



His Majesty King Abdullah, accompanied by HRH Crown Prince Hussein, receives Oman Shura Council Chairman Khalid Al Maawali and his accompanying delegation

King receives Oman Shura Council chairman

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Tuesday received Chairman of the Shura Council of Oman Khalid Al Maawali, and his accompanying delegation.

The meeting, attended by HRH Crown Prince

Hussein, addressed recent regional developments, as well as the need to de-escalate current tensions and ensure the security and sovereignty of Arab states, according to a Royal Court statement.

His Majesty underscored the deep-rooted ties between Jordan and Oman, as well as Jordan's readiness to continue strengthening them.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Director of

the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh, Speaker of the House of Representatives Mazen Oadi and Oman's Ambassador to Jordan Sheikh Fahad Bin Abdulrahman Bin Ahmed Al Ojaili attended the meeting.

King departs for Norway to attend King Harald V's funeral

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah departed for Norway on Tuesday to attend the funeral of King Harald V of Norway, according to a Royal Court statement.

His Majesty is accompanied by Her Majesty Queen Rania. HRH Crown Prince Hussein was sworn in as Regent, in the presence of Cabinet members.



Crown Prince chairs National Council for Future Technology meeting

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein on Tuesday chaired a regular meeting of the National Council for Future Technology, during which he reviewed the council's plans and ongoing projects.

During the meeting, attended by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan, who is chairman of the council, the Crown Prince was briefed on the progress of the "Sanad for Business" application, according to a Royal Court statement



HRH Crown Prince Hussein chairs a regular meeting of the National Council for Future Technology, and reviews the Council's plans and projects

Continued on page 5



File photo

Jordan condemns Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Tuesday condemned Houthi militia attacks on civilian and economic sites in the Saudi cities of Abha, Khamis Mushait, Jazan and Najran, which injured several civilians.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Foreign Ministry also condemned the continued targeting of com-

mercial vessels by the Houthis in the Red Sea, calling the attacks a "blatant violation of Saudi Arabia's sovereignty and a threat to its security, stability and territorial integrity".

The ministry said that the attacks constituted a flagrant violation of international law and the UN Charter and posed a threat

to the safety and security of maritime navigation.

The ministry also reaffirmed Jordan's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and its support for all measures it takes to protect its security, stability, resources, and the safety of its citizens and residents.

Continued on page 5

Jordan welcomes UK settlement trade ban, backs 12-nation call for restrictions

AMMAN (JT) — The Foreign Ministry on Tuesday welcomed Britain's decision to ban trade in products from Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, calling it an important step consistent with international law and efforts to preserve the two-state solution.

The ministry also welcomed a joint statement by 12 countries, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, expressing their intention to take national measures and support European measures restricting trade in products from Israeli settlements, which are considered illegal under international law.

In their joint statement, the 12 countries reaffirmed their commitment to a two-state solution in line with relevant UN Security Council resolutions, with the aim of establishing an independent Palestinian state.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Fouad Ma-



AFP photo

The Israeli settlement of Givat Zeev near the Palestinian city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank

jali said that the decisions by the 12 countries to restrict trade with settlements reflected an international commitment to implementing international law and relevant UN resolutions, particularly UN Security Council Resolution 2334. The resolution condemns Israeli measures aimed at altering the de-

mographic composition, character and status of Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem.

Majali also cited the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which he said affirmed the illegality of the Israeli occupation and the unlawful nature of settlement construction and measures to annex parts of the West Bank, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

In another statement, the ministry welcomed Britain's additional measures targeting services that provide financing for or facilitate the expansion of existing settlements and the construction of new ones.

Continued on page 5

Israel orders closure of UK consulate in Jerusalem over settlement sanctions

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel on Tuesday ordered the closure of Britain's consulate in Jerusalem as retaliation after London led Western sanctions over violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

Israel said it would also expel British diplomats at a centre monitoring the US-

brokered ceasefire plan in Gaza and bar British training for Palestinian Authority forces, as well as banning 12 British officials from visiting Israel.

"The accusations made today by the foreign secretary in the British Parliament were outrageous lies," foreign minister Gideon Saar said, after his British counterpart Ed

Miliband accused Israeli settlers of "ethnic cleansing" in the West Bank.

"The British move is morally distorted and constitutes blatant interference in the affairs of a sovereign state and in its electoral process," he said, ahead of close-fought October 27 elections in which prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu is championing set-

tlements in the West Bank.

Saar said Israel was closing the British consulate which lies in East Jerusalem, part of the historically Palestinian area that Israel captured in 1967.

Israel considers Jerusalem its undivided capital, a stance that is not internationally accepted, with the exception of a handful

of countries including the United States under President Donald Trump.

"United Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and is under its full sovereignty," Saar said.

"Any foreign activity in the area must be conducted through accepted and agreed channels and without violating Israel's sovereignty."



AFP photo

A photo shows the British consulate in Israeli-occupied East Jerusalem on Tuesday



File photo
The Labour Force Survey shows that Jordanians aged 15 to 24 have the lowest illiteracy rate, at just 0.7 per cent

Illiteracy rate falls to 4.5% in 2025 — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — The illiteracy rate in the Kingdom fell to 4.5 per cent in 2025, down from 11 per cent in 2000, reflecting a “significant” improvement in literacy levels over the past two decades, according to the Department of Statistics (DoS).

The figures, released on Tuesday to mark International Literacy Day, are based on the findings of the 2025 Labour Force Survey, DoS said as reported by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The survey showed continued declines in illiteracy rates among both men and women, as the government steps up efforts to narrow the gender gap in education and expand programmes targeting groups most vulnerable to illiteracy, the department said.

The initiatives are aimed at promoting greater equity and sustainability in access to education, according to the department.

DoS cited data from the Ministry of Education for 2024, which showed that 40.5 per cent of people aged 15 and over had participated in formal or non-formal education or training during the previous 12 months. The participation rate stood at 35.5 per cent among men and 45.5 per cent among women.

Youth record lowest illiteracy rate

The Labour Force Survey showed that Jordanians aged 15 to 24 had the lowest illiteracy rate, at just 0.7 per cent.

The department said that the figure reflects the success of education policies in reaching younger generations and brings Jordan closer to achieving zero illiteracy among youth.

Literacy is among the indicators linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with the UNESCO supporting Jordan’s efforts to reduce illiteracy...

In contrast, the highest illiteracy rate was recorded among Jordanians aged 65 and above, at 21.7 per cent, highlighting the continuing challenges of providing educational

opportunities to older people.

Illiteracy was also significantly lower among economically active Jordanians.

The rate stood at 0.4 per cent among employed Jordanians aged 15 and over and 0.3 per cent among the unemployed, compared with 6.7 per cent among those who were economically inactive.

Literacy is among the indicators linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, with the UNESCO supporting Jordan’s efforts to reduce illiteracy, particularly among older people, by 2030.

The department said that progress in this area has been supported by successive governments, international organisations and local civil society groups.

International Literacy Day is observed annually on September 8 and has been marked worldwide since 1967.

The day seeks to raise awareness among policymakers, experts and communities about the importance of literacy and the role it plays in building inclusive and sustainable societies.

It also provides an opportunity to renew the global commitment to education for all and highlight the barriers faced by people who lack access to learning opportunities.

Princess Muna attends launch of initiative to enhance primary healthcare workforce

AMMAN (JT) — In the presence of HRH Princess Muna, president of the Jordanian Nursing Council and patron for nursing and midwifery in the eastern Mediterranean region, the Higher Health Council (HHC), in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO), on Tuesday launched a national initiative to chart Jordan’s human resources vision for primary healthcare.

The initiative, launched in the presence of HRH Princess Zein, aims to formulate a unified national framework to guide health workforce planning and investment policies over the next 10 to 15 years through an inclusive, multisectoral approach, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

This approach would address demographic shifts, the rising burden of non-communicable diseases, and lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Highlighting the strategic imperative of empowering medical and nursing personnel, Princess Muna underscored the long-term impact of workforce investment.

“Investing in our health personnel is not merely an investment in the health sector, but an



Petra photo
HRH Princess Muna on Tuesday attends a ceremony by the Higher Health Council and World Health Organisation to launch a national initiative to chart Jordan’s human resources vision for primary healthcare

investment in the future, prosperity, and well-being of our nation,” Princess Muna said.

“Today, more than ever, we must place health workers at the heart of our national health agenda, working together to build a qualified, supported, and empowered workforce capable of meeting the needs of present and future generations,” the princess added.

The initiative focuses on building a resilient

workforce across all primary healthcare disciplines, including doctors, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, community health workers, public health specialists and administrative staff.

Through stakeholder consultations, situational assessments, and regional best-practice reviews, the initiative will establish the national charter for health human resources to align education and training

with national health priorities, while addressing labour market disparities and workforce distribution.

The drive aligns with the Economic Modernisation Vision, launched under the directives of His Majesty King Abdullah, and supports the national roadmap for Universal Health Coverage and health security.

Minister of Health and HHC President Ibrahim Badoor noted that the initiative coincides with

the Cabinet’s decision to reactivate the council as the central governance body for national health policy.

