



CBJ raises interest rates by 25 basis points

AMMAN (JT) — The Central Bank of Jordan's (CBJ) Open Market Operations Committee has raised interest rates on all monetary policy instruments by 25 basis points, effective on Monday.

The move, decided at the committee's sixth meeting of 2026, is aimed at maintaining monetary stability, and enhancing the attractiveness of the Jordanian dinar and the competitiveness of dinar-denominated assets by aligning domestic interest rates with prevailing trends in regional and

international financial markets, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The committee said that its decision followed a review of key economic, monetary and financial developments at the domestic, regional and international levels, as well as monetary policy trends among central banks and measures being taken to address rising inflationary pressures.

Jordan's inflation rate reached 2.20 per cent during the first eight months of 2026, up from 1.86 per cent during the same pe-

riod last year, according to CBJ.

The latest economic indicators point to resilient monetary and banking conditions and continued recovery in economic activity, the bank said.

Tourism receipts rose 2.9 per cent during the first eight months of 2026 to about \$5.6 billion, supported by a notable improvement in performance over the past three months, when average growth reached around 17 per cent, Petra said.

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Prime minister unveils plans to boost economy in Maan, accelerate development

- Hassan highlights Maan's 'significant' economic potential, says work over next two years to focus on capitalising on these opportunities
- He says government's priorities are to strengthen economy, improve public services, create income-generating opportunities for citizens
- Premier says Maan Development Area needs to become more competitive to attract investment
- PM says gov't will introduce investment incentives, including reduced land prices, electricity costs

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan said on Sunday that Maan has significant economic potential, and that the government will work over the next two years to capitalise on those opportunities and place the southern governorate on a path towards sustainable development.

Speaking at a Cabinet session held in Maan, Hassan said that the government's immediate priorities were to strengthen the economy, improve public services and create income-generating opportunities for citizens, despite continuing regional instability.

"Today, all our determination and efforts are focused on building the economy, improving services and enabling citizens to find the income opportunities they



Prime Minister Jafar Hassan chairs a Cabinet session in the southern governorate of Maan

need," Hassan said, describing these priorities as the government's primary focus.

He said that Jordan's leadership and the strong institutions and security had ena-

bled the government to concentrate on implementing the Economic Modernisation Vision

and strengthening the national economy.

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

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has condemned the storming of Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif by extremist Israeli minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and groups of extremist settlers, under the protection of Israeli occupation forces.

In a statement on Sunday, the ministry said that the incident constitutes a "blatant" violation of the historical and legal status quo at Al Haram Al Sharif, a desecration of its sanctity and an escalation and provocation, according to a ministry statement.

Ministry Spokesperson Fuad Majali reiterated the Kingdom's absolute rejection and condemnation of continued incursions by extremist ministers and settlers, as well as their provocative practices.

Majali also condemned the Israeli occupation forces for facilitating the incursions, describing them as a



This photo shows a view of the Al Aqsa Mosque compound and its Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem's Old City on December 20, 2024

"flagrant" violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

He said that such

"reckless" actions seek to impose new realities at Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif by attempting to di-

vide it temporally and spatially.

Majali warned of the consequences of the continued violations

and provocative practices, stressing that Israel has no sovereignty over occupied Jerusalem or its Islamic and Christian holy sites.

He called on the international community to take a firm stance to compel Israel, as the occupying power, to halt its illegal practices and violations against the holy sites in Jerusalem, and end measures restricting worshippers' access to Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif.

Majali reiterated that the entire 144 dunnum Al Aqsa Mosque compound is an exclusive place of worship for Muslims and that the Jerusalem Waqf and Al Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department, under the Ministry of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places, is the sole legal authority responsible for managing the affairs of Al Haram Al Sharif and regulating access to it.



Jordan banks won't raise interest rates on existing individual loans — ABJ

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian banks will keep interest rates unchanged on existing individual loans despite the Central Bank of Jordan's decision to raise key policy rates by 25 basis points, the Association of Banks in Jordan (ABJ) said on Sunday.

The move will shield borrowers from additional financial costs and help them continue

meeting their loan obligations, the association said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency (Petra).

The decision comes despite higher funding costs facing banks, including increased interest rates on deposits, particularly those denominated in foreign currencies, following the US Federal Reserve's de-

cision to raise interest rates by 25 basis points, ABJ said.

The association said that the decision reflects the Jordanian banking sector's commitment to taking into account citizens' economic circumstances while balancing customers' interests with the need to maintain the strength and stability of the banking sector.

Switzerland committed to working with Jordan on enhancing stability, peace — ambassador

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — Switzerland remains committed to working with Jordan on enhancing dialogue, stability and peace, Swiss Ambassador to the Kingdom Emilija Georgieva said.

In an interview with The Jordan Times, Georgieva said that Switzerland's experience in mediation and "good offices" remains available to the region, including through Geneva as a platform for talks.

She also highlighted Switzerland's Regional Cooperation Programme for Syria and neighbour-



Emilija Georgieva

ing countries for 2026-2029, which combines humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, peacebuilding and migration support. (See full interview on page 2.)

The programme aims to help vulnerable communities while addressing issues including

livelihoods, water management, governance and social cohesion.

Georgieva described Jordan as an "essential partner" in these efforts, citing the Kingdom's role in regional stability and humanitarian support.

Georgieva highlighted initiatives including Swiss Film Days, Switzerland's participation in the Amman International Film Festival and the Voices of the Reef project, which brings together Swiss and Jordanian artists and scientists to raise awareness about protecting the Gulf of Aqaba's coral reefs.

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Russia vows revenge for election-day attacks as poll shows ruling party win

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia vowed on Sunday to "intensify" its strikes on Kyiv in response to Ukrainian drone attacks on Moscow, as an exit poll showed the ruling United Russia party on course to win parliamentary elections.

Ukraine fired waves of drones at Moscow and the surrounding region on the final day of voting, killing two people and setting an oil refinery ablaze, officials said.

Russia's defence ministry accused Ukraine of attempting to "disrupt the democratic will of Russian



A family votes in Russia's parliamentary election at a polling station in the village of Kudinov, 140 km southwest of Moscow, in the Kaluga region, on Sunday

citizens" and vowed a response.

An exit poll pub-

lished by a pollster showed United Russia on course to win 49.4

per cent of the vote, around the same it achieved in the previ-

ous election.

"In response to the Kyiv regime's attacks on civilian targets within Russia, the Russian army will continue and intensify its high-accuracy strikes against military targets in Kyiv," the Russian defence ministry said.

The attack was the largest on Moscow since Russia launched its military operations in Ukraine offensive in 2022 and involved some 1,600 drones, 450 of which were aimed directly at the capital, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said.

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Princess Basma attends national meeting on women in agriculture

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Princess Basma, chairperson of the board of trustees of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), on Sunday attended a national meeting organised by the commission under the theme “Women in Agriculture: From Beneficiaries to Partners”.

The meeting aimed to identify the priorities of women working in agriculture as part of a national dialogue on policies and rural development, and to enhance their participation in shaping decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods, according to a JNCW statement.

Princess Basma stressed the importance of the meeting, which addresses the situation of women in the agricultural sector as a matter at the heart of Jordan's development, highlighting women working in the sector as partners in production, rights-holders in terms of opportunities and decision-making, and a key component in shaping the future of Jordan's rural communities.

She said that the meeting is in line with the UN declaration of 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, underscoring the importance of ensuring that women working in agriculture are reflected in policies, programmes and practices, and are recognised as being at the heart of the rural economy and one of its pillars.

Princess Basma highlighted the challenges facing women working in agriculture, including transportation, the lack of social protection, limited access to extension services and support, and care re-



HRH Princess Basma on Sunday attends a national meeting organised by the Jordanian National Commission for Women to identify the priorities of women working in agriculture

sponsibilities, stressing the need for a more integrated institutional response.

She noted that Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) has placed agricultural productivity and women's economic participation among national priorities, highlighting the importance of pursuing both tracks and empowering women working in this vital sector, while treating them as partners in decision-making and access to opportunities.

Princess Basma also highlighted the pivotal role of JNCW as a national mechanism that brings together public institutions, civil society, the private sector and other partners, and works to link national policies to women's lived realities.

Acting JNCW Secretary-General Dima Jweihan said that talking about women in agriculture is about hard work, economic empowerment and food security, as well as equitable access to resources, services and opportunities.

She stressed the importance of recognising women's work, enabling them to benefit from its returns and ensuring their participation in decisions related to their work.

Jweihan added that the meeting reflects the commission's commitment, under the leadership of Princess Basma, to providing a platform for meaningful national dialogue with women working in agriculture, highlighting their experiences, expertise and needs, and viewing them as partners in production, decision-making and setting development priorities, rather than merely as beneficiaries.

The meeting included working sessions with the participation of women working in agriculture and representatives of relevant institutions.

The sessions addressed several themes, including guidance and extension services; technology and resilience to climate change; entrepreneurship; markets and leadership; decent work

and care; and financing and ownership.

The sessions concluded with agreement on clear and specific outcomes under each theme, with the aim of incorporating them into the National Strategy for Women in Jordan.

The meeting marked the beginning of a dialogue and follow-up process that links the voices of women working in agriculture to policymaking and strengthens national efforts to support their economic and social participation and their role in developing their communities.

The meeting also focused on the JNCW's role in bringing together relevant stakeholders and coordinating their efforts, conveying women's priorities to national policymaking and planning processes, and building on the discussions to update the National Strategy for Women and its implementation plan, particularly in areas related to women's economic and social empowerment.

Prince Hassan meets Sabelat El Hassan participants, highlights youth empowerment

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince Hassan, honorary president of the El Hassan Youth Award, on Sunday stressed the importance of empowering young people and preparing them to become responsible leaders capable of contributing to community development.

Speaking during a meeting with participants of the “Sabelat El Hassan 2026” programme, held at Al Karameh Hall at the Greater Madaba Municipality, Prince Hassan stressed that investing in human resources through education, work and public service forms the foundation for achieving sustainable development and safeguarding human dignity.

The prince noted that holding the meeting at the municipality carries symbolic importance linked to institutional, service and urban development, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

“Municipal work forms a fundamental pillar in serving local communities,” the prince said, stressing that the role of youth goes beyond consuming services to actively shaping their cities through entrepreneurial ideas, volunteer work and community initiatives

Highlighting national industry as a cornerstone of self-reliance and economic growth, Prince Hassan called on young people to engage in productive sectors and leverage technology, automation and artificial intelligence to enhance the competitiveness of Jordanian products and open new markets.

