



New governors at the Ministry of Interior are sworn in before His Majesty King Abdullah at Al Husseinia Palace on Tuesday

King swears in new governors

AMMAN (JT) — New governors at the Ministry of Interior were sworn in before His Majesty King Abdullah at Al Husseinia Palace on Tuesday. Ahmad Al Faouri, Osama Al Hashim, Ahmad Zuhair and Muhieddin Al Adwan were sworn in as governors of Jerash, Mafraq, Zarqa and Madaba, respectively, according to a Royal Court statement.

Royal Hashemite Court Chief Yousef Issawi and Interior Minister Mazen Faraya attended the swearing-in.

Jordan ranks third globally in sound money, 50th in economic freedom

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan ranked third globally in the sound money category and 50th overall in the Economic Freedom of the World 2026 Annual Report, published by Canada's Fraser Institute in collaboration with the Cato Institute.

The Kingdom scored 7.38 out of 10 overall, placing 50th among 165 countries and territories assessed in the report, which is based on economic data from 2024, according to the report, cited by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Jordan scored 9.59 out of 10 in the sound money category, ranking third behind Switzerland and Finland. The category assesses price stability, inflation volatility, money supply growth and the freedom to maintain bank accounts in foreign currencies.

In the regulation category, Jordan ranked 25th globally, scoring 7.38 out of 10. The assessment covers credit markets, labour regulations and business licensing procedures.

The Kingdom scored



8.13 out of 10 in international trade freedom, ranking 52nd worldwide. The category evaluates trade barriers, trade facilitation and restrictions on the movement of capital.

The Economic Freedom of the World index assesses countries across five areas: Government size, legal systems and property rights, sound money, freedom to trade internationally and regulation.

The report provides a comparative assessment of economic freedom based on indicators covering monetary stability, the regulatory environment and openness to international trade.

Gov't designates Baptism Site as nature reserve ahead of 2030 anniversary

- Decision reflects site's exceptional environmental value, its global religious, cultural, historical significance
- Proposed reserve will encompass the Baptism Site and its surrounding natural areas
- Designation is expected to help preserve natural environment surrounding World Heritage Site, support scientific research, long-term environmental monitoring

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet has approved the inclusion of the Baptism Site in the national network of protected areas and its designation as a nature reserve covering 10 square kilometres, as preparations begin for the 2,000th anniversary of the baptism of Jesus Christ in 2030.

The government will proceed with the necessary procedures in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The decision reflects the site's exceptional environmental value, as well as its global religious, cultural and historical significance (See full story on page 2).

Studies and field surveys have identified the area as an integrated ecosystem and one of the



The Baptism Site on the east bank of the Jordan River

most important natural habitats on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, the statement said.

"Its diverse landscapes, which include riverine and wetland environments, valleys and plains, provide food, shelter, breeding grounds and resting places for a wide range of wildlife," it said.

The Baptism Site is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, highlighting its significance as a landmark of both natural and cultural heritage.

The proposed reserve will encompass the Baptism Site and its surrounding natural areas, including Wadi Kharar, Wadi Gharabah and habitats connected to

the Jordan River.

Beyond protecting local flora and fauna, the designation is expected to help preserve the natural environment surrounding the World Heritage Site and support scientific research and long-term environmental monitoring.

Plans also include establishing a biodiversity database to strengthen conservation efforts, according to the statement.

The initiative is further expected to promote sustainable ecotourism, cultural tourism and religious tourism, while creating economic opportunities for local communities through tourism-related services and research activities.

The proposed reserve is intended to balance environmental conservation with existing land uses, allowing the area's natural and cultural heritage to be protected while supporting sustainable development.

On May 18, His Majesty King Abdullah inaugurated the Baptism Site International Orthodox University on Monday, at the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ (Bethany Beyond the Jordan).

His Majesty directed the government to adopt and support the initiative to commemorate two thousand years since the baptism of Jesus Christ in 2030, which was put forward by the Council of Church Leaders in Jordan.

During a meeting with Christian religious leaders from Jordan and Palestine at the Baptism Site, the King highlighted the need for the

2030 initiative's action plan to focus on improving infrastructure and operational services at the Baptism Site, according to a Royal Court statement.

During a visit to Baptism Site in September, HRH Crown Prince Hussein issued directives to improve the site to enhance the experience of Christian pilgrims and visitors.

The Crown Prince emphasised the need to carefully plan for the 2030 millennium celebrations, in a manner that reflects the profound history of the site and reaffirms Jordan's status as a premier global destination for Christian pilgrimage.

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan has recently chaired the first meeting of a national committee

overseeing preparations for Jordan's 2030 commemoration of the second millennium of the Baptism of Jesus Christ.

The committee will develop policies and guidelines, coordinate international outreach and national procedures, and plan events to mark the anniversary.

Hassan stressed the need to begin preparations immediately in line with the directives of His Majesty King Abdullah and in support of an initiative proposed by the Council of Church Leaders in Jordan.

He called for a comprehensive plan and clear timetable, saying the commemoration reflects Jordan's historical and religious standing and its role as a global destination for Christian pilgrimage.

Israeli settlers rapidly reshape occupied West Bank amid surge in violence

By Najla M. Shahwan

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — Israeli settlers have intensified a campaign of violence and intimidation across the occupied West Bank, attacking and displacing Palestinian communities while establishing dozens of government-backed settlements and illegal outposts that are rapidly reshaping the territory.

Having expanded their presence far beyond what appeared possible just a few years ago, extremist settlers are racing to consolidate their gains

ahead of this month's Israeli election. Their supporters, including senior government officials, are seeking to secure votes and advance a settlement agenda aimed at creating facts on the ground that would be difficult to reverse, even if a less supportive government takes power.

The transformation of the occupied West Bank has accelerated over the past three years, amid Israel's war in Gaza and the US-Israeli war against Iran, which have diverted international attention from Palestinians losing

Jordanian mobile bakeries in Gaza produce over 69 million loaves since January 2025

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordanian mobile bakeries in Gaza have produced over 69 million loaves of bread between January 2025 and October 14th, 2026, according to the World Central Kitchen (WCK), which oversees the bakeries' operations in Gaza.

Upon Royal directives, Jordan dispatched three Jordanian mobile bakeries to Gaza as part of a Jordanian initiative to ensure continuous supply of bread and meet the daily needs of residents across Gaza.



The production capacity of each mobile bakery is around 70,000 loaves of bread daily.



The first mobile bakery started operations in January 2025, while two more mobile bakeries were dispatched

in December 2025. The bakeries are operated by WCK, which is an international non-governmental organization

that provides meals and food assistance to populations affected by conflicts and disasters worldwide.

Continued on page 5

Jordan gears up for 2,000th anniversary of Jesus Christ’s Baptism in 2030

- King leads preparations for 2030 commemoration of 2,000 years since baptism of Jesus Christ
- Crown Prince Hussein calls for improvements to Baptism Site to enhance experience of visitors, strengthen Jordan’s position as leading global pilgrimage destination
- Prime minister oversees national preparations, directing committees to meet clear deadlines, promote Jordan’s religious tourism sector
- \$120 million development project launched on adjacent land, featuring museum, integrated pilgrims’ village, upgraded infrastructure, green corridor
- Plans target one million pilgrims, visitors annually



His Majesty King Abdullah inaugurates the Baptism Site International Orthodox University on May 18, at the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ (Bethany Beyond the Jordan)

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah has placed the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ at the centre of Jordan’s preparations for the 2,000th anniversary of the baptism in 2030, directing the government to support a landmark initiative aimed at strengthening the Kingdom’s position as a leading global destination for Christian pilgrimage while preserving the site’s religious, historical and environmental significance.