WHO Acting Regional Director Adham Ismail and WHO Representative to Jordan Iman Shankiti stressed the organisation’s commitment to supporting the Kingdom in building a skilled, motivated health workforce capable of delivering high-quality primary care nationwide.

Baptism Site foundation advances Bethany Village design, technical studies

AMMAN (JT) — The Foundation for the Development of Lands Adjacent to the Baptism Site is continuing technical and design work on Bethany Village, within wider efforts to develop the area near the Baptism Site while preserving its distinctive character and reflecting its global religious and historical significance.



Photo courtesy of the Foundation for the Development of Lands Adjacent to the Baptism Site

To this end, the foundation’s team carried out a field visit to assess the visual impact of the proposed security plan, according to a foundation statement.

They were joined by three heritage impact assessment specialists working to UNESCO standards, along with representatives of the Public Security Directorate, the construction contractor

and the company overseeing the design of the museum and the village, as well as the associated infrastructure works, on behalf of the project owner.

The visit involved installing story poles on the project grounds to simulate the proposed elements and gauge their visibility from Mar Elias Hill, helping to evaluate their visual impact and inform design and implementa-

tion decisions in harmony with the site’s character and surroundings.

A meeting followed to review preparations for the infrastructure works, attended by the director-general of the Baptism Site Commission and members of the project team.

The team also toured the plot allocated for the Museum of the Baptism of Jesus Christ, where soil

testing was conducted and potential locations for the museum entrances were discussed, as part of the technical studies needed to prepare the design of one of Bethany Village’s principal components.

These efforts support the continued development of Bethany Village in line with Royal directives and the foundation’s mandate to shape the area

adjacent to the Baptism Site in a manner befitting its global religious and historical significance, while safeguarding its natural setting and biodiversity and ensuring compliance with UNESCO requirements.

The project aims to create an integrated destination that enriches the pilgrim and visitor experience and raises Jordan’s profile on the global map of religious, cultural and spiritual tourism.

It coincides with preparations for the commemoration of the 2000th anniversary of the Baptism of Jesus Christ in 2030, an occasion of profound religious significance worldwide and an opportunity to spotlight Jordan as a land where biblical history remains alive.

AVIATION

RJ welcomes 17th Airbus A320neo family aircraft

AMMAN (JT) — Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) has welcomed its 17th Airbus A320neo family aircraft to its fleet, marking another milestone in its strategy to modernise and expand its fleet, strengthen operational capabilities and enhance the passenger experience.

The arrival is part of RJ’s ongoing fleet modernisation programme, which has seen 10 new aircraft of various types join the fleet since the beginning of this year, bringing the airline’s total fleet to 36 modern aircraft, according to an RJ statement.

RJ Chairman and CEO Samer Majali said that the arrival of the new aircraft represents another important milestone in the national carrier’s fleet modernisation journey, noting that investment in new-generation aircraft strengthens operational efficiency and competitiveness while providing passengers with a more advanced and comfortable travel experience.



RJ photo
The arrival of the 17th Airbus A320neo family aircraft is part of RJ’s ongoing fleet modernisation programme, which has seen 10 new aircraft of various types join the fleet since the beginning of 2026

Majali said that the A320neo family plays a key role in operating RJ’s short- and medium-haul network, serving destinations across the Middle East, the Gulf, Africa and Europe.

An additional aircraft is scheduled to join the fleet in December, bringing the number of A320neo

family aircraft to 18 by the end of 2026. Two further aircraft are expected to join in 2027 and 2028, bringing the total to 20. An additional Airbus A321 will also join the fleet next year.

As part of its long-haul fleet expansion, RJ has added two Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners this year, with a third

scheduled for delivery in 2027. The airline plans to grow its 787-9 fleet to nine aircraft over the coming years.

Majali said that the expansion of the 787-9 fleet supports RJ’s plans to grow its long-haul network, given the aircraft’s operational efficiency and ability to operate long-distance nonstop serv-

ices. The aircraft also offer improved fuel efficiency and modern onboard features, including Wi-Fi and advanced in-flight entertainment systems.

In parallel, RJ has launched a comprehensive upgrade programme for its existing fleet of seven Boeing 787-8 aircraft, including the installation of onboard Wi-Fi, cabin refurbishments and repainting in the airline’s new colours and visual identity.

RJ also operates eight new-generation Embraer E2 aircraft, which support its regional network by providing operational efficiency and flexibility to serve destinations with varying levels of demand.

Majali stressed that fleet modernisation and network expansion are being implemented as part of a strategic approach that balances growth with market requirements, while supporting Jordan’s tourism strategy, improving operational efficiency and strengthening fi-

nancial sustainability.

He said RJ’s financial and operational indicators demonstrate its ability to steadily implement its strategic plans despite exceptional challenges facing the regional aviation industry. The airline recorded positive financial results in the first half of 2026, alongside growth in revenues, passenger numbers and overall operations.

Majali added that fleet modernisation and network expansion will further strengthen RJ’s role in stimulating tourism, enhancing Jordan’s air connectivity and reinforcing Amman’s position as a regional air transport hub.

Royal Jordanian continues to expand its global network to destinations including Misrata, Munich, Hamburg, Sharjah, Alexandria, Dallas, Vienna and Tashkent, as it works towards expanding its network to approximately 60 destinations over the coming years.

Public administration commission launches data strategy project to boost data governance

AMMAN (JT) — The Service and Public Administration Commission on Tuesday launched its data strategy project, aligning with government directives to enhance data governance and management to support evidence-based decision-making.

The initiative aims to bolster the public sector’s readiness to adopt artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Speaking at a meeting with data liaison officers from various units within the commission, Yasser Nsour, secretary-general of the commission and chief data officer, highlighted the importance of data as a “strategic” institutional asset for driving efficiency and supporting sound decision-making.

Nsour stressed the need to adhere to the project’s timeline and ensuring accuracy in inventorying data assets, noting that this process involves docu-

menting available data, identifying its types, sources, storage locations, and custodians to build a comprehensive institutional registry and unlock integration opportunities.

The initiative aims to bolster the public sector’s readiness to adopt artificial intelligence...

The step forms part of a broader framework to establish a sustainable system that embeds transparency and accountability in data handling, serving as a pillar for deploying AI tools to streamline operations and enhance public service delivery.

Jordan condemns Nauru’s opening of embassy in Jerusalem

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday condemned the decision of Nauru to open an embassy in Jerusalem, describing the move as “unacceptable and a blatant violation of international law and international legitimacy resolutions”.

Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali stressed that any measures or decisions aimed at altering the status or legal identity of Jerusalem are null, void and illegal, according to a ministry statement.

Majali reiterated that the only path to achieving a just and comprehensive peace that guarantees regional security and stability lies in establishing an independent, sovereign Palestinian state on the June 4, 1967 lines with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The tiny Pacific island nation of Nauru opened its embassy here in Jerusalem on Monday, joining a small group of countries taking the symbolic step



This photo shows a view of Jerusalem with an empty Al Aqsa Mosque compound and its Dome of the Rock on March 18

of backing Israeli sovereignty in the contested city.

“We see opening an embassy here in Jerusalem not only as a strengthening of our ties with Israel, but also as a

message to the world of where we stand,” said Nauru’s Vice President and Foreign Minister Lionel Aingimea, according to AFP.

Most countries have kept their embassies in

Tel Aviv on the grounds that the status of Jerusalem will be settled in a final resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Kosovo and Somaliland, which are not

member-states of the United Nations, have also opened what they consider their embassies in Jerusalem.

At Monday’s inauguration ceremony, Israeli foreign minister Gideon

Saar called Nauru “one of Israel’s greatest friends”.

He said that other countries would soon follow Nauru in opening embassies in Jerusalem, noting that Colombia was expected to do so in early October.

Bogota has yet to confirm a date, but Colombia’s new hard-right President Abelardo de la Espriella announced such a move in July, AFP said.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo said last week it would move its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

Argentine President Javier Milei, an outspoken supporter of Israel, has also promised to move his country’s embassy to the holy city.

The status of Jerusalem is one of the thorniest issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel occupied east Jerusalem and annexed it in 1967, in a move not recognised by the vast majority of the international community.

AT A GLANCE

JHCO, Qatar Red Crescent distribute 9,597 food parcels to displaced Gaza families



AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO) on Tuesday distributed 9,597 food parcels to displaced families in the Gaza Strip, in partnership with the Qatar Red Crescent Society, as part of the “Vegetable Baskets and Water Tankers” project. JHCO said that the second and final phase of the project involves distributing 6,230 food parcels across North Gaza, Gaza City, Middle Area and Khan Yunis governorates. This initiative comes within ongoing relief efforts to alleviate the suffering of Gaza residents amid challenging field conditions, according to a JHCO statement.

Army foils drug smuggling attempts using balloons



AMMAN (JT) — The Eastern Military Region command on Tuesday thwarted two separate attempts to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics carried by guided balloons within its area of responsibility along its front line. Border Guard units detected the balloons, intercepted and downed them inside Jordanian territory, and seized their narcotics payload in coordination with military security agencies and the Anti-Narcotics Department, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) statement. The seized items were handed over to the competent authorities to initiate the necessary legal procedures. The JAF reaffirmed its commitment to decisively confronting all smuggling and infiltration attempts across the Kingdom’s borders, tracking the various methods and means used, and taking all necessary operational measures to thwart them.

