

Jordan condemns Iranian drone attack against UAE

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Monday condemned an Iranian drone attack targeting the United Arab Emirates.

The drone was intercepted by UAE air defence systems over its territorial waters, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Jordan described the attack as a “blatant” violation of UAE sovereignty, a threat to its security, stability and territorial integrity, and a dangerous escalation violating international law and the UN Charter.



The ministry reaffirmed Jordan's absolute solidarity with the UAE, and the Kingdom's full support for all measures taken by the UAE to safeguard its sovereignty, security, citizens and residents.

Arab states condemn renewed Iranian attacks on Jordan, UAE

AMMAN (JT) — Arab countries and the Cairo-based Arab League on Monday condemned renewed Iranian attacks targeting Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, warning that the acts of aggression threaten regional security and violate the sovereignty of the two countries.

Nabil Fahmy, secretary-general of the League of Arab States denounced the attacks in the strongest terms, saying they represented a blatant violation of Jordanian and Emirati sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as a breach of international law and the UN Charter.

Fahmy said in a statement that any threat to the security of an Arab country or attack on its territory, regardless of the justification, is unacceptable.

He expressed the pan-Arab organisation's full solidarity with Jordan and the UAE and its

support for measures taken by the two countries to protect their security, sovereignty and territorial integrity. He also stressed that the security of Jordan and the UAE was an integral part of Arab national security.

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Unemployment rate falls to 16.1% in Q2 2026 — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's unemployment rate fell to 16.1 per cent in the second quarter of 2026, down 0.4 percentage points from 16.5 per cent in the same quarter of 2025, according to the Department of Statistics (DoS).

The unemployment rate among Jordanians stood at 21 per cent in Q2, compared with 21.3 per cent in the same period last year, marking a decline of 0.3 percentage points, the DoS said in its quarterly report released on Monday.

The national unemployment rate has fallen by 1.7 percentage points over the past four years, compared with the second quarter of 2022.



File photo

Male unemployment among Jordanians recorded a long-term decline of 4.2 percentage

points compared with Q2 2021, when it stood at 22.7 per cent, according to the report.

Female unemployment

among Jordanians also declined, falling by 2.4 percentage points from the first quarter of 2026 and by

2.5 percentage points compared with Q2 2025.

The overall unemployment rate among females, including all residents, fell by 5.3 percentage points year-on-year to 19.9 per cent in Q2 2026.

Among people aged 24 and above, the unemployment rate stood at 18 per cent for Jordanians, compared with 5.8 per cent among non-Jordanians in the same age group.

The overall unemployment rate among non-Jordanian residents in the Kingdom stood at 8.2 per cent during the second quarter of 2026, the report added.

DIPLOMACY

Safadi, Bahraini counterpart discuss bilateral relations, regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi received a phone call on Monday from his Bahraini counterpart Abdullatif Bin Rashid Al Zayani.

Safadi and Al Zayani discussed the deep-rooted relations between Jordan and Bahrain and ways to enhance cooperation in a manner that serves the interests of both countries, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The two top diplomats also discussed the repercussions of the escalation in the region, and efforts aimed at restoring calm and enhancing security and stability.

Safadi and Al Zayani condemned the Iranian attacks on Jordan.



Ayman Safadi



Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani

Al Zayani affirmed Bahrain's solidarity with Jordan in all measures it takes to safeguard its sovereignty, security and stability, as well as the safety of its citizens.

The two ministers also discussed regional

developments and their implications for regional and international peace and security, as well as prospects for joint coordination to strengthen Arab cooperation, in addition to several issues of mutual concern.



File photo

Jordan condemns storming of Al Aqsa Mosque by far-right Israeli minister

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has condemned the storming of the Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif by far-right Israeli minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and groups

of extremist settlers, under the protection of the occupation forces.

In a statement on Monday, the ministry denounced the act as a “blatant violation of the existing historical

and legal status quo at Al Haram Al Sharif, a desecration of its sanctity, a condemned escalation and an unacceptable provocation”.

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US, Iran exchange strikes as Hormuz tensions intensify

‘Iranian movements have become exposed, and pre-emptive US operations remain possible and ongoing,’ analyst says

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — The United States and Iran exchanged fresh strikes on Monday, reviving direct confrontation after weeks of reduced fighting and placing the Strait of Hormuz at the centre of a new regional escalation.

US Central Command (CENTCOM) said that American forces carried out a “limited, precise” operation against Iranian Revolutionary Guard forces preparing to lay sea mines in the strategic waterway.

CENTCOM said that US forces targeted two Iranian launch platforms on Lark Island



AFP photo

This US Navy handout photo released on July 28, by US Central Command Public Affairs shows a US sailor signalling an F/A-18E Super Hornet on the flight deck of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush on July 21

after detecting preparations to fire missiles carrying naval mines to-

wards the strait.

The command said the operation was aimed

at protecting civilian sailors and commercial shipping. It rejected

Iran's description of the strikes as an act of aggression.

US President Donald Trump threatened on Monday to hit Iran “hard” after the two foes traded fire for the first time in weeks, as his Treasury secretary vowed to keep up a pressure campaign aimed at hobbling Tehran's economy.

After six months of war, the foes remain at an impasse, with Iran keeping the strategic Strait of Hormuz closed and the US persisting with a naval counter-blockade of Iranian ports.

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File photo

Despite the rise in international benchmarks in August compared with July, the fuel pricing committee decides to maintain the rates of main fuel derivatives for September at their August levels

Gov’t maintains fuel prices unchanged for September despite global market increases

AMMAN (JT) — The fuel pricing committee on Monday decided to keep the local prices of main petroleum products unchanged for September at August levels, following government directives.

The committee reviewed fuel derivative prices during August compared with July, which revealed a “noticeable” increase in average monthly rates, particularly for diesel and kerosene, driven by ongoing geopolitical tensions in the region and their impact on global markets, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Despite the rise in international benchmarks compared with the previous month, and under government

directives, the committee decided to maintain the rates of main fuel derivatives for September at their August levels.

Consequently, 90-octane gasoline remains at 1,000 fils per litre, 95-octane gasoline at 1,310 fils per litre, diesel at 850 fils per litre and kerosene at 550 fils per litre.

The price of a 12.5kg cooking gas cylinder was also kept unchanged at JD7, while liquefied petroleum gas supplied to the industrial sector will continue to receive subsidies totaling JD1.6 million for September.

The committee stressed that domestic fuel pricing relies on the monthly average of

global rates during the 30 days preceding the pricing date.

As part of the gradual approach adopted since the onset of the crisis, the government continues to absorb a “significant” portion of rising global energy costs rather than passing full increases onto local consumers, aiming to mitigate the impact on citizens and economic sectors.

Cumulative price differentials absorbed by the Treasury due to this policy and the non-reflection of actual market rates since the start of the crisis until the end of August have reached some JD224 million, including domestic gas cylinder subsidies, according to the committee.

The committee noted that maintaining stable prices for September reflects official keenness to curb local fuel price volatility and provide greater stability for citizens and business sectors amidst persistent uncertainty in global markets resulting from geopolitical developments.

The committee also emphasised that it would continue to evaluate variables in global energy markets and their reflections on local costs on a monthly basis, ensuring timely decision-making that balances protecting citizens and economic sectors with safeguarding overall economic and financial stability.

Petra named Jordan’s Olive Capital to promote agriculture, tourism

AMMAN (JT) — Petra District was chosen as “Jordan’s Olive Capital for 2026”, in recognition of its agricultural and heritage status, as well as the economic, environmental and cultural significance of the olive tree to the area’s landscape, Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khreisat said on Monday.

Speaking to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Khreisat said that selecting Petra aligns with the ministry’s strategy to highlight the comparative advantages of governorates, reinforce local agricultural identities, support farmers and promote indigenous produce, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He noted that this year’s initiative carries a broader developmental dimension, leveraging agricultural assets to stimulate tourism and economic activity in Petra.

The minister added that the olive tree constitutes an integral part of the Kingdom’s agricultural heritage, and holds vital socioeconomic and environmental importance.

The ministry seeks to support the olive sector and enhance its value chain to boost productivity, improve quality and expand market opportunities for Jordanian goods, he highlighted.

Selecting Petra at this time offers an opportunity to integrate agriculture with tourism, particularly given the current challenges facing the tourism sector and the decline in visitor



File photo

Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khreisat on Monday says that Petra District is chosen as ‘Jordan’s Olive Capital for 2026’, in recognition of its agricultural and heritage status

numbers, Khreisat said.

This will be achieved by creating a comprehensive tourism experience that goes beyond visiting the archaeological site, directly connecting visitors with local agricultural, rural and heritage products, the minister noted.

Khreisat pointed out that the event aims to contribute to stimulating economic activity in the city and maximising local community benefits from tourism.

This will be achieved by promoting agricultural and rural products, encouraging visitors to buy them and learn about their production methods, and connecting farmers and producers with hotels, restaurants, tourism facilities and local markets, he added.

The minister noted that the events will serve as a platform to highlight the importance of the olive tree and its products, while showcasing the efforts

of local farmers and producers.

He added that the scheduled activities will include exhibitions, olive oil tasting sessions, and cultural events highlighting Jordan’s agricultural and culinary heritage to enhance the presence of local produce within Petra’s tourism experience.

The ultimate objective is to transform agricultural produce from a simple commodity into a core component of the tourism journey, Khreisat said, noting that this strategy enables visitors to engage with Jordanian heritage, purchase souvenirs, extend their stay and increase spending within the local economy.

The initiative will unlock wider market opportunities for small-scale entrepreneurs, women, youth and local families, driving community development and capitalising on Petra’s global renown, he highlighted.

Khreisat said that the designation follows the ministry’s annual approach of spotlighting major olive-producing areas to showcase the Kingdom’s agricultural diversity and create added value for the sector.

Similar designations were granted to Irbid in 2023, Ajloun in 2024 and Mafraq in 2025.

“Petra, Jordan’s Olive Capital 2026” seeks to establish a sustainable model linking agriculture, tourism and heritage, Khreisat noted, adding that the effort will lay the groundwork for long-term agritourism routes and durable partnerships between local producers and the tourism industry.

Investing in Petra’s agricultural and cultural assets offers a “powerful” tool to leverage its international profile, reinforcing the district as a destination that seamlessly blends cultural tourism with an authentic Jordanian agricultural experience, he said.

Non-Jordanian labour law violators face five-year entry ban after deportation

AMMAN (JT) — Non-Jordanian workers found to be in violation of labour regulations after September 30 will be deported and barred from returning to Jordan for five years from the date of deportation, Ministry of Labour Spokesperson Mohammad Zyoud said on Monday.

