



Jordan, Arab, Islamic countries condemn Israel's rejection of Gaza peace deal

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan, Arab and Islamic countries on Sunday condemned Israel's rejection of a recently released roadmap for fully implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2803, as well as its rejection of Palestinian statehood.

The foreign ministers of Jordan, the UAE, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Egypt said that the Israeli positions amount to a direct repudiation of

the Comprehensive Plan, jeopardise its implementation and fundamentally undermine collective efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace.

The ministers said that such rejection confirms that Israel now bears responsibility for obstructing efforts to bring peace to Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The road map, which has been accepted by the Palestinian factions, is the outcome of extensive efforts by the mediators,

namely Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, the US, the high representative for Gaza and the Board of Peace.

It constitutes a vital milestone for the de-commissioning of weapons concurrent with the withdrawal of Israeli forces, the deployment of the international stabilisation force, the transfer of administrative authority to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza and the reconstruction of Gaza, as stipulated in the Comprehensive Plan.

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Cabinet allocates JD10m to Student Support Fund to assist additional 10,000 university students

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday announced an additional JD10 million allocation to the Student Support Fund.

The allocation, made under Royal directives from His Majesty King Abdullah and as part of government efforts to expand support for university students, will be financed through proceeds from public auctions of distinctive vehicle licence plates, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

In a Prime Ministry statement, the prime minister was quoted as saying that the new funding will enable the government to support an additional 10,000 students at the start of the academic year, helping them meet their educational needs and adapt to the demands of higher education.

The government has doubled the Student Support Fund's budget to JD40 million from JD20 million two years ago, raising the expected number of beneficiaries to nearly 63,000 students, compared with an annual average of around 53,000 previously, the statement said.

Hassan also congratulated students who passed the General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (Tawjihi), wishing them success as they embark on the next stage of their education and careers.



Prime Minister Jafar Hassan chairs a Cabinet session on Sunday, during which an additional JD10 million allocation to the Student Support Fund were endorsed

He also extended his best wishes to students who did not pass this time, wishing them success in future attempts and in pursuing vocational careers or other alternative pathways.

Noting that 2026 recorded the highest Tawjihi pass rate, Hassan stressed that pass rates alone should not be considered the primary measure of educational success. He said the focus should remain on students' ability to adapt to labour market demands and on improving overall learning outcomes.

He also underlined

the importance of continuously evaluating the implementation and impact of the new secondary education system to ensure its ongoing development and provide students with high-quality education.

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King's visit to China offers chance to deepen economic cooperation — JSF

- Chinese exports to Jordan reach \$6.29 billion in 2025
- Jordanian exports to China reach \$430 million, concentrated mainly in phosphate, potash, fertilisers, chemicals, copper
- Trade deficit between two countries estimated at about \$5.86 billion

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah's visit to China on Monday presents an opportunity to strengthen economic ties between the two countries, attract more diversified Chinese investment and expand Jordanian exports to the Chinese market, according to a report by the Jordan Strategy Forum (JSF).

The forum said that the visit could help move bilateral relations beyond their current focus on trade towards greater investment, production and technology cooperation.

In a report titled "Jordanian-Chinese Economic Prospects: Between Trade and Foreign Direct Investment", the JSF examined China's growing economic role in the Middle East and prospects for expanding trade and investment ties with Jordan.

The report, cited by Al Mamlaka, said that Jordan



faces a significant trade imbalance with China, while Chinese investment in the Kingdom remains concentrated in a limited number of economic activities.

Chinese exports to Jordan reached approximately \$6.29 billion in 2025, compared with \$430 million in Jordanian exports to China, resulting in a bilateral trade deficit of about \$5.86 billion, according to the report.

Jordanian exports to

China remain concentrated in a limited range of products, including phosphate, potash, fertilisers, chemicals and copper.

The cumulative value of Chinese foreign direct investment in Jordan reached approximately \$3.56 billion between 2010 and 2025, the forum said.

The figure is lower than Chinese investment in Iraq (\$12.19 billion), the UAE (\$9.72 billion), Egypt (\$8.29 billion),

Saudi Arabia (\$7.02 billion) and Morocco (\$3.93 billion), but the forum described it as a significant Chinese investment presence in Jordan.

However, the number of Chinese investment projects in Jordan remains relatively low. Some 71 projects were implemented between 2010 and 2025, compared with 1,227 in the UAE, 540 in Saudi Arabia, 375 in Egypt and 177 in Morocco.

Chinese investment

in Jordan is also heavily concentrated in the energy sector.

Of the \$3.56 billion invested during the 2010-2025 period, approximately \$3.17 billion, or nearly 89 per cent, went to energy, according to the report. Investment in other sectors was considerably smaller, including about \$360 million in consumer products, \$19.7 million in automotive, \$6.4 million in financial and business services and \$4.27 million in information and communications technology.

The forum said Jordan's challenge is not simply to attract more Chinese investment, but to diversify investment and channel it towards activities that strengthen productive capacity, transfer technology and technical know-how, develop local suppliers and create higher-skilled jobs.

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King's China visit to advance Jordan-China strategic partnership — Chinese ambassador

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah's official visit to China on Monday will map out the next decade of strategic cooperation with Chinese President Xi Jinping, according to Chinese Ambassador to Jordan Guo Wei.

Guo told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the upcoming summit marks a key milestone as Jordan and China approach the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations next year.

Economic cooperation between Amman and Beijing expanded rapidly, according to the ambassador. China became Jordan's top trading partner in 2025, with bilateral trade surging over 25 per cent to exceed \$6.7 billion.

Jordan's exports to China jumped 80 per cent in the first five months of this year alone, reaching nearly \$300 million.

Chinese investments in Jordan now exceed \$3 billion, supporting major sectors such as engineering, textiles, steel, ceramics, energy, logistics and e-commerce,



Guo Wei

while employing thousands of Jordanians.

Notably, a Chinese firm is now the largest shareholder in the Arab Potash Company, driving record production and sales.

Guo voiced Beijing's commitment to encouraging further business in Jordan, pointing to emerging opportunities in green development, the digital economy and advanced manufacturing.

Beyond economic ties, cultural and educational exchanges continue to grow. Over 600 Jordanian students are currently learning Chinese across seven institutions, while around 500 Chinese students study in Jordan.

Chinese culture is also gaining strong traction across Jordan, with tea, culinary, and poetry events reaching local schools and communities. Initiatives like Spring Festival celebrations, youth concerts, and language competitions continue to draw widespread interest alongside annual performances by Chinese artistic troupes at the Jerash Festival.

On global and regional issues, Guo noted that Amman and Beijing maintain shared stances on key priorities, particularly the Palestinian cause and broader Middle East stability, as both nations work together to promote regional peace.

Looking ahead, China plans to expand development opportunities and deepen cooperation with Jordan across trade, investment, energy, minerals, media, and human resources, Guo said.

He added that both nations will also explore emerging fields, including green development, the digital economy, and advanced manufacturing.

Safadi, Qatari counterpart discuss relations, regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi held talks on Sunday with Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani that focused on bilateral ties and regional developments.

The two ministers discussed ways to further strengthen the Amman-Doha ties, as well as regional developments, particularly efforts to de-escalate tensions, restore



Ayman Safadi

calm and enhance security and stability in the region, according to a For-



Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani

eign Ministry statement.

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West Bank at a 'breaking point' as settler violence, military raids escalate

By Najla M. Shahwan

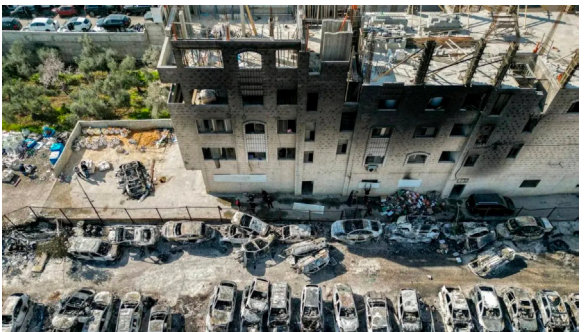
OCCUPIED WEST BANK — Palestinians across the occupied West Bank are facing mounting insecurity as settler attacks, military raids, mass detentions, home demolitions and land confiscations intensify, raising fears of further displacement and settlement expansion.

In the village of Qusra, south of Nablus, armed Israeli settlers have surrounded Palestinian homes, blocking access to essential supplies and trapping families inside

for days.

About 15 Palestinians, including two children, have been confined to three homes in Qusra for nearly a week after settlers blocked roads and restricted access to the area. The families have reportedly been without adequate access to water and electricity since August 9.

Israeli forces have also prevented foreign activists attempting to deliver food and water to the families from reaching the Ras Al Ain area, according to the Palestinian news agency Wafa.



An aerial view of a yard where cars were torched overnight, in the Palestinian town of Huwara near Nablus in the occupied West Bank

Residents said settlers began surrounding the homes earlier in the week, blocking roads

with stones, erecting a tent nearby and preventing residents from freely entering or leaving the

area.

The United Nations said the families were "trapped inside their homes in a state of terror", unable to meet basic needs and without access to water or electricity.

Israeli forces entered the area a day earlier and ordered the families to temporarily leave their homes. The residents refused, fearing that their houses could be taken over if they abandoned them, and instead gathered in one of the three homes.

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FAO photo

The workshops aim to enhance the capacities of participating organisations and expand the adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices and technologies

FAO launches climate resilience training for Tafileh cooperatives, civil society

AMMAN (JT) — Training workshops for cooperatives and civil society organisations were launched on Sunday in Tafileh Governorate as part of the “Building Resilience to Cope with Climate Change in Jordan through Improving Water Use Efficiency in the Agriculture Sector [BRCCJ]” project, implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

The workshops aim to enhance the capacities of these organisations and expand the adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices and technologies, contributing to improved water-use efficiency and enhancing local communities’ capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, according to a FAO statement.

The training programme is being implemented by FAO, in partnership with Advance Consulting, with support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), under the BRCCJ project.

The project seeks to support the transition towards a more resource-efficient and sustainable agricultural sector, particularly in water use, while boosting food security and livelihoods in communities most affected by water scarcity and climate change.

At the opening of the workshop, Director of the Cooperative Department in Tafileh Governorate Raed Rbeihat welcomed representatives of the participating cooperatives and emphasised the importance of cooperative action in supporting and advancing the ag-

ricultural sector, particularly in light of the challenges posed by climate change and water scarcity.

Policy and Education Specialist at FAO Samia Akroush provided an overview of the BRCCJ project, highlighting its objectives and key components, as well as its role in improving water-use efficiency in agriculture, promoting climate-smart agricultural practices, and building the capacities of local communities and civil society organisations.

The workshops aim to enhance the capacities of these organisations and expand the adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices and technologies...

These efforts contribute to enhancing their resilience to the impacts of climate change and supporting sustainable agricultural development.

The workshop brings together representatives from five cooperatives in Tafileh Governorate, with 30 cooperative members participating.

Participants are receiving theoretical and practical training on climate-smart agricultural technologies, adaptation measures in the agricultural sector, and sustainable management of water and natu-

ral resources.

The training aims to enable cooperatives to play a stronger role in promoting sustainable agricultural practices, supporting sound management of natural resources, and helping local communities adopt practical and effective solutions to adapt to climate change.

The training course will run for eight days and will include a range of practical and field-based sessions focusing on climate-smart agriculture technologies, sustainable agricultural practices, water-use efficiency and natural resource management.

The programme is designed to strengthen the capacity of cooperatives and civil society organisations to share knowledge and promote innovative practices among local communities and farmers.

The BRCCJ project is implemented by FAO with funding from GCF, in partnership with the ministries of agriculture, water and irrigation, and environment, as well as the United Nations Development Programme.

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of local communities and the agricultural sector in Jordan to adapt to the impacts of climate change by improving water-use efficiency, promoting sustainable management of natural resources, and scaling up the application of climate-smart agriculture practices and technologies, thereby supporting a more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector in the face of climate challenges.