Sanad for Business platform to launch before end of 2026 — minister

AMMAN (JT) — Following the directives of HRH Crown Prince Hussein Bin Abdullah, the “Sanad for Business” platform will be launched before the end of 2026, Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship Sami Smirat said on Tuesday.

Smirat said the Crown Prince chaired a meeting of the National Council for Future Technology, during which the council reviewed progress on the platform and its detailed implementation plan.

He noted that the platform will serve as a unified digital gateway for companies and investors to access government services, and complete and track transactions electronically.

The minister also said the platform is designed to simplify procedures and improve the quality of government services, stressing the importance of ensuring its



Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship Sami Smirat says on Tuesday the ‘Sanad for Business’ platform will be launched before the end of 2026

readiness before launch, providing high-quality and user-friendly services, and conducting awareness campaigns alongside its rollout.

The platform will operate primarily through a web portal, alongside a mobile application, allowing companies and investors to complete

and track government transactions through a single platform, he said, adding that it will be separate from the “Sanad” app, which is dedicated to citizens.

The first phase will include services from around 12 government institutions and departments, including

the Companies Control Department, Customs Department, Income and Sales Tax Department, Jordan Food and Drug Administration, Social Security Corporation and occupational licensing services provided by the Greater Amman Municipality and municipalities.

It will also include company registration services and investment incentives provided by the Ministry of Investment, with additional services to be added gradually, including sector-specific licences and work permits.

Smirat said the platform would contribute to improving the investment climate by enabling investors to register companies, register employees with the Social Security Corporation and obtain tax numbers electronically through a single platform, without having to visit multiple government entities.

“Access to the platform will be available through digital identity, a dedicated digital mechanism for investors from outside the Kingdom or the establishment number,” he added.

Smirat stressed that launching the platform

before the end of the year is a “clear and explicit directive” from the Crown Prince, noting that its services must be high quality, sustainable and easy to use.

During Tuesday’s periodic meeting of the National Council for Future Technology, the Crown Prince also reviewed the council’s plans and ongoing projects, including progress on the “Sanad for Business” platform. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan, chairman of the council.

The Crown Prince stressed the need to provide the services required by Jordanian businesspeople and citizens, ensure the platform’s readiness ahead of its launch and coordinate with all relevant entities.

He also stressed the importance of continuing to develop the “Sanad” app and addressing any observations.



The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development on Tuesday says that secondary education is now defined as a three-year phase covering grades 10, 11 and 12

Ministry says secondary education now spans grades 10-12

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development on Tuesday said that secondary education is now defined as a three-year phase covering grades 10, 11 and 12, and that this does not mean the General Exam will be extended over three years.

In a statement, the ministry said that secondary education previously covered grades 11 and 12, while grade 10 was part of basic education.

Minister of Education and Human Resource Development Azmi Ma-

hafzah has recently said that the traditional Tawjihi exam format has ended, with the General Exam now designated for university admission, while students receive their secondary school certificate after successfully completing grade 12 at school.

Mahafzah said “Under the new system, students study core subjects in grades 10 and 11. After passing grade 11, they can sit for the first part of the General Exam, covering Arabic, mathematics, Islamic education and Jordan history, which accounts for 30 per cent of the to-

tal score.”

Students can postpone these subjects until grade 12, he said, adding that students can select specialised subjects based on their intended university majors in their final year.

The minister also said the law defines the General Exam as an assessment of secondary-level curricula for university admission purposes.

The secondary school certificate is awarded upon successful completion of grade 12, while the General Exam is used exclusively for higher education admission, Mahafzah said.

National strategy targets 15% improvement in energy efficiency by 2035 — ministry

AMMAN (JT) — The National Energy Strategy aims to improve energy efficiency by 15 per cent by 2035, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary-General Amani Azzam said on Tuesday.

Azzam made the remarks during an awareness workshop organised by the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund in Aqaba, in partnership with the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), to introduce the fund’s programmes and financing mechanisms and explore opportunities for cooperation in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

She stressed the importance of enhancing energy efficiency and promoting a culture of conservation across various sectors to reduce operating costs, boost competitiveness and support sustainability.

Azzam also reviewed the partnership between the fund and ASEZA and the results of several energy efficiency projects implemented in Aqaba, including the installation of energy systems at several tourist camps and comprehensive energy audits at several hotels and industrial facilities.

The projects contribut-



ed to financial savings of up to 40 per cent in some sectors, she said.

Executive Director of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund Rasmi Hamza stressed the importance of energy audits as a key tool for identifying energy waste and opportunities to reduce consumption and costs.

The findings help facilities identify priorities and select appropriate measures, particularly those that require lower investment and generate returns more quickly, he said.

Hamza also highlighted successful projects implemented by the fund in the hotel sector in Aqaba and Petra, which contributed to improving energy efficiency and reducing operating costs.

He stressed the impor-

tance of building on these experiences and expanding them to other vital economic sectors.

ASEZA Commissioner for Environmental Affairs Nidal Ouran stressed the importance of continuing partnerships among institutions and expanding investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

He also called for enhancing the role of commercial banks in providing affordable financing for projects aimed at reducing energy consumption and improving efficiency.

The workshop was held as part of the fund’s efforts to promote its programmes and financial and technical tools, build on successful energy efficiency projects and strengthen public-private partnerships.

2,391 cyber incidents registered in H1 of 2026 — NCSC

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan recorded 2,391 cyber incidents during the first half of this year, a 5.7 per cent increase from the same period last year, National Cybersecurity Centre (NCSC) Director Mohammad Smadi said on Tuesday.

Smadi said that most of the incidents were of medium severity, including technical scanning and reconnaissance, attempted breaches and denial-of-service attempts, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

He also noted that the centre uses the term “cyber incident” to cover both actual breaches and attempts that are detected and thwarted.

The rise in cyber incidents is linked to several factors, foremost among them regional geopolitical tensions and developments, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and security vulnerabilities in some digital assets that may have gone undetected or were only recently discovered, Smadi said.

He said cyber incidents are classified according to their severity. High-severity incidents directly affect critical operations and infrastructure, including the energy and water sectors, while incidents targeting sensitive systems involve sensitive data and systems.

Medium-severity incidents include scanning and technical reconnaissance, malware and attempted breaches, while low-severity incidents include repeated unsuccessful attempts to access systems, he added.

Smadi said that advances in AI have contributed to more sophisticated cyberattacks, noting that AI can be used to develop attacks that are harder to detect and counter.

He said the NCSC is working to keep pace with these developments and maintain a balance between its defensive capabilities and the offensive capabilities used by hackers.

Under the National Cybersecurity Strategy, the centre is seeking to use artificial intelligence in defensive operations and to thwart attacks, strengthening its ability to detect, respond to and recover from cyber incidents, Smadi said.

He identified greater integration within the national cybersecurity system as a key priority of the strategy, through closer coordination and clearer division of roles between the NCSC and national institutions.

Smadi said that Cybersecurity Law No. 16 of 2019 empowers the centre to require public and private sector institutions and civil society organisations to comply with its policies, legislation, controls and procedures.

The centre also works closely with institutions, particularly government entities providing digital services to citizens, to ensure the security of those services and conduct the necessary cybersecurity tests before their launch, he said.

Smadi said that Jordan’s cybersecurity capabilities rest on three main pillars, including human capital, policies, legislation and regulatory controls, and technology.

He stressed that Jordan has highly qualified professionals in the field, adding that cybersecurity is not limited to technical specialists and technological tools but also depends on citizens’ and users’ awareness when operating in the digital space.



Migrants await processing during a deportation operation by the ministry of mnterior in Tripoli

UN condemns storming of Libya migrant aid centre

TRIPOLI (AFP) — The United Nations has condemned the storming of one of its facilities in Libya's capital Tripoli where migrants were present, denouncing "deeply aggressive acts".

The UN has not identified the specific agency, but videos circulating on social media since Monday showed people forcing their way into the premises of the International Organisation for Migration [IOM] in Tripoli, ransacking furniture and driving out the occupants.

"The United Nations in Libya strongly condemns the repeated incidents that occurred this morning on the premises of the service centre managed by one of the UN agencies in Tripoli," the IOM said in a statement late Monday.

Libyan authorities have not responded publicly but the UN said it acknowledged authorities had taken action to respond to the incident.

It said authorities

had taken steps to "investigate the circumstances of the deeply aggressive acts against staff and the people accessing humanitarian services of the centre".

But it said that "such incidents must not be repeated".

The UN reiterated a call "to rely on reliable and verified information when disseminating it in the public sphere...."

The issue of migrants and allegations of plans to settle them permanently in Libya has stirred heated debate in the North Afri-

can country in recent months.

Protesters have regularly gathered outside the headquarters of UN agencies, including the IOM and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], blocking the entrances.

They say they want these offices to be closed down permanently and their staff expelled.

The UN reiterated a call "to rely on reliable and verified information when disseminating it in the public sphere, and it reaffirms its commitment to constructive cooperation and working closely with the Libyan authorities and local communities".

