



King, Bahrain monarch discuss regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah and King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain, during a phone call on Thursday, discussed recent regional developments.

The two leaders discussed the need to halt the dangerous escalation in the region, as well as ways of strengthening cooperation and coordination in service of Arab causes and to achieve security and stability,

according to a Royal Court statement.

The call also touched on the deep-rooted ties between Jordan and Bahrain and ways to enhance them across various sectors.

King receives letter from newly appointed chairman of joint chiefs of staff

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Thursday received a letter from newly appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Majdi Al Harasis, in response to the letter sent to him yesterday from the King.

In the letter, Maj. Gen. Al Harasis expressed his pride and gratitude for being tasked with this responsibility, emphasising that the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army will remain steadfast in its commitment to safe-guarding the Kingdom, under the leadership of the King, according to a Royal Court statement.

Al Harasis added that His Majesty's letter sets a clear path for the ongoing restructuring, strengthening and modernisation of the armed forces.

The new army chief pledged to ensure that the armed forces maintain the highest levels of competence, readiness, and professionalism to keep pace with rapid changes and emerging challenges.



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Majdi Al Harasis

King receives letter from retired Lt. Gen. Huneiti



Photo courtesy of Royal Court

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Thursday received a letter from retired Lt. Gen. Yousef Huneiti, the former chairman of the joint chiefs of staff.

In the letter, Huneiti expressed his deep pride at having served Jordan in his capacity as chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, highlighting His Majesty's steadfast guidance, continuous care and immense support for the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army, according to a Royal Court statement.

Huneiti concluded the letter by reaffirming his commitment to serving Jordan.

Prime minister offers condolences over fatal bus crash in Egypt



AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Thursday expressed his deepest condolences over the victims of a tragic bus accident on Wednesday in the Egyptian city of Nuweiba, which resulted in fatalities and injuries among Jordanian and Egyptian citizens.

Hassan directed all concerned authorities to take necessary measures to repatriate the bodies of the deceased to the Kingdom as quickly as possible, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The prime minister also instructed officials to arrange the transfer of the injured for medical treatment in Jordan according to their health condition without delay.

He emphasised maintaining continuous coordination with Egyptian authorities to ensure full medical care for the injured until their recovery.

Also, Hassan sent a cable of condolences to Egyptian Prime Minister Moustafa Madbouly over the victims of the tragic accident.

He also wished the injured a speedy recovery.

Ten Jordanians died after a passenger bus carrying 43 people, including 22 Jordanians, overturned on the Dahab-Nuweiba highway in Egypt's South Sinai Governorate.



Foreign Ministry photo

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi holds talks in Vienna on Thursday with Austrian Federal Minister for European and International Affairs Beate Meisl-Reisinger

Gov't launches digital spokesperson service 'Farah'

- Momani says new e-service part of government communication tools
- He says technology aims to explain government decisions, policies, provide accurate information



The Prime Ministry

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Government Communication and Government Spokesperson Mohammad Momani on Thursday announced the launch of a digital spokesperson service named "Farah".

Momani said that the new e-service is part of digital government communication tools.

In a post on his official account on X platform, Momani said that launching the service aligns with the government efforts to employ digital technology and artificial intelligence tools in communication.

He added that the technology aims to explain government decisions and policies, provide accurate information to citizens and interested parties, and strengthen digital government communication mechanisms.

Safadi, Austrian foreign minister discuss bilateral relations, regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi and Austrian Federal Minister for European and International Affairs Beate Meisl-Reisinger on Thursday discussed ways to enhance cooperation in the economic, trade, investment, tourism, education and defence sectors.

During talks in Vienna, the two ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation between the two countries and advancing their long-standing partnership, which spans more than seven decades.

They also discussed regional developments and efforts aimed at ending escalation and enhancing security and stability, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Speaking at a joint press conference following the talks, Safadi stressed the importance Jordan attaches to its partnership with Austria and the opportunities available to expand cooperation in various fields.

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ACT says it sets 2nd consecutive monthly record with 104,000 TEUs

AMMAN (JT) — The Aqaba Container Terminal (ACT) said it had handled more than 104,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) in August, setting a monthly record for the second consecutive month despite ongoing regional trade disruptions.

The terminal said in a statement that it handled 58 vessels during the month, surpassing the 100,000-TEU mark for the second month in a row.

In July, ACT handled a record 101,900 TEUs, the statement said.

Transit trade also remained strong for the third consecutive month, exceeding 20,000 TEUs in August, including more than 10,000 TEUs destined for Iraq.

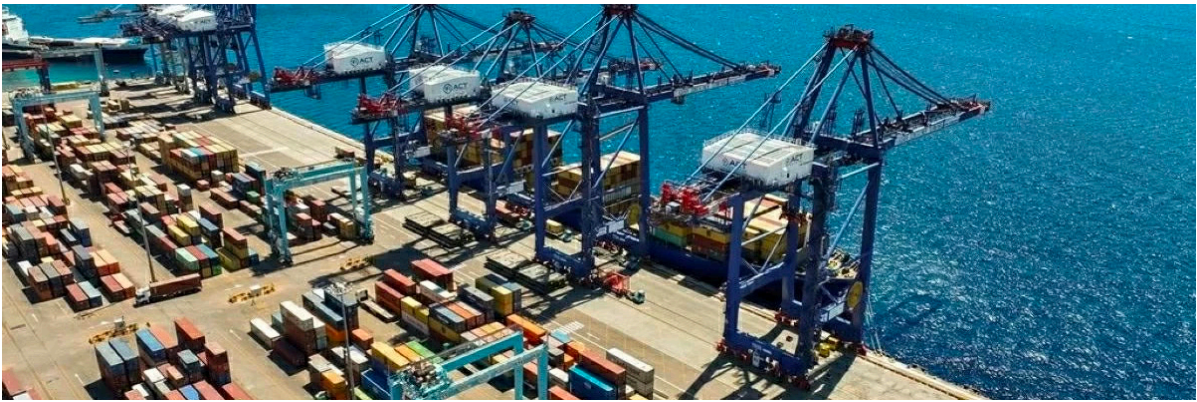
Imports recovered significantly during the month, reaching 36,000 TEUs, while gate movements exceeded 43,000 truck trips. More than 35,000 of those trips involved import cargo deliveries.

ACT said that the August results reflected continued coordination with the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, the Ministry of Transport and key supply chain partners.

The cooperation helped reduce yard occupancy and maintain smooth vessel and truck movements throughout the month," the terminal said.

ACT Chief Executive Officer José Rueda attributed the performance to the dedication of the terminal's workforce and the application of global operational practices by APM Terminals.

He said that the measures helped maintain the quality and reliability of services expected by customers.



An aerial view of the Aqaba Container Terminal

ACT file photo



Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa visits the Jordan Field Hospital in Nablus on Thursday

Palestinian prime minister visits Jordan Field Hospital in Nablus

AMMAN (JT) — Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa visited the Jordan Field Hospital in Nablus on Thursday, commending the humanitarian and medical role of the Jordan Armed Forces–Arab Army (JAF) through its field hospitals operating in Palestine.

Mustafa expressed appreciation for Jordan's steadfast stance under the leadership of His Majesty King

Abdullah in supporting the Palestinian people and advocating for their rights in international forums, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

He praised the dedicated efforts of the Jordanian medical teams in treating patients and providing healthcare services, according to a statement from the JAF.

Since commencing its duties in 2023, the hospital has provided

continuous medical services 24 hours a day, benefitting approximately 363,520 patients and performing 3,177 major and minor surgeries, Petra said.

It continues to offer emergency, radiology, laboratory and nursing care within an integrated medical system.

The prime minister was briefed by the hospital's force commander on its humanitarian duties, medical

capabilities and staff operations.

Mustafa toured various hospital departments to review the workflow and service delivery, reiterating praise for the medical personnel's humanitarian mission.

The Palestinian prime minister was received by the Jordanian ambassador to Palestine, along with the hospital's force commander and hospital director.

JAF photo

Prince Mired, IEC chairman discuss boosting political participation of persons with disabilities

AMMAN (JT) — HH Prince Mired, chief chamberlain and president of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD), and Chairman of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) Board of Commissioners Musa Maaytah on Thursday discussed boosting political participation for persons with disabilities.

The discussion focused on guaranteeing persons with disabilities' constitutional right to run for office, vote, and actively participate in municipal elections and political life, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Prince Mired highlighted the importance of advancing the joint strategic plan between HCD and IEC.

He stressed the need to build on previous electoral experiences by identifying strengths and addressing areas requiring improvement across all stages of the voting process.

This includes early preparations, raising political awareness, providing accessible electoral information, adapting polling sta-



Petra photo

HH Prince Mired and Chairman of the Independent Election Commission Musa Maaytah on Thursday discuss boosting political participation for persons with disabilities in the municipal elections

tions and training field staff to ensure voters with disabilities can participate independently.

The prince stressed that future efforts must rely on clear data to identify gaps, implement targeted interventions and measure overall impact.

He also called for involving persons with disabilities and representative organisations in designing and evaluating procedures related to their politi-

cal engagement.

For his part, Maaytah reaffirmed the necessity of collaborating with all stakeholders executing the electoral process, including security agencies and civil society organisations.

He stressed integrating the rights and requirements of voters with disabilities into all executive instructions and procedural guides governing elections.

HCD had previously

worked with IEC to develop a three-year plan aimed at enhancing political participation for persons with disabilities.

The plan focuses on securing their involvement in parliamentary and municipal elections, expanding political party membership and developing leadership capacities.

It also entails reviewing legislation to align provisions with the rights of persons with disabilities.

Urdunna Jannah attracts 181,000 participants nationwide

AMMAN (JT) — The domestic tourism programme "Urdunna Jannah" has attracted some 181,000 participants from its launch through August 31, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities said on Thursday.

Participants joined various trips across the Kingdom's governorates, supported by numerous tour operators, guides, and tourist transport companies, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The ministry noted in August that the Golden Triangle, comprising Petra, Wadi Rum and Aqaba, led overnight destinations.