Amman road density data improves Jordan's prosperity ranking — GAM

AMMAN (JT) — The Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) has completed calculating the lengths of roads within the boundaries of the capital as part of national efforts to enhance Jordan's position in the Legatum Prosperity Index.

Amman's road density stood at 8.2 kilometres of road per square kilometre of the city's area in 2025, while the total length of paved roads reached 6,522 kilometres across an area of 800 square kilometres, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

GAM said that its roads directorate formed specialised committees and held intensive workshops in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and relevant authorities.

It also provided the Department of Statistics with accurate data on road lengths within the capital, which was included in a comprehensive aggregate table prepared in coordination with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing and the Ministry of Local Administration.

The data will be used



File photo

The Greater Amman Municipality says that the total length of paved roads in the capital stands at 6,522 kilometres across an area of 800 square kilometres

to calculate the road density indicator according to the approved international methodology and include it in the Kingdom's annual statistical yearbook.

The municipality said that the achievement reflects its commitment to supporting government efforts to develop infrastructure and enhance the quality of national data, contributing to improving Jordan's international image and competitiveness in global indicators.

GAM noted that these efforts helped improve Jordan's ranking in the global Legatum Prosperity Index by improving Amman's road density indicator.

The municipality has sought to organise the city under a long-term growth plan, most recently the Amman Growth Plan 2025 and translated it into urban planning measures

while improving and expanding road networks through projects implemented under its 2022-2026 strategic plan.

GAM has also documented and updated the networks on its Geographic Information System (GIS).

The municipality provided accurate data for calculating the indicator.

The road density indicator is an engineering and economic measure

of the availability and extent of a road network within a given geographic area.

It is generally calculated by dividing the total length of roads by the area's size or population to assess the efficiency of infrastructure in cities and urban areas.

Road density is one of the indicators used to measure the prosperity of cities under the global Legatum Prosperity Index.

Environment Fund approves projects to advance green economy, conservation

AMMAN (JT) — The Environment Protection Fund has approved financing for a package of environmental and development projects focusing on sustainable agriculture, nature reserve rehabilitation, water harvesting, recycling and green spaces.

The approvals were made by the fund's Board of Directors during a meeting at the Ministry of Environment chaired by Environment Minister Ayman Suleiman, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The projects aim to empower youth and women in rural communities, strengthen food security, promote environmentally sustainable production, conserve ecosystems, expand water harvesting and increase green spaces.

Several community organisations will receive support under the fund-



ing package.

Among the approved projects are the Petra Springs Environmental Society's "Petra Biscuit House"; a water harvesting and home garden initiative by the Basmat Khair Women's Cooperative Society; the "Map and Fabric" project by the Himmet Nisaa Balqa Charity Society; and a Jordan Environment Society initiative to strengthen rural community participation in environmental justice.

Funding was also approved for the Ayadi Al

hance the long-term sustainability of the sites.

The board also approved the rehabilitation and operation of the Mujib agricultural project, with plans to develop it into a national model for modern farming.

As part of the project, an applied agricultural academy specialising in non-traditional farming will be established to provide young people with practical training in innovative and environmentally friendly agricultural techniques and improve their access to employment opportunities.

The funding package also includes two new environmental parks — one at the Pilgrims City, or Al Waha, in Maan Governorate, and another at Aqaba University College — aimed at expanding green spaces and promoting environmental awareness in local communities.

The fund also approved a circular-economy project to manufacture outdoor benches and waste containers from recycled plastic for use in public parks and recreational areas.

The initiative seeks to increase the reuse of plastic waste, support recycling-based industries and innovation, and promote more efficient use of resources.

The Ministry of Environment said that the projects reflect the fund's approach to financing initiatives that deliver measurable environmental benefits while supporting sustainable development.

The ministry added that the projects will also help support local communities, create opportunities for youth and women, protect natural resources and advance Jordan's green economy.

Scholars uncover evidence of Roman soldiers in Jordan’s Black Desert

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — Scholars found many graffiti dated between the 1st century BC and the late 3rd century AD in Syro-Jordanian Desert, particularly within the rugged lava fields of the Black Desert.

“This activity occurred both before and after the region became part of the Roman province of Arabia in 106AD,” said Professor Hani Hayajneh from Yarmouk University.

“Thousands of inscriptions, including drawings, personal names, records and prayers, were carved into the local basalt by nomadic pastoralists who primarily used Safaitic [an epichoric Ancient North Arabian script representing an Old Arabic dialect] as their primary means of written expression,” Hayajneh added.

Contact with the Roman army enabled the local communities to learn the basics of Greek, as is now evidenced by a significant number of epigraphic



Photo courtesy of Rafe Harashsheh

The Latin graffiti at Marabb Al Surufat

finds. Conversely, Latin inscriptions are much rarer in the region and they appear exclusively within military contexts.

The epigraphy of Namara shows this clearly, said Julien Aliquot from French National Centre of Scientific Research, adding that Namara is a garrison in southern Syria with many Greek and Latin graffiti related to various legionary and auxiliary troops, including the third legion Cyrenaica, whose main camp was at Bostra, the capital of the Roman

province of Arabia.

“On the Jordanian side of the border, the Latin graffiti in cursive letters that has been recorded near the so-called Cairn of Hani is also certainly the work of Roman soldiers,” Aliquot said.

Also, it is worth mentioning the small dossier of the military inscriptions at Bayir, which includes four 2nd century AD Latin graffiti. The Black Desert graffiti presented here therefore belongs to a series of documents that have now been clearly

identified.

“Its publication will provide further insight into the lives of the soldiers stationed by the provincial authorities in the same environment as the nomadic tribes to patrol and maintain the security of the limes Arabicus,” Aliquot noted.

The inscription was recorded by Rafe Harashsheh during his 2011-2012 surveys, when he was employed by the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, Hayajneh said.

He added that it was discovered between the

Baghdad highway and the Syrian-Jordanian border, approximately 8 kilometres north of the road and 25 kilometres to the northeast of the city of Al Safawi, on one of the burial mounds located on the northern edge of Marabb Al Surufat.

Hundreds of ancient drawings and Safaitic inscriptions have been discovered in the same area of the Black Desert. Many of these were first documented by Frederick Victor Winnett and his team in the 1950s, Hayajneh said.

The OCIANA database also includes (in its current state, under the misnomer Marabb Al Sarafa) some 50 Safaitic graffiti that have been more recently recorded.

“In 2022, Rafe Harashsheh published twenty-five inscriptions from Marabb Al Surufat. We also know that Greek was not absent in the surroundings, as evidenced by two bilingual inscriptions. However, no Latin documents have yet been mentioned there,” Hayajneh underscored.

PSD records 43,495 environmental violations in 7 months

AMMAN (JT) — The Public Security Directorate (PSD) on Sunday said that 43,495 environmental violations had been recorded by the end of July as a result of automated and electronic monitoring and firm action against violations and practices that constitute attacks on the environment, public facilities and tourist and natural sites.

PSD said that the violations included 9,342 offences under the Framework Law, 28,599 cases of littering from vehicles and 223 cases of dumping rubble, in addition to 5,331 violations that were recorded under the Marine Environment Protection Regulation and the Aqaba Marine Reserve Regulation.

PSD said that it continues to implement intensive monitoring measures under its action plan within the executive programme of the cleanliness and reduction of random waste dumping strategy, aimed at protecting the environment, upholding the rule of law and promoting



File photo

The Public Security Directorate on Sunday says that 43,495 environmental violations have been recorded by the end of July as a result of automated and electronic monitoring

positive environmental behaviour.

The directorate stressed that it deals firmly with environmental protection as a national responsibility and a matter of law enforcement by intensifying field monitoring, detecting violations and taking legal action against offenders, alongside awareness and media campaigns aimed at bringing about lasting changes in community behaviour.

PSD noted that it also continues to conduct enhanced monitoring campaigns during weekends, public holidays, and official occasions to detect

environmental violations and harmful practices, focusing on sites with high numbers of visitors, particularly recreational areas, forests, and tourist and natural sites, through continuous security and monitoring patrols.

The directorate is also enhancing its media plan through awareness messages, programmes, activities and initiatives aimed at promoting a culture of environmental protection and turning public cleanliness into an established community practice and a comprehensive national partnership.

21 investors obtain Jordanian citizenship in Q2

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet on Sunday was briefed on statistics on investors who obtained Jordanian citizenship or residency through investment during the second quarter of 2026.

According to the statistics, 21 investors obtained Jordanian citizenship during the period, with their investments in the Kingdom exceeding \$33 million and creating 767 jobs for Jordanians.

Meanwhile, six investors obtained residency through investment, with their investments totalling nearly JD2 million, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The statistics showed that the total number of investors who have obtained Jordanian citizenship since the implementation of the citizenship-by-investment decision in 2021 has reached 687.

The Cabinet has recently approved amendments to the bylaws regulating the issuance of residency



The total number of investors who have obtained Jordanian citizenship since the implementation of the citizenship-by-investment decision in 2021 reaches 687

and Jordanian citizenship to investors as part of efforts to attract and retain investment and stimulate economic activity across the Kingdom.

Under the amended rules, investors can

qualify for citizenship by purchasing newly issued shares in Jordanian companies worth at least JD1.5 million, subject to conditions including holding the shares for five years.

Citizenship can also be granted to investors who establish new projects with capital of at least JD700,000 in Amman or JD500,000 in other governorates, as well as those investing in existing projects

and meeting requirements related to fixed assets and the employment of Jordanians.

Other routes include investing JD3 million in pharmaceutical or food logistics projects or creating at least 150 jobs for Jordanians in Amman or 100 jobs in other governorates.

The Amra City Project requires a JD1.5 million investment to qualify. Citizenship benefits extend to the investor's wife, dependent daughters, parents, and unmarried sons under 24 years of age, or under 30 years of age if the investment exceeds JD2 million.

The amended rules also provide for residency through property investment, including a five-year residency permit for investors purchasing property worth at least JD200,000 from a developer, JD300,000 from non-developers or JD150,000 outside Amman, subject to a five-year holding period.



The Department of Statistics (DoS) says that the inflation rate rose to 2.13 per cent during the first seven months of 2026 compared with 1.94 per cent during the same period in 2025

Inflation rate reaches 2.13% in first seven months of 2026 — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — The inflation rate rose to 2.13 per cent during the first seven months of 2026 compared with 1.94 per cent during the same period in 2025, according to official data released by the Department of Statistics.

Monthly inflation in July reached 2.7 per cent compared with 1.68 per cent recorded in July 2025, while the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for July dropped by 0.18 per cent compared with June 2026, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported

Rents and transport were the primary contributors to the cumulative inflation during the January to July period. Rents added 0.71 percentage points, followed by transport at 0.52 percentage points, oils and fats at 0.26 percentage points, and tobacco and cigarettes at 0.17 percentage points.

For the month of July, transport led the inflation contribution with 1.08 percentage points, followed by rents at 0.76 percentage points, and oils and fats at 0.29 percentage points.

Price decreases in key food items helped mitigate overall inflation during July.

Lower prices for fruits and nuts reduced inflation by 0.20 percentage points, meat and poultry by 0.07 percentage points, and dairy products and eggs by 0.05 percentage points.

The CPI calculation is based on a consumer basket comprising 850 items, including 325 food items and 525 non-food items, with prices collected from a survey sample of 3,400 commercial establishments.

Police arrest 132 suspects in third week of anti-Crystal meth campaign

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) announced on Sunday the arrest of 132 suspects in 117 cases in various parts of the Kingdom, according to official sources.

The arrest came in the third week of a "strict" security campaign and an awareness campaign that was initiated by AND in collaboration with the Media and Community Policing Directorate to combat the use of Crystal meth in Jordanian society.

The campaigns aimed at warning the public about the use of this deadly substance and pursuing individuals who deal with the illicit substance.

"In our third campaign week, we dealt with 117 cases of Crystal meth trafficking, smuggling, promotion, and the use of this deadly substance," Police Spokesperson Brig.

Gen. Amer Sartawi said. As a result, Sartawi maintained, law-enforcement officers arrested 41 suspects who were allegedly smuggling, promoting and trafficking crystal meth.

