddington confirmed Albert Einstein's theory of relativity.

He achieved this by observing the effect of a light-bending phenomenon called gravitational lensing on the stars that became visible while the Sun's dazzling light was obscured.

More than a century later, scientists will watch a total solar eclipse lasting a minute



AFP Photo

The moon fully passes over the sun's horizon during a Total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024 in Brady, Texas

and 40 seconds appear across a swathe of northern Spain next week.

"Our work aims to understand the physical mechanisms underlying the Sun's activity," Allan Sacha Brun, an astrophysicist at France's Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), told AFP.

Every day, specialists are working on models aiming to explain solar activity, allowing them "to put the Sun back into context within its evolutionary timeline, from

its birth to its death", he added.

'We're incredibly lucky'

The Sun is constantly spewing out matter and charged particles, sometimes unleashing full-blown solar storms that shoot out giant explosions of plasma and other matter.

When these materials slam into Earth's magnetic shield, they can knock out satellites, threaten astronauts —

and create colourful auroras in the skies of northern and southern latitudes.

"These phenomena follow a regular cycle, peaking every 11 years," Brun said. "In 2024, the Sun reached the peak of its 25th cycle."

Next week, CEA scientists will focus on the Sun's corona, the outermost layer of its atmosphere.

"We're incredibly lucky: the Moon is 400 times smaller than the

Sun — but it's also 400 times closer to us," Brun said.

This coincidence means the Moon blocks out the Sun's light, but still lets scientists see what is happening in its atmosphere.

The Sun's corona extends out for 10 million kilometres, and is a million times less intense than its surface, which is called the photosphere. But the corona can still reach up to 2 million degrees Celsius.

During normal times when there is no eclipse, scientists study the Sun's atmosphere with satellites equipped with a coronagraph — "a filter that blocks out the photosphere", Brun explained.

But total eclipses even allow them a rare glimpse of the chromosphere, the layer of atmosphere between the corona and the surface.

'Inspirational'

Scientists at the European Space Agency (ESA) will be analysing next week's eclipse, hoping to learn more about solar winds.

"Why do solar storms propagate in this way? What are their struc-

tures, and can we develop models that allow us to predict them?" asked Carole Mundell, the ESA's director of science.

The ESA's Solar Orbiter probe, which launched in 2020, has been busy collecting data about the Sun's atmosphere and wind.

Eclipses are an opportunity to "test just how good our models are — or how bad", the mission's co-principal investigator Miho Janvier said.

Another ESA mission called Proba-3 is currently using three spacecraft flying in synchronised formation to create their own mini-solar eclipses.

There are also plans for a mission called MESOM that hopes to send a spacecraft into the shadow of the moon to get a much-longer view of the phenomenon.

Lucie Green, a solar physicist at University College London working on the mission, told AFP that total solar eclipses were "inspirational for everybody, artists and scientists alike".

"What we see on the Earth is inspiring what we want to do in our space science research," she added.

Publisher defends Cambridge professor in plagiarism row

LONDON (AFP) — Publisher Simon & Schuster has defended Jason Arday, a University of Cambridge professor facing snowballing accusations of plagiarism ahead of the release of his memoir.

A scandal involving Arday — who made headlines when he was appointed as Cambridge university's youngest Black professor in 2023 — erupted in recent days after some academics and media reports accused him of plagiarising parts of his PhD thesis.

His backstory, detailed in his memoir "Great and Unfortunate Things" set to be published this month by Simon & Schuster UK, has also attracted attention. Diagnosed with autism, Arday says he was non-verbal until age 11 and only learnt to read and write at 18, before becoming Cambridge's professor of sociology of education at 37.

"We are proud to publish Professor Jason Arday. We have worked closely with him... and can speak to the professionalism and integrity he has brought to every stage of the publication," Simon & Schuster said in a statement sent to AFP on Wednesday.

The publisher noted that "no allegations of plagiarism have been made with respect to" the

memoir, which is set to be published next week in the United States and the end of the month in the UK.

In a widely shared statement, the University of Cambridge earlier defended Arday as "the victim of a vile campaign to undermine his credibility".

"Allegations of plagiarism regarding his thesis and journal publications have been thoroughly investigated by the relevant institution and the journals in question. Professor Arday has been cleared by those investigations of any wrongdoing," the prestigious university said.

In an interview with The Times newspaper, Arday admitted to making "mistakes" in his academic work, but said he was being wrongly "portrayed to be a liar and a fantasist and an academic fraud".

He also alleged the "campaign to unseat me from my position" was "racially motivated".

The row was sparked by an article by Nathan Cofnas — a US academic whose research affiliation with a Cambridge college was terminated over accusations of racism — who claimed he found multiple sections of Arday's doctoral dissertation were copied from other works.

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