Since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya has been wracked by instability and divided between two rival governments.

Smugglers and traffickers have long exploited the volatility to develop clandestine networks for migrants hoping to reach Europe by sea.

Syria should protect minorities to stop emigration — minister

ROME (AFP) — Syria's future constitution should guarantee the equality and inclusion of all religious minorities to stem emigration, a Syrian minister told AFP on Tuesday.

"We have to have a new constitution, which includes everybody, and [in which] everybody is equal under the law," Syria's Social Affairs and Labour Minister Hind Kabawat told AFP.

Kabawat is the only woman and only Christian in the Islamist transition government headed up by Ahmed Al Sharaa set up after the 2024 fall of former president Bashar Al Assad.

The transition parliament set up since Al Sharaa came to power has the task of coming up with a new constitution.

Syria, a majority Sunni Muslim country, is home to one of the world's oldest Christian communities.

There are also sizeable Alawite, Druze, Ismaili and Kurdish minorities.

The number of Christians has plunged — going down from around a



A large Syrian flag flutters above Tishreen Park in Damascus, June 4, 2025

million before the start of the civil war in 2011 — to around 300,000 people, according to experts.

Kabawat said the departure of Christians started long before Assad's fall.

"I felt the acceleration since the massacres of Hama in the 1980s. Many Christians decided to leave. We used to be 15 per cent, then 9 per cent, then 4 per cent," she said.

Asked whether the

departures had sped up since the fall of Assad, Kabawat said Syrians from different communities were still leaving.

"They're worried, and they don't know what kind of government this is," she said, adding that

the government needed to do more to show it was "inclusive".

Kabawat is in Rome to meet Pope Leo XIV on Wednesday with around 20 Muslim and Christian officials from the Arab world.

Drone strike near courthouse in central Sudan kills 12

KHARTOUM (AFP) — A drone strike blamed on Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) killed 12 people outside a courthouse in the army-held town of Umm Rawaba in North Kordofan on Tuesday, a medical source told AFP.

The attack is the latest in an escalating wave of drone strikes by both the RSF and the Sudanese army, which have been at war since April 2023.

The strike hit an area outside the courthouse where residents had gathered to complete legal and administrative procedures, witnesses told AFP.

"I was near the court-



A truck carrying gunmen affiliated with Sudan's army drives on a street in the eastern city of Gedaref on November 11, 2024

house when I saw the drone hit a tree outside the building" one witness

told AFP, adding that the area was crowded with people at the time.

Another witness said residents rushed to help those caught in the blast.

UK PM denounces 'politics of poison' after anti-migrant protests

LONDON (AFP) — British Prime Minister Andy Burnham urged his Labour Party lawmakers to stop the "politics of poison seeping into our streets" after demonstrators tried to block the arrival of migrants, a media report said on Monday.

The protest took place in a part of southern England that authorities fear is becoming a new route for small boat crossings.

Speaking to parliamentarians in a closed-door meeting, Burnham said the party's mission must be to counter "fear with positivity and hope", the PA news agency reported.

"We have a responsibility in the times that we're living in. It's a solemn responsibility to prevent the politics of poison seeping into our streets," he was quoted as saying.

Thousands of asylum seekers have crossed the Channel on rudimentary vessels in recent years, usually between Calais and Dover where the distance between the French and English coasts is shortest.

On Sunday, Britain's coastguard rescued a boat carrying 140 people that French authorities said had departed from Baie de Seine in



Britain's Prime Minister Andy Burnham

Normandy, a couple of hundred kilometres southwest of Calais.

Later, some 200 demonstrators, many dressed in black and wearing face coverings, disrupted the disembarkation of the migrants in Portsmouth, Hampshire, far west of Dover.

They blocked roads while police officers equipped with riot shields formed a security cordon around buses intended to take the migrants to a processing centre, footage on social media showed.

The crowd dispersed around 4:00am (03:00 GMT) and the migrants were successfully transported, officials said.

"We condemn the intimidating and thuggish behaviour we saw

in Portsmouth last night," a spokesperson for the UK interior ministry, known as the Home Office, said in a statement.

"The right to peaceful protest is fundamental to our democracy but it must never cross a line into disorder."

Sunday night's demonstration was the second significant anti-migrant disorder of the weekend after large crowds of masked men blocked access to the Port of Dover for several hours on Saturday.

Both gatherings were organized by a group called Patriot Platform, started by Daniel Thomas, also known as Danny Tommo, an associate of far-right activist Tommy Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon.

Thomas filmed and livestreamed both events on social media.

'Not equipped'

Arrivals of small boats in the county of Hampshire are rare.

"Extremely concerning to see an illegal migrant crossing this far west," local Conservative lawmaker Joe Robertson wrote in a post on X.

"We need to know exactly what happened and if new routes are being used for megadraghies by people smugglers."

Donna Jones, police and crime commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight police, said in a statement that Portsmouth "is not equipped to receive and process people entering the country this way".

"The government needs to ensure the southern coast of Britain is secure to prevent this from happening again," she added, saying that Sunday night's scenes had "put pressure on resources, particularly policing".

A UK government official told reporters there was "no evidence" at this stage to suggest that smugglers running the crossings had changed their strategy.

Britain has been grappling with how to curb the perilous small boat journeys, which have seen tens of thousands of asylum seekers arriving annually on southeast England's coast since in recent years.

The crossings, often of people fleeing war and famine, have been seized on by the hard-right Reform UK Party, which has made gains since breaking through at the 2024 general election.

The Labour government insists it is making progress tackling the issue, in part because of co-operation deals with the French government and a tightening of the asylum system.

According to Home Office data, 16,513 irregular migrants have crossed the Channel since the beginning of the year, down about 40 per cent compared to the same period in 2025.

Last week, Burnham announced the deployment of 45 additional officers to French beaches to help combat an increase in the number of passengers per boat.

The vast majority of migrants to Britain arrive via legal routes, government data shows.



This aerial photo shows excavators working during recovery efforts at the site of the destroyed Gyirong Port border crossing in Gyirong County, in China's western Tibet region on Saturday

Landslides in China kill six, nine missing — state media

BEIJING (AFP) — Landslides in eastern China have killed six people with nine others still missing, state media said on Tuesday, days after heavy rains unleashed by Typhoon Saudel.

A mudslide which hit Mingkeng village in Jiangxi province on Saturday left five dead and seven missing, state news agency Xinhua said, citing local officials.

Another person was found dead and two others still missing after landslides hit the nearby townships of

Zuo'an and Tanghu.

The landslides followed days of torrential rains brought by Saudel, which first made landfall on China's eastern coast at the end of last month.

Several cities suspended work, schools and transport services in the face of the heavy rains.

The landslide in Mingkeng damaged homes and destabilised roads, according to Xinhua. More than 170 rescuers were deployed to the site to scour for those missing.

The landslides fol-

low devastating glacial floods in the Himalayas last month that have killed 43 people in Tibet, according to state media, as well as nearly 1,300 people across the border in Nepal.

There are more than 5,000 missing in Nepal and another 519 on the Tibetan side of the border.

Scientists say climate change is accelerating glacial melting worldwide and making extreme storms more frequent worldwide, increasing the risk of such disasters.



This handout photo released by the official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) shows International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi giving a news conference after his meeting with Syria's foreign minister in Damascus on August 18

Secret Assad-era Syrian nuclear reactor was almost complete — UN

VIENNA (AFP) — A near-complete nuclear reactor built secretly during the rule of toppled Syrian leader Bashar Assad would have been able to produce nuclear material to make nuclear weapons, the UN nuclear watchdog chief said on Monday.

Inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) last month visited two sites, one in Deir Ezzor and a second undisclosed location identified to them by Syrian authorities.

In a report seen by AFP last week, the IAEA said it found that Syria's previous government was building a nuclear reactor.

Assad was toppled in December 2024 and the current Islamist government came to power.

IAEA head Rafael Grossi said it was "obvious that the previous government was pursuing a number of clandestine" activities.

"They didn't want the world to know what they were doing," he told reporters after opening the Vienna-based agency's quarterly board of governors meeting.

"Given the configuration, the technical features of that type of reactor, this is a reactor that is very efficient in the production of fissile material that could be used directly for the fabrication of nuclear weapons," he said, adding that building the reactor was a "very important step".

He said the reactor — which is currently being excavated — "was almost completed".

It was "very possible... that the then Syrian authorities also performed some explosions in order to... hinder any possibility of an investigation", he added.

'Missing information'

Besides the reactor under construction at the Deir Ezzor site, the IAEA found a fuel fabrication plant where nuclear fuel for the reactor was manufactured, and a location where nuclear fuel as well as uranium scrap and waste were stored.

'The new revelations (in the IAEA report) provide confirmation and new details...'

In its report, the IAEA said it found around 73 tonnes of natural uranium metal.

Grossi has praised Damascus's "courageous decision" to report the undisclosed site.

The UN atomic watchdog had declared in 2011 that the location was "very likely" to host a nuclear reactor, adding that its information

suggested it was being built with North Korean assistance.

On Monday, Grossi said it was up to the IAEA board to decide whether to close the file opened in 2011, adding that he currently had not been tasked to further investigate alleged connections to North Korea.