Meanwhile, 91 suspects were arrested for using the deadly substance, Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

Crystal meth is the common name for crystal methamphetamine, a strong and highly addictive drug that affects the central nervous system, according to WebMD.

Sartawi had recently said that Crystal meth "is one of the most dangerous chemical substances that affects people's mental and physical health".

"This dangerous substance causes rapid addiction, severe disturbances in perception and behaviour, and affects bodily functions, especially causing damage to the brain and lungs, in addition to aggression, loss of control and perception and causing many heinous crimes," Sartawi added.

He stressed that the "campaign is ongoing until it reaches its goals of spreading awareness and pursuing individuals who deal with this deadly substance".

All the detained suspects were referred to the State Security Prosecutor for further questioning and indictment, he added. Citizens are urged to report any person who deals with Crystal meth by contacting 911, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate (PSD).

All information will be treated with utmost discretion, seriousness, firmness, verification, and confidentiality, the PSD statement added.

Medical examinations begin for third batch of national service conscripts

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF), represented by the Mobilisation and Popular Army Directorate, on Sunday began medical examinations for the third batch of national service conscripts as part of the implementation of the National Service Programme.

The programme was re-activated to prepare and train Jordanian youth and equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to enhance their capabilities and sense of national responsibility, according to a JAF statement.

Medical examinations for conscripts from Irbid, Ajloun, Jerash and Mafrq governorates are being conducted at Prince Rashid Bin Al Hassan Military Hospital in Eidoon from Sunday, August 16 until Tuesday, August 18.

Conscripts from Karak and Tafilah governorates will undergo examinations



The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) on Sunday begins medical examinations for the third batch of national service conscripts

on Wednesday, August 19 at Prince Ali bin Al Hussein Military Hospital in Karak, while those from Ma'an and Aqaba governorates will be examined on Thursday, August 20 at Prince Hashem bin Abdullah II Hospital in Aqaba.

Examinations for conscripts from the central region, Amman, Zarqa, Madaba and Balqa gov-

ernorates, will be conducted from August 23 to September 3 at the Preliminary Military Medical Committee in Khow.

Conscripts who missed their scheduled examination appointments may visit the Preliminary Military Medical Committee in Khow during the same period to complete their examinations.

Third-batch conscripts may also undergo their examinations at any of the designated examination centres during the announced dates, according to their circumstances and places of residence.

The JAF said that the arrangements are intended to facilitate the reception of conscripts and ensure their equitable distribution among military hospitals and medical centres according to a geographical schedule that takes their places of residence into account.

The measures are also aimed at expediting medical and administrative procedures while ensuring an organised implementation of the national service programme, the Armed Forces added.

The programme reflects the importance attached to national service as a national duty that strengthens values of belonging, responsibility and commitment among

Jordanian youth.

The three-month National Service Programme provided conscripts with intensive, well-rounded training, combining a field-based military track focused on discipline, physical fitness and the use of light weapons, with a theoretical component covering active citizenship, national awareness, financial literacy and labour market readiness.

Each year, 6,000 young men would be selected, divided into three phases of 2,000 conscripts each, according to the Military Media Directorate.

The initiative builds on HRH Crown Prince Hussein's announcement to reactivate the National Service Programme, describing the effort as a national step to prepare and qualify young people through military training and a structured theoretical curriculum within the National Service and Reserve Service framework.

Senate committee passes 2026 amendments to Real Estate Ownership Law

AMMAN (JT) — A joint Senate committee has passed the Real Estate Ownership Law of 2026, as referred by the Lower House.

The draft law establishes procedures for land expropriation for major national and infrastructure projects while strengthening protections for property owners and introducing measures to improve the real estate investment environment, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The legislation is expected to have particular relevance to major infrastructure projects planned by the government, including a railway project



A joint Senate committee passes the Real Estate Ownership Law of 2026, as referred by the Lower House

in the Southern Ghor, where land expropriation may be required to facilitate construction.

The draft law sets procedures for expropriation, compensation and judicial

oversight, seeking to balance public interest and development needs with citizens' property rights.

The joint committee, comprising the Legal and Finance committees and

chaired by Senator Rajai Muasher, reviewed the draft's provisions and discussed its articles to balance the public interest, property rights, and the requirements of development and investment projects.

Muasher said that Article 11 grants the Cabinet authority to expropriate land while preserving citizens' right to object and providing for judicial oversight to protect property rights and ensure the law's implementation.

He described the railway project as a national and strategic undertaking that is expected to stimulate economic activity, improve transportation and

trade, and contribute to growth across several sectors. He stressed that the legislation would not undermine the rights of citizens whose land has been or may be expropriated for the project.

The committee urged the government to consider the direct impact of major legislation on citizens and, where possible, consult stakeholders and relevant authorities before adopting measures to clarify provisions, assess their implications and promote public understanding.

It also recommended giving priority, to the greatest extent possible, to state-owned land when implementing major in-

frastructure and national projects, while avoiding the expropriation of privately owned land except when necessary.

The committee called for the distinctive characteristics of tourist and environmentally sensitive areas to be considered when determining project routes, particularly for the railway. It said routes should protect private property and areas of tourist and environmental significance, including Wadi Rum.

The committee further recommended regulations establishing clear principles and mechanisms for calculating fair compensation, with standardised

valuation criteria to ensure fairness, transparency and protection of property owners' rights.

It also called for improved mechanisms for resolving joint-ownership cases and greater capacity within the administrative body responsible for implementing the law, particularly among employees who deal directly with citizens.

The committee proposed specialised training programmes to ensure employees understand the law and its implementation mechanisms and to reduce discrepancies in interpretation, procedures and documentation requirements.

The draft law seeks to improve the real estate investment environment by allowing the Department of Lands and Survey to collect and analyse data and issue periodic reports on market conditions and performance indicators.

The draft also addresses financial leasing as a form of temporary ownership, seeks to expedite required approval procedures and aims to strengthen legal certainty for expropriated properties by shortening periods for relinquishing ownership, establishing rules for calculating fair compensation and enhancing judicial oversight of the expropriation process.

Lower House begins deliberations on 2026 draft Local Administration Law

AMMAN (JT) — The Lower House on Sunday began deliberations on the 2026 draft Local Administration Law.

Administrative Committee Chairman MP Khalifeh Diat said that the committee had substantially amended the government's draft following consultations with relevant stakeholders to strengthen elected councils, enhance oversight of executive bodies and expand public

participation.

He said that the committee had removed provisions allowing the Cabinet to dissolve elected councils without sufficient safeguards and introduced clearer powers for councils to obtain information, monitor service delivery, follow up on delayed projects and oversee municipal performance.

The bill also raises municipalities' share of capital expenditure to

16 per cent, Diat said, stressing that increased funding should be accompanied by sound financial management, measurable performance indicators and effective accountability mechanisms.

He described the bill as a pivotal step in the Kingdom's political and administrative reform process and one of the key pieces of legislation stemming from the Economic Modernisation

Vision.

Diat said the legislation clearly defines the roles of municipal councils and executive administrations, helping prevent overlapping powers and ensuring greater clarity over responsibilities.

He added that the bill limits the authority to dissolve elected councils by setting a maximum dissolution period of one year, preventing councils from remaining sus-

pended indefinitely.

A key pillar of the legislation, Diat said, is shifting municipalities from their traditional service-oriented role towards a developmental one, with responsibilities extending beyond sanitation, roads and daily services to development, investment, stimulating local economies and contributing to strategic and urban planning.

He also highlighted the bill's retention of direct



The Lower House on Sunday begins deliberations on the 2026 draft Local Administration Law

and secret elections for municipal council presi-

dents and members as a means of strengthening

public participation and local democracy.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Local Administration Walid Masri said the legislation aims to improve the quality of services provided to citizens and transform municipalities into "genuine development units" capable of driving local development, attracting investment and strengthening governorates' economies.



First aid responders and residents gather as they search the site of an Israeli air strike that targeted a neighbourhood in the southern Lebanese village of Deir Al Zahrani on Saturday

Israel vows to go after Hizbollah as it names another killed

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel vowed on Sunday it would hit Hizbollah again if threatened, as it identified what it described as a commander killed in strikes a day earlier that also left several children dead.

Israeli strikes on Saturday killed 11 people in southern Lebanon, according to authorities, in the deadliest attacks since a deal was reached in June aimed at ending hostilities.

Israel said the strikes were a response to Hizbollah setting off explosive drones inside a so-called “security zone” in southern Lebanon, seriously injuring three Israeli troops including an officer.

“No score will be left unsettled in any arena. We’ll defend our soldiers and our civilians with full power,” Defence Minister Israel Katz wrote on X.

The Israeli military identified one of those killed on Saturday as Abu Hassan Alaa, saying he was a senior commander of Hizbollah’s Badr unit who had been involved in firing drones at Israeli troops.

Israel earlier said that the strike killed a commander in Hizbollah’s

elite Radwan Force, Ali Samir Al Haj Hassan.

The Israeli military acknowledged that Hassan’s family was present but defended the strike by saying they were not the target.

‘Netanyahu, who is the subject of proceedings before the International Criminal Court over war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Gaza’

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said a “whole family” had been killed in the strike in the village of Ansar, with Lebanon’s health ministry reporting that three children and two women died.

Imran Riza, the UN humanitarian coordinator

for Lebanon, condemned the strike.

“Children and civilians continue to pay an unacceptable price. International humanitarian law is clear: Civilians must be protected at all times,” he said.

Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office accused Hizbollah of deliberately placing civilians in harm’s way.

Hizbollah denied the account, saying that “another entire family has been wiped out following orders issued by Netanyahu”.

“Netanyahu, who is the subject of proceedings before the International Criminal Court over war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Gaza, is once again presiding over the killing of Lebanese civilians,” Hizbollah said in a statement.

Hizbollah pulled Lebanon into the regional war in March by firing rockets at Israel in support of Iran, after US-Israeli strikes there sparked war in late February.

Lebanon and Israel signed a US-brokered deal in which Lebanon’s army will gradually take over security in southern areas occupied by Israel, but Hizbollah has refused to disarm.

Hamas delegation, Egypt intelligence chief hold talks on Gaza plan

CAIRO (AFP) — A Hamas delegation met Egyptian intelligence chief Hassan Rashad on Sunday to discuss ways to advance the implementation of a post-war plan for Gaza, Egypt’s state news agency reported.

The Middle East News Agency said the delegation led by Hamas chief Khalil Al Hayya “reaffirmed commitment to completing US President Donald Trump’s plan”.

Hamas had said in late July that it was ready to hand over its weapons to a nascent technical committee set to govern Gaza, as part of a 15-point plan announced by Trump’s Board of Peace.

But Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected the plan, vowing there would be no withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza until the full disarmament of Hamas.

The delegation arrived in Egypt on Saturday evening, ahead of a visit by Trump’s Envoy Jared Kushner to the region.

A Hamas official had told AFP the talks in the Mediterranean city of El Alamein would cover “the latest devel-



Displaced Palestinians walk past tents and destroyed buildings near the beach front in Gaza City on Friday

opments in the negotiations and the efforts being made to compel Israel to abide by the agreement, which includes the 15-point roadmap, and to begin its implementation”.

“The delegation will brief Egyptian officials on Israeli violations of the ceasefire agreement, and Hayya will emphasise the movement’s commitment and readiness to implement the agreement as soon as Israel announces its commitment to it.”

Another Hamas source told AFP that a meeting was being ar-

ranged between the Hamas negotiating delegation, the Board of Peace’s High Representative for Gaza Nickolay Mladenov and US officials during Kushner’s visit to Egypt this week, to discuss obstacles related to the agreement.

The source added that contacts were under way with Egyptian, Qatari and Turkish mediators “to compel Israel to abide by the agreement”.

Kushner is scheduled to visit Israel and Egypt this coming week in a bid to bridge the gaps in the Gaza plan rejected by Netanyahu.