He also called for fostering creative thinking and transforming challenges



HRH Prince Hassan, during a meeting with participants of the ‘Sabelat El Hassan 2026’ programme, on Sunday stresses the importance of empowering young people and preparing them to become responsible leaders

facing Jordan into opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly in water, energy, agriculture, services, education and logistics.

Limited resources have consistently served as a catalyst for Jordanian innovation, Prince Hassan said, noting that knowledge and innovation have become critical national assets in the modern era.

Prince Hassan also highlighted the Multidimensional Deprivation Index as a vital tool for gaining a comprehensive understanding of community needs by assessing various dimensions of deprivation beyond income indicators alone.

The prince emphasised that utilising accurate data and knowledge remains essential for setting priorities and formulating development policies that ensure resources and services reach the most vulnerable groups and areas.

Director of the El Hassan Youth Award Khawla Hassan said

that Sabelat El Hassan 2026 continues the journey of the programme launched in 1991 under the patronage and support of Prince Hassan to empower youth and bolster their leadership roles in serving the nation.

'Municipal work forms a fundamental pillar in serving local communities'

She noted that participants undertook field visits and activities spanning historical, religious, archaeological and environmental sites, alongside national, economic, industrial and logistics institutions, coupled with training, athletic, intellectual and volunteer initiatives.

Head of the Greater Madaba Municipality Committee Haitham Jweinat praised

the programme's role in enhancing youth knowledge of Jordan's history and institutions while reinforcing teamwork, dedication and belonging.

He emphasised the importance of such meetings in enhancing intergenerational communication, connecting youth with their local communities and encouraging active participation in the development process.

Prince Hassan engaged in a discussion with participants, hearing their experiences and impressions from visits to various governorates and exchanging views on the insights gained throughout the programme.

First launched in 1991 as a core component of the El Hassan Youth Award, Sabelat El Hassan provides a national field experience combining education, exploration, training and community service aimed at fostering leadership, self-reliance and civic responsibility among youth.

ICRC, KOICA conference focuses on mental health of missing persons’ families

AMMAN (JT) — The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Delegation in Amman convened a two-day conference titled “Mental Health and Psychosocial Support [MHPSS] for Families of Missing Persons: Bridging Theory, Research, and Practice” on September 15–16, with the support of Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

The conference brought together government representatives, mental health experts, academics, researchers, international and local organisations, alongside families of missing persons from across the region and beyond, according to an ICRC statement.

Organised under the partnership framework of the ICRC-KOICA Conflict and Fragility Programme, the conference highlighted a shared commitment to providing MHPSS to families living in uncertainty about the fate and whereabouts of their relatives, and to addressing their prolonged anguish.

The conference opened with a keynote address by Pauline Boss, renowned family therapist and originator of the concept of ambiguous loss, followed by numerous presentations and expert panels exploring the importance of MHPSS for families in local policies, academic teaching and research.

Dedicated panels also examined the spe-



The International Committee of the Red Cross Delegation in Amman and Korea International Cooperation Agency hold a conference titled ‘Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Families of Missing Persons: Bridging Theory, Research, and Practice’

cific experiences of women and children affected by disappearances, as well as the experience of families during the search process, drawing on experiences from other countries.

Numerous comparative researches were also presented including studies on Ambiguous Loss among migrant populations affected by disappearances and family separations.

At the heart of numerous discussions were the lived experiences that gave voice to the realities faced by many families.

Over the course of two days, the conference served as an integrated learning and knowledge-sharing platform, bridging humanitarian responses with theoretical frameworks.

It also dedicated an important segment to developing recom-

mendations on the way forward, drawing on the input of all experts present.

“Without an answer, without a farewell, and without a place to grieve, millions of families in this region live suspended between loss and hope,” said Yann Fridez, head of delegation for the ICRC in Jordan.

“International Humanitarian Law recognises this profound suffering, but we must ask ourselves how to prepare future generations of professionals to deliver continuous and dignified support,” Yann emphasised.

“This conference goes beyond simply sharing project outcomes. It serves as a meaningful feedback mechanism that systematically connects field experience with academic theory,” said Jihyun Jeon, deputy country director of KOICA Jordan.

Switzerland ready to support regional de-escalation, negotiated solutions — ambassador

- Geneva preparations advance for Jordan-hosted High-Level Conference on Humanity in War
- Switzerland to host Geneva AI Summit in June 2027 on safe and responsible use of artificial intelligence
- Voices of the Reef project will bring together 12 Swiss and Jordanian artists for a weeklong residency in Aqaba

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — Switzerland is ready to use its diplomatic experience in mediation and dialogue to support efforts to ease regional tensions and advance negotiated solutions, Swiss Ambassador to Jordan Emilija Georgieva said on Sunday, stressing the need to protect civilians and uphold international law.

In an exclusive interview with The Jordan Times on Sunday, Georgieva said that Switzerland stands in solidarity with Jordan and remains committed to working with the Kingdom on dialogue, stability and peace.

“At a time of heightened tensions, our message is clear: International law must be respected, civilians must be protected, and every effort must be made to achieve de-escalation and lasting, negotiated solutions,” Georgieva said.

She said that Switzerland's longstanding experience in mediation, dialogue and “good offices” remains available to the region through its diplomatic network and by providing spaces for talks, particularly in Geneva.

Preparatory work is currently under way in Geneva for the High-Level Conference



Swiss Ambassador to Jordan Emilija Georgieva

on Humanity in War, which will be hosted by Jordan on December 7.

Georgieva also highlighted Switzerland's Regional Cooperation Programme for Syria and neighbouring countries for 2026–2029, which combines humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, peacebuilding and migration.

The programme supports vulnerable populations and access to basic services, while also addressing livelihoods, water management, good governance and social cohesion.

“Jordan is an essential partner in all of these efforts,” she said, highlighting the Kingdom's role in promoting regional stability and providing humanitarian support.

Beyond diplomacy, Georgieva said that culture and the arts can strengthen ties

between Jordan and Switzerland by creating connections that traditional diplomacy cannot always achieve.

She pointed to the Swiss Film Days, Switzerland's participation in the Amman International Film Festival and the Voices of the Reef project, which brings together Swiss and Jordanian expertise in art, science and environmental protection.

“I would like to see even more exchanges between Swiss and Jordanian artists, filmmakers, students and cultural institutions,” she said, stressing that bilateral relations are also relations between people.

On artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, Georgieva said that Switzerland is following developments in Jordan with “great interest”, noting that both

countries have strong human capital and an interest in using innovation to address practical challenges.

She cited the National Flood Mapping Programme as a concrete example of cooperation, with Switzerland providing Jordanian government partners with expertise and training in advanced flood analysis, modelling tools and technologies.

The resulting flood maps can support urban planning and emergency preparedness by giving authorities better information to assess and manage flood risks.

The cooperation also comes as Switzerland prepares to host the Geneva AI Summit on June 21–22, 2027, bringing together governments, international organisations, academia, civil society and the private sector to discuss how AI can drive progress while ensuring its safe and responsible use.

Environmental cooperation is another key area. Through the Transnational Red Sea Centre, Switzerland and Jordan are working to better understand and protect the coral reefs of the Gulf of Aqaba.

Georgieva said that the latest Voices of the Reef project will bring

together 12 Swiss and Jordanian artists for a weeklong residency in Aqaba, where they will meet local partners and explore the reefs before translating scientific knowledge into art and storytelling.

She said the project aims to raise awareness, particularly among young people, and strengthen a sense of shared responsibility for protecting the Red Sea ecosystem.

On economic ties, Georgieva said bilateral trade reached approximately CHF 850 million in 2025, with Swiss companies present in sectors including pharmaceuticals, tourism and hospitality.

She said there remains room to deepen these ties through stronger business networks, entrepreneurship, vocational training and market-relevant skills.

Georgieva also described Jordan as a country of “remarkable contrasts”, combining ancient history with a young population that has ideas, ambitions and a strong desire to innovate.

Despite the challenges facing the region, she said, Jordan continues to play an important role as a place for dialogue, exchange and cooperation.



Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani announces Cabinet decisions taken during a session held in Ma'an

Cabinet approves new industrial zone, investment incentives in Maan

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet on Sunday approved the establishment of a development zone spanning 13,000 dunums of state-owned land in the Abu Amoud Al Sharqi area of Ma'an Governorate.

Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani said during a press conference following a Cabinet session held in Ma'an that the zone will host three strategic industrial projects for the production of phosphoric acid, purified phosphoric acid and sulphuric acid.

The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company will serve as the master developer of the zone, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Momani, who is also the government spokesperson, said that the decision is part of government efforts to stimulate investment in Ma'an and the southern region, support local development and create employment opportunities.

Momani also announced incentives for Al Rawda Industrial Estate in the Ma'an Development Zone to enhance its investment competitiveness, attract capital and create jobs.

Under the measures,

the Ministry of Labour will implement the support mechanism of the Productive Branches Programme to promote local employment at newly established factories in Al Rawda Industrial City.

The ministry will cover 50 per cent of the minimum wage for Jordanian workers at the factories, in addition to JD25 per month towards Social Security contributions and JD25 for transportation allowances.

The measures follow the Cabinet's approval last month of investment incentives for Al Rawda Industrial Estate similar to those offered to the Karak and Tafileh industrial cities.

The package includes electricity tariff subsidies from the Electricity Distribution Company, with a 75 per cent discount during the first two years of operation, 50 per cent during the following two years and 25 per cent in the fifth year.

It also includes incentives under the small- and medium-sized enterprise definitions adopted by the Energy and Minerals Regulatory Commission, as well as the electricity bill support programme operated

by the Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation.

Al Rawda Industrial Estate will also be included in the Ministry of Labour's Productive Branches Programme, providing wage subsidies, Social Security coverage or transportation allowances for three years.

The package also provides a 50 per cent reduction in container handling fees at the Port of Aqaba for exports originating from Al Rawda Industrial City for three years.

Land prices at the industrial city have been reduced from JD15 to JD7.5 per square metre for plots exceeding 20 dunums, up to a maximum area of 120 dunums.

Momani outlined the government's development plans for Ma'an Governorate across several sectors and responded to media questions.

In a separate decision, the Cabinet terminated the services of three members of the Board of Commissioners of the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority: Vice President Shaker Adwan, Commissioner for Reserve and Tourism Management Yazan Mahadin and Board Member Fatima Hilalat.

Hassan lays foundation stone for natural gas supply project at Al Rawda Industrial Estate

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Sunday laid the foundation stone for a project to supply natural gas to Al Rawda Industrial Estate in the Maan Development Zone.

The project, funded by a nearly JD10 million Emirati grant from the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), is part of a JD50 million grant allocated to supply natural gas to industrial estates in several governorates, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The initiative is part of the government's strategy to extend natural gas supplies to industrial zones nationwide and reduce energy costs for industries by 35 to 60 per cent.

