



King, in call with Saudi crown prince, condemns attacks on Saudi Arabia, expresses solidarity with Saudi people

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah, during a phone call on Monday with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the prime minister of Saudi Arabia, extended his condolences over the victims of the attacks targeting Saudi Arabia. His Majesty reiterated Jordan's condemnation of these attacks, affirming its full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and its support for the country's measures, under the leadership of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, to ensure its security, sovereignty and safety of its people, according to a Royal Court statement.

For his part, Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman expressed his condolences over the death of a Jordanian citizen as a result of these attacks, and wished the injured Jordanians a speedy recovery.

King holds talks with Malaysia monarch in Kuala Lumpur

- His Majesty says his visit to Malaysia reflects depth of relations between two countries
- King expresses Jordan's readiness to work with Malaysia to address challenges facing region
- His Majesty emphasises need to stop Israel's violations in region, including its actions in West Bank, Jerusalem
- Sultan Ibrahim highlights significance of King's visit, underlines the heritage of Royal families of two countries
- King bestows on Sultan Ibrahim Order of Al Hussein Bin Ali, in recognition of distinguished Jordan-Malaysia relations

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Monday held talks with Malaysia's King Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Sultan Iskandar at the Istana Negara in Kuala Lumpur, during which they discussed the long-standing relations between Jordan and Malaysia and recent regional developments.

His Majesty thanked Sultan Ibrahim for his warm hospitality, noting that the visit reflects the depth of relations between the two countries and will contribute to building on that close partnership to develop cooperation across all fields, according to a Royal Court statement.

Speaking about regional developments, the King underscored that current dangerous escalations must be halted, expressing Jordan's readiness to work with Malaysia to address challenges facing the region and enhance regional peace and security.

His Majesty emphasised the need to stop Israel's violations in the region, including its actions in the West Bank and Jerusalem, and attempts to alter the existing historical and legal status quo of Muslim and Christian holy sites, noting that the immense suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza continues unabated.

Continued on page 5



Photo courtesy of Royal Court

His Majesty King Abdullah, at the start of his state visit to Malaysia, holds talks with King Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Sultan Iskandar at the National Palace of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur. Discussions covered the strong ties between Jordan and Malaysia, as well as key regional developments

King meets with Malaysia PM

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah met with Malaysia Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in Kuala Lumpur on Monday, to discuss ways of strengthening Jordanian-Malaysian relations and cooperation in a number of areas.

His Majesty emphasised the importance of building on this visit to further enhance bilateral ties, which span more than 60 years, as well as to increase dialogue on regional and international issues of mutual interest, according to a Royal Court statement.

The King reaffirmed Jordan's support for efforts to achieve peace and stability at regional and international levels, as well as diplomatic endeavours to resolve conflicts, protect civilians and facilitate the delivery of aid, noting the importance of close cooperation with Malaysia in this regard.

His Majesty highlighted the importance of strengthening coordination through the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to mobilise an effective international response to halt Israel's dangerous actions in the West Bank and its violations of Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

The King reiterated the need to support Syria and Lebanon in their efforts to maintain their security, stability and sovereignty.

For his part, Prime Minister Ibrahim emphasised his country's pride in its close relations with Jordan and its commitment to strengthening joint cooperation, particularly in the fields of technology and defence.

The two sides also agreed to reactivate the Jordanian-Malaysian Trade Committee, the statement said.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh, and Jordan's Ambassador to Malaysia Ismail Maaytah attended the meeting.

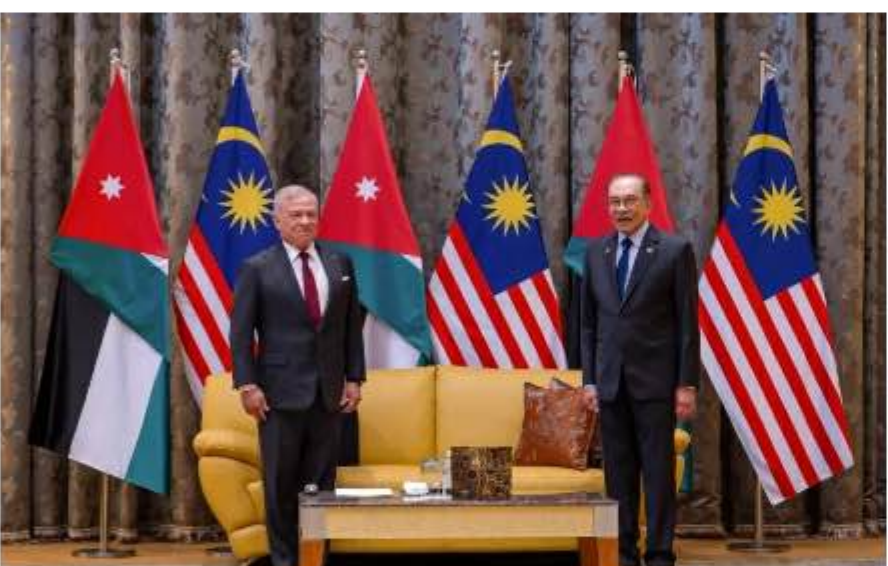


Photo courtesy of Royal Court

His Majesty King Abdullah meets with Malaysia Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in Kuala Lumpur on Monday, to discuss ways of strengthening Jordanian-Malaysian relations and cooperation in a number of areas

Jordan condemns Houthi attacks on Saudi airports

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Monday condemned a series of attacks by Yemen's Houthi militia on Saudi Arabia, including strikes targeting King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and King Fahd International Airport in Dammam, which left one resident dead, injured several others and caused material damage.

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AFP/File

This screen grab from a video footage shows a Houthi missile being launched

Coalition says ballistic missile fired at Riyadh intercepted

AMMAN (JT) — The Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen said on Monday that its forces intercepted a ballistic missile fired by the Houthis at the Saudi capital Riyadh.

"Interception and destruction of a ballistic missile launched by the terrorist Houthi militia toward Riyadh," Maj. Gen. Turki Al Malki, spokesman for the coalition, wrote on X.

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HERITAGE

Jordan welcomes UNESCO resolution on Old City of Jerusalem

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday welcomed the unanimous adoption of a resolution on the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls by the UNESCO Executive Board during its 225th session in Paris, under the agenda item "Occupied Palestine".

Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali said that the resolution called on Israel, the occupying power, to halt all illegal unilateral measures in the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls that threaten the area's exceptional cultural and historical value and endanger its heritage.

The resolution also declared such measures null and void, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Majali also said that the resolution expressed regret over the Israeli occupation authorities' failure to comply with calls to halt ongoing excavations, tunnelling, works related to the cable car project and other illegal activities in East Jerusalem.

The ministry reiterated calls for Israel to cease all violations.

He added that the resolution reaffirmed Jordan's firm position on the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls, including the Islamic and Christian holy sites, and the need to preserve the historic and legal status quo there.

The resolution also reaffirmed previous decisions adopted by the UNESCO Executive Board and the World Heritage Committee regarding Jerusalem.



AFP via Getty Images

The Dome of the Rock at the Al Aqsa Mosque Compound in East Jerusalem



Petra photo
Minister of Education and Human Resources Development Azmi Mahafzah on Monday attends an event organised by UNESCO and the Queen Rania Teacher Academy marking the World Teachers' Day

Education Ministry, UNESCO mark World Teachers' Day, boost global education ties

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan marked World Teachers' Day on Monday by celebrating teachers' contributions to learners and communities, while highlighting the Queen Rania Teacher Academy's (ORTA) joining of the Teacher Task Force.

Held under the patronage of Minister of Education and Human Resources Development Azmi Mahafzah, the event was organised by UNESCO and ORTA under the title "From Jordan to the World: Celebrating Teachers and Their Impact", according to a UNESCO statement.

The celebration brought together teachers and national and international education experts to discuss the profession's role in shaping learning and supporting communities.

Mahafzah said that teachers were central to education and nation-building, stressing the

importance of investing in their professional development, listening to their voices and providing an enabling work environment.

He added that the ministry was working to address challenges and strengthen local and international partnerships to place teachers at the centre of educational development.

Accounts shared by a teacher, a student and a parent highlighted how teachers' influence extends beyond academic achievement, underlining the importance of relationships between educators, learners and families.

UNESCO Representative to Jordan Noha Bawazir said that the occasion recognised teachers' dedication and their lasting impact on learners and communities.

"Sixty years after the adoption of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the

Status of Teachers, supporting teachers remains a shared priority," Bawazir said, highlighting UNESCO's partnership with the ministry and QRTA to advance quality education.

ORTA's joining of the Teacher Task Force was presented as a step linking Jordan's experience in teacher development with the international education community.

ORTA CEO Abdelmajeed Shamlawi said that continuous professional development was essential to strengthening education.

He said that joining the task force connected Jordan's experience with the global teaching community and reaffirmed the academy's commitment to supporting teachers and improving education.

The event highlighted teachers' role in shaping the future of education and the communities they serve.

'Geopolitical tensions, rising airfares drive 8.7% drop in Jordanians travelling abroad'

AMMAN (JT) — The number of Jordanians travelling abroad for tourism fell by 8.7 per cent in the first eight months of 2026, as regional tensions, uncertainty over air travel and rising ticket prices prompted more people to consider domestic holidays.

Preliminary figures from the Ministry of Tourism, based on Central Bank of Jordan data and cited by Al Mamlaka, show that about 1.066 million Jordanians travelled abroad for tourism between January and August, down from approximately 1.167 million in the same period last year.

The decline amounted to around 101,100 travellers.

In remarks to Al Mamlaka, Mahmoud Khasawneh, president of the Association of Tourism and Travel Agents, attributed the fall to geopolitical tensions across the region and uncertainty surrounding flight schedules.

He said that travellers were concerned about possible cancellations and delays to their return journeys.

Khasawneh said that the figures also pointed to a shift towards domestic tourism, with Jordanians taking advantage of the government-backed Urdunna Jannah programme or making bookings directly.

Jordan offers a range of domestic tourism options, including historical sites, natural at-



JT file
Queen Alia International Airport

tractions and adventure activities, he added.

Khasawneh said that regional tensions had also reshaped Jordanians' preferred external destinations. Syria had become the leading destination, partly because it could be reached without air travel, followed by Turkey and Egypt.

Hilalat, president of the Jordan Hotels Association, attributed the decline in outbound tourism partly to higher airfares, as well as challenging economic conditions.

Monthly figures show uneven declines

The number of Jordanians travelling abroad increased in three of the first eight months of 2026 compared with the corresponding months in 2025.

Departures rose by 1.6 per cent in January, 7.5 per cent in May and 3 per cent in Au-

gust, while the remaining months recorded declines.