The King’s directives set the course for a national effort bringing together the Royal Court, government institutions, Christian church leaders and international partners to prepare the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ (Bethany Beyond the Jordan), known locally as Al Maghtas, for the millennium commemoration.

In May, King Abdullah inaugurated the Baptism Site International Orthodox University (BIO Uni) and directed the government to adopt and support the initiative proposed by the Council of Church Leaders in Jordan to mark two millennia since the baptism of Jesus Christ.

During a meeting with Christian religious leaders from Jordan and Palestine at the site, attended by HRH Prince Ghazi, the King’s chief adviser for religious and cultural affairs and personal envoy, His Majesty stressed that preparations must prioritise infrastructure, operational services, and the overall experience of pilgrims and visitors.

The King said that he would closely follow progress on the initiative’s action plan, reaffirming his commitment to safeguarding holy sites, preserving the Christian presence in the region and highlighting Jordan’s role as home to some of the world’s most significant Christian religious landmarks.

Church leaders welcomed the Royal initiative, describing the 2030 anniversary as an opportunity to renew the values of unity, harmony, dialogue and mutual understanding.

They also underscored the importance of coordinating preparations with churches and Christian institutions worldwide to encourage pilgrims to visit the place where the baptism took place.

The initiative envisages a comprehensive programme encompassing religious and cultural events, the development of Christian pilgrimage tourism products, in-



From HRH Crown Prince Hussein's visit to the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ (Bethany Beyond the Jordan) on September 14, accompanied by HRH Prince Ghazi, chairman of the board of trustees of the Baptism Site Commission



An aerial view of the Baptism Site showing the Church of the Baptism of the Lord

ternational promotion and the upgrading of facilities at the Baptism Site, and other religious and tourist destinations across Jordan.

Building on the Royal directives, HRH Crown Prince Hussein visited the Baptism Site on September 14, issuing instructions to improve its facilities and services to enhance the experience of Christian pilgrims and other visitors.

Accompanied by Prince Ghazi, chairman of the Baptism Site Commission’s board of trustees, the Crown Prince was briefed on the services provided at the site and the preparations under way for the 2030 commemoration.

He stressed the importance of careful planning for the anniversary, ensuring that the celebrations reflect the site’s profound religious and historical significance, and reinforce Jordan’s position as a premier international destination for Christian pilgrimage.

The Crown Prince also called for wider promotion of the site in coordination with the Ministry

of Tourism and Antiquities, the Jordan Tourism Board and other relevant partners, highlighting the importance of a co-ordinated national effort to attract visitors from across the world.

Prince Hussein’s visit underscored the importance attached to translating the Royal vision into practical improvements that will allow the site to accommodate growing numbers of pilgrims while preserving its sanctity and distinctive character.

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan has stepped up government coordination, stressing that preparations must reflect Jordan’s religious and historical significance and its standing as a destination for Christian pilgrimage.

Chairing the second meeting of the High-Level National Committee tasked with preparing for the anniversary on September 17, Hassan directed executive committees to work according to clear agendas and timetables.

He also called for the work to be institution-

alised within the Prime Ministry, with regular progress reports to ensure projects remain on schedule.

Referring to the Crown Prince’s visit, Hassan stressed the need to complete planned projects on time, and provide the infrastructure and services required to improve the visitor experience.

He called for an intensified international marketing campaign over the following three years to promote Jordan as a destination for Christian pilgrimage and religious tourism, particularly in North and South America, Europe and Asia.

Proposals include establishing a mobile museum to attract international visitors, developing partnerships with churches and travel agencies worldwide, and preparing a detailed calendar of events for 2027-2030.

\$120 million project to transform surrounding area

A central component of the preparations is a major development

project estimated at \$120 million on approximately 1,400 dunums of land adjacent to the Baptism Site, on the eastern bank of the River Jordan.

Four agreements have been signed covering the construction of a museum dedicated to the baptism of Jesus Christ, the development of an integrated pilgrims’ village, infrastructure improvements and the creation of a green corridor.

The project aims to attract one million pilgrims and visitors annually, transforming the surrounding area into a major Christian pilgrimage destination while protecting the sanctity and historical identity of Al Maghtas, which was inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List in 2015.

The planned museum, allocated \$50 million, will cover approximately 5,500 square metres and present the site’s religious, archaeological and historical significance through artefacts, specialised exhibitions and modern

display technologies.

A further \$40 million has been allocated to a pilgrims’ village designed to offer a more comprehensive visitor experience. Plans include a reception centre, hotel, restaurants, shops, a church, public squares and other service facilities, allowing pilgrims to extend their stays rather than limiting visits to short excursions.

Infrastructure works, budgeted at \$27 million, will cover roads, water networks, desalination and irrigation systems, electricity, solar power and lighting. An additional \$3 million will support the development of a green corridor.

According to the announced timetable, preliminary work on the museum and pilgrims’ village is due to begin by the end of the first quarter of 2027, with major construction scheduled to start in the second quarter. Both projects are expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2029, ahead of the anniversary celebrations.

The inauguration of BIO Uni adds an educational and cultural dimension to the wider initiative, positioning the Baptism Site as a centre not only for pilgrimage but also for learning, scholarship and dialogue.

Bishara Dahabra, the official in charge of founding affairs at the university, described its opening as a landmark for the church, Jordan and the world, saying that the Kingdom offers an example of peace, fraternity and coexistence at a time of conflict and sectarian division.

The university’s first phase will offer four disciplines: Theology, philosophy, law and languages. Three master’s programmes are also planned, covering canon law, ascetic life, and Orthodox-Christian and Islamic dialogue.

Its educational approach will include a “Great Books” programme requiring students to read at least 50 books during their studies, alongside spiritual retreats lasting from three to 40 days.

The university intends to welcome students from Jordan and abroad, with the aim of developing graduates who can serve as ambassadors for education, dialogue and mutual understanding.

As development plans advance, environmental conservation has emerged as a key consideration in ensuring that growth around the Baptism Site does not undermine its natural heritage.

The Baptism Site Adjacent Lands Development Foundation, working with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), has convened experts and representatives of national and international institutions to review an environmental study and technical framework for restoring the surrounding area.

The study documented native plant species, wildlife habitats and resident and migratory birds, while identifying challenges including the spread of invasive plant species that threaten ecological balance.

Proposed measures include removing invasive plants and restoring native vegetation, establishing ecological corridors to connect habitats, developing nature trails, managing lighting and noise, improving visitor movement and introducing long-term environmental monitoring.

The consultative process brought together representatives of UNESCO, ministries, United Nations agencies, conservation organisations, the Baptism Site Commission and other national and international partners.

Tharwat Masalha, chairman of the board of trustees of the Baptism Site Adjacent Lands Development Foundation, said that environmental protection was central to the vision for the area, given its close connection to the site’s religious, historical and human significance.

RSCN Chair Batool Ajlouni described the partnership as an expression of the society’s national role in conserving biodiversity, particularly in areas of exceptional cultural and environmental value.

The partners agreed to refine the environmental framework in light of the technical recommendations before its adoption as part of the project’s implementation phases.



The Aqaba Development Corporation says that total cargo handling across Aqaba's ports increased by 12 per cent in the first nine months of 2026

Aqaba ports' cargo handling rises 12% in first nine months of 2026 — ADC

AMMAN (JT) — Total cargo handling across Aqaba's ports increased by 12 per cent in the first nine months of 2026, reaching 19.68 million tonnes compared with the same period last year, according to data released by the Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC).

