

Thursday, August 27, 2026 | Rabi I 14, 1448 Hijri



Aqaba Container Terminal

National exports rise 6.2% in first half of 2026

- Reexports surge 44.6%, pushing total exports up 14.5%
- Trade deficit narrows as export-to-import coverage improves

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's national exports rose by 6.2 per cent in the first half of 2026 to JD4,667 million, compared with the same period of 2025, according to the Department of Statistics (DoS) monthly report on foreign trade.

Reexports recorded a sharp 44.6 per cent increase to JD1,747 million, pushing total ex-

ports to JD6,414 million, up 14.5 per cent, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Imports also increased, rising by 6.1 per cent to JD10,261 million during the first half of 2026. Despite the increase, the trade deficit narrowed by 5.5 per cent, or JD226 million, to JD3,847 million, compared with JD4,073 mil-

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Prime minister, ADFD chief discuss expanding Jordan-UAE cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday received Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) Director General Mohamed Suwaidi, who is visiting the Kingdom to sign agreements to finance projects in vocational and technical education and energy, as well as to support the general budget.

Hassan highlighted the deep relations and strategic partnership between Jordan and the UAE, expressing appreciation for Emirati support in advancing Jordan's economic development under the guidance of both leaderships, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

He commended ADFD's role in financing vital strategic projects and stressed the importance of expanding cooperation into new sectors.

Suwaidi said that bilateral ties serve as a model for constructive collaboration, expressing pride in the fund's historical partnership with Jordan and its support for national development priorities.



Photo courtesy of Prime Ministry

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday receives Abu Dhabi Fund for Development Director General Mohamed Suwaidi

The funded projects include constructing five modern vocational and technical education schools valued at approximately \$40 million across Amman, Mafrag, Jerash and Irbid, aligning with the government's strategy to expand technical education.

Additionally, ADFD is providing \$70 million to supply natural gas to Al Rawda Industrial City in Maan and Al Muwaqqar Industrial City, alongside studies to extend coverage to the King Hussein Bin Talal Development Zone in Mafrag.

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Gov't signs \$300m financing agreement, \$40 million contract with ADFD

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Planning and Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) on Wednesday signed a \$300 million financing agreement to support the Kingdom's general budget, as well as a \$40 million contract to construct and equip a number of public vocational and technical schools.

The agreement was signed by Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Zeina Toukan and ADFD Director General Mohammed Saif Al Suwaidi, according to a Planning Ministry statement.

According to the statement, the \$40 million contract covers the construction and equipping of five vocational and technical



Planning Ministry photo

(From left) Director General of Abu Dhabi Fund for Development Mohammed Saif Al Suwaidi, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Zeina Toukan and Minister of Education and Human Resources Development Azmi Mahafzah, during the signing ceremony of a \$300 million financing agreement and a \$40 million contract to construct a number of public vocational and technical schools

schools adhering to the highest standards across the Capital, Mafrag, Jerash and Irbid governorates.

The contract was signed by Minister of Education and Human Resources Development Azmi Mahafzah and CEO of Trojan Holding Ahmad Al Shamsi.

The project falls within the priorities of the Economic Modernisation Vision's executive programme (2026-2029) and forms part of a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Jordanian government and the ADFD in late 2023 to support vocational and technical education and supply the labour market with skilled personnel across various economic sectors.

Toukan stressed that the agreements reflect the depth of strategic relations between Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, embodying ADFD's pivotal role as a primary partner supporting the Kingdom's development efforts for over five decades.

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File photo

Jordan welcomes integration of SDF into Syrian military institutions

AMMAN — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday welcomed the integration of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) into Syrian military institutions, as an important step towards preserving Syria's unity, security and stability.

Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali reiterated the Kingdom's steadfast position in supporting Syria's reconstruction on foundations that safeguard

its unity, sovereignty, security, stability and territorial integrity, while protecting the rights of all Syrian citizens, according to a ministry statement.

The leader of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces announced their dissolution on Tuesday under a deal with the government.

The forces' leader, Mazloum Abdi, declared their dissolution in a televised speech at the presidential palace

in Damascus.

"We announce today the end of the mission of the Syrian Democratic Forces and declare, with full responsibility, their dissolution as an independent military force," he said.

Abdi explained that the announcement followed "the completion of the process of integrating our forces into the brigades of the Syrian army".

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Jordan offers condolences to Nepal over flood victims

Hundreds reported missing after devastating floods swept Himalayan nation

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday expressed condolences to the government and people of Nepal over the victims of the devastating floods that swept the Himalayan nation.

The ministry's Spokesperson Fouad Majali expressed Jordan's solidarity with Nepal and its sympathies to the families of the victims.

Hundreds of tourists in Nepal, many of them

foreigners, have gone missing in the Himalayan nation's devastating flash floods on Wednesday, which have killed at least 95 people, according to AFP.

Hours after the disaster tore through the border region with Tibet, some 403 visitors, including 341 foreign nationals, were still unaccounted for, according to the ministry of culture, tourism and civil aviation, AFP said.

In its second situation update posted on X, the Nepal Tourism Board gave a tally of 384 missing travellers, 291 of them non-Nepalis. Many of the foreign tourists' nationalities were yet to be confirmed.

Nestled in the Himalayas, Nepal is a milestone tourist destination for hikers and climbers from around the world, lured by the challenge of scaling some of the world's highest peaks,

Mount Everest among them.

Images shared by Nepali police showed floodwater surging through a river, sweeping away houses in its path, while AFP images depicted the top floor of a house sticking out from muddy soil.

"So far, eight bodies have been found. Rescue operations are underway," Nepal police spokesman Abi Narayan Kafle told AFP.

Videos shared by Nepal police and others on social media showed torrents of muddy water crashing through mountain valleys in the Himalayan district bordering China.

"I witnessed the flood sweep away eight or nine trucks, along with houses and people," Suman Chalize, a 34-year-old teacher, told AFP in Nuwakot district.

"It was absolutely heart-wrenching. I had



AFP photo

Houses lie partially submerged in muddy water along a riverside after flash floods at Trishuli Bazar in Nepal's Nuwakot district on Wednesday

not witnessed such devastation before."

The police spokesman told AFP earlier that authorities did not know the extent of the damage but said they had "alerted people who are staying near the riverside to relocate".

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Jordan, China sign MoU to enhance environment, climate change cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — The governments of Jordan and China, on the sidelines of His Majesty King Abdullah’s visit to China, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation in environment and climate change.

The signing took place among several agreements aimed at expanding bilateral partnership across various sectors during the visit, which featured a meeting between King Abdullah and Chinese President Xi Jinping, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The MoU establishes a framework for environmental and climate action tailored to the two nations’ socio-economic conditions, supporting efforts towards sustainable development and a low-carbon green economy transition.

Cooperation areas specified under the agreement include environmental management policies, biodiversity conservation, pollution control, marine environment protection, solid and plastic waste management, climate change mitigation, environmental impact assessment and public awareness.

The agreement enables both sides to advance practical collaboration through policy and expertise exchange, joint research, expert visits, workshops, training programmes, and joint meetings aimed at capacity building and innovative problem-solving.

Environment Minister Ayman Suleiman said that the MoU represents a “vital” step in enhancing environmental ties, reflecting Jordan’s commitment

to broadening international partnerships and leveraging advanced technology to address climate challenges.

Suleiman noted that the ministry aims to translate the agreement into concrete programmes that support national priorities, promote green and circular economies, improve waste management and protect biodiversity.

He added that the co-operation aligns with the Economic Modernisation Vision to enhance resource efficiency, bolster climate resilience, and fulfil national commitments.

Under the agreement, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China will oversee implementation and coordinate joint activities through designated representatives.

Children from Gaza, cancer centres join 2,600m2 'Canvas of Hope'

By Ahmad Alkhawaldeh

AMMAN — More than 1,000 children from cancer treatment centres, refugee communities, Gaza medical evacuation programmes and low-income families across Jordan spent three days this week painting a 2,600 square-metre canvas in what organisers described as “one of the largest participatory children’s artworks in the Middle East”.

The “Canvas of Hope” event ran from Sunday to Tuesday at the Dunes Club on the Airport Road, organised by Hareer for Community Development under the patronage of HRH Princess Karma bint Abbas. More than 1,000 children and family members attended each day.

Princess Karma opened the festival on Sunday and was received by Hareer Executive Director Nihad Dabbas and the organisation’s team.

She toured the event, met participating children, viewed their artwork and joined them in painting on the canvas.

“The success of the first day came thanks to the joint efforts of our partners, supporters, participants and volunteers. Every child who took part in the painting added a piece of their own story and their own dream to the canvas,” Dabbas said.

On Monday, Princess



Photo courtesy of Hareer for Community Development

More than 1,000 children from cancer treatment centres, refugee communities, Gaza medical evacuation programmes and low-income families across Jordan spend three days this week painting a 2,600 square-metre canvas

Karma was joined by HRH Princess Rania bint Abbas. The two princesses met children evacuated from Gaza, children supported by the National Aid Fund and underprivileged children from governorates across the Kingdom.

They viewed the children’s artwork and offered encouragement.

The day’s programme also featured a heritage performance by a Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) troupe and a

piano recital by Rawan Shahroui.

The festival concluded on Tuesday, with more than 1,000 children and families participating on the final day.

The closing programme featured artistic, cultural and entertainment activities, with the participation of the embassies of Indonesia, Mexico and Italy, as well as the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Diamond Group, Nadejda Club and Friends of Rus-

sian Culture Association.

Hareer said that the “Canvas of Hope” was intended not simply as a drawing event, but as a form of psychological and social support, giving children an opportunity to express their feelings through art and colour while promoting integration and social solidarity.

Over the three days, children and families from across the Kingdom contributed to the collective canvas, adding

their stories, dreams and messages.

Hareer said that the initiative demonstrated children’s ability to transform difficult circumstances into art and turn hope into something tangible.

The Amman event was the first stage of the “Canvas of Hope” initiative. Organisers said that it will next move to Aqaba before expanding to other governorates, with the aim of reaching as many children as possible.

Experts examine Jordan’s renewable energy challenges, regional transition

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — Institute Français Proche Orient, in partnership with the Centre for International Studies (CERI), Sciences Po, the Council for British Research in the Levant – Amman Institute and the Arab Centre for Research-Amman, has recently organised a conference titled “Energy Across Scales: City, Transition, Region”.