April saw the steepest fall, with departures dropping by 38.2 per cent. This was followed by March, down 21.3 per cent, February, down 19.8 per cent, June, down 10.3 per cent and July, down 2.4 per cent.

Domestic tourism programmes appear to be playing a growing role in encouraging Jordanians to explore destinations within the country.

An opinion poll conducted by the University of Jordan's Centre for Strategic Studies found that 73.3 per cent of respondents were aware of domestic tourism initiatives, including Urdunna Jannah.

Meanwhile, 83 per cent of the national sample said that such programmes had encouraged citizens to travel within Jordan.

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities previously told Al Mamlaka that some 211,000 people had participated in the Urdunna Jannah programme from the beginning of 2026 to early October.

Participation in the domestic tourism programme reached some 211,000 participants since its launch, Programme Director Ahmad Rifai has recently said.

Rifai said that the programme undergoes continuous updates through adding new destinations and assessing participant feedback, according to Al Mamlaka.

Rifai noted that 141 tourism offices have benefited from the initiative, alongside 6,654 buses and tour guides, 115 participating restaurants, and 106 accommodation facilities.

The Ministry of Tour-

ism and Antiquities aims to reach 220,000 beneficiaries through the programme during 2026, focusing on expanding trips to less visited destinations and supporting areas affected by regional circumstances, particularly Petra.

Overnight beneficiaries exceeded 83,000, bringing total overnight stays to 85,000 nights.

The programme aims to stimulate domestic tourism and encourage citizens to explore national destinations by providing diverse, subsidised tourist experiences with trip cost being subsidised by up to 60 per cent.

Plans include expanding participation to cover over 400 local projects comprising restaurants, hotels, and tourism experiences and introducing over 60 tourist routes across all governorates.

Mobile data usage in Jordan rises 29% in Q2 — TRC

AMMAN (JT) — The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) has published its statistical report for the second quarter of 2026, highlighting key performance indicators across the telecommunications sector.

Mobile broadband subscriptions grew 2.4 per cent to 8.4 million in Q2 2026, compared with 8.2 million in Q2 2025, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Prepaid plans accounted for 61 per cent of total subscriptions, while postpaid plans made up 39 per cent.

Voice and data lines represented 79 per cent of total subscriptions, while data-only lines stood at 21 per cent.

Mobile voice call traffic reached around 7 billion minutes, divided into 97 per cent local and



File photo
The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission says that mobile 5G subscriptions surged 23 per cent to 533,000 in Q2 2026, up from 433,000 in Q1 2026

3 per cent international calls.

Text messaging fell 47.6 per cent to 180 million SMS's, down from 344 million in Q2 2025, according to the TRC.

Mobile penetration reached 69 per cent of the total population and 106.2 per cent among individuals over 15.

Mobile data usage rose 29 per cent to 936 million gigabytes, compared with 724 million gigabytes in Q2 2025, according to the report.

Mobile 5G subscriptions surged 23 per cent to 533,000 in Q2 2026, up from 433,000 in Q1 2026, and grew 121.6 per cent compared with 240,500

subscriptions recorded in Q2 2025.

Fixed broadband internet subscriptions grew 1.3 per cent to 830,000, achieving a household penetration rate of 33 per cent.

Fibre connections comprised 81 per cent of fixed Internet subscriptions with 672,000 users, while

Fixed Wireless Broadband Access (FWWA) held 14.4 per cent, xDSL held 4.2 per cent, and satellite Internet reached approximately 1,200 subscriptions.

Fixed broadband data usage rose 28.5 per cent to 1.8 billion gigabytes, averaging 749 gigabytes monthly per subscription.

Fixed voice service subscriptions dropped 1.2 per cent to 478,000, with residential users accounting for 67 per cent and commercial users 33 per cent. Fixed voice call traffic fell 17 per cent to 8.3 million minutes, split between 80 per cent domestic and 20 per cent international calls.

Leased line subscriptions increased 4.8 per cent to reach 26,000 by the end of Q2 2026, compared with 24,800 in Q2 2025.



Photo courtesy of British Council
The British Council brings together more than 500 educators, school leaders, policymakers and international education partners in Amman for its 2026/27 Partner Schools Teachers' Continuing Professional Development Forum and Partner Schools Leaders' Conference

British Council brings together over 500 educators to discuss future-ready schools

AMMAN (JT) — The British Council brought together more than 500 educators, school leaders, policymakers and international education partners in Amman for its 2026/27 Partner Schools Teachers' Continuing Professional Development Forum and Partner Schools Leaders' Conference.

Held under the theme "Education That Matters: Building Skills, Creating Opportunity and Driving Economic Growth", the annual events brought together more than 250 teachers, over 200 school leaders and representatives from more than 115 British Council Partner Schools, according to a British Council statement.

The events examined how leadership, innovation and international collaboration can strengthen education and prepare learners for changing workforce demands.

Opening the events were British Ambassador to Jordan Philip Hall and British Council Head of Market Jordan Ameera Manna, alongside representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and

UK awarding organisations Cambridge, Pearson and OxfordAQA.

Both days featured keynote sessions by educational leadership consultant Kathleen O'Hare on future-ready leadership and teaching.

The teachers' forum included interactive workshops, including "Make Learning Stick: Refining Practice for Greater Impact", delivered by Audai Ababneh, a senior teacher educator from the Queen Rania Teacher Academy team.

Other sessions led by British Council experts covered exploratory action research, pedagogy, safeguarding and student well-being. The forum concluded with certificates and awards recognising teachers' excellence and innovation.

The leaders' conference focused on whole-school transformation and how strategic leadership can improve teaching quality, organisational resilience and student achievement.

Panel discussions facilitated by O'Hare examined how future-ready schools could align with Jordan's Economic Vision 2030.

Members of the Students Counselling Com-

mittee also discussed ways to empower students to shape their education. The conference concluded with an awards ceremony recognising outstanding Partner Schools.

Contributions from government representatives, the British embassy, UK awarding organisations, universities and private-sector employers highlighted the role of collaboration in strengthening Jordan's education system.

Manna said that preparing young people for the future required education systems that embraced innovation, invested in teachers and empowered school leaders.

"Through the Partner Schools network, the British Council continues to create opportunities for collaboration, professional growth and international partnership that strengthen education and expand opportunity for future generations," she added.

The British Council said that the discussions would continue throughout the 2026/27 academic year as it worked with Partner Schools, government institutions and UK education partners to turn ideas into action.

Ayn Qasiyya skeleton offers fresh insights into prehistoric Levantine societies

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — The Early Epipalaeolithic site of Ayn Qasiyya is located in the Azraq Oasis, a formerly lush wet and marshland setting within the Irano-Tuhuranian steppe and Saharo-Arabian desert of south-west Asia, situated circa 100 kilometres east of Amman.

The region has a rich local sequence of prehistoric settlement, in which sites dating to the Early, Middle and Late Epipalaeolithic are well represented.

The site is located immediately north of the Ayn Qasiyya pool, which was formerly a small pond associated with a copious spring.

"While excavations in Area C revealed a channel fill containing a mixed lithic assemblage, consisting of Early Epipalaeolithic, Natufian and



Photo courtesy of Jay Stock
An Early Epipalaeolithic sitting burial from the Azraq Oasis, Jordan

PPNB diagnostic chipped stone artefacts, Areas A, B and D revealed exclusively Early Epipalaeolithic artefacts," said Professor Tobias Richter from The University of Copenhagen.

Preserved skeletal elements of Ayn Qasiyya include a fragmentary cranial vault, including portions of the frontal, occipital, left and right pari-

etal and temporal bones, maxillae, mandible and a partial dentition, a partial right clavicle, right and left humeri, diaphyses of the left radius and ulna, left and right femora, tibiae and fibulae, Richter continued.

The professor added that little was preserved of the thorax and pelvis, apart from fragmentary left and right mid-thorac-

ic ribs, fragments of the right and left sacral alae, the right acetabulum and a few fragments of vertebral bodies.

"The bones of the right foot are better preserved than the left, with most elements represented, while the left consists of a partial calcaneus and metatarsal fragments."

"All visible long bone epiphyses are fused, and the dentition is characterised by extremely heavy tooth wear, with significant exposure of dentine on most molars, which suggests either that the individual is an adult of middle to older age or that tooth wear was particularly rapid," Richter said.

While the state of preservation precludes observation of many typically sexually dimorphic traits, several characteristics of the skull and mandible suggest that this skeleton is that of a

male, the professor said.

"An estimate of the length of the fragmentary right femur taken with the bones in situ indicates a maximum length of approximately 431 millimetres, which suggests a relatively small adult stature of approximately 161 centimetres, using a regression equation developed for ancient Egyptians," Richter said.

This, in combination with the relatively small stature of Ayn Qasiyya 1, is consistent with a pattern of morphological heterogeneity in the Levant prior to the Natufian, the professor said.

"Ayn Qasiyya 1 provides evidence for a hitherto not fully recognised burial practice in the Early Epipalaeolithic Levant: Exposure or placement of dead corpses in open, unaltered surroundings," Richter added.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Sunday meets with Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan

Jordan, Malaysia sign agreements on consultations, diplomatic training

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Sunday met with Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan on the sidelines of the state visit by His Majesty King Abdullah to Malaysia.

Safadi and Hasan signed two exchanges of notes covering bilateral consultations between Jordan and Malaysia, and cooperation between the Jordan Diplomatic Institute and the Malaysian Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, according to a ministry statement.

Media forum concludes with calls to protect press freedom, combat disinformation

AMMAN (JT) — The fourth Future of Media and Communication Forum concluded on Monday after two days of discussions on artificial intelligence (AI), digital transformation, press freedom, media credibility and impunity for crimes against journalists in conflict zones.

HRH Princess Rym Ali attended the closing main panel, titled “The Ministry of Information and the Challenges of the Independent Media Landscape”, which brought together information and media officials from Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Egypt.

Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani stressed that media plays a vital role in public awareness and national security, calling for professional, independent outlets capable of constructive criticism and responsible reporting, according to organisers.

He said that media legislation should protect society from hate speech and incitement without restricting freedom of expression, adding that criticism of public policies remains a core element of media practice, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Syrian Information Minister Khaled Zaatar said that restoring public trust and credibility was essential to the future of media

Lebanese Information Minister Paul Morcos said AI and digital advances would not replace human intellect, stressing the need for independent official media that serves the public rather than political factions.

Syrian Information Minister Khaled Zaatar said that restoring public trust and credibility was essential to the future of media

General Supervisor of Official Palestinian Media Ahmad Assaf warned that technology and AI were increasingly being used to target Palestinians and distort their narrative. He called for digital independence, continued Arab media attention to the Palestinian cause and urgent international action to hold those responsible for targeting journalists accountable.