A draft resolution seen by AFP, expected to be submitted to the board this week for a vote, proposes closing the file.

The IAEA will continue to work with Syria to keep the material safe and report its findings, Grossi said.

The Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), a US-based organisation specialising in nuclear proliferation, last week said questions remained.

"The new revelations (in the IAEA report) provide confirmation and new details... but they do not provide any surprises or fill in the missing information about the entire scope of the reactor and reprocessing project and Syria's cooperation with North Korea," it said.

Last month, Grossi visited the site in Deir Ezzor in the east, which has been shut for 18 years.

In 2018, Israel admitted carrying out a top-secret air raid on the site 11 years earlier.

In 2008, less than a year after the strike, US officials accused Syria of having sought to build a secret nuclear reactor and acknowledged that Israel had destroyed it in the raid.

Zelensky says Russia 'ready to negotiate' — Axios

KYIV, Ukraine (AFP) — Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Monday that Russia showed readiness to negotiate towards a conflict settlement at talks with US envoys, Axios reported.

The weekend visit to Moscow and Kyiv by Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner marks Washington's latest bid to break a diplomatic stalemate in Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II, which began with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine four years ago.

Witkoff touted progress in the meetings and raised the prospect of reviving three-way peace talks to end the war.

Zelensky told US news outlet Axios that the United States was pushing to de-escalate the conflict ahead of the long winter.

Russia has struck Ukraine's energy grid each winter since invading in February 2022, cutting power and heating to millions in temperatures as low as -20°C.

Zelensky said the US envoys, who held



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky (right), next to US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, speaks during a joint press conference following their talks in Kyiv on Sunday, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine

separate talks with the Ukrainian and Russian leaders, told him that "the Russians are ready to negotiate".

"Russia really thinks that this winter can help them to break us," he told Axios.

But the administra-

tion of US President Donald Trump could pressure Russian President Vladimir Putin to de-escalate, he added, and Putin "doesn't want" to "upset" his US counterpart.

Zelensky said the weekend talks included

US proposals around energy facilities, grain shipments and oil and gas exports, but declined to give further details.

The Ukrainian leader said the US approach aimed to resume negotiations between the

warring countries and ensure the coming winter was different from previous ones.

The goal was to make progress before or during winter in order to "bring [the] sides closer to the peace", Zelensky said.

Saudi vows response as Houthis hit oil sites in worst attack in years

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AFP) — Saudi Arabia on Tuesday threatened to hit back after a wave of missiles from Yemen's Houthis set oil facilities ablaze and wounded dozens.

The overnight attacks caused "temporary" shutdowns at oil sites and left 73 injured, Saudi authorities said, a reminder of the danger posed by the group across the southern Saudi border.

Saudi Arabia will "take all necessary measures to defend its sovereignty", a foreign ministry statement said, demanding a halt to the Houthi strikes



This screen grab taken from video footage released on Tuesday by the National Resistance Forces in Yemen shows a rocket being fired from a vehicle-based launcher, as Yemeni government forces and National Resistance Forces fire at Houthi fighters on the Kadha front, west of the city of Taiz in Yemen's western Taiz province

and their attacks on Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea.

The Houthis fired dozens of ballistic missiles, their military

spokesman said.

The Saudi-led coalition also said it would

respond to the latest attacks.

The coalition's Joint Forces Command will "take all necessary measures and actions to respond to the sources of the threat and neutralise its danger", a statement said.

An energy ministry source told the Saudi Press Agency that "several energy sector facilities and installations" in the south were targeted.

"The attacks caused fires at several locations, leading to a temporary halt in some operations" as well as several injuries, the source was quoted as saying.

Serbia crosses 'red line' as war criminal funeral sparks outrage

BELGRADE (AFP) — Bosnia's foreign minister on Tuesday expelled two Serbian diplomats and accused Belgrade of crossing "every red line" after several of its officials attended a funeral for war criminal Ratko Mladic.

At least six Serbian ministers were among thousands that attended Monday's funeral service which openly praised Mladic, who died last month in The Hague while serving a life sentence for war crimes committed during the Bosnian war.

The scenes in the capital of a European Union candidate country also drew condemnation from outside the Balkans, with EU chiefs Ursula von der Leyen and Antonio Costa labelling the attendance of Serbian officials "deeply regrettable".

"Serbia's path into the European Union requires an unequivocal commitment to fundamental European values and historical truth," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said on X.

Bosnia's Foreign Minister Elmedin Konakovic said he had ordered the defence envoy and an



Mourners hold Serbian flags and portraits of late Bosnian Serb military leader Ratko Mladic during a procession to cemetery on the day of the funeral ceremony for Ratko Mladic in Belgrade, on Monday

adviser of Serbia's intelligence service to leave the country.

Earlier he said he would recall Sarajevo's embassy staff from Serbia in an attempt to cut diplomatic ties to the

"lowest possible level". "They crossed every red line with what they did yesterday, the day before, and in the days leading up to the reception," Konakovic told a press conference in

Sarajevo.

'Lip service'

Despite Mladic's convictions, Serb nationalists and pro-government media still embrace him as

a hero. Mourners wore shirts emblazoned with his face and held banners praising the former general during Monday's event.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, who did not attend the funeral, has rejected allegations of glorifying Mladic and insisted that the service was organised by the family, not the state.

But the attendance of ministers, alongside the use of soldiers and a government plane to bring Mladic's body to Belgrade has sparked outrage.

"If this is not state involvement, what is?" Emir Suljagic, the director of the Srebrenica memorial centre, said on X.

Mladic was sentenced for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during Bosnia's 1990s war — including his role in the killing of some 8,000 people in Srebrenica.

Suljagic said the statements from Brussels were not enough.

"We have had enough of people paying lip service to the victims while proceeding to shake hands with politicians dreaming of future genocides," he said.

Crown Prince chairs National Council for Future Technology meeting

Continued from page 1

His Royal Highness stressed the need to ensure the services needed by Jordanian businesspeople and citizens are provided on the app, and that it is fully operational

prior to its launch, in coordination with all relevant entities.

The Crown Prince highlighted the importance of continuing to work on developing the Sanad application and addressing any feedback.

The meeting also touched on e-payments, with His Royal Highness noting the need to expand its procedures to facilitate citizens' transactions, particularly those related to government services.

Jordan welcomes UK settlement trade ban, backs 12-nation call for restrictions

Continued from page 1

The ministry's statement reiterated Jordan's support for Palestin-

ian freedom and called for an end to the Israeli occupation.

It also called for the establishment of an in-

dependent and sovereign Palestinian state on the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Jordan condemns Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia

Continued from page 1

The Riyadh-based Arab News quoted the spokesperson for the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen, Maj. Gen. Turki Al Maliki, as

describing the Houthi escalation and attempts to target Saudi territory and infrastructure as "dangerous," saying they demonstrated the group's "hostile and irresponsible" approach.

Al Maliki said that the latest attacks targeted civilian and economic sites in the Saudi Arabia cities of Abha, Khamis Mushait, Jazan and Najran, resulting in 73 civilian injuries.

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Why Jordan matters more than its size suggests

By Hadeel Shqair

In international politics, size matters, but not always as much as we think. Jordan has neither the vast territory nor the natural resources of many of its neighbours. It is not a major military power, nor does it possess the financial influence of the Gulf states. Yet, for decades, Jordan has remained remarkably present in the politics of the Middle East.

That is no accident. Jordan has developed a form of influence that is difficult to measure on conventional scales of power. It is built on credibility, moderation and the ability to maintain relationships across political divides.

This may be Jordan's most important strategic asset. Few countries inhabit a more complicated neighbourhood. Jordan sits at the intersection of some of the region's most enduring conflicts and political fault lines. Wars in Syria and Iraq, instability in the Palestinian territories and repeated regional confrontations have all produced consequences that eventually reached Jordan's borders.

Refugees arrived. Trade routes were disrupted. Security challenges changed. Pressure on water, infrastructure and public services increased.

Yet Jordan remained standing. Stability, however, should not be confused with passivity. Jordanian stability has required continuous political management, diplomacy and an ability to absorb external shocks that would severely test much wealthier countries.

The Palestinian question illustrates why Jordan continues to matter. For Amman, Palestine is not simply another item on the foreign-policy agenda. It is directly connected to national security, borders, Jerusalem and the future stability of the region.

Jordan's persistent support for a two-state solution may sometimes appear almost conventional after decades of international discussion. But events repeatedly bring diplomacy back to the same conclusion: There can be no lasting stability in the Middle East without a credible political future for Palestinians.

Consistency, in this context, becomes a form of power. Jordan has also maintained something increasingly scarce in a polarised region: the ability to communicate with different sides.

Its strategic relationships with the United States and Europe coexist with deep Arab ties and an active role in regional diplomacy. Amman frequently becomes relevant precisely when dialogue elsewhere becomes difficult.

This is what might be called Jordan's quiet power. It does not depend on dominating headlines. It depends on being considered reliable when circumstances become unpredictable.

But international credibility alone is not enough. Jordan's next challenge is to translate its diplomatic capital into greater economic and institutional strength at home. Education, technological development, professional media, political modernisation, the rule of law and opportunities for young Jordanians are not separate from foreign policy. They increasingly determine a country's international influence.