The conference’s public sessions explored three main themes: Energy in the urban context, covering everyday life, populations and mobility; renewable energy and the challenges of the transition away from fossil fuels; and the political economy of energy, examining the reshaping of the Arab region through gas, electricity and renewable



File photo

Institute Français Proche Orient and partners organise a conference that features a discussion on the challenges facing Jordan’s renewable energy sector

energy networks.

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the challenges facing Jordan’s renewable energy sector.

Eric Verdeil from CERI emphasised changes in energy supply as an

emerging challenge for the MENA region.

“Other ecological pressures trail behind, such as increased threats of flooding because of exceptional rainfalls and sea-level rise or hotter temperature prospects, which have recently made the headlines in Gulf cities,” Verdeil said, adding that this concern takes a different form in energy exporting and importing countries.

In oil- and gas-producing countries, threats of peak oil and resource depletion are surfacing in some cases, such as in Bahrain, Dubai or Tunisia, Verdeil noted.

“However, in most cases, it’s not the depletion by itself that is a concern, but rather the fact that growth in demand consumes more and more of national oil production, which then

cannot be sold on the international market,” Verdeil said.

This results in reduced incomes, which in turn compromise the ability to finance the redistribution that is at the heart of the social contract.

‘Upheavals following the revolution in 2011 disrupted supplies’

Lower oil prices since 2014 have aggravated this situation. Net oil and gas importers in the

MENA region experience energy pressures in a different way, Verdeil added.

In a context of growing demand for energy, driven by population growth and the rise of middle-class consumption patterns (individual cars, electric appliances), the hikes in energy prices at the end of the 2000s strongly inflated energy spending and created fiscal tensions, as higher energy costs have not been passed on to the prices of essential goods, Verdeil stressed.

Low oil prices after 2014 were a relief for governments in net importing countries.

“It is noteworthy that both energy poor and, more surprisingly, energy rich countries have experienced recurring electricity shortages in the last decade, some-

times for long periods,” Verdeil said.

Independent Jordanian researcher Asmaa Amin said that Jordan in the past relied for oil and gas on neighbouring Arab states.

After the first Gulf War in 1990, dependence shifted to Iraq until the 2003 US invasion. Then, Jordan turned to Egypt, but the so-called Arab Spring in 2011 also negatively impacted energy deals with Cairo, Amin underlined.

“Upheavals following the revolution in 2011 disrupted supplies. To compensate, Jordan imported crude oil from the global market at a high cost,” Amin said, underscoring that it also marks a deeper structural dependency shaped by geopolitical alignments and economic liberalisation.

JMD activates new rainfall station to improve precipitation data collection

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Meteorological Department (JMD) on Wednesday operated a new rainfall observation station in Amman’s Wadi Saqra area as part of efforts to enhance the Kingdom’s weather tracking network.

The new facility aims to improve precipitation data collection and map rainfall distribution across the capital, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

JMD Director General Raed Khattab said that activating the station falls under the department’s plan to bolster its technical capabilities and expand its field surveillance, stressing that a robust early warning system relies on an accurate, widespread observation network capable of delivering timely data.

Khattab added that

data gathered from the stations forms the basis for weather forecasts and warnings, whilst enhancing the department’s ability to track impactful weather systems, thereby protecting lives and property and assisting relevant authorities in taking appropriate measures.

The new facility aims to improve precipitation data collection and map rainfall distribution across the capital

Jordan’s long-term annual rainfall average is about 8.1 billion cubic metres, according to recent official figures.

Agriculture Ministry, FAO launch climate-smart training for farmers in 4 governorates

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Agriculture and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) have signed a cooperation agreement aimed at enhancing farmers’ capacity to adapt to climate change through specialised training programmes based on the climate-smart farmer field schools methodology, while promoting water-saving agricultural technologies.

Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khreisat and FAO Acting Representative in Jordan Paul Opio signed the agreement as part of the “Building Resilience to Cope with Climate Change in Jordan through Improving Water Use Efficiency in the Agriculture Sector [BRCCJ]” project, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported on Wednesday.

The project is funded by the Green Climate



File photo

The Ministry of Agriculture and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation sign a cooperation agreement aimed at enhancing farmers’ capacity to adapt to climate change through specialised training programmes

Fund (GCF) and implemented by FAO in partnership with the ministries of agriculture, water and irrigation, and environment, as

well as the UN Development Programme.

The agreement marks an “advanced” stage of cooperation, moving from training

agricultural extension officers to direct field implementation with farmers, enhancing their ability to adapt to climate change and

improve water-use efficiency.

Under the agreement, 44 farmer field schools and 44 field days will be held in Madaba, Karak, Tafileh and Maan, while the equipment and facilities needed to establish 60 additional field schools in the future will also be identified.

The activities are expected to benefit around 880 farmers by providing them with practical knowledge and skills in climate-smart agriculture.

The activities build on a training-of-trainers programme implemented last year for agricultural extension officers at the Ministry of Agriculture, equipping them to apply the climate-smart farmer field schools methodology and transfer knowledge to farmers.

The programme also contributed to building qualified nation-

al capacities to lead and oversee the field schools, supporting the programme’s sustainability and broader implementation.

The BRCCJ project is the first GCF-funded project in Jordan and will run for seven years, targeting more than 212,000 beneficiaries, including over 83,000 direct beneficiaries.

The project aims to enhance water and food security and build a more climate-resilient agricultural sector, in line with national priorities, the Economic Modernisation Vision and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The project has a total value of \$33.25 million and targets Karak, Madaba, Tafileh and Maan governorates in the Dead Sea Basin, which are among the areas most affected by climate change and water scarcity in the Kingdom.



Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabsheh and The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development on Wednesday sign contracts for the implementation of pipeline projects to supply natural gas to Al Muwaqqar and Al Rawda industrial estates

Ministry, ADFD sign agreements to supply gas to Muwaqqar, Rawda industrial estates

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabsheh on Wednesday signed contracts for the implementation of pipeline projects to supply natural gas to Al Muwaqqar and Al Rawda industrial estates, funded by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD).

TAQA Arabia CEO Pakinam Kafafi signed the contract for the Al Muwaqqar project, while Petrojet Chairman Walid Lotfy signed on behalf of the consortium implementing the Al Rawda project in the Ma'an Development Area, according to a Ministry statement.

Kharabsheh expressed appreciation for the UAE's continued support through ADFD, which has allocated \$70 million to the two projects.

He said that the initiative forms part of the national strategy to reduce energy costs across economic sectors, enhance industrial competitiveness, expand production lines and create job opportunities.

ADFD Director General Mohamed Suwaidi highlighted the fund's longstanding partnership with Jordan since 1974, noting that its total financial support to the Kingdom has reached 9.4 billion Emirati dirhams.

He said the investments reflect the strength of the two countries' strategic ties and contribute to Jordan's economic growth.

The Al Muwaqqar project will be implemented by a consortium comprising Petrojet and Ahmad Tarawneh and Partners, while Taqa Arabia will implement the Al Rawda project, which includes the construction of a 14-kilometre natural gas pipeline.

The projects are funded under a memorandum of understanding between ADFD and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and are aligned with the Economic Modernisation Vision's executive programme to upgrade energy infrastructure, enhance investment attractiveness and support sustainable growth.

20 sick children return to Gaza after treatment in Jordan

AMMAN (JT) — A number of sick children and their companions returned to the Gaza Strip on Wednesday through the King Hussein Bridge after completing treatment at hospitals in the Kingdom under the "Jordanian Medical Corridor" initiative, which was launched to provide medical care to 2,000 children from Gaza.

The returning group included 20 children accompanied by 48 family members, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) statement.

The children received the necessary medical care in the Kingdom after being evacuated to Jordan by the JAF, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The children's families expressed their gratitude to His Majesty King Abdullah and the JAF for their humanitarian and medical efforts to provide healthcare to people in the Gaza Strip. They also praised the quality of care and medical services their children received during their treatment in Jordan.

Patients and their companions are returned to Gaza after completing treatment to make room for new groups of patients to be evacuated to Jordan for medical care.

The "Jordanian



The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) says on Wednesday that the returning group included 20 children accompanied by 48 family members

Medical Corridor" initiative is part of the Kingdom's ongoing humanitarian and relief efforts to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Jordan also runs two military field hospitals in Gaza, one in the

Strip's north, which was established in 2009 following the war in 2008, and the second is in Khan Younis in the south, which was established in November 2023 at the peak of the Israeli war of aggression on the coastal

enclave that erupted on October 7, 2023.

Other humanitarian programmes include the land bridge for aid delivery, the mobile bakery, and the Restoring Hope Initiative, which provides prosthetics for amputees.

Preparatory works begin for Amman Cable Car project

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) have begun preparatory works in downtown Amman as part of the Amman Cable Car project, aimed at boosting tourism and connecting key sites and landmarks.

In a joint statement, the ministry and GAM said that the buildings covered by the preparatory and removal works are not classified as heritage or archaeological buildings and are located outside the main historic markets.

They stressed that preserving Amman's archaeological and architectural heritage and the identity of downtown remains a key focus of the development plans.

The statement said that the properties and buildings covered by the works are owned by GAM and are not privately owned, and that the current works will not require compensation or new expropriation.

They added that the



The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) begin preparatory works in downtown Amman as part of the Amman Cable Car project

works are being carried out in accordance with the Urban and Architectural Heritage Protection Law No. 5 of 2005.

Buildings of heritage value have been identified and documented, with officially recognised buildings included in the Urban and Architectural Heritage Register, they said, stressing that the cable car project will

not affect any building officially registered in the heritage buildings and sites register.

The areas designated for demolition and preparatory works are subject to the necessary technical procedures and inspections by competent authorities, including the Department of Antiquities, to verify that the sites contain no archaeological re-

mains, according to the statement.

If any indications of archaeological remains or discoveries emerge during the works, the relevant legal and technical procedures will be followed, it added.

The ministry and GAM said that the cable car project is part of an integrated vision to develop downtown Amman and is not intended to replace its

historic markets and heritage landmarks, but rather to strengthen links between them and facilitate visitors' access to the heart of the city.

The project will also offer visitors a new perspective of Amman and, once completed, provide a qualitative addition to the capital's tourism offering, they said.

The project is part of a broader vision to establish downtown Amman as an integrated tourist destination that combines the area's historic character with modern development needs, the statement said.