Container handling rose by 6.58 per cent to 786,950 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), while land and air passenger movements increased by 2 per cent to 422,487, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

Cargo handling at the New Aqaba Port increased by 64 per cent to 5.85 million tonnes, driven by a 45 per cent increase in grain handling to 3.62 million tonnes and a 60 per cent rise in coal handling to 518,911 tonnes.

Sugar handling at the port reached 810,402 tonnes, compared with none in the same period last year, while general cargo handling increased by 20 per cent to 894,875 tonnes.

Vehicle handling rose by 38 per cent to 94,530 units, while livestock handling fell by 38 per cent to 543,593 heads.

At the Aqaba Container Terminal, imported container throughput increased by 12 per cent to 415,382 TEUs. Imported transit containers

surged by 391 per cent to 115,762 TEUs, up from 23,593 TEUs in the same period last year.

Non-transit imported containers declined by 14 per cent to 299,620 TEUs, while exported containers increased by 1 per cent to 371,568 TEUs.

Gas handling at the jetty surged by 176 per cent to 54,151 tonnes, while potassium hydroxide handling rose by 77 per cent to 21,363 tonnes...

Cargo handling at the Oil Jetty rose by 39 per cent to 3.43 million tonnes. Crude oil handling increased by 14 per cent to 1.22 million tonnes, diesel by 7 per cent to 799,561 tonnes and gasoline by 50 per cent to 805,468 tonnes.

Gas handling at the jetty surged by 176 per cent to 54,151 tonnes, while potassium hydroxide handling rose by 77 per cent to 21,363 tonnes and phenol handling increased by 309 per

cent to 147,036 tonnes.

Chemical handling increased by 943 per cent to 46,511 tonnes, while mineral oils surged by 1,047 per cent to 32,715 tonnes. Vegetable oil handling reached 302,700 tonnes.

Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) handling increased by 11 per cent to 413,181 tonnes, while liquefied natural gas (LNG) handling fell by 31 per cent to 464,837 tonnes.

Dry bulk handling rose by 8 per cent to 11.91 million tonnes, despite declines in several commodities. Phosphate handling fell by 19.1 per cent to 4.06 million tonnes, sulphur by 31 per cent to 528,033 tonnes and fertilisers by 11 per cent to 527,421 tonnes.

Liquid bulk handling increased by 16 per cent to 5.43 million tonnes, while general cargo handling grew by 25 per cent to 2.03 million tonnes.

Ship traffic at Aqaba's ports rose by 7 per cent to 2,060 vessels. The number of vessels carrying liquid bulk increased by 22 per cent to 196, while dry bulk vessels rose by 1 per cent to 278.

Container ship calls fell by 2 per cent to 438, while cruise ship calls dropped by 80 per cent to two. The port also received 95 vehicle-carrying vessels during the first nine months of 2026.

Cabinet approves 10-year strategy to develop local drone industry

New regulations simplify electricity licensing, exempt green hydrogen projects from licensing fees endorsed

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet, during a session chaired by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Tuesday, approved the National Strategy for the Localisation of the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Industry for 2026-2036.

The strategy aims to establish a domestic industry and position Jordan as a regional hub for drone technology development, manufacturing, systems integration and testing, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The strategy also seeks to increase local value addition, develop engineering expertise and create opportunities for Jordanian talent and businesses.

It treats the UAV industry as an integrated ecosystem encompassing software, electronics, communications, navigation, control and power systems, airframes and testing, rather than focusing solely on manufacturing or assembling imported components.

Potential applications include agriculture, resource management, infrastructure and power line inspections, mining, municipal services, logistics, surveying and emergency response.

The strategy follows an assessment of national capabilities involving many Jordanian companies and 15 universities. It focuses on establishing a domestic manufacturing base, positioning Jordan as a regional centre for integration and testing, developing high-value local capabilities, linking scientific research to industry and stimulating domestic demand.

It also seeks to align education and training with industry requirements through updated engineering curricula, practical training, in-



The Cabinet on Tuesday approved the National Strategy for the Localisation of the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Industry for 2026-2036

dustry-focused graduation projects and stronger partnerships between universities and businesses.

The strategy prioritises software, communications, testing and engineering design, while allowing the use of imported components when local production is not economically viable.

In the energy sector, the Cabinet approved the 2026 Regulations on Conditions for Granting, Renewing or Amending Electricity Licences under the General Electricity Law.

The regulations aim to encourage investment, simplify licensing procedures and establish fair fee structures.

They introduce incentive fees for energy storage activities to strengthen grid stability and support the integration of renewable energy sources.

They also exempt independent transmission and associated generation dedicated

to green hydrogen production from licensing fees.

The Cabinet also approved the 2026 Regulations for Licensing Domestic Cleaning Services Companies, which define requirements for issuing, renewing and revoking Ministry of Labour permits, outline company obligations and establish penalties for violations.

The regulations aim to curb unregulated advertising on social media and protect beneficiaries' rights. Licensed companies may provide Jordanian and non-Jordanian workers under daily, weekly or monthly contracts.

Companies must provide dedicated accommodation and uniforms, submit an annually renewable performance bond, recruit workers through authorised entities in countries covered by agreements with Jordan, provide training, maintain employment contracts and

ensure social security coverage.

Overnight stays are prohibited, and non-Jordanian cleaning workers cannot transfer to other sectors, the statement said.

The Cabinet also approved the Ministry of Health Strategy for 2026-2030 and directed the ministry to begin implementation, with annual reviews to align budget allocations with priority outcomes and performance indicators.

The strategy aligns with Royal directives, the Economic Modernisation Vision, the Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap and the Sustainable Development Goals, the statement said.

It focuses on disease prevention, service quality, spending efficiency, infrastructure development and digital transformation.

Its six priorities cover primary and preventive care, specialised medical services and clinical quality, human

resource development, infrastructure and digital transformation, healthcare coverage and financial sustainability, and institutional governance, including crisis management.

The Cabinet also approved the draft 2026 amended regulations governing federations and referred them to the Legislation and Opinion Bureau.

The amendments aim to improve governance, operational efficiency, administrative decentralisation and digital transformation.

The Cabinet approved draft regulations for universities and intermediate community colleges, as well as a draft administrative structure for the General Iftaa Department, and referred both to the Legislation and Opinion Bureau.

The Cabinet also approved a draft law ratifying the 2026 extradition agreement between Jordan and Morocco and referred it to the Lower House.

Engineering industries strategy targets JD2.5b in exports by 2031

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply has launched the Engineering Industries Sector Strategy for 2026-2029, targeting total sector exports of JD2.5 billion by 2033 and core engineering exports of JD1.043 billion by 2029.

Prepared with support from the Economic Reform Programme and the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, the strategy aims to create 15,000 direct jobs by 2031, increase local value addition and attract investment, Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The sector comprises around 4,800 facilities employing 35,200 workers. In 2024, core engineering exports stood at JD639.2 mil-



The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply launches the Engineering Industries Sector Strategy for 2026-2029

lion, while total sector exports reached JD1.3648 billion.

The strategy also aims to double fixed

capital formation in metal products and electrical equipment by 2029 and ensure that women account for at

least 20 per cent of new jobs.

It seeks to address challenges including high energy costs and

supply chain vulnerabilities, while capitalising on shifts in global supply chains, free trade agreements and demand linked to reconstruction in Syria.