Zyoud, speaking to Al Mamlaka TV, urged employers and non-Jordanian workers to rectify their status before the September 30 deadline, warning that violators will face electronic deportation notices from the following day.

He added that employers found to be employing non-Jordanian workers in violation of the law face fines of no less than JD800 per worker, stressing that the measures are aimed at regulating the labour market.

Zyoud noted that the ministry is carrying out intensive inspection campaigns across all governorates, with teams operating in three daily shifts to identify non-Jordanian workers in violation of regulations.

He said that inspection teams use electronic devices that provide instant access to workers’ personal data, enabling them to check for electronic deportation notices and take immediate deportation measures in accordance with the law.

Regarding domestic workers, Zyoud stressed that the decision applies to all household workers who have not rectified their status in accordance with the Labour Law and the Residence and Foreigners’ Affairs Law, urging household employers to use the



File photo

Ministry of Labour Spokesperson Mohammad Zyoud on Monday says that employers found to be employing non-Jordanian workers in violation of the law face fines of no less than JD800 per worker

remaining grace period to avoid financial penalties.

The spokesperson noted that electronic deportation notices will be issued as of October 1 against all workers who fail to regularise their status, including domestic workers, adding that the Cabinet decision provides financial exemptions and facilitations to help workers and employers regularise their status within the specified period.

The Cabinet decision provides financial exemptions and facilitations to help workers and employers rectify their status within the specified period, Zyoud added.

He also said that the exemptions include a 50 per cent reduction in work permit fees for previous years and a waiver of fines for failing to renew permits.

Workers holding residency permits with the Ministry of Interior will receive a full waiver of fines owed to the ministries of labour

and interior, while paying 50 per cent of work permit fees for previous years.

The decision also allows non-Jordanian workers to move among sectors and employers, easing costs for employers and helping economic sectors benefit from workers already residing in the Kingdom.

The measures also apply to workers subject to residency requirements, including domestic workers

Zyoud warned that regularising workers’ status after the deadline would be more costly, as employers or

householders would have to apply to the Ministry of Labour to cancel a deportation notice.

If approved, they would be required to pay a JD5,000 fine, in addition to all outstanding work permit fees and fines, without benefiting from the current exemptions.

The measures also apply to workers subject to residency requirements, including domestic workers.

He stressed that the deadline will not be extended and that the financial exemptions under the Cabinet decision will remain unchanged, noting that inspection campaigns will be intensified across the Kingdom to identify non-Jordanian workers in violation and take legal action, including deportation.

The government has also waived, in certain cases, the requirement for a clearance certificate from a previous employer when a guest worker moves to another employer.

Taste of Korea festival showcases growing Jordan-Korea cultural ties

By Rahaf Abu Khadijeh

AMMAN — Hundreds of visitors gathered in Amman over three days as the “Taste of Korea — K-POP Edition” festival transformed the supermarket into a showcase of Korean cuisine, music and contemporary culture, highlighting growing cultural and commercial ties between Jordan and the Republic of Korea.

Organised by the Korean embassy in Jordan and the Commercial Section of the embassy (KOTRA Amman), in cooperation with local partners, the festival ran from Thursday to Saturday.

The event built on the momentum of the “Ya Hala, Meet Korea” festival held in July, while continuing the Korean Food Week initiative, which has been organised in Jordan for the past seven years.

Throughout the three-day event, visitors sampled a wide range of Korean dishes and products, while tasting stations, K-POP music and interactive activities created a lively atmosphere.

Long queues formed at food stands as families, young people and Korean culture enthusiasts explored flavours that have become increasingly familiar through Korean television dramas, films and music.

The festival featured popular dishes including tteokbokki, gimbal and Korean fried chicken, alongside a variety of Korean beverages. It also introduced visitors to products that had not been showcased during the previous festival due to logistical constraints.

Organisers said that interest in Korean cuisine in Jordan has grown “significantly” in recent years. While Jordanian consumers were once largely unfamiliar with Korean instant noodles, demand has expanded to include traditional dishes such as kimchi, bibimbap, bulgogi and tteokbokki.

Ingredients such as seaweed have also found their way into meals prepared in Jordanian households, reflecting the growing familiarity with Korean cuisine.

The increasing popularity of Korean food has also generated greater interest in learning how to prepare authentic dishes.

Organisers said that culinary demonstrations and food-related events regularly attract visitors eager to learn about Korean cooking techniques and ingredients, with many expressing hope that future festivals will be held over a longer period.

The global success of K-dramas and K-POP has encouraged many



Photo courtesy of the Korean embassy

Organisers of the ‘Taste of Korea — K-POP Edition’ festival say that interest in Korean cuisine in Jordan has grown ‘significantly’ in recent years

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The global success of K-dramas and K-POP has encouraged many

Jordanians to explore Korean traditions beyond entertainment, fostering greater curiosity about the country’s cuisine, lifestyle and cultural heritage.

A key objective of this year’s festival was to ensure that interest in Korean food extends beyond the event itself. Korean restaurant Bistro Manna and The Venti, described by organisers as the first Korean coffee franchise in Jordan, offered complimentary tastings throughout the festival.

Cozmo also expanded its selection of Korean food products, providing consumers with year-round access to a wider variety of items.

The festival’s reach extended beyond the venue through social media, with a regional influencer with more than two million followers sharing the experience with a wider online audience.

Korean Ambassador to Jordan Kim Pil-woo said that cultural and culinary exchanges

continue to strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between the two countries, adding that the growing popularity of Korean culture presents new opportunities to deepen bilateral relations.

Hanna Kim, director-general and commercial attaché of KOTRA Amman, said that the growing popularity of Korean food, music and lifestyle in Jordan reflects the strengthening ties between the two countries.

She noted that such events serve as a bridge for greater cultural understanding while also creating new opportunities for trade and business cooperation.

The enthusiastic response to the festival underscored the growing popularity of Korean culture in Jordan, with expanding access to Korean restaurants, cafés and supermarket products helping to strengthen ties between the two countries at both cultural and commercial levels, Kim added.



Gov’t setting out national framework for organ donation — minister

AMMAN (JT) — The government is developing a national protocol to regulate organ donation and transplantation following the launch of a digital organ donation registration service on the Sanad government application, Health Minister Ibrahim Bdour said on Monday.

Bdour told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the protocol will bring together the health, legal, religious and other relevant sectors and set out the roles of participating institutions, procedures for following up with registered donors, and priorities for patients in need of transplants.

The Sanad service, introduced following a Cabinet decision, enables citizens to access

information about organ donation and digitally register their willingness to donate. The registration will later be included among the approved personal data linked to family records.

Bdour said that the protocol will cover the medical, legal and Sharia aspects of organ donation, including religious rulings concerning donation following brain death.

He explained that brain death is determined by specialised medical committees according to approved medical criteria, including cases in which some organ functions are maintained through life-support systems.

The minister said that expanding organ donation would

depend primarily on making better use of existing health-care infrastructure, strengthening co-ordination among relevant institutions and providing specialised staff training, rather than establishing new centres.

He also stressed the importance of digital government services in making organ donation registration more accessible, as well as closer co-ordination among medical, legal and religious institutions and greater public awareness.

The Cabinet on Sunday approved the addition of the organ donation registration service to Sanad, allowing citizens to formally record their willingness to donate organs digitally.

Jordanian truckers protest cargo rules, report attacks at Syrian border

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian truck drivers have staged protests over exemptions granted to certain goods from Syria’s “back-to-back” cargo transfer system, while Jordanian trucks and drivers have no role in decisions governing the entry of trucks into Syrian territory, President of the Association of Owners of Clearance and Transport Companies Daifallah Abu Aqoula said on Monday.

Abu Aqoula told Al Mamlaka TV that Syria’s General Authority of Customs Ports issued Decision No. 31 in February, barring non-Syrian trucks from entering Syria and requiring the transfer of goods under the “back-to-back” system at border crossings.

He said that practical difficulties in unloading and reloading certain goods onto Syrian trucks led to exemptions for materials including clinker, bulk cement, cranes, marble blocks and glass, allowing them to enter through the Nasib Customs Centre without undergoing the transfer process.

Some drivers have renewed their protests, calling for an end to the exemptions, Abu Aqoula said, noting that facilities at the Nasib crossing cannot accommodate the transfer of certain



Trucks line up at the Jaber/Nassib border post between Jordan and Syria on the day of its reopening, on September 29, 2021, in the northeastern city of Mafraq

materials.

He stressed that decisions on exempted goods rest with the Syrian authorities, calling for the protection of Jordanian drivers.

Abu Aqoula said that a small number of individuals had thrown stones at Jordanian trucks carrying cement and clinker, with footage of the incidents circulated online.

He called on the Syrian authorities to hold those responsible accountable, stressing that Jordanian drivers transport goods at traders’ request and that cement enters Syria with the approval of the Syrian authorities.

He stressed that the incidents would have no impact on the close Jordanian-Syrian relations or cooperation between the two countries, noting the continued movement of goods through the Jaber border crossing to the Gulf countries and Aqaba Port.

The Jordanian Truck Owners Syndicate has contacted the relevant authorities to prevent further attacks, Abu Aqoula said, noting continued coordination with customs clearance companies, security agencies, the Land Transport Regulatory Commission, the Ministry of Transport and the Syrian authorities.

He said that activity at the Jordanian-Syrian border continues to grow, with the number of customs declarations rising by more than 17,000 to 18,000 compared with the same period last year.

Abu Aqoula described the attacks as “isolated acts by individuals outside the law”, stressing that hundreds of Jordanian trucks enter Syria daily and carry out their work normally, and that such incidents are sporadic and do not reflect the Syrian people or government.

Also, protests at the

Jaber-Nasib border crossing have intensified over the continued use of a special cargo transfer mechanism, with drivers and transport operators calling on the Ministry of Transport to intervene and adopt a fair queuing system.

They said that the current mechanism has affected the transport sector and limited Jordanian trucks’ access to Syria.

The protests also saw tensions and attacks on several Jordanian trucks, with stone-throwing damaging the windscreen of one tipper truck, according to drivers.

FINANCE

Jordan Fintech Festival 2026 to kick off on September 23

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan is set to host the second edition of the Jordan Fintech Festival 2026 on September 23 and 24 at the King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre in the Dead Sea, held under the theme “Where Regulation Meets Innovation”.

The two-day event is scheduled to bring together key representatives from financial institutions, regulatory authorities, fintech firms, investors and industry experts from Jordan, the region, and worldwide, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Adel Sharkas stressed that the festival serves as a strategic national platform reflecting the ongoing transformation within the financial sector.