The government announced the Amman Cable Car project in October 2025. Prime Minister Jafar Hassan said at the time that the project would serve as a tourism, investment and economic attraction, help restore the appeal of central and eastern Amman, create job opportunities and reinforce the status of old Amman as a prominent tourism and heritage destination.

Traffic department expands use of smart traffic lights

AMMAN (JT) — The Central Traffic Department (CTD) said that it is addressing traffic flow between secondary and main roads by installing smart traffic lights at locations experiencing heavy traffic and a higher risk of accidents, CTD Director Brig. Gen. Raed Assaf said on Wednesday.

In remarks to Al Mamlaka, Assaf said that the location near Al Nahda Bridge towards the Eighth Circle is the fourth site to receive a smart traffic light as part of a pilot study, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The location previously required a traffic officer to regulate traffic during peak hours, while the smart signal allows a shift from "fixed control" to a system that monitors traffic and responds to exceptional situations, enabling traffic officers to be deployed at other locations that require regulation, Assaf said.

He noted that the traffic light is linked to the Greater Amman Municipality's central control system and monitoring cameras operated by the munic-



The Central Traffic Department says that it is addressing traffic flow between secondary and main roads by installing smart traffic lights at locations experiencing heavy traffic

ipality and the Traffic Department.

Other smart traffic lights have been installed at Istiklal Hospital for traffic coming from Jordan Street, at the intersection of Arjan Street and the Faculty of Education with Al Shaheed Street, and at the Queen Noor Street Bridge, he said.

Other traffic solutions are also being implemented, including widening lanes and constructing parallel roads along some routes, Assaf added.

Assaf noted that the work is being carried out in cooperation with the Traffic Department, the Greater

Amman Municipality and the Ministry of Public Works, adding that plans are underway to address traffic flow along King Abdullah Street and the roads feeding into it.

Regarding smart traffic systems, he said the Public Security Directorate has developed the Traffic Department's operations room and equipped it with artificial intelligence-enabled screens, digital maps and surveillance cameras. Operations rooms in Zarqa and Irbid have also been upgraded, while drones are being used to monitor traffic.

Man detained after allegedly shooting, killing son in Irbid

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Criminal Court prosecutor on Wednesday began questioning a man who allegedly shot and killed his son in Irbid Governorate earlier in the day, official sources said.

The victim allegedly received multiple gunshot wounds from his father while at their home, Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

The victim was rushed to a nearby hospital but died shortly after being admitted, Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

The victim's body was transferred to Irbid's National Institute of Forensic Medicine for an official government au-

topsy, according to the police official.

Sartawi added that "a suspect was arrested shortly afterwards".

The police official said that initial investigations indicated that the reason behind the alleged shooting was a dispute between the father and his son.

The weapon that was allegedly seized with the suspect was sent to the Forensic and Laboratories Department for a ballistic match, according to a senior official source.

The Criminal Court prosecutor will summon the victim and the suspect's family members for questioning, the senior official said.

The suspect was or-

dered detained by the Criminal Court prosecutor for 15 days pending further investigation.

Investigations are ongoing into the incident, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate.

This is the second incident to take place involving a father who allegedly killed his son in the Kingdom in a week.

On Saturday, police arrested a man who allegedly shot and killed his son in Balqa Governorate.

The victim allegedly received multiple gunshot wounds by his father while at their home.

The victim was rushed to a nearby hospital but died shortly after being admitted.

STATEMENT

Jordan condemns terrorist attack in Nigeria

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday condemned the terrorist attack targeting Niger State in central Nigeria, which left dozens of people dead, injured, or abducted.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Fouad Majali reaffirmed the Kingdom's full solidarity with the government and people of the friendly Federal Republic of Nigeria, reiterating Jordan's rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism aimed at destabilising security and stability, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Majali expressed sincere condolences to the government and people



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday condemns the terrorist attack targeting Niger State in central Nigeria

of Nigeria and the victims' families, wishing the injured a speedy recovery and the kidnapped a safe return.

Suspected terrorists

abducted and killed dozens of people in an attack during Friday prayers in the villages of Dikera and Binzi. No official toll has yet

been released, according to AFP.

In a video circulating on social media, several hundred people, many of them women

and children, were seen gathered in a forest and presented as hostages taken from Dikera. No ransom demand was mentioned.

A survivor of the attack told AFP last week that the assailants were members of the Daesh group Lakurawa, which some researchers have linked to a regional branch of the Daesh movement.

Another survivor blamed Ansaru, another local Daesh group.

Nigeria has been battling an insurgency for 17 years. The insurgency is concentrated in the northeast, but Friday's attack struck in a central western zone near the Benin border.



Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) greets Syrian President Ahmed Al Sharaa (right) during their meeting at the Kremlin on October 15, 2025, in Moscow, Russia

Syria president, Putin discuss deepening ties in call

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrian President Ahmed Al Sharaa and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Wednesday discussed strengthening ties, the Syrian presidency said, their first call since reaching an agreement over Moscow's military bases in the country.

The Syrian presidency said the two leaders discussed "bilateral relations and regional developments", as well as "strengthening cooperation in areas of shared interest".

"The two sides emphasised the importance of continuing coordination and consultation, and strengthening communication between the two countries, in a way that serves shared interests and supports security and stability in Syria and the region," the statement added.

The Kremlin said in a statement that both leaders "noted the importance of the Memorandum of Understanding signed on August 9 on the reorganisation of the Hmeimim air base and the Tartus logistics support facility".

Earlier this month, Syria said it reached an agreement with Moscow on the fate of the bases in Hmeimim and Tartus.

The Syrian foreign ministry said at the time that the bases would be turned into "joint training and capacity-building centres, within new arrangements that preserve mutual interests".

The ministry said the Memorandum of Understanding "set a time

limit of no more than three months to complete the process".

Syria also took over Latakia's international airport, a civilian facility adjacent to Hmeimim and whose operations were closely linked to Russia's presence.

Both the Hmeimim and Tartus bases had remained operational while talks were ongoing.

Damascus has expressed a willingness to cooperate with Moscow after Assad's fall, and Sharaa has visited Putin twice since then.

During Sharaa's last visit in January, Putin said "much has been accomplished in terms of restoring our interstate relations", commending Sharaa for his "efforts to restore Syria's territorial integrity".

Islamic civilisation’s leading figures take centre stage on forum’s second day

By Mai Anati

TASHKENT — The second day of Media Forum 2026 focused on how Uzbekistan's Islamic intellectual heritage can reach global audiences through film, books and digital media, with participants highlighting the power of storytelling in preserving a shared human legacy.

The programme centred on the second plenary session, "Figures of Islamic Civilization Who Changed the World: Great Biographies in Film, Books, and Digital Media". The session explored how the lives and achievements of major figures can be presented through modern media while preserving their historical significance.

The discussion shifted the focus from Uzbekistan's historic sites to the people behind its intellectual legacy. Their ideas and contributions have influenced the wider Islamic civilisation and continue to offer material for contemporary storytelling.

Munira Aminova, adviser to the minister of foreign affairs of Uzbekistan, said the heritage presented through the Centre of Islamic Civilisation should not be viewed as belonging to Uzbekistan alone.

"It not only belongs to Uzbekistan. It belongs to our general intellectual heritage of humanity," Aminova said.



Photo: provided

The Media Forum 2026 continues its activities with the second day focusing on Uzbekistan’s Islamic intellectual heritage

She said the centre represents more than Uzbekistan's past. It connects the country's historical legacy with its present and future, while providing a platform for international engagement.

Aminova described the centre as part of Uzbekistan's cultural diplomacy. She said cultural exchange can help build trust between countries, alongside political dialogue and economic cooperation.

"Building trust between countries is, of course, related to culture," she said.

She also highlighted the role of international media in bringing lesser-known stories about Uzbekistan to wider audiences. Many of those stories, she said, have yet to be fully told.

The focus on biographies reflects the changing way audiences consume history. Film and television can bring historical figures to wider audiences, while books provide deeper context and digital platforms allow stories to reach younger generations.

The challenge is to make these stories ac-

cessible without reducing their historical and intellectual significance. That places greater responsibility on journalists, film makers and digital storytellers to combine accuracy with compelling narratives.

For Uzbekistan, the effort has a wider cultural and diplomatic dimension. The country's historic cities, religious centres and scholars form part of a broader intellectual heritage that extends across the Muslim world.

Presenting that heritage internationally

can strengthen cultural links while offering global audiences a broader understanding of Uzbekistan's contribution to Islamic civilisation.

The forum's second day therefore reinforced a wider message: Heritage is not simply a record of the past. It can also serve as a platform for dialogue and understanding in the present.

For Uzbekistan, the challenge is now to take a centuries-old intellectual legacy beyond its historic sites and into a global media conversation.

The foreign tourists missing in Nepal’s flash floods

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AFP) — Hundreds of tourists in Nepal, many of them foreigners, have gone missing in the Himalayan nation's devastating flash floods on Wednesday, which have killed at least 95 people.

Hours after the disaster tore through the border region with Tibet, some 403 visitors, including 341 foreign nationals, were still unaccounted for, according to the ministry of culture, tourism and civil aviation.

In its second situation update posted on X, the Nepal Tourism Board gave a tally of 384 missing travellers, 291 of them non-Nepalis. Many of the foreign tourists' nationalities were yet to



AFP photo

A photo taken on Wednesday shows a truck and buildings partially submerged by mud following flash floods and a landslide disaster in Devghat, in Nepal's Nuwakot district

be confirmed.

Nestled in the Himalayas, Nepal is a milestone tourist destination for hikers and climbers from around the world, lured by the challenge of scaling some of the world's

highest peaks, Mount Everest among them.

Here is the latest info on the missing:

India

According to the tourism board, 142 nationals

from neighbouring India were missing.

The missing Indians were in the country with three travel agencies: Samrat Tours & Travels, Leaf Holiday and Himalayan Glacier.

Malaysia

Seventeen Malaysians travelling with Fishtail Tours & Travels were missing in the floods, the board said.

Malaysia's foreign ministry however said its embassy in Kathmandu has received reports from travel agencies suggesting they had lost contact with 11 Malaysian nationals believed to be in the Rasuwa district.

United Kingdom

Twelve UK citizens with the Alpine Eco Trek agency were unaccounted for, the tourism board said.