Interest also expanded to newly introduced destinations under the programme, notably Iraq Al Amir, Umm Ar Rasas and Rihab.

The programme aims to stimulate domestic tourism and encourage citizens to explore local sites through diverse, subsidised packages.

It targets around 220,000 beneficiaries in 2026, focusing on driving visits to less-



File photo

The Ministry of Tourism on Thursday says that the domestic tourism programme 'Urdunna Jannah' attracts some 181,000 participants from its launch through Monday

frequented locations and supporting areas hit hardest by regional developments, particularly Petra.

With the ministry subsidising trip costs by up to 60 per cent, the programme plans to engage over 400 local businesses, including restaurants, hotels and tourism projects, and offers more than 60 diverse tourist routes across Jordan.

The revamped pro-

gramme allows direct booking and self-drive options for subsidised experiences via its digital platform.

It has also expanded eligibility to include foreign and Arab university students studying in Jordan, residents from the Gaza Strip, and non-Jordanian children and spouses of Jordanian women.

Executed in partnership with travel agen-

cies, tour guides, hotels, camps, transport companies and handicraft shops, the initiative aims to sustain the sector, build resilience amid regional conditions and empower local communities.

Packages include free transportation via modern buses, tour guides, and meals, alongside monthly cultural events and local bazaars in every governorate.

DoS denies fines for citizens unable to answer census questions

AMMAN (JT) — Department of Statistics (DoS) Director General Haidar Fraihat on Thursday said that rumours circulating on social media about fines for citizens who are unable to answer certain census questions or are absent from their homes during field visits are unfounded.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Fraihat said that in previous censuses, enumerators occasionally encountered cases, where household data could not be collected, describing this as a normal occurrence within expected statistical margins of error.

Fraihat apologised for any misunderstanding caused by his previous statements, stressing that he intended no offence and expressing confidence in the understanding of citizens and residents.

He said that all field researchers have undergone rigorous training and readiness tests to ensure flexibility, smooth communication and respect for



GAM photo

Department of Statistics Director General Haidar Fraihat on Thursday refutes rumours circulating on social media about fines for citizens who are unable to answer certain census questions

household privacy during the 2026 Population and Housing Census.

Fraihat noted that field enumerators are drawn from teachers at the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, who enjoy widespread public trust and respect.

The DoS relies on the accuracy of data provided by citizens, Fraihat said, stressing that public coopera-

tion is the cornerstone of a successful census. He added that field workers have consistently received cooperation and hospitality from residents.

He stressed that the census questions are straightforward and non-intrusive. If respondents are unable to answer immediately or a household is unavailable, enumerators will handle the situ-

ation flexibly and arrange a follow-up visit if necessary.

The DoS director general expressed his appreciation for the public's engagement with the national exercise and urging citizens and residents to cooperate with field researchers to ensure accurate data that will support development planning and help improve public services.

Khirbet Salameh: Preserving a rural archaeological site in Amman

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — Khirbet Salameh, an archaeological site next to the American Centre of Research (ACOR) in Tla' Al Ali, overlooks the University of Jordan and offers a glimpse into the rural landscape of ancient Amman.

The site was first surveyed in the 1970s by Mujahed Muheisin of Yarmouk University. It was partially excavated in the 1980s by Cherie Lenzen and Allison McQuitty on behalf of ACOR.

In the early 1990s, then-ACOR director Pierre M. Bikai carried out further excavations.

During that period, Khirbet Salameh became a field school for archaeology students at the University of Jordan, providing practical training in excava-

tion and archaeological documentation.

The site was a farmstead in antiquity, with its inhabitants relying on farming and agriculture in a fertile valley that is now part of Tla' Al Ali.

‘There is a quantity of early Hellenistic material and two Ptolemaic coins’

The surviving structure is a rare example of preserved rural ar-

chitecture in the Amman area. It dates to the Roman period, probably the second century AD, and continued to function or was reused during the Byzantine and early Islamic periods.

According to Bikai, in a report published for the Department of Antiquities in 1992, the fortified square structure was primarily built of limestone and measured 24 by 24 metres.

“The main gate faces east, where the water and fertile agricultural lands were most accessible,” Bikai said in the report. The building contains 14 rooms arranged around an inner courtyard.

After a hiatus during the COVID-19 pandemic, basic protection measures were undertaken at the site in 2020.

More comprehensive preservation work began in January 2021.

The work was carried out jointly by ACOR and the Department of Antiquities.

The first phase included cleaning the site, buttressing fragile areas, covering deep holes and documenting and visualising the site in its existing condition.

The work was led by British-American archaeologist Jack Green.

The second phase focused on improving the site's safety and protecting its exposed eastern side. A stone wall was built along the eastern cliff edge to guard against potential geological instability, while a proper staircase with handrails was installed to improve visitor access and safety.

The work was over-



Photo courtesy of ACOR

An aerial view of Khirbet Salameh, an ancient farmstead in Tla Al Ali

seen by Ala'a Al Badarin and Jehad Haron and supported by the USAID-funded Sustainable Cultural Heritage Through Engagement of Local Communities Project (SCHEP).

The third phase concentrated on urgent,

minimal interventions inside the archaeological site.

These included stabilising open holes, installing metal covers over wells and pit silos, and adding lighting.

The surrounding landscape was also

addressed.

Trees were planted around the site's perimeter as part of efforts to protect the archaeological area and clearly demarcate it from potential encroachment.

Excavations at Khir-

bet Salameh have yielded material from several periods, reflecting the site's long history of occupation.

“There is a quantity of early Hellenistic material and two Ptolemaic coins,” Bikai said. “Four bins were associated with the Hellenistic pottery. Other remains belonged to the late Roman and Byzantine period.”

For Bikai, the site's significance lies in the evidence of repeated construction, abandonment and resettlement.

“The importance of Khirbet Salameh was that it incorporated different stages of construction and the site was abandoned and resettled multiple times,” he said, adding that its historical development was similar to that of many archaeological sites in Jordan and across the region.

Water minister says dams prepared for 2026/2027 rainy season

AMMAN (JT) — The Kingdom's dams are “fully” prepared for the 2026/2027 rainy season, following the submission of the National Dam Safety Committee report confirming the structural integrity and operational readiness of facilities across Jordan, Minister of Water and Irrigation Raed Abu Soud said on Thursday.

Abu Soud directed all water sector personnel to handle the upcoming season with high responsibility and professionalism, execute contingency plans for emergencies and flash floods, and maintain round-the-clock operations at the ministry's control centres, according to a ministry statement.

Accompanied by Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Secretary-General Hisham Hissa and dam officials, Abu Soud inspected several



Minister of Water and Irrigation Raed Abu Soud said on Thursday checks on several water facilities and hydroelectric power stations ahead of winter

water facilities and hydroelectric power stations to review maintenance work, facility preparation, and the clearing of valleys and stream beds.

These measures aim to maximise rainwater harvesting across the Kingdom, aligning with national goals

to expand water collection, secure water supplies for various uses, support food security, and advance the Economic Modernisation Vision and the Strategic Water Plan 2023-2040.

Composed of specialised water experts, engineers, and technicians, the committee conducted field visits and surveys to verify the operational readiness of dams and adjacent valley beds during flood conditions.

The committee is tasked with monitoring dam behaviour, analysing discharge measurements, and relaying real-time data to the main operations centre.

It also formulates water release plans, manages periodic daily, monthly, and annual water budgets, and tracks inflow, storage, loss, and discharge levels across all dams.



Jordan condemns Iranian attack on Kuwait

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Thursday condemned the Iranian attacks targeting Kuwait.

A Foreign Ministry statement denounced the attacks as a “blatant” violation of Kuwaiti sovereignty, a threat to its security, stability and territorial integrity, and a dangerous escalation violating international law and the UN Charter.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed Jordan's absolute soli-

darity with Kuwait and emphasised full support for all measures taken by Kuwait to safeguard its sovereignty, security, citizens and residents.

Kuwait's army said Thursday it was intercepting a missile and drone attack from Iran.

"Kuwaiti air defenses are currently engaging hostile missile and drone attacks following the heinous Iranian aggression," Kuwait's army wrote on X.

Jordan reaffirms commitment to advancing pan-Arab economic integration

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's Permanent Representative to the Arab League Amjad Adaih on Thursday headed the Kingdom's delegation to the 118th ministerial session of the Economic and Social Council, held at the pan-Arab body's General Secretariat.

Delivering the Kingdom's address on behalf of the minister of industry, trade and supply, Adaih stressed that Jordan attaches great importance to enhancing Arab economic coordination and expanding joint frameworks, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He stressed that the ministry, through its role in the council, spares no effort to bolster regional trade, investment, and economic ties, expressing full readiness to share expertise and activate operational channels with Arab nations.

Adaih highlighted the session's extensive



Jordan's Permanent Representative to the Arab League Amjad Adaih on Thursday heads the Kingdom's delegation to the 118th ministerial session of the Economic and Social Council

agenda, which covers vital items across key economic and social sectors, led by the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA), developments in the Arab Customs Union, regional trade and investment flows, and efforts to bolster joint Arab action.

He noted Jordan's active engagement

alongside Arab counterparts in advancing cooperation projects to adopt recommendations that foster integration, warning that regional security challenges and conflicts severely impact economic structures, particularly transport, supply chains, energy, and food security demanding

more effective and innovative mechanisms.

Jordan also took part, through the Economic Office at the Permanent Mission, in the council's preparatory meetings, which addressed vital issues aimed at enhancing coordination across various economic, social, and developmental fields.

HFDJB, JODDB sign MoU to boost youth, women employment in Badia

AMMAN (JT) — The Hashemite Fund for the Development of Jordan Badia (HFDJB) and the Jordan Design and Development Bureau (JODDB) on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding to expand training, innovation and technology initiatives to improve employment opportunities for youth and women in the Badia.

The MoU, signed in the presence of HRH Princess Basma bint Ali, HFDJB chairperson of the board of trustees, seeks to support the fund's development efforts by leveraging the JODDB's technical and engineering expertise, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The memorandum also provides for training programmes aligned with labour market needs, capacity-building initiatives for youth and women, support for entrepreneurial ideas and



The Hashemite Fund for the Development of Jordan Badia and the Jordan Design and Development Bureau on Wednesday sign a memorandum of understanding to improve employment opportunities for youth and women in the Badia

projects, and the transfer of knowledge and technology.