Similar projects have been completed in South Aqaba, Ouweira, Qastal and Hashimiteh, while work is under way in Al Rawda and Muwaqqar. Studies are also under way for the King Hussein Bin Talal Development Zone in Mafraq and Zarqa.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mohanad Shehadeh, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources



Photo courtesy of Prime Ministry

The project, funded by a nearly JD10 million Emirati grant from the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), is part of a JD50 million grant allocated to supply natural gas to industrial estates in several governorates

Saleh Kharabsheh and Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh attended the ceremony.

Hassan was briefed on the project, which is scheduled for completion within 18 months. The project is expected to enhance the competitiveness and investment appeal of Al Rawda Industrial Estate, support national exports and create job opportunities.

The launch follows a Cabinet decision granting Al Rawda Industrial Estate investment incentives similar to those offered in Karak and Tafileh. The incentives include subsidised energy costs, support for local labour wages, reduced container handling fees at the Port of Aqaba and discounted land prices.

Maan Development Company CEO Mohamad Abu Tayeh, Jordan Oil Terminals Company General Manager Ashraf Rawashdeh and Fajr Egyptian-Jordani-

an Natural Gas Company CEO Yasser Salah Al Din also attended the ceremony.

Ahead of chairing a Cabinet session in Maan, Hassan inaugurated an expansion project at Maan Governmental Hospital, comprising an outpatient clinic building and a blood bank covering more than 5,000 square metres at a cost of approximately JD5 million.

Hassan directed Minister of Health Ibrahim Badoor to provide the outpatient clinic with specialised medical staff and complete the supply of the necessary equipment for the hospital, which serves more than 190,000 residents.

The prime minister commended the Arab Potash Company for donating approximately JD1.2 million to cover the cost of medical equipment as part of its corporate social responsibility contributions.

LTRC delegation inspects passenger transport procedures at Jaber/Nasib crossing

AMMAN (JT) — A delegation from the Land Transport Regulatory Commission (LTRC) and representatives of relevant authorities on Sunday inspected passenger transport procedures on both sides of the Jaber/Nasib Border Crossing as part of efforts to improve the movement of travellers between Jordan and Syria.

The delegation inspected bus and vehicle waiting areas and passenger procedures on the Syrian side, as



JT file

Jaber Border Crossing with Syria

well as procedures for passenger buses and vehicles crossing from

Jordan.

It also discussed operational and procedural challenges and identified measures to improve traffic flow and reduce waiting times, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The field visit also focused on improving coordination between official bodies and representatives of the transport and tourism sectors to facilitate passenger movement and enhance services for travellers in both directions.

A report will be prepared outlining the

field findings, existing challenges and proposed measures, ahead of discussions with the relevant authorities on improving the cross-border passenger transport system.

The delegation included representatives from the LTRC, Jaber Border Crossing, Jaber Customs, security agencies, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Association of Travel and Tourism Agents and the Tourist Transport Association.

Cargo handling at Aqaba ports rises over 80% — ACPOM

AMMAN (JT) — Aqaba has become the main gateway for neighbouring countries and Gulf states, with cargo handling at the Kingdom's ports increasing by more than 80 per cent, Director General of the Aqaba Company for Ports Operation and Management (ACPOM) Mahmoud Khleifat on Sunday.



ACT photo

An aerial view of the Aqaba Container Terminal (ACT)

Khalifat said that Aqaba ports now handle Iraqi food commodities transiting through Jordan, vehicles bound for Gulf states and cargo destined for Saudi Arabia, reinforcing Aqaba's role as a main port for neighbouring countries, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He attributed the increase to coordinated efforts by state institutions to accommodate the significant rise in cargo and vessel traffic.

The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), Aqaba Development Corporation and the government have introduced measures to facilitate the entry of foreign trucks, establish new logistics yards and accommodate increased cargo volumes.

Khalifat said that authorities are working to consolidate Aqaba's role as a regional port rather than merely a transit route, particularly amid disruptions and crises in the Red Sea and the wider region, while establishing this activity as a sustainable part of the local economy.

He noted that increased cargo volumes have created operational challenges, particularly the need for additional storage capacity, logistics areas and land.

"The new strategy includes establishing additional logistics areas and allocating land to handle the large volumes of cargo arriving at the ports," he said.

He added that port equipment is being upgraded amid continuous 24-hour operations, with Aqaba authorities and the Aqaba Development Corporation continuing modernisation, monitoring and maintenance works.

Khalifat stressed that cargo handling fees have remained unchanged since 2009. He said Aqaba's lower handling costs compared with neighbouring countries, coupled with faster operations, help reduce external costs, including vessel waiting charges of \$25,000-\$35,000 or more.

He said that the inland port project, first proposed in 2015, has become increasingly necessary to speed up cargo movement from the ports, expand storage capacity for goods bound for neighbouring countries and enable the ports to receive more vessels.

Measures by the Ministry of Transport and the Land Transport Regulatory Commission, including allowing vehicles from Arab countries to transport their own cargo, are helping reduce cargo volumes at the ports and accelerate handling and unloading.

The inland port would also provide a new outlet for cargo, customs clearance and other procedures, he said, stressing the need for coordination among customs, transport and clearance authorities.

Khalifat said that the rise in cargo handling reflects a recovery in transit traffic and goods movement to neighbouring countries.

He stressed that domestic imports have remained strong, with fuel, gas, grains and other commodities recording increases alongside higher cargo flows to Arab markets.

EuroCham Jordan, Sierra Leone chamber sign MoU to boost trade, investment

AMMAN (JT) — The European Chamber of Commerce in Jordan (EuroCham Jordan) and the European Chamber of Commerce in Sierra Leone (EuroCham Sierra Leone) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Milan to bolster economic, trade, and investment cooperation between Middle Eastern and West African business communities.

The MoU was signed by EuroCham Jordan President Mohammad Samadi and EuroCham Sierra Leone Vice President Roberto Mariani, Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Under the agreement, both chambers will act as primary contact points to facilitate market access, promote B2B meetings, exchange market

data, and connect buyers, exporters and investors across the two regions.

The chambers agreed on a first-year action plan featuring direct channels for business exchange...

Cooperation spans multiple key sectors, including agriculture, food processing, manufacturing, mining, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, renewable energy, green technology, logistics, IT, digital transformation, tourism, infrastruc-

ture and professional services.

The agreement also enables both parties to explore joint opportunities under EU initiatives and Global Gateway programmes, focusing on private sector development, sustainability and digital transformation.

The chambers agreed on a first-year action plan featuring direct channels for business exchange, targeted corporate matchmaking and at least one joint business event.

Samadi noted that the partnership leverages strategic geographic positions, positioning Jordan as a gateway to Middle Eastern markets while utilizing Sierra Leone to access broader opportunities in West Africa.

55 suspects arrested in 119 crystal meth cases across Kingdom — PSD

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) announced on Sunday the arrest of 55 suspects in 119 cases related to Crystal meth trafficking and dealing in various parts of the Kingdom, according to official sources.

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

The eighth-week campaign resulted in the arrest of 39 suspects in cases related to trafficking, smuggling, promotion and the use of Crystal meth," Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

Meanwhile, 135 suspects were arrested for using the deadly substance, Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

The total amount of seized Crystal meth with the suspects was 0.29 kilogrammes, according to the police official.

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

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

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

"This dangerous substance causes rapid addiction, severe disturbances in perception and behaviour, and affects bodily functions, especially causing damage to the brain

and lungs, in addition to aggression, loss of control and perception, and causing many heinous crimes," Sartawi added.

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

All the detained sus-

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

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

All information will be treated with utmost

discretion, seriousness, firmness, verification, and confidentiality, the PSD statement added.

According to PSD 2025 statistics, there were 22,031 drug crimes in the Kingdom.

The number of drug and possession cases was 15,720, while the number of drug trafficking cases was 6,311, according to the PSD statistics.



This video grab taken from UGC images posted on social media on Saturday, shows smoke rising near Riyadh airport

US fears rapid escalation in Mideast after Houthis attack Riyadh

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AFP) —The United States warned Saturday that hostilities between Saudi Arabia and Iran-backed Houthis could “escalate rapidly” after a missile attack targeted Riyadh for the first time since the Yemen conflict resumed.

US President Donald Trump cut short a weekend at Camp David, a secluded presidential complex in rural Maryland, to return unexpectedly to the White House on Saturday.

The White House gave no explanation for the early return, which comes as a new threshold was crossed in the conflict between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis, who control a large part

of Yemen and are fighting government forces backed by a coalition led by Riyadh.

Loud explosions rang out twice on Saturday in the Saudi capital, where AFP journalists saw a fuel tank bearing the logo of oil giant Aramco on fire near the airport.

“This military conflict has the potential to escalate rapidly,” the US State Department warned, adding American citizens outside the Middle East should “seriously reconsider travel to and through the region”.

The Houthis’s lightning offensive seizing swathes of Yemeni territory in recent weeks has left hundreds dead and, according to the UN, displaced more than

110,000 people.

These clashes and the subsequent hostilities with the kingdom have already disrupted Saudi Arabia’s exports, the world’s leading supplier of crude oil, as well as maritime traffic.

The Riyadh-led coalition confirmed Saturday evening on X that a ballistic missile launched by the Houthis towards the capital was “successfully intercepted and destroyed”.

The coalition added that the pro-Iranian fighters had tried to target “civilians and civilian infrastructure” in several cities in the west of the kingdom, including the port of Yanbu on the Red Sea, an important export hub for Saudi oil.

Far-left Elif Eralp wins Berlin vote on anti-AfD, pro-poor campaign

BERLIN (AFP) — The far-left Die Linke Party won Berlin elections Sunday, according to exit polls, making its lead candidate Elif Eralp the top contender to become the next mayor of Germany’s capital city.

Eralp, 45, and her pro-poor party have promised dramatic steps to solve Berlin’s housing crisis and bring down rents, including with a controversial pledge to expropriate flats held by large corporate landlords.

The daughter of Turkish migrants, Eralp has also campaigned as being the best person to counter the rise of the far-right and anti-immigration Alternative for Germany (AfD) Party.

“I believe it would indeed send a powerful signal if someone with a migration background were to become governing mayor of Berlin,” she said on the eve of the vote.

Celebrating on Sunday, she exclaimed: “In our city, love and justice have triumphed over hatred.”

Eralp — whose party wants to reduce social inequality and the power of big business — has been compared to Zohran Mamdani, the charismatic left-wing outsider who became mayor of New York.

“Naturally, the success of a democratic socialist in New York — the heartland of capitalism — is a major success,” Eralp said on Friday, calling Mamdani “a great role model”.