Chairman of Egypt's National Media Authority Ahmed Muslimani said state media must adapt to competition from digital platforms while preserving cultural values and national identity. He also warned against prioritising commercial interests over media integrity.

JSF urges incentives to help SMEs adopt sustainability standards

AMMAN (JT) — Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which account for 98.1 per cent of businesses in Jordan, need financial incentives and practical guidance to adopt environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices and remain competitive, according to a policy paper published by the Jordan Strategy Forum (JSF).

The paper, titled “ESG: A Strategic Opportunity for SMEs” and published in co-operation with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), said that ESG practices can help SMEs cut costs, manage risks, improve competitiveness and access financing and foreign markets, while non-compliance could exclude them from supply chains.

Globally, companies listed on stock exchanges that disclose sustainability data account for 91 per cent of total market capitalisation, according to the OECD's 2025 report.

Corporate sustainable bonds reached \$2.4 trillion by late 2024, while only 25 per cent of SMEs in the European Union had developed an ESG strategy.

In Jordan, ESG adoption is growing among major companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE), in line with the Economic Modernisation Vision, national green growth plans and the country's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 31 per cent by 2030, according to the paper.

The ASE instructed the top 20 companies on its ASE20 index in 2022 to issue sustainability reports in accordance with Global Reporting Initiative standards. It has also introduced a climate disclosure framework that will take effect in 2027, requiring compliance with IFRS S1 and IFRS S2 standards.

Despite these developments, more than 60 per cent of SMEs surveyed by Amman Arab University reported facing general financial constraints, with many viewing sustainability compliance as an additional cost. A separate GIZ survey found that 13.8 per cent of 500 surveyed SMEs classified themselves as green businesses, indicating potential for wider adoption.

Issawi attends funeral of Jordanian killed in Riyadh airport attack

AMMAN (JT) — Royal Court Chief Youssef Issawi on Monday attended the funeral of Mahmoud Hasan Barqawi, who was killed in Saudi Arabia in an attack that targeted King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh two days earlier.

Issawi conveyed the condolences of His Majesty King Abdullah and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hussein to the family of the deceased, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates announced on Sunday that a Jordanian national had been killed and four others injured in the attack.

The ministry said that two of the injured Jordanians had been discharged from hospital, while two women remained under medical care.

It added that it was monitoring their conditions in coordination with Saudi authorities and working to facilitate the repatriation of the deceased's remains to Jordan.

The ministry also reiterated Jordan's condemnation of attacks launched by the Houthi militia against Saudi Arabia, reaffirming the Kingdom's solidarity with Riyadh in safeguarding its security and stability and the safety of its citizens and residents.

It also commended Saudi authorities for providing medical care to the injured Jordanians.



Royal Court Chief Youssef Issawi on Monday attends the funeral of Mahmoud Hasan Barqawi, who was killed in Saudi Arabia in an attack that targeted King Khalid International Airport



General view of Amman

JT file

JAGA to train 1,450 Syrian public sector employees in 2027

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordanian Academy for Government Administration (JAGA) is preparing to train 1,450 Syrian public sector employees in 2027 with support from the EU, as part of efforts to expand its training programmes and strengthen public sector capabilities, Head of Partnerships Manal Damen said on Monday.

Damen said that the academy had shifted from offering short training courses to building a flexible, cumulative national learning system aimed at strengthening knowledge and applying it to support development, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

She said that the academy designs programmes to develop competencies according to job categories, including leadership and public sector employees, based on each group's needs and objectives.

The programmes focus on applying acquired knowledge in the workplace, measuring training outcomes and assessing their impact on government performance and the quality of services provided to citizens, Damen said.

She added that the academy draws on specialised and experienced trainers from its own staff, and through partnerships with local community institutions, universities and academic institutions.

The academy also seeks to benefit from local and regional experience in digital transformation and artificial intelligence to improve government performance and enhance the efficiency of public institutions, she said.

Damen added that the academy had signed Memoranda of Understanding with the Palestine School of Government and a separate Memorandum with Morocco.

Police arrest 62 alleged drug dealers, 127 users in one week

By Bana Hussein

AMMAN — The Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) on Sunday reiterated its warning to alleged crystal meth users and dealers that its “strict security” campaign against them is ongoing.

The warning came in the 11th week of its campaign, along with an awareness operation that was initiated by AND in cooperation with the Media and Community Policing Directorate almost two months ago to combat the use of Crystal meth in Jordanian society.



The law-enforcement agency said it arrested 62 alleged drug dealers in 129 new cases over the past week, Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

In addition, the police official told The Jordan Times that AND officers arrested 127 alleged Crystal meth users and seized “3,806 kilogrammes of the deadly substance”.

“Individuals caught dealing or using this

deadly substance will receive harsh punishment and strict administrative procedures,” the police official warned.

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

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

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

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

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

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

TIES



Minister of Interior Mazen Faraya on Monday receives UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix

Interior minister, UN official discuss cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Interior Mazen Faraya on Monday received UN Undersecretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix at his office.

The talks addressed the regional situation, avenues for bolstering cooperation with the United Nations in areas of mutual interest, and the role of the Public Security Directorate in peacekeeping operations, reinforcing the Kingdom's international standing and the high calibre of its police personnel, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Both sides underlined the necessity of intensifying efforts to combat crime and drug trafficking, alongside sustained coordination and the exchange of expertise in related domains.



News coverage showing file footage of a North Korean missile launch is seen on a screen at Seoul Station in Seoul on Monday

North Korea fires ‘several ballistic missiles’ into Sea of Japan

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea on Monday fired multiple ballistic missiles off its east coast, Seoul’s military said, after weeks of mounting friction over a landmine explosion along their heavily fortified border.

Since the blast that injured three South Korean soldiers in the Seoul-controlled area of the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), both countries have touted the test-firing of upgraded missile technology.

“Our military detected around 09:20 [00:20 GMT] several ballistic missiles launched from the Pyongyang area towards the East Sea,” the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said Monday, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

“Our military has stepped up surveillance and vigilance against possible additional launches,” it added in its statement.

Japan’s defence ministry separately confirmed the launch of at least one suspected ballistic missile.

Some of the North Korean missiles detected flew more than 900 kilometres, the JCS said, while Seoul and longtime ally the United States were now conducting an analysis of their exact specifications.

South Korea’s National Security Office convened an emergency security meeting following the launch to review the country’s military readiness.

A joint Seoul-UN investigation last week

concluded that North Korea had planted the landmines that exploded in the DMZ over a year ago, something Pyongyang has angrily denied.

Kim Yo-jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, has blasted South Korean demands for an apology as “despicable” while separately rejecting an offer of medical equipment from Seoul.

‘Our military detected around 09:20 [00:20 GMT] several ballistic missiles launched from the Pyongyang area towards the East Sea’

On October 3, Pyongyang test-fired an intermediate-range ballistic missile that Kim Yo-jong said employed unspecified artificial intelligence technology and was “capable of changing its flight orbit at a low altitude”.

Seoul said days later that it had successfully tested a domestically produced hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV), a weapon carried into the upper atmosphere by rocket boosters or ballistic missiles be-

fore gliding towards its targets.

The presidential Blue House said the HGV offered “a new deterrence capability capable of striking key targets within the Korean Peninsula’s operational environment”.

On Thursday, Kim Yo Jong said Seoul must offer “utmost respect” if it hoped to mend ties with the North.

“If they [South Korea] truly wish to restore relations between the DPRK and South Korea, they should be mindful of the other side’s feelings in every word and deed, and first demonstrate the utmost respect, consideration and sincerity,” she said on Thursday, using her country’s official acronym.

The ratcheting tensions come as US President Donald Trump’s recent overtures to Pyongyang have raised concerns that Seoul — an ally of Washington — could be sidelined in potential nuclear talks involving the North.

In October, North Korea launched several short-range ballistic missiles a day after Trump suggested he might meet with Kim Jong-un this year.

Seoul and Pyongyang remain technically at war as the Korean conflict ended in 1953 with a truce rather than a peace treaty.

The DMZ is one of the world’s most heavily fortified frontiers, and landmine incidents have previously heightened tensions between the two countries.

France schools protest rumbles on as Macron urges ‘respect’

PARIS, France (AFP) — Some 130 French high schools remained closed on Monday, the education ministry said, with authorities hoping the protest movement that has rocked the nation in recent weeks would ease ahead of half-term holidays.

In an incident seemingly unrelated to the protests, in the southern town of Aubagne near Marseille police arrested a 14-year-old on Monday after a middle school headmaster and a teacher were shot with a hunting rifle.

Students have blocked entrances to hundreds of lycées — high schools for children aged 15 to 18 — in recent weeks, with squads of riot police deployed and occasionally violent clashes resulting.

Piling dumpsters, bins and barriers in front of their schools, or carrying often humorous signs at protests, pupils have complained about absent teachers, overloaded timetables, overcrowded classes and dilapidated classrooms, among other grievances.

Pupils were blocking the entrances of schools in Paris, the southern cities of Marseille and Toulouse and the west-



Protesters and high-school students take part in a demonstration outside the Lycee Toulouse Lautrec, in Toulouse on Monday

ern city of Rennes, AFP reporters saw.

A few dozen protested outside a high school in central Marseille.

“We stand in solidarity with the high schools that are worse off. We need real measures and proper dialogue, not repression,” said 16-year-old pupil Emeline.

Student rallies have been planned for Tuesday, ahead of wider public demonstrations against the rising cost of living that are expected on Saturday.

President Emmanuel Macron told reporters during a visit to the Paris Motor Show that the pupils’ grievances would take time to address and urged restraint from protesters.

“These are issues that deserve time, consultation, discussion, and respect,” Macron said.

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Fewer schools closed

The education ministry said 96.5 per cent of France’s 3,700 lycées remained open on Monday.

“The number of school closures is falling,” with 96.5 per cent of schools open on Monday, yet “the violence is intensifying”, it said.

The ministry said some eight members of teaching staff had been injured on Monday morning, mostly in the Paris region and cities

Global poverty index rises for first time since its 2010 creation

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — A UN global poverty index has risen for the first time since its creation in 2010, bringing the number of people affected to 1.2 billion, the United Nations Development Programme reported Monday.

In the 2026 edition of their annual report, the UNDP and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative research center counted 51.5 million more people living in “acute” poverty compared to the previous year.

UNDP Administrator Alexander De Croo said the increase in poverty should be a “wake-up call for the world”.

“Behind these figures are 1.2 billion people facing hardships that reinforce one another: Hunger, missed school-



Protesters and high-school students take part in a demonstration outside the Lycee Toulouse Lautrec, in Toulouse on Monday

ing and a lack of clean water or electricity. This is unacceptable,” he said in a press release.