South Korea

South Korea officials confirmed eight hydropower workers were out of contact in the Rasuwa district following the floods.

South Africa

Four South Africans travelling with the same Alpine Eco Trek agency as the missing British citizens were missing, according to the tourism board.

United States

Three US citizens, also with Fishtail Tours & Travels, were unaccounted for, the board said.

Portugal

A Portuguese woman was missing in the floods, the foreign ministry told AFP.

"She was with a group at the border post on the Nepali side," a ministry spokeswoman said.

Australia

One Australian with Kathmandu Holiday Tours & Travel was missing, according to the board.

Netherlands

A Dutch citizen travelling with the same company as the missing Australian was also unaccounted for, the board added.

Italy

The Italian foreign ministry said two Italian tourists and their guide were stranded upstream from a landslide but are receiving assistance.

The ministry is aware of 90 Italian citizens currently in Nepal and Tibet, but does not know if any might have been affected.

Nationalities unconfirmed

Several of the tour groups also announced missing foreigners whose nationalities had not been confirmed.

They included 77 with Trekkers Society, 26 with Kailash Journey and eight with Richa Tours & Travels.

Nepal

The Nepali tourism board also announced that, in addition to the unaccounted-for foreigners, a total of 93 Nepalis were missing.

El Salvador on red alert due to El Nino-fuelled drought

SAN SALVADOR (AFP) — El Salvador declared a state of maximum alert on Tuesday due to a drought linked to the El Nino phenomenon, which has caused crop losses, authorities said.

The measure activates monitoring, surveillance and aid efforts for affected communities.

"We are declaring a red alert for meteorological and farming drought across the national territory," the Civil Protection department wrote on X.

El Nino is a weather pattern that raises surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, generating global changes in winds and rainfall as well as erratic weather conditions.

It is also nudging up global temperatures in a year predicted to be the hottest on record.

El Nino occurs on average every two to seven years but this year's is shaping up as the most intense on record.

Central America is in the throes of a severe



AFP photo

Farmers load dried leaves and crop residue from a cornfield ruined by a lack of rainfall onto a truck in Tecoluca, San Vicente department, El Salvador, on Wednesday

drought driven that has already prompted Honduras to place 80 per cent of its territory on alert and caused the Panama Canal to cut shipping traffic because of its dwindling water levels.

In El Salvador, the lack of rain, which is usually abundant at this time of year, has wiped out crops.

The agriculture ministry has announced food assistance for rural families that do not have irrigation systems.

Several municipalities in El Salvador are located in the Central American Dry Corridor, an arid strip that also includes parts of Honduras and Nicaragua and is vulnerable to extreme weather events.

All three countries broke their monthly temperature records in both June and July, exacerbating fears of famine.

So far in August, 14 temperature records have been smashed in El Salvador.

Further south, Peru last week declared a state of emergency in a third of its cities over El Nino and said intense heat and rain could also cause havoc for food production.

Norway arrests 16-year-old for preparing terror attack

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Norwegian police said on Wednesday they had arrested a 16-year-old boy suspected of preparing a terrorist act, with media reporting he was preparing to attack a pre-school.

Police prosecutor Lise Dalhaug told AFP the boy had been arrested after police received a tip from an "anonymous person abroad" who had "become aware of disturbing threats on various social media platforms".

Dalhaug said the boy had then been identified and arrested, and the case was being investigated as "preparation for a terrorist act".

Although the arrest took place in early June, it has not been made public until now.

Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten reported that the boy had plans to attack a preschool carrying axes and knives, but Dalhaug would not confirm the reports.

"He has talked about several targets," Dalhaug said, but she did not wish to say what they had been at this point.

Dalhaug said the boy had made the threat on different social platforms and that the investigation so far indicated "that he was alone in the planning".

The boy was a resident of the Vestfold region south of Oslo, she added. They hoped to complete the investigation by the end of September.

Asked about what kind of sentence the boy could face, Dalhaug said that "it is a very serious offence", meaning he would risk a "harsh prison sentence".

Invitation to Submit Proposals

Country:

Project:

EBRD Project ID:

Client:

Contract:

Type of Contract:

Procurement Method:

ECEPP ID:

Deadline for submission of proposals:

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

PIU Support and Construction Supervision Consultancy Services for the Shallala Wastewater Treatment Plant Rehabilitation and Expansion

56399

Water Authority of Jordan (WAI)

PIU Support and Construction Supervision Consultancy Services

Consultancy

Open Tender Single-Two Envelope with PQQ

45744314

21/9/2026 14:00 UK Time

This invitation to submit proposals follows the general procurement notice for the project, published by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) on 19/8/2026.

The Client has received financing from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the "Bank") and intends using part of the proceeds towards the cost of the contract(s) stipulated in this invitation.

The overall objective of the Contract is to facilitate timely and effective implementation of the Project by providing assistance to WAI. The Consultant will be required to familiarise themselves with the Financing Documents related to the Project and other EBRD key documents, including: EBRD Procurement Policies & Rules (PPR); EBRD Environmental and Social Policy (ESP); EBRD Disbursement Handbook for Public Sector Clients; Project-specific Environmental and Social Documentation; and other related EBRD Policies, Strategies or Procedures relevant to the Project.

The procurement process will be carried out in accordance with the Bank's Procurement Policies and Rules dated 15th May 2022.

The procurement process is open to participants from any country.

Requests for clarification shall be received by the Client no later than 14 calendar days, prior to the deadline for submission of applications.

The Client now invites proposals for the following contract(s) (the "Contract"), to be funded from the above proceeds:

PIU Support and Construction Supervision Consultancy Services

A full description of the procurement process, evaluation methodology, eligibility and qualification requirements for participants, as well as the terms and conditions and requirements of the Contract are contained in the procurement document for the Contract, which can be obtained by contacting the Client.

The procurement document, upon request, will be dispatched electronically by downloading it, free of charge, from the Internet using the following link:

<https://ecepp.ebrd.com>

Fire haze threatens health of millions in Indonesia, ministry warns

PEKANBARU, Indonesia (AFP) — Millions of Indonesians risk health complications from exposure to thick haze covering several cities and towns, officials said on Wednesday, as El Nino-fuelled wildfires wreak havoc on Borneo and Sumatra islands.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago, has for weeks battled wildfires that have led to school closures and thousands of people requiring medical treatment, with smoke also reaching neighbouring Malaysia and Singapore.

The health ministry said 3.4 million people living in seven provinces on Borneo and Sumatra were at risk of respiratory infections due to exposure.

In Pekanbaru, the capital of Sumatra's Riau province, thick smog forced the government to shutter dozens of schools as it urged residents to stay indoors.

"The smog gets thicker at night, making Pekanbaru almost like a dead city. A lot of people don't dare go out. And if they do, they wear masks," Abdullah, a 38-year-old entrepreneur, told AFP.

"My eyes sting so badly. When I go outside, it really feels like breathing in the smoke from freshly burned trash," added the Pekanbaru resident who, like many Indonesians, has one name.



A firefighter extinguishes a peatland fire in the Kranggan area of Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan, on Wednesday

In Jambi, also on Sumatra, 31-year-old homemaker Farida said the haze had already affected her family's health.

"My four-year-old child and I have begun coughing so much, especially when we stay

outdoors too long," she told AFP. "I have trouble breathing."

The Jambi local government has ordered home schooling for children in kindergarten and elementary school for the remainder of the week.

The health ministry said it had distributed more than 260,000 face

masks to residents of the hardest-hit areas.

On Tuesday, President Prabowo Subianto said the government has deployed dozens of helicopters, aircraft, water pumps, and thousands of personnel to battle the blazes.

"Now I think it has begun to be brought under control, mitigated. In

several places, I believe, and I hope that within the next one to two weeks everything can be resolved," Prabowo said.

Most wildfires are blamed on slash-and-burn practices to clear land for farming.

Police said over the weekend they had arrested 72 people on suspicion of starting fires.

Fires between January and July burned more than 200,000 hectares of land — an area three times the size of the capital Jakarta, the government said last week.

That is already larger than during previous El Nino seasons in 2019 and 2023.

The El Nino weather pattern triggers worldwide changes in winds, atmospheric pressure and rainfall.

Muslims in Indonesia, celebrating the birth of Prophet Mohammed on Tuesday, prayed for rain.

Malaysia said it stood ready to help put out fires.

Poor air quality in Malaysia's Sarawak state, on Borneo Island which it shares with Indonesia and Brunei, led to nearly 600 schools being closed last week.

At one point on Wednesday morning, tracker IQ Air ranked the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur second-most polluted city globally.

South Korea police find four bodies on Jeju Island, sparking review

SEOUL, (AFP) — South Korean police have found the bodies of four people reported missing on a popular resort island, as investigators probe local police's handling of the missing persons cases.

The discovery of the bodies over three days through on Monday has sent shockwaves through Jeju Island, a resort destination that draws more than 13 million domestic and foreign visitors each year.

The missing persons cases appear unrelated, but two were reportedly closed by the same officer.

One case involved 37-year-old Jang Miran, whose body was found on Monday after her boyfriend reported her missing in May. The other involved a missing man in his 60s.

Authorities on Tuesday detained the investigator, surnamed Bu, who closed both cases, accusing him of falsifying records and neglecting his duties.

Bu allegedly closed Jang's case by falsely recording her death as a "traffic accident casualty".

He had reportedly told Jang's family that he had made contact with the woman and that she was safe but did not wish to be found.

"The arrest warrant against the defendant was issued over concerns of flight risk and evidence tampering," detective Jung Tae-won said at a news conference on Wednesday.

The government launched a task force to "swiftly examine all missing cases the defendant had handled", he added.

The scandal prompted President Lee Jae

Myung to order a probe into the handling of Jang's case. He instructed his Cabinet to present a reform plan for the police force.

"Recently, serious concerns have emerged over a lack of discipline within the police and irresponsibility in maintaining public safety," Lee said at a cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

"Please give some thought to how the police should be reformed going forward, including the establishment of a body tasked with overseeing police reform," he added.

Police have also launched a comprehensive review of all missing persons cases closed over the past three years — some 310,000 cases — in response to the scrutiny, Yonhap news agency reported on Wednesday.

Prime minister, ADFD chief discuss expanding Jordan-UAE cooperation

Continued from page 1

This initiative aims to reduce energy costs for local industries, stimulate the business environment, and enhance national product competitiveness, the statement said.