For a country with limited natural resources, human capital is not simply an economic advantage. It is a strategic resource. Jordan therefore offers a useful lesson beyond its borders.

The twenty-first century may require us to reconsider what makes a country powerful. Military strength and economic wealth remain important, but influence can also come from stability, credibility, institutional resilience and the ability to keep doors open when others close them.

The Middle East has many powerful actors. What it has far fewer of are trusted ones. Jordan's importance has never rested solely on what it possesses. It has rested on the role it is able to play.

And in a region where trust is becoming increasingly difficult to find, that may explain why Jordan continues to matter far more than its size would suggest.

Baptism 2030: How AI can help Jordan turn a historic anniversary into a global digital experience

By Lubna Hanna Ammari

In 2030, Jordan will stand before a historic moment of global significance: The commemoration of the 2,000th anniversary of the Baptism of Jesus Christ at Bethany Beyond the Jordan, known in Arabic as Al Maghtas. The occasion is far more than a religious anniversary. It is an opportunity for Jordan to present one of its most important spiritual and cultural landmarks to the world and to demonstrate how heritage, technology and human connection can come together in the digital age.

The Baptism Site is not simply another archaeological destination. Located on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, north of the Dead Sea, Bethany Beyond the Jordan is recognised by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and is traditionally identified as the place where Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist. Its archaeological landscape includes churches, chapels, monasteries, caves and baptismal pools that reflect centuries of religious activity and pilgrimage. UNESCO's recognition in 2015 placed the site within a global framework of outstanding cultural and religious heritage.

Jordan has already begun preparing for 2030. In August 2026, Prime Minister Jafar Hassan chaired the first meeting of the National Committee responsible for preparing the commemoration, following directives from His Majesty King Abdullah. The national plans include developing infrastructure, improving services for pilgrims and visitors, establishing a museum dedicated to the Baptism, and developing an integrated visitors' and pilgrims' village. Four agreements worth approximately \$120 million have also been signed for projects surrounding the Baptism Site.

Yet, physical infrastructure alone will not determine how the world experiences Baptism 2030. The next generation of visitors increasingly discovers destinations through digital platforms before ever setting foot on the ground. This is where artificial intelligence can become a strategic national asset rather than simply another technological tool.

Jordan could create an AI-powered digital gateway to Al-Maghtas, allowing people anywhere in the world to explore the site virtually, learn about its history, understand its religious significance and plan an eventual pilgrimage. An intelligent multilingual digital guide could communicate in Arabic, English, Chinese, Spanish, French, Italian, German and other major languages, adapting its explanations to the visitor's age, interests, cultural background and level of knowledge. Such a platform could transform the Baptism Site from a destination that people discover when they arrive in Jordan into a destination they begin experiencing long before their journey.

Jordan has an extraordinary story to tell. In 2030, the world will be looking toward the banks of the Jordan River to remember an event whose meaning has travelled across two millennia and across cultures and continents

Artificial intelligence could also help bring the layers of history embedded in Al Maghtas to life. Through augmented and virtual reality, visitors could explore reconstructed historical landscapes, ancient churches and archaeological features while clearly distinguishing between documented historical evidence and digital reconstruction. AI could help personalise these experiences, enabling a student, researcher,

pilgrim or tourist to explore the same heritage site from a different perspective.

The opportunity extends beyond the physical boundaries of Al Maghtas. AI could connect the Baptism Site with Jordan's wider religious and cultural heritage, creating intelligent digital journeys linking Christian pilgrimage sites, archaeological landmarks, museums, churches and communities across the Kingdom. Instead of presenting individual destinations separately, Jordan could offer visitors a connected digital narrative of a country where history, faith, culture and coexistence intersect.

There is also an important economic dimension. AI-powered tourism platforms can help visitors discover local accommodation, restaurants, transportation, handicrafts, cultural experiences and community-based tourism. By connecting international visitors with local businesses and communities, the digital experience could extend the economic benefits of Baptism 2030 beyond the immediate vicinity of the site.

This vision would also be consistent with Jordan's broader national direction. The Jordani-an Artificial Intelligence Strategy and Implementation Plan 2023-2027 identifies artificial intelligence as a national priority and seeks to position Jordan as a regional leader in AI while developing the country's technological and human capabilities. The strategy includes 68 projects and initiatives across priority sectors.

However, technology must serve the heritage, not replace it. The greatest danger in creating a digital experience around a sacred site would be allowing artificial intelligence to turn spirituality into entertainment or historical interpretation into algorithmic storytelling. Every AI-generated reconstruction, translation and narrative should therefore be based on verified sources and reviewed by historians, archaeologists, theologians and relevant religious authorities. The UNESCO status of Al Maghtas also makes preservation and authenticity essential considerations as Jordan develops new visitor experiences.

The figures announced by the Jordanian regulator therefore take on broader meaning. Closing more than ten pages and six centres does more than shut down visible sales channels...

This is where the value of early monitoring becomes clear. If the name of a compound already being followed by the radar starts appearing in online offers or on products at the border, regulators can

intensify scrutiny before the sales and distribution network around it expands.

Once the market has already formed, however, the problem may extend far beyond a page or an account. Documented cases and regulatory actions show that sales may be linked to a wider chain involving suppliers, importation, shipping, payment and distribution points outside pharmacies. Closing the visible storefront remains important, but it cannot by itself answer another question: Has the structure that allows the market to return actually been weakened?

The figures announced by the Jordanian regulator therefore take on broader meaning. Closing more than ten pages and six centres does more than shut down visible sales channels; the information these actions reveal about suppliers, product sources and distribution channels can be turned into regulatory intelligence that informs subsequent monitoring and redirects what regulators look for in future cases.

The Jordanian warning thus opens a window onto an issue broader than the products it identified. The value of monitoring begins before the market itself takes shape: By identifying compounds in development that are most likely to attract consumer interest or be commercially exploited; then detecting signs that an unregulated market is beginning to form around them before the product appears locally; linking digital signals with findings from border controls and enforcement actions; and using each case to make it harder for the market to re-emerge and to detect the next case faster.

The real ambition for Baptism 2030 should therefore not be simply to attract more visitors. It should be to create a model for how a country can use emerging technology to make heritage more accessible without compromising its authenticity, dignity or sacred character.

The opportunity extends beyond the physical boundaries of Al Maghtas. AI could connect the Baptism Site with Jordan's wider religious...

The writer is a specialist in educational technology

BUSINESS

Wednesday, September 9, 2026



The Vocational Training Corporation in cooperation with the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts announces on Tuesday the opening of registration for a fully funded training scholarship

VTC, RACA open registration for fully funded elevate training programme

AMMAN (JT) — The Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), in cooperation with the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts, and with support and funding from the Swiss embassy in Jordan, announced on Tuesday the opening of registration for a fully funded training scholarship under the ELE-VATE programme.

The programme aims to provide young people with specialised vocational skills in culinary arts and hospitality and prepare them to enter the labour market, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

According to a VTC statement, the schol-

arship covers three specialised training programmes; fundamentals of culinary arts; fundamentals of bakery, confectionery and pastry production; and barista and hotel services.

The programmes will be offered at the VTC's training institutes in Jerash and Madaba, with practical training focused on providing participants with the skills and knowledge needed to work in the tourism and hospitality sector.

The ELEVATE programme is intended to contribute to preparing qualified vocational workers who meet la-

bour market needs and to provide young people with specialised training opportunities in one of the key sectors.

Upon completing the programme, participants will receive a professional practice certificate accredited by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission, supporting the value of the training and their opportunities to enter the labour market.

The VTC called on those interested in the scholarship to register and take the opportunity to gain specialised vocational skills through the registration link provided by the corporation.

Real estate sales activity rises 7% in August — official figures

AMMAN (JT) — Property sales activity in Jordan rose by 7 per cent in August compared with July, while recording a marginal increase of less than 1 per cent year-on-year, according to the latest figures from the Department of Lands and Survey (DLS).

The data, reported by Al Mamlaka TV, showed that the total value of property transactions reached around JD4.39 billion during the first eight months of 2026, down 4 per cent from the same period last year.

Apartment sales increased by 5 per cent in August compared with July and by 1 per cent compared with August 2025. Land sales rose by 8 per cent month-on-month, while edging down by less than 1 per cent year-on-year.

Despite the monthly increase, overall property sales activity in the Kingdom declined by 9 per cent during the first eight months of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025. Apartment sales fell by 6 per cent, while land sales declined by 9 per cent.

A total of 6,910 properties were sold to companies in the Kingdom during the first eight months of the year.

The value of prop-



Property sales activity in Jordan rises by 7 per cent in August compared with July according to data released by Department of Lands and Survey

erty transactions stood at around JD673.7 million in August, down 2 per cent from the same month last year and by less than 1 per cent from July.

Property market revenues, however, rose by 9 per cent year-on-year and 6 per cent month-on-month to around JD27.4 million.

During the first eight months of 2026, revenues increased by 4 per cent compared with the same

period last year, reaching around JD182.1 million.