The strategy is built around three pillars covering local value chains, institutional capacity and export market diversification. It includes five initiatives focusing on local content, the Zarqa Engineering Innovation Centre, compliance with green industry requirements, the "Made in Jordan" brand and specialised investment.

Priority subsectors include metal products, electrical equipment and metal furniture, in line with the Economic Modernisation Vision.

Army foils drug smuggling attempt using balloons

AMMAN (JT) — The Eastern Military Region on Tuesday thwarted an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics into the Kingdom using guided balloons, the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) said.

Border guard forces detected the balloons as they attempted to cross into Jordanian territory within the region's area of responsibility.

The forces intercepted and brought down the balloons inside Jordan and seized the narcotics in coordination with relevant military and security agencies and the Anti-Narcotics Department, according to a JAF statement.



The Eastern Military Region on Tuesday thwarts an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics into the Kingdom using guided balloons

The seized materials were handed over to the competent authorities for legal action.

The JAF reaffirmed the readiness and ca-

pability of its border guard units to counter smuggling and infiltration attempts and safeguard the Kingdom's security and stability.

Cassation Court upholds 20-month sentence for man in marijuana cultivation case

By Rana Hussein



AMMAN — The Court of Cassation has upheld a May 2022 State Security Court (SSC) ruling, sentencing a man to 20 months in prison after convicting him of planting marijuana at his house in Aqaba in January 2022.

The court declared the defendant guilty of planting marijuana

and possessing a small quantity of illegal narcotics on Jan. 20.

The SSC sentenced him to one year and eight months in prison and ordered him to pay a JD1,500 fine.

Court documents said the Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) learnt the defendant was planting and possessing illegal narcotics at his home in

Aqaba.

"The AND agents raided his home and found marijuana plants and small quantities of hashish and Crystal meth," court documents said.

The defendant confessed that he planted the marijuana and possessed the illegal narcotics for his personal use, the court papers added.

The defendant contested the SSC's ruling through his lawyer, who argued that "my client had no previous criminal record and had expressed his regret to the court".

The lawyer argued that his client should have "been pardoned by the court because this was his first drug-related case".

Meanwhile, the SSC

prosecution office asked the higher court to uphold the sentence and the fine imposed on the defendant.

The higher court maintained that the SSC had followed the proper procedures in issuing the sentences against the defendant.

"It was clear to the court that the defendant confessed willingly to planting and

possessing the illegal drugs for his personal use," the higher court said.

Therefore, the higher court maintained that the defendant deserves the punishment he received from the SSC.

The Court of Cassation judges were Mohammad Ibrahim, Majid Azab, Hayel Amr, Fawzi Nahar and Ibrahim Abu Shamma.

CONFLICT



Rapid Support Forces' 'technicals' mounted with machine guns and anti-aircraft weapons

Sudan army strike in disputed territory kills 53 — local authorities

KHARTOUM (AFP) — A drone strike by the Sudanese army killed 53 people at a market in an area disputed between Sudan and South Sudan, local authorities said on Tuesday, the latest in a wave of deadly attacks.

Authorities in Abyei district said the strike hit Amiet market on Monday. They accused the army of launching 22 munitions during the attack, which also wounded at least 27 people.

"The casualties comprise vulnerable civilian populations, including women, children, the elderly, local merchants, members of the host Ngok Dinka community, South Sudanese returnees, and Sudanese refugees who had sought sanctuary from the broader regional conflict," the authorities said.

Between Sunday and Monday, strikes across Sudan killed more than 100 people. The country is in the grips of a brutal war between the regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) that began in April 2023.

Abyei district is claimed by both Sudan and South Sudan, which split from its northern neighbour in 2011 following decades of conflict.

Parts of the district are controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), a splinter from the organisation that fought for Juba's independence. The group is itself split in two, with each faction supporting opposite sides in Sudan's war.

The deadliest strike during the recent wave came near a market on Sunday evening in Al Dibab town in the southwestern state of West Kordofan, which is controlled by the RSF.

Residents and medical workers said a drone struck a transport hub where villagers had gathered after a market day to find rides home, killing 80 people.

Ahmed Abakar Wadi, a resident who helped bury victims, told AFP at least 50 bodies were recovered at the scene, including that of his brother.

Another 47 wounded people were taken to the nearby town of Al Mujlad where 30 later died from their injuries, according to a medical source.

"The drone struck once, and then came back 10 minutes later and struck again," Wadi told AFP.

The RSF's self-declared administration, known as Tasis, and the Sudanese rights group Emergency Lawyers accused the army of carrying out Sunday's attack.

More than 1,100 people were killed in drone attacks across Sudan during the first half of this year, according to the United Nations.

Juba's foreign ministry said it had summoned the Sudanese ambassador over the attack, which it condemned "in the strongest terms possible".

It accused the Sudanese army of striking multiple locations within the market, which is used as a transit point for goods to areas controlled by the RSF.

'The drone struck once, and then came back 10 minutes later and struck again'

UK to deploy fighter jets to help protect Saudi from Houthi attacks — govt

LONDON (AFP) — British fighter planes will be deployed to help Saudi Arabia defend itself against increasing attacks from Yemen's Houthi rebels, the UK government announced on Tuesday.

The defence ministry said the deployment formed part of "additional defensive military support" to Riyadh.

"The UK will fly defensive counter air missions to support the protection of Saudi cities and critical national infrastructure against aerial attack, using RAF Typhoon fighter jets," the ministry of defence said in a statement.

"These aircraft will operate in a defensive role and will not conduct offensive strikes against the Houthis."

Britain will also deploy a military transport aircraft "to support the movement of defence material within Saudi Arabia alongside UK military advisers to support Saudi staff officers", the statement added.



This picture taken on August 1, 2023 shows a view of the Kingdom Centre (L) skyscraper in Riyadh

"The continuing attacks from the Houthis on our ally Saudi Arabia are absolutely despicable," said defence minister Wes Streeting.

"The targeting of the airport in Riyadh in particular shows the lengths the Houthis are going to escalate the situation in the region," he added.

The Saudi capital's international airport has been targeted by strikes 20 times since the beginning of the month, with a recent attack killing 13 people and wounding more than 300.

Saudi Arabia, the Yemeni government and the United States accuse Iran of backing the Houthis — an allegation Tehran denies.

Christiane Amanpour to leave CNN after 43 years

NEW YORK (AFP) — Veteran journalist Christiane Amanpour said Monday she is leaving her role at CNN after a 43-year career as one of the US broadcaster's most prominent international correspondents.

"After thinking carefully for several months and experiencing a few sleepless nights, as you can imagine, I've decided to separate from CNN," Amanpour, 68, said in a statement.

Her announcement came weeks after media corporation Paramount Skydance formally took over Warner Bros. Discovery, the parent company of CNN.

That merger has drawn concerns over



Christiane Amanpour has interviewed many of the world's leaders and newsmakers

the independence of CNN as the merged company's owners, the Ellison family, are close allies of US President Donald Trump — a fierce critic of the TV network.

Amanpour did not reference the deal but emphasised her commitment to being "fiercely independent".

"That's especially important today as we face unprecedented

ed pressures from all sides, political, financial, and also from the rising dangers in the field," she said.

British-born Amanpour first became known to the CNN audience internationally for her coverage of the 1991 Gulf War that followed Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

She has interviewed many of the world's leaders and newsmakers over the past decades and reported from hotspots such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Rwanda and the Balkans.

Amanpour said her daily news show on CNN will be scaled back to once a week until next June, while her PBS programme will also end.