The election win by the Die Linke, at about 25 per cent according to exit polls, was a



Top candidate of the left-wing Die Linke (The Left) Party Elif Eralp attends a tv debate following Berlin’s state elections in the House of Representatives in Berlin on Sunday

historic first for Berlin and dealt a blow to the centre-right CDU of embattled Chancellor Friedrich Merz, which came second with about 20 per cent.

In order to govern, however, Eralp must now convince other parties — likely the centre-left SPD and the Greens — to join her in a so-called “red-red-green coalition”.

Mideast conflict

However, the SPD’s lead candidate Steffen Krach has already made clear he opposes the expropriation idea by Die Linke, a party which traces its roots in part to communist East Germany’s ruling party.

Germany’s mainstream parties have many other differences with the hard-left party, especially on security policy where it opposes military aid for

Ukraine and advocates for Germany to leave NATO.

Die Linke has also been criticised for anti-Israeli messages from some district-level figures — an especially sensitive issue in Germany, given its dark history of Nazi rule and the Holocaust.

Eralp had repeatedly emphasised her desire to support and foster Jewish life in Berlin.

But fierce criticism of Israel from some local branches of Die Linke, particularly in Berlin’s Neukölln neighbourhood that is home to many Arab and Muslim immigrants, have drawn negative headlines.

A concert in August at a local Die Linke campaign event in Neukölln provoked scandal after a performer advocated an “intifada” (uprising) and chanted “Death to the IDF!”, the

Israel Defence Forces.

Eralp distanced herself from the incident, but it drew fierce criticism from the Greens and the SPD — and once again prompted the press to question whether Die Linke is fit for governing.

Path to power

Still, the Greens during the campaign appeared to prefer backing a coalition with Die Linke over the other obvious possibility of joining with the conservative CDU.

But in the SPD, which has a history of close ties to organised labour and working-class voters, there are some dissenting voices.

The SPD chose to break with a left-wing coalition after the previous election in 2023 and are currently junior partners with the CDU.

Eralp now has a few

days or weeks to convince her potential partners that she has her state branch under control and is suited to govern.

Eralp’s parents, who were active in socialist politics and trade unions in Turkey, fled to Germany in 1980 following a military coup when the mother was eight months pregnant.

Eralp was born in Munich and went on to study law in Hamburg, going on to defend migrants’ rights. She was hired as a staffer for Die Linke’s faction in the German parliament in 2010, and moved to Berlin permanently not long after.

She lives in the trendy Kreuzberg district with her husband and two children — and is often quick to emphasise that, like most Berliners, they rent their flat and are not homeowners.

STRIKE

UN chief condemns Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia

LONDON (AFP) — UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Sunday strongly condemned Houthi attacks on infrastructure and civilian areas in Saudi Arabia.

In an interview with Al-Arabiya, Guterres highlighted the need to protect freedom of navigation in the strategic Bab El-Mandeb Strait, a crucial shipping route connecting the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

The UN chief said attacks on Saudi vessels were “totally unacceptable,” emphasizing the importance of respecting navigational rights and freedoms.

His comments came after Saudi Arabia intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile launched by the



The UN Secretary General released a statement on Sunday on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Houthis toward the capital, Riyadh, early on Saturday.

Maj. Gen. Turki Al-

Malki, spokesman for the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen, said the missile was

destroyed by Saudi air defenses.

The Houthis also attempted to strike ci-

vilians and civilian infrastructure in the Saudi cities of Baish, Taif, Farasan, and Yanbu, Al Malki said. Saudi air defense systems thwarted the attempted attacks, he added.

Several Arab countries, including Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt, Qatar, and Lebanon, also condemned the attacks.

The Iran-allied Houthis, who control much of northern Yemen, have repeatedly launched missiles and drones at Saudi Arabia during Yemen’s long-running war. The group has also threatened maritime traffic in and around the Red Sea, including near Bab El Mandeb.

This article was first published in Arab News



US President Donald Trump is seen aboard Marine One alongside US golfer Bryson DeChambeau and Mikayla Demaiter as it lands at the Ellipse near the White House in Washington, DC, on Saturday

Trump cuts short weekend, returns to White House

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US President Donald Trump cut short a weekend at Camp David to return unexpectedly to the White House on Saturday, as tensions rose in the Middle East.

There was no explanation from the administration why Trump was no longer returning on Sunday from Camp David, a secluded presidential complex in rural Maryland, as had been previ-

ously announced.

The change in plan came as the Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen’s Houthis said on Saturday that the Iran-backed group fired a ballistic missile at Riyadh at dawn, after a fire broke out near the Saudi capital’s international airport.

The State Department and a string of US embassies issued security alerts to Americans.

The alerts cited “the potential for unforeseen escalation” and noted that “Iranian-supported Houthis have engaged in hostilities against Saudi Arabia, including civilian airports”.

“This military conflict has the potential to escalate rapidly,” the State Department warning said. “Americans outside the Middle East should seriously reconsider travel to and through the region.”

North Korea fires ballistic missile into East Sea — Seoul



People sit near a television screen showing a news broadcast with file footage of a North Korean missile test, at a train station in Seoul on Sunday

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea fired a ballistic missile off its east coast on Sunday, South Korea’s military said, days after Pyongyang reaffirmed its status as a nuclear-armed state.

The launch came eight days after North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles towards the East Sea, also called the Sea of Japan, as part of what it later described as a joint firepower drill.

It also followed Pyongyang’s rejection this week of a resolution by the UN nuclear watchdog demanding that it halt its

nuclear activities.

“Our military detected a ballistic missile launched from the Wonsan area of North Korea towards the East Sea at around 3:00 pm,” South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

The military said it had stepped up surveillance and vigilance for possible additional launches, while South Korea, the United States and Japan were “closely sharing information” on the missile.

The office of the Japanese prime minister also confirmed the launch, saying on X that the pro-

jectile was a “suspected ballistic missile”.

Japan’s defence ministry later said the projectile had “already fallen”, without giving further details.

South Korea’s presidential National Security Office convened an emergency security meeting following the launch to review Seoul’s response and assess the launch’s impact on national security, the presidential office said.

The government called on Pyongyang to “immediately cease” its ballistic missile launches, describ-

ing Sunday’s firing as a “grave act” that violated UN Security Council resolutions.

North Korea accused “hostile forces” of seeking to end the country’s nuclear programme during this week’s General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

A foreign ministry spokesperson said the IAEA resolution “has no effect on the DPRK’s position as a nuclear weapons state”, using the acronym for North Korea’s official name.

North Korea has legally

enshrined its status as a nuclear-armed state, with its leadership declaring the country’s atomic arsenal permanent and irreversible.

Kim Yo-jong, the powerful sister of the North Korean leader, recently said the country’s nuclear-armed status was “absolute”, and called those hoping for its denuclearisation “idiots”.

US President Donald Trump said in August that North Korea possessed 57 “very powerful” nuclear weapons, while South Korea has put the figure at between 80 and 120.

Gov’t allocates annual funding of JD124m for ‘Reayah’ cancer programme — Farah

AMMAN (JT) — The government's digital spokesperson, Farah, announced that the government has allocated an annual funding of JD124 million for the “Reayah” cancer care programme to cover cancer treatment, with over 2,100 patients currently receiving care under its umbrella.

Farah said on a post on X that the programme covers 4.2 million citizens, including elderly individuals over 60, children under 19, and National Aid Fund beneficiaries, to facilitate immediate treatment access upon diagnosis without complex referral procedures or delays.

Farah noted that the launch of “Reayah” addresses the critical need for prompt cancer intervention and high



The government's digital spokesperson, Farah, says that the programme covers 4.2 million citizens, including elderly individuals over 60, children under 19, and National Aid Fund beneficiaries

treatment costs by providing automatic coverage upon diagnosis, adding that beneficiaries can obtain their insurance cards through

the “Sanad” application without additional procedures.

For citizens not covered by ‘Reayah’, Farah stressed that cancer care remains available at oncology centres in public hospitals...

For citizens not covered by “Reayah”, Farah stressed that cancer care remains available at oncology centres in public hospitals, with the government covering treatment and referrals to the King Hussein Cancer Centre if required services are unavailable.

Iran says conveyed conditions to US for reopening Hormuz

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran’s top negotiator said on Sunday that Tehran had conveyed to Washington through mediators its conditions for reopening the strategic Strait of Hormuz, which it has blockaded throughout the Middle East war.

The two foes are locked in a stalemate months into the conflict that began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February. Tehran has since

maintained a stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping route for the world’s oil and gas, while Washington is pushing a campaign to choke the Islamic republic’s ports and economy.

“Our messages and the explanation of our conditions have been clearly conveyed to the other party through mediators,” said Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher

Ghalibaf, who has acted as chief negotiator in talks to end the war.

“As long as the conditions are not met... and the US commitments are not honoured, it will be impossible to return to the situation from before the negotiations and to an open strait,” he added, according to state television.

Mohsen Rezaei, the head of Iran’s supreme national security council, said on Saturday that the Islamic republic

had conveyed its conditions to the US via mediator Qatar.

“Our conditions are an end to the war on all fronts, the release of our frozen funds and an end to the naval blockade,” he said in an interview with Al Jazeera.

Iranian authorities have said that mediator Pakistan’s Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi will travel to Tehran on Sunday for talks.

Iran’s Khatam Al An-

biya central military command, meanwhile, issued a threat against the United States on Sunday, in a statement carried by state television.

“We warn that if the US makes a mistake in dealing with Islamic Iran, all of that country’s bases and interests in the region will become the target of continuous, effective and painful attacks, without any limit or restraint,” it said.

Prime minister unveils plans to boost economy in Maan, accelerate development

Continued from page 1

Hassan said that the Maan Development Area needed to be elevated to a much higher level of competitiveness and announced a package of incentives aimed at attracting investment.

The measures include a 50 per cent reduction in land prices and a 75 per cent reduction in electricity costs during the first two years for qualifying projects, as well as incentives to encourage the employment of Jordanian workers, the Premier said.

The government has made five working visits to Maan Governorate over the past two years, Hassan said, reaffirming its commitment to projects included in the governorate’s development plan.

According to the prime minister, more than 81 per cent of the projects and programmes included in Maan Development Vision have been completed or implemented. “The plan includes 127 projects across various sectors, with an estimated total cost of about JD250 million over three years.”

Hassan said inter-

est in investing in the Maan Development Area was expected to increase during 2027 as the new incentives take effect.

The government is also placing significant emphasis on developing Maan as a logistics and industrial hub, the prime minister said, describing the proposed Aqaba-Maan dry Port as a cornerstone of the governorate’s future economy.