Iran offers \$30,000 bounty for killing, capturing US soldiers

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran’s military announced on Sunday that it was offering a bounty equivalent to \$30,000 for killing or capturing US soldiers, with the reward doubled if carried out by a woman.

Army chief Amir Hata-mi said the plan had been drawn up following a “large number of requests” to participate, according to the IRNA state news agency.

There has been no known deployment of US ground forces in Iran during the Middle East war, with the exception of a rescue mission in April for a downed American airman.

Hatami did not provide any details on where or when the killing or capturing of US soldiers was expected to take place.

“Anyone who kills or captures and hands over an invading American military personnel will receive a reward equivalent to \$30,000 or 5 billion toman from the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Army,” Hatami said, using an informal unit equivalent to 10,000 Iranian rials.

“Courageous Iranian women who carry out such an action will receive double the reward,” he added.

Hatami repeated

Iran’s call for the US to leave the Middle East, and said “they no longer have permission to enter the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman or the Strait of Hormuz”.

The war between Tehran and Washington began on February 28 when the United States and Israel attacked Iran.

Just over a month into the war, the US launched a massive rescue operation to retrieve the weapon systems officer of an F-15 jet, involving around 200 US troops and more than 170 aircraft racing to find the airman ahead of Iranian forces.

During the rescue, Iranian troops damaged an A-10 ground attack aircraft which was ditched over friendly territory. The US also reportedly abandoned and destroyed aircraft used during the mission including a C-130 transport plane.

Days before, the pilot of the F-15 was rescued by a helicopter crew in a smaller operation.

The war was later paused by an April ceasefire after nearly 40 days of fighting, followed by a June framework for peace talks that later collapsed.

Iran and the United States have since traded

fire sporadically, with fighting mainly centred in southern Iran and around the Strait of Hormuz.

Indirect contact between the two sides via mediators has continued with little sign of any diplomatic breakthrough. Iran has also set out a list of demands for reopening the strait, including war damages.

The number of US military personnel killed since the start of the war stands at 17, with the most recent deaths in July. They have all been killed outside of Iran, in countries including Jordan and Iraq.

Belgium races to tame huge wildfire creeping towards Germany

BAELEN, Belgium (AFP) — Water-bombing aircraft and farmers’ tractors joined forces Sunday to help firefighters tame Belgium’s largest modern-day wildfire, which has scorched vast swathes of a hard-to-reach nature reserve near the German border.

The blaze has mushroomed to 3,000 hectares two days after breaking out in the High Fens park, an area of boggy peatlands and pine forests popular with hikers.

Area firefighting chief Luc Burette said that “if we cannot contain the fire” there was a risk it could spill over the German border just a stone’s throw to the east.

“We’re hanging in there, because everyone wants this fire put out,” Gregory Melotte, one of several hundred firefighters and emergency workers deployed on site, told AFP. He was working his third shift in as many days.

“We’ve really limited the damage to stop it from taking hold in the tall fir trees” — but the blaze was not yet “under control”, he conceded.

A huge area straddling the border has been blanketed by a thick plume of yellowish smoke, prompting the partial evacuation of two Belgian villages. Around 20 people spent



This photo shows the charred landscape in the aftermath of a wildfire in the Hautes Fagnes (High Fens) nature reserve, in Waimes, on Sunday

the night in a local sports hall.

Local farmers join fight

The German town of Monschau also advised residents living closest to the fire to evacuate — saying the front was just 1.8 kilometres from the first inhabited areas.

Water-bearing Chinook helicopters flown in from The Netherlands were spearheading the effort.

But local farmers have also poured in to help battle the blaze, with a ballet of tractors pulling in tankers of water drawn from a nearby lake.

“Right now there are about 15 tractors queuing to fill up,” Jean-

Pierre Robert, who manages a lakeside hotel, told AFP.

“We moved our cows, and opened up all our fences to give them access.”

Authorities described the conditions Sunday as still “challenging”. But Interior Minister Bernard Quintin saod two of the fire fronts — heading towards the localities of Jalhay and Monschau — were now “under control”.

The blaze broke out for reasons still unknown in an area that was ravaged by massive fires in 1911, during a similar period of heatwaves and drought — and is the country’s largest wildfire since then.

Fumes have reached the neighbouring Bel-

gium province of Namur, and even as far as eastern France where the Moselle department triggered an air-pollution alert.

On site, the shifting winds have complicated firefighters’ efforts but the Liege governor’s office said that “the defensive line protecting evacuated areas is holding”.

“No homes have been affected at this stage, although the fire remains close and smoke levels are significant,” it added.

Help from the skies

Firefighters from all over Belgium as well as from Germany have deployed across the zone, supported by next-generation fire engines.

But authorities said

operations were “particularly complex” because of the fens’ terrain — a patchwork of heath, peat bogs and raised wooden boardwalks where heavy vehicles risk sinking into the ground, and firefighters struggle to tackle the fire at close range.

They were counting heavily on aerial assistance to bring the situation under control.

Two water-bombing aircraft arrived on Sunday from Sweden and got to work, backing up four helicopters — two Belgian and two Dutch — already on site.

A liaison officer was coordinating the aerial resources “to prevent accidents”, EU Commissioner Hadja Lahbib told AFP.

Prime Minister Bart De Wever has thanked Belgium’s European partners for the assistance.

Like much of Europe, Belgium has experienced a new spell of intense heat and drought in recent days.

Temperatures reached as high as 37°C in some parts of the country on Friday, creating conditions conducive to wildfire outbreaks.

But rescue teams have been unable to access the area where the High Fens fire first broke out, meaning its precise cause remains unknown.



An F-18 multirole fighter aircraft of the Finnish Air Force performs at the ‘Airpower 24’ air show in Zeltweg, Austria, on September 6, 2024

Spanish jet downs drone in Romania after airspace breach

BUCHAREST (AFP) -A Spanish fighter jet on Sunday shot down a drone that had breached Romanian airspace near the border with Ukraine and Moldova, national authorities and NATO said.

A growing number of drones have crossed into NATO states in eastern Europe as Russia pursues its invasion of Ukraine.

The interception of the drone, which entered from Moldova, was carried out by an F-18, deployed on NATO duties, at 5:01am, the Romanian defence ministry said in a statement.

Debris fell in an unpopulated area of the Galati region, near the Ukrainian border, it added.

Spain’s defence ministry said on X that its air force had shown “its outstanding professionalism

in the defence of European airspace”.

Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares said he had spoken with his Romanian counterpart Oana Toiu, who thanked the pilots.

NATO Air Command said on X that the mission involved two F-18s, which are part of a Spanish contingent of around 200 personnel and 11 aircraft based in Romania.

Romania’s eastern seaboard, bordering the Black Sea, is close to areas frequently targeted by Russian strikes. This was the fourth drone to be destroyed in the country since the start of Russia’s all-out invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

And, in a separate incident on Sunday announced by the defence ministry, drone debris was found in the Black Sea, off Romania’s city of

Constanta.

In July, Romania expelled a Russian embassy employee in what it called “a firm response” to drones repeatedly breaching the country’s airspace. Romania shot down three drones on three consecutive days before the expulsion.

Authorities have reported finding drone fragments on Romanian soil several times since 2023 following Russian attacks on Ukrainian ports along the Danube River, which lie just across the border.

Similar incidents have been reported elsewhere on NATO’s eastern flank, including in Poland and the Baltic states.

On Friday, NATO said Italian jets operating under the alliance’s air-policing mission shot down a drone that entered Latvian airspace.

Thousands await aid after deadly Indonesian quake

RUTENG, Indonesia (AFP) — Help started arriving on Sunday for thousands of evacuees on Indonesia's Flores island after a powerful earthquake killed 48 people, injured dozens and damaged hundreds of houses and buildings.

Some 5,000 people fled their homes as the 7.7-magnitude quake hit the island early Saturday, followed by at least 341 aftershocks in the hours that followed, a spokesman for the BNPB national disaster agency, Berton Suar Pelita Panjaitan, said.

People in some areas were left without electricity and telecommunications and at least one emergency access road remained inaccessible.

"We need food, drink, medicines, and diapers for the children," Umri, a resident of Nangahale village on the north coast of Flores, told AFP on Sunday morning.

The 55-year-old, who like many Indonesians uses one name, has been



Employees clear debris from a damaged bank building following a 7.7-magnitude earthquake in Ruteng, Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara, on Sunday

hiding out on a hilltop for 24 hours with others afraid to return home.

Nurhidayati, also 55, spent the night on a mat on the same hill.

"I'm still terrified; my heart is pounding hard remembering yesterday's

tremor... We just ran up here yesterday. I'm very scared now, still traumatised by the quake in 1992. I don't dare to go home," she said.

Flores was struck by a 7.7-magnitude earthquake in 1992 that trig-

gered a tsunami and killed about 2,500 people.

"I hope the government will soon distribute logistics to help us," said Nurhidayati.

BNPB head Suharyanto said Sunday at least five helicopters, several

planes, a naval vessel and search and rescue ships were on their way to help.

Berton said at least 101 Flores residents were reported injured in the quake.

Survivors were in urgent need of assistance in the form of emergency tents, food, medicines, blankets, camp beds, mats, clean water and electricity generators, he added.

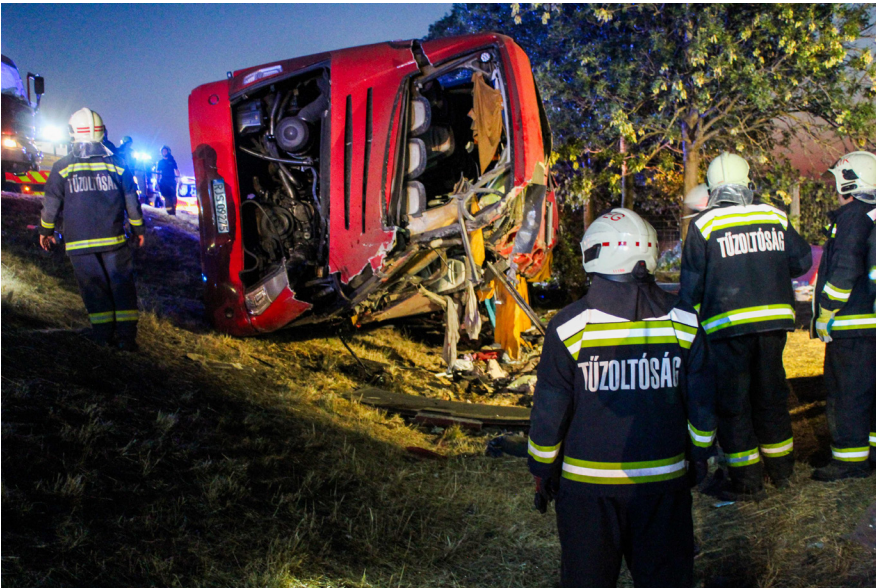
The death toll rose by one from Saturday night to Sunday morning.

Local search and rescue official Fathur Rahman told AFP on Sunday there were no reports of people buried or missing.

The epicentre of the shallow quake was located just off the north coast of the island, geological authorities said.

The affected areas have few, if any, high-rise buildings.

Berton said at least 914 houses were severely damaged and hundreds of others to a lesser degree.



AFP photo

This handout photo received from Hungary's National Directorate General for Disaster Management, Ministry of the Interior (NDGDM), shows rescue workers and other officials working at the wreckage of an overturned Polish tourist bus on the M3 motorway near Mezokeresztes, about 150 km east of the Hungarian capital Budapest, on Sunday

12 killed as Polish bus veers off Hungary highway

BUDAPEST (AFP) — A Polish bus crashed into a ditch on a Hungarian highway early Sunday killing 12 people and leaving at least 10 with critical injuries, officials said.

The coach, heading from Serbia to Poland, crashed at 01:00 am on the M3 highway near Mezokeresztes, about 140 kilometres east of Budapest, according to police.

The bus, with 57 passengers and two drivers, "left the road, ended up in a ditch, and came to a stop on its side," the national disaster management agency said in a social media post.

Hungary's Interior Minister Gabor Posfai said the driver had been detained and media quoted police as saying he had fallen asleep at the wheel.