More than half of those in acute poverty were children.

However, UNDP said a major factor in the re-

corded increase was population growth, and new data was only available for 13 of the 108 developing countries covered by the report.

While the total number of people in poverty has increased, the report pro-

vides a mixed picture. Some 33 nations have halved the percentage of their people living in poverty as defined by the index in the past 15 years.

Those included six countries in sub-Saharan

Africa. Among the countries that have made the most rapid progress were countries in Asia — China and Vietnam — UNDP said.

As in the previous year, the report found that the majority of the poorest people live in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, specifically the Indian subcontinent, the most densely populated region on Earth.

In Angola and Zambia, the poverty rate has also declined, but population growth has more than offset this decrease, resulting in an increase in the number of people living in poverty.

The poverty index used in the report includes indicators such as the lack of adequate housing, sanitation, electricity, cooking fuel, food and education.

CLIMATE

El Nino sets temperature record in key Pacific zone — EU monitor

PARIS, France (AFP) — An intensifying El Nino broke a temperature record in a key zone of the Pacific in September, the EU’s climate monitor said on Monday, in another sign the weather pattern is gaining exceptional strength.

Global forecasters have been warning for months that this El Nino would likely become the strongest ever observed and the latest record has tumbled even before the episode’s expected peak later this year.

The warming phase of a natural climate cycle, El Nino raises sea temperatures in the tropical Pacific, triggering changes in weather that can increase the risk of drought and flooding, and exacerbate man-made global warming.

The Copernicus Climate Change Service said sea surface temperatures in a tell-tale El Nino monitoring region of the Pacific, known as Nino3.4, had reached an “all-time high” of 29.70°C last month.

This exceeded the peak temperatures



People walk on the beach in Navarre, Florida, on Friday. Hurricane Isaias rapidly intensified into a major category 3 storm, triggering mandatory evacuations as it barreled towards the US Gulf Coast where it was projected to make landfall in the evening

of previously strong El Nino events of 1982/1983, 1997/1998 and 2015/2016, “underscoring the exceptional intensity of the current El Nino”, the EU monitor said.

But in a statement to AFP, Copernicus said it “cannot yet say that the current El Nino is the strongest ever recorded”.

As climate change raises ocean temperatures, it can make recent El Nino events appear stronger than past ones, complicating historical

comparisons.

Copernicus said it had adopted a new index, which accounts for the warming of tropical oceans, that suggested the current event is not yet stronger than past ones.

But the values observed in September “point to an already exceptionally strong El Nino, especially given that the event has not yet reached its peak”, Copernicus told AFP.

Not all forecasters use the same scale to interpret El Nino.

On Friday, Japan’s

weather agency said that El Nino conditions had reached their “strongest intensity on record”, with temperatures in the phenomenon’s monitoring area 4°C above normal.

As El Nino gathers strength, global average sea surface temperatures hit a record 21.05°C for September, topping the previous high of 20.92°C for the same month in 2023, according to Copernicus.

Overall, the world experienced its second hottest September on record, with surface air temperatures averaging 16.27°C, the EU service said.

September was 1.63°C hotter than the pre-industrial average, a period defined as 1850-1900.

Nations agreed at the 2015 UN climate talks in Paris to keep global warming “well below” 2°C above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C, in order to limit the effects of climate change.

But the United Nations declared in September that the long-term 1.5°C target

would be missed in a matter of years.

“We are in a new run of months above 1.5°C, and with a strong El Nino still intensifying it is likely to last into 2027,” Copernicus director Carlo Buontempo said in a statement.

“Crossing the Paris Agreement’s long-term limit is only a matter of time. How far we overshoot, and for how long, is still up to us,” he said.

Scientists say it is crucial to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels to limit the period of “overshoot” above 1.5°C and bring temperatures back down as quickly as possible.

Experts have warned that this El Nino would likely push global temperatures to a new record in 2027.

El Nino warms surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, bringing worldwide changes in winds, pressure and rainfall patterns.

It typically takes place every two to seven years and lasts around nine to 12 months.

Ethiopian gov’t forces enter key Tigray town near Eritrea border

ADDIS ABABA (AFP) — Ethiopian federal forces and their allies entered a key northern Tigrayan town near the Eritrean border without a fight, residents told AFP on Monday, after it was abandoned by rebels.

Clashes erupted in late September between the federal army and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), who made gains in neighbouring Afar region but are increasingly being pushed back towards the Eritrean border.

Ethiopia accuses Eritrea of backing the TPLF forces and the fighting has reignited fears of a fresh war between the two neighbouring countries.

The Tigrayan regional capital Mekelle fell to government forces earlier this month after the TPLF evacuated.

Residents of the northwestern town of Adwa, among the region’s most populated and roughly 40 kilometres from Eritrea’s border, said federal forces and an allied militia entered the town on Sunday.

“All the shops in the town are closed. Last night, many government



Members of the Ethiopian Federal Police (EFP) patrol aboard a pickup truck as they resume operations after federal forces pushed back the rebel Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in Mekelle on Friday

on Saturday.

Another resident, who also asked for anonymity, confirmed the TPLF’s departure but said that, while government forces were in the town, they had not reached the centre.

“The roads are deserted. People are very afraid of theft,” he said.

Conflict monitor ACLED said that drone strikes targeted a hotel in Adwa on October 4, wounding between “five and nine people, including security personnel”, who were taken to hospital.

ACLED told AFP some sources indicated that TPLF chairman Debre-

TPLF vice president AmanuelAssefa said he “did not wish to comment”.

Flights to Mekelle, suspended when clashes broke out, resumed on Sunday and telecommunications services have also been restored.

Addis Ababa and Asmara — who fought a 1998-2000 border war — traded diplomatic barbs last week, each accusing the other of starting a war.

Ethiopia alleges its neighbour backs the rebels, and a foreign security source told AFP last week that between 5,000-8,000 Eritrean soldiers are present in Tigray.

French presidential hopeful Glucksmann says ‘battle begins’ to revive divided left

PARIS (AFP) — Raphael Glucksmann declared on Monday that the “battle begins” as he launched a bid to unite France’s fragmented left ahead of next year’s presidential election, hours after he was flour-bombed by a protester.

Glucksmann, a 46-year-old EU lawmaker, was on Sunday elected the centre-left candidate for the April-May election, securing a commanding first-round victory that surprised even many within his own camp.

The leader of the small centre-left Place Publique party now faces the challenge of uniting the divided mainstream left.

The French left has been shut out of the presidential second round ever since Fran-



Candidate in the Socialist (PS) and centre-left Place Publique (PP) parties primary Raphael Glucksmann delivers a speech after the announcement of the result for the first round of voting in the primary organized by the Socialist Party, Place Publique (PP), and the Republican and Socialist Left, ahead of France’s 2027 presidential election, in Paris on Sunday

cois Hollande won in 2012.

“At last, the battle begins,” Glucksmann told broadcaster Radio

France on Monday.

“Finally, we’re banishing the spirit of defeat from our hearts. I’ve had enough of this left

that doesn’t believe in victory.”

Glucksmann said his “entire life has prepared me for this historic moment”.

He is currently polling in the low teens, well behind the frontrunner, far-right candidate Marine Le Pen.

He also trails centre-right contender Edouard Philippe, who served as prime minister under President Emmanuel Macron, and hard-left veteran Jean-Luc Melenchon, whose France Unbowed (LFI) party boycotted the primary. Glucksmann has ruled out any alliance with LFI.

Le Pen has benefited from one of the most fractured political landscapes in modern French history, with a multitude of candidates vying for support and

traditional political forces weaker than ever.

On Sunday night, Glucksmann was pelted with flour as he left a Paris bar where he had been celebrating his victory.

The lawmaker said he was “ready to face the violence and brutality of this campaign” and appeared to blame Melenchon’s party for the flour-bombing episode.

“At every event we organise, at every demonstration we attend, there are LFI activists who harass, insult, throw flour at, or threaten people,” he said.

“Jean-Luc Melenchon must formally condemn the fact that his supporters are carrying out these attacks,” he added.

Macron’s Socialist predecessor, Hollande, who is believed to be

eyeing another presidential run, did not take part in the primary.

Glucksmann said Hollande “warmly congratulated” him.

“I want him to be part of our team,” he added.

“Given the seriousness of the situation, I cannot imagine that someone who has been president of France would devote themselves to anything other than the national interest.”

Besides being a staunch European who abhors the far right, Glucksmann is a strong supporter of Ukraine in its fight against the Russian invasion.

He is the son of philosopher Andre Glucksmann. His grandfather, Ruben Glucksmann, was born in what is now western Ukraine and served as a Soviet spy under Stalin.

UK PM Burnham says ‘clear’ Russia meddled in Brexit vote

LONDON (AFP) — British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said on Monday it was “clear” Russia had interfered in the UK’s bitter 2016 Brexit referendum, renewing claims of meddling by Moscow.

Burnham said he inquired about Russian involvement in the divisive ballot, in which Britons voted by a narrow margin to leave the European Union, when he became prime minister in July.

“I asked the question coming to Downing Street: ‘Was there interference in the 2016 referendum from Russia?’ And I’ve had the clear answer that yes, there was,” Burnham told the Rest is Politics podcast broadcast on Monday.

A UK parliamentary committee said in 2020 it could not confirm Russian meddling in

the Brexit vote but criticised the Conservatives in power at the time for failing to probe possible interference.

Junior foreign minister Stephen Doughty alleged to LBC radio on Monday that Russia “attempted” to interfere in the vote but had “not succeeded”.

Burnham also said German Chancellor Friedrich Merz had told him that Germany’s far-right opposition party AfD, “is clearly linked to Russia — funded, I believe”.

“There is certainly misinformation, disinformation that is emanating from Russia into German politics,” said Burnham.

He said Britain should “help voters in Germany and France understand that some of this politics is instigated via our enemies”.

Yemen’s Houthis tighten siege of key city — military sources to AFP

TAEZ, Yemen (AFP) — Houthis fighters have tightened their siege of the Yemeni city of Taiz, where fighting has killed more than 60 people in the past 24 hours, military sources from both sides told AFP on Monday.

The Houthis have blocked all exits and carried out several attacks overnight, said a military source loyal to the internationally recognised, Saudi-backed government that holds the city.

The violence killed 22 members of the pro-



This screen grab taken from video footage released by Ansarullah Media Centre on Saturday shows what they say is a drone targeting Yemeni government forces in Yemen’s southwestern Taiz governorate

government forces, the source said.

The Houthis lost at least 40 fighters, according to military sources from the Iran-backed movement, who said they were sending reinforcements.