He added that the event aligns with the Kingdom’s vision to build an integrated digital financial ecosystem that supports sustainable development goals and enhances Jordan’s regional and international competitiveness.

The governor noted that the CBJ continues to refine regulatory frameworks that foster innovation whilst guaranteeing consum-



er protection, thereby providing an enabling environment for fintech growth and the development of cutting-edge digital financial solutions.

Sharkas highlighted that the gathering also aims to bolster collaboration between financial institutions, start-ups and regulators, aligning financial innovation with actual market demand to offer emerging enterprises broader access to investors, potential partners and markets.

Organised by the CBJ in partnership with the Association of Banks in Jordan and in cooperation with the German Agency for International Co-operation (GIZ), the event forms part of wider efforts to boost

the Kingdom’s fintech ecosystem, accelerate digital transformation, drive financial inclusion, and consolidate Jordan’s standing as a regional hub for fintech and innovation.

The summit will bring together decision-makers, banking leaders, financial institution executives, regulators, tech start-ups and investors to exchange expertise, review rapid developments in financial services, and explore prospective investment and partnership opportunities.

The agenda focuses on core themes shaping the future of finance, including digital payments, banking and financial sector digitalisation, open finance, digital as-

sets, blockchain technologies, embedded finance, and banking-as-a-service (BaaS), alongside entrepreneurship, venture capital, and start-up ecosystem development.

Sessions will also address sustainable finance, environmental governance, user experience optimisation on fintech platforms, virtual asset developments, and asset tokenisation.

The programme features panel discussions, specialised workshops led by local and international experts, and an exhibition showcasing the latest fintech products and solutions, according to Petra.

The event further includes start-up pitch sessions and dedicated

networking opportunities connecting innovators with industry leaders and investors.

Also, the festival will host the Fintech Hackathon, offering young talents and innovators a platform to build solutions for real-world financial challenges and present their projects directly to investors and institutions.

Hosting the festival underscores Jordan’s commitment to establishing a comprehensive fintech ecosystem grounded in qualified human capital, advanced digital infrastructure, and a supportive regulatory framework, enabling enterprises to build, test and scale their solutions into regional and global markets.



AND arrests 116 suspects, seizes 12kg of crystal meth — police spokesperson

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) announced on Sunday the arrest of 116 suspects in 71 cases related to Crystal meth trafficking and use in various parts of the Kingdom, according to official sources.

AND officers seized 12 kilograms during the operations, which are part of a strict security campaign that was launched last month.

The arrest came in the fifth week of the campaign, which also included an awareness campaign that was initiated by AND in collaboration with the Media and Community Policing Directorate to combat the use of Crystal meth in Jordanian society.

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

“We dealt with 24

cases of Crystal meth, trafficking, smuggling, promotion, and the use of this deadly substance,” Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

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

As a result, Sartawi maintained, law-enforcement officers arrested 42 suspects who were allegedly smuggling, promoting and trafficking crystal meth.

Meanwhile, 84 suspects were arrested for

using the deadly substance, Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

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

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

All the detained suspects were referred to the State Security Prosecutor for further questioning and indictment, he added.

Citizens are urged to report any person who deals with Crystal meth by contacting 911, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate (PSD).

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



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

NARCOTICS

JAF thwarts drug smuggling attempt using guided balloons

AMMAN (JT) — The Eastern Military Region on Monday thwarted an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics using guided balloons within its area of responsibility.

Border Guard units

detected, engaged, and brought down the balloons inside Jordanian territory, seizing the narcotics they were carrying in coordination with military, security agencies, and the Anti-Narcotics De-

partment, according to a Jordan Armed Forces–Arab Army (JAF) statement.

The seized material was referred to the competent authorities for necessary legal procedures.

JAF reaffirmed its commitment to decisively countering smuggling and infiltration attempts across borders, tracking emerging methods, and taking requisite operational measures to foil

them.

Border Guard units continue to execute their duties in protecting the Kingdom’s borders and confronting any attempts that threaten national security and stability.



An Israeli army soldier gestures nearby as an Israeli military excavator demolishes a Palestinian building on the outskirts of Nablus in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Monday

Israel to deport British activist seized by West Bank settlers — lawyer

OCCUPIED-JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel will deport on Monday a British activist who was “kidnapped by settlers and assaulted” in the occupied West Bank over the weekend and subsequently transferred to police custody, his lawyer told AFP.

Finn Joughin was in the southern West Bank village of Umm Al Khair on Saturday doing protective presence, a tactic used to deter Israeli settler violence against Palestinians, his lawyer, Inbar Shaked Vardi, said.

She said children from settler families had entered the Palestinian village’s sports centre before attempting to dismantle fences that had been put up to protect residents from settler attacks.

“Finn only stood there holding on to the fence in an attempt to stop the break-in, at that point settlers began yelling at him accusations in Hebrew that he did not understand,” Vardi said.

“Settlers started accusing him of sexually harassing one of the children which is not something that happened,” she said, adding that armed settlers then took Joughin by force to a nearby settlement.

“He was taken to a shed inside the settlement of Carmel... He was put in a headlock and his hands were tied behind his back and he was forced to sit on the floor

in the shed for 30 minutes while settlers filmed humiliating videos that they later posted,” Vardi said, adding it was “a violation of both his right to privacy and his right to a good name”.

Israeli police were called to the scene and arrested him, Vardi said, adding that officers “interrogated him a under the sole suspicion of assault”.

‘A complaint was also filed against him on suspicion of assaulting a minor and other suspected offences’

While waiting for his hearing to take place at Jerusalem Magistrates Court on Sunday, police announced Joughin would be moved to Israel’s immigration authority and transferred to Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv, Vardi said.

Authorities decided to deport him following a pre-deportation hearing on Sunday, with his flight scheduled for around 3pm (12:00 GMT) on Monday, Vardi said.

In a statement, Israeli police said a “foreign national who disturbed

public order” near the Carmel settlement was arrested and subsequently transferred to the immigration authority.

“A complaint was also filed against him on suspicion of assaulting a minor and other suspected offences,” it added.

“After sufficient evidentiary basis was established regarding his actions, the investigation materials were transferred last night to the Population and Immigration Authority for a hearing and a decision regarding his removal from Israel,” it said.

Israel has occupied the West Bank since 1967.

Violence by Israeli settlers towards Palestinians has persisted for years, often with little or no legal consequence, but recent months have seen a surge in attacks.

More than 500,000 Israelis live in settlements in the Palestinian territory, which are illegal under international law, among some three million Palestinians.

Vardi said Joughin’s case reflected a broader policy by the Israeli government and law enforcement to expand Jewish settlement in the territory.

“Both Palestinians and activists who are assaulted by settlers are often the ones who are arrested by Israeli police and despite clear evidence that they were victims of assault,” she said.

Iran FM accuses ‘serpent’ Netanyahu of tricking US into war

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Monday called Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu a “serpent”, accusing him of tricking Washington into going to war with the Islamic republic.

“In Hebrew, Netanyahu openly crows that he suckered the US administration into a war on Iran on behalf of Israel. Netanyahu explicitly laughs about how he ‘influenced’ America through 1,000 hours of airtime on US networks,” Araghchi said in a post on X.

“In English, he praises POTUS’ leadership. Serpent,” he added.

War broke out between Iran and the United States on February 28 with US-Israeli strikes killing the Islamic republic’s supreme leader Ali Khamenei along with senior military officials.

Iran retaliated with attacks across the region as the conflict continued to spread.

An April ceasefire put an end to the most in-



Motorists drive past a billboard depicting US President Donald Trump inside a catering container, installed on a building along a street in downtown of Tehran on Monday

tense fighting, but sporadic attacks mainly near the Strait of Hormuz have dimmed prospects for a final peace agreement, and the US

recently shifted toward a campaign of what it calls “economic asphyxiation” of Iran.

The US struck the Iranian island of Larak late

Sunday, its first such attack in a month.

In response, Iran says it launched attacks on bases in Jordan and the UAE used by the US military.

Last week, Netanyahu dismissed any prospect of an Iran-US deal and called Iran’s leaders “savages”.

Italy, Spain extend border checks for 15 days in migration row

ROME (AFP) — Italy and Spain announced on Monday a 15-day extension of reciprocal border checks imposed in a spat over a migrant rush last month into the Spanish north African territory of Ceuta.

The Italian interior ministry said in a statement that the extension was “due to the continued relevance of the assessment factors that led to their introduction on August 1”.

Italy said it was “taking into account the initiatives already launched by Spain, together with the European Union, so that the situation in that area may move towards normalisation in the near future”.

Spain’s interior ministry, which put in place border checks for travellers arriving from Italy for one month from August 8, responded by announcing a reciprocal 15-day extension.

Italy and Spain do



A resident watches from her window migrants waiting on the sidewalk before being registered in Loma Colmenar district of Ceuta on Monday

not share a land border, but passengers arriving on flights now go through passport checks, which is normally not the case because both countries

are members of the Schengen free-travel zone.

Ceuta is not part of Schengen. Any travellers continuing to mainland Spain must

pass border controls.

More than 70,000 migrants entered Ceuta on July 30-31, swimming or crossing on foot from neighbouring Morocco in a chaotic

influx that left scores dead and fuelled fresh tensions in the European Union over migration.

Italy’s far-right Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni was among the EU leaders who called for Spain to be suspended from the Schengen area, even though such a move is legally impossible.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on Monday the rush of migrants was still under investigation, though he ruled out any responsibility on the part of Moroccan authorities.

In a radio interview, the Socialist leader also denounced misinformation spread by the “ultra-right”.

Although the vast majority of migrants returned to Morocco within hours, thousands remain in Ceuta, which is only 18 square kilometres, many living rough on the streets.

Nepal toll surges as rescuers struggle through ‘unimaginable’ disaster

NUWAKOT (AFP) — Rescuers struggled on Monday through mud and debris for a sixth day, as the number of missing people soared to nearly 4,500 since tsunami-like glacial floods roared down from the China-Nepal border, creating an “unimaginable” disaster.

The latest confirmed death toll surged above 900, with unidentified bodies buried in mass graves after DNA sampling.

The huge wave of freezing water, rocks and debris that smashed into villages and towns on Wednesday killed at least 939 people in Nepal and in Tibet, in China, with at least 17 bodies also pulled from rivers downstream in India.

Nepali Prime Minister Balendra Shah in a statement on Sunday called the disaster “unimaginable and heartbreaking”.

Rescue teams are in a race against time in treacherous conditions to free around 100 hydropower workers believed trapped in multiple tunnels — digging, drilling and blasting through debris.