The agreement also includes preparing studies and technical solutions and implementing pilot programmes and projects across the northern, central and southern Badia regions,

to strengthen residents' skills and readiness for employment.

Princess Basma stressed the importance of translating the MoU's outcomes into practical training programmes targeting Badia youth, helping them develop their skills and ideas

and enabling them to realise their potential.

She also highlighted the need to expand the scope of the cooperation beyond the northern Badia to include the central and southern regions.

HFDJB Director General Ayesh Qatarnah described the MoU as an important step in the fund's efforts to empower and train Badia youth, enhance their skills and capabilities, and draw on the JODDB's specialised expertise to deliver high-quality programmes tailored to their needs.

JODDB Director Ayman Batran underlined the bureau's readiness to work directly with the fund on youth training and development through programmes targeting sectors that meet labour market needs, enhancing participants' preparedness and expanding their employment opportunities in the private sector.



Prosecutor questions bus driver after boy found dead inside school bus

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Amman prosecutor on Thursday began questioning a female bus driver who allegedly left a five-year-old schoolboy inside her bus, which caused his death, official sources said.

The victim was allegedly left inside the bus by the female driver, who was in charge of driving children from school to their homes, Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

The female driver had a private contract with some families to drive their children to and from school, according to the police official.

Based on preliminary investigations, Sartawi said, “the female driver forgot the child inside the bus”. “The driver forgot

the child was still in the bus, locked her vehicle and left,” according to Sartawi.

The child was later found and rushed to a nearby hospital but was declared dead on arrival, he added.

The child's body was transferred to the National Institute of Forensic Medicine for an official government autopsy, according to Sartawi.

Blood and tissue samples were taken from the child and sent to the Forensic and Laboratories Department for further testing, according to a senior official source.

The Amman prosecutor will summon the victim's family for further questioning, the senior official said.

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

EVENT

Energy Ministry participates in 'Intersolar Middle East 2026' in Dubai

AMMAN (JT) — Secretary General of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources Amani Azzam on Thursday took part in “Intersolar Middle East 2026” conference in Dubai.

During the conference, she stressed that the success of the energy transition depends not only on technology, investment and infrastructure, but also on investing in people, developing skills and empowering youth and women to shape and lead the sector's future.

Azzam outlined Jordan's experience in advancing the energy transition, noting that



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renewable energy accounted for around 26.3 per cent of total electricity generation

in the Kingdom by the end of 2025.

The secretary-general highlighted Jor-

dan's expansion in energy storage, smart grids and green hydrogen, the Jordan



The Anti-Narcotic Department on Wednesday says that they arrest 26 wanted suspects, including two alleged members of a regional gang, in connection with eight illicit drug cases nationwide

Two alleged regional gang members among 26 arrested in drug crackdown — police

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Anti-Narcotic Department on Wednesday said that they arrested 26 wanted suspects, including two alleged members of a regional gang, in connection with eight illicit drug cases in various parts of the Kingdom in the past few days, according to police.

Law-enforcement officers also seized large amounts of illicit drugs and firearms

with some of the suspects, according to Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi.

One of the major cases, according to Sartawi, involved the arrest of two suspects, who allegedly had ties with a regional gang, in Madaba Governorate.

“Our security teams received information that the two suspects possessed a large quantity of drugs and placed them under surveillance,” Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

The two suspects were arrested during a raid, and officers allegedly found in their possession 11 kilograms of Crystal meth and around 43 kilograms of Hashish, the police official added.

In another security operation, Sartawi said that 11 suspected drug dealers were arrested in Ruweished area.

Officers allegedly seized 33,000 illicit pills and 12 firearms

during the raid operations, he added.

Police also arrested suspects in Aqaba, Irbid and Madaba, according to Sartawi.

Police seized Crystal meth, Hashish and Captagon pills, he added.

All suspects were referred to the State Security Court prosecution office for further questioning and indictment, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate.



Flash flood survivors gather to receive utility aid from a temporary relief camp at Devghat in Nepal's Nuwakot district on Thursday

Nepal says death toll rises to 1,252 as rescue operations continue

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AFP) — Catastrophic floods on the China-Nepal border have killed at least 1,252 people in Nepal, the disaster authority said on Thursday, taking overall deaths to more than 1,270.

Chinese state media earlier confirmed 21 people were killed in Tibet, bringing the total toll from the disaster that struck on August 26 to 1,273.

The number of missing in Nepal remained 4,216, as rescue operations continued on a war-footing.

In China, state media say there are 541 people missing, taking the overall number to 4,757.

Nearly 600 foreigners from over 30 nationalities are also missing, with Indians making up one of the largest proportions.

Some 75 Americans are also unaccounted for, ac-

cording to the State Department on Wednesday.

In Kathmandu, desperate families of some of the missing foreigners said they were combing hospitals and morgues for any information about their loved ones.

"I feel desperate, it's been so many days," said 53-year-old American Sanjeev Rai who flew to Nepal after learning that his wife was untraceable.

The floods, which tore through mountain districts, have destroyed roads, bridges and other infrastructure, hampering relief efforts.

Aid agencies said they were considering deploying porters to deliver aid to hard-hit districts close to the border with China.

"We've been discussing with the government how also to use helicopters, cargo drones to be able to

deliver aid," Lila Pieters Yahia, the UN resident coordinator for Nepal, told reporters in Kathmandu.

"The beauty of your country [is] you have porters. So we have to go back into also those very simple means to bring the aid as soon as possible."

Long considered the backbone of trekking and mountaineering expeditions in Nepal, porters are known to carry heavy loads for days across steep trails in tough conditions.

Nepali army personnel and rescue teams, including foreign experts, meanwhile, continued to search on Thursday for survivors feared trapped inside several hydropower tunnels.

The work is ongoing using excavators and other heavy equipment to look for any survivors in the tunnels, the army said.

Palestinians say Israeli army kills two teenagers in West Bank

RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — The Israeli army killed two teenagers in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday night, the Palestinian health ministry said, while the army said it opened fire during a "violent riot".

Omar Mohammad Naji Al Nassan, 19, and Khalil Rasem Khalil Shahada, 16, were shot dead by the Israeli army in the village of Al Mughayyir, northeast of Ramallah in the central West Bank, the ministry said.

Amin Abu Alia, the head of the Al Mughayyir village council, told AFP "Israeli settlers... tried to steal sheep from two homes" in the village, and that following a confrontation, "the Israeli army imposed a siege on the village before raiding its centre".

He said the Israeli forces placed snipers inside buildings, who "opened live fire on residents who tried to confront the settlers".

The Israeli army meanwhile said it had "secured the entrance" to the village "in order to facilitate the return of livestock belonging to Israeli civilians that had been found in the area of the village".

"During the forces' activity in the area, a violent riot broke out, during which terrorists



Relatives mourn during the funeral of two Palestinians killed in Al-Mughayyir, east of Ramallah, following an Israeli settlers attack followed by Israeli army raid, at the Ramallah government hospital in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday

hurled cinder blocks and stones at the forces," the army said.

"The forces responded by firing at key instigators in order to remove the threat," it said, adding that the management of the incident was under review.

The Palestinian Red Crescent reported that the two teenagers were critically wounded by

live fire during clashes, Nassan in the neck and Shahada in the back, and were transferred to two hospitals in Ramallah, where doctors pronounced them dead.

AFP footage filmed inside the Ramallah medical centre showed mourners gathering around one of the bodies shrouded in a Palestinian flag.

The mourners carried the remains outside the hospital and chanted "with our souls and our blood, we will sacrifice ourselves for you, martyr. We were created to live in freedom".

The West Bank, occupied by Israel since 1967, has seen a surge in violence since the outbreak of war in the Gaza Strip following

Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023.

Attacks by settlers on Palestinians have increased and become almost daily. At least 1,105 Palestinians, including a number of militants, have been killed by fire from Israeli soldiers or settlers, according to an AFP tally based on Palestinian official figures.

Ukraine, India discuss Black Sea, food security on FM's 'historic' Kyiv visit

KYIV, Ukraine (AFP) — Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar arrived in Kyiv on Thursday to discuss shipping in the Black Sea and food security, Ukraine's authorities said.

Kyiv hailed the visit, Jaishankar's first standalone trip to Ukraine, as "historic" and called for a peaceful resolution to the war in Ukraine.

It follows a meeting earlier this week between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier this week.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has killed thousands of civilians and turned into Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II.

Moscow has also hampered exports of Ukrainian food products through a campaign of port and ship strikes on the Black Sea.

"We are grateful to India for its commit-



In this handout photograph taken and released by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Service on Thursday, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky (left) greets India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar prior to their talks in Kyiv

ment to ending this unjust war," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on social media after meeting Jaishankar.

"We discussed the situation in the Black Sea, including the existing

threats to civilian shipping," Zelensky said.

"It is absolutely unacceptable to block food supplies to regions where this is a highly sensitive issue and where people depend on these maritime routes,"

he added.

Jaishankar told reporters in Kyiv: "Every passing day of conflict only means more deaths and more destruction."

"Understandably, it is for the parties involved to find a way. But if In-

dia can be of any help in any manner, we are ready. And this was the core of my discussion today so far," he added.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga called Jaishankar's visit a "historic moment".

He said Kyiv was "constantly under attack", adding: "I appreciate my colleague's brave visit."

"While the minister was here with us in Kyiv, Russia once again launched jet-powered 'shaheds', which were developed not without Iran's help," Zelensky said.

He added the the Indian delegation "was safe because it is Ukrainian fighter jets that shoot down most of these drones".

Since last week, jet-powered drones have been attacking Kyiv and surrounding areas, triggering multiple air raid alerts per day, causing damage to residential buildings and wounding civilians.