The Houthis were keeping up their fight in Taiz governorate despite coming under Saudi airstrikes, the sources said.

On Sunday, the health ministry warned of a “humanitarian catastrophe” in the city, with medicine, medical equipment and fuel “on the verge of running out”.

Taiz city is inland from the Red Sea coast and the Bab Al Mandab strait, where the Houthis captured swathes of territory in a rapid offensive last month.



Lars Klingbeil, co-leader of Germany’s Social Democratic (SPD) party, German Finance Minister and Vice Chancellor walks away after giving a press statement next to a statue of former Chancellor Willy Brandt at the party’s headquarters in Berlin on Monday, after Baerbel Bas announced to step back from her role as the party’s co-leader and Labour Minister

Minister’s resignation rocks Germany’s coalition

BERLIN (AFP) — German Chancellor Friedrich Merz’s government faced new turbulence on Monday when a key minister from its junior coalition partner, the SPD, unexpectedly quit and criticised “attacks” from the chancellor’s party.

Baerbel Bas, labour minister and co-leader of the centre-left SPD, cited personal reasons for her resignation, saying she needed time to grieve following the death of her daughter-in-law.

But she also took aim at Merz’s conservative CDU.

“I must unfortunately note that the public attacks against me — regrettably including those from within the ranks of our coalition partner — have continued to intensify during this difficult time for me personally,” she said.

The resignation comes amid turmoil for the government, which is grappling with a sluggish economy and low poll ratings.

The far-right AfD has also soundly beaten the CDU in two recent state polls, including in the region of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania where Merz’s party scored its worst ever result.

Welt TV on Monday, after Bas quit.

The departure risks complicating pension reform, one of the coalition’s main priorities.

Bas’s ministry is preparing a draft bill after a government commission recommended people work longer to cope with the fact that the population is aging.

Bas is giving up her posts as both a minister and co-leader of the SPD.

She will be replaced as labour minister by Alexander Schweitzer, one of the SPD’s vice chairs, party sources told AFP.

She intends to retain her seat as an MP for Duisburg, a city at the heart of the former Ruhr mining region in northern Germany.

Merz said on X he respected Bas’s decision, adding: “I thank her for her commitment.

“As a father and a grandfather, I can only imagine how heavily this loss weighs. I wish her and her family a lot of strength.”

King holds talks with Malaysia monarch in Kuala Lumpur

Continued from page 1

The King also highlighted Jordan and Malaysia’s shared position on the centrality of the Palestinian cause, and on the two-state solution as the only way to resolve the conflict.

His Majesty remarked on the situation in Syria and Lebanon, stating that their sovereignty and security must be respected, the state-

ment said.

The King called on the international community to take action to halt Israel’s dangerous trajectory in the region, in order to prevent the conflict from escalating further, emphasising the need to respect the sovereignty of states and the security of their peoples.

For his part, Sultan Ibrahim highlighted the significance of His

Majesty’s visit, noting the rich heritage of the Royal families of Malaysia and Jordan, the close ties between them, and their role in preserving Islamic heritage.

Sultan Ibrahim also emphasised the depth of relations between the two countries, highlighting areas in which they could strengthen their cooperation, particularly in the military

sphere.

The King bestowed on Sultan Ibrahim the Order of Al Hussein Bin Ali, in recognition of the distinguished relations between the two countries and their peoples.

Sultan Ibrahim presented the Darjah Utama Seri Mahkota Negara (The Most Exalted Order of the Crown of the Realm) to His Majesty, in recognition of the King’s efforts to

strengthen relations between the two friendly nations.

An official welcoming ceremony was held for His Majesty upon arrival at the Istana Negara.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh, and Jordan’s Ambassador to Malaysia Ismail Maaytah attended the talks.

Jordan condemns Houthi attacks on Saudi airports

Continued from page 1

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs denounced the attacks on the two air-

ports, as well as on civilians and civilian and economic sites in Saudi Arabia, describing them as a flagrant violation of international law and an

assault on the kingdom’s sovereignty, security and stability.

The ministry reaffirmed Jordan’s full solidarity with Saudi Arabia,

stressing its support for all measures taken by the Kingdom to safeguard its security, stability, resources, and the safety of its citizens and

residents.

It also extended its sincere condolences to the family of the deceased and wished those injured a speedy recovery.

Coalition says ballistic missile fired at Riyadh intercepted

Continued from page 1

A fresh Houthi strike hit Riyadh’s international airport on Sunday, a day after an attack claimed by the Yemeni group killed at least a dozen people and forced authorities to suspend operations there.

The Iran-backed group on Sunday claimed multiple attacks over the last 24 hours, including on the airport, and threatened to keep targeting the kingdom’s transit hubs, calling them “a theatre of operations for our forces”, according to AFP.

Hours later, the Saudi-led coalition fighting

the group reported that a projectile struck King Khalid International Airport, sparking a fire. Air defences also intercepted a missile nearby, it added.

The fresh attack on the airport killed one person — a Pakistani resident — and wounded 11 others, Saudi Arabia’s civil aviation authority said.

The wounded “were immediately transferred to several hospitals to receive the necessary medical care”, the authority said on X.

“The attack also caused property damage, the extent of which is currently being assessed.”

Authorities have ex-

tended the closure of the airport by 24 hours until 21:00 GMT on Monday, the tracking site Flight-radar24 said on X.

Saudi air defences intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile launched by Yemen’s Houthi militia towards Khamis Mushayt in the Kingdom’s south-west early on Monday, while Civil Defence issued an emergency alert in nearby Abha before later declaring that the danger had passed, Arab News reported.

Al Maliki announced the interception in a post on X.

The Saudi General Directorate of Civil Defence

also issued an alert on X warning of a potential attack on Abha. It later announced that the threat had passed, according to the Riyadh-based news outlet.

The latest developments have renewed attention on south-western Saudi Arabia following a series of attacks targeting the Kingdom’s major airports in Riyadh and Dammam.

Khamis Mushayt and Abha, both in the mountainous Asir region, have been targeted by Houthi missile and drone attacks in recent weeks. The group has also targeted Jazan and Najran, two regions bordering

Yemen, where the Iran-aligned movement is based.

The latest interception comes amid an intensifying campaign targeting Saudi Arabia’s civilian infrastructure, including airports in the Kingdom’s central and eastern regions, Arab News reported.

Sunday’s incident was the fourth reported strike on Riyadh airport in five days. Coalition forces also said air defences had intercepted and destroyed a cruise missile near the airport.

The attack followed a missile strike on the capital’s airport on Saturday that killed 13 people and

injured more than 300, making it the deadliest attack in Saudi Arabia in more than a decade.

Footage broadcast by Saudi state television showed scores of religious pilgrims queuing at a gate as they prepared to travel to Islam’s two holiest sites. A bright orange flash sent people fleeing in panic, while parts of the roof appeared to cave in.

The airport was closed following the attack.

Houthis claim wider attacks

The Houthis claimed responsibility for Saturday’s attack and said they had also targeted King

Fahd International Airport in Dammam, in the Eastern Province, as well as two facilities belonging to Saudi oil giant Aramco.

Saudi Arabia’s civil aviation authority confirmed that Dammam airport had been targeted on Sunday evening, saying damage assessments and safety inspections were under way.

The attacks have heightened concerns over the security of Saudi Arabia’s aviation infrastructure and the risk of further escalation as the Kingdom continues to support Yemen’s internationally recognised government in its conflict with the Houthis.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan discussed regional tensions and efforts to de-escalate the conflict with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi on Sunday, according to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

Araqchi said Tehran was ready to help facilitate dialogue between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, SPA reported.

The diplomatic contacts followed expressions of solidarity with Saudi Arabia from Bahrain, the United Kingdom, Jordan and the European Union after the attacks on Riyadh airport.

THE JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975

Published by the Jordan Press Foundation

Chairman of the Board

Samih Maaitah

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Editor-in-Chief

Raed Omari

Editorial and advertising offices
Jordan Press Foundation

The Jordan Times is published daily except Saturdays

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P.O. Box 6710
Amman 11118

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National Library registration number:
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Advertising facsimile: **5696183**
Circulation Department:
5600800 ext. 2383

Turning JD20 billion into sustainable economic growth

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

The Social Security Investment Fund’s assets surpassing the JD20 billion threshold marks a significant milestone for the fund. Its assets reached approximately JD20.1 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2026, compared with around JD18.7 billion at the end of 2025, representing growth of approximately 8 per cent. However, the economic significance of these figures lies not merely in the size of the Fund’s assets, but also in the quality of its returns, the efficiency of its risk management, and its ability to protect and grow the savings of contributors and retirees over the long term.

The fund recorded comprehensive income of approximately JD1.37 billion during the first nine months of the year. This included net income of JD879 million, an increase of approximately JD492.4 million in the valuation of its strategic equity portfolio and a transferred insurance surplus of around JD110 million. It is important to distinguish between these components. Investment income reflects the ability of assets to generate revenue, while gains from equity valuation represent increases in market value that may fluctuate in the future. The insurance surplus, meanwhile, constitutes an additional financial inflow rather than an investment return.

This distinction is particularly important when assessing the quality and sustainability of the fund’s performance. The true measure of success is not simply the growth of assets, but the ability to generate an appropriate return relative to the amount invested, the level of risk, inflation and future obligations. Accordingly, the 8.6 per cent increase in income compared with the same period last year is a positive indicator, although it should also be assessed against appropriate benchmarks for each investment portfolio.

Bonds account for 56.2 per cent of the fund’s assets, compared with 21.3 per cent in equities and 11.5 per cent in money market instruments. The remaining share is distributed across real estate, loans, tourism investments and other assets. This allocation provides an important foundation for generating regular income and maintaining liquidity.

The fund’s evolving investment strategy is evident in its expansion into several major strategic projects. In the transport sector, the fund holds a 7 per cent stake in the Aqaba, Shidiya and Ma’an railway project company. The project aims to improve the transportation of phosphate and potash, enhance supply chain efficiency, and reduce transport costs, thereby strengthening the competitiveness of Jordanian exports.

In the water sector, the fund holds a 15 per cent stake in the National Water Carrier project through the National Water Investments Company, while completing the procedures for its direct participation in financing the project through a consortium of Jordanian commercial banks. In the energy sector, the fund holds a 20 per cent equity stake in the company established for the combined-cycle power generation project, IPP7, supporting the expansion of electricity generation capacity.

In mining and manufacturing, the fund is completing the procedures to acquire a 20 per cent stake in a project company established to build a plant producing purified phosphoric acid, in partnership with the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Arab Potash Company. This investment supports the development of domestic manufacturing and increases the value added generated from Jordan’s natural resources.