The number of property ownership transactions by non-Jordanians increased by 31 per cent in August compared with the same month in 2025 and by 18 per cent compared with July.

Apartment sales to non-Jordanians rose by 44 per cent year-on-year and 22 per cent month-on-month, while land sales increased by 13 per cent compared with both

August 2025 and the previous month.

The estimated value of property transactions involving non-Jordanians rose by 46 per cent year-on-year in August to JD23.71 million. The figure was marginally lower than in July, declining by less than 1 per cent.

During the first eight months of 2026, the number of property ownership transactions by non-Jordanians fell by 1 per cent compared

with the same period last year. Apartment sales increased by 7 per cent, while land sales declined by 12 per cent.

Despite the decline in the number of transactions, their estimated value rose by 19 per cent year-on-year to around JD147.1 million.

According to ownership statistics by gender, men accounted for 64.86 per cent of property owners, compared with 35.14 per cent for women.

Could gas prices return to 2022 highs on US-Iran war?

LONDON (AFP) — European gas prices have more than doubled owing to the US-Iran war, just as Europe needs to replenish its reserves ahead of winter.

AFP examines the severity of the current spike, comparing it with energy price shocks in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



AFP file photo

Why are reserves a key concern?

Since the 2022 Russia invasion, the European Union has required member states to fill their gas reserves each year to at least 80 per cent capacity by November 1 in order to mitigate the risk of shortages during the coldest months.

With less than two months to go before the deadline, current fill levels stand at an average of 67 per cent, well below the 79 per cent mark at the same time last year.

Much of the decline is owing to Germany, where stocks in Europe's biggest economy stand at just 53 per cent of capacity compared to 71 per cent this time last year.

This points to a surge in demand ahead of the current winter. Europe must also compete with Asia to secure liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments.

"No comparably low storage level has been

recorded at this time of year," said industry lobby group INES.

It cautioned that the "window for sufficient refill is closing".

The competition for gas stocks between European and Asian countries risks further driving up prices — which have more than doubled to approach 75 euros per megawatt-hour owing to the conflict in the Middle East.

The war has effectively blocked the Strait of Hormuz, which before the conflict transported about one fifth of the world's LNG and oil.

How high could prices go?

The outlook for gas prices centre primarily on Qatar — one of the world's largest LNG suppliers and whose exports rely on maritime shipping.

"If disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz persist through the winter, a price range of 100 to 150 euros per megawatt-hour is plausible," Julien Mathonniere at Energy

Intelligence told AFP.

Another variable could be the climate, noted Jonathan Schroer, a strategist at UniCredit.

He said the El Nino weather phenomenon over the summer had made temperatures hotter in much of the world.

"This is significant because hotter weather creates more demand for power for cooling systems, driving higher electricity consumption, especially in Asia," which is home to major LNG importers China, India and Japan.

However, analysts consider it unlikely that there is a return to the 2022 price peaks — when the European benchmark contract TTF briefly exceeded 300 euros per megawatt-hour.

Why this crisis differs from 2022?

In 2022, the shock stemmed from an EU policy decision to reduce reliance on Russian gas, which at the time provided 45 per cent of the bloc's requirements, according to Schroer.

The sudden loss of these volumes forced European nations to urgently reorganise their supply chains and build new LNG terminals.

Today, the issue is less about a single supplier, rather more about tighter global supplies.

Europe is now more exposed to international competition for LNG cargoes than to a direct supply cut-off.

Why the electricity sector appears less vulnerable?

European countries are consuming less gas than in 2022 as they increasingly switch to renewables to generate electricity.

According to the European Commission, renewable energy accounted for nearly half of the EU's electricity generation in 2025.

Analysts believe this shift reduces the risk of a gas price spike translating into electricity bill hikes as severe as those seen in 2022, although costs are still expected to rise.

Extension of freight exemptions supports supply chain stability, limits price rise — clearance association

AMMAN (JT) — President of the Association of Owners of Clearance and Transport Companies Daif Allah Abu Aqouleh recently said the Cabinet's decision to extend the exemption from customs duties and taxes, is a "vital" step towards strengthening supply chain sustainability and ensuring the smooth flow of goods.



JT file

The decision to extend the exemption is resulting from the increase in freight charges and it includes all goods arriving through sea-freight for an additional six months.

Speaking to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Abu Aqouleh said the decision would help protect consumers from global price increases while mitigating the impact of rising freight and transport costs on importers and economic sectors amid global trade challenges arising from regional and international developments.

He added that maintaining the exemptions

would help contain overall import costs.

The Cabinet recently approved an extension of its previous decision to exempt all sea-bound imports from customs duties and taxes resulting from increased sea freight charges for an additional six months.

The measure, which covers general and special sales taxes, aims to prevent increases in commodity prices resulting from higher shipping costs and regional developments.

Abu Aqouleh said ex-

tending the relief scheme to all maritime imports would ease the financial burden caused by elevated shipping rates and help prevent these costs from being passed on to domestic market prices.

He said stabilising freight costs, particularly maritime shipping rates, is a "fundamental" factor in ensuring a steady supply of raw materials and essential commodities to the Kingdom, while maintaining regular import operations to support various economic sectors.

Abu Aqouleh added that significant increases in shipping fees directly affect the final prices of goods.

Government measures to ease these costs, he said, help shield consumers from regional and global inflationary pressures while enhancing the competitiveness of the commercial and industrial sectors.

He stressed the need for continued monitoring of global freight rate trends and their impact on trade costs, calling for stronger public-private cooperation to adopt proactive measures that ensure uninterrupted commercial flows.

The association president commended the Cabinet's decision, saying it reflects the government's commitment to mitigating the impact of rising shipping costs on the national economy and consumers, while maintaining market stability and product availability amid prevailing regional conditions, Petra reported.

US stocks dip as oil prices advance

NEW YORK (AFP) — Wall Street retreated early Tuesday as oil prices pushed higher while markets awaited key inflation data later in the week.

Brent oil futures were trading above \$97 a barrel following Houthi attacks targeting Saudi oil infrastructure, part of an effort to gain control of Bab al-Mandab Strait, a

conduit for Saudi crude after Iran blockaded the Strait of Hormuz.

About 10 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.2 per cent at 52,962.18.

The broad-based S&P 500 dipped 0.2 per cent to 7,701.95, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index also lost 0.2 per

cent at 26,464.68.

Markets are looking ahead to consumer and wholesale inflation reports later in the week, considered key inputs for a Federal Reserve September 16 decision on interest rates.

"Our forecast is that we're going to see a fairly big inflation increase this month, so we are expect-

ing the Fed will raise rates," said FHN Financial's Chris Low.

Among individual companies, GE Aerospace rose 0.7 per cent after announcing it would buy Consolidated Precision Productions for \$11.75 billion from private investment firms Warburg Pincus and Berkshire Partners.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

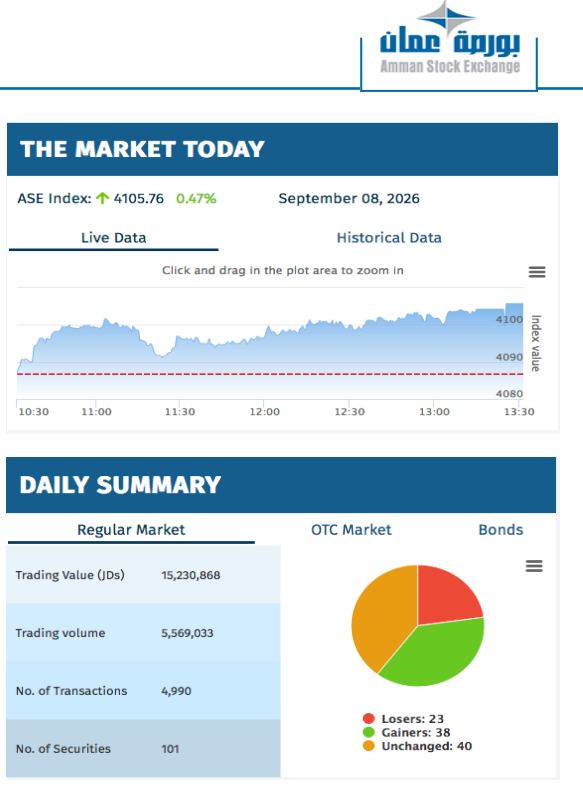
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Tuesday amounted to JD15.2 million spread over 5.6 million shares that traded through 4,990 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.47 per cent, closing at 4105.76 points.

Out of 101 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 38 companies rose while the share price of another 23 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Arab Pesticides and Veterinary Drugs Manufacturing Company by 7.27 per cent, Al Faris National Company for Investment and Export by 5 per cent, Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 4.95 per cent, High Performance Real Estate Investments by 4.88 per cent, and Jordan Masaken for Land and Industrial Development Projects by 4.62 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 4.76 per cent, Al Shamekha for Real Estate and Financial Investments by 4.51 per cent, National Insurance by 4.29 per cent, Al Bilad Securities and Investment by 2.94 per cent, and Jordan Dairy by 2.87 per cent.