He said that many industries currently located in Aqaba could eventually be relocated to Maan, except those that need to remain close to the seaport.

He said that the government expected to soon begin work on the Aqaba-Al Sheidiya-Maan railway, which he described as fundamental to establishing Maan as a dry-port centre.

The government is also studying a route linking Al Karamah, Al Safawi, Al Azraq, Al Jafr (in the eastern region) and Ma’an, with the aim of creating a more direct and efficient international connection between Maan and Iraq.

Hassan said that the government aimed to complete the integrated development

plan for Maan during 2027 and begin issuing tenders for its various components next year.

He said that the projects, including the railway, were expected to be completed by 2030-31.

‘The building has already been completed and handed over, while medical equipment will be provided through a grant’

The prime minister said that the government is also planning a number of major public-service projects in the governorate.

Hassan said the Maan Military Hospital was expected to be ready before the end of

2027. “The building has already been completed and handed over, while medical equipment will be provided through a grant.”

He also announced the opening of a new blood bank and outpatient clinics building at Maan Hospital and said a cardiac catheterisation unit was expected to open next year, subject to the selection of a suitable location and funding through a dedicated grant.

The government will also implement water-sector projects worth JD50 million in Maan Governorate, Hassan said.

Regarding tourism, he said that the government had introduced measures to support the tourism sector in Petra, which has been affected by the regional situation.

“The government will continue providing support and incentives in co-operation with the relevant authorities in an effort to sustain tourism-related businesses and activities and encourage a recovery in visitor numbers.”

Hassan also announced plans to establish a new public park in Maan as part of

a national programme to build six parks in several governorates.

The park will follow the specifications of Mafrqa Park and Al Nashama Park in Amman’s Marj Al Hamam District and is expected to be completed in 2027, providing recreational space for children, young people and other residents.

During its session in Maan, the Cabinet also approved the comprehensive rehabilitation of King Abdullah II Tourist Park and Maan Model Park, including the provision of facilities needed to serve residents and visitors, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The Cabinet approved the establishment of a 13,000 dunum development area in Al Sheidiya to facilitate three strategic industrial projects by the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company in partnership with local and international firms.

The projects are expected to attract more than JD1.25 billion in investment and create employment opportunities for the local community, while contributing to economic development in the area.



A young man walks past a tank said to have belonged to Tigray People’s Liberation Front rebels near Debre Tabor

Ethiopia’s main armed groups announce alliance against government

ADDIS ABABA (AFP) — Seven Ethiopian armed groups have formed an alliance against the federal government, an official of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) told AFP on Sunday.

Both the government and the TPLF have massed troops along the border of the northern state in recent months, according to the African Union, fuelling fears of a return to the war that killed some 600,000 people.

“We just formed an alliance, we are collaborating with several groups and our objectives are to remove the regime and facilitating a transitional government,” said TPLF Vice President Amanuel Assefa.

The groups involved are Tigrayan forces, Amhara nationalist Fano militias and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), an active

insurgency in Ethiopia’s most populous region — together with four others.

‘I am not sure they will be able to sustain such a war’

The federal authorities have not yet responded to AFP’s request for comment on the alliance.

Kjetil Tronvoll, a regional specialist at

Oslo New University College in Norway, cast doubt on the alliance’s effort to overthrow the federal government, which possesses numerous drones.

Describing it as “a sacrificial war for the rebels”, he told AFP: “I am not sure they will be able to sustain such a war.

If they coordinate as a military command, it may make a difference, it is a potential four to five fronts that the government will have to deal with, it might be a challenge,” he added.

But he questioned what might come after any takeover, given the armed groups’ different ideologies.

Ethiopia has been plagued by armed conflicts in its two most populous regions, Oromia and Amhara. Federal forces have been fighting the OLA since 2018 and Fano since 2023.

CBJ raises interest rates by 25 basis points

Continued from page 1

Remittances from Jordanians working abroad also continued to post strong growth, rising 14.1 per cent during the first seven months of the year to approximately \$3

billion. National exports increased 7.2 per cent over the same period to \$6.6 billion.

The Central Bank said that it would continue to monitor economic and monetary

developments and assess their impact on the national economy, while taking the necessary measures to preserve monetary and financial stability and strengthen the resilience of the national economy.

Switzerland committed to working with Jordan on enhancing stability, peace — ambassador

Continued from page 1

In technology, the diplomat said that her country is supporting Jordanian partners through the National Flood Mapping Programme, providing expertise and training in flood analysis and mod-

elling to strengthen urban planning and emergency preparedness.

Georgieva said there is further potential to strengthen business links through entrepreneurship, vocational training and market-relevant skills.

She described Jor-

dan as a country of “remarkable contrasts”, combining its ancient heritage with a young population eager to innovate, adding that the Kingdom continues to serve as an important space for dialogue, exchange and cooperation.

Russia vows revenge for election-day attacks as poll shows ruling party win

Continued from page 1

Images showed a gaping hole in a multi-storey apartment building on the outskirts of the capital, while another showed black smoke pouring from what appeared to be an oil refinery.

At least two people were killed — a 44-year-old woman and an eld-

erly man — in two separate locations, Moscow Regional Governor Andrey Vorobyov said.

A fire triggered by a drone crashing into a 21-storey building also led to 400 people being evacuated, Vorobyov added.

First polls

The parliamentary

vote, which decides all 450 seats in Russia’s lower house State Duma, was Russia’s first since the conflict.

A exit poll by the state-owned Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VCIOM) showed United Russia winning 49.4 per cent, with the Communist Party and national-

ist LDPR Party on 14.2 and 10.7 per cent respectively.

Former president Dmitry Medvedev, who chairs United Russia, said his party appeared to have “performed admirably”.

“We must now put the president’s decisions into practice,” he was quoted as saying by the state RIA news

agency.

“For that reason I believe United Russia’s result will be higher, whilst that of the opposition parties will be lower,” VCIOM Director Valery Fedorov said.

Cyberattacks

As voting entered a final day, Russia’s elec-

toral chief said there had been a wave of cyberattacks targeting election infrastructure.

Ella Pamfilova, chair of Russia’s Central Election Commission, did not say who was responsible.

The attacks appeared to have been carried out by “highly professional, well-

coordinated groups using artificial intelligence tools”, she said.

“Over the past period, more than 1,000 waves of DDoS attacks have been recorded against infrastructure in Russia that is specifically involved in the electoral process,” Pamfilova was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies.

DDoS (distributed denial-of-service) attacks involve overwhelming a system with Internet traffic so that it is unable to function normally.

She warned on Saturday that saboteurs had also severed communication lines in Russia’s far east, in an apparent attempt to frustrate the voting.

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Israel’s election: An electoral battle shaped by the open front

Israel’s election is entering a phase that cannot be understood through polling numbers or the traditional contest between Benjamin Netanyahu and his opponents alone. The political landscape is moving on two parallel tracks, the reshaping of the opposition camp and the security and military developments that could unfold over the coming weeks on Israel’s open fronts.



Amer Al Sabaileh

Within the opposition, Gadi Eisenkot has emerged as one of the most important variables. His Yashar Party has rapidly overtaken Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid in several polls, reaching levels that put it in direct competition with Likud. But Eisenkot’s importance goes beyond the numbers. As a former IDF chief of staff and former member of the War Cabinet, he brings a security profile that his rivals do not possess to the same extent. This allows him to appeal to voters looking for an alternative to Netanyahu from within Israel’s military and security establishment.

The battle, therefore, is not only between Netanyahu and the opposition. There is a second contest taking place within the opposition itself, who will have the political mandate to lead a government if the anti-Netanyahu camp crosses the crucial 61-seat threshold — Eisenkot or Bennett? However, reaching 61 seats on paper does not necessarily mean being able to form a government. Red lines between the different components of the opposition, particularly over relations with Arab and ultra-Orthodox parties, could make the coalition arithmetic far more complicated.

Netanyahu, meanwhile, appears to be approaching the election according to a different calculation. Rather than securing a major victory, his more realistic objective may simply be to prevent his opponents from reaching 61 seats. If he can keep the opposing camp below a majority, he can preserve his position while waiting for a new political configuration to emerge.

This strategy becomes even more important given the risk of right-wing votes being lost to smaller parties that fail to cross the electoral threshold into seats held. In a closely fought election, the question may not only be who wins more votes, but also who succeeds in preventing the other side’s votes from being converted into seats.

But all these parliamentary calculations remain vulnerable to a more important factor. What will happen on the ground before election day? This is not an election taking place in a stable security environment. Gaza remains politically and militarily unresolved. The West Bank remains vulnerable to escalation, while the Lebanese front carries multiple possibilities. Syria is another arena where Israeli and regional calculations intersect. Iran, however, remains the actor most capable of producing a strategic development that could rapidly reshape the priorities of Israeli voters.

This is where one of Netanyahu’s most important advantages lies. He is not watching events from outside government, he is managing them from the center of power. The coming weeks could therefore give Netanyahu an opportunity to redefine the election itself. If he can present a military or security development as an achievement, the campaign could shift from being a referendum on his record to a different question, who is best equipped to protect Israel and manage the next phase?

But this advantage can also turn against him. A new escalation without clear results, the expansion of another front, a major security crisis, or an unexpected development involving Iran could lead Israeli voters to reassess the government’s performance and increase pressure on Netanyahu from within Likud and the wider right.

This is why reading an election scheduled for late October through September polling could be misleading. The current numbers may define the starting point, but they do not necessarily define the final result. The real battle will take place at the intersection of parliamentary arithmetic and events on the ground. In an election shaped by Gaza, Lebanon, the West Bank, Syria and Iran, the coming weeks will not simply be a waiting period before voting, they will, in effect, be part of the election itself. And a single event on one of Israel’s fronts may ultimately matter more than dozens of opinion polls.

The problem is bigger than Netanyahu

By Mohammad Abu Rumman

Israel’s forthcoming elections are being viewed as one of the most consequential political moments in recent decades — not only because they could bring Benjamin Netanyahu’s long era to an end, but because Netanyahu has come to embody an entire period of conflicts, divisions and wars that followed October 7, 2023.

At first glance, the electoral map looks more like a contest between Netanyahu and his opponents than a confrontation between two coherent political projects. An alliance has emerged between Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid, while Gadi Eisenkot leads another list, alongside other opposition forces united primarily by the goal of ending Netanyahu’s rule. On the other side stand Likud and its religious-nationalist and Haredi allies. Yet, the differences within the anti-Netanyahu camp are considerable and could become much more apparent if it actually succeeds in taking power.