Over the past five years, ADFD has provided nearly \$1 billion in grants and assistance for projects in education, energy, digital transformation at the Ministry of Health, and development of lands adjacent to the Baptism

Site. The fund also provided a new \$300 million soft loan to support Jordan's general budget. Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Zeina Toukan attended the meeting.

National exports rise 6.2% in first half of 2026

Continued from page 1

According to the report, the growth in national exports was led by knitted clothes and accessories, which rose by 3 per cent, chemical and nitrogenous fertilisers, up 14.1 per cent, and raw potash, which increased by 30.7 per cent.

The gains were partly offset by declines in exports of jewellery and precious ornaments, which fell by 19.8 per cent, machinery and mechanical appliances by 23.6 per cent, vehicles and motorcycles by 5.9 per cent, and electrical machinery and equipment by 2.4 per cent.

The rise in national exports was driven by higher shipments to Syria, non-Arab Asian countries, including China and European Union member states, notably The Netherlands.

Meanwhile, the main sources of imports included Greater Arab Free Trade Area countries, led by Saudi Arabia, North American Free Trade Agreement member states, including the United States, and non-Arab Asian countries, including China and European Union member states, notably The Netherlands.

Imports stood at JD2,008 million, leaving a monthly trade deficit of JD738 million.

On a year-on-year basis, total exports in June surged by 32.3 per cent, supported by a 12.5 per cent rise in national exports and a 137.5 per cent jump in re-exports.

However, imports also surged by 43.5 per cent, widening the monthly trade deficit by 68.1 per cent.

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Jordan offers condolences to Nepal over flood victims

Continued from page 1

The Nepal Army said it had deployed helicopters and disaster response personnel to the affected area.

The Nepal Electricity Authority said about 430 megawatts of production capacity, including from hydropower and solar facilities, has been damaged.

"The disaster has damaged the production, transmission and distribution facilities of the Authority... resulting in disruption of electricity supply," it said.

Sarthak Shrestha, a remote sensing and geo information analyst at the Katmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), said a preliminary assessment showed "no anomalies" from China's side of the border.

"We believe a rock-ice avalanche occurred in Nepal, blocking the Lhende river and causing the cascading flood event," he told AFP.

Mudslide risk

Several highways were also closed, Nepali authorities said.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV reported on Wednesday that "a mudslide disaster on the Nepalese side resulted in major casualties and missing people at the Gyirong Port" in Tibet.

State news agency Xinhua said Chinese President Xi Jinping

had urged "all-out" rescue operations.

Xi said that "the most urgent task is doing everything possible to search for and rescue the missing people ... quickly treat injured people and minimise casualties to the greatest extent possible", according to CCTV.

In July last year, 17 people went missing after a mudslide near the Gyirong Port, Xinhua reported at the time.

Monsoon rains from June to September regularly trigger deadly floods and landslides across South Asia.

Scientists say climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events in the region.

Qiangong Zhang, head of climate and environmental risks at ICIMOD, said a second flood may be imminent.

"With a blockage still lodged upstream on the Nepal-China border river, authorities warn a second flood may occur," he told AFP.

Iran says US sanctions will achieve nothing as Netanyahu dismisses diplomacy

Continued from page 1

"America will not achieve anything with economic pressure at this stage, just as it was unable to achieve anything in the war," Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Wednesday, according to the country's ISNA news agency.

"We will stand firm against economic pressures, as we have done so far and will continue to do."

Army spokesperson Mohammad Akraminia told state television that the military had replenished its combat capabilities with the reconstruction of all damaged weapons systems and import of new equipment from abroad.

On Monday, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent claimed the US had "dismantled Iran's military capabilities, destroyed nearly 100 per cent of its military factories, and buried its nuclear programme".

'Savages'

The US and Israel launched the war against Iran in late February, vowing to end an alleged Iranian nuclear weapons programme and threatening to topple the regime in Tehran.

Iran responded by firing on US allies in the Gulf and closing the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping route for global supplies of oil and gas.

The waterway's closure has strained the

world economy as shipments fail to reach major markets, pushing up the price of oil and placing pressure on Trump ahead of mid-term elections in November.

'I tell you — an agreement cannot be reached'

Repeated rounds of negotiations brokered by mediators have failed to produce a lasting diplomatic settlement, with a ceasefire collapsing last month.

Trump had frequent-

ly claimed a deal was close, but has since backed away from diplomacy, while Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday dismissed any prospect of a deal, calling Iran's leaders "savages".

"I tell you — an agreement cannot be reached," Netanyahu said, adding that he had discussed the issue with Trump at a recent meeting.

"I doubt, however, that an agreement can be reached with that group there, with those savages."

Announcing the new US economic measures, Bessent said expanded secondary sanctions would target Iran's digital assets and its technology, gold, aviation



Strait of Hormuz

and shipping sectors.

But Iran's Islamic republic has already en-

dured decades of sanctions since its founding in 1979.

The Strait of Hormuz remains at the heart of the dispute between the two

sides. Iran says it will not reopen the vital waterway until the US meets its demands, and has frequently attacked vessels.

Tehran has also indicated it intends to impose fees for use of the waterway, which the US and others in the region oppose.

Trump meanwhile insists the US navy has "total control" of the strait and has even called it US territory.

Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi said on Tuesday that he hoped his country and Iran would "soon announce" the temporary corridor.

"Future management of the strait and a permanent solution will follow in due course," he wrote on X following talks in Tehran.

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Jordan and China... Is a new era of economic partnership beginning?

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

Jordan does not need to compete with China in areas where China has a clear advantage. Instead, Jordan needs to build on its own strengths and competitive advantages and become part of Chinese and global value chains in areas where it can compete successfully. The goal should be to focus on products and industries that Jordan can produce and export, so that cooperation with China can increase local value added and strengthen the competitiveness of the Jordanian economy.

This is exactly the direction highlighted by His Majesty King Abdullah II during his important visit to China, which was accompanied by a joint statement, agreements and memoranda of understanding. The visit comes at an important time for Jordan, as the economy needs to attract more investment, diversify its markets, increase exports, attract new technology and move from an economy that depends heavily on consumption and services toward one that produces more, exports more and creates more jobs.

The joint statement covered many important areas, including trade, investment, energy, minerals, agriculture, tourism, industry and supply chains. It also highlighted the digital economy, artificial intelligence and advanced industries. Together, these areas provide an opportunity to build a stronger and more productive economic relationship between Jordan and China.

Investment is one of the most important areas. Jordan has a strategic location, relative stability, a network of trade agreements and a well-educated workforce. However, the country still needs more foreign investment to support economic growth and development. China can be an important source of capital, technology, and experience, especially in industry, infrastructure, energy and minerals.

However, attracting Chinese investment should not be the main goal by itself. What matters is the quality of the investment. An investment that creates new production, provides jobs, uses local resources, transfers technology and increases exports is much more valuable than an investment that only serves the local market. The success of the partnership should therefore be measured by the value it adds to the Jordanian economy.

Cooperation in energy and minerals is especially important. Jordan has mineral resources that could support new industries. But the real economic benefit does not come simply from extracting and exporting these resources. The greater opportunity is to develop industries around them and produce higher-value products. Chinese technology and investment can help Jordan move from simply using its resources to creating more value from them.

The agreement on industry and supply chains is also important. Jordan cannot compete with China in large-scale manufacturing, but it can find areas where it can play a specialised role in global value chains. Jordan can develop industries that make use of its geographic location and its trade agreements with regional and international markets.

The digital economy and artificial intelligence offer another important opportunity. These sectors do not require large natural resources or a huge industrial base. They mainly require skilled people, strong digital infrastructure, good regulations and innovation. Cooperation with China can therefore help Jordan develop digital skills, transfer knowledge and create new opportunities for technology-based exports.

Tourism is another promising area. The agreement to improve air connections between the two countries is an important practical step. China has a very large tourism market, and attracting more Chinese visitors to Jordan could increase tourism revenues and support hotels, restaurants, transportation, retail and other services. But this requires more than promotion. Jordan needs regular direct flights, tourism products designed for Chinese visitors, effective digital marketing, and easier payment, booking and communication services.

The biggest challenge, however, is to make sure that this partnership helps Jordan increase its exports. This requires a clear national strategy. Jordan should not only import Chinese technology. It should use that technology to increase productivity and competitiveness. It should not only attract Chinese capital. It should direct that capital toward productive and export-oriented sectors. It should also not only attract Chinese tourists, but develop a tourism industry that keeps a larger share of tourism spending inside the Jordanian economy.

The agreements signed during the visit can be the beginning of a new phase, but they are not the final goal. Memoranda of understanding provide a framework for cooperation, while actual projects, investment, trade and exports will determine whether the partnership succeeds.

The next step should therefore be to move from agreements to implementation. Each agreement should have clear targets and performance indicators. Priority projects should be identified, along with expected investment, job creation, export opportunities, local content and technology transfer.

Jordan has a valuable opportunity to deepen its economic relationship with China. China has capital, technology, experience and access to large markets. Jordan has a strategic location, skilled human resources, investment opportunities, and access to several regional and international markets.

Jordan does not simply need more trade with China. It needs a more productive economic partnership with China, one that increases investment, production, exports, productivity, technology transfer and employment.

Jordan–China Summit: Toward technology localisation

By Hasan Dajah

His Majesty King Abdullah's visit to China marked a new strategic milestone in the trajectory of Jordanian-Chinese relations. It sent a clear message that the future of these ties will not be limited to trade exchange and the import of finished goods; rather, it will move towards building a sustainable development and production partnership based on technology transfer, the exchange of expertise, the localisation of advanced industries and national capacity building.

His Majesty's meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping, the Chinese leadership, and heads of major corporations reflected an ambitious Jordanian vision aimed at leveraging China's rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, robotics, digital industries and renewable energy, while aligning scientific research with the needs of the economy and the labour market. The visit also opened broader horizons for Chinese investment and fostered cooperation among universities, research centres, and companies in both nations. These efforts contribute to training youth, creating high-quality jobs, enhancing the national economy's competitiveness, and solidifying Jordan's position as a regional hub for technology, innovation, production and export to both regional and global markets.