TENNIS

Blockx first Belgian man to reach US Open quarter-finals

NEW YORK (AFP) — Alexander Blockx beat Francisco Cerundolo in four sets on Monday to become the first Belgian man ever to reach the US Open quarter-finals. The 21-year-old Blockx, seeded 28th in his Flushing Meadows debut, outlasted 24th-seeded Cerundolo 6-3, 4-6, 7-5, 7-5. Blockx, who upset fifth-seeded Flavio Cobolli in the third round, backed up that win with a determined performance during which he received “magical medication” from the doctor to combat a “sharp pain in my rib”. I was just holding on to be honest,” Blockx said. “Even though I won that first set 6-3, it could have been the other way round.” The win marks the latest stepping stone for Blockx, who began the year outside the top 100 and had to qualify for the Australian Open. After splitting the first two sets, Blockx and Cerundolo stood level at 5-5 when the Belgian fell behind 0-40 on his serve. Blockx worked his way back with big serves and booming strokes, holding serve and breaking Cerundolo in the next game to take the third set.

BASKETBALL

China's teenage 223cm basketball player 'just a little girl'

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese teenage basketball player Zhang Ziyu stands 223cm and towers over opponents at the Women's World Cup — but off the court she's “just a little girl”. That was the assessment of the giant 19-year-old by team-mate Han Xu after China's 74-70 overtime win over the Czech Republic on Sunday in Germany. The teenage centre scored three points in just over 10 minutes on court against a physical Czech side, having been more of a threat against reigning champions the United States in a 94-61 loss to start the tournament. After that defeat, USA superstar Caitlin Clark had warm words for Zhang, saying: “I've never played against a woman of that size and she obviously presented some challenges for us. I think she's a wonderful player and you see how young she is. You can tell she's still growing and learning how to play and how to leverage her advantage, which is her size.”



HRH Prince Feisal on Tuesday launches the 24th Asian Karate Championship for youth, juniors and under-21s

Prince Feisal inaugurates 24th Asian Karate Championship

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince Feisal, president of the Jordan Olympic Committee, on Tuesday inaugurated the 24th Asian Karate Championship for youth, juniors and under-21s, hosted at the Arena Hall at Al Hussein Youth City. The event was attended by Their Royal Highnesses Princes Abdullah and Mohammad Bin Feisal, with the four-day championship bringing together 338 male and female athletes representing 30 countries. Minister of youth

and chairman of the championship's Higher Organising Committee, Raed Adwan, said that national institutions are committed to providing the necessary support to ensure the event's success and showcase Jordan's sporting image. Jordan Karate Federation president, Hassan Masoud, welcomed the participating delegations, stressing that Amman's hosting of the championship highlights sport's role in bringing people together and reinforces Jordan's position as a

country of security and stability, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The opening ceremony included folklore and heritage performances...

Asian Karate Federation president, Maj. Gen. Nasser Razouqi,

praised Jordan's organisational efforts and facilities provided for the event, commending its efforts to host a distinguished continental championship. The opening ceremony included folklore and heritage performances, as well as artistic shows. Following the ceremony, Prince Feisal attended part of the competitions and presented medals to the winners in the under-57kg and over-60kg junior categories, and the over-60kg junior girls' category.

Barca star Yamal says will not beg for Ballon d'Or

BARCELONA (AFP) — Barcelona star Lamine Yamal said on Tuesday he will not beg for the Ballon d'Or trophy after winning the World Cup with Spain and La Liga with the Catalan giants. On Monday Real Madrid star Kylian Mbappe made his case to win the trophy, highlighting his World Cup Golden Boot win, which also saw him become the competition's all-time top goalscorer. Yamal, 19, thought he had played very well while winning trophies for club and country but said he was happy to let others decide whether he deserved the prize. The teenager, Mbappe, Harry Kane, Ousmane Dembele and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia are the main candidates to win the award at the ceremony in London on October

26. "I don't think I need to [make a campaign for it], I'm not thinking about what I deserve, everyone can think what they like," Yamal told reporters. "I'm proud of everything I've done this year with my club and with the national team. We've become world champions, we've won the league again. I can't ask for anything more. "I think... I've shown an incredible level, it's [the media's] job and I will not beg for anything." Yamal came second in last year's Ballon d'Or voting behind PSG star Dembele. France forward Dembele recently told France Football that Kvaratskhelia, Kane and Mbappe would be in his top three to win the award.



From left to right: Barcelona's German forward #14 Karim Adeyemi, Barcelona's Spanish forward #10 Lamine Yamal take part in a training session at the Joan Gamper training ground in Sant Joan Despi, near Barcelona, on Tuesday

Second-hand smoke causes to nearly 1.7M deaths globally — study

PARIS, France (AFP) — More than 2.7 billion people including children have been exposed to second-hand smoke globally, contributing to nearly 1.7 million deaths in 2023, according to study published on Tuesday in The Lancet. Tobacco remains a leading cause of disease globally, the study said, noting many “non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke” were among the estimate total of 8 million people who died in 2023 of smoking-related illnesses. “Exposure to second-hand smoke is a globally recognised health risk, with no safe level of inhalation,” it said. By reviewing studies published in the US National Institutes of Health database PubMed along with population surveys, Tuesday's study sought to estimate the prevalence of exposure to second-hand smoke and quantify the burden of disease in 204 countries and territories between 1990 and 2023. Among the approximately 2.7 billion people exposed to second-hand smoke in 2023 were 767 million children aged 0 to 14, the study found. This exposure is estimated to have resulted in 1.66 million premature deaths and causing premature disability



and illness, leading with ischemic heart disease, a heart condition caused by insufficient oxygen supply to the heart muscle. In children, exposure to second-hand smoke is estimated to have caused 5.2 million respiratory tract infections in 2023, it said. People in proximity to someone lighting up are exposed to both the “side-stream smoke” from the burning tobacco product and smoke exhaled by the active smoker, the study explained. “The sidestream component, which dominates the air non-smokers breathe, is unfiltered... carrying higher per-unit concentrations of the

toxic and carcinogenic compounds” than that being inhaled by the active smoker, it said. Despite significant declines in smoking prevalence globally since 1990, the absolute number of people exposed has remained stable due to population growth and increased exposure in Africa and the Middle East. Women are also disproportionately affected by second-hand smoke, particularly in regions where smoking prevalence among women is low, it noted. “Despite this substantial burden, [second-hand smoke] exposure remains rarely acknowledged as a major risk factor for female health,” it said.

Stay far from battlefield, warns Japanese director in Vietnam War film

VENICE (AFP) — Modern warfare may have changed, but the suffering of victims remains the same, while those waging war will inevitably “commit horrifying acts”, Japanese director Shinya Tsukamoto said of his Vietnam War film at Venice. “Mr. Nelson, Did you Kill People?”, which premiered on Friday at the Venice Film Festival, tells the true story of Allen Nelson, a black US Marine sent to Vietnam in 1966 and plagued the rest of his life by what he saw — and did — there. Director Tsukamoto, last at Venice in 2018 with his pacifist Samurai film “Killing”, said that when he learned about the story of Nelson, who battled PTSD and dedicated his life to speaking out about the horrors of war, he felt compelled to portray his experience on film. “I wanted to depict the fact that, beyond eras and beyond borders, if people go to war, no matter what country they come from, they will experience horrifying things and commit horrifying acts,” Tsukamoto told a press conference on Friday. Tsukamoto's work, which ranges from post-modern horror movies like 1995's “Tokyo Fist” to “Fires on the Plain” from 2014 about the WWII-era



Japanese director Shin'ya Tsukamoto (centre), Australian actor Geoffrey Rush (right) and US actor Rodney Hicks attend the red carpet

Japanese occupation of the Philippines, has increasingly examined the legacy of war. In war, he said, “even if the side doing the killing changes, the victims do not”. “Whether it's an old-fashioned war or a drone war, in the end, people's innards are blown out, their eyes are torn from their sockets and the families around them are plunged into grief. In that sense, the horror experienced by the victims is ultimately the same,” he said. “Mr. Nelson, Did you Kill People?” takes its title from a question asked by a schoolchild during

a talk Nelson gave following his tour in Vietnam. The query sent the Vietnam vet into a tailspin that led to family problems, medication, therapy and ultimately redemption. “Fire at anything” Through unflinchingly graphic flashbacks, the viewer is plunged into the hot Vietnam jungle where the young Nelson, played by Mark Merphy, and his platoon seek out Viet Cong, massacring innocent civilians and burning villages as a matter of course. “We fired at anything that moved,” remembers

ing perpetrators' awareness of their killing. “As the technology becomes more advanced, I worry that the perpetrator's sense of actually inflicting harm will become more and more dulled,” he said. But he noted that drone operators sometimes monitor their targets for days, firing their drone “after having watched and understood that person's home environment and family situation”. “So in many cases, they launch an attack by drone after having developed a certain empathy for the target's family. And it appears that precisely because of that, they do indeed suffer from severe PTSD,” he said. “So no matter how much the times change, those who are killed are in the same position as ever, and I don't think the inner experience of those doing the killing will fundamentally change either.” The director said his goal was to make viewers “feel war with their skin, with their bodies, and to come away with a slight trauma”. “If people can feel that through this film, then I personally believe that someday, when young people see it, they will viscerally reject the idea of going to a real battlefield.”

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