US President Donald Trump speaks while hosting a Rose Garden dinner at the White House in Washington, DC, on Wednesday

White House pressures US companies to ditch Paris space summit

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The White House is pressuring American space companies, including billionaire Elon Musk's SpaceX, to decline French President Emmanuel Macron's invitation to a space summit in Paris next week, according to a Politico report.

In a private call, a White House official told companies, including SpaceX, Stoke Space, K2 Space and Astra, that attending the two-day event "could look like tacit support for EU policy positions", three anonymous sources familiar with the call told Politico.

The sources also said the White House official, who works in the science and technology policy office, emphasised that the decision to attend is up to the companies, but the discouragement was noted.

The White House official also told industry representatives that "France did not coordinate with the US on the

summit, accused the country of 'anti-competitive practices,' and suggested the event's panels were not designed to include the American perspective and may diminish US industry efforts," according to Politico's sources.

Under President Donald Trump, the United States's relationships with European allies has taken on new dimensions with disagreements over tariffs, troop deployments to the unpopular war in the Middle East and more.

Co-chaired by France and Germany, the summit will be held at the Grand Palais in Paris and will host global leaders from around 120 countries to discuss the challenges related to the use of outer space.

In July, Secretary-General Philippe Adam told AFP the event would bring together "heads of state and governments, but also companies".

"Obviously, the Americans need to be there," he said.

panies and the third was in politics.

The White House did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment on the story.

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Belgium logs nearly 3,000 excess deaths during heatwaves

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AFP) — Belgium logged nearly 3,000 excess deaths during successive heatwaves since June, health authorities said on Thursday, days after this summer was confirmed as the hottest on record in the northern European nation.

Some 365 excess deaths were observed between July 28 and August 16, when Belgium sweltered under its third heatwave of the season, which also saw the beginning of the country's worst wildfire in modern history.

That represented a "slight" uptick of seven percent more deaths than normal, the Sciensano national public health institute said.

The figure added to a grim tally racked up during the previous two bouts of high temperatures, the institute said.

Belgium logged an excess mortality rate of 49 per cent between June 18 and July 3, with 2,035 extra deaths.

Another 535 more people than usual died between July 4 and 17, bringing the to-

tal number of excess deaths over the summer to 2,935, according to a statement.

Earlier this week, the national weather agency said summer 2026 was the hottest on record, making Belgium the latest European nation to smash temperature records this year.

Temperatures in the official national reference station in Uccle, outside Brussels, averaged 20.3°C, 2.4°C above the mean of recent decades, according to the Royal Meteorological Institute.

Scientists warn that climate change is making extreme weather events more intense and resulting in heat records tumbling more often.

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Pedestrians walk through water sprays on Place Bellecour during a heatwave in Lyon, central France, on Wednesday

UN’s Sudan probe says foreign fighters fuelling conflict

GENEVA (AFP) — Foreign fighters and support networks are fuelling the conflict in Sudan and worsening violence against civilians, a UN-backed investigation warned on Thursday.

The United Nations’ independent fact-finding mission on Sudan said foreign involvement was strengthening the military capabilities of the country’s warring parties, enabling increasingly sophisticated military operations, with devastating consequences for ordinary people.

Since April 2023, the conflict between Sudan’s army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has killed tens of thousands and forced millions to flee their homes.

In a report, the probe documented the recruitment, training and deployment of foreign personnel to support the RSF, with transnational entities also facilitating the transfer of weapons, ammunition, military technology and logistical support.

It also said there were reasonable grounds to believe that the regular army used foreign-supplied drones in its operations that harmed civilians and civilian infrastructure.

“This external support has not brought greater protection for civilians,” said the fact-finding mission’s Chairman Mohammad Chande Othman.

“Instead, civilians are paying the price through attacks on homes, hospi-



The remains of a drone during a display of weapons reportedly seized by the Sudanese army, which it says were supplied to the RSF by foreign countries

tals, schools, markets and places of refuge.”

The UN Human Rights Council established the probe in October 2023, to begin gathering evidence of violations in Sudan.

The independent investigative team does not speak on behalf of the United Nations.

Colombian contingent

The investigation documented the deployment of up to 2,000 ex-military

Colombian contractors who directly operated combat drones, artillery and advanced weapons alongside RSF units.

Witnesses also reported fighters from South Sudan, Chad and Ethiopia, “including women, serving primarily in front-line, rather than technical roles”, identified by language, accent “and, in some cases uniforms”, the report said.

Private entities, intermediaries and recruiters

operating from countries including Colombia and the United Arab Emirates used transit locations in Chad, Libya and Somalia to facilitate the delivery of personnel, training, weapons and logistics to the RSF in Sudan, the report said.

It found that foreign suppliers had boosted the RSF and the army’s drone capabilities, allowing them to strike far beyond the front lines.

The mission found rea-

sonable grounds to believe that the army and RSF attacks it documented may amount to war crimes.

Responding to the report, the United Arab Emirates insisted in a statement it was “not involved in the civil war in Sudan, nor has it provided arms or any related material to any party in Sudan since the outbreak of the conflict”, and strongly condemned violations of international

law by all sides.

The United States last month urged the UN Security Council to expand an arms embargo on the Darfur region to cover all of Sudan — a call echoed by the fact-finding mission.

“Protecting Sudan’s civilians requires action not only against those fighting the war, but also against the individuals, entities and networks that enable it to continue,” said Chande Othman.

German defence firms targeted in arson attack

MUNICH, Germany (AFP) — German authorities said on Thursday that defence firm offices in Munich were targeted in an overnight arson attack and that two Bulgarian nationals were later arrested.

A “political background” was assumed in the attack, police said, which saw firebombs hurled outside a defence tech firm and close to a drone maker, but did not cause major damage or injuries.

The incident comes with Germany — a key NATO supporter of Ukraine in its fight against Russia — on high alert for Moscow-backed sabotage plots and “hybrid attacks”.

Bavaria’s Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann drew a link between the latest incident, a suspected Russian “hybrid attack” on Leipzig airport involving an explosive-laden drone last month, and two attacks this week on power substations.

“As we have already seen in other parts of Germany in recent days, we now face an increased risk of attacks on our infrastructure and quite clearly also in connection with defence companies in our country,” he told a press conference.

“All of this is happening in the context of an overall deterioration in the security situation and of international conflicts.”

A police spokesman in Munich told AFP that authorities were alerted overnight that objects may have been thrown from a car on a street that is home to defence companies.

Police found one firebomb alight and extinguished it, then rendered a second harmless, he said.

Local public broadcaster Bayerischer Rundfunk reported that the devices were thrown into a construction site that forms part the premises of Rohde & Schwarz, a tech firm that supplies the German and other militaries, and one started a fire near some containers.

Rohde & Schwarz confirmed to AFP that

incendiary devices were found close to its headquarters, adding their site was “not affected”.

Drone maker Helsing, which supplies the Ukrainian armed forces, has its headquarters opposite the site. The company declined to comment when contacted by AFP.

Authorities launched a hunt and arrested two Bulgarians, a 38-year-old man and a 28-year-old woman, at a Munich petrol station, the police spokesman said.

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl said investigations were ongoing.

“But we are always in a position to get to the bottom of these matters”, he told a press conference, adding that the Leipzig airport incident last month was proof of this.

“There is no such thing as 100 per cent security against attacks of this kind,” he said.

‘All of this is happening in the context of an overall deterioration in the security situation and of international conflicts’

How El Nino is choking the Panama Canal

PANAMA CITY (AFP) — The Panama Canal will restrict the number of vessels transiting the crucial waterway from Friday for the second time ever due to drought caused by the El Nino climate phenomenon.

Five per cent of global trade passes through the canal that connects the Pacific Ocean with the Atlantic.

The waterway is set to reduce daily traffic from 36 to 32 ships a day in an effort to conserve water amid a severe drought likely to last until mid-2027.

Canal authorities are also reducing the per-

mitted draft of vessels — how deep they sit in the water — from 15.24 to 14.63 metres.

Panama has declared an emergency over El Nino, which raises surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean and causes global changes in winds and rainfall as well as erratic weather conditions.

The canal’s incoming administrator Ilya Espino de Marotta has acknowledged the current “challenging” conditions.

The 80 kilometre canal draws on freshwater that comes mainly from rainfall and is stored in

artificial lakes.

Without water, its locks that lift and lower ships at the beginning and end of the journey would not function.

Each transiting ship requires about 200 million litres of water, which is then discharged into the sea.

Water “is the most important resource for operations”, but “between April and August the accumulated rainfall deficit was 35.8 per cent below the historical average”, the canal’s water manager Erick Cordoba told AFP.

And there are “no signs of recovery in the short

term”, Cordoba added.

Forecasts indicate that the 2027 dry season, normally between January and April, will start a little earlier than usual and extend into May.

In 2023 and 2024, El Nino forced a reduction in daily transits to 22 and the maximum draft to 13.41 metres.

That led to 20 per cent fewer vessels and a 17 per cent drop in tonnage, not to mention longer lines of ships queuing up.

Further restrictions could follow those imposed on Friday.

“If we don’t manage to fill the lakes in Novem-

ber, we’re going to have to tighten our belts,” former canal administrator Jorge Quijano told AFP.

Long-lasting restrictions will lead to “higher shipping costs and longer waiting times” and therefore higher prices for consumers, Rebecca Bill Chavez, president of the Inter-American Dialogue, told AFP.

A ship loses around 200 containers for every 30 centimetre draft decrease, according to Quijano.

That amounts to hundreds of units for large vessels that can carry up to 16,000.

“We’re going to see a significant impact on the container sector,” which is the canal’s biggest source of revenue, he said.

But Danish shipping company Maersk believes it is still “too early” to “speculate” about the impact.

The route mainly connects China, South Korea and Japan with the United States — the origin or destination of seven in ten containers that pass through the canal.

Rising costs could “potentially affect US trade”, said analyst Natasha Lindstaedt of Britain’s University of Essex.

“Unfortunately, that is the reality, and that is why, as a society and also as states, we must strengthen our resilience.”

Germany this week formally accused Moscow of being behind the Leipzig incident, further ratcheting up tensions between Moscow and Berlin.

Berlin has accused Russia of recruiting “low-level agents”, usually people paid small sums and with little training, to carry out such acts.