His Majesty's visit to Shanghai held particular significance, given the city's status as a home to leading Chinese companies specialising in robotics manufacturing and application development. The visit was not merely an opportunity to observe an advanced industrial model; it embodied a practical drive to establish direct cooperation between the company and Jordanian universities and institutions — particularly in the areas of research and development, talent training, and the design of robotic applications tailored to the needs of the Jordanian economy. The most significant message conveyed by the visit is the need to shift from merely consuming technology to actively participating in its production and development. With its pool of skilled talent in engineering, software, artificial intelligence and mechatronics, Jordan

is well-positioned to establish a national base specialised in robotics technologies. This foundation could begin with system programming, maintenance and integration into production lines, subsequently progressing to robot assembly, component manufacturing, and the development of specialised models tailored to local and regional market needs.

The Jordanian-Chinese summit could lay the groundwork for a roadmap that includes establishing a joint center for robotics and artificial intelligence, launching collaborative university and training programs, creating a fund to support technology projects, and attracting Chinese production lines to Jordan's development zones

Robotics offers vast potential for application within Jordan. In the pharmaceutical and food industries, robots can execute packaging, inspection, and quality control tasks with high precision, while in warehouses and logistics centres, they can handle goods transport, sorting, and inventory management. They can also be deployed in the energy sector for cleaning and inspecting solar panels, and in the water sector for leak detection and pipeline monitoring,

alongside applications in agriculture, airports, hotels, healthcare and specialised cleaning services.

The importance of this technology is particularly evident in sectors such as mining, phosphate and potash production, and civil defense; robots can enter hazardous environments to perform inspection, exploration, and rescue missions, thereby mitigating risks to personnel and enhancing operational efficiency. Consequently, Jordanian-Chinese cooperation in this field represents not only an economic investment but also a contribution to advancing public safety systems and protecting human life.

Furthermore, the royal visit paved the way for reshaping the relationship between universities and the industrial sector. Jordanian universities possess promising scientific and research capabilities, yet they require international partnerships capable of transforming academic ideas and models into commercially viable products and applications. Chinese companies can play a pivotal role in establishing specialised laboratories, developing joint programs, training students and researchers, and supporting technology incubators and startups.

Such cooperation would generate high-quality job opportunities for Jordanian youth, particularly in fields such as robotics engineering, artificial intelligence, software development, control systems, advanced maintenance and data analysis. These high-value-added roles align with global labour market shifts and help Jordan bridge the gap between educational outcomes and the demands of the new economy. Furthermore, this collaboration could help curb the brain drain by offering advanced professional and research opportunities within the Kingdom.

These initiatives align with the objectives of the Economic Modernisation Vision and the efforts of the National Council for Future Technology, which aim to attract high-quality investments and build a knowledge- and innovation-based economy. Jordan boasts a stable investment environment, advanced digital infrastructure and a skilled workforce, alongside a strategic

geographic location linking Asia to Arab and regional markets. These advantages position the Kingdom to serve as a hub for the assembly, programming, and development of Chinese robotics, facilitating their subsequent export to countries across the region.

Thus, the Jordanian-Chinese summit could lay the groundwork for a roadmap that includes establishing a joint center for robotics and artificial intelligence, launching collaborative university and training programmes, creating a fund to support technology projects, and attracting Chinese production lines to Jordan's development zones. Jordanian startups could also be encouraged to develop robotics applications tailored to sectors such as tourism, agriculture, healthcare, energy, mining and logistics. This roadmap could incorporate tax and financial incentives for investing companies, as well as the establishment of business incubators and joint laboratories that link academia with industry, providing practical training for students and engineers. Furthermore, national priorities for robotics applications should be defined and provisions made for knowledge transfer, intellectual property rights and increased local content, thereby transforming this cooperation into a sustainable, production-oriented partnership.

The success of the Royal visit will be measured by the ability of the relevant institutions to translate its outcomes into concrete agreements and projects with clear timelines. Jordan faces a significant opportunity; China possesses the technology, expertise, and manufacturing capabilities, while Jordan offers skilled talent, a strategic location, stability and market access. By integrating these elements, a model partnership can be forged — one that elevates Jordanian-Chinese relations from traditional cooperation to a stage of joint production and technology localisation, thereby reinforcing the Kingdom's position as a trusted regional hub for robotics, artificial intelligence and advanced innovation.

Hasan Dajah is a professor of strategic studies at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University. He is also a consultant to the Belt and Road Institute — Peking University

Mega projects reshaping Jordan's new economy

By Salameh Darawi

For all the difficult regional and economic circumstances surrounding Jordan, the government is continuing to push ahead with a number of major projects that could, if delivered as planned, fundamentally reshape the national economy in the years ahead.

During the first half of 2026, implementation began on 343 of the 394 projects included in the second executive programme of the Economic Modernisation Vision. The numbers are significant, but the real question is whether these projects can move beyond plans, announcements and construction schedules to become productive assets that generate growth, jobs and new sources of revenue.

Among the most consequential are the National Water Carrier, the Aqaba Port Railway, energy and gas projects, and the development of Amra City. These are no longer simple ideas sitting on government agendas. Some have entered preliminary works; others have completed their designs and agreements, while several are awaiting financial close.

What makes these projects important is not simply the billions of dollars they could bring into the economy. Their greater significance lies in their potential to change Jordan's economic geography.

For decades, Jordan has been viewed as a small economy constrained by the size of its domestic market and limited natural resources. But better connectivity through railways, ports, energy infrastructure and regional supply chains could give the country a different economic role — one that is more closely integrated with its

neighbours and with wider regional markets.

The Aqaba Port Railway is a case in point.

The Jordanian-Emirati project, estimated at around \$2.3 billion, envisages a 360-kilometre railway linking phosphate and potash production areas with the industrial port. With a projected capacity of around 16 million tonnes a year, the railway is far more than a logistics project.

Financial close is expected in early 2027, with construction to follow over five years. But its strategic value extends beyond transporting Jordan's mining exports. It could become the nucleus of a national rail network, potentially linking Jordan with Syria, Turkey and Europe to the north, and Saudi Arabia and the Gulf to the south.

The government is also studying a 42-kilometre connection to the Maan Development Estate, alongside the proposed Maan-Aqaba inland port project. If developed as part of a wider regional transport network, such infrastructure could gradually position Jordan as a transit and logistics hub rather than simply an end market.

Then there is the National Water Carrier, a project whose importance goes well beyond economics.

With a capital cost estimated at \$4.3 billion and a total cost of around \$5.8 billion including financing, the project aims to desalinate 300 million cubic metres of water annually and transport it through a 438-kilometre pipeline. That would cover roughly 40 per cent of Jordan's drinking-water needs, with water deliveries expected to begin in the fourth quarter of 2030.

For one of the world's most water-scarce countries, this is

not merely an infrastructure investment. It is an investment in national security, economic stability and the country's ability to sustain future growth.

Energy offers another potentially transformative opportunity.

The government has contracted the drilling of 80 new production wells in the Risha gas field, with the objective of raising production to 418 million cubic feet per day by 2029. If that target is achieved, the government expects domestic production to cover Jordan's annual natural-gas requirements.

Jordan has also signed an agreement for a \$1 billion green ammonia project, with an annual production capacity of 100,000 tonnes. Such investments could become increasingly important as global energy markets shift and demand grows for lower-carbon industrial products.

Amra City provides yet another dimension to the government's investment ambitions.

Preliminary works have begun on the 46,000-seat Hussein bin Abdullah II International Stadium. Plans have also been approved for a 50-million-dinar exhibition and convention centre capable of accommodating 15,000 people, alongside an entertainment city whose first phase is expected to cost another 50 million dinars.

Together, these projects point to an attempt to broaden Jordan's economic base beyond traditional sectors and create new platforms for tourism, events, investment and services.

But this is where the difficult part begins.

Announcing major projects is relatively easy. Financing and delivering them without placing excessive pressure on the public finances is considerably

harder.

The 2026 budget targets a deficit of 2.125 billion dinars, equivalent to 4.6 per cent of GDP. Against that backdrop, the government cannot rely primarily on direct public borrowing to finance every major project on its agenda.

Public-private partnerships, foreign investment and development financing therefore need to play a central role. The objective should be to build infrastructure that expands the economy rather than infrastructure that simply expands the government's liabilities.

That distinction matters.

These projects should ultimately generate growth, employment and revenue, while their financing structures must be designed to limit the impact on the deficit and public debt. Equally important is transparency: The public needs to know not only the headline cost of each project, but also the long-term commitments, guarantees and potential risks that could eventually fall on the Treasury.

Jordan now has an opportunity to enter its second century with a more productive economy and a stronger connection to the region.

But the success of that ambition will not be measured by the number of projects announced, contracts signed or construction sites opened.

It will be measured by whether these projects become productive assets — infrastructure that generates economic value, strengthens Jordan's position in the region and creates opportunities for future generations.

The challenge, in other words, is not simply to build more.

It is to build wisely — and to ensure that the cost of today's ambition does not become tomorrow's burden.



Gulf Air aircraft at Bahrain International Airport on November 5, 2019

Experiencing turbulence: Gulf air hubs weather wartime downturn

By Maxence D'aversa
Agence France-Presse

PARIS, France — After six months of war in the Middle East, the Gulf's major aviation hubs are navigating turbulence as a hefty portion of their lucrative transit traffic opts for other airports such as Istanbul.

Between April and June, business for Middle Eastern airlines — measured by passenger kilometres — was down 30 per cent, with that figure down close to 50 per cent on routes to Europe, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

In Dubai, the number of flight seats scheduled was down 15 per cent year on year in August, the biggest drop among the world's top 10 airports, aviation data specialist OAG said, though the UAE hub remained the world's leading international airport by that measure.

The shock to the Gulf is significant because the region had made connecting travel a linchpin of its economic strategy.

As recently as last year, nearly one in six connecting passengers worldwide passed through the Middle East.

These travellers represented nearly half of all traffic through Dubai and the UAE capital Abu Dhabi, and almost three-quarters of traffic through the Qatari capital Doha.

'Global centre of gravity'

Since the outbreak of war on February 28, airspace restrictions over Iran and Iraq have taken a toll.

Risk-averse European carriers have cut services to the region, making Turkish Airlines "the big winner", according to Paul Chiambaretto, an air transport specialist

at France's Montpellier Business School.

With Russian airspace also off limits to many Western airlines, Istanbul's strategic location has made it a desirable alternative to Gulf hubs, placing it at the "global centre of gravity for air transport", Chiambaretto said.