From an economic perspective, these projects reflect a shift towards long-term investments linked to vital sectors. Their potential benefits extend beyond direct financial returns to include higher productivity, lower operating costs and increased employment opportunities. However, their success depends on adherence to feasibility studies, cost control, effective management of financing and implementation risks, and the achievement of returns commensurate with the risks involved.

The strategic importance of a project does not eliminate the need for rigorous financial scrutiny. On the contrary, it makes independent evaluation, sound governance, and transparent disclosure even more important. Protecting the savings of contributors and retirees must remain the fund’s primary responsibility.

Reaching JD20 billion in assets is an important achievement, but it is not the ultimate measure of success. True success lies in transforming this wealth into sustainable returns and productive investments that improve the efficiency of Jordan’s economy without exposing the rights of future generations to uncalculated risks.

The Social Security Investment Fund’s assets are not merely a large investment portfolio. They represent an economic and social trust that demands the highest standards of governance, transparency and investment discipline.

When ‘democracy’ becomes an obstacle to peace



WASHINGTON WATCH

James J. Zogby

While proponents assert that the spread of democracy is essential to peace, two allied democracies, the United States and Israel, are engaged in wars being exacerbated by their electoral politics..

From the beginning, in the American mind, democracy has been seen as more than just a form of governance. Both Liberals and Conservatives idealise and elevate the idea of democracy into the equivalent of religious doctrine, making exaggerated claims about the benefits that accrue to democratic societies. We have been told that democratically elected governments are: More tolerant, more respectful of minority rights, more accountable for their actions and less likely to start wars. Several US administrations have made the spread of democracy a foreign policy priority, arguing that it’s essential for world peace.

While the US and some allies flaunt these attributes, boasting that their democracies place them above societies with other forms of governance, in reality, their claims of purity and adherence to ideals don’t hold up to scrutiny.

The glaring contradiction between the values espoused and the actual behaviours have been clear since our founding. After all, the American experiment with democracy was built on slave labour and the genocide of Native Americans. More recently, when the George W. Bush administration launched its campaign to promote democracies worldwide, it did so while blundering through a devastating “war of choice” in Iraq and torturing prisoners in “black sites” they’d suborned other countries to make available to US interrogators.

Much the same can be said of Israel, who we and they tout as “our closest ally” and the “only democracy in the Middle East”. Like us, Israel claims that its democracy elevates it above its neighbours, making its actions more just and its behaviour more moral. And like true believers in any ideology, when it’s pointed out that reality doesn’t agree with their claims, they deny it and attack those pointing out the disconnect.

The fact that democracies hold elections provides yet another reason to boast of superiority. However, elections are often used by contesting parties to justify bad behaviours and exacerbate social tensions.

President Trump, for example, needs a way out of his no-win war with Iran, especially its negative impact on the economy and consumers, and the insecurity and instability it is fomenting in the Gulf. But he is loath to look weak by ending the war without some claim of victory. That might have a negative impact on his legacy and his hold over his base voters — and he needs them to turn out in November to deliver a GOP victory. And so, he continues his bellicose language and threats toward Iran.

Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu may have assumed that he could manage a governing coalition of parties even more extreme than his own. But his partners have used their positions to aggravate tensions with Palestinians in both Israel and the occupied lands. When Netanyahu felt compelled to sign onto ceasefires that were supposed to stop the bombing in Gaza and Lebanon, his agreement proved hollow. In the face of criticism from opponents and even coalition partners that he was compromising Isra-

el’s security by not “finishing the job”, he has continued to violate both ceasefires with impunity, while doing nothing to rein in the widespread terrorist violence in the West Bank being fomented by his allies. He cannot afford to lose any of his governing partners, or he’ll be out of office.

In both instances, instead of implementing the values claimed to be the attributes of democracy, these elections do the opposite. Political discourse becomes coarser and more divisive, social tensions are aggravated and warlike behaviours are promoted.

Especially troubling is that while reporters and commentators know that the words and actions of Netanyahu and Trump are directed more at appeasing their constituents than at the realities in Gaza, Lebanon, or Iran, too often they treat the political posturing as if it were real. For example, instead of honestly assessing Netanyahu’s claims that villages in south Lebanon need to be demolished to fend off his opponents’ accusations of weakness, they report it as if leveling whole Lebanese villages is needed for Israel’s security.

Sadly, this is what has become of our democracies.

The writer is president of the Washington-based Arab American Institute

How AI monetises your portrait?

By Hamza Alakalik

In our fast-paced digital world, users eagerly ride wave after wave of smart filters and viral apps. The recent 1980s and 1990s photo trend that swept across social media platforms is a prime example. Millions of users uploaded high-resolution personal portraits to receive — within second digital albums steeped in nostalgia. Yet, behind this innocent entertainment lies a massive economic and technical engine: Every portrait uploaded for free becomes an invaluable data mine. This reality raises urgent questions about the true motives of tech companies and whether these trends are harmless fun or carefully engineered digital traps.

Big tech corporations and emerging artificial intelligence startups leverage these photo filters in ways that extend far beyond driving temporary user engagement. Economically, these applications serve as highly efficient, low-cost data acquisition tools. Instead of spending millions of dollars licensing training datasets, tech firms receive a global supply of top-tier images directly from consenting users. This massive influx enables companies to train generative AI mod-

els and refine facial recognition algorithms. These systems are subsequently sold as software services to security, financial and commercial institutions for substantial sums, while simultaneously inflating startup valuations in venture capital markets.

Technically, the true value resides in data diversity and sheer scale. Deep learning models require vast datasets encompassing varied facial structures, ages, ethnicities and lighting conditions to achieve high accuracy and prevent algorithmic bias. Image trends allow companies to harvest precise biometric data for free, often bypassing strict regulatory scrutiny. These photos feed Generative Adversarial Networks, enabling them to generate hyper-realistic synthetic human images, advance deepfake capabilities and improve cross-age identity matching tools.

To illustrate the scale of this impact, consider FaceApp, which sparked global controversy by collecting millions of facial biometric maps on external servers under ambiguous terms of service that waived user image rights. Similarly, Lensa AI generated over \$29.3 million in December 2022 alone at the height of the magic avatar trend. Driven

by subscription fees to offset operational costs, the app processed over 22 million user uploads while retaining rights to utilise that data for future model training. These examples illustrate how users transition from consumers to the primary product and financial supporters of AI labs.

Yet the core question remains: are these trends truly innocent? Analytical evidence demonstrates they are not accidental phenomena, but rather precision-engineered social engineering campaigns that capitalise on human psychology, vanity, and nostalgia. The hidden dangers centre on biometric privacy violations — data that, unlike passwords, cannot be reset if compromised. Furthermore, regulatory compliance and data governance remain critical vulnerabilities. Most apps rely on oppressive terms of service that grant perpetual, non-exclusive rights to exploit, share or monetise user images with third parties, creating severe risks of deepfake impersonation and financial fraud.

In response to this unchecked biometric flow, international and regional framework regulations impose strict safeguards. The European Union’s General Data

Protection Regulation classifies personal photos and biometric data as special categories, strictly prohibiting processing without explicit, informed consent and guaranteeing the right to erasure. Regionally, Arab Personal Data Protection Laws — such as those in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt — require clear legal grounds and transparent consent for biometric processing, alongside stringent restrictions on cross-border data transfers.

Ultimately, navigating digital transformation safely requires prioritising robust data governance and cybersecurity awareness. Users must approach free trends with cautious skepticism and carefully review privacy policies before granting camera or media library access. Concurrently, regulatory authorities must rigorously enforce data protection frameworks and mandate immediate biometric data deletion post-processing. Safeguarding digital identity is no longer optional; it is an imperative necessity in the age of generative artificial intelligence.

The writer is a legal consultant in digital transformation governance, AI ethics, personal data protection and FinTech regulation.

Will the Bardella scandal sink Le Pen?

By Zaki Laidi

PARIS — Jordan Bardella is little known outside of France. But if Marine Le Pen, the leader of the far-right National Rally (RN), wins next spring’s presidential election — as appears increasingly likely — he will, she says, be her prime minister. The question is whether the growing scandal around Bardella will cause Le Pen to change her mind and, if not, how that will affect her chances of victory.

The scandal kicked off on September 28, when the French investigative news outlet Mediapart reported that an examination of written exchanges from 2013 had revealed barefaced antisemitic remarks by Bardella. “The Jew has to dominate other people, crush them and rob them,” read one message. On October 1, after Bardella denied the veracity of the claims, Mediapart published the full set of exchanges.

Mediapart’s source, whom one can assume is close to the RN, downloaded the messages from Meta. Bardella still calls the texts “crude forgeries”, but there can be little doubt that the messages were sent from an account in his name.

This puts Le Pen in a tough spot. She has spent the last decade attempting to differentiate herself from her father and the RN’s founder, Jean-Marie Le Pen, who was convicted numerous times of antisemitism and inciting racial violence. (Antisemitism is illegal in France.) She wants to turn the RN into a respectable populist party

— one that will act as a bulwark against immigration, especially from Muslim countries. In fact, she is seeking to portray the RN as a protector of French Jews from Islamist threats and a strong supporter of Israel.

Bardella’s crude antisemitism undermines this effort, invoking a history the RN wants to forget. While this might not have much impact on the first round of the election, because the RN’s far-right base is solid, it could affect Le Pen’s prospects in the second-round run-off, when she will need to attract votes from the traditional right. The 31-year-old Bardella — ostensibly too young to have political skeletons in his closet — was supposed to play a key role in broadening her appeal.

Distancing the RN from its antisemitic, Vichyist past is part of the equation, but so is reassuring voters about the party’s plans for the economy. Whereas Le Pen’s statism — reflected in her opposition to raising the retirement age — casts doubt on her commitment to markets, Bardella has been much more open to market-based solutions. So, while Le Pen is responsible for winning working-class support, Bardella is supposed to attract centre-right voters. Both will be essential to victory, particularly if the RN’s second-round opponent is the far-left Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

Bardella seems to be banking on the current scandal being forgotten by the time France goes to the polls. If the remarks were entirely false, as he claims, Bardella would

simply ask Meta to export his own Facebook account records, which only he is in a position to request. (He has not done so.) Moreover, he would presumably demand a swift court appearance to confront Mediapart. Instead, he has opted to lodge a defamation suit, which will not go to trial for at least two years. One can only assume that he wants the word “defamation” to make headlines, but not the lawsuit’s outcome, hoping that once Le Pen is elected president and he is named prime minister, attention will be elsewhere.

If there are no new revelations, this scenario is plausible: The scandal dies down quickly, Le Pen reconfirms Bardella as head of the RN at the end of this month, and the presidential campaign is launched in earnest. This outcome would not displease Mélenchon. If Le Pen is his second-round opponent, he will be able to respond to any antisemitism accusations levelled against him by pointing to the Bardella affair.