Munich is a major centre for the defence tech industry, which is growing rapidly as Europe rearms.

Safadi, Austrian foreign minister discuss bilateral relations, regional developments

Continued from page 1

“Jordanian-Austrian relations are moving forward steadily through joint economic, educational and defence programmes, as well as cooperation in efforts to promote regional stability, both bilaterally and within the framework of the European Union,” he said.

Safadi also highlighted the importance of resuming direct flights between Amman and Vienna in boosting tourism and trade exchanges between the two countries.

He commended Austria’s support for the two-state solution and its contribution to humanitarian response efforts in Gaza and to meeting the needs of refugees.

Safadi also stressed the need for the full implementation of US President Donald Trump’s plan to consolidate stability in Gaza and the removal

of all Israeli restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid.

The two countries signed an agreement several months ago regulating the presence of Austrian forces cooperating with Jordan in military...

He warned of the consequences of Israel’s illegal measures in the West Bank, including settler violence, settlement expansion, land confiscation and violations of the historical and legal status quo at Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, noting that such actions undermine the two-state solution and

prospects for achieving a just and comprehensive peace.

Safadi stressed the need for effective and influential international action to halt these measures and protect the right of all peoples in the region to live in security and peace.

The two ministers also discussed support for the Syrian government’s reconstruction efforts, with Safadi describing Syria as a “success story” that Jordan and Austria agree on the need to support.

He also stressed the need to support the Lebanese government in extending its sovereignty across all Lebanese territory, calling for Israel’s withdrawal from occupied areas and the implementation of understandings with Lebanon and UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

Safadi condemned the Iranian attacks on Jordan and the Gulf Cooperation Council

countries, noting that they began hours after the outbreak of the recent war, despite Jordan and other Arab countries having worked to prevent the conflict.

He said Jordan and Austria agreed on the need to pursue diplomacy and dialogue to resolve the crisis, according to the statement.

Safadi also stressed that the US is a partner of Jordan, with the presence of US forces in the Kingdom governed by a defence co-operation agreement under which the forces are stationed at Jordanian military bases and cooperate with the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army in several fields.

He added that Jordan has similar defence co-operation with other partner countries that also have forces in the Kingdom, including Austria.

The two countries signed an agreement

several months ago regulating the presence of Austrian forces cooperating with Jordan in military training and the exchange of expertise.

Safadi said Jordan’s defence cooperation with partner countries has extended over many years and has proven effective in counterterrorism efforts.

He stressed that Jordan seeks good relations with Iran, but said this requires addressing the causes of tension, including support for drug and weapons smuggling into the Kingdom and attempts to undermine its security and stability.

Safadi reaffirmed that Jordan will continue to exercise its sovereign and legal right to take all necessary measures to protect its security, stability, sovereignty and the safety of its citizens.

He also congratulated Meisl-Reisinger on Austria’s election as a

member of the UN Security Council from the beginning of next year.

Meisl-Reisinger said Austria considers Jordan a key regional partner and a pillar of security and stability, commending the Kingdom’s role in promoting security, stability and peace.

She also highlighted the deep-rooted friendship between the two countries and the numerous Royal visits to Austria over the years, stressing the importance of building on bilateral cooperation, particularly in tourism and renewable energy.

Meisl-Reisinger also stressed the importance of continued defence and security cooperation under the agreement signed between the two countries in April 2026, which provides for joint cooperation programmes and military training.

She condemned the Iranian attacks on the Kingdom and ex-

pressed Austria’s solidarity with Jordan, commending the Kingdom’s role in delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza and treating injured children from the Strip in Jordanian hospitals.

The Austrian minister also commended Jordan’s efforts to support stability and recovery in Syria and encourage the voluntary return of Syrian refugees.

Safadi also met with members of the Austrian Parliament’s Foreign Affairs and Defence committees to discuss Jordanian-Austrian relations and ways to enhance them, as well as regional and international developments and parliamentary cooperation, ahead of an expected visit to the Kingdom by the Parliament’s cross-party Middle East/Gulf Friendship Group.

Safadi also met with Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael

Grossi and discussed ways to strengthen existing cooperation between Jordan and the agency.

On Wednesday, Safadi participated in a dialogue session entitled “Jordan’s Role in the Middle East: Peacemaker, Mediator and Pillar of Stability” at the Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue in Vienna.

Also on Thursday, Safadi held a phone call with Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen, during which they discussed bilateral relations and ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries.

They also discussed regional developments and efforts to end escalation, restore calm and enhance security and stability, both bilaterally and within the framework of the European Union, agreeing to continue consultations and coordination on issues of mutual interest.

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Saxony-Anhalt, Germany's potential far-right laboratory

BERLIN (AFP) — The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) has its biggest chance yet of forming a regional government as voters in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt on Sunday elect a regional assembly. The party holds commanding leads in opinion polls and could even win enough seats to form a government on its own, although this is far from certain. Germany's federal system gives the country's 16 state governments broad powers — so what would an AfD government mean in practical terms?

Migration

The AfD's top candidate Ulrich Siegmund has promised to expel as many migrants as possible who don't have settled status, including through expanded use of pre-deportation detention. The party has promised a "deportation and remigration offensive" and says an AfD-led state government would refuse to admit people who had entered illegally from a safe third country. It also wants to act against churches offering refuge to irregular migrants and make asylum seekers carry out community service or lose their benefits. However, it may not be able to achieve all it has promised. According to a Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology analysis, 21 of the AfD's 56 planned measures on migration could only be implemented at the national or European level.

Security

Saxony-Anhalt's AfD branch has been classified as a "right-wing extremist" organisation by Germany's domestic intelligence agency BfV. The party has accused the BfV of political interference and wants its state-level agency to undergo far-reaching reform, even raising the possibility of abolishing it entirely. The AfD also wants more focus on combating left-wing extremism and setting up "citizens' watch" groups to act as a complement to the police. Police unions have criticised the idea, saying it would undermine their monopoly on the use of force.

Public media

Siegmund has said one of his first acts upon taking office would be to cancel the contract which governs the status of the region's public broadcaster. The AfD routinely accuses Germany's public broadcasters of bias, and Siegmund has said cancelling the contract would be a way of exerting "pressure for reform" on public media. However, media law experts say the AfD's plans would probably run afoul of the constitutional duty to provide a comprehensive public broadcasting service.

Schooling

In Saxony-Anhalt, the AfD says it would lift a ban on home schooling and abolish the obligation for parents to send their children to school. However, this would require a two-thirds majority in parliament which the AfD is unlikely to gain, and then likely face additional judicial and constitutional hurdles. In its first 100 days the AfD has also pledged to ban the rainbow flag in schools and introduce the German flag and the singing of the national anthem. State funding for an initiative called "School against Racism" would be discontinued. In the long term, the AfD wants to refocus the history curriculum away from the Nazi era to other parts of Germany's history, such as the German Empire founded in 1871. It also wants to expand the teaching of Russian in schools and restart student exchanges with Russia suspended since 2022.

Family

Siegmund has said he wants to encourage more births instead of relying on immigration to combat depopulation, recalling policies of former Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban. Couples would receive a "baby welcome money" of 2,000 euros (\$2,300) for each of their first two children, and 4,000 euros for every child after that. The AfD would also make meals for children at schools and kindergartens free. Siegmund acknowledged in a TV interview that these measures would cost hundreds of millions of euros and cautioned that "not everything can happen at once".

A homeland on Canvas: Sliman Mansour and the rise of revolutionary Palestinian art

By Ramzy Baroud

The death of Palestinian artist Sliman Anis Mansour stirred powerful memories. He passed away at Al Makassed Hospital in occupied East Jerusalem on August 24, at the age of 79, bringing to a close a legacy that cannot truly be described, but only experienced. His life almost exactly spanned the age of the Palestinian Nakba. He was born mere months before the mass expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homeland. Yet, his death in an occupied city tells us that the story of Mansour, his art and the Palestinian struggle for freedom is far from over.

Oddly, for years, I knew Mansour through a single painting: Jamal Al Mahamel (The Camel Carrier of Hardships). The title itself requires a pause. The phrase is rooted in Palestinian and Levantine popular culture. It describes one who shoulders the collective struggles, pain and responsibilities of others. In Mansour's post-Nakba world, that person is an elderly Palestinian porter, a barefoot worker carrying the burden of an entire homeland on his back. That homeland is represented by Jerusalem, with the Dome of the Rock, one of Islam's holiest sites, rising above it. Mansour, however, was not a Muslim. He belonged to the once-thriving, though sadly shrinking, Palestinian Christian community and came from the town of Birzeit, near Ramallah in the West Bank. Let that sink in. One of the most iconic Palestinian paintings of the modern era, celebrating the centrality of Jerusalem and one of its most recognisable historic Islamic sites, was painted by a Christian man. In the age of Israeli extremists like national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and his "religious wars", this may appear unusual. For Palestinians, it is anything but. Though deeply spiritual, Palestinians have historically transcended religious divides in their long

struggle for freedom. A mosque is never just a mosque, and a church is never just a church. They are powerful symbols of history, culture, roots, spirituality and continuity. Mansour entrusted the Camel of Hardships with carrying all of that alone, as the world watched an old man bent beneath an unbearable weight, yet fierce and unbroken in his resolve.