A Polish diplomat, Andrzej Osiaek, told a press conference that five of

the injured were fighting for their lives. He said the coach was taking pilgrims back to Poland.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said he had ordered a special flight to be sent to collect the passengers on the bus who could travel.

Eleven people were declared dead at the scene and another person died in hospital, the disaster agency said. The ambulance service said 37 people suffered minor injuries and were taken to hospitals in four cities. The highway was closed for several hours.

The fire brigade and other rescuers had to drag some people out through the windows because they were trapped under the crushed roof of the bus.

Two cranes eventually lifted the bus out of the ditch, according to the

disaster management agency.

It is the worst road accident in Hungary since a train hit a German tourist bus at Siofok in 2003, killing 33 people. In 2002, a bus carrying Polish pilgrims crashed near the western town of Balatonszentgyorgy, killing 19 people.

Hungary's Prime Minister announced the death toll of the latest disaster on social media.

"I send my sincere condolences to the families of the victims," he said. "I thank all the people who took part in the rescue operation."

Poland's Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski called it a "tragic bus accident involving Polish tourists" in a post on X.

"The consular service is acting. We are in contact with the Hungarian authorities," he added.

Jordan, Arab, Islamic countries condemn Israel's rejection of Gaza peace deal

Continued from page 1

The ministers said that rejecting the road map constitutes an "explicit refusal to proceed with the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and directly threatens to derail the extensive efforts exerted by US President Trump to end the war in Gaza and establish the conditions for lasting peace".

The ministers also underscored the importance of sustained and active US engagement to ensure and enforce Israel's full compliance with the commitments and

arrangements envisaged under the Comprehensive Plan and its road map and to prevent further obstruction of their implementation.

They also stressed that Israel bears direct and full responsibility for any consequences resulting from its continued rejection, obstruction, delay or non-compliance, including any resulting deterioration of the situation on the ground and disruption of efforts to end the war in Gaza.

The top diplomats also reiterated the urgent need for the full and im-

mediate implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to address the grave humanitarian situation, ensure security and stability for all in Gaza, pave the way for reconstruction and recovery and advance a just and lasting peace grounded in the Palestinian right to self-determination and statehood in accordance with international law.

They also categorically rejected any attempt to deny or foreclose Palestinian statehood, including through unilateral actions.

"A just, lasting and comprehensive peace

can only be achieved through the implementation of the two-State solution and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state along the borders of pre-1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions," the statement said.

"Any attempt to deny or foreclose Palestinian statehood therefore directly undermines prospects for peace, security and stability throughout the region."

The ministers also

underscored the importance of the continued role of the Board of Peace and called on all parties to support its efforts to implement the road map and advance the second phase of President Trump's Comprehensive Plan.

They also called on the Board of Peace, with the active support and engagement of the United States, to take immediate and concrete measures within its mandate to uphold the integrity of the Comprehensive Plan and prevent any party from obstructing its implementation.

King's visit to China offers chance to deepen economic cooperation — JSF

Continued from page 1

China's changing investment priorities

The report said that China has become one of the Middle East's major economic partners. While its engagement with the region was initially driven largely by energy needs, cooperation has expanded into trade, investment, infrastructure, manufacturing, logistics and technology, supported by the Belt and Road Initiative.

Chinese exports to Arab economies reached approximately \$293.5 billion in 2025, while imports from Arab economies totalled about \$201 billion, putting bilateral trade at nearly \$495 bil-

lion, according to the report.

The forum also highlighted a shift in the composition of Chinese overseas investment.

While earlier Belt and Road Initiative investments focused heavily on infrastructure and energy, Chinese companies are increasingly investing in renewable energy, electric vehicles and batteries, digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence and advanced manufacturing.

The report said the shift could create new opportunities for Jordan, particularly as China places greater emphasis on compliance, governance, sustainability and supply-chain security in overseas

investment.

The Jordan Strategy Forum outlined several priorities that could help the Kingdom maximise the economic benefits of the King's visit.

The first is to position Jordan as a stable, internationally connected production base for Chinese investors targeting export markets. The forum said the Kingdom's strategic location, skilled workforce, industrial zones and preferential access to key markets provide a strong foundation for such a role.

Another priority is to diversify Chinese investment into sectors aligned with Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision, including

advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, mining, pharmaceuticals, logistics, ICT and digital services, food industries and tourism.

The forum said that priority should be given to projects that establish productive activities in Jordan, create well-paying jobs, strengthen local suppliers, transfer technology and technical expertise, and expand and diversify exports.

It also identified renewable energy, electric vehicles and batteries, digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence and advanced manufacturing as areas where Jordan could seek greater cooperation with Chinese companies.

The forum recom-

mended pursuing Chinese partnerships in research and development, innovation centres, vocational and technical training, higher education and the commercialisation of entrepreneurial ideas.

The JSF proposed establishing a permanent mechanism for economic cooperation and implementation between Jordan and China.

The mechanism would bring together relevant government institutions, investment authorities, business organisations and private-sector representatives to monitor agreed projects, address implementation obstacles and identify new areas for cooperation, according to the forum.

Cabinet allocates JD10m to Student Support Fund to assist additional 10,000 university students

Continued from page 1

Hassan said the Kingdom is entering a new phase in education following the establishment of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.

He emphasised that the change represents a comprehensive restructuring of work methods and implementation mechanisms across all stages of education, incorporating modern technology, updating

educational foundations and empowering teachers.

Highlighting the importance of developing school infrastructure, Hassan said the government has built 86 new schools in less than a year, in addition to extensive classroom expansions and kindergarten facilities, describing the achievement as unprecedented.

He added that 14 of the schools were established through corporate social responsibility

initiatives, thanking the private sector for its support.

Hassan also announced that the school transport project will be launched next week in the Southern Governorates and the Southern Badia.

The initiative will serve nearly 9,000 students and 900 teachers and is intended to pave the way for expansion to the central and northern governorates following a successful initial trial.

Safadi, Qatari counterpart discuss relations, regional developments

Continued from page 1

Safadi and Sheikh Mohammed stressed the need for all parties to uphold dialogue and diplomacy and implement the memorandum of under-

standing between the US and Iran, especially with regard to the freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

Both sides also reaffirmed Jordan and Qatar's full support for ef-

forts aimed at defusing tensions and reaching a comprehensive agreement that addresses all causes of the crisis and achieves lasting security and stability in the region, the statement said.

West Bank at a 'breaking point' as settler violence, military raids escalate

Continued from page 1

The situation in Qusra has drawn condemnation from the United Nations human rights agency, which described the prolonged siege as part of a broader pattern of settler violence in the occupied West Bank.

"These criminal actions by the settlers, supported or acquiesced to by Israel, the Occupying Power, are making life unbearable for these Palestinian families and are clearly aimed at forcing them to leave their homes and their land," the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said.

The agency warned that the three families, comprising 15 people

including two children, were at risk of forced displacement.

"Time is running out for these three families before they are forcibly displaced," it said.

Qusra has emerged as a flashpoint for settler violence in the northern West Bank. The United Nations said earlier this year that it had recorded more settler attacks there than in any other Palestinian community in the occupied territory.

On August 13, US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee, a prominent supporter of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, described settlers besieging Palestinian homes as "Israeli terrorists".

The attacks reported in the West Bank have

included the torching of vehicles, damage to agricultural infrastructure and fires set at local mosques. According to United Nations data, settlers have also attacked at least 160 water and sanitation facilities across the Palestinian territory this year.

Human rights organisations and international bodies have warned that such attacks form part of broader efforts to pressure rural Palestinian communities to leave their land.

Meanwhile, Israeli military operations continue across the West Bank, including nearly daily night raids, mass arrests and localised lockdowns in towns and refugee camps such as Balata and Qalandiya.

Israeli occupation authorities have also continued demolishing Palestinian residential and commercial structures in Area C, citing the absence of Israeli-issued construction permits. At the same time, plans for new settlement housing units and outposts have advanced, further fragmenting Palestinian communities and restricting movement.

According to UN figures, an average of 122 Palestinian buildings have been demolished each month this year.

Israeli forces have also issued demolition notices for homes in Kafr Sur, the Jalazone refugee camp and farmers' shelters in al-Jiftlik.

Settlers have meanwhile re-established a

settlement near Jenin and erected a new outpost on land belonging to a town near Tulkarem.

The developments come amid a sharp escalation in violence by Israeli forces and settlers across the West Bank as Israel prepares for parliamentary elections in October.

Addressing the UN Security Council on August 11, Ramiz Alakbarov, the UN deputy special coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said the West Bank was at a "breaking point".

Alakbarov said Israeli forces and settlers had killed 76 Palestinians, including 18 children, in the occupied territory so far this year. He added that about 3,800 Palestinians, nearly half of

them children, had been displaced by settler violence, demolitions and evictions.

The UN has documented more than 1,430 settler attacks involving casualties or property damage across approximately 260 Palestinian communities in 2026, according to Alakbarov. He said many of the attacks had taken place in the presence of Israeli forces.

Since January 2023, 127 Palestinian communities have been fully or partially displaced, including 47 that were completely uprooted, affecting more than 6,390 people, he said.

Alakbarov warned that settler attacks, once concentrated primarily in Area C, where Israel

exercises full civil and security control, were increasingly spreading into Areas A and B.

Israeli authorities have also advanced or approved approximately 12,360 settlement housing units across the West Bank this year, including 5,160 in occupied East Jerusalem, according to Alakbarov.

"These are interconnected steps, not isolated developments," he said, warning that the measures were reshaping the occupied West Bank, weakening Palestinian governance and advancing what he described as "de facto annexation".

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and international human rights monitors have also condemned the es-

calation, describing it as part of a broader campaign of intimidation and land seizures.

Israel's far-right coalition government has overseen a significant expansion of settlement construction. Finance minister Bezalel Smotrich has said the policy is intended to undermine the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state.

More than 150 of the 193 UN member states recognise a Palestinian state encompassing the Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The United Nations and most governments consider Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank illegal under international law.

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No war, no peace:
The intelligence
war around Iran

The crisis between Iran and the United States is no longer a direct war, but peace has certainly not been achieved. We are facing what can best be described as a state of “no war, no peace”, in which military operations have stopped while the other instruments of confrontation remain fully active, including economic pressure, internal exhaustion, intelligence warfare and a constant military threat. Washington appears determined to maintain pressure on Iran and deepen its economic crisis while simultaneously preserving its overwhelming military advantage and full readiness to resume operations. The current phase, therefore, looks increasingly like an intelligence war conducted under the veil of a military pause.



Amer Al Sabailah

But this intelligence war is not directed at Iran alone. The United States and Israel now appear focused on dismantling what remains of Iran’s regional network of influence by intensifying pressure on Hizbollah, continuing to target the Houthis, and giving the Iraqi government greater room to address the issue of militias and weapons outside state control. In this context, Iran’s emergency response and its moves toward Iraq, including the dispatch of Esmail Qaani to warn against disarming Iraqi factions at this particular moment, become significant.

Rather than moving directly back into a confrontation with Iran, the region appears to be entering a stage that could precede a new direct confrontation, while Iran’s regional instruments are progressively weakened, including Hizbollah, the Houthis and the Iraqi militias. At the same time, the Iranian interior is becoming a major theatre for intelligence operations, exploiting a crisis that is deepening politically, economically, socially and in terms of security.

The Strait of Hormuz provides a clear example of this equation. Iran can disrupt navigation and raise the cost of maritime risks through mines, fast boats, drones and missiles, which explains the growing concerns among shipping and insurance companies. But disrupting navigation is not the same as exercising military control over the Strait. The United States remains the dominant military power in the area, yet, its presence alone cannot prevent every attempt to target or disrupt shipping. This creates an important paradox, a weaker power can achieve a limited objective, disrupting navigation, while a much stronger power cannot easily guarantee its security.

More importantly, Washington may not be in a hurry to bring this situation to an end. A prolonged Hormuz crisis pushes the world to rely on the United States and strengthens Washington’s demand that other countries contribute to securing navigation. It is, in effect, a process of reshaping relations with both allies and adversaries, transforming a regional crisis into an international responsibility led by the United States.