Only the centre-right candidate Édouard Philippe, who served as prime minister under President Emmanuel Macron in 2017–20, stands to benefit from a decline in support for Le Pen, as he would be able to capture part of her base. So far, however, the public does not seem overly troubled by the Bardella revelations.

That could change if new revelations emerge. Bardella certainly has adversaries within the RN, reportedly including Le Pen’s niece Marion Maréchal. The RN’s “number twos” have often ended up being pushed

aside to make way for a member of the Le Pen family. So it is perhaps not surprising that Maréchal thinks Bardella is an interloper. Nonetheless, ensuring Le Pen’s victory remains the top priority, so Bardella’s party foes must show restraint.

There is a third possibility: The revelations about Bardella act as a slow poison. The damage from the scandal appears to be contained for now, but doubts may nonetheless set in. This could lead Le Pen to sideline Bardella quietly and choose a different prime minister. Le Pen would need to manage such a change tactfully, but it would expand her options for the second round.

French presidential campaigns are rarely predictable. In 2002, few imagined that Jean-Marie Le Pen would reach the second round against Jacques Chirac. In 2017, the election was upended by the revelation that former Prime Minister François Fillon — then the presidential frontrunner — had created a phantom job for his wife. Today, it is impossible to predict how the Bardella affair will affect the outcome of the next presidential election. But even if it does not damage Le Pen’s chances, it makes Bardella highly unlikely to be chosen as prime minister.

Zaki Laidi, professor of International Politics at Sciences Po, is a former special adviser to the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union (2020-24) and the author of the forthcoming “A Post-Liberal World”.



The E-commerce Programme for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises has been launched under a regional initiative aimed at strengthening digital trade and e-commerce across the Middle East and North Africa

E-commerce programme launched to boost SMEs' digital export

AMMAN (JT) — The E-commerce Programme for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) has been launched under a regional initiative aimed at strengthening digital trade and e-commerce across the Middle East and North Africa.

The Programme is in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the German Agency for International Cooperation and the European Union, the programme is funded by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The initiative aims to expand export opportunities and create jobs by improving the policy environment and helping businesses develop the skills needed to access international markets.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply Dana Zoubi said Jordan had strong potential to expand digital and professional services exports, supported by a skilled workforce

and specialised information technology companies, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

She said during a dialogue session titled "Digital Trade and Professional Services: Strengthening Jordan's Position as a Regional Hub", that priorities included improving regulatory frameworks, strengthening government policies, addressing shipping costs and enhancing logistical support.

Executive Director of the Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation, Ghaleb Hijazi, said changing global trade patterns offered opportunities to diversify exports and create specialised jobs, particularly in information technology, consulting, engineering and creative industries.

He stressed that businesses needed effective digital marketing strategies, access to international customers and sustainable business models, adding that support programmes should focus on building capabilities beyond pro-

viding grants.

Head of a Committee at the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, Wael Shokerat, said Jordan had made progress in telecommunications infrastructure, electronic payments, digital services and legislation supporting innovation under the Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV).

He highlighted the need for flexible regulatory frameworks, stronger exporter capabilities and practical solutions to logistical, financial and regulatory barriers to cross-border trade.

The ITC Programme Manager for the Middle East and North Africa, Sawzan Ben Ramadan, said expanding service exports required identifying the obstacles businesses face in international markets and addressing gaps in existing support programmes.

She also stressed the importance of better coordination between public institutions and the private sector, noting that businesses needed greater awareness of available government support.

Green Climate Fund partnership to boost climate finance for municipalities

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Local Administration, Walid Masri, outlined these priorities during a meeting with a GCF delegation to discuss cooperation opportunities and the development of climate projects at the national and regional levels.

The meeting aims to strengthen cooperation with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and expand access to climate finance to help municipalities and local communities address climate change.

The delegation included Thomas Eriksson, GCF Director for Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East, and Regional Director, Amgad Elmahdi, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Walid Masri, who also chairs the board of the Cities and Villages Development Bank, said cooperation should extend beyond project financing to include institutional capacity-building, programme development and stronger partnerships among national



Green Climate Fund delegation meets to discuss cooperation opportunities and the development of climate projects at the national and regional levels

institutions, international organisations and the private sector.

He highlighted the importance of securing GCF accreditation for the Cities and Villages Development Bank to improve Jordan's direct access to international climate finance and enable the bank to direct funding towards government institutions and municipalities.

Discussions covered zero-waste initiatives, the circular economy, recycling, more efficient resource management, water harvesting and sustainable local development projects.

Masri also stressed the need to strengthen early warning systems and improve preparedness for climate-related risks to minimise losses and protect communities, infrastructure and essential services.

He highlighted a regional dialogue scheduled for December as an opportunity to exchange expertise, identify common priorities and build partnerships among stakeholders involved in climate finance and sustainable development.

Masri said stronger cooperation would help attract climate finance, deliver sustainable projects and reinforce Jordan's role in advancing climate action across the region, Petra, reported.

Inflation rate reaches 2.26% till September — DoS



Jordan's industrial production rises by 0.62 per cent in the first eight months of 2026 compared with the same period last year, according to the Department of Statistics

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's inflation rate averaged 2.26 per cent in the first nine months of 2026 compared with the same period last year, according to the Department of Statistics (DoS).

The Consumer Price Index rose by 2.73 per cent year-on-year in September, while increasing by 0.16 per cent compared with August, the DoS cited in its monthly report released on Monday.

Rent was the largest contributor to inflation during the first nine months of the year, adding 0.72 percentage points to the overall rate, followed by transport at 0.66 percentage points, oils and fats at 0.27 percentage points, and tobacco and cigarettes at 0.17 percentage points.

In September, transport contributed the most to annual inflation, adding 1.13 percentage points, followed by rent

at 0.76 percentage points and oils and fats at 0.29 percentage points.

Price declines in several food categories partly offset inflationary pressures during the month.

Vegetables and dried and canned legumes reduced the inflation rate by 0.21 percentage points, followed by fruits and nuts at 0.18 percentage points and dairy products and eggs at 0.04 percentage points.

Oil rises as Trump comments roil energy markets

LONDON (AFP) — Benchmark oil prices topped \$105 a barrel on Monday after Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi movement launched strikes on Saudi Arabia, heightening worries about tight global supplies heading into the northern hemisphere winter.

Doubts surrounding US President Donald Trump's claim of an "energy ceasefire" between Ukraine and Russia, following his surprise announcement of a deal to buy diesel from Moscow, further unsettled investors.

After a mixed showing for stocks across Asia, Europe's main indices rose in mid-day deals, with the car sector lifted by the European Union's announcement that it will cap imports of hybrid vehicles from China in a bid to avert a trade war.

The dollar was higher against most currencies ahead of key US inflation data this week, which will be pored over for clues on when the Federal Reserve will likely raise interest rates once more in

a bid to tame elevated inflation.

"Oil remains well bid above \$100 after strikes on Saudi Arabia's Riyadh airport over the weekend, whilst efforts to secure a Russia-Ukraine energy truce were muddy," said Neil Wilson, a strategist at Saxo UK.

Meanwhile, "a US deal to purchase some Russian diesel is a drop in the ocean", he added.

Russia on Monday refused to say whether an agreement had been reached with Ukraine to halt attacks on en-

ergy infrastructure, a day after Trump sowed confusion with his unilateral announcement that an "energy ceasefire" had been reached.

Trump also called for Ukraine to "get a new leader" after Volodymyr Zelensky slammed Washington's easing of Russian diesel sanctions, as Trump grapples with high fuel prices weeks before midterm elections in the world's biggest economy.

Saudi Arabia's energy minister acknowledged, meanwhile, that the kingdom's infrastruc-

ture and resilience had been tested following a wave of deadly attacks by Yemen's Houthis.

The weekend strikes marked a sharp escalation in the Yemen war, where Saudi Arabia has long supported the internationally recognised government.

Also in view this week for markets is the start of the corporate earnings season, with US banking giants JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs and Bank of America due to report.

Tech giants will follow later in October and November, with



Benchmark oil prices topped \$105 a barrel Monday after Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi movement launched strikes on Saudi Arabia

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates warned on Sunday that unregulated artificial intelligence posed a growing threat and predicted an escalation in AI-powered cyber attacks in the coming year.

He said that while the risk of AI "getting out of control" remained years away, the immediate concern was "bad people" using existing systems without safeguards.

"The front that we'll probably see most dramatically in the next year is cyber attacks," Gates told ABC News.

Industrial production records 0.62% growth through August — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's industrial production rose by 0.62 per cent in the first eight months of 2026 compared with the same period last year, according to the Department of Statistics (DoS).

The Industrial Production Quantity Index (IPQI) increased by 3.34 per cent year-on-year in August and 3.16 per cent compared with July, the DoS cited in its monthly report released on Monday.

The cumulative index reached 89.45 points by the end of August, up from 88.90 points in the same period of 2025.

The monthly index



Jordan's industrial production rises by 0.62 per cent in the first eight months of 2026 according to the Department of Statistics

stood at 95.88 points in August, compared with 92.78 points a year earlier and 92.94 points in July.

Manufacturing, which accounts for 88.7 per

cent of the index, grew by 0.71 per cent in the first eight months of the year.

Electricity production, representing 5.9 per cent of the index, rose by 2.14

per cent, while mining and quarrying, which account for 5.4 per cent, declined by 2.21 per cent.

On an annual basis, manufacturing output increased by 3.72 per cent in August, while electricity production rose by 3.54 per cent. While Mining and quarrying fell by 2.97 per cent compared with August 2025.

Month-on-month, all three sectors recorded growth. Electricity production rose by 9.74 per cent, mining and quarrying rebounded by 9.22 per cent, and manufacturing output increased by 2.38 per cent.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Monday amounted to JD11.1 million spread over 4.8 million shares that traded through 4,511 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.37 per cent, closing at 4167.62 points.

Out of 112 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 49 companies rose while the share price of another 28 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Arab International for Education and Investment by 6.99 per cent, Arab Phoenix Holdings by 5 per cent, Nobar Trading Investment Company by 5 per cent, Afaq Holding for Investment and Real Estate Development Company Plc. by 4.76 per cent, and Shira Real Estate Development and Investments by 4.76 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 4.64 per cent, Al-Amal Holding by 4.49 per cent, Jordan Decapolis Properties by 4.35 per cent, Jordan Masaken for Land and Industrial Development Projects by 4.05 per cent, and Ibn Al-Haytham Hospital Company by 4.05 per cent.