She added that she "looks forward to interesting new projects down the line, and will always be rooting for CNN and maintaining its history of independent journalism. Remember: always be truthful, not neutral".

In a memo carried by US media, CNN Chief Executive Mark Thompson praised Amanpour "for 43 extraordinary years of remarkable journalism, loyalty and friendship".

"Like so many CNNers who will hear the news today, I'm very sorry to see her go, but I've come to accept that this is the right time for her, both personally and professionally," Thompson said.

French PM vows 'massive' police deployment for new demonstrations

PARIS (AFP) — French Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu on Tuesday vowed a "massive" police presence at fresh protests called for the coming weekend, as he faced criticism over the handling of recent street violence.

The eurozone's second-largest economy was rocked on Saturday by some of its worst rioting in recent years, just six months before voters head to the polls to elect a successor to President Emmanuel Macron.

Facing angry lawmakers in parliament, Lecornu acknowledged that the security response had fallen short and promised a stronger approach ahead of a new wave of protests.

"The deployment for next Saturday will be massive," Lecornu said.

He accused ultra-left radical groups of forging an "insurrectionary plan" that led to the riots, which erupted on the sidelines of nationwide protests over the cost of living.

Images of clashes, mobs looting stores and public buildings set ablaze last weekend prompted several countries, including the United States, China and Germany, to issue travel advisories for their citizens in France.

French authorities on Monday announced partial curfews in Paris and some other cities, and Lecornu said new curfews would be imposed on Tuesday where needed.

Paris police ordered a temporary ban on people carrying cans or bottles of petrol or gas, after mobs



A man walks past a row of burnt out vehicles on Rue Yves Toudic destroyed after a nationwide protest against the 'high cost of living', in central Paris on Monday

set fire to government buildings and shops last weekend.

During the night, a helicopter flew over the French capital's Place de la Republique, one of the epicentres of the unrest, sweeping a searchlight across the square to monitor compliance with the curfew.

"The sound of a helicopter at one in the morning is a bit oppressive," said Sylvain Courant, a resident of the Les Halles neighbourhood, another hotspot of the street violence.

"It's that thing you see on TV, in all the good war films."

Macron, currently on a Gulf tour where he secured additional diesel supplies in an effort to bring down prices, has acknowledged shortcomings in the handling of the

protests.

France's government is wrestling with high public debt and anger over soaring prices, and facing a strong challenge from the far right.

The unrest on Saturday broke out after around half a million people turned out across France to denounce the cost of living, following four weeks of school protests.

On Monday, several cities, including Paris, the southwestern city of Bordeaux and Nice on the French Riviera, introduced partial curfews.

A targeted curfew for minors was to be introduced in several districts of the southern port city of Marseille from Tuesday evening and at least through Friday, a source close to the matter told AFP.

Security forces arrested

a man believed to be connected to the ultra-left over the burning down of a historic town hall in Limoges, whose destruction has become a symbol of the violence.

Authorities have come under criticism from parties across the political spectrum, with far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen describing the unrest as a "wake-up call" that exposed a "profound crisis" of authority.

Investors have sold off French debt in recent weeks amid rising doubts about the government's ability to rein in spending.

Under pressure to support thousands of damaged or looted shops, the government said interest-free loans would be made available from Friday to all affected businesses, along with other measures.

Justice Minister Gerald

Darmanin said nearly 150 people had been jailed and more than 800 brought before the courts.

He argued that a strong judicial response was necessary to prevent ordinary people from taking matters into their own hands.

"The justice system is being extremely firm," he said. "People with no previous criminal record are being sent to prison."

Some demonstrators were seriously injured. One man lost a hand to a police grenade. In the eastern city of Mulhouse, a 17-year-old girl lost an eye.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez offered to resign on Sunday, saying police "had lost control" during the unrest. Macron rejected his resignation.

Other European countries have also seen demonstrations over rising prices, with smaller clashes breaking out in Milan, Italy's financial centre, and Belgium over the weekend.

Italy was preparing to send 500 troops to Milan as the government considered a wider crackdown.

US President Donald Trump has seized on the unrest in France to amplify his anti-immigration and anti-Islam rhetoric, as his Republican party faces strong headwinds in the upcoming midterm elections.

"It's immigration, and I told President Emmanuel Macron, close up your borders," said Trump.

Several analysts countered that immigration was not a driving force in France's unrest.



US Vice President JD Vance delivers remarks at a campaign rally at Hyder Warehouse in Hendersonville, North Carolina on Monday

US VP Vance says staying out of Israel vote as Trump backs Netanyahu

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US Vice President JD Vance said he would not be following Donald Trump in endorsing Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and wanted to stay on the sidelines.

"I'm not anti-endorsing him. I'm not pro-endorsing him. I'm not getting involved in Israeli elections," Vance said of Netanyahu, in an interview Monday with journalist Mark Halperin.

"I endorse American candidates and that's where I'm focused on is the [US] midterms," he added.

Trump on Sunday issued a public endorsement of his right-wing ally Netanyahu, who is seeking a new term as premier in Israel's October 27 parliamentary election.

Vance's reticence to weigh in on the Israeli vote contrasts with his approach to European elections.

Days before Hungary's parliamentary election in April, he flew to Budapest to support then-prime minister Viktor Orban, another right-wing figure.

He has also voiced support for Germany's far-right AfD party, whose leader, Alice Weidel, he met last year.

Vance, who is widely viewed as aiming to succeed Trump in 2029, reportedly expressed opposition to launching the US-Israeli war with Iran, but has since defended the campaign.

The vice president also had notably strong words for Israeli officials who criticized a short-lived US-Iran ceasefire agreement in June.

"Trump is the only head of state in the entire world who is sympathetic to the nation of Israel at this moment," he said at the time.

"If I was in the cabinet of the Israeli government, I might not be attacking the only powerful ally that I have anywhere left in the entire world," he added.

Zelensky, US envoys to hold Oslo talks as Ukraine claims US missile holdup

OSLO (AFP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky arrived in Oslo on Tuesday for talks with top US envoys in a bid to get strained relations with Washington “on a more constructive path”, Oslo said.

“We are maintaining all contacts that can help bring peace,” Zelensky said in a social media post announcing his arrival in Oslo.

Norway’s Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store said earlier that Oslo would host talks between Zelensky, US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner — the latter taking part remotely — as well as Finnish President Alexander Stubb.

Relations between Kyiv and Washington have soured since President Donald Trump partially lifted sanctions to strike a diesel-supply deal with Russia’s Vladimir Putin and slammed Zelensky as a warmonger for Ukrainian attacks on Russian oil refineries.

Zelensky has accused the United States of deliberately withholding vital intelligence and delaying military aid, saying on Monday that Ukraine received no early warning of powerful Russian missile strikes that targeted energy facilities in the capital region.

US-led diplomatic efforts to end Europe’s deadliest conflict since



Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky and Norway’s Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store deliver a joint press conference after a meeting on the situation in Ukraine on Tuesday in Oslo

World War II have stalled in recent months, as Washington has shifted focus towards the war with Iran.

The Norway talks were due to begin on Tuesday afternoon and continue into the evening, Store told reporters.

“The aim is to put diplomatic efforts on a more constructive path,” he said.

Ahead of the meeting,

Zelensky on Tuesday said he held “substantive” and “constructive” talks with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in which he insisted that the US military satellite system Ukraine uses, Starshield, “needs to be restored” and that ballistic missile interceptors “are needed to protect lives”.

Zelensky told US senators on Monday that “the Pentagon is delaying

the delivery of missiles” already paid for by European countries, and that the shipment was waiting for US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth’s signature.