So far, three dead bodies have been pulled out of two tunnels, and the teams have found routes blocked



A resident watches from her window migrants waiting on the sidewalk before being registered in Loma Colmenar district of Ceuta on Monday

with mud.

An Indian army officer deployed as part of a specialised tunnel rescue team said rescuers were digging through “sludge”.

He told AFP he was “still hopeful” there were survivors inside.

Amid the horror, there has been some hope; a six-year-old pulled out of the mud on Friday was reunited with her parents after police found her crying for

her mother.

“Her body was trapped in mud, but her head was outside,” Nepali Armed Police spokesman Netra Bahadur Karki told AFP.

“She is out of danger and recovering at a hospital and has reunited with her family.”

‘Changing climate’

The disaster was sparked by a glacial collapse, the US

Geological Survey said.

While the exact cause of that collapse is unclear, climate change is causing glaciers to melt worldwide, raising the risk of such disasters.

Nepali Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal said: “The people of Nepal are one of the major victims of the changing climate and its impact.”

Scientists say the Himalayas, the world’s highest

mountain range, are melting faster as global temperatures rise.

Aid needs are enormous. Entire communities have been swept away, leaving families homeless in heavy rain or sheltering in temporary facilities.

“This is an unfolding disaster,” UN children’s fund official Abiodun Banire told AFP, saying the needs of the tens of thousands impacted were vast.

Roads have been washed away, power plants destroyed and dozens of bridges smashed.

“There are too many challenges,” said E. Hawadi, a police officer coordinating rescue efforts in the badly-affected Nuwakot district.

“There are no roads, they have all been washed away, and many areas are just not accessible,” he told AFP on Monday.

Overflowing mortuaries

With mortuaries overflowing with the dead, Nepal has begun burying some of the hundreds of bodies recovered after taking DNA samples so families can later retrieve them.

Kathmandu has ap-

pealed for international support, saying Nepal needed “more than a thousand” freezer units to store bodies.

Distraught families, desperate for news of missing relatives, are watching images of bodies on screens at community centres in a bid to identify the dead.

Shobha Adhikary, in the southern Nepali city of Bharatpur, told a local coordinator she believed one image showed her childhood best friend.

“It looks like him, for sure,” she said, showing a photograph of a smiling, middle-aged man.

Among Nepal’s list of the missing are 592 foreigners, including tourists who had come for trekking in its mountains, as well as Hindu pilgrims seeking spiritual peace at Tibet’s sacred Mount Kailash.

‘Billions of dollars’

In China, Tibet is largely inaccessible to foreign journalists, and Chinese authorities are the only source of information.

More than 2,000 personnel are part of rescue operations there, but they have faced intense challenges,

and are slowly advancing towards the epicentre of the disaster.

China has said 16 people died in Tibet, with 546 people missing.

Tibetan advocacy groups in exile have questioned China’s account of the disaster.

Tencho Gyatso, president of the International Campaign for Tibet, called for China to disclose “complete and verifiable information about the damage and casualties”.

Beijing’s foreign ministry said on Monday that the “release of information has been open, transparent and timely”, and rejected international reports it is underreporting deaths.

In Nepal, the disaster agency recorded the total number of people missing on its side of the border at 3,925, revising an earlier number, with 939 bodies recovered.

Nepal’s economy is already under pressure, and foreign governments have pledged millions of dollars in humanitarian aid.

Kathmandu warns that the reconstruction bill could run into “billions of dollars”.



Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis (left) welcomes Lebanese President Joseph Aoun prior their meeting at the Maximos Mansion in Athens, on Monday

Lebanon urges Greece to help implement truce with Israel

ATHENS (AFP) — Lebanese President Joseph Aoun asked Greece on Monday for support to help implement a ceasefire agreement with Israel and end Israeli attacks on his country, hours after Greece and Israel announced a multibillion arms deal.

The June 26 accord, brokered by the United States, says both sides must cease hostilities and allow the Lebanese army to restore control over the entire country.

Beirut wants Israel to withdraw from all territory it has occupied in southern Lebanon. Israel first wants Lebanese militant group Hizbollah evacuated from the sector.

“Lebanon and the Lebanese people are tired of wars, and from the start of the negotiations with Israel the aim was to put an end to the state of hostility,” Aoun told a press conference in Athens alongside Greek President Konstantinos Tassoulas.

“The framework agreement... cannot be implemented unilaterally. It needs to be implemented on both sides,” he insisted.

‘Solving the problem by military force will not succeed’

invaded, while Hizbollah fired missiles at Israeli territory.

Since then, Aoun said, Israeli strikes have killed 4,300 Lebanese, wounded 12,000 and destroyed 60-70 villages.

“Solving the problem by military force will not succeed,” he said, insisting on the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from his country.

After a later meeting, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said Greece supported “the sovereignty, independence and unity of Lebanon” and would support “all efforts aimed at de-escalation and mutual comprehension”.

Greece has historically maintained cordial relations with Arab states while simultaneously developing strong military ties with Israel.

On Monday, Greece and Israel announced Athens was buying a \$3.5billion aerial defence system from Israel.

RACISM

The prickly issue of financial compensation for slavery

PARIS, France (AFP) — A United Nations watchdog says countries involved in the transatlantic slave trade of the 16th to 19th century are legally obliged to compensate for the harm they caused.

But while most of the many countries implicated agree to symbolic or commemorative measures, they are reluctant to address the sensitive issue of financial or material reparations for the trade, which saw millions of African men, women and children shipped to the Americas to work in appalling conditions.

A total of 182 countries — including the United States, Britain, France, The Netherlands, Portugal and Spain — are parties to the international treaty aimed at eliminating racial discrimination.

In many of those same countries, black people continue to face discrimination and poverty today.



The United Nations Logo

Humans continued to be enslaved after independence in the United States, Brazil and other Latin American countries.

prospect of any financial compensation.

(\$230 million) to raising awareness of the Dutch trade in humans and its consequences today.

outdated decrees that define slaves in its colonies as “moveable goods” who can be inherited, outline brutal punishments for trying to escape and condemn the children of slaves to the same bondage fate as their parents.

Church of England

In the absence of concrete commitments from governments, a number of institutions and local authorities have taken independent initiatives.

The Church of England apologised for its historical links to slavery and in 2023 announced plans to invest 100 million pounds to address the generational damage slavery caused to several communities.

The project is still in the development phase.

In 2023, insurance market Lloyd’s of London said it would spend 52 million pounds on racial equality causes after a report found it played a “significant role” in the slave trade.

Congress rebuffs, Illinois town acts

Since 1989, the US Congress has repeatedly been asked to create a body to investigate slavery and its consequences. But it has never voted this into law.

The town of Evanston in Illinois has chosen to address the issue on its own by tackling housing discrimination against its Black population.

The local press says more than \$6 million has been distributed since 2021 to eligible residents as part of the scheme, which is being challenged in the courts but is still ongoing.

Arab states condemn renewed Iranian attacks on Jordan, UAE

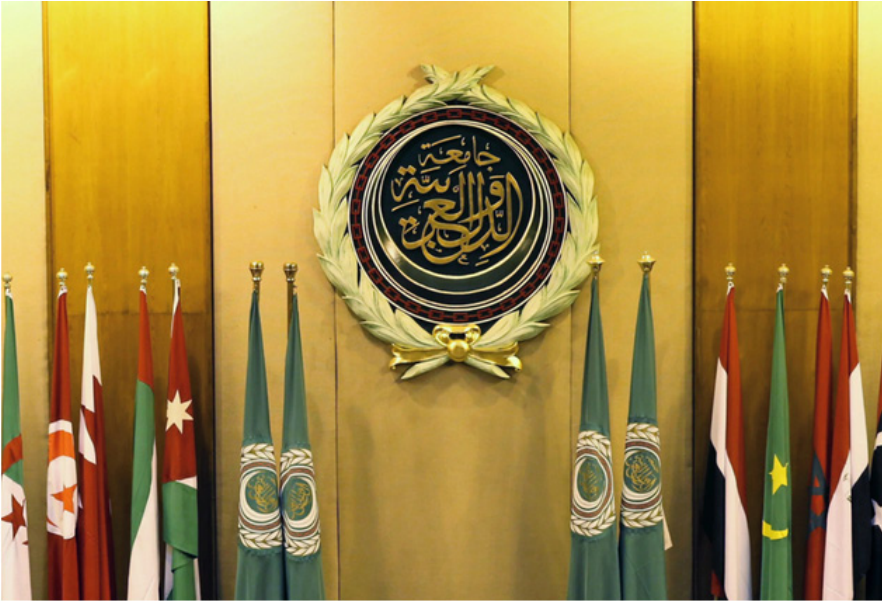
Continued from page 1

Fahmy rejected Iran’s justifications for attacks on Arab countries and called on Tehran to respect the sovereignty of Arab states.

He also said that preserving regional security and stability required adherence to international law, prioritising dialogue, and avoiding actions that could widen the conflict or put the region’s security and the interests of its people at risk.

The UAE also strongly condemned the Iranian missile attacks targeting Jordan.

The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the attacks in a statement as a flagrant violation of Jordan’s sovereignty, and a threat to its security and stability.



File photo

Qatar condemned the renewed Iranian attacks on Jordan and UAE as a “serious violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both countries, and a breach of international law, the UN

Charter and the principles of good-neighbourly relations”.

Egypt likewise condemned the renewed Iranian attacks on Jordan and the UAE, expressing deep concern over their continuation

and warning that they posed a direct threat to the security of the two countries and their populations.

Cairo also warned that an expansion of the conflict could further undermine efforts

to restore stability in the region.

Kuwait’s Foreign Ministry strongly condemned the Iranian attacks on Jordan early on Monday, saying the missile strikes violated the Kingdom’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and threatened regional security and stability.

Al Azhar Al Sharif, Egypt’s leading Islamic institution, also condemned the renewed attacks on Jordan and the UAE, rejecting what it called blatant aggression and warning of the threat to civilians and regional stability.

Al Azhar called on Iran to respect the principles of good-neighbourly relations and to halt attacks against its Muslim neighbors, which it described as prohibited under Islamic law.

Jordan condemns storming of Al Aqsa Mosque by far-right Israeli minister

Continued from page 1

The ministry’s spokesperson, Fouad Majali, affirmed the Kingdom’s “absolute rejection and strong condemnation of the continued incursions by extremist ministers, officials and settlers, as well as their provocative actions”.

He also condemned the Israeli occupation forces for facilitating the ongoing incursions into the Al Aqsa Mosque Compound, describing them as a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law, and as a “reckless and unacceptable” attempt to impose new realities at Islam’s third holiest site by seeking to divide it temporally and spatially.