The significance of these elections extends well beyond Israel’s domestic political calculations. Netanyahu has increasingly become a liability for Israel’s external relations after confrontations and crises with Turkey and Iran, while Israel’s relations have grown more difficult even with Arab states with which it has peace treaties and other agree-

ments. Its image has also deteriorated among broad sectors of Western public opinion. Britain offers a clear example of this recent shift, particularly through measures taken against settlers and settler violence in the West Bank.

Even in Washington, the relationship between Donald Trump and Netanyahu is no longer what it once was. The US-Israeli alliance remains strong, but differences have emerged over several regional issues. Some within the US administration may see a different Israeli government as offering a better opportunity to recalibrate Washington’s relations with Israel and its regional allies.

This helps explain the regional and international anticipation of a “post-Netanyahu” era. Yet, a more important question remains: What if Netanyahu actually leaves? Will Israel change? Would we see a fundamental shift in its policies towards Palestinian statehood, the West Bank and Gaza, or toward Lebanon, Syria and the wider region?

In this context, Nathan Brown, a professor of political science and a leading expert on the region, offers an important answer in an article published by Carnegie’s Diwan on September 15 under the title “Old Wine in New Battles”. Brown warns against reducing Israel’s current transformation to Netanyahu himself. The security doctrine that has taken shape since October 7 appears

to be broader than Netanyahu, while potential political alternatives, despite their differences, share essential elements of it.

Brown’s central argument concerns Israel’s transition from a doctrine of deterrence to one of prevention. Under the previous model, an adversary could possess dangerous military capabilities while Israel sought to deter it from using them. Under the emerging doctrine, however, possession of the capability itself becomes the problem. It is no longer enough to deter Hezbollah from firing its missiles; Israel seeks to prevent it from rebuilding its arsenal. Nor is containing Hamas considered sufficient; the objective becomes preventing it from reconstructing its military and governing capabilities.

The same logic extends to Syria and Turkey, and even potentially to states that maintain peaceful relations with Israel. The new doctrine shifts the concept of security from dealing with intentions to dealing with capabilities. Governments change, alliances shift and a weak state today may become powerful tomorrow. Political settlements can therefore no longer, as they once did, remove another state’s military capabilities from Israel’s security calculations.

More dangerously, this doctrine contains a self-reproducing logic. If an adversary rebuilds its capabilities, the conclusion is that the previous strike was insufficient.

Did Houthis seize Bab El Mandeb, or were they ‘enabled to do so’

By Enad Al-Hammadin

In recent weeks, the Iranian-aligned Houthi forces have intensified their attacks on Saudi Arabia, threatening the Kingdom’s ability to export oil to global markets and thereby potentially driving up global oil prices, as Iran would like to see. However, the apparent reluctance of the United States to assist Saudi Arabia in confronting the Houthis in the Red Sea leaves many questions unanswered. The broader picture suggests that the American ally in the region can no longer be relied upon to provide security and protection to the same extent as previously assumed.

Former US ambassador to Saudi Arabia Michael Ratney has stated that “the Saudis are extremely frustrated and that this is the worst-case scenario they could have anticipated”. He also argues that one of the reasons behind Saudi Arabia’s massive investments in the United States is the security partnership that the Kingdom now needs. Dan Shapiro, writing in The New York Times, explains the apparent US reluctance to assist Saudi Arabia by pointing to Washington’s engagement in an open war with Iran. According to this argument, US naval forces are deployed across the region to respond to threats from Iran and its regional proxies, while American strategic ammunition stockpiles are under pressure. In other words, the United States may not be capable of fighting two wars simultaneously, even if it wanted to assist Saudi Arabia.

This does not, of course, mean that Saudi Arabia relies entirely on the United States for its security. Rather, Riyadh appears to have recognised since the war with Iran that the American security umbrella may no longer extend beyond Israel in the way it once did. The Kingdom has therefore sought strategic partnerships with other regional powers that could compensate for this unfavorable scenario. The Mecca Agreement can be viewed, in this context, as one attempt to compensate for the perceived decline of American security support.

It is clear that the Saudis do not want to fight the Houthis alone. Their previous experience — the military campaign against the Houthis, which lasted approximately a decade — is an experience they do not want to repeat. Instead, they are seeking partnerships with major regional powers to help prevent the Houthis from controlling the Bab El Mandeb and to deter further attacks against Saudi territory.

But the central question is: Why have the Houthis moved so forcefully toward Bab El Mandeb at this particular moment?

The answer appears to be connected to the calculations of several regional and international powers, most importantly Russia, China, Iran and the Houthis themselves.

Iran and the search for an alternative maritime pressure point

Iran has increasingly come to perceive that its control over the Strait of Hormuz may be moving toward a point where this important strategic card could lose some of its value in negotiations with the United States. The main reason Iran has sought to retain leverage over the Strait is its ability to influence global energy prices and, consequently, exert pressure on the United States and the Gulf states while increasing international pressure to end the war against Iran.

Iran’s strategy worked relatively well at the beginning of the war. Even up to the signing of the memorandum of understanding, Iran appeared to be the principal beneficiary of several of its provisions. However, its excessive reliance on this strategic card may prove to have been one of Iran’s major strategic mistakes.

Iranian intransigence has encouraged the United States, oil-producing countries in the region, and oil-consuming countries around the world to search for alternatives that would reduce the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran’s strategy of controlling or threatening the Strait has gradually lost some of its significance because of increased oil exports through the southern Omani route, as well as the use of larger oil tankers capable of transporting greater volumes of oil with fewer vessels. China has also reduced its oil consumption and increased its reliance on alternative energy sources. In addition, oil-producing countries outside the Gulf — such as Brazil — have helped compensate for part of the global shortfall in Gulf oil supplies.

Another factor is the unprecedented economic pressure and sanctions imposed by the Trump administration, which have increasingly become an alternative to direct military strikes. Iran may be capable of responding effectively to military attacks, but it is now facing significant difficulties in responding to the economic isolation imposed on it by the United States.

Together, these measures have helped the global economy become more resilient and recover without oil prices rising to levels that would seriously damage global economic growth, as Iran had hoped. This created an incentive for the Houthi front to become more active, move toward the Bab El Mandeb, place particular pressure on Saudi Arabia — the world’s largest oil exporter — and disrupt global trade in an attempt to turn maritime insecurity into a bargaining tool.

Russia and the Houthis

Russia is among the major powers that has a direct interest in the Houthis’ advance toward Bab El Mandeb.

First, Russia benefits from higher global oil prices. Any major global oil or energy crisis can directly benefit Moscow, particularly by increasing the value and export

potential of Russian oil, which remains subject to extensive Western sanctions.

Second, threatening the closure of the Bab El Mandeb allows the Houthis to create additional pressure on the United States and Europe. Moscow can also potentially use the Houthis as a strategic card in its broader confrontation with Ukraine and the European states.

A number of analyses have suggested that Russia may have provided the Houthis with location coordinates and advanced intelligence in their confrontation with Israel, the United States, and Saudi Arabia. Russia also has an interest in increasing pressure on Saudi Arabia, influencing its relationship with Ukraine, and potentially encouraging greater Saudi purchases of Russian weapons.

Previous reports have suggested that Moscow has supported the Houthis as a means of challenging Washington and the West. According to an analysis by the Atlantic Council, the Houthis are no longer merely Iranian proxies but have increasingly become a tool through which the Kremlin can expand its influence in the region and confront the West.

The relationship between Russia and the Houthis appears to have moved beyond a temporary tactical relationship towards a more integrated military and intelligence partnership. According to the US Treasury Department, Russia’s military intelligence agency, the GRU, has provided direct technical assistance in Houthi-controlled Sana’a under the cover of humanitarian assistance. This assistance reportedly includes advanced data-tracking systems that have enhanced the Houthis’ ability to target vessels in the Red Sea with greater precision.

Reports have also alleged the involvement of the well-known Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout in weapons-smuggling operations benefiting the Houthis, illustrating the reported depth of military cooperation. Saudi Arabia appears to have recognized this development earlier and raised the issue with Russia, but Moscow seems to have calculations that extend beyond its relationship with Riyadh.

Diplomatically, Russia has also supported the Houthis through its positions at the United Nations Security Council. In 2015, Moscow abstained from voting on Resolution 2216, which imposed an arms embargo on the Houthis, thereby allowing them to remain an effective political and military card.

China: The hidden but effective player

China has emerged as a less visible but potentially influential actor in supporting Ansar Allah, the Houthi movement. Despite Beijing’s traditional rhetoric emphasising peace and non-interference, intelligence reports have alleged that China has provided substantial support to the Houthis indirectly through Iran, their principal regional sponsor.

This support has reportedly in-

If Israeli military operations generate greater hostility, that hostility itself becomes further evidence for the need to continue them. The strategy therefore contains no natural endpoint. “Temporary” security zones and military positions in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria could gradually become permanent realities, while the boundary between defence and control becomes increasingly blurred.

The Palestinian question offers the clearest test. A less extreme government might come to power — one that rejects displacement, restrains settlers, restores a greater role for diplomacy and once again speaks of a “political horizon”. But if genuine Palestinian sovereignty remains unacceptable, while full political equality within a single state is also rejected, then the essence of the equation will not have changed very much.

Expectations surrounding the coming elections should therefore remain measured. Netanyahu’s departure, if it occurs, could matter considerably in terms of rhetoric, political instruments and Israel’s international relations. It would not necessarily, however, mark the end of the security doctrine that has become entrenched in recent years.

The real question is no longer simply: Who will govern Israel after the elections? It is: What concept of security will govern Israel after Netanyahu?

cluded dual-use technologies, components for missiles and drones, and satellite imagery. Such assistance has not only strengthened Houthi military capabilities but may also have altered the balance of power with other Yemeni actors.

The Houthis’ recent advance toward the Bab El Mandeb therefore raises questions about whether they have received assistance and intelligence from several states that have strategic interests in challenging the United States, Saudi Arabia and Europe.

In response, Washington has imposed a series of sanctions on Chinese companies accused of supplying the Houthis with advanced military-related technologies, including satellite imagery and electronic components used in drones and missiles.

In April 2025, the US Treasury Department announced sanctions against China’s Chang Guang Satellite Technology Co., accusing the company of providing sensitive space-based services to the Houthis that could be used to target international shipping in the Red Sea.

China has also clearly benefited from this balancing dynamic. Chinese vessels have often appeared to be less exposed to Houthi attacks in the Red Sea, while attacks have been directed primarily at Western-linked shipping. This apparent pattern has strengthened speculation about possible understandings — whether direct or mediated — between the Houthis and Beijing.

A complex network of relationships

These complex and interconnected relationships between Ansar Allah, Russia, China and Iran may help explain the Houthis’ continued military advantage over Yemen’s government forces. They may also help explain why Saudi Arabia was unable to achieve a decisive breakthrough during the years it fought the Houthis.