This also explains why the crisis is becoming a test for the wider international system. Russia is facing growing pressures, while China cannot ignore a prolonged crisis threatening global trade and energy flows. Yet, the longer the crisis continues, the more it may serve another American objective by accelerating the search for alternatives to the Strait of Hormuz.

Talk of pipelines, overland routes and connectivity linking the Gulf through Jordan to the Mediterranean, alongside emerging corridors connecting India and Europe, becomes more significant the longer the Strait remains unstable. The world cannot base its energy security indefinitely on a passage that can be disrupted for an extended period. Alternatives, therefore, may gradually shift from strategic projects to practical necessities.

Against this backdrop, Donald Trump’s statement that the American response would be “a thousand times greater” if Iran attacked the United States also serves to keep the Iranian threat firmly within the strategic equation. Maintaining Iran as a potential threat to American interests and assets creates the political and psychological conditions for a possible return to confrontation, while the continued presence of American military power in the region requires a sustained strategic justification.

This is where the real danger of “no war, no peace” lies. As the crisis inside Iran deepens, the regime may eventually see external escalation as a means of rebuilding its legitimacy, while Washington could view any escalation as justification for using force again. The current phase, therefore, may not represent the end of the war, but preparation for another one, a war now being fought through economics, intelligence and political pressure, before developments inside Iran determine whether the region remains trapped in “no war, no peace,” or moves once again toward direct confrontation.

Trump’s code

By Mohammad Abu Rumman

After months of the US–Iran war, it has become increasingly clear that President Donald Trump does not want to slide into a prolonged, open-ended war with Iran, despite his fiery rhetoric and repeated threats. A man who built an important part of his political message around criticising American presidents for becoming entangled in Middle Eastern wars now finds himself confronting the very dilemma he repeatedly warned against: How can America wield its overwhelming power without becoming captive to it?

By political instinct and negotiating style, Trump prefers a deal to war—but he wants to reach one from a position of strength. His method, therefore, relies on threats, rhetorical escalation, military deployments and pushing as close as possible to the brink without actually going over it. Whether consciously or not, this approach comes remarkably close to the ideas of Thomas Schelling, one of the foremost theorists of deterrence and coercion in international relations and the author of “The Strategy of Conflict”. Schelling’s work contributed to his receiving the 2005 Nobel Prize in Economics, jointly with Robert Aumann.

Schelling’s central insight was that power lies not only in using force, but also in convincing an

adversary that you are prepared to use it. A successful threat is one that compels the other side to do something it would otherwise prefer not to do in order to avoid an even greater cost. Words, when credible, therefore become part of power itself.

That, broadly speaking, has been Trump’s strategy toward Iran: severe threats, deadlines, warnings about destroying power stations, bridges and infrastructure, followed at the last moment by a return to diplomacy. We saw this clearly when he came close to ordering a major military strike, only to suspend it and give negotiations another chance.

Trump’s problem is that the other side has not behaved as his theory of coercion would predict. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) did not back down at the brink. Instead, it pushed the decision back into Washington’s court: Either carry out the threat and enter a much larger confrontation whose political, military and temporal limits would be difficult to define, or step back and return to negotiations.

This leads to the crucial question: why has the IRGC not behaved according to conventional calculations of the balance of power, despite being fully aware of the enormous disparity between American and Iranian capabilities?

Here lies the paradox. The IRGC is playing essentially the

same game — and may understand the dynamics of brinkmanship better than its adversaries assume. What appears irrational from the perspective of the balance of power becomes considerably more rational when viewed through the prism of regime survival and the institutional survival of the Revolutionary Guards themselves.

For Trump, the real abyss is another prolonged American war in the Middle East. For the IRGC, by contrast, the abyss is capitulation to Trump’s terms. From this perspective, backing down over the Strait of Hormuz would not merely constitute a tactical concession. It could touch the very core of the IRGC’s existence, function and political-ideological narrative — indeed, one of the pillars underpinning its legitimacy within the Islamic Republic.

The battle over Hormuz has therefore become about far more than freedom of navigation. At its core lies another question: who gets to dictate the terms on which the war ends?

The IRGC may have achieved something more consequential than scoring a military point: it may have cracked Trump’s code. The Iranians have become increasingly adept at reading the psychology of the American president. They understand his tendency to raise the ceiling of his threats and his desire to project strength. But they also recognise his acute sensitiv-

ity to prolonged war, American casualties, rising oil prices, and the domestic political costs of military escalation. More importantly, they have repeatedly tested the distance between Trump’s escalatory rhetoric and his ultimate decisions.

This does not necessarily mean that Iran has prevailed politically or strategically. Tehran’s wager is on endurance and on raising the cost of forcing it to retreat, rather than achieving a decisive victory.

Yet, the dilemma remains. Trump has discovered that threats do not always work when the adversary is prepared to tolerate greater risks than he is. Conversely, the IRGC has discovered that perhaps the most effective response to brinkmanship is to persuade the other side that you are more willing to go over the edge.

Trump is therefore beginning to search for a third option: Military and economic pressure more effective than threats alone, but less costly than an open-ended war.

That is the crossroads defining the next phase of the conflict. Can the Pentagon offer Trump a formula capable of achieving his objectives without dragging the United States into a prolonged war? Or is the problem not a shortage of military options at all, but rather that Iran has already learned how to read the American president’s code?

Celebratory gunfire: When joy delivers grief

By Zaid K. Maaytah

Almost every Jordanian has heard of an incident where a celebration ended very differently from how it began, someone injured at a wedding by a stray bullet, a passerby struck by a bullet fired after a Tawjihi result, or a child hurt while watching a celebration nearby, the details may differ, but the stories are familiar, and they all carry the same painful contradiction, a bullet fired to express joy can bring tragedy to someone who had nothing to do with the celebration.

Jordan has worked for years to confront celebratory gunfire through awareness campaigns, enforcement, legal measures and cooperation with local communities, these efforts have contributed to a noticeable decline in the practice and growing social rejection of it, but as long as incidents continue to occur, understanding what still drives the behaviour can help identify ad-

ditional ways to reduce it further.

The danger of celebratory gunfire is already widely understood, yet knowing the consequences does not always prevent the behavior, particularly when it takes place in a highly social environment, our choices are influenced by what we see others doing and by what we believe the people around us accept or expect, this is the power of social norms, what appears normal or socially acceptable can influence how we behave.

This suggests that alongside focusing on the person holding the gun, there is value in focusing on the people around them, particularly those whose actions carry social influence, tribal and community leaders, MPs, election candidates, prominent family members and other respected figures can play an important role, not simply by speaking against the practice, but by making their rejection visible through their own behaviour.

Jordanian communities have

already used honour pledges and local initiatives to reject celebratory gunfire, providing a strong foundation to build on, one possibility is for influential figures to make a specific public commitment that they will not remain at any celebration where firearms are discharged, families and guests could adopt the same commitment, turning a general position against the practice into a clear action.

Making these commitments public is central to the idea, short messages or videos shared through social media would allow people to repeatedly see respected members of their communities making the same pledge, rather than limiting it to a document signed on one occasion, the commitment becomes a visible social signal that can reach far beyond those who originally made it.

The scientific logic is relatively simple, people look to others, particularly those they respect or identify with, for cues about ac-

ceptable behaviour, and public commitments also make people more likely to act consistently with what they have promised, combining the two can strengthen an emerging social norm, respected figures make the commitment publicly, others see and potentially follow it, and the social environment surrounding the behaviour gradually becomes less accepting of it.

None of this replaces enforcement, awareness, or the work already being done by government and local communities, it builds on the progress they have achieved by adding another way to reinforce the social rejection that already exists, the goal is ultimately simple, to reach a point where firing a weapon is no longer seen as part of celebrating at all, because no expression of happiness should ever turn one family’s joy into another family’s grief.

Zaid K. Maaytah is a researcher in economics and behavioural policy

Pope chooses to ‘disarm’ technology
as the theme of World Peace Day 2027

By Lubna Hanna Ammari

When the Vatican announced the theme for the 2027 World Day of Peace, it chose words that are both provocative and deeply relevant to the world we are living in: “Disarming Technology. Serving Peace. Politics as Preventive Responsibility”. The theme, announced by Pope Leo XIV for the 60th World Day of Peace on January 1, 2027, places technology and particularly artificial intelligence at the centre of the global debate on peace, human dignity and responsibility.

The choice of the word “disarming” is particularly significant. The Pope is not calling for humanity to reject technology or abandon scientific progress. Rather, he is challenging governments, institutions, technology developers and societies to reconsider how technological power is designed, governed and used. In a world where artificial intelligence is increasingly influencing decisions that affect our lives, the fundamental question is no longer simply what technology can do, but what it should be allowed to do.

Artificial intelligence has already become an important part of education, healthcare, research, business and public services. It can help students learn in more personalised ways, assist researchers in analysing complex information and support professionals in making faster and more informed decisions. Yet the same technologies can also be used to manipulate information,

undermine privacy, intensify social divisions and, most seriously, influence military decisions and the conduct of war.

This is where the Pope’s message becomes particularly urgent. According to the Vatican’s announcement, Pope Leo XIV warns against entrusting military decisions to artificial intelligence and recalls a central principle from his encyclical Magnifica Humanitas: “no algorithm can make war morally acceptable”. He is calling on the international community to develop shared agreements that protect human responsibility and humanitarian principles whenever human life and peaceful coexistence are at stake.

The message also reflects a growing international concern about the relationship between artificial intelligence, autonomous weapons and nuclear security. In July 2026, more than 200 Nobel laureates, former heads of state, university representatives and experts gathered at the Borgo Laudato Si’ in Italy to discuss artificial intelligence and nuclear war. Their discussions focused on technology in the service of humanity, the moral challenges of AI and war, and the need for responsible governance of emerging technologies.

For this reason, “disarming technology” should be understood as an ethical and political concept rather than a rejection of innovation. It means ensuring that technological development remains anchored in human dignity, accountability and the common good. It means keeping meaningful human responsibility

at the centre of decisions that can have irreversible consequences.

This message has particular relevance for education. Universities are not only places where students learn how to use new technologies; they are also institutions responsible for preparing future leaders, professionals and citizens to make wise decisions about technology. As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into education and research, universities must go beyond teaching students how to use AI tools. They must also teach them how to question AI-generated information, recognise bias, protect privacy, evaluate consequences and understand the ethical limits of technological power.

The responsibility, however, does not belong to universities alone. Governments must establish effective regulatory frameworks, technology companies must take responsibility for the systems they develop, and international organisations must work towards common principles that prevent technological competition from becoming another source of conflict. The Vatican’s call for shared international agreements is therefore significant because technologies capable of crossing borders require forms of governance that can also cross borders.

For Jordan and the wider Arab region, this debate offers an important opportunity. Countries across the region are investing heavily in digital transformation and artificial intelligence as part of their efforts to build knowledge-based economies. The chal-

lenge is to ensure that this transformation is not measured only by the number of technologies adopted, but also by the extent to which those technologies improve human wellbeing, strengthen education, support sustainable development and contribute to peace.

Ultimately, Pope Leo XIV’s message asks humanity to pause at a critical moment in technological history. We are developing systems capable of processing enormous amounts of information, making increasingly complex predictions and influencing decisions once made exclusively by human beings. But technological intelligence does not automatically create moral wisdom.

The future of artificial intelligence will therefore depend not only on how intelligent our machines become, but on how responsible we remain as human beings. “Disarming technology” is, at its heart, a call to put human dignity before technological power and peace before technological competition.

The 2027 World Day of Peace thus presents a timely question for governments, universities, businesses and citizens alike: Can humanity become wise enough to govern the technologies powerful enough to transform its future? The answer may determine whether artificial intelligence becomes a tool that deepens division and conflict, or one that helps build a safer, more peaceful and more humane world.