The soldiers did not paint over the walls themselves, of course. They dragged weary refugees from their sleep and forced them to erase every piece of graffiti, every image and every word

Though the painting was created in 1973, it exploded in popularity during the First Intifada, the popular uprising that unified Palestinians everywhere. It took on a renewed meaning: We Palestinians may be standing alone, exhausted by time and the betrayal of others, but we remain as steadfast as ever. The last time I saw that

painting hanging in the living room of my old house in the Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza was also the last time I saw my father, most of my brothers and many of my childhood friends. My father died years later. The house was bombed. The painting no longer hangs where it once did, at the heart of our old refugee home. Ironically, it was only after I left Palestine that I discovered that Sliman Mansour was far more than the creator of a single painting. He belonged to an artistic movement that taught visual sumud, steadfastness, to an entire generation. My lack of knowledge was not a fault of my own. Artists such as Mansour, Ismail Shamout, Fathi Ghaben, Vera Tamari, Tayseer Barakat and Nabil Anani, among others, were simply forbidden by Israeli military ordinances. Israel is afraid of Palestinian art, particularly art that preserves memory, asserts steadfastness and speaks of revolution. During the Intifada, the Israeli army would storm Palestinian refugee camps almost daily, particularly before dawn, to ensure that artistic expressions on the walls were painted over. The soldiers did not paint over the walls themselves, of course. They dragged weary refugees from their sleep and forced them to erase every piece of graffiti, every image and every word. The soldiers may have thought they were carrying out a military duty, somehow protecting Israel's national security. In reality, they were trying to erase evidence of a people whose roots in the land ran far deeper than the occupation itself. But the evidence was never erased. It could not simply be painted over, even when the artist himself disappeared, because true art is more than an arrangement of colors on canvas. It is one of the deepest forms of documenting one's own existence. Fathi Ghaben, who became a close friend of my family, had, like most Gazans, more than his share of suffering. He was a refugee from a once-serene village called Hirbiya, north of

Gaza. His family sought refuge in Gaza during the Nakba. Ghaben had no memories of the village he lost as a child, yet its colours filled his paintings. For him, Palestine was a beautiful woman, powerful in her determination, yet, gentle in her gaze. Her eyes, always sharply defined, embodied the beauty of a homeland that never abandoned him. She was the worker, the farmer, the student, the protester, the fighter. Ghaben was repeatedly imprisoned by Israel for emphasising the colours of the Palestinian flag in his art, accused of "incitement through his paintings". The occupation army killed his young nephew in 1982, and many of his relatives were killed in the genocide. Ghaben himself died during the genocide, in February 2024, after being displaced from his home. For me, and dare I say for many of my generation, it is difficult to process art that does not carry this kind of weight — art that goes beyond mere "expression" and becomes an experience of blood, sweat, tears and the burden of memories that can only be put to rest when justice in Palestine finally prevails. I think back to the Camel of Hardships, and I am convinced that Mansour's figure represented more than Palestine and the Palestinian. Perhaps unknowingly, he was also painting the Palestinian artist himself. They, too, carried an immense responsibility on their shoulders. Without them, several generations might never have truly appreciated the colors of Palestine, smelled the powder of revolution, or understood the true meaning of losing a homeland. Ramzy Baroud is a journalist, author and the editor of The Palestine Chronicle. He is the author of eight books. His latest book, "Before the Flood" was published by Seven Stories Press. His other books include "Our Vision for Liberation", "My Father was a Freedom Fighter" and "The Last Earth". Baroud is a non-resident senior research fellow at the Centre for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA). His website is www.ramzybaroud.net

Why the far- right’s war on modern architecture matters

By Jan–Werner Mueller

PRINCETON — Although the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) has been surging in the polls for two years, it has been kept from power by other parties’ refusal to enter governing coalitions with it. But since this “firewall” relies on the AfD never winning outright majorities, it could be fatally undermined by this weekend's state election in Saxony-Anhalt. True, even if the AfD can form a government in Saxony-Anhalt, it will not be able to do much about its current preferred topic: Migration policies and refugee law. But Germany's 16 federal states (Länder) do have wide-ranging authority over culture and education policy and it is here that the AfD's program has been most revealing (and revolting). Far-right populists always wage culture wars. Though they sometimes try to take advantage of cost-of-living crises or other economic challenges, peddling the idea that they alone represent what they call the “real people” is their core commitment. Because they insist that only citizens with the “right” characteristics qualify, they never miss an opportunity to push for the “remigration” not only of refugees but also of “unreal” or “fake” citizens, meaning those from the wrong ethnic background (or even those committed to the wrong political positions). Given their fixation on questions of identity, far-right parties can keep changing their economic agenda — veering from neoliberalism to support for a strong welfare state — without ceasing to be far right. Only by changing their tune on refugees and migrants would they truly become a different political entity. This brings us back to the AfD's programme for Saxony-Anhalt. The AfD cleverly accus-

es what it calls the establishment parties (Altparteien) not of corruption or malice, but of a weakness of will that stems from “national masochism” and low “self-confidence”. These defects supposedly have “cultural” roots, namely a “tradition of destroying tradition” that has left the country defenseless against “rainbow ideologies”. Founded in Weimar but eventually relocated to Dessau in Saxony-Anhalt, the Bauhaus school of art, design, and architecture is still remembered fondly for remarkable buildings like those designed by Walter Gropius in Dessau during the mid-1920s. But according to the AfD, Bauhaus represents “anti-German art”, meaning “German art that doesn't want to be German”. If given power, it would require every new edifice built with state financial support to reflect what it considers a recognisably German tradition (a category that apparently does not include the state's own most influential architectural school). Attacks on modern architecture are not a peculiarity of the German far- right. From former Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to US President Donald Trump, who has issued multiple executive orders to make classicism the preferred style of new federal buildings, far-right leaders have long sought to transform the built environment to reflect what they regard as proper national traditions. Their reasons are varied. For starters, architecture, from the huge mosques erected under Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the prominent Hindu temples commissioned by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, provides tangible, widely visible clues as to who “the real people” are supposed to be. “Beauty”— one of Trump's watchwords,

but also one pushed by more sophisticated figures like the Dutch intellectual-cum-dandy far-right leader Thierry Baudet — is shorthand for advocacy of traditional hierarchies, from the household to the economy to politics.

The point is not that everyone who likes traditional architecture must be a closet right-wing extremist. Rather, it is that the far right’s cultural agenda is intimately tied to its underlying exclusionary political agenda

The AfD would require all new public buildings to be viewed by the majority as “beautiful” (which seems to suggest that every design must be subject to a popular referendum). Plenty of self-conscious- ly traditionalist organisa-

tions and online accounts support this vision, and unlike professional politicians, they are more likely to give the game away. Many explicitly pit classical architecture against “globalism”— a term that often serves as a slippery slope toward anti-Semitism — or re-prise interwar (namely, Nazi) descriptions of modernism as “degenerate art”. For all the emphasis on particularity, anti-modernism is itself a depressingly homogeneous worldwide phenomenon. The AfD's description of Bauhaus as a symbol of “de- racination” has already been answered with a new “Bauhaus Manifesto”, initiated by Germany's federal cultural minister. But as laudable as this document is as a political statement, it ends up massively oversimplifying the history of 20th-century architecture. Contrary to the manifesto's central claim, it is far from obvious that all the protagonists of the Bauhaus stood for an “open society”. In fact, some were quite ready to work with and for the Nazis (who officially banned the school). A Bauhaus-trained architect was among those who designed Auschwitz. The point is not that everyone who likes traditional architecture must be a closet right-wing extremist. Rather, it is that the far right's cultural agenda is intimately tied to its underlying exclusionary political agenda. And since the built environment always serves to make values visible, as the philosopher Susan Neiman once put it, it would be a mistake to dismiss the fight over modern architecture as a sideshow.

Jan-Werner Mueller, professor of Politics at Princeton University, is the author of the forthcoming “Street, Palace, Square: The Architecture of Democratic Spaces” (Penguin Books, 2026).



The Consumer Protection Directorate has prepared a 'corrective' action plan to address a manufacturing defect in 2022 and 2023 JAC E10X and JAC E10X SEHOL vehicles

Jordan orders 'corrective action' for JAC E10X defect

AMMAN (JT) — The Consumer Protection Directorate has prepared a "corrective action plan" to address a manufacturing defect in 2022 and 2023 JAC E10X and JAC E10X SEHOL vehicles that may cause sudden stoppage while driving, according to a statement by Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply.

The directorate, affiliated with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply, said Thursday it had received 53 complaints by Wednesday regarding the defect.

Technical and field inspections conducted by a joint committee with the Jordan Standards and Metrology Organisation, using manufacturer diagnos-

tic equipment, found strong indications of a recurring manufacturing defect linked to the vehicle's main battery or its battery management system.

Based on the final technical report, the directorate prepared measures that include suspending the sale and circulation of vehicles currently in stock, placing warning labels on them and informing prospective buyers of precautionary measures.

The proposed plan would also require the manufacturer and its agent to inspect all 188 registered vehicles of the affected models and address the root cause of the problem within three months, while submitting periodic reports

to the ministry and the Standards and Metrology Organisation.

The manufacturer and agent would also be required to provide written guarantees that repairs will be carried out free of charge to vehicle owners.

The technical report will be sent to China's State Administration for Market Regulation to determine what measures have been taken regarding the issue.

The Consumer Protection Directorate said it will conduct monthly random checks to assess the effectiveness of the repairs and take legal action against any party that fails to comply with the required measures.

ASEZA oversees plan to clear unclaimed containers at ACT

AMMAN (JT) — Chief Commissioner of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) Shadi Majali on Thursday inspected progress on a plan to transfer unclaimed containers from the Aqaba Container Terminal (ACT).

The field visit was attended by ASEZA Commissioner for Economic Development and Investment Affairs Mohammad Abu Omar.

During the tour, ASEZA Director of Storage Raed Theyabat briefed officials on performance indicators, operational milestones and results achieved to date, according to an ASEZA statement.

The plan implements recommendations from a joint coordination meeting held with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply, the Minister of Transport, and key commercial, maritime and logistics stakeholders.

The measures are in line with Prime Ministerial directives to monitor operational conditions at ACT and ensure the clearance of unclaimed units, particularly transit freight, from the terminal to the former free zone site.

Targeting the removal of 1,500 to 2,000 containers, the scheme has so far relocated around 1,100 units, while nearly 200 have



Photo Courtesy of ASEZA

Chief Commissioner of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority Shadi Majali on Thursday inspects progress on a plan to transfer unclaimed containers from Aqaba Container Terminal

completed customs clearance.

The ongoing transfers have eased congestion across ACT yards and streamlined overall container handling.

As a result, yard capacity utilisation dropped from 102 per cent before the plan was implemented to around 80 per cent, reflecting a "tangible" improvement in operational flow and storage capacity.