Majali warned of the consequences of the continued incursions and violations against Islamic and Christian holy sites, and against

the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem and its holy sites.

Majali called on the international community to take a firm position requiring Israel, as the occupying power...

He also stressed that Israel has no sovereignty over the occupied city of Jerusalem or its Islamic and Christian holy sites.

The spokesperson reiterated that the entire Al Aqsa Mosque Compound, covering

an area of 144 dunums, is an exclusively Muslim place of worship, and that the Jerusalem Awqaf and Al Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department, which falls under Jordan’s Ministry of Awqaf, is the legally authorised body with exclusive jurisdiction over the administration of all affairs of Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif and the regulation of access to it.

Majali called on the international community to take a firm position requiring Israel, as the occupying power, to halt its ongoing violations against Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, as well as all provocative actions by Israeli officials and extremists.

He said these actions constitute a continuation of the Israeli government’s policy and its dangerous escalation in the occupied West Bank.

US, Iran exchange strikes as Hormuz tensions intensify

Continued from page 1

On Sunday, the United States carried out strikes on an Iranian island in the Strait of Hormuz.

The exchange raised fears of a return to major hostilities, with the US president vowing to respond.

“We’re going to hit them hard,” Trump said, according to a Fox News reporter who spoke to

him briefly. “There will be a response.”

The United States said it attacked Iranian rocket launchers on the island of Larak to prevent Tehran planting mines in the key shipping lane.

President Masoud Pezeshkian later on Monday called for dialogue.

“We continue to strive for a path of agreement and under-

standing, and we believe that continuing the war is neither in our interest, nor in the interest of the region,” he said at a summit in Kyrgyzstan, adding “the solution to the existing problems is dialogue and cooperation”.

State media reported that three people were killed in the US attack on Larak, with several others wounded.

The exchange marked

the first US strikes on Iranian territory in about a month. It came as Washington has increasingly relied on economic pressure against Tehran.

The escalation also renewed concerns over global energy supplies. Hormuz carried about one-fifth of the world’s oil supplies before the war began.

CENTCOM said last week that US forces had

completed clearing sea mines from international shipping routes in the strait. The latest operation showed that Washington remains focused on preventing Iran from regaining the ability to disrupt navigation.

Trump said Iran would not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons. He also said the United States would have near-total control of Hormuz once the war

is won.

Political analyst Amer Sabaileh said the operation showed that Washington was seeking to remove Iran’s ability to threaten shipping through the strait.

“Clearly, the United States has completed clearing the Strait of Hormuz of mines and now wants to eliminate Iran’s ability to lay mines or disrupt the strait,” Sabaileh said.

“Lark Island is effectively the Revolutionary Guard’s logistical and operational hub for activities linked to Hormuz.”

He said that the strike also demonstrated growing US intelligence superiority.

“America is now imposing not only a military blockade, but also intelligence dominance, meaning Iranian movements have

become exposed and pre-emptive US operations remain possible and ongoing,” Sabaileh said.

“The renewed exchange underscores the fragility of the conflict’s diplomatic track. With Hormuz again at the centre of military pressure, further strikes could deepen the regional crisis and increase pressure on global energy market.”

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Queen Rania Al Abdullah Street
P.O. Box 6710
Amman 11118

E mail: editor@jordantimes.com
jotimes@jordantimes.com
Website: jordantimes.com

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What if the Internet stops?

Discussions about the possibility of a total global internet blackout are no longer confined to science fiction or theoretical speculation. Today, such a scenario represents a critical strategic question that directly concerns the central nervous system of modern civilisation: its physical and digital infrastructure.

A total digital shutdown would inflict an unprecedented operational shock on sovereign state institutions and market economies alike. The consequences would extend far beyond a temporary interruption to entertainment or social networking. A blackout could immediately disrupt financial clearing, international trade, supply-chain management, healthcare delivery, and higher education.

During the critical initial hours of a widespread outage, data-driven navigation and logistics networks would grind to a halt, exposing the deep vulnerabilities created by global interconnectedness.

From a public finance and administrative perspective, sovereign revenue collection and national tax administration systems would face severe operational paralysis. The failure of electronic payment gateways, cloud-based digital invoicing systems, and automated customs-clearance protocols would trigger an abrupt disruption in the flow of state revenues into national treasuries. At the same time, e-commerce platforms, cross-border remittance mechanisms, and digital banking channels would face systemic disruption, exposing the structural vulnerabilities of societies that have rapidly transitioned towards cashless financial models. This sudden freeze in liquidity would leave both public institutions and private enterprises struggling to meet their immediate obligations.

Nevertheless, the underlying architecture of digital engineering was fundamentally designed as a decentralised, self-routing framework capable of redirecting traffic and adapting to operational disruptions. Vital financial and transport sectors continue to maintain offline processing mechanisms alongside secondary analogue communication channels. The sophistication of these contingency measures is increasingly reflected in the national security doctrines of major world powers.

For instance, Russia has periodically conducted operational trials aimed at disconnecting its national network, RuNet, to test localised internal data routing. China, meanwhile, has reinforced its digital sovereignty through domestic data centres and control over critical internet infrastructure in an effort to sustain its domestic digital economy. European nations and the United States have likewise prioritised operational redundancy, parallel fibre networks, and low-Earth-orbit satellite systems to reduce the risks associated with single points of failure.

Furthermore, the global development of alternative financial messaging systems independent of SWIFT — such as China's CIPS and Russia's SPFS — demonstrates how substantial investments in digital infrastructure have created a degree of operational resilience. A global blackout, therefore, would not simply be a technological crisis; it would become a genuine test of sovereign preparedness and institutional resilience.

On the socio-psychological level, the consequences would extend beyond economic indicators to challenge individual behaviour and collective social structures. A sudden network outage would abruptly shatter the pervasive virtual reality in which much of modern life now takes place, revealing the extent of our dependence on screens. Heavy technology users and digital-content consumers would inevitably experience acute disruption and psychological discomfort as identity-shaping platforms and real-time channels of interaction suddenly disappeared. This collective shock could force communities to reconsider their dependence on digital validation and adapt once again to the physical reality that exists beyond the screen.

Quite the contrary, such a crisis could also serve as a catalyst for reactivating the strategic importance of foundational physical assets. Print journalism, physical books, institutional libraries and analogue landline telephony would immediately reclaim their historical value as reliable means of preserving information, maintaining records and sustaining human communication. Here, civilisational resilience would come to the fore. Human societies have demonstrated throughout history a remarkable capacity for rapid cognitive and operational adaptation. People remain capable of reorganising daily life, managing crises at the local level, and restoring direct human connection without relying on digital protocols. In this sense, core human skills remain the ultimate backup system.

To guarantee systemic readiness and long-term stability, I believe the current landscape demands the adoption of a "Hybrid Resilience" paradigm at both the civic and governmental levels. Citizens should proactively prepare for potential disruptions through a degree of strategic diversification: retaining some immediate liquidity in physical currency alongside tangible assets such as gold and property, while also maintaining offline hard-drive backups of essential digital files to ensure continued access to critical information.

For governments and sovereign institutions, there is an equally important strategic imperative: To resist the complete decommissioning of legacy analogue infrastructure and physical paper registries. Nation-states should establish international agreements on satellite communication redundancy to safeguard critical data flows during undersea cable failures. They should also expand sovereign intranets, develop localised data centres, and establish robust offline contingency mechanisms for tax and customs administration.

I am confident that a state capable of bridging technological efficiency with the preservation of traditional assets will remain better equipped to safeguard its national security and maintain vital public services, regardless of technological volatility or disruption.

The question, therefore, is not simply whether the internet could stop. The more important question is whether modern societies would be prepared if it did.



Hosam Haddad

Hasan Al Dahah

Iran stands at a strategic crossroads, facing choices that could reshape its political system, regional role and international alliances. At this pivotal moment, US military and economic pressure, the complexities of Iran's nuclear programme and mounting domestic challenges are converging with Tehran's deepening strategic ties with China and Russia. Developments up to August 2026 suggest that military force and sanctions have failed to compel Iran to capitulate, while disagreements over the monitoring of its nuclear facilities and its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency remain unresolved.

Looking ahead, Iran's strategic crossroads could lead to three broad outcomes: An attempt at regime change by force; greater resilience supported indirectly by China and Russia; or a prolonged state of instability in which neither war nor peace prevails.

The first and most dramatic possibility would be a shift by the United States and its allies from a policy of containing and weakening Iran towards one explicitly aimed at regime change. Such a strategy could involve large-scale military strikes, a comprehensive economic blockade and attacks on the institutions of the leadership and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, alongside support for opposition forces and domestic protests. In broad terms, this would echo the path taken by Washington towards Iraq, where years of sanctions and the destruction of military capabilities ultimately culminated in regime change and the restructuring of the state.

Yet, applying the Iraqi model to Iran would be considerably more difficult. Iran is larger in both territory and population, possesses cohesive security and military institutions, and has significant capacity for retaliation through missiles, regional networks and maritime routes. More importantly, removing Iran's leadership would not automatically produce a stable political order. It could instead trigger internal conflict, weaken state institutions and spread instability across the Gulf and beyond.

The likelihood of such an outcome would increase if Washington became convinced that limited

military strikes and sanctions were insufficient to prevent Iran from rebuilding its nuclear and military capabilities. It would also become more plausible if severe divisions emerged within the regime at the same time as widespread protests and an economic crisis that became increasingly difficult to contain. Another important factor would be the formation of an international and regional coalition willing to bear the enormous costs of military confrontation and the uncertain aftermath of regime change.

Even then, however, the conditions for success would be formidable. There would need to be sufficient international political and legal cover, or a major security incident that provided Washington with a justification for full-scale intervention. An organised Iranian political alternative with domestic legitimacy and the capacity to govern after a transition would also be essential. At the same time, Iran's ability to retaliate would have to be contained, while US bases, Gulf states and energy supplies would need protection from potentially severe repercussions. For these reasons, the probability of an Iraqi-style regime-change scenario remains low to moderate. Its military and human costs would be immense, and the risk of transforming a campaign intended to change Iran's political system into a prolonged regional war would be considerable.

A second, and perhaps more sustainable, possibility is that Iran succeeds in absorbing external pressure and preserving the cohesion of the regime with indirect support from China and Russia. This would not mean Beijing or Moscow entering a war on Iran's behalf. Rather, their support could take the form of diplomatic and political backing, the maintenance of trade and energy links, the provision of technology and information, limited military cooperation and assistance in mitigating the effects of sanctions.