Istanbul is able to connect Europe to Asia with only a slight detour, he added.

Turkish Airlines' customer base is up 5 per cent since the start of the conflict, with a decrease in capacity on Middle East flights offset by a 6 per cent bump on routes to Europe and a 16 per cent rise for East Asia.

'This crisis, which initially seemed purely cyclical, is starting to become increasingly structural'

The national carrier has been "expanding strongly for several years, offers a very good product and relies on a modern airport", Chiambaretto said.

In July, Istanbul's main airport even overtook London Heathrow with more than eight million travellers.

'Structural' change

The question is wheth-

er passengers will return to the Gulf once the situation stabilises.

Early last month IATA was still describing the diversion of traffic as likely a temporary phenomenon.

But the longer the conflict lasts, the greater the risk that these new aviation habits will become entrenched.

"This crisis, which initially seemed purely cyclical, is starting to become increasingly structural," warned Chiambaretto.

The Gulf airlines are trying to regain ground. Early this month Emirates said it had restored 92 per cent of capacity that had been planned before the war, while Qatar Airways claimed in mid-June to have brought back 85 per cent of its network.

UAE carrier Etihad was holding up even better: This month it was the only one of the three major Gulf carriers to increase its capacity year on year, doing so by 9 per cent.

In the longer term, the Gulf hubs and their reliance on connecting flights are also under threat from the arrival of a new generation of aircraft capable of flying farther.

Single-aisle jets such as the Airbus A321XLR can now fly 11 hours carrying 200 passengers. They can make direct routes between secondary cities profitable without passing through a hub, such as a route announced by United Airlines on Tuesday from Washington to the French city of Toulouse, which will begin in April 2027.

Ultra-long-haul flights are also bypassing stopovers. Australian airline Qantas plans to launch at the end of next year a 22-hour non-stop flight between Sydney and London using specially configured Airbus A350s.

Jordan's exports to Kenya jump to \$54m in five months

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI) and Jordan Chamber of Commerce (JCC) met the Kenyan economic delegation on Wednesday to discuss ways to strengthen economic and trade ties, expand business-to-business contacts and explore new trade and investment partnerships.

Industry

JCI President Fathi Jaghbir said the sharp increase in exports reflects growing economic ties between the two countries and points to further potential for Jordanian companies in the Kenyan market.

Jordan's exports to Kenya reached around \$54 million in the first five months of 2026, compared with \$2 million in the same period last year, as businesses from both countries explore opportunities to expand trade and investment partnerships.

His remarks came during a meeting organised by the chamber with representatives of Kenya's manufacturing sector, attended by Jordan's Economic and Commercial Attaché in Nairobi Maram Makhamreh.

Jaghbir said the growth in exports provides a basis for broadening bilateral economic relations beyond trade, including through joint industrial and investment projects.

He called for stronger direct links between manufacturers and



Photo Courtesy of Jordan Chamber of Commerce

Jordan Chamber of Industry and Jordan Chamber of Commerce meet the Kenyan economic delegation on Wednesday to discuss ways to strengthen economic and trade ties

businesses in both countries, as well as greater exchange of expertise and cooperation in developing products that meet market demand.

Pharmaceuticals, garments, chemicals and food industries were identified as sectors with potential for increased cooperation between Jordanian and Kenyan companies.

Commerce

The meeting brought together Kenyan business leaders and representatives from the food, services, consulting, health, pharmaceutical, medical supplies, construction and building materials

sectors, alongside Makhamreh, according to a JCC statement.

JCC Foodstuff Sector Representative Jamal Amro called for capitalising on available opportunities to boost bilateral trade and establish direct partnerships between Jordanian and Kenyan companies, particularly in the food sector. He also stressed the need to identify Kenyan products and opportunities available to Jordanian importers and traders.

Ibrahim Nawaiseh, JCC construction and building materials sector representative, highlighted the importance of direct meetings between private-sector

representatives in identifying opportunities that could develop into joint businesses and projects.

He pointed to scope for cooperation in construction, building materials, engineering services and contracting, noting that Jordanian companies have accumulated expertise in these fields that could support stronger ties with Kenyan firms.

Nawaiseh also called for the exchange of information on projects, investment opportunities and tenders to help companies in both countries access new markets.

Kenyan companies outlined their areas of

activity, including trade facilitation, exhibitions and conferences, trade missions, agriculture and exports of tea, flowers and fresh produce. Their activities also include meat and livestock, grains and pulses, coffee and nuts, agricultural logistics, engineering, contracting, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and cleaning products.

The talks also addressed ways to increase business contacts, encourage trade delegations and missions, promote participation in specialised exhibitions and economic events, and connect Jordanian and Kenyan companies according to their sectoral interests.

Global economy 'storm-tossed' between crises, AI opportunity — IMF chief

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief recently compared the global economy to a "storm-tossed vessel", caught between high inflation, debt and trade wars while driven by tailwinds from the AI revolution.

Kristalina Georgieva told journalists in Washington that the global economy had so far "weathered the energy shock caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz better than we feared".

Worldwide energy prices have skyrocketed since the United States

and Israel launched their war on Iran, engulfing the Middle East in violence as Tehran's retaliatory action targeted US allies and blocked the vital Strait of Hormuz.

In July, the IMF cut its global growth projection for the second time this year, flagging "uncertainty and risks" related to the war in the Middle East.

Global economic growth is estimated at 3 per cent this year, the IMF said in its update to its World Economic Outlook at the time, down from 3.1 per cent in its April forecast.

Georgieva on Tuesday

said the impact of the war had been "asymmetric", based on countries' exposure to Gulf oil imports and their overall macroeconomic stability.

Global inflation — driven by high energy prices — was also being pushed in a "tug of war" by the "positive demand shock from AI", she said, referring to an increase in economic demand due to massive investments in the new technology.

"Risks to the outlook are more balanced than they were around our Spring Meetings [in April], but still tilted to the downside, and uncertainty remains

high," she said.

Georgieva warned that with winter approaching in the northern hemisphere, energy demand would only increase, possibly pushing a renewed rise in prices.

"This means the energy shock is not over. A renewed rise in oil prices could fuel inflation, forcing central banks to retain a restrictive policy stance with knock-on implications on debt service costs and on economic activity."

She was, however, optimistic about the broad impact of AI on the world economy, and said positive effects were being seen in

more countries than just the United States, the leader in the technology so far.

Georgieva warned that there were "significant unknowns" when it came to AI and that the risk of falling behind was "most profound" in developing countries.

Despite the global economy showing more resilience than feared to the shock of the Iran war, there was "no room for complacency", she said.

She called on countries to address fiscal imbalances — especially with regards to debt — and for central banks to be "laser-focused" on inflation.

US stocks edge down after inflation data

NEW YORK (AFP) — Wall Street stocks dipped early on Wednesday following data showing stable US inflation as markets looked ahead to earnings from tech giant Nvidia.

The personal consumption expenditures price index rose 3.7 per cent in July from a year ago, the same annual increase as in June.

"It's fair for the markets to look at those numbers and think that it doesn't change the narrative all that much," said Interactive Brokers' Steve Sosnick.

About five minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.1 per



The Dow Jones industrial average was up 22.74 points, or 0.14%, at 16,423.76

cent at 53,507.08.

The broad-based S&P 500 dipped 0.1 per cent to 7,669.29, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index lost 0.2 per cent at

26,108.09.

Besides Nvidia results later Wednesday, markets are also focused on Friday's speech by Federal Reserve (Fed) Chair Kevin

Warsh at an annual central bank conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

The data "certainly fit with the idea that there is no need for immediate Fed action" which is good for Warsh as "he doesn't want to raise rates before the election if there is no reason to do so", Sosnick said.

Among individual stocks, Meta rose 2.3 per cent as a legal filing confirmed that the tech giant reached a settlement with multiple US states to settle a suit alleging it deliberately designed its products to hook children and gather their data while misleading the public.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD17.4 million spread over 10 million shares that traded through 6,451 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.18 per cent, closing at 4017.13 points.

Out of 112 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 43 companies rose while the share price of another 35 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Northern Cement Company by 7.36 per cent, Arab International for Education and Investment by 6.31 per cent, First Insurance by 5.15 per cent, Kafaa for Financial and Economical Investments Plc. by 4.88 per cent, and Middle East Insurance by 4.86 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were National Insurance by 7.45 per cent, Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 4.76 per cent, Amoun International for Investments by 4.26 per cent, Injaz for Development and Projects by 3.77 per cent, and Amad Investment and Real Estate Development by 3.53 per cent.

بورصة عمان
Amman Stock Exchange

THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ▲ 4017.13 0.18% August 26, 2026

Live Data

Historical Data

Click and drag in the plot area to zoom in

DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market

OTC Market

Trading Value (JDs)	17,393,582
Trading volume	9,997,701
No. of Transactions	6,451
No. of Securities	112

TENNIS

Williams-Alcaraz fall in US Open mixed quarter-finals

NEW YORK (AFP) — The dream team of Serena Williams and Carlos Alcaraz made a winning start but could not progress to the final stages of US Open's mixed doubles tournament. Williams, often considered the best women's tennis player in history and Spain's seven-time Grand Slam singles champion Alcaraz fell to Belinda Bencic of Switzerland and Flavio Cobolli of Italy, 5-4, 4-1. The result means Bencic and Cobolli will advance to Wednesday's finale of the unorthodox competition, when the semifinals and finals will be played back-to-back. "We felt their aura for sure," Bencic told a television interviewer afterward. "It was an honor to play. Playing Serena and Carlos on Arthur Ashe is not easy," Cobolli said. Williams and Alcaraz had shown strong form earlier defeating the British-New Zealand pair of Lloyd Glasspool and Emma Routliffe. But Cobolli, who is having a breakout season in singles as the French Open runner-up and Bencic, an Olympic Gold medalist with singles wins over Williams, proved too much. Williams was making her competitive return to Arthur Ashe Stadium since her 2022 retirement, paired with Spain's Alcaraz, himself back after a lengthy injury layoff.