Container dwell times also recorded "marked" improvement. Transit container dwell time fell from 14 to 12 days, while import container dwell time decreased from 11 to 8.5 days, highlighting the efficiency of expedited handling procedures.

Majali underscored the need to adhere to the implementation schedule in close coordination with all relevant entities to clear the remaining unclaimed cargo and maintain ACT's readiness to receive container vessels without disruption.

Enhancing operational efficiency at the terminal remains a strategic priority for ASEZA, directly supporting national trade flows, maritime shipping and Aqaba's logistics ecosystem, Majali added.

200 companies to take part in 4th 'International Food, Food Tech Exhibition'

AMMAN (JT) — Around 200 local, Arab and foreign companies specialising in food manufacturing will participate on Friday in the fourth edition of the "International Food and Food Tech Exhibition", held at the Amman International Motor Show on Airport Road.

The three-day exhibition, organised by Nabd International for Exhibitions and Conferences, focuses on food security, technological challenges and solutions in food manufacturing, production-line automation, supply-chain sustainability and regional food security.

The event brings together specialists in the food and beverage industries and food manufacturing technology from Jordan and abroad, along with official decision makers and representatives of international organisations concerned with the sector. Companies from 25 Arab



and foreign countries, in addition to Jordan, are taking part.

Exhibitors represent a range of sectors, including food and beverages, dairy and meat products, frozen foods, food ingredients and additives such as spices, flavours and nutrients, manufacturing equipment, packaging, cold-chain solutions, technology, food services and hospitality.

The exhibition will also showcase developments and innovations in food manufacturing, equipment and packaging technologies.

According to the organiser, the exhibition

aims to highlight the importance of the food manufacturing sector and developments in the industry, particularly in the wake of global crises, which underscored the importance of expanding and localising food industries and utilising agricultural products and crops available in Jordan.

Nabd International General Manager Anoud Jarrar said the exhibition provides an opportunity for Jordanian companies to meet counterparts from various countries, and connect Jordanian agricultural producers and food industry workers with potential import-

ers in regional markets, particularly neighbouring countries such as Palestine, Syria and Iraq.

She said the fourth edition was organised based on the outcomes of previous editions and amid growing interest among food manufacturers in keeping pace with developments and adopting food manufacturing technologies in line with quality requirements and international standards.

A conference on smart food manufacturing and food security will also be held alongside the exhibition, bringing together academic researchers, chief executives in the manufacturing sector, decision-makers and technology innovators to help link scientific research with industrial applications.

The exhibition covers an area of 11,000 square metres and will be open throughout its three-day run from 2pm to 9pm. Admission will be free for business owners.

Non-Jordanian ownership in companies listed on ASE reached 46.2%

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) revealed that the value of shares bought by non-Jordanian investors at the ASE in August 2026 was JD30.4 million, representing 11.6 per cent of the overall trading value, while the value of shares sold by them amounted to JD47.9 million.

The value of shares bought by non-Jordanian investors since the beginning of the year until the end of August 2026 was JD262 million, representing 11.7 per cent of the overall trading value, while the value of shares sold by them amounted to JD329.7 million.

Arab investors' purchases during August 2026 were JD29.1



Amman Stock Exchange reveals that the value of shares bought by non-Jordanian investors at the ASE in August 2026 was JD30.4 million

million, or 95.7 per cent of the overall purchases by non-Jordanians, while their sales amounted to JD44.2 million, or 92.4 per cent of non-Jordanians total sales, according

sales value amounted to JD3.7 million, representing 7.6 per cent of the total sales by non-Jordanians.

Hence, non-Jordanian investors' ownership in companies listed on ASE as of end of August 2026 represented 46.2 per cent of the total market value, of which 32.7 per cent for institutional investors including companies, institutions and funds.

Arab investors own 29.7 per cent and non-Arab investors own 16.5 per cent. At the sectoral level, the non-Jordanian ownership in the financial sector was 47.9 per cent, in the services sector was 22.2 per cent and 51.4 per cent in the industrial sector.

Bolivia orders state intervention as fuel crisis bites

LA PAZ (AFP) — The Bolivian government announced on Wednesday that it had placed state oil company YPFB under temporary supervision, citing problems with fuel imports and distribution amid a severe supply crisis.

Long lines of drivers queuing for scarce fuel have become a regular sight in Bolivia, where President Rodrigo Paz took power last November on a pledge to end the worst economic crisis in decades.

A government decree, dated Tuesday, orders YPFB's "extraordinary, transparent and tempo-

rary" takeover to "protect the interests of the State".

The measure could last for up to 180 days and also aims to evaluate how Bolivia currently imports and distributes fuel.

The president's office said in a Facebook post Wednesday that the move would "restore efficiency, strengthen fuel supply and bring transparency to the logistics chain".

A commission made up of several ministerial representatives will oversee the management of the state-owned enterprise.

Hydrocarbons Minister Marcelo Blanco acknowledged to reporters that "regular meas-

ures we had taken didn't work" and attributed the fuel shortage to "logistical shortcomings in YPFB's import and distribution" processes.

The Ministry of Hydrocarbons also announced that it intends to gradually strip YPFB of its role in fuel marketing so the state firm can focus on extraction, exploration and refining.

The government last week hiked diesel prices from 9.80 bolivianos (about 80 US cents) a liter to 18 bolivianos (\$1.50) in an effort to curb fuel smuggling to other countries, which it says is aggravating shortages.

Farmers angry at the decision blocked roads in the north-eastern Beni department and Santa Cruz, Bolivia's economic powerhouse.

The popular dissent tactic defied a state of emergency which Paz declared in June to take the wind out of massive protests against his administration.

The US-backed leader came to power after decades of socialist rule.

His attempts to salvage the economy, such as the scrapping of fuel subsidies in December, caused prices to double and have been unpopular in some circles.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Thursday amounted to JD14 million spread over 5.6 million shares that traded through 4,381 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.58 per cent, closing at 4061.24 points.

Out of 102 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 53 companies rose while the share price of another 19 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Arab Aluminum Industry/Aral by 4.83 per cent, Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 4.49 per cent, First Insurance by 3.73 per cent, Al Shamekha for Real Estate and Financial Investments by 3.73 per cent, and Salam International Transport and Trading by 3.70 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Al Daman for Investments by 4.82 per cent, Assas for Concrete Products Company Ltd. by 4.55 per cent, Consultant and Investment Group by 4.26 per cent, Specialised Trading and Investment by 4.13 per cent, and Jordan International Investment Company by 4 per cent.

THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↑ 4061.24 0.58% September 03, 2026

Live Data Historical Data

Click and drag in the plot area to zoom in

DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market	OTC Market	Bonds
Trading Value (JDs)	13,979,684	
Trading volume	5,615,673	
No. of Transactions	4,381	
No. of Securities	102	

Losers: 19
Gainers: 33
Unchanged: 30

TENNIS

Michelsen shocks Nakashima in US Open clash of rising Americans

NEW YORK (AFP) — Brandon Nakashima, one of the hottest players in men's tennis this summer, couldn't find his best game on Wednesday, losing to fellow American Alex Michelsen in the US Open second round. In a battle of two rising Americans, Michelsen, 22, defeated 25-year-old Nakashima 6-3, 6-4, 6-4. The 16th-seeded Nakashima came to New York having reached one final and two semi-finals in key warmup tournaments, amassing a 12-3 record and upsetting several higher-ranking players with a hard-hitting game tailor made for New York's fast hard courts. But on Wednesday, Nakashima's game lacked the forcefulness he had demonstrated during the summer swing, allowing Michelsen to control more of the points with his big serve and heavy ground strokes. Michelsen, ranked 46th, said he was thrilled to reach the US Open third round for the first time. "It feels great to to beat a guy like him. He's beaten so many good players this summer," said Michelsen, who next faces Daniel Merida of Spain, currently ranked 39th.

FOOTBALL

Duran stars as Celtic cruise, Rangers snatch late winner

LONDON (AFP) — Celtic striker Camilo Duran inspired the Scottish champions' 3-0 win over Aberdeen, while Rangers snatched a 2-1 victory against Falkirk on Thursday. Duran has scored six goals in five matches for Martin O'Neill's side after his latest eye-catching contribution at Parkhead. The Colombian netted in the 14th minute with the latest in his series of spectacular strikes since joining from Qarabag in the close-season. Duran collected Benjamin Nygren's pass and unleashed a long-range drive that cannoned in off the crossbar. "He's a terrific player. He has set the tone for us since the beginning of the season," O'Neill said of Duran. "He's playing in a position which is really strong for him but he can play in a number of positions, he's that good." Nygren and Yang Hyun-jun were also on target as Celtic killed off the game before the break. Although they suffered a humiliating Champions League exit against LASK, Celtic have made a perfect start to their title defence with four successive wins.

2026 JFA Shield Cup kicks off

By Aline Bannayan

AMMAN — The Jordan Football Association Shield Cup — the third competition on the local football agenda — kicks off on Friday a day after the Pro League started.

All matches will be played at Prince Mohammad Stadium in Zarqa as the 10 Pro league teams contest the event the format of which has changed to be played over like the league with U-21 players on the lineups.

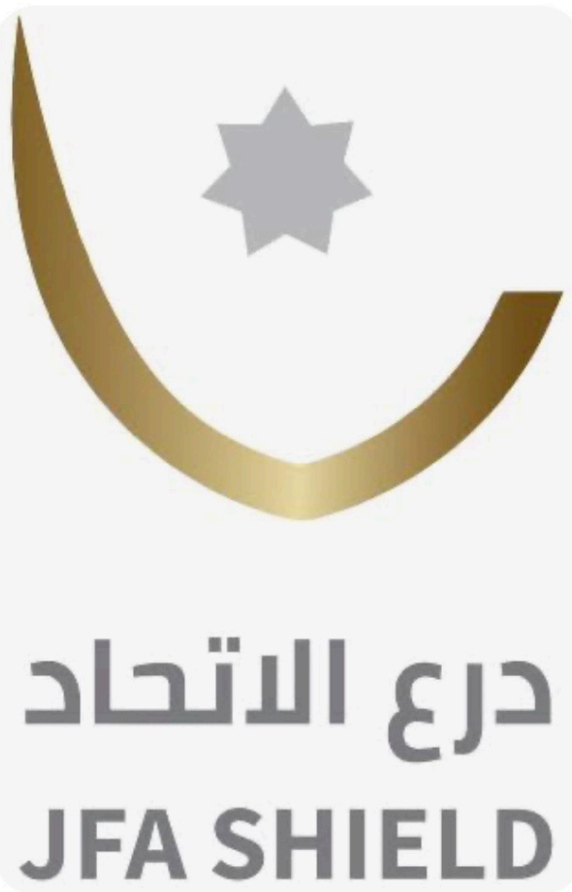
The Shield competition aims at giving younger players a chance at competitive experience to form the bulk of the future U-23 national squad.