The writer is a specialist in educational technology

BUSINESS

Monday, August 17, 2026



Jordanian and Pakistani business chambers have agreed to establish a joint business council as part of a broader push to expand bilateral trade

Jordan, Pakistan chambers establish joint business council to drive trade, investment

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian and Pakistani business chambers have agreed to establish a joint business council as part of a broader push to expand bilateral trade, unlock investment opportunities and build direct partnerships between companies in the two countries.

The Jordan Chamber of Commerce (JCC) and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing an institutional framework for cooperation across trade, investment, industry and technology, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Signed through an exchange process by JCC President Khalil Haj Tawfiq and FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh, the agreement provides for exchanging information on commercial and investment opportunities, promoting joint ventures, facilitating business delegations and organising meetings, events and participation in exhibitions.

At the centre of the agreement is the creation of the Jordanian-Pakistani Business Council, which will serve as a permanent

private-sector platform to identify priority sectors and viable investment and trade opportunities, connect businesses and investors, and follow up on joint projects and initiatives.

Haj Tawfiq noted Pakistan as a large market with substantial industrial and production capacity, while Jordan offers a strategic location, an investment environment and a network of trade agreements that provide access to regional and international markets.

These complementary advantages could support joint ventures extending beyond traditional merchandise trade, he said.

Haj Tawfiq identified fertilisers, phosphate, potash, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, food and agricultural products as sectors with potential for expanding Jordanian exports to Pakistan.

Jordan, meanwhile, could tap Pakistan's capabilities in textiles, food manufacturing and information technology, among other sectors, to develop joint investment and industrial projects.

Food security is another potential area of cooperation. Haj Tawfiq said Pakistan's agricultural and production

capacity could help Jordan diversify its food import sources and strengthen the resilience and sustainability of supply chains.

He called for direct, long-term relationships between exporters and importers in both markets to capitalise on these opportunities.

Current bilateral trade remains below the potential of the two economies, Haj Tawfiq said, underscoring the need to intensify private-sector engagement, exchange business delegations, hold specialised sectoral meetings and address barriers that constrain trade and investment flows.

He said the new business council will be a key mechanism for turning the MoU into tangible economic activity by drawing up priority sectors, identifying commercially viable opportunities, linking Jordanian and Pakistani companies directly and following up on projects agreed by both sides.

The chamber views Pakistan both as a promising destination for Jordanian exports and as a strategic economic partner for diversifying imports, strengthening food security and pursuing industrial and technology partnerships, he added.

ICT sector generates \$3.6b in revenue, 46,000 Jobs

AMMAN (JT) — The information and communications technology (ICT) sector has grown into a \$3.6 billion industry employing more than 46,000 people, underscoring its expanding role in investment, exports and the Kingdom's broader economic modernisation drive.

The figures were presented as the Information and Communications Technology Association of Jordan (int@j) marked its 25th anniversary under the theme "25 Years... One Network", highlighting the industry's evolution from a specialised technology segment into a core component of the national economy.

Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship Sami Smeirat said int@j has become a platform for ICT expertise and a key link between the private sector and government, contributing to several stages of the industry's development.

He said Jordan's technology sector has benefited from an early Royal vision that identified ICT as a strategic pillar for development, economic growth, innovation and investment, as well as a source of opportunities for Jordanian talent, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The sector is now central to Jordan's modernisation agenda, Smeirat said, serving as an enabler for investment and export growth and the creation of high-skilled jobs. Digital technologies are also a key component of public-sector modernisation efforts aimed at improving government efficiency and the quality and accessibility of services.

He said the establishment of the National Council for Future Technology reinforces



The information and communications technology sector has grown into a \$3.6 billion industry employing more than 46,000 people

that direction by bringing together government, businesses, universities and Jordanian expertise to translate technological change into projects, programmes and economic opportunities.

An overview presented during the anniversary event showed that int@j's membership has grown to 316 companies, while Jordanian startups have attracted an estimated \$250 million through more than 14 investment funds.

Over its 25-year history, the association has contributed to efforts to develop the regulatory environment, preserve industry incentives and promote Jordanian technology exports, while organising trade missions and launching platforms and initiatives supporting start-ups, women's participation and cyber security.

The association's activities have also included organising the MENA ICT Forum and helping Jordanian technology companies access regional and international markets.

Int@j Chairman Fadi Qutaishat said the past quarter-century has seen technology shift from a specialised industry into a fundamental part of Jordan's economy and the future of business.

He traced the industry's institutional development to 1999, when information technology was placed among the Kingdom's priorities. Private-sector leaders subsequently developed the REACH plan to build Jordan's IT industry, followed by the establishment of int@j in 2000 to support its implementation.

Qutaishat announced the launch of "The REACH Forum" under a new identity as an extension of the MENA ICT Forum. Aqaba will host the event in April 2027 at the Aqaba International Exhibition and Convention Centre.

Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority Chief Commissioner Shadi Majali and Aqaba Development Corporation CEO Hussein Safadi said Aqaba is ready

to host technology companies, investors and entrepreneurs attending the forum.

They pointed to ongoing expansion in the city's investment and urban infrastructure, including upgrades to King Hussein International Airport and the development of new projects and events.

Telecommunications Regulatory Commission Chairperson Lara Khatib, meanwhile, stressed the importance of continued public-private coordination in developing services and creating a market capable of attracting investment and skilled professionals.

Int@j CEO Nidal Bitar said the association has sought to bring technology companies together, represent their interests, address industry challenges and strengthen cooperation with government.

Its work has also focused on connecting universities and talent with employment opportunities and helping technology companies expand their contribu-

tion to national exports.

Bitar said the association is entering a new phase as artificial intelligence and the digital economy increasingly reshape economies and business models.

He announced the launch of an interactive digital yearbook documenting int@j's 25-year history and the development of Jordan's technology industry.

A new digital platform has also been introduced to provide expanded information on ICT companies and allow users to search and classify businesses according to their activities, geographic presence and other criteria.

Int@j will also hold a specialised artificial intelligence event in November, focusing on the transition from AI adoption to measurable impact, alongside digital sovereignty, skills and inclusive digital growth. The event will be organised with support from the German Agency for International Cooperation, Petra reported.

Hotter Europe isn't cooling investor fervour for stocks

By Samir Tounsi and Paul Cassedanne in Frankfurt
Agence France-Presse

PARIS, France — The heatwaves pummeling Europe this summer will have costly impacts on industries ranging from agriculture to tourism — but that hasn't stopped stock markets from hitting all-time highs.

For investors en-

thralled by soaring corporate profits, headlines about the painful consequences from climate change are largely just background noise, experts say.

"The earnings season has been so strong, and the number one worry in terms of inflation being the situation in Iran, that global warming is really second order," said Florian Ielpo,

head of macroeconomic research at the Swiss bank Lombard Odier.

In theory, markets are constantly pricing in expectations for everything from interest rates to technology advances. In practice, prospects of hotter weather disrupting wide swathes of everyday life are not pulling stock prices back to Earth.

The Paris, Frankfurt, Madrid and Milan exchanges all hit records in August, in line with recent all-time highs for Wall Street's key indexes.

"Even though Europe's problems have only gotten worse with this summer's abnormally hot temperatures, drying rivers and further disrupting transport within

the continent, earnings expectations for Stoxx 600 companies keep rising!" Ipek Ozkardeskaya, senior analyst at Swissquote, wrote in a research note this week.

Even if climate change does not pose an immediate risk, the threat is likely to gradually move centre-stage over the next 10 to 15 years, Ozkardeskaya ex-

plained to AFP.

"The biggest risk for European equities is potentially stagflationary: Climate change could simultaneously weaken productivity and growth, at the same time pushing food, energy, insurance costs, infrastructure spending and ultimately inflation structurally higher," she said.

Among the most vul-

nerable sectors, she cited agriculture and heavy industry as they deal with water scarcity and higher input prices, as well as insurance if firms face higher claims.

France's Environment Minister Monique Barbut said this month that the fierce heatwaves this summer would cost 10 to 15 billion euros.

The heat is threatening harvests across the Continent, raising the spectre of soaring food prices.

And in Germany, steel giant Thyssenkrupp warned that record-low levels on the Rhine were threatening raw material deliveries, echoing industry warnings that the waterway could soon become unnavigable.

EU pushes back as US revives trade pressure on bloc

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AFP) — The EU pushed back recently at renewed trade pressure from the United States, as Washington said the bloc was enabling Chinese evasion of US tariffs and stepped up calls for it to roll back flagship green rules on businesses.

Washington's ambassador to the EU, Andrew Puzder, called on the bloc Friday to "align" the provisions of two landmark new laws on environmental and human rights supply chain standards with the EU-US trade deal struck last year.

"Now it's time for the EU to deliver," Puzder posted on X, along with

a US government document detailing a long list of "concerns" with the rules.

"The United States will take any actions necessary to address unreasonable burdens on US commerce absent a solution that addresses these concerns," the document warned.

Responding to Puzder's message, European Commission spokesperson Arianna Podesta said the EU continued to "exchange on both tariff and non-tariff issues", with the United States, calling the process "constructive".

But she added: "We have been very clear

and consistent on the fact that neither our rules framework nor our regulatory autonomy is up for negotiation."

The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive requires large companies to fix the "adverse human rights and environmental impacts" of their supply chains worldwide, while the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive requires them to provide information on their climate impact and emissions, and steps to limit them.

"The directives' extraterritorial reach and costly and onerous supply chain due dili-

gence obligations will adversely impact the ability of US businesses to compete on a level playing field in the EU market," read the US document.

The EU has already dialled back the scope of both laws under pressure from businesses both inside and outside the bloc, delaying implementation and sparing smaller firms, but the US document said that did not go far enough.

Puzder's comments came a day after he hit out at the bloc's carbon border tax, CBAM, which he charged was "a tariff in substance, no matter the 'climate policy' label".

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

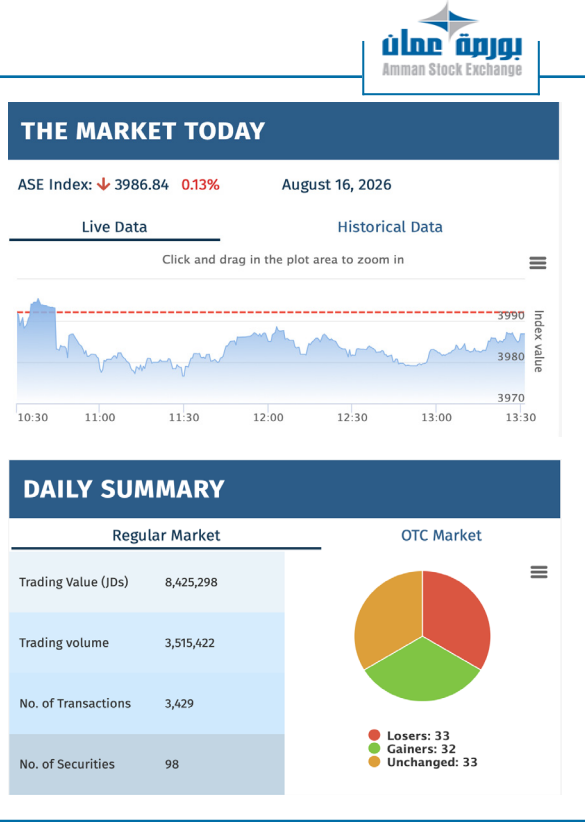
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Sunday amounted to JD8.4 million spread over 3.5 million shares that traded through 3,429 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.13 per cent, closing at 3986.84 points.

Out of 98 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 32 companies rose while the share price of another 33 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Kafaa for Financial and Economical Investments Plc. by 5 per cent, Middle East Insurance by 4.90 per cent, Euro Arab Insurance Group by 4.72 per cent, Future Arab Investment Company by 4.35 per cent and Latent Energies for Investments by 4.12 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordanian Duty Free Shops by 4.93 per cent, First Islamic Finance by 4.62 per cent, Arab Pesticides and Veterinary Drugs Manufacturing Company by 4.32 per cent, Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 4.30 per cent, and National Portfolio Securities by 3.85 per cent.