He said several European countries were ready to transfer Patriot interceptor missiles from their own stockpiles but were still awaiting US approval.

The United States has

denied making any changes to intelligence sharing with Ukraine, and Rubio on Tuesday said Washington was not deliberately withholding supplies.

“There’s nothing being deliberately denied to Ukraine,” Rubio said while on a trip to India.

“It’s simply, it’s a balance between our obligations to other partners and frankly our own... requirements for our own

facilities as well.”

Trump has also denied ordering a reduction in speeds on the US government-owned and -controlled Starshield network after Elon Musk, whose company SpaceX developed it, said the order could only have come from the White House.

Strained relations

The US leader has accused his counterpart of not trying to resolve the conflict with Russia.

“Zelensky doesn’t know what he’s talking about,” Trump said on Monday.

“To be honest, I think it’s time for somebody else to negotiate on behalf of Ukraine.”

Trump said he was ready to meet Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping in China next month to discuss denuclearisation, adding that talks could also cover the Ukraine war — fueling fears in Kyiv that it was being sidelined.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed earlier that “the topic of such a hypothetical has indeed been mentioned” when asked about a Wall Street Journal report on Sunday that Trump, Putin and Xi could meet.

Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga said that such a meeting would “only encourage Putin to continue this war”.

Iran says Iraq will expel exiled Kurdish opposition members

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iran’s ambassador to Iraq said on Tuesday that Baghdad had agreed to “expel” or hand over members of Iranian Kurdish opposition groups who have taken refuge on the Iraqi side of the border.

The announcement came after senior Iraqi security officials repeatedly told AFP that Baghdad was refusing to do so, fearing for the lives of the Kurdish exiles.

Iraq’s autonomous Kurdistan region, an oil-rich area in the north of the country, has long hosted camps and bases for Iranian Kurdish rebel groups, which Tehran labels terrorists who serve US or Israeli interests.

“During a meeting of the joint security commission — attended by the Iranian delegation and the Iraqi National Security Adviser — the two parties agreed to expel the members of the Iranian separatist terrorist groups from the Iraqi Kurdistan region or hand them over to Iran,” Ambassador Mohammad Kazem Al-Sadeh wrote on X.

On Monday, Iraq’s National Security Council hosted a meeting of the two delegations in Baghdad. A governmental delegation from the Kurdistan region also took part, according to a state-

ment from the media office of Iraqi National Security Adviser Qasim Al Abboudi.

The statement said the talks focused on “ways to address current challenges and to harmonise the visions of the parties concerned”.

In 2023, Baghdad and Tehran signed an agreement aimed at strengthening security along their shared border — particularly in the Kurdistan region — and “neutralising the Kurdish opposition”.

The deal put an end to recurring Iranian bombardments targeting the groups and helped ease tensions between the two countries.

But since the outbreak of war in the Middle East in late February, triggered by US-Israeli strikes, Iran has resumed deadly attacks on the Kurdish groups.

Under the 2023 agreement, Iraqi authorities disarmed the Iranian Kurdish groups, moving them away from the border and transferring them to camps.

On February 22 this year, a few days before the outbreak of the war, five of the groups announced the formation of a political alliance aimed at overthrowing the Iranian government and guaranteeing the right to self-determination for the Kurds.

UN rights chief condemns Europe protests violence

GENEVA, Switzerland (AFP) — UN rights chief Volker Turk on Tuesday condemned all acts of violence in the protests gripping France and other European countries, urging those involved to ratchet down the tensions.

“The mass protests across Albania, Belgium, France, Italy and Portugal are raising human rights concerns,” Turk said in a statement.

“I condemn all acts of violence and call on all of those involved to reduce tensions and prevent further violence. The best and only way forward is inclusive and safe dialogue.”

The UN high commissioner for human rights said people had the right to protest peacefully, and to have their voices heard — and countries had to facilitate these rights.

“I deplore the actions

of those exploiting protests to commit acts of violence and vandalism against public and private property. They should be held individually accountable,” he added.

Turk voiced concern at reports of unnecessary and excessive use of force against protesters, including children.

He said countries had to ensure that any law enforcement response

remained lawful, necessary and proportionate.

“Allegations of unlawful use of force must be investigated promptly, effectively and independently, with accountability and effective remedies for victims,” said Turk.

‘Constructive dialogue’

France was rocked on Saturday by some of its worst rioting in recent years.

Images of clashes, mobs looting stores and public buildings set ablaze last weekend prompted several countries, including the United States, China and Germany, to issue travel advisories for their citizens in France.

French Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu accused ultra-left radical groups of forging an “insurrectionary plan” that led to the riots,

which erupted on the sidelines of nationwide protests over the cost of living.

Lecornu pledged a “massive” police deployment next weekend, with organisers calling for a new round of protests next Saturday.

Turk encouraged countries to engage protesters, particularly young people, in “meaningful, inclusive and constructive dialogue”.

He also called for “concrete steps to address legitimate and fundamental human rights concerns over education, public services, housing, the rising cost of living and inequality”.

In Albania, demonstrators have repeatedly clashed with police as months of protests escalate.

Around 300 people have been injured in the latest clashes, more

than half of them police, according to the authorities.

Hundreds of protesters were detained during two days of clashes in Milan over the weekend and dozens of police officers were injured.

And Belgian police fired tear gas and water cannon to disperse demonstrators in Brussels and Liege taking part in cost-of-living protests on Saturday.

Israeli settlers rapidly reshape occupied West Bank amid surge in violence

Continued from page 1

Between January and August 2026, the United Nations documented more than 1,600 settler attacks resulting in injuries or property damage, an average of more than six a day. The figure represents an increase from the already elevated level recorded last year.

At least 80 Palestinians in the West Bank have been killed by Israeli forces or settlers since February 2026, according to the UN humanitarian office. Palestinian communities, including Deir Jarir and Al Mughayyir, northeast of Ramallah, have experienced repeated killings in areas near which settlers have established outposts.

The expansion has gathered momentum under a government that includes prominent far-right advocates of settlement, notably finance minister Bezalel Smotrich, whose portfolio includes settlement policy, and National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir. Both live in settlements.

Their influence has weakened constraints on a movement seeking to establish permanent Israeli control over ter-

ritory occupied since 1967.

Between 2013 and 2022, the Israeli government approved just three settlements, according to Peace Now, an Israeli anti-settlement watchdog group.

Today, at least 148 settlements in the occupied West Bank and 15 in occupied East Jerusalem bring the total to 163, housing approximately 750,000 Israelis, or roughly 10 per cent of Israel’s Jewish population.

By mid-2026, the occupied West Bank also had an estimated 350 to 400 outposts, including agricultural and pastoral outposts. Palestinian residents say settlers based in these outposts have attacked and terrorised communities across the territory, spreading fear and disrupting daily life.

At least 4,300 Palestinians have been displaced across the West Bank this year, with settler attacks accounting for about 60 per cent of the displacement, according to the United Nations.

Olive harvest becomes another flashpoint

The annual olive harvest has emerged as another focus of settler violence,

with Palestinian farmers reporting intimidation and obstruction as they gather a crop that provides a crucial source of income.

Settlers have carried out attacks that disrupted the harvest, while Israeli forces have separately detained Palestinians across the occupied territory. Reported incidents have included assaults on olive pickers, the burning and uprooting of trees, and the theft of crops and livestock.

Settlers have also set fire to Palestinian-owned olive groves and stolen olives during one of the most important agricultural seasons for Palestinian communities.