Faisali are the title-holders, while Wihdat who have not won a major title lately, have their eyes set on winning and repeating their 2020 shield win and the 2008 achievement when they won all season titles.

The last 2025/2026 season, Hussein retained their Pro League title for the third year running, combining a first-time triple titles: In addition to the League, they won the Jordan Cup after beating Ramtha and the Super Cup by overcoming Wihdat.

Faisali beat Salt to win the fourth title of the season, the JFA Shield.

Hussein have been Pro League champions for the past three seasons. Together with neighbours Ramtha, they have changed the usual Faisali-Wihdat title dominance by teams from the capi-



tal. Ramtha won the 2021/22 crown for the third time in their history after 39 years, while Hussein won the 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 seasons.		
Last season, Shabab Urdun, league champions in 2005 and 2012, had a tough time maintaining their spot in the Pro League: While Ahli and Sama Sarhan were relegated to the First Division and have been replaced by First Division's top two Dqara and Arabi.		
Looking back at the history of the Shield tournament, Wihdat and Faisali are a record 10 time winners, Ramtha 5, Hussein three, Jazira and Amman and Shabab Urdun twice,		
Salt, Jalil, Kufrsoun and Yarmouk once. Hussein were finalists 7 times. Amman, have since scrapped football while Qadissieh were relegated and have since merged with Shabab Urdun.		
JFA Shield record		
(Runner up in parenthesis)		
1981 — Jazira (Wihdat)		
1982 — Wihdat (Amman)		
1983 — Wihdat (Ramtha)		
1984 — Amman (Hussein)		
1985 — Amman (Faisali)		
1986 — Jazira (Faisali)		
1987 — Faisali		

(Wihdat)	1988 — Wihdat (Hussein)
1989 — Ramtha (Wihdat)	1990 — Ramtha (Hussein)
1991 — Faisali (Wihdat)	1992 — Faisali (Hussein)
1993 — Ramtha (Qadissieh)	1994 — Hussein (Faisali)
1995 — Wihdat (Jalil)	1996 — Ramtha (Hussein)
1997 — Faisali (Wihdat)	1998 — Kufrsoun (Hussein)
1999 — not held	2000 — Faisali (Shabab Al Hussein)
2001 — Ramtha (Baq'a)	2002 — Wihdat (Faisali)
2003 — Hussein (Shabab Al Hussein)	2004 — Wihdat (Hussein)
2005 — Hussein (Faisali)	2006 — Yarmouk (Wihdat)
2007 — Shabab al Urdun (Jazira)	2008 -Wihdat (Baq'a)
2009- Faisali (Arabi)	2010 -Wihdat (Jazira)
2011- Faisali (Shabab Urdun)	2012-2015 —Not held
2016- Shabab Urdun (Faisali)	2017 — Wihdat (Jazira)
2018 — not held	2020 -Wihdat (Ramtha)
2021- Jalil (Wihdat)	2022- Faisali (Ramtha)
2023- Faisali (Wihdat)	2024- Salt (Wihdat)
2025 — Faisali (Wihdat)	

Alcaraz overpowers Faria to reach US Open third round

NEW YORK (AFP) — Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz overcame an early wobble to book his place in the third round of the US Open on Thursday, recovering from a set down to defeat Portugal's Jaime Faria in four sets.

Obviously the first set, I was feeling great, I had break point, I missed it," Alcaraz said.

"After that I was in a rush. I didn't take time, I wasn't patient and that obviously cost me the break.

"Against someone like Jaime, he's serving 140, 141 [mph], it's very difficult.

"I tried to stay calm ... think good things are going to happen again."

Faria meanwhile was left ruining his inability to build on an impressive opening set. The 23-year-old's serve fell apart in the second while Alcaraz upped the tempo and began to find a telling extra zip in his groundstrokes.

Although Alcaraz had to save two break points in the opening game before holding, it was all one-way traffic thereafter.

Faria was broken three times as Alcaraz went through the gears to take control of the contest.

The Spaniard's momentum extended into the third set, with Faria broken again to go 2-0 down.

Faria hit back with a break of Alcaraz's serve to make it 2-1, but was soon back in trouble after being broken in the next game to trail 3-1.

The set went with serve thereafter as Alcaraz took a 2-1 lead.

Alcaraz went a double break up in the fourth to move into a 5-1 lead and served out to seal victory.

Alcaraz, who is playing in New York after returning from a four-month layoff due to a wrist injury, defeated his 72nd-ranked opponent 4-6, 6-0, 6-3, 6-2 in 2hr 40 min at the Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Alcaraz, who will face China's Wu Yibing in the third round, blamed his first set problems on a failure to convert a golden break point opportunity that would have given him a 4-2 lead.

Instead, Faria leveled at 3-3 and then broke Alcaraz in the next game to go 4-3 up.

"Tough match for me.

The Bayeux Tapestry, a priceless account of England's conquest

LONDON (AFP) — It is arguably the most famous date in English history: 1066 — the year of the Battle of Hastings, marking the start of the Norman Conquest and pivotal in England's development.

The battle is told in incredible detail in the 11th-century Bayeux Tapestry.

It will go on display for the first time in London from September 10, following a loan from the Bayeux Museum in Normandy, northwestern France.

Here are some facts about the almost 1,000-year-old artwork that can be seen until July next year at the British Museum.

1066 and all that

Embroidered in wool thread, the tapestry depicts how William the Conqueror defeated England's King Harold in 1066, the last successful invasion and conquest of England by a foreign army.

William's victory ended Anglo-Saxon rule, and led to the Normans transforming England's government, land ownership, military system and society, while Norman French



AFP photo

This general view shows the Bayeux Tapestry on exhibit before the arrival of France's President Emmanuel Macron as he attends a preview event with Britain's King Charles III and the British prime minister for the Bayeux Tapestry Exhibition, at the British Museum in London on September 2

strongly influenced the English language.

The result brought England closer to continental Europe and shaped its society for centuries, with the modern royal family able to trace its roots back to William.

The tapestry documents the conquest in words and images, but its origins are shrouded in mystery, although historians appear to agree it was apparently embroidered in England.

"Most scholars today think the tapestry was made in England, probably in or around Canterbury," the British museum says on its website.

According to some historians, Bishop Odo of Bayeux — William's half-brother — commissioned

Harold, who had been crowned following Edward's death, at the Battle of Hastings in southern England in October 1066. Harold is killed and William is crowned on Christmas Day.

The tapestry features 626 figures and 202 horses, as well as other animals including dogs and birds, according to the Bayeux Museum.

Only six women are depicted on it — one is being possibly assaulted, one crying and one fleeing a burning house clutching a child.

Some accounts say King Harold died after being struck in the eye by a French arrow — a scene apparently shown on the tapestry though the arrow may have been added later.

The tapestry also captures an image of Halley's comet.

London show

In an unprecedented display of French-British diplomacy, the tapestry goes on display at the British Museum from September 10 to July 11, 2027.

It will be displayed flat for the first time, rather than hanging on a wall.

Around 7.5 million peo-

ple are expected to flock to the museum during the exhibition, up from the usual annual figures of around 6 million.

So it could break the record of more than 1.6 million visitors for a single exhibition set in 1972 for an exhibition of ancient Egyptian king Tutankhamun.

"It is a defining piece of our nation's history and a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience," the museum's chairman of trustees George Osborne said.

The first tickets from the exhibition's opening to the end of December sold out on July 1, the day they went on sale.

Delicate cargo

An expert study in 2020 found around 24,200 stains and 10,000 holes.

The work is sensitive to micro-vibrations, handling and humidity, and must not receive more than 50 lux, a very dim light.

The tapestry has only left Bayeux twice, to be displayed at the Louvre in Paris: once in 1803, on Napoleon's orders, and once in 1944, in tribute to the British and US troops who fought to free France from Nazi German occupation.



AFP photo

Japanese officials estimate that around 4,000 people in total — some from overseas — have participated in moving Hirosaki Castle's tower

With ropes and chants, thousands move Japanese castle

HIROSAKI, Japan (AFP) — Chanting in unison, hundreds of volunteers in northern Japan heaved on ropes to pull a 400-tonne castle back towards its original position.

The imposing fortified tower of Hirosaki Castle was shifted 80 metres in 2015 to allow for essential repairs to the stone walls that support it.

Engineers at the time opted to reposition the three-storey wooden structure without dismantling it, hoisting it in one piece on metal rails to a temporary platform.

Since last Saturday, groups of about 80 people have been taking turns moving the tower a few precious centimetres at a time.

Local officials estimate that around 4,000 people in total — some from overseas — have participated, advancing the structure by nearly five metres.

"It's like trying to move a mountain," Taka-hiro Kogawa, a 56-year-old Hirosaki resident, told AFP, his forehead beaded with sweat after a few minutes of intense effort.

Azusa Nimiya, a 46-year-old history and castle enthusiast, travelled from Shimane, almost on the other side of Japan's main island, to do her bit.

"It's the experience of a lifetime, a precious and unique memory," she said.

The municipality will deploy heavy machinery in September to complete the journey, aiming for a permanent installation in November.

Following further restoration work on the copper roof and facades, the full reopening to the public of this masterpiece from the Edo Period (1603-1868) is scheduled for 2033.

By involving the public, "We wanted everyone to be able to experience history physically," said Kensuke Hayasaka, the head of the restoration project.

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