CRICKET

Pakistan captain Babar Azam returns against England '90 percent fit'

LONDON (AFP) — Pakistan captain Babar Azam has said he is "90 per cent fit" as he returns to lead his country in the second Test against England at Lord's. Azam missed last week's series opener at Headingley because of a finger injury, with the tourists thrashed by an innings and 103 runs in his absence as England went 1-0 up in a three-match campaign. The 31-year-old Azam was hit on the glove while batting during a warm-up match, compounding a finger injury initially sustained during Pakistan's recent tour of the West Indies. But he has been back batting in the nets during the past 48 hours and the experienced batsman is now set to strengthen a Pakistan side dismissed for just 171 and 135 in Leeds when the second Test gets under way on Thursday. "I've had a couple of practice sessions again and I'm 90 per cent fit for the match tomorrow," Azam told a pre-match press conference at Lord's on Wednesday.

Super Cup showdown: Faisali meet Hussien Irbid

By Rayan Jaafra

AMMAN — The Jordan Super Cup will take centre stage on Friday evening at the Amman International Stadium, pitting Faisali against Hussein Irbid in a high-stakes showdown. Al Faisali head into the clash carrying crucial momentum following a hard-fought 2-1 victory over arch-rivals Wihdat last Friday, while Hussein Irbid arrive brimming with confidence after a dominant 5-0 thrashing of Ramtha on Saturday.

This blockbuster final highlights a fascinating contrast in eras and ambitions within Jordanian football. Hussein Irbid steps onto the pitch backed by their continuous success and tactical consistency over the last five years, aiming to prove that their modern reign at the summit of domestic football is firmly cemented. Standing in their way is an ambitious Faisali side revitalised by new management and a proactive transfer market, looking to leverage their unmatched pedigree and overflowing trophy cabinet to reclaim domestic supremacy.

The dugout battle adds an incredible layer of subtext to the fixture, featuring a fascinating tactical chess match between Hussein's manager — Faisali legend #9 Striker Ahmad Hayel — and Al-Faisali's newly appointed Egyptian coach, Tarek Mostafa. Hayel, a beloved former talisman and icon for the Blues during his playing days, now looks to mastermind their downfall from the opposition bench, while Mostafa brings a wealth of tactical acumen to



Jordan Pro League CFI photos

The Jordan Super Cup will take centre stage on Friday at the Amman International Stadium, pitting Faisali against Hussein Irbid

Faisali's technical area as he aims to steer the club back to silverware.

Chasing history and continental pride

The historical weight of the Super Cup adds an extra layer of intrigue to Friday's encounter. Hussein Irbid arrives as the reigning force in this specific competition, having secured back-to-back Super Cup titles in 2024 and 2025 to bring their total to 3 tournament wins. Meanwhile, Faisali boasts an unmatched historical dominance in the competition with 17 titles to their name, though they will be looking to break a domestic drought in the tournament, having last lifted the Super Cup trophy back in 2019.

The experience and the talent

The tactical battleground on Friday night will largely be defined by individual brilliance across the pitch, highlighted by a compelling head-to-head duel between Faisali's experienced talisman Ahmad Al Ersan and Hussein's dynamic young midfielder Yousef Qushi. Ersan enters this final in red-hot form after putting on a master-class in the semifinal against Wihdat, where he netted a crucial brace — breaking the deadlock right at the start of the second half before firing home a dramatic winner in the fourth minute of stoppage time to seal a 2-1 victory. Opposing him will be the 21-year-old rising star Yousef Qushi, whose



tactical discipline, vision, and composure anchored Hussein's fluid build-up play during their commanding 5-0 dismantling of Ramtha. Qushi capped off that stellar performance with a brilliant brace, highlighted by a stunning free-kick that left the crowd amazed. How this central pairing dictates the tempo under the lights could ultimately decide where the trophy ends up.

Razor-thin margins and the upcoming duty

Historically, the rivalry

between these two heavyweights has been fiercely competitive and remarkably tight. Across their last 10 head-to-head encounters, Faisali holds a narrow edge with 4 victories to Hussein Irbid's 3, alongside 3 draws. However, recent fixtures between the sides have been characterised by tactical caution and razor-thin margins, highlighted by a striking trend of nine consecutive meetings staying under the 2.5 goals mark.

Beyond domestic pride, both powerhouses carry the torch for Jor-

danian football on the continental stage as they prepare to serve as the nation's premier representatives in the upcoming AFC Champions League Two campaign. With those continental commitments looming large next month, a Super Cup triumph provides invaluable momentum and psychological ascendancy. whoever lifts the trophy on Friday night will step into the upcoming domestic league season carrying a towering psychological edge and a much higher level of ambition.

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

Flags lowered across US for country music legend Dolly Parton

SEVIERVILLE, United States (AFP) — Flags across the United States were flying at half-staff on Wednesday and grieving fans gathered in the late country music star Dolly Parton's hometown in Tennessee as the nation paid tribute to the beloved cultural icon.

Parton, who rose from grinding poverty to become a rhinestone-studded entertainment giant with hits like "Jolene" and "9 to 5," has died at 80, her family announced on Tuesday.

Parton was more than a singer — she wrote 3,000 songs, starred in major Hollywood films and donated millions to charities in her home state and beyond.

She was also an accomplished businesswoman, with interests spanning from her popular Dollywood theme park to cosmetics, pet apparel, baking mixes and even a truck stop.

"Dolly has lived in the light and is in the arms of Jesus," her nephew Bryan Seaver said in a video announcing her death on social media.

He said the multiple award-winning artist — known for her glittering style, curvy figure and larger-than-life blonde wigs — had "opened doors for generations



AFP photo

A woman lays flowers outside Dolly Parton's house in Brentwood, Tennessee, on Wednesday

of singers, songwriters, musicians, and dreamers from every walk of life".

Parton died after a brief battle with cancer, her third cousin Brent Allen confirmed to AFP. Parton had recently spoken about unspecified health challenges.

"I feel like she's one of the last of the salt of the earth. She brought people together," Allen told AFP in Sevierville, the singer's hometown in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains.

Parton's funeral will be small and private, People magazine said, citing the singer's representatives.

President Donald Trump called Parton's death a "true loss for mil-

lions of people".

"There has never been anyone like her, and never will," Trump said on social media.

He ordered flags lowered across the country, while New York's Empire State Building was to be lit in pink at 9:25 pm — a nod to Parton's hit song and movie "9 to 5".

'Devastated'

As the news of Parton's death spread, hundreds gathered in Sevierville to pay tribute.

Mourning fans laid flowers at a statue in the town which depicts Parton strumming an acoustic guitar.

"We've always called

her our patron saint of Tennessee," fan Callie Koonane Rickards told AFP.

Parton's death sparked a rare moment of unity in a country often bitterly at odds over Trump's presidency, the war against Iran and cultural issues.

Fellow country music star Carrie Underwood said on social media that Parton "was probably the one person on planet Earth that everyone loved and could agree on".

The Grand Ole Opry, America's temple of country music said: "May her legacy live on through her songs, the lives she touched, and the countless artists she inspired. There will never, ever be another one like her."

Parton's co-stars from "9 to 5", which sparked her soundtrack smash when it came out in 1980, expressed shock.

Oscar winner Jane Fonda said she was "devastated" while Lily Tomlin called her "the great harmoniser of humanity".

A world 'less sparkly'

Born in 1946 as one of 12 children in rural Tennessee, Parton headed for the country music capital Nashville right after graduating from high school.

By 1967, at age 21, she was among the most recognised figures in American music, having joined Porter Wagoner's syndicated country music television show that broadcast her voice and face into millions of US homes.

During a prolific career that spanned six decades, Parton penned some 3,000 tunes.

They included "Jolene", "Coat of Many Colours" and the iconic ballad "I Will Always Love You", which became an international smash hit for Whitney Houston.

The "queen of country music" released 49 studio albums and more than 100 compilation and collaboration albums.

Humanoids break records at Beijing Robot Games

BEIJING (AFP) — Faceless humanoids exceeded human records and delighted hundreds of spectators at the World Robot Games over the weekend in Beijing as China showcased its dominance in the industry.

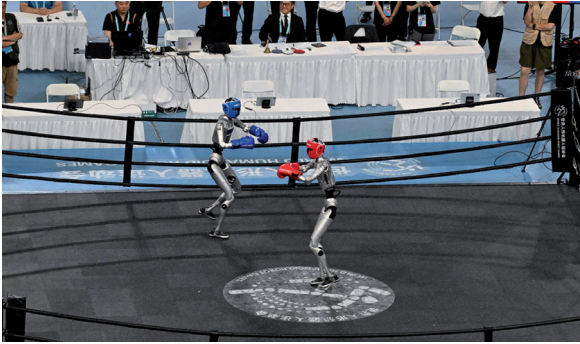
Dozens of humanoids and their human operators descended on Beijing's Olympic speed skating arena to compete in events from athletics and boxing to football and martial arts.

During Saturday's opening ceremony, a Chinese robot broke Jamaican legend Usain Bolt's record for the 100-metre dash, a feat splashed across headlines in Chinese state media.

The white and headless humanoid called Tiangong Ultra finished the sprint in 9.39 seconds according to state broadcaster CCTV — surpassing Bolt's best of 9.58 seconds, set in 2009.

On Sunday, robot-makers scored another win, with the same humanoid model shattering the 400-metre world record by nearly five seconds.

Developed by a local government-backed research centre in Beijing, it finished in 38.16 seconds — with its time later revised to 38.15.



AFP photo

Humanoid robots fight in a kickboxing match during the 2nd World Humanoid Robot Games at the National Speed Skating Oval in Beijing on Thursday

In one 400-metre heat, a white-shelled robot thrashed its arms side to side as it propelled itself around the track, leaning dangerously forward as fans wondered out loud if it would fall.

The robot wobbled as it stormed toward the finish but managed to remain upright.

Fans were just as pleased to watch the robo-athletes flop, as multiple robotic runners failed to start.

Others made their way around the track at the pace of a brisk walk or crumbled immediately after the gun start.

Children and their parents giggled as a toddler-sized robot kicked a football off the pitch over knee-high barricades.

'It's not a test of intelligence'

Each clunky, barely defended goal earned the waddling humanoids roars of applause from the stands.

Spectators erupted into laughter as a humanoid in a boxing ring stumbled off to the side and folded over the ropes where it stayed motionless until humans lifted it away.

For 72-year-old spectator Hou Yali, the weekend's robot records left her wanting to watch the machines go against humans.

"We'll be able to see more clearly whether machines can surpass humans," said Hou, who is retired and lives in Beijing.

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