Saudi Arabia therefore has strong grounds to avoid returning to a situation in which it confronts the Houthis alone. It also has reason to seek international and regional partnerships capable of limiting Iran’s influence over strategically important maritime routes.

Although the immediate consequences of this problem are particularly significant for Saudi Arabia, its implications extend far beyond the Kingdom. Control over, or threats to, major maritime chokepoints affect global energy prices, international trade, and the balance of power across the region.

The central question, therefore, is not simply whether the Houthis have managed to move towards Bab El Mandeb. The more important question is whether their advance represents an independent Houthi strategic achievement — or the outcome of a broader regional and international alignment in which the Houthis have been enabled to exploit a strategically critical maritime chokepoint.



The Amman Chamber of Commerce and British Ambassador to Jordan Philip Hall on Sunday discuss steps to follow up on the outcomes of His Majesty King Abdullah's visit to London in July

ACC, UK envoy discuss follow-up to King's London visit

AMMAN (JT) — The Amman Chamber of Commerce (ACC) and British Ambassador to Jordan Philip Hall on Sunday discussed steps to follow up on the outcomes of His Majesty King Abdullah's visit to London in July and translate them into economic initiatives.

The two sides explored ways to build on the business forum held during the Royal visit to boost trade, attract investment and develop commercial partnerships between Jordanian and British companies.

They also discussed potential joint ventures in priority sectors, including digital technology, water, transport, healthcare, tourism, logistics and value-added manufacturing, according to an ACC statement.

ACC Chairman Khalil Haj Tawfiq stressed the importance of identifying target companies, following up with British firms that have expressed interest in Jordan, and expanding the presence of Jordanian goods and services in the British market.

He affirmed the chamber's readiness to work with the British embassy's commercial section to connect Jordanian and British companies, exchange market information and establish direct trade channels.

Haj Tawfiq also called for activating the memorandum of understanding between the ACC and the West London Chambers of Commerce through trade delegations and business match-making sessions.

Hall reaffirmed the UK's commitment to strengthening economic ties with Jordan and expanding bilateral cooperation.

He encouraged Jordanian officials to engage with British companies operating in the region and promote Jordan as a stable hub for regional expansion, while pursuing joint efforts to increase two-way tourism.

During the first half of 2026, Jordanian exports to the UK reached around JD36 million, while imports from the UK stood at JD121 million.

New Global Economic Identity Index launched to assess national economic transformation

AMMAN (JT) — Strategic Consultant Adli Kandah announced on Sunday the launch of the Global Economic Identity Index, a research tool designed to analyse national economies through their structural and productive characteristics rather than relying on traditional performance metrics.

Kandah told Jordan News Agency, Petra, that while indicators such as GDP, inflation, unemployment, national debt and foreign direct investment are essential, they fail to reveal an economy's core capacity for structural transformation.

The index addresses this gap by examining economic components, inter-sectoral links, diversification, complexity and overall productivity.

The model frames an economy's structural baseline as its "economic DNA", a composite of interconnected productive traits that dictate its ability to generate value, diversify output and transition across developmental stages, according to Kandah.

The index evaluates national economies on a 100-point composite scale built across five core dimensions; Sectoral structure and baseline composition, Productive linkages between domestic industries, economic diversification across output channels, economic complexity and technological depth, total factor productivity across labour and capital during its pilot phase.

The framework analysed six Arab economies; Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia, tracking structural shifts over the 2010-2025 period to test the model across varied economic landscapes.

Kandah noted that the tool's primary value lies in identifying structural bottlenecks and long-term advantages rather than producing a static ranking.

It offers policymakers a diagnostic tool to verify whether reform initiatives are driving genuine structural change or merely producing temporary performance spikes.

The index is designed to complement, rather than replace, established international benchmarks.

To safeguard intellectual property, the research was registered with the National Library of Jordan and issued an official ISBN.

Future phases will expand the underlying database and include a broader array of regional and global economies, Kandah said.

Jordan's shift to sustainable cooling requires industry, consumer action

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — Jordan's transition to sustainable cooling requires investment, technical training and closer co-operation between the government, industry and international partners, according to participants in a dialogue session on the refrigeration and air-conditioning.

The session, held recently as part of an Ozone Day event, focused on "Sustainable Cooling and the Kigali Amendment in the Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Sector — Current Situation, Challenges and Presentation of National Success Stories".

The discussion brought together United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) Representative Sulafa Madanat, The United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) Deputy Resident Representative Majdah Al Assaf, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Environment Omar Arabiyat and representatives of the industrial sector.

Participants said the transition to sustainable cooling goes beyond replacing refrigerants, requiring upgrades to equipment and production lines, improved energy efficiency, stronger safety standards and the development of technical skills.

A representative of a Jordanian industrial company said the shift towards lower-impact refrigerants, which began more than a decade ago, had required significant investment, training and continuous technical development.

The transition also involves modifying equipment and production lines and addressing workplace safety, energy efficiency, maintenance and after-sales services, the representative said.

Some alternative refrigerants, such as R600a, have a lower environmental impact but are flammable, requiring appropriate safety measures and specialised expertise, the representative added.



A session, is held last week as part of an Ozone Day event, focused on 'Sustainable Cooling and the Kigali Amendment in the Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Sector — Current Situation, Challenges and Presentation of National Success Stories'

The choice of refrigerant also depends on the type of equipment and its application, while the transition requires appropriate standards for installation, operation and maintenance.

Supporting Jordan's cooling industry

Chief of the Montreal Protocol and Sustainable Cooling at the UNIDO, Liazzat Rabbiosi, told The Jordan Times that Jordan has a distinctive position in the region due to its local manufacturing sector for refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment.

"Many refrigerants used in cooling equipment are also powerful greenhouse gases, so their release into the atmosphere contributes to climate change," Rabbiosi said.

She said the Montreal Protocol plays a dual role in protecting the ozone layer and helping to mitigate climate change.

"More energy-efficient cooling equipment can help reduce electricity consumption and household costs while maintaining comfortable indoor temperatures," she added.

Rabbiosi also highlighted the importance of supporting Jordanian manufacturers as demand grows for environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient technologies.

'Many refrigerants used in cooling equipment are also powerful greenhouse gases, so their release into the atmosphere contributes to climate change'

Participants said Jordanian manufacturers have opportunities to expand exports to European markets, but stressed that continued investment in technology, green finance and technical skills would be needed to support the sector's development.

Consumers have a role to play

Rabbiosi also called on consumers to consider energy efficiency when purchasing air conditioners and refrigerators, advising them to check energy-efficiency

labels and choose equipment that consumes less electricity.

She encouraged households to use air conditioning responsibly, noting that setting temperatures at around 24°C can provide sufficient comfort while reducing energy consumption.

Such measures can help lower electricity bills while reducing the environmental impact of cooling, she said.

As temperatures rise, demand for cooling is expected to increase, making sustainable solutions increasingly important.

Rabbiosi said even cities where air conditioning had traditionally been less common were experiencing hotter summers and a growing need for cooling.

She noted that the international community had made considerable progress in protecting the ozone layer, but said more work was needed to address climate change and ensure that growing demand for cooling is met sustainably.

"The Montreal Protocol demonstrates the importance of countries working together to tackle environmental challenges," she added.

The Ozone Day event was organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, UNDP and UNIDO Jordan.

Bank of Japan hikes rates to 31-year high to battle inflation

TOKYO (AFP) — The Bank of Japan (BoJ) raised interest rates to a 31-year high recently and said it would lift them further as it looks to counter inflation fuelled by surging energy prices and a weak yen.

The 25-basis-point hike to 1.25 per cent was expected by markets following the recent tightening by the European Central Bank and the US Federal Reserve, though the decision was not unanimous as it was carried by a 7-2 majority vote.

Pressure has increased on officials to further tighten monetary policy as a spike in oil prices caused by the Middle East crisis — which shows little sign of ending anytime soon — is expected to keep putting upward pressure on inflation.

"Given that underlying CPI inflation has been approaching 2 per cent and financial conditions have been accommodative, the bank will continue to raise the policy interest rate," the BoJ said on its website.

BoJ Governor Ka-



A person passing by Bank of Japan

zuo Ueda told a news conference that it was "important to stabilise the underlying inflation rate", avoiding a situation in which it surpassed the 2 per cent target with an "adverse impact on the economy".

Central bankers are keeping tabs on movements in the yen, which fell to a 40-year low against the dollar in July, prompting a historic joint US-Japanese intervention in foreign exchange markets.

The unit has been weighed in particular by the wide gap

between Japan's still low interest rates and those of the Federal Reserve, which encouraged investors to favour better-yielding dollar-denominated assets.

Despite the hike to the highest level since 1995, which had been telegraphed for weeks, the yen weakened to more than 157 per dollar, compared with around 156.30 before the announcement.

"For a market looking for evidence that the BoJ could shorten the distance between hikes, those dissents mattered," said

Stephen Innes at Quintext Intel.

"Traders were looking for signs that the Bank could move faster from here, yet two members were already arguing that even today's move had come too soon."

Short-lived reprieve

The cheap yen is driving up the cost of imported goods, which in turn is putting upward pressure on inflation.

Makiko Tsushima, a farmer from the northern region of Aomori, told AFP that she was "really wishing" for inflation to slow down.

"Prices are climbing. Casual shopping at a supermarket easily costs me 10,000 yen [\$63] these days... Daily necessities like toilet paper and everything else are also expensive," the 54-year-old said.

Still, figures on Friday showed core inflation fell to 1.7 per cent in August from 1.8 per cent but remains close to the BoJ's 2 per cent target.

The reading from the internal affairs ministry, which excludes

volatile fresh food prices, was lower than forecasts for it to remain unchanged.

Government support for gasoline and electricity fees contributed to the slower pace of inflation, the data showed.

However, the reprieve could prove

very short-lived for resource-poor Japan after energy and gas prices soared in recent weeks because of the Middle East crisis.

"Inflation was little changed in August but there are mounting signs that higher energy costs are feeding through and we expect it to rise above the BoJ's 2 per cent target before long," said Marcel Thieliant of Capital Economics.

The government is trying to mitigate the impact of inflation on household purchasing power, notably with a massive stimulus package adopted at the

end of 2025, extensive tax breaks on energy, and measures adopted in the spring to support consumption.

Tokyo also decided this week on a drastic two-year reduction in the consumption tax on food products, from 8 per cent to 1 per cent starting in April 2027.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Sunday amounted to JD15.1 million spread over 8.4 million shares that traded through 6,077 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.22 per cent, closing at 4115.50 points.