Human Rights Watch has said Israeli authorities provide violent settlers with arms, funding and impunity. Attacks by armed settlers frequently take place alongside Israeli military units or while soldiers stand by, according to the rights group.

Settlement expansion has also advanced through major construction plans, including E1 project, which would add thousands of housing units in a strategic corridor between East Jerusalem



Palestinian Hanan Hamaye gestures as she stands near the shattered glass of her home following a reported attack by Israeli settlers, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank village of Turmus Ayya on Monday

and the rest of the occupied West Bank.

Critics warn that the development could sever East Jerusalem from surrounding Palestinian territory and further undermine the prospects for a viable Palestinian state.

Israel was preparing to proceed with a tender for part of the project, but the attorney general ordered a

one-month postponement on September 27 to prevent the process from being used for electioneering.

The deadline for construction bids was moved from Oct. 19 to a date after the Oct. 27 Knesset election.

Smotrich has said the project is intended to “bury the idea” of Palestinian statehood.

International criticism intensifies

Escalating settler violence and displacement have prompted growing international concern, including an emergency debate at the UN Security Council and criticism from international bodies and partner countries.

On October 15, UN officials and member

states warned that settler violence and land expansion in the West Bank had reached historic highs. They raised concerns over attacks on Palestinian olive harvesters, the burning of property and the forced displacement of thousands of residents.

EU foreign ministers also expressed deep concern over the deteriorating situation,

condemning continued settlement expansion, forced displacement and the sharp increase in violence against civilians during the olive harvest.

Several European countries and regional partners have pursued or considered further economic and diplomatic measures, including restrictions or bans on imports of goods produced in illegal West Bank settlements. They have warned that continued violence and the E1 project threaten the two-state solution.

Last month, Britain banned goods made in Israeli settlements, with British Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband describing settler violence as “ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.”

Despite mounting international condemnation, Israeli leaders have issued occasional public rebukes of violent settlers, but settlement expansion has continued.

The rapid growth of settlements and outposts, combined with rising violence and displacement, is reshaping the occupied West Bank and further complicating efforts to achieve a negotiated two-state solution.

THE JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975

Published by the Jordan Press Foundation

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

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

Follow us on X Platform: [@jordantimes](https://twitter.com/jordantimes)
Like our facebook page: [thejordantimes](https://www.facebook.com/thejordantimes)
Youtube: [thejordantimes](https://www.youtube.com/thejordantimes)

National Library registration number: **D/1998/2062**
Telephone: **5600800 ext. 2392**
Facsimile: **5696183**
Advertising facsimile: **5696183**
Circulation Department: **5600800 ext. 2383**

The Jordan Times is published daily except Saturdays

Youth and political parties... the relatability gap

By Zaid K.Maaytah

Jordan continues to pursue economic growth and modernisation, with efforts to attract investment and create new opportunities, alongside these ambitions, political development deserves similar attention, particularly the participation of younger generations, while much of the discussion focuses on encouraging young people to join political parties, perhaps we should begin with a more fundamental question, do they understand what political parties represent and how their own beliefs relate to them?

Most people have opinions about how society should function, what governments should prioritise and what makes a policy fair or effective, these opinions often reflect deeper political beliefs, even when we do not recognise them as such, political parties, in their simplest form, bring together people who share certain principles and a vision for society, from a behavioural angle, people tend to identify with groups that reflect their values and offer a sense of belonging, which helps explain why political affiliation begins with shared beliefs rather than a membership application.

Yet the connection between personal beliefs and political affiliation is not always obvious, a young person may care deeply about issues affecting their future without knowing how those concerns relate to different political philosophies or party programmes, this creates what we might call a relatability gap, where people struggle to recognise their own convictions in the political options available to them, addressing this gap requires making political ideas more accessible and showing how they relate to the decisions that shape everyday life.

Universities could play an important role by hosting discussions where students explore different political approaches to public issues and understand why people can reach different conclusions about the same challenges, similar awareness sessions in communities across Jordan could explain how parties are formed and how their principles influence their positions, bringing young people together with representatives of different parties could also encourage open dialogue, allowing both sides to better understand one another, such activities would make political education a practical experience rather than an exercise in memorising definitions.

Education is equally relevant to those establishing and leading political parties, developing a political identity requires an understanding of political philosophies and the ability to translate principles into clear programmes, workshops and educational programmes could help party members develop these skills and communicate their ideas in language that citizens can readily understand, the aim is not to make every party appealing to everyone, but to make its beliefs and priorities sufficiently clear for people to recognise whether they share them.

From a behavioural perspective, education acts as an enabler of behavioural change, giving people the knowledge and confidence to make decisions that reflect their convictions, it does not guarantee that someone will join a political party, nor should that be its sole purpose, but it can help make political participation a more informed and meaningful choice, as Jordan advances economically, strengthening political awareness can contribute to a political culture in which citizens engage with ideas before deciding how they wish to participate.

By Zaid K. Maaytah – researcher in economics and behvaoural policy

Saving Netanyahu, saving Trump?

Mohammad Abu Rumman

Donald Trump’s full endorsement of Benjamin Netanyahu came as a surprise in both its timing and tone, after relations between the two men had appeared increasingly strained by the consequences of the war with Iran. Amit Segal had, however, raised the possibility of an “October surprise” in Israel Hayom on September 3, suggesting that Netanyahu might receive a last-minute boost — a possibility I discussed in my earlier column, “Trump’s Burdensome Ally”. At the time, the question was whether the American president might see a different Israeli government as an opportunity to lighten the burden of his alliance with Netanyahu; his endorsement now raises a more complicated question: How has Netanyahu regained his value to Trump without overcoming the very problems that made him a liability?

The significance of that question lies in the prospect that a change of government in Israel could ease Washington’s friction with its European and Arab partners and improve its ability to manage regional relations, even without a fundamental shift in Israeli policy. Netanyahu carries political and personal baggage that extends beyond disagreements over any single issue, while the war with Iran has added American objections to the conflict’s objectives and costs. Those objections have reached the heart of the White House, with JD Vance criticising elements within the Israeli government whom he accused of trying to influence American public opinion to prolong the war, exposing a distinction between maintaining the alliance with Israel and seeing value in Netanyahu’s continued leadership.

Yet the answer depends not only on the costs of the relationship but also on how the alternatives are presented to the president, which makes the contest for influence within the White House central to understanding Trump’s renewed embrace of Netanyahu. In Trump’s highly personal approach to politics, trust in those around him and their access to him carry considerable weight, allowing advisers who can portray the alliance as useful to his own objectives to tip the balance even while

objections remain unresolved. What may have changed, then, is Trump’s assessment of his need for Netanyahu, whose political survival has been recast as an opportunity for the American president rather than simply a favor to the Israeli prime minister.

The differing positions within Trump’s circle help explain this possibility. Segal previously placed Marco Rubio and Mike Huckabee among those more sympathetic to Netanyahu, while identifying reservations on the part of Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff; reports following the endorsement also described opposition from advisers and Trump’s consultation with John McLaughlin, who has worked with both his election campaigns and Likud. These accounts do not establish who ultimately determined the outcome, but they suggest that the decision emerged from a contest over what would best serve Trump, and that support for Israel does not necessarily translate into agreement over Netanyahu’s continued leadership or the price worth paying to preserve it.