There are already strategic foundations for such an approach. Iran is bound to Russia through a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty, while China has repeatedly expressed support for Iran's sovereignty and opposition to unilateral sanctions and military pressure, favouring a political settlement over direct confrontation. For Beijing, maintaining stable energy supplies is a strategic

priority; for Moscow, limiting the expansion of US influence in its southern neighbourhood remains an important consideration. Iran itself has considerable experience of adapting to sanctions, maintaining an industrial and military base and operating through a parallel economy. Its membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and BRICS also provides Tehran with additional economic and diplomatic avenues.

The success of this scenario, however, would depend first and foremost on Iran's ability to maintain cohesion within its state institutions and prevent economic hardship from developing into deep political and security divisions. Tehran would also need to preserve trade, financial and technological channels with China and Russia despite continued US sanctions and pressure. Equally important would be the avoidance of actions that cross Washington's perceived red lines and trigger a full-scale war or comprehensive blockade.

The probability of this scenario appears moderate to high, but it would not amount to an outright Iranian victory. Instead, it would produce a costly strategic stalemate in which the regime survives while remaining under sustained economic, military and diplomatic pressure. China and Russia could help Tehran withstand the pressure, but neither is likely to provide an unlimited security guarantee or assume the full cost of Iran's confrontation with the United States.

This brings us to the third scenario, and arguably the most realistic: the continuation of a state of "neither war nor peace". Under this outcome, tension, threats, sanctions and limited military strikes would continue, while channels for negotiation and mediation remained open. The United States would be unwilling to pursue regime change because of the enormous costs and risks involved, while Iran would remain unable to end the sanctions or fully impose its regional preferences. The result would be a crisis that is managed rather than resolved.

Several factors favour this uneasy equilibrium. All parties understand that a full-scale war could threaten the security of the Gulf, disrupt oil supplies and inflict serious damage on the global economy. Washington has little appetite for becoming

trapped in an occupation or prolonged state-building project, while Tehran needs some degree of de-escalation to ease economic pressure without making fundamental strategic concessions. The continuation of direct or indirect communication channels would therefore be crucial in preventing miscalculation and an uncontrolled slide towards open conflict.

For this scenario to endure, Iran would also need to keep its nuclear and regional activities within limits that do not trigger large-scale military intervention. At the same time, regional powers and international mediators would have to remain capable of brokering limited understandings on issues such as security, energy and freedom of navigation. The probability of this outcome appears high precisely because it accommodates the minimum interests of the principal actors. The United States can continue its strategy of pressure and containment; Iran can preserve its political system and deterrent capabilities; and China and Russia can help prevent its collapse without becoming directly involved in a major confrontation with Washington.

Ultimately, an Iraqi-style regime-change strategy would be the most dangerous and least controllable option. Military intervention might weaken or even remove elements of Iran's leadership, but it would offer no guarantee of political stability. On the contrary, it could unleash internal conflict and regional consequences extending far beyond Iran's borders. Chinese and Russian support, meanwhile, provides Tehran with an important strategic safety net, but it should not be mistaken for an absolute defence guarantee.

The more probable future, therefore, is neither total war nor lasting peace. Iran is likely to remain caught between escalation and negotiation, pressure and adaptation, confrontation and diplomacy. This uneasy balance could persist for years, punctuated by periodic crises and limited military exchanges, until either a broader nuclear and security settlement is reached or an internal transformation fundamentally reshapes the Iranian political system. For now, the central question is not whether the confrontation will end, but how long all sides can continue managing it without allowing it to become a war that none of them can control.

Towards Jordanian economic sovereignty

In today's world, economic sovereignty no longer means producing everything a country consumes or isolating itself from global trade. That notion has long been obsolete. Instead, economic sovereignty has come to represent something far more profound: a nation's ability to make its own economic decisions freely, secure its strategic needs, and maintain resilience in the face of external shocks while continuing to benefit from integration into the global economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, disruptions to global supply chains, conflicts across the Middle East, and the growing technological rivalry between the United States and China have all demonstrated that the world's most successful economies are not those that have closed themselves off, but those that have built resilience and adaptability. As a result, concepts such as technological sovereignty, strategic autonomy and supply-chain resilience have become central pillars of economic policy across the European Union, the United States, Japan, South Korea and many other economies.

The European Union, for example, now advocates "Open Strategic Autonomy", a strategy that seeks to preserve the benefits of an open economy while reducing excessive dependence on any single supplier, market or technology. Likewise, South Korea and Singapore did not pursue self-sufficiency; rather, they invested in knowledge, technology and high-value-added industries — the true foundations of economic sovereignty in the twenty-first century.

This concept is particularly



ECONOMIC REVIEW

Yusuf Mansur

on imported energy, severe water scarcity, high public debt and a relatively narrow productive base compared with more industrialised economies.

Economic sovereignty in Jordan, therefore, should not be understood as disengagement from the global economy. Rather, it should mean strengthening Jordan's capacity to make independent economic decisions, diversify its sources of income, reduce strategic vulnerabilities, and enhance productivity and competitiveness.

Perhaps the greatest gap in Jordan's economic policy debate today is the absence of an objective tool to measure our progress towards this goal. We regularly monitor economic growth, inflation, unemployment and public debt, yet we have no systematic way of measuring economic sovereignty itself.

It is therefore time to develop a Jordan Economic Sovereignty Index (JESI)—a national composite index published annually to assess the strength of Jordan's economy and its capacity to withstand external risks, much as countries measure competitiveness, innovation and human development. Inter-

relevant to Jordan. The Kingdom enjoys political stability and strong institutions, yet it also faces structural challenges, including limited natural resources, dependence

national research increasingly recognises composite indicators as essential instruments for performance evaluation, evidence-based policymaking and long-term strategic planning.

Such an index could be built around six principal pillars.

The first would be Production Sovereignty, encompassing the contribution of manufacturing to GDP, industrial value added, the share of high-technology exports and the Economic Complexity Index, which measures the diversity and sophistication of a country's export basket.

The second pillar would be Financial Sovereignty, covering public and external debt, foreign exchange reserves, fiscal balance and the economy's ability to finance investment through domestic resources.

The third would be Trade Sovereignty, measuring export-market diversification, dependence on individual trading partners, supply-chain resilience and the ability to sustain trade flows during periods of global disruption.

The fourth pillar would be Technological Sovereignty, now one of the defining elements of national economic strength. It would include expenditure on research and development, patent generation, innovation performance and the country's capacity to develop, absorb and transfer technology. Investment in knowledge and innovation remains the principal engine of productivity growth and long-term economic development.

The fifth pillar would focus on Strategic Resource Sovereignty, incorporating food security, energy security and water security, all of which have become as important to national resilience as traditional fiscal indicators.

Finally, the sixth pillar would measure Human Capital Sovereignty, including educational quality, labour productivity, workforce skills and innovation capacity. No economy can truly control its own destiny without a highly skilled and globally competitive workforce.

Publishing such an index annually would provide policymakers with a practical tool for assessing genuine progress and directing reforms towards areas where they are most urgently needed. It would also enable meaningful comparisons between Jordan and countries that have successfully transformed their economies, such as Singapore, South Korea, Estonia, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates, rather than relying solely on comparisons of GDP growth or unemployment rates.

Economic sovereignty is neither a political slogan nor a call for economic isolation. It is the capacity of a nation to generate knowledge, deepen its industrial base, diversify its economy, master technology, secure its strategic needs and remain actively integrated into the global economy from a position of strength rather than dependence.

Jordan, under the Economic Modernisation Vision and the reforms currently underway, has a genuine opportunity to move beyond managing challenges towards building a more sovereign, more resilient and more competitive economy. Yet that journey begins with measuring what truly matters. Establishing a Jordan Economic Sovereignty Index is therefore not an academic luxury;

The writer is a Former Jordanian minister of State for Economic Affairs.

BUSINESS

Tuesday, September 1, 2026

Jordanian-Saudi committees propose plan to cut trade time, costs

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian and Saudi business representatives have proposed a 12-month plan to speed up trade between the two countries, cut costs, and eases procedures for companies and traders.

The plan, put forward by committees of the Jordanian-Saudi Joint Business Council, includes a fast-track trade route, improved risk-management procedures and performance indicators to track reductions in the time and cost of moving goods, according to recommendations issued at the end of the committees' meetings in Amman.

The committees also called for harmonising technical standards and conformity requirements, expanding electronic links between authorities, and exchanging data and certificates to reduce duplicate testing, costs and processing times, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

They recommended improving the efficiency of border crossings, ports and logistics services, removing obstacles facing trucks and goods, and strengthening



Petra photo

Jordanian and Saudi business representatives have proposed a 12-month plan to speed up trade between the two countries; cut costs and eases procedures for companies and traders

supply-chain continuity amid regional economic and geopolitical challenges.

The committees also proposed activating the council's Joint Coordination Office to oversee implementation, with clear responsibilities and deadlines, and called for simpler procedures for investors and businesspeople, including wider use of electronic visas.

The recommendations also called for stronger cooperation in industry, agricul-

ture, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, tourism and investment, including joint projects, increased trade in agricultural and livestock products, and greater promotion of investment opportunities in priority sectors.

The committees said the next phase should focus on turning the recommendations into concrete projects and measurable results, with continued coordination between the private sectors and relevant authorities in both countries.

Jordan, Saudi Business Council discuss expanding investment, PPPs

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Investment Tariq Abu Ghazaleh on Monday met with members of the Saudi-Jordanian Joint Business Council to discuss prospects for economic and investment cooperation, as well as ways to expand private-sector partnerships between both countries.

According to a Ministry of Investment statement, Abu Ghazaleh highlighted the "deep-rooted" ties binding Jordan and Saudi Arabia, stressing the importance of building upon them through practical co-operation between business communities, identifying priority sectors, and leveraging private-sector expertise to establish joint ventures and enter new markets.

The minister noted that Syria's reconstruction phase opens new horizons for regional investment, affirming that Jordan, with its strategic location and economic and logistical infrastructure, is well-positioned to serve as an effective platform for companies seeking to participate in rebuilding efforts, according



Photo Courtesy of Ministry of Investment

Minister of Investment Tariq Abu Ghazaleh on Monday meets with members of the Saudi-Jordanian Joint Business Council to discuss prospects for economic and investment cooperation

to a statement by minister of investment.

Abu Ghazaleh underscored the need to build alliances between Jordanian and Saudi firms to pool expertise and capabilities, thereby enhancing their competitiveness and ability to capitalise on reconstruction opportunities.

The meeting was attended by Secretary-General of the

Ministry of Investment Zaher Oatarneh and Chairman of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce Khalil Haj Tawfiq.

During the meeting, Abu Ghazaleh urged council members to participate in the Jordan-EU Investment Conference, scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2026, describing it as an opportunity to network with glo-

bal investors and explore new avenues of collaboration.