Out of 104 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 35 companies rose while the share price of another 43 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were United Cable Industries by 7.34 per cent, Arab Investors Union Company for Real Estates Developing by 5 per cent, Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 4.83 per cent Amwaj Properties by 4.76 per cent and Al Rakaez Investment Company by 4.65 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Arab Pesticides and Veterinary Drugs Mfg. Company by 4.18 per cent, Comprehensive Multiple Transportations Company by 3.03 per cent, Al Shamekha for Real Estate and Financial Investments by 3.01 per cent, Al Faris National Company for Investment and Export by 2.86 per cent, and Specialised Investment Compounds by 2.84 per cent.



FOOTBALL

PSG President Nasser Al Khelaifi under investigation in France for conflict of interest

PARIS, France (AFP) — Nasser Al Khelaifi, the Qatari president of French football club Paris Saint-Germain (PSG), is under investigation in France on suspicion of an illegal conflict of interest, prosecutors in Paris said on Sunday. The preliminary probe is linked to his twin stewardship of the Champions League title holders and the beIN Media Group and involves a meeting on broadcasting rights with the French football league's representatives in July 2024, the prosecutor's office said, confirming a report in L'Equipe sports newspaper. The meeting was held the day after beIN Sports made a 100-million-euro (\$115-million) offer for rights to broadcast one Ligue 1 match per week. France's professional football league later accepted the beIN offer. According to a source close to the case, Anticor alleges that Al Khelaifi took part in discussions on the validation of beIN Sports' bid despite also serving as chairman of beIN Media Group, creating a conflict of interest. Al Khelaifi's lawyer, Renaud Semerdjian, rejected the claims. "The allegations made against Mr Nasser Al Khelaifi are without basis, neither legally nor factually," he told AFP. The lawyer said his client had "always acted in an independent, impartial and objective manner".

Man City outgun Sunderland despite Brobbey hat-trick, Liverpool win at Bournemouth

MANCHESTER, United Kingdom (AFP) — Brian Brobbey's hat-trick for Sunderland could not prevent Manchester City opening up a three-point lead at the top of the Premier League after a thrilling 5-3 win, while Liverpool beat Bournemouth 1-0 on Andoni Iraola's return to the south coast. City took advantage of Arsenal's shock 3-0 defeat at Brighton on Saturday but made life hard for themselves despite taking the lead three times at the Etihad Stadium. Enzo Fernandez opened the scoring with his first goal since equalling the Premier League transfer record with a £125 million (\$167 million) move from Chelsea. Sunderland won their first European match for 53 years against AZ Alkmaar in midweek but showed little sign of tiredness as City could not shake off the Black Cats. United have taken just four points from their opening four games and were dumped out of the League Cup by Brighton in midweek after surrendering a 2-0 lead at home for the first time in 50 years.

Faisali and Ramtha set the pace at the top after statement victories

By Rayan Jaafra

AMMAN — Week 3 of the Jordanian Pro League (CFL) delivered high drama, a lot of goals and surprising results across local venues, shaking up the early-season standings.

The round kicked off in Petra Stadium as newly promoted Doqara secured their first victory over Al Salt 2-0, where Hamza Al Saifi broke the deadlock right before halftime in the 45+4th minute, firing in the opener after being set up by Mohammad Bani Atieh.

Salt had a golden opportunity to equalise in the 85th minute when they were awarded a penalty, but Nigerian forward Ebedebiri Endurance missed the target entirely. Faris Ghotashah sealed the three points for Doqara in stoppage time with a decisive strike in the 90+3rd minute following a swift counterattack.

Meanwhile, Al Jazeera played out a draw against fellow promoted side Arabi at Petra Stadium, picking up a point that places Jazeera third while earning Arabi its first point of the campaign.

Ramtha stun Wihdat at Qweismeh

In a fixture that shocked the home supporters, Wihdat fell 1-0 to Ramtha at King Abdullah Stadium on Saturday. Despite Wihdat's pres-



Photo courtesy of Faisali's Account

Al Faisali's midfielder Noor Al Rawabdeh Celebrates His brace

sure, defender Abdulrahman Al Daraisheh scored the game's only goal in the 74th minute, heading home from a corner kick.

Hussein's struggles continue in six-goal thriller

Defending champions Hussein Irbid failed to find their footing, sharing the spoils in a thrilling 3-3 draw against Shabab Ordon. Hussein drew first blood when Aref Al Haj struck from the edge of the box in

the 26th minute, assisted by young talent Yousef Qashi.

Shabab Ordon struck back quickly in the 30th minute as Ousai Tannous sliced through the defense to tee up Adham Al Rifaie. Hussein regained the lead just five minutes later through national team defender Abdallah Nasib, who headed in from a corner delivered by Al Haj.

After the break, Youssef Abu Al Jazar extended Hussein's lead to 3-1 in the 57th minute off a corner from Mah-



Photo courtesy of Ramtha's Account

Ramtha's Goalkeeper Murad Al Faluji saving his net

moud Al Mardi. Shabab Ordon clawed their way back once again by the Colombian defender Saul Castro headed home from a corner in the 65th minute, before Ecuadorian forward Michael Caicedo converted an 87th-minute penalty past goalkeeper Mahmoud Al Kawamleh following a handball.

Faisali cruise past Baqa'a to share top spot

The Blue Knights stamped their authority at Amman Interna-

tional Stadium to close out the round in style, routing Baqa'a 4-0, after sustained pressure and a scramble in the box, Anas Al Awadat squared the ball to Ahmed Al Ersan, who opened the scoring in the 37th minute. Baqa'a's woes deepened when Mohammad Kalooob received a red card in the 45+4th minute following a VAR review for denying Ersan's a clear goalscoring opportunity.

Faisali capitalised after the break as Nour Al

Rawabdeh struck from outside the 18-yard box in the 55th minute following an assist from Rizq Bani Hani. Al Rawabdeh added his second and Faisali's third in the 67th minute after brilliant footwork and an assist from Al Awadat.

Ivorian midfielder Jean Ahoua capped off the dominant performance with a late header in the 89th minute, sealing the victory that leaves Faisali sharing the summit of the league table.

LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

AI 'warning shots' focus Beijing on national security risks

BEIJING (AFP) — While AI researchers in the United States fret over out-of-control super-intelligence wiping out humanity, Chinese policymakers have until now been more focused on immediate risks, from deepfakes to child safety.

But the alarming hacking ability of top artificial intelligence models is leading Beijing to see the dangers in a new light, with the spy agency chief warning this week that the technology could jeopardise national security.

"There are more similarities than differences when it comes to AI safety issues" in China and the United States, said Kevin Xu, founder of US-based technology hedge fund Interconnected Capital.

But unlike in America, these "don't get litigated or go viral in public in China", Xu told AFP.

Nevertheless, the cybersecurity impact of AI agent bots acting without human oversight "would rank very high among the Chinese government's biggest concerns".

As the topic grabs global headlines, the pressure is on for President Xi Jinping and US coun-



AFP photo

The motto 'The future is human', used prominently by 'The Be Human Company', a Canadian AI strategy and transformation company, is seen during day two of the 'ALL IN 2026' conference at the Palais des Congres de Montreal in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, on Thursday

terpart Donald Trump to discuss tackling the AI threats to both countries at in-person talks on Thursday — despite their rivalry in the field.

Both powers are "developing a more realistic and shared understanding of these risks, thereby heightening the sense of urgency" to work together, Sun Chenghao of Tsinghua University's Center for International Security and Strategy told AFP.

Cooperation on shared safety evaluations for AI models or alert systems when crises emerge might be undermined by

the fierce competition, however.

"We're leading China in AI... and frankly I want to keep it that way," Trump said when asked about calls from top US labs for a coordinated slowdown of their cutting-edge work.

'Vulnerable position'

A stark warning of the existential threat posed by self-improving future

AI systems, posted Monday on X by a researcher resigning from US startup Anthropic, has fuelled debate worldwide over how the technology should be governed.

China is already actively regulating how it is used, such as by prohibiting the creation of an AI-generated avatar in someone's likeness without their consent.

"Chinese AI policy focuses more on real, present-day harms to society and people," said Brian Tse, CEO at Concordia AI, a Beijing-

based consultancy focused on AI safety.

"Beijing treats AI as a general-purpose technology — not a 'god-in-a-box'," he said.

It sees it as "something closer to electricity or the automobile: enormously beneficial for society and industry, but ultimately manageable through regulation", Tse said.

He added that "recent AI capability jumps, high-profile incidents acting as 'warning shots', and a worrying pace of AI development through automation" had all pushed the technology up the list of priorities.

On the streets of Shanghai, AFP found a mix of concern and pragmatism about AI.

"In my view, no new technology develops completely smoothly," said 42-year-old Xie Zongbo.

He said news of the cyberattack "worm" that could hack into WeChat may in fact be "a good thing: Identifying the issue, solving it, and patching the loophole ultimately benefits the advancement of cybersecurity".

There was also broad support for tight regulation.



AFP photo

Mustafa Khaled Alwan, a 72-year-old Syrian man, poses for a photo surrounded by his books, which he retrieved after hiding them behind a false wall for 15 years at the start of the uprising against longtime Syrian ruler Bashar Al Assad, in his home in the Al Bayadah neighbourhood in Homs on Saturday

In Syria, a library of Islamist texts sees light of day a decade on

By Bakr Alkasem

Agence France-Presse

HOMS, Syria — After more than a decade of displacement, a Syrian man finally tore down a wall he had built to conceal a library of mainly Islamist books that would likely have landed in prison, or worse, under Bashar Assad's rule.

Like many in Syria, Mustafa Khaled Alwan, 72, is a sympathiser of the Muslim Brotherhood, which long opposed the Assad dynasty.

His collection, numbering in the hundreds, also includes Islamic teachings, poems and books on science and social topics.

"This library is very precious to me, I filled

it up slowly," he told AFP from central Syria's Homs.

Under Hafez Al Assad, Islamists were violently suppressed, most notably in a 1982 massacre in Hama, whose death toll has never been formally established, though estimates usually range from 10,000 to 40,000.

Alwan said the Hama massacre was a "pivotal point for all Syrians".

"I was upset, but we were afraid to even talk to ourselves."

'We built a wall'

Yet, despite the major risk involved, Alwan was undeterred from gathering the books.

As protests erupted

against Assad across Syria in 2011, Alwan feared his support for the demonstrators might put his library in jeopardy.

Amid the protests, Homs was dubbed the "capital of the revolution" and was subjected to particularly brutal crackdowns by Assad's forces.

"At the end of 2011, when the situation was difficult, I moved [the library] to the home I recently bought for my son," he said.

"No one knew I owned this home," which encouraged him to move the books there.

"Some revolutionaries came and helped me, and we built a wall" to hide the library.



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