CRICKET

India's Padikkal makes 167 in first Sri Lanka Test

GALLE, Sri Lanka (AFP) — Deydutt Padikkal hit a polished 167 as India reached 364-5 at tea on a rain-hit day two of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle on Sunday. Resuming on their overnight score of 288-2, India lost three wickets — all to Sri Lanka spinners — in the shortened afternoon session. The entire first session was lost due to rain, and play got under way late after lunch. Padikkal, recalled to the side after almost two years as an injury replacement for Sai Sudharsan, impressed the most among the batsmen. His knock was the fourth-highest Test score by an Indian in Sri Lanka behind Sachin Tendulkar (203), Virender Sehwag (201 not out) and Shikhar Dhawan (190). Padikkal, 26, lost his wicket when he was stumped by Niroshan Dickwella off the bowling of Prabath Jayasuriya. His 167 came off 230 deliveries and contained 15 fours and a six. Galle is hosting its 50th Test match, the first Asian ground to achieve the milestone. India has an impressive record against Sri Lanka, having not lost any Test against them since 2015.

TENNIS

Depleted Djokovic falls in Cincinnati Masters opener

CINCINNATI (AFP) — Novak Djokovic was overcome by the heat and humidity at the ATP-WTA Cincinnati Masters on Saturday, with the 24-time Grand Slam winner falling in his opening match to Argentine Thiago Tirante. The South American advanced to the third round with a 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 against the 24-time Grand Slam champion, who hit the wall in the second set but recovered to make a battle of it in the third before bowing out. The Serb star won a brutal 18-minute third game of the second set after taking the first, saving four break points over nine deuces. But he was clearly struggling, doubling over or even dropping to his hands and knees between some points. Djokovic took a medical timeout after that game, with the physio and then a doctor coming on court to assist with assessments and ice towels. After Tirante took the second set both players cooled off in the locker room. Slightly revived, Djokovic soldiered on in the deciding set, where a drop shot gone wrong on his opponent's match point spelled the end for the veteran — who must try to regroup before the start of the US Open on August 30.



Jordan's U20 squad upbeat for the upcoming Asian Cup qualifiers

Jordan's U-20 counts down to qualifiers

By Aline Bannayan

AMMAN — Jordan's U20 football team has left to Doha, Qatar for a training camp ahead of the upcoming Asian Cup qualifiers in which Jordan plays in Group D alongside, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and hosts Bahrain August 31-September 6. Jordan is slated to face Saudi Arabi during the Aug. 16-21 camp which comes after a similar one in Kuwait where Jordan beat their hosts twice 1-0. They also held a camp in Egypt losing 2-0 and 3-0. In recent matches, the

team lost to Uzbekistan 2-1 and held them 1-1 and Iraq 0-0. After the 4th WAFF U20 Championship was postponed, the squad is eyeing the 2027 U20 Asian Cup which Jordan has previously qualified to 9 times finishing fourth in 2006 to advance to the U20 World Cup in 2007. In previous Asian Cup editions, the team exited the group stages in 1977, 1978, 2008, 2010, 2018 and 2025; exited the quarterfinals in 2012 and 2023. In the past decade, they did not qualify in 2014 and 2016. The senior men's team's

success has raised the bar for all teams after Jordan finished runner-up at the 2023 Asian Cup; runner-up to champions Morocco at the 2025 FIFA Arab Cup; a historic first-time qualification to the World Cup in their 7th time in qualifiers since 1986, as well as booking a spot in the next edition of the 2027 Asian Cup. In latest age divisions competitions, the men's U23 squad exited the 2026 AFC U23 Asian Cup quarters after losing to eventual and reigning champs Japan. The U17 men's squad has been in-

active since they lost their qualifying chance to the 2026 U17 AFC Asian Cup from which the top eight finishers represent Asia at the 2026 FIFA U17 World Cup. In the women's game, Jordan exited the U20 Asian Cup Round 1, while the senior team didn't make it past qualifiers for the 2026 Women's AFC Asian Cup which Jordan reached twice before: In 2014 as group winner, and in 2018, as host. In addition, the women's U17 team exited qualifiers for the AFC U17 Asian Cup 2026.

Odegaard says Arsenal 'want to win everything' after Community Shield success

CARDIFF, United Kingdom (AFP) — Martin Odegaard warned Arsenal's rivals that the Premier League champions want to "win everything" after starting their season by sweeping aside Manchester City in the Community Shield. Arsenal captain Odegaard delivered a man of the match performance capped by the final goal in his team's dominant 3-0 victory in Cardiff on Sunday.

Riccardo Calafiori netted Arsenal's opener after just 24 seconds and Kai Havertz was also on the scoresheet before half-time in the annual curtain raiser to the English top-flight season.

Just four months ago, Odegaard lifted Arsenal's first Premier League crown since 2004 after they finished seven points ahead of second-placed City.

The Norway midfielder believes the dynamic display against City, now managed by Enzo Maresca instead of Pep Guardiola, showed the north Londoners have not lost their hunger for silverware.

"We played some brilliant football. Great performance and a great way to start the season," Maresca said.

"We showed our level today. We're showed we're ready. We're serious and we want to do it again. We want to attack it. We want to do it again.

When you get a taste of how nice it is you want to do it again. We want to win everything."

Installed as the bookmakers' favourites for a second successive title, Arsenal begin their Pre-

mier League charge at home to promoted Coventry on August 21.

'Things to work on'

City open their bid for a first title since 2024 with a visit from Bournemouth on August 24 and Maresca admitted they have a lot to improve before then.

"We have many things to work on. The season's just started so there are many things we need to do better," he said.

"The goal we conceded after 24 seconds unfortunately affected the game. Disappointed with that because in this kind of game the level is so similar that when you concede a goal, it then becomes difficult."

Maresca endured the joint-heaviest defeat by a City manager in their first game in charge, tying a 4-1 loss for Harry Newbould's side against Arsenal in 1906.

It was also Maresca's joint-worst loss as a manager in England after a 3-0 defeat against Brighton during his time with Chelsea in 2025.

Since the start of the 2023-24 season, City have only won two of their nine matches against Arsenal, showing the widening gap between them that Maresca must find a way to close.

"After the goal, the reaction was quite good. We had three or four chances to score and draw the game. Unfortunately we conceded the second one and it became more complicated," he said.

"From next Sunday we start the Premier League and the focus has to be about that."

FAMILY FLAVOURS MAGAZINE

THE SPICE OF LIFE

Living in the AI age: What it means for our future

By Dr Tareq Rasheed, International consultant and trainer Expert contributor/Family Flavours Magazine

In a world of rapid change and unprecedented challenges, the future is moving in new and accelerating directions. We are living through the Digital Transformation Age; a period of profound change that is reshaping societies, organisations and families and transforming the way we live, work, communicate and connect.

At the heart of this transformation is the artificial intelligence (AI) age. But what exactly lies behind the term artificial intelligence and what other emerging technologies and concepts are changing the world around us?

As these developments become increasingly embedded in our everyday lives, what opportunities do they offer and what challenges and risks do they bring?

Understanding the new language of management

The world of work is changing rapidly and so is the language used to describe it. Terms such as agility, resilience, future foresight and digital transformation are becoming part of our everyday conversations



about organisations, businesses and even our personal lives.

But what do these terms actually mean? Here is a simple guide to some of the key concepts shaping the way organisations work today:

1. Accelerators: Doing things faster

Accelerators are strategies, techniques and approaches that help speed up processes. Something that once took three to five days, for example, may now be completed in just three to five hours with the right technology and approach

2. Enablers: Giving people the right tools

Enablers are the tools that make this possible. Technology can empower people, simplify tasks and make services faster and more accessible. Across many sectors, organisations are moving towards digital systems that allow people to accomplish more with greater ease

3. Agility: Being ready to respond

Agility means being able to respond quickly when circumstances change. In an increasingly digital world, smart processes can help organisations react faster to new demands, challenges and opportunities

4. Resilience: Being prepared for what comes next

Resilience is about being able to keep moving forward when things do not go according to plan. Having different scenarios and contingency plans allows organisations to adapt to unexpected challenges while staying focused on their goals

5. Governance: Creating the right framework

Governance provides the rules, policies and legal frameworks that guide organisations. Good governance helps ensure that new technologies and approaches are used responsibly while keeping organisations on the right

path towards their goals

6. Future foresight: Preparing for tomorrow/today

The future starts today. Future foresight means looking beyond the present and considering what might happen next. By exploring different possible scenarios, organisations can prepare for potential risks while also identifying new opportunities

7. Sustainability: Thinking long term

Sustainability is about achieving results that can last. This means using resources responsibly and making decisions that support long-term success rather than focusing only on immediate results

And where does AI come in? One technology that is helping bring many of these ideas together is AI. In simple terms, AI refers to computer systems that can perform tasks that normally require human intelligence.

These can include analysing information, recognising patterns, learning from data, making predictions and supporting decision-making.

Machine Learning is one of the key technologies within AI. It allows computer systems to learn from data and improve their performance

over time. Think of it this way: Instead of simply following a fixed set of instructions, an AI system can analyse large amounts of information, identify patterns and use what it has learned to help solve problems or make decisions.

This is why AI is becoming such an important part of the digital transformation taking place around us. It can help organisations work faster, make better-informed decisions, respond more effectively to change and prepare for the future.

But as AI becomes increasingly integrated into our lives, the important question is not simply "What can AI do?" It is also "How can we use it wisely, responsibly and in a way that benefits people?"

What does the future hold?

To understand where AI is taking us, there are three terms that are useful to know: ANI, AGI and ASI. Don't worry, the names sound complicated, but the ideas behind them are actually quite simple.

ANI is the AI we are familiar with today. It is designed to do particular things, such as answering questions, recognising faces, translating languages, recommending what we might like to watch or helping us complete a task.

It can be extremely

good at what it does, but it does not have the broad understanding or creativity of a human being.

AGI is a concept for a more advanced kind of AI; one that could learn and handle many different kinds of tasks rather than being designed for just one.

Imagine a machine that could learn from experience, adapt to a new situation and work out how to solve a problem it had never encountered before. This is the kind of possibility that AGI represents.

AGI does not yet exist in the way scientists and researchers envision it, but it is an area of intense research and discussion.

AI beyond human intelligence?

This is where things become much more futuristic. Artificial Superintelligence, refers to a hypothetical form of AI that could eventually become more capable than humans in areas such as problem-solving, creativity and decision-making.

It does not currently exist. But the idea raises some very important questions: If machines ever become more intelligent than humans, who decides what they should do? What values would guide them? And how would we make sure that technology continues to serve humanity?

No one knows exactly

what the future will look like.

So, is AI good or bad? Like any powerful technology, AI has both advantages and disadvantages.

On the positive side, AI can save us time and effort. It can help us find information, organise our work, solve problems and complete tasks more quickly. It is already being used in areas ranging from medicine and education to finance, engineering and communication.

But there is another side to the story.

We need to think about privacy, security and cybersecurity. We need to consider how AI may affect jobs and education and how it could influence the way our children learn and prepare for their future. We also need to ask how much of our decision-making we should hand over to machines.

And there is an even bigger question: What happens to human creativity, judgement and values in a world where machines can increasingly do things for us?

AI is already part of our lives

You may already be using AI without even thinking about it. Tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and Perplexity can answer questions, write and edit text, summarise information, generate ideas and

help with countless everyday tasks.

The possibilities are expanding almost every day. There is far more to AI than we can cover here. My aim is simply to give you a compass, a starting point for understanding the changes taking place around us and thinking about what they could mean for your life, your family and your children's future.

Let AI be the servant, not the leader

Perhaps the most important message is a simple one: Let AI be the servant, not the leader.

AI is a creation of human intelligence and creativity. It can be an extraordinary tool, but it should remain a tool. Our ability to think, question, imagine, create, make ethical choices and take responsibility cannot simply be handed over to a machine.

The future will undoubtedly bring remarkable advances in AI. But the real challenge is not whether machines will become more capable. It is whether we, as human beings, will remain wise enough to decide how that capability should be used.

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