For his part, Co-Chair of the Saudi-Jordanian Joint Business Council Abdulrahman Thubaiti affirmed the strength of relations between the two brotherly nations, highlighting the council's keenness to enhance communication between business communities and ex-

plore new opportunities to boost trade and investment ties.

The Saudi-Jordanian Joint Business Council is co-chaired by Thubaiti representing the Saudi side and Haj Tawfiq representing the Jordanian side. The council is holding a series of meetings in the Kingdom this week to further enhance bilateral economic cooperation.

Stocks drop as Warsh fans US rate hike bets, crude up on US-Iran strikes

HONG KONG (AFP) — Asian stocks fell on Monday as hawkish comments from Federal Reserve (Fed) boss Kevin Warsh saw investors ramp up bets on a US interest rate hike, while oil prices spiked after a fresh flare-up in the US-Iran war.

With inflation remaining stubbornly high — largely on the back of elevated energy costs — the US central bank has come under pressure to act and Warsh's refusal to provide guidance has stoked uncertainty.

But in a highly anticipated speech at the Jackson Hole symposium of central bankers and economists in Wyoming, he left traders with few doubts that he was ready to increase borrowing costs.

Warsh said: "We must be confident that underlying inflation is moving to our objective, clearly and at sufficient speed. Otherwise, we have work to do."

He called the spike in inflation — currently at 3.7 per cent and nearly double the Fed's 2 per cent target — "concern-

ing", and said he would be "hard-pressed" to describe current financial conditions as "restrictive", a potential hint that rate hikes could be on the horizon.

However, he stopped short of saying he would support a hike, adding: "I stand here today committed to a discipline, not to a decision."

All three main indexes on Wall Street fell Friday. Yields on short-term US Treasury bonds — which reflect monetary policy expectations — jumped and the dollar rallied against its peers. Gold, which benefits from lower interest rates, fell.

And Asia followed suit, with tech firms — which rely on borrowing to fuel their huge AI investments — leading the way down.

Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Taipei and Jakarta were all down, though Singapore and Wellington edged up.

Focus will now turn to a string of crucial data releases over the next two weeks before the Fed makes its decision, with jobs up this week and the consumer price index (CPI) next week.

"Should we get an inline payrolls print that does not give the Fed too much to work with, next week's core CPI report will become the major decider for the market's Fed belief system," wrote Chris Weston at Pepperstone.

"The volatility priced around that outcome across rates, forex and equities could therefore be significant."

The Fed's battle against inflation has been hobbled by the Iran war, which has pushed oil prices higher.

And after a run lower for most of last week, they spiked again Monday, a day after the United States said it had attacked Iranian rocket launchers on a small island in the Strait of Hormuz, its first strikes on the country in a month.

The attack prompted Tehran to retaliate by hitting US military targets in Jordan. Both main crude contracts rose more than 2 per cent Monday.

The exchange came shortly after the US-Iran war hit the six-month mark and at a time when hostilities had been

subsiding.

The news revived concerns about the conflict, with attempts and peace talks appearing to be going nowhere and the Strait — through which a fifth of global crude and gas passes — largely closed.

US officials this month vowed the "economic asphyxiation" of Iran to make it open the waterway.

"Hormuz is once again threatening to put a floor under oil just as Warsh is putting a ceiling on how much inflation patience markets should assume from the Fed," said Quintext Intel's Stephen Innes.

"For oil traders, [the] move is another reminder of how quickly the geopolitical premium can return.

Physical flows through Hormuz have improved materially from their worst levels, which is precisely why crude had started giving back some of the fear premium, but the latest exchange shows how fragile that progress remains and how quickly the shipping story can be pushed back onto the trading desk."

Jordan to host FinTech Festival with international participation

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan will host the second Jordan FinTech Festival 2026 on September 23-24 at the King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre at the Dead Sea, bringing together financial institutions, regulators, fintech companies, investors and experts from Jordan and abroad.

Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Adel Sharakas said the festival represents a strategic national platform reflecting the transformation of the financial sector, and Jordan's vision of building an integrated digital financial system that supports sustainable development and enhances the Kingdom's regional and international competitiveness.

The CBJ continues to develop regulatory policies that support innovation while protecting consumers, helping create an environment conducive to fintech growth and the development of digital financial solutions, Sharakas said, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

He added that the fes-

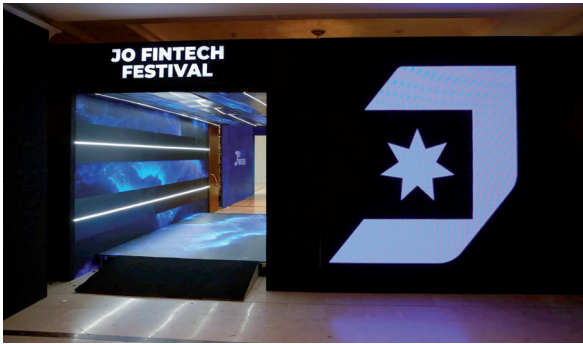


Photo courtesy of JO Fintech

Jordan will host the second Jordan FinTech Festival 2026 on September 23-24 at the King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre at the Dead Sea

tival aims to strengthen cooperation among financial institutions, startups and regulators, while linking financial innovation to market needs and giving startups greater opportunities to connect with investors, markets and potential partners.

The festival is organised by the CBJ in partnership with the Association of Banks in Jordan (ABJ) and in cooperation with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

The event is part of efforts to strengthen Jordan's fintech ecosystem, support digital trans-

formation and financial inclusion, and reinforce the Kingdom's position as a regional hub for financial technology and innovation.

The two-day programme will feature panel discussions and specialised workshops with local and international experts, as well as an exhibition of fintech solutions and products, startup pitch sessions and networking events.

Key topics will include digital payments and transformation in banking and financial services, open finance, digital assets and blockchain technologies, embed-

ded finance, banking-as-a-platform models, entrepreneurship and investment, and the development of the startup ecosystem.

The programme will also address sustainable finance and environmental governance, user experience on fintech platforms, virtual assets and asset tokenisation.

A FinTech Hackathon will provide innovators and young people with an opportunity to develop digital solutions to challenges facing the financial sector and present their projects to experts, investors and financial institutions.

The festival reflects Jordan's efforts to build a fintech ecosystem based on human capital, digital infrastructure and a sound regulatory framework, enabling companies to develop, test and scale their solutions in regional and international markets.

Participation is free, with experts, investors and representatives of financial institutions and startups invited to register through the festival's official website.

China's factory activity slides for second straight month

BELJING (AFP) — Factory activity in China contracted in August for a second straight month, official data showed on Monday, as soft demand weighs on the world's second-largest economy.

Leaders in Beijing are seeking to maintain pace despite hurdles including trade frictions with Washington and an entrenched property-sector crisis that has spooked consumers.

The manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) came in at 49.8 in August, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, slightly below the 50 mark sepa-

rating expansion from contraction.

Still, the reading was higher than the 49.5 forecast in a Bloomberg survey of economists, and an improvement on the 49.2 recorded in July.

NBS statistician Huo Lihui said in a statement it showed an "expansion in both production and market demand in the manufacturing sector".

Certain sectors saw "weak market activity", Huo added, including steel production and chemical materials.

The non-manufacturing PMI, which measures activity in other areas including services and

construction, came in at 49, the data showed.

That was unchanged from July but missed the Bloomberg forecast of 49.4.

Huo noted "weak" activity in wholesale, retail and capital market services in August, which were all "below the critical point".

"The rise of commodity prices may have benefited some firms in the upstream manufacturing sector, as both input and output price indexes rose last month," wrote Zhiwei Zhang, president and chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management.

"But this is driven by

supply rather than demand," he added.

China's economy has been supported by a historic boom in exports that has shown no sign of stopping in recent months.

It has also been helped by the global artificial-intelligence frenzy that has increased demand for its tech products.

With storm clouds building elsewhere, economists argue that Beijing needs to shift towards a model powered more by household consumption than traditional growth drivers including infrastructure investment and property.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Monday reached JD12.4 million while 5.7 million shares were traded through 4,386 transactions.

The ASE share price index closed at 4000.27 point, a decrease of 0.2 per cent.

The share of 99 companies were traded, the share price of 41 companies rose, and the share price of 27 declined.

The top five gainers were, the Kafa'a for Financial & Economical Investments (Plc.) by 5 per cent, National Portfolio Securities by 4.17 per cent, Afaq for Energy Co. Plc by 3.91 per cent, Assas for Concrete Products Co. Ltd. by 3.74 per cent, and Al Tajamout For Touristic Projects Co. Plc. by 3.37 per cent.

The top five losers were Amwaj Properties by 5 per cent, Middle East Insurance by 4.83 per cent, The Arab Pesticides & Veterinary Drugs Mfg. Co. by 3.89 per cent, Real Estate Development by 2.9 per cent and Shareco Brokerage Company by 2.78 per cent.

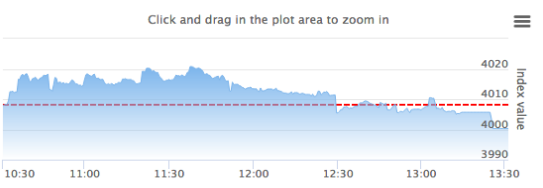


THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↓ 4000.27 0.20% August 31, 2026

Live Data

Historical Data



DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market

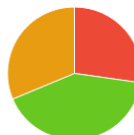
OTC Market

Trading Value (JDs) 12,441,279

Trading volume 5,669,514

No. of Transactions 4,386

No. of Securities 99



Losers: 27
Gainers: 41
Unchanged: 31

FOOTBALL

It 'hurts' says Messi of decision to retire from international football

MIAMI (AFP) — Lionel Messi said on Monday he is retiring from international football after leading Argentina to a second successive World Cup final in July. Messi, 39, wrote on Instagram: "It was a decision that hurt and still hurts deep in my soul but I understand that it is the right time. "I swear I always gave everything, not just in the last few years when we won everything but before that too, and I always fought and gave my all for this shirt," he added. Messi led Argentina to World Cup glory by winning the 2022 final against France in a penalty shootout in Doha, but his side lost 1-0 to Spain in the 2026 final in East Rutherford, New Jersey.Following the death of his father Jorge in August, Messi had said he had "serious doubts" about continuing to play football of any sort for "much longer". Messi's contract with Major League Soccer club Inter Miami runs until the end of the 2028 season.