بورصة عمان
Amman Stock Exchange

THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↑ 4167.62 0.37% October 12, 2026

Live Data

Historical Data

Click and drag in the plot area to zoom in

DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market

OTC Market

Trading Value (JD)

11,075,873

Trading volume

4,813,819

No. of Transactions

4,511

No. of Securities

112

Losers: 28

Gainers: 49

Unchanged: 35

TENNIS

Alcaraz exits Shanghai Masters in straight-sets loss

SHANGHAI (AFP) — Carlos Alcaraz fell to Zizou Bergs in straight sets at the Shanghai Masters on Monday, interrupting the former world number one's in-form return to the professional Tour after being sidelined for months by injury. The 39th-ranked Belgian beat the second-seeded Spanish star 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) in the third round to land the tournament's biggest upset yet, and will play either Tommy Paul or Valentin Vacherot next. "It's a little disbelief and not feeling too much," Bergs, 27, said afterwards. "You're just really in the moment, being focused on the points you have to play," he added. "I'll be very happy." Alcaraz started with more quality until Bergs broke the Spaniard's serve to go up 3-2 in the first set. The 23-year-old grabbed back that break in the next game but was uncharacteristically off-target, sending a mess of shots into the net. He double-faulted to hand Bergs a critical break point in the 11th game, and lost the first set when a volley went short.

CRICKET

Bangladesh close on victory over Afghanistan after Litton century

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Bangladesh pushed towards a big win over Afghanistan in the one-off Test after a brilliant century from Litton Das helped them set a target of 479 runs in Abu Dhabi on Monday. Litton scored 102, his seventh Test hundred, as Bangladesh declared on 372-7 on day four at Sheikh Zayed Stadium, having achieved a 106-run lead in the first innings. Afghanistan finished the day on 132-3 with Sediquallah Atal and Hashmatullah Shahidi batting on 35 and 19 respectively. Bangladesh will expect their pacers and spinners to seal victory on a wearing pitch on Tuesday. Bangladesh seamer Ebadot Hossain gave his team an early breakthrough when he dismissed Abdul Malik for two in just the second over of the innings. Hasan Mahmud, who took a hat-trick during his five-wicket haul in the first innings, had Shahidullah Kamal caught behind for 19 before Rahmat Shah and Atal added 82 for the third wicket. Shah, who made a century in Afghanistan's first innings of 240, compiled a battling 51, hitting five fours and a six, before Hossain had him caught behind by Litton. It was Litton's eighth dismissal behind the stumps in the match, setting a new record for Bangladesh.



Manchester United striker Bryan Mbeumo (right) wins a duel with Tottenham Hotspur defender Marcos Senesi at Old Trafford

African players in Europe: Mbeumo ends goal drought as United draw

PARIS, France (AFP) — Cameroon star Bryan Mbeumo ended a four-game goal drought by scoring for Manchester United in a 1-1 Premier League draw with 10-man Tottenham Hotspur at the weekend.

AFP Sport highlights African headline-makers in the major European leagues:

ENGLAND
BRYAN MBEUMO
(Manchester Utd)

Mbeumo put United ahead at old Trafford with a clinical finish from an acute angle inside the Tottenham penalty area in the 73rd minute. But the 27-year-old's third goal this season did not prove the winner as Dominic Solanke equalised in stoppage-time to leave United with only one league win this term from six matches.

NICOLAS JACKSON
(Aston Villa)

The Senegal striker scored for the third time in his last five games, but it was not enough to inspire a win over Brentford at Villa Park. Jackson equalised for Villa in the 12th minute with a close-range finish after Emiliano Buendia's effort deflected into his path. Unsettled by a host of close-season sales, Unai Emery's men sit 15th with just one victory in six top-flight matches.

SPAIN
YAN DIOMANDE
(Real Madrid)

Real Madrid's record signing, 140 million-euro (\$157 million) Ivory Coast winger Diomande, grabbed his first goal for the club to earn a 1-0 win over Villarreal. The winger started on the left flank instead of Vinicius Junior and drilled home from just inside the area with a

crisp finish to start making good on his transfer fee after a slow start to life in the Spanish capital.

GERMANY
ISMAEL SAIBARI (Bayern Munich)

Morocco playmaker Saibari helped spare Bayern's blushes as the champions laboured to a surprise 2-2 draw at Augsburg. Saibari equalised for Bayern early in the second half after a howler from Manuel Neuer had allowed Augsburg to go ahead after just eight seconds. It was the 25-year-old's second goal in two games. He scored his first for Bayern in the 7-0 rout of Union Berlin just before the international break.

TEREM MOFFI
(Hamburg)

Nigeria striker Moffi scored his first Bundesliga goal as Hamburg came from behind to win 3-2 at Hoffenheim. The 27-year-old, who joined Hamburg from Nice in August, made an immediate impact after coming on as a substitute in the 76th minute. He headed in Hamburg's equaliser just seven minutes later. Miro Muheim grabbed the stoppage-time winner.

FRANCE
MAMA BALDE (Brest)

Balde scored for Guinea-Bissau in a stunning 3-0 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying victory over Nigeria this month. The 30-year-old winger was among the goals again at the weekend, this time in Ligue 1, claiming the fourth as Brest routed Angers 5-1 in a mid-table clash. He completed a brilliant solo effort with a superb strike from inside the box.

Faisali and Hussein resume Asian matches

By Aline Bannayan

AMMAN — Jordan's League champs Hussein play Oman's Al Seeb in an away encounter on Tuesday in their second Group D match in the 2026-27 AFC Champions League Two — the second-tier club competition organised by the Asian Football Confederation.

Hussein kicked off their matches with a disappointing 2-2 draw with East Bengal that kept them third in the group after Iraq's Shorta beat Al Seeb 1-0.

League runner-up Faisali on the other hand face Saudi Arabia's Nahda in Wednesday's Group C match. Faisali are bottom of the group after their opening 4-3 defeat to Qatar's Al Rayyan while Nahda drew Saudi Arabia's Taawoun 1-1.

Fans had higher expectations after many stars on both lineups represented Jordan at the World Cup. However, players in the league have had inconsistent performances with Faisali in the lead after three wins and a draw while Hussein are now 6th in the table after a sole win, two draws and one defeat.

UAE's Al Wahda leads Group A which includes Uzbekistan's Nasaf, Kuwait's SC, and Bahrain's Khaldiya, while Turkmenistan's Arkadag lead Group B which includes Bahrain's Muharraq, UAE's Jazira and Iran's Gol Gohar Sirjan. After group-stage matches end December 3, the top two teams from each group will move to the Round of 16. The knockout stage begins on February 9, 2027, with the final scheduled for May 15, 2027.



Americans Hall and Woodford win economics Nobel for stabilisation models

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Americans Robert Hall and Michael Woodford were awarded the Nobel economics prize Monday for their work on how monetary and fiscal policy can better stabilise disruptive economic fluctuations.

The two were honoured for developing new models for managing recessions and other crises that fail to respond to traditional tools.

"On the basis of these models, well-timed fiscal and monetary policy measures can reduce the economy's peaks and troughs," the jury said.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences explained in a statement that ever since John Maynard Keynes formulated his economic theories almost a century ago, "stabilisation" policies had long let officials boost economic growth when needed.

But during the oil shocks in the 1970s, the Keynesian models that governed when and how action should be taken no longer worked.

Hall, 83, a professor at Stanford University, and Woodford, a professor at Columbia University born in 1955, separately began to explore new models.

"Rather than basing the models on statistical links between macroeco-



nom variables, such as inflation, production and consumption, they chose to build them on a microeconomic foundation," the jury said.

Hall and Woodford's models include an "understanding for how the total mass of individual households and businesses affect the economy through their actions", it said.

A fundamental aspect of this is the understanding that households are forward-looking when making decisions about spending or saving.

'Tremendous honour'

This means the way governments and central

banks communicate their policies can influence people's views of the future when making such decisions.

"The laureates' work has provided us with a stable theoretical foundation for the models that are now used by central banks and governments around the world," John Hassler, chair of the prize-awarding committee, said in a statement.

"It's a surprise, but I'm feeling very good about it," Woodford told reporters via phone during the announcement of the prize, saying he felt "elated" over receiving "a tremendous honour".

A concrete example of

his work implemented in practice was when the 2008 financial crisis created a situation where "traditional tools of monetary policy were not really adequate to deal with the problem of restoring economic activity", he said, noting that interest rates were already lowered to zero in many countries.

One of the new approaches employed by central banks was to start making "more explicit statements" on where they believed guiding interest rates were headed in the future, which continues to this day.

"I think it did contribute to better stabilisation. It didn't magically solve the

problem, but I think it was an important contribution," Woodford said.

'Public understanding'

While his theories have had a large impact on policymakers, he said they had not been "motivated by a specific political agenda".

"It was an attempt to improve the foundations for discussion of economic policy and therefore to contribute both to the management of the economy, but also to contribute to public understanding," Woodford said.

The decision to honour work on monetary policy comes as the US Federal Reserve, the United States central bank — which recently hiked rates to combat inflation — faces unprecedented pressure from President Donald Trump to cut interest rates.

The economics prize is the only Nobel not among the original five created in the will of Swedish scientist Alfred Nobel, who died in 1896.

It was instead created through a donation from the Swedish central bank in 1968, but like the Nobels in chemistry and physics, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences chooses the winner using the same selection process.



AI in sports betting is metamorphosing the game of chance into a symphony of data-driven precision

Startups are betting on AI to predict the future

NEW YORK (AFP) — Several startups are betting that they can leverage artificial intelligence (AI) to make better forecasts than even the most specialised experts when it comes to topics as varied as stock market movements, the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, or how a Shakira song will perform on music charts.

By 2030, "We're going to feel that what we were doing for our decision-making was complete Stone Age thinking," Dan Schwarz, cofounder of the forecasting company FutureSearch, said.

AI forecasting models are already on par with the best "superforecasters" — gifted individuals whose estimates are markedly superior to those of ordinary people — thanks to troves of data acquired from both public and private sources.

In early September, two AI models made history when they took the top spots in the Metaculus Cup, a competition among prediction champions, both human and nonhuman.

FutureSearch's in-house human wizard, superforecaster Tom Liptay, is aware that "he's not secure in his job" in the medium term, Schwarz said. "He knows that these things are going to surpass him."

Theo Summer, who cofounded Preseen with Veniamin Veselovsky, used AI tools to turn \$35 into \$1.9 million in just seven months on the American prediction-making site Kalshi.

The idea is not to guarantee a result but to define a probability of occurrence, with the ability to cross-check assumptions related to several interconnected events — for example, changes in the price of oil and the war in the Middle East.

"Right now, the quickest buyers are normally the hedge funds, just because if they think they can make money off something, they can move pretty fast," Veselovsky said.