TENNIS

Medvedev advances without drama at US Open

NEW YORK (AFP) — One year on from a spectacular first-round meltdown, former US Open champion Daniil Medvedev made his way serenely into the second round at Flushing Meadows on Sunday. The seventh-seeded Russian needed two hours and 14 minutes to ease past French qualifier Hugo Gaston 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 and pronounced himself pleased with his progress since a first-round loss to Martin Damm in Winston-Salem last week. During that match the mercurial Medvedev was heard to wonder whether he should drop tennis and take up pickleball — a possibility he was asked about in his on-court interview. "Last couple of weeks were not easy, but you know how it is — sometimes you lose matches, sometimes you win," he said. "I'm happy that today I managed to produce a high level of tennis.I felt like I did everything I wanted to do well. I finished the match strong, I started the match strong. I'm really glad the way I played." It was a far cry from last year's US Open, when Medvedev lost his cool in a first-round loss to France's Benjamin Bonzi, erupting in the third set when a photographer's mistaken foray onto the court prompted chair umpire Greg Allensworth to award Bonzi a first serve.

By Aline Bannayan

AMMAN — Jordan's basketball squad returns home after ending Window 4, Round 2 Asian qualifiers for the 2027 FIBA World Cup settling for fourth spot after losing 82-81 to hosts the Philippines in overtime, before losing 126-93 to Australia.

Jordan let the win slip out of their hands against the Philippines, but against Australia, it was a different story. The squad clearly lacked a cohesive attack and relied on individual efforts with Amin Abu Hawas leading Jordan with 21 points followed by Abdullah Olajuwon and Jalen Harris with 19 while Ahmad Duweiri was only held to 6 points.

In other Window 4 matches, New Zealand beat Iran 93-91 in OT and Syria 126-74 while the Philippines beat Iran 68-56. Teams are contesting 8 Asian slots in two groups with the top three from each group and the best 4th placed team advancing to the World Cup. Jordan is playing in a challenging Group E which is now headed by Australia followed by New Zealand, Iran, Jordan, the Philippines and Syria while Lebanon heads Group F followed by Japan, China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and South Korea. Jordan next plays New Zealand on November 27 and Australia on November 30 in window 5 with window 6 matches



JBF photo

Jordan's coach Luis Guil Torres has a challenging time ahead to best prepare the squad for the Asian Games and remaining World Cup qualifiers

against the Philippines and New Zealand on February 25 and 28, 2027.

After relatively easy Group C matches in Round 1 where they finished second after Iran with Syria third and Iraq eliminated, Jordan's hopes of moving to its third consecutive and fourth overall World Cup after first qualifying in 2010 have now been made tougher as they need to win at least two or three matches of their remaining four matches to secure qualification. The squad's new coach Spaniard Luis

Guil Torres clearly needs to undertake drastic changes after the team also finished 6th at the 45th William Jones Cup in Taiwan and now has the Nagoya Asian Games coming up where Jordan was drawn in Group B alongside Iran, Qatar and Taiwan while Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia play in Group A and China, Philippines, Bahrain and Kazakhstan in Group C.

Jordan's squad regrouped late with Torres leading team practice just ahead of William

Jones. The lineup was a mix of young players recalled from Jordan's U-19 World Cup qualifying team combining with a now ageing lineup which is led by veteran Duweiri, Abu Hawas, Ahmad Hamarsheh, Freddie Ibrahim as Olajuwon as well as pro Harris.

A total of 80 national squads from the four FIBA regions are contesting the qualifiers in six windows from November 2025 to March 2027 following which 7 teams from Asia, 5 teams from Africa, 7 from the Americas, and 12 from

Europe will advance to the 2027 World Cup in Doha which is a direct qualifier for 7 national teams to the 2028 Olympic Games.

The seven best ranked Asian teams from

Group E standings

Team	P	W	D	PF	PA	PTS
Australia	8	8	0	814	560	16
N. Zealand	8	6	2	778	638	14
Iran	8	5	3	599	542	13
Jordan	8	5	3	684	668	13
Philippines	8	4	4	615	614	12
Syria	8	2	6	534	719	10

It 'hurts' says Messi as he retires from international football

MIAMI (AFP) — Lionel Messi said on Monday he was retiring from international football after leading Argentina to a second successive World Cup final in July.

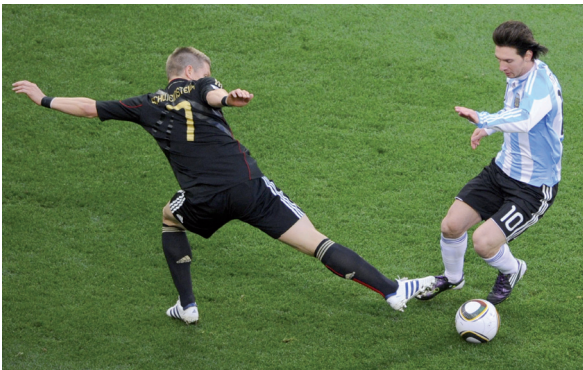
The 39-year-old forward who won the World Cup in 2022 and dragged his nation to the final in the United States only to lose to Spain, said the decision had been painful.

"It was a decision that hurt and still hurts deep in my soul but I understand that it is the right time," Messi wrote on Instagram. "I swear I always gave everything, not just in the last few years when we won everything but before that too, and I always fought and gave my all for this shirt," he added.

Messi led Argentina to World Cup glory four years ago by winning the final against France in a penalty shootout in Doha, but his side lost 1-0 to a superior Spain side in the 2026 final in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Following the death of his father Jorge in August, Messi had said he had "serious doubts" about continuing to play football of any sort for "much longer".

"I don't know what I'll do without you, I



AFP photo

Germany's midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger (left) marks Argentina's striker Lionel Messi during their 2010 World Cup quarterfinal football match at Green Point Stadium in Cape Town, South Africa, on July 3, 2010

don't know how to go on. I just played football, and now I have serious doubts about continuing to do so for much longer," he said then.

Messi's contract with Major League Soccer club Inter Miami runs until the end of the 2028 season.

In this year's finals, Messi inspired Argentina to another final by scoring eight goals and provided two assists in the dramatic late comeback against England in the semifinals.

But the dream of lifting the trophy again proved one match too far as the South Americans lost to Spain in the MetLife Stadium in a match that ended in ugly scenes.

Midfielder Leandro Paredes and several of his Argentina team-

mates have received bans and fines for their part in clashes with Spain players after the final.

Messi, meanwhile, was pictured in tears after receiving his loser's medal. He said afterwards that the pain of defeat was "immense" and that it would "take a long time for this wound to heal".

'Thank you for everything'

In his statement on Monday, the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner said it was time for a new generation of Argentine players to take up the torch.

"I love, I loved, and I will always love being on the national team," he wrote. "I gave everything I had, I have nothing more to give,

and besides, there are some very talented young players coming up behind me who deserve to be there."

First called up in 2005 by Jose Nestor Pekerman as an 18-year-old, Messi would go on to play 207 times for Argentina and become the country's leading scorer, with 125 goals.

Messi also won two Copa Americas in 2021 and 2024 during his 21-year international career.

Yet, prior to the trophy-laden later years, Messi did not hold the place in Argentine hearts reserved for other national idols such as Diego Maradona or Pope Francis.

After moving to Catalonia at 13 to join Barcelona, Messi could have represented Spain but chose Argentina.

His long-time teammate Angel Di Maria, also a 2022 world champion, on Monday paid homage to Messi for this choice and his impact on the national team.

"We will be forever grateful to you for being Argentinian and for having taken Argentina to the top of the world," Di Maria said.

"For having chosen to be Argentinian when you could have chosen something else. Thank you for everything."

Too small for fries: Drought shrinks Belgian potatoes

By Camille Camdessus

Agence France-Presse

AMAY, Belgium — Mathieu Comijn inspected rows of potatoes in a field of cracked earth and browned leaves, pulling from the ground tubers barely the size of ping-pong balls.

"How do you expect to make fries out of these?" asked the Belgian farmer in frustration, as he uprooted another plant and examined it.

"Normally, they should be at least four times this size," he said.

Like many Belgian farmers this summer, Comijn's harvest in Amay, near the eastern city of Liege, has been hit by a devastating combination of weather extremes.

First, a spate of heavy rain and storms at the end of spring weakened the soil. Then, as elsewhere in Europe, exceptionally hot and dry conditions followed — blamed by scientists on man-made climate change.

That caused the soil to harden into compact clumps in which potatoes "cannot breathe properly" and struggle to grow, the farmer explained.

"It's a disaster," the 30-year-old told AFP. "I've never seen anything like it."

The problem for Comijn is that all these



AFP photo

'Either there are too many potatoes, like last year, and prices collapse... or it's the opposite extreme,' said the president of Belgium's national union of fry vendors

rows of Bintje potatoes, a prized variety in Belgium, were destined to become long, golden fries — a beloved staple in a country dotted by "friteries" or "frituren", street stalls specialising in the stuff.

Yet, with just a month to go before the harvest, set for around September 20, none are larger than the palm of his hand. The only silver lining is that their flavour has not been spoiled by their diminished size.

'Too painful'

Comijn's father Stephane has been so distressed by the situation that he refused to visit the field for several days.

"It's too painful," said the septuagenarian, wiping his forehead. The former head of the family farm struggles to remember weather this

dry in the region — except, perhaps, during a historic heatwave in 1976.

But good harvest or bad, the Comijn family, who grow 500 hectares of potatoes, still have supply contracts to meet.

As the world's top exporter of frozen fries, Belgium applies strict rules to its potato trade.

Before the harvest, growers and processors negotiate both delivery volumes and prices.

To help fulfil part of their commitments, the Comijns will draw on stocks from last year, when the harvest was exceptionally abundant.

"We had started throwing some of them away," Stephane Comijn explained, to make space for this year's crop.

"But now they're worth money," he said, standing in front of a refrigerator

Round 2, as well as Qatar qualify automatically as host. If Qatar is not ranked among the top four in their group the fourth place teams from groups 'E' and 'F' will be ranked against each other to decide the final qualifier.

At the last 31st FIBA Asia Cup 2025, Jordan's squad failed to keep up the nation's impressive record finishing 11th among 16 nations after previously reaching the medals podium twice. So far, the squad has played at the FIBA Asia Cup 17th times, with their best position runner-up in 2011, 3rd in 2009 and 4th in 2022.

Apart from qualifying to the World Cup three times in 2010, 2019 and 2023, the squad was the first Arab team to win the William Jones Cup in 2007 and 2008. They later won the 17th Arab Basketball Championship for the first time and finished runner-up to Egypt at the Pan-Arab Games. In 2023, Jordan was Asian Games silver medalist. Jordan also qualified to the U19 Basketball World Cup in 1995 and 2025.



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