Seen in this light, the endorsement suggests that the argument linking Netanyahu’s survival to Trump’s electoral and regional interests has gained the upper hand. The influence of Netanyahu’s supporters cannot be separated from their ability to address the president’s own concerns, foremost among them the cohesion of his political base ahead of the midterm elections. White Evangelical Protestants accounted for approximately 30 per cent of Republican voters, according to Pew’s 2024 data, and Netanyahu has close ties to the Christian Zionist current within that constituency, making support for him a possible means of reassuring an influential, if far from uniform, bloc. Having already paid a political price for the war Trump may be reluctant to compound it by dampening enthusiasm among voters on whom he has long relied.

That argument becomes more compelling when it intersects with Iran, because a president who has borne the costs of confrontation needs an outcome he can present as an achievement. Here, Netanyahu acquires a value beyond his appeal to Evangelical voters, as Trump’s endorsement itself makes clear: He tied

his support to confronting Iran, spoke of “finishing the job” soon, and suggested that a different Israeli leader would leave America to do so alone. The message effectively recasts the ally accused of drawing Washington into a costly confrontation as the partner the president needs to bring it to a successful conclusion.

This reading gives added significance to reports of American military preparations for renewed operations against Iran, while preserving the distinction between preparing options and deciding on war, as well as the possibility that military threats are intended to strengthen Washington’s negotiating position. If Trump is still seeking an outcome the previous confrontation failed to deliver, Netanyahu’s eagerness to escalate may become a reason to retain him, having previously been a source of frustration. Here lies the more dangerous paradox: The costs of war may encourage both men to expand it in search of a way out, even though another round could deepen their economic and political predicament and heighten the risks facing the region and Washington’s partners within it.

At this point, the competition within the administration extends beyond preferences over Netanyahu to a more fundamental disagreement about how American interests should be protected, bringing Vance back to the centre of the picture. He is closer to a current within MAGA that is wary of foreign wars and questions the assumption that American and Israeli interests invariably coincide, without representing the movement as a whole or opposing the alliance with Israel. The more heavily Trump invests in Netanyahu, the harder it becomes to reconcile those reservations with the obligation to defend the president’s choices, particularly if an electoral endorsement develops into a partnership in another military campaign. Such a development could widen the political distance between president and vice president, although the endorsement alone does not establish that Vance’s influence has diminished or that a rupture has emerged.

This interplay also explains the force of the message directed at Israeli voters, for Trump is offering Netanyahu more than a declaration of friendship: he

is presenting him as the partner America needs. That allows Netanyahu to turn his relationship with the White House into an argument against an opposition united by the objective of removing him, while suggesting to voters that changing their prime minister could jeopardise a strategic advantage for their country. Such intervention cannot guarantee victory, but it could influence the margins that decide a close election, giving Netanyahu a chance to defend his continued leadership by invoking Washington’s need for him, after his opponents had cited the burden he places on Israel’s relationship with the United States.

The comparison with Bill Clinton is therefore useful in identifying the character of this intervention. Clinton sought to help Shimon Peres defeat Netanyahu in 1996, after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, out of concern for a peace process he feared would be endangered by a Likud victory. Yet he maintained some distance between his political preference and his official position, affirming that the alliance would endure regardless of the winner. Trump, by contrast, ties the suitability of Israel’s leadership to Netanyahu personally and portrays the election of someone else as a problem for America, marking a difference both in the explicitness of the endorsement and the pressure it exerts, and in the shift from supporting a candidate to protect a political process to making that process — and relations between two countries — dependent on one man’s survival.

In this sense, Netanyahu may never have ceased to be Trump’s burdensome ally; he has regained his standing because the argument that abandoning him would cost more than retaining him has prevailed. The contest for influence within the White House is the channel through which electoral calculations and the wager on Iran combine to shape the president’s decision, which means the test of this renewed embrace will extend beyond the outcome of Israel’s election. It will also turn on whether Trump uses his support to impose his own terms on Netanyahu, or finds that he has once again tied his success to the choices of an ally whose next gamble could reproduce the very burdens he had hoped to escape.

political groundwork were essential to expanding the activist base and building the networks that eventually made the sports boycott possible.

In other words, the groundwork preceding the sports boycott was indispensable. Without it, South Africa might never have been excluded from the 1964 Olympic Games and ultimately expelled from the Olympic movement in 1970.

One can confidently argue that Palestinians have already established the foundations necessary to make their boycott movement truly global, expanding, as it has, beyond academic circles into other popular arenas.

But South Africa’s anti-apartheid movement had an advantage that Palestinians have yet to secure.

In 1976, African countries boycotted the Montreal Olympics over New Zealand’s sporting relationship with apartheid South Africa.

This was followed, a year later, by the Gleneagles Agreement, through which Commonwealth governments committed themselves to discouraging sporting contacts with South Africa.

Over time, the boycott tightened its grip, leaving apartheid South Africa increasingly isolated from the international sporting community.

Considering that what is taking place in Palestine goes beyond apartheid into genocide, one can argue that the international sporting response remains far below the level of solidarity extended to those living under apartheid in South Africa.

Countries supporting Palestine have not declared a comparable collective boycott of sporting events involving Israel, nor have they barred countries supporting Israel’s genocide in Gaza.

Israeli teams continue to compete, facing the consequences of popular anger rather than coordi-

The empty stadium illusion: Why banning Israeli fans is not enough

By Ramzy Baroud

The stadium is empty, but Israel is still in the game.

Though any form of isolation of those responsible for genocide is welcome, the growing movement for a sports boycott of Israel has yet to translate solidarity into meaningful sporting isolation.

Two recent developments illustrate this contradiction.

The first is the decision by Alkmaar, a Dutch city north of Amsterdam, to bar visiting supporters of Israeli football club Hapoel Be’er Sheva from attending its October 15 Europa League match against AZ Alkmaar at the AFAS Stadium.

The decision followed the violence surrounding the November 2024 Ajax-Maccabi Tel Aviv match in Amsterdam, when Israeli supporters were filmed chanting racist slogans, tearing down Palestinian flags and confronting local residents.

Such behaviour is hardly unfamiliar among sections of Israeli football supporters, whose racist chants against Palestinians have included the notorious “Death to Arabs”, and “Burn down your village”. During the November 2024 violence in Amsterdam, Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters were also filmed chanting that there were “no children” left in Gaza.

These expressions of racism are increasingly encountering resistance from international audiences, many of whom no longer accept Israel’s carefully cultivated image of democracy, civilisation and moral exceptionalism. The genocide in Gaza has shattered those illusions.

But Israeli supporters are also confronting another reality: Growing isolation and the realisation that their presence is increasingly unwelcome in sporting spaces they once took for granted. Rather than prompting introspection,

such resentment is manifesting itself in further hostility, confrontation and racist abuse.

The second development came on October 4, when Ireland’s UEFA Nations League fixture against Israel was relocated to Serbia and played behind closed doors.

The Football Association of Ireland cited operational and security concerns. But the writing is on the wall: The growing solidarity movement in Ireland has made clear its opposition to sporting engagement with a team representing a state responsible for the genocide in Gaza.

Combined with recurring demonstrations at international sporting events involving Israeli teams, Palestinian flags raised by supportive crowds and growing demands for Israel’s exclusion from international competitions, these developments suggest that sport is becoming an increasingly important arena of solidarity and boycott.

The question, however, remains: Is any of this enough?

The answer may lie in the South African experience, where sporting solidarity eventually evolved into a comprehensive international boycott.

International campaigns to boycott apartheid South Africa began gaining momentum in the 1950s, gradually spreading across academic, activist and political circles.

The organised sports boycott began taking shape in earnest in 1959, with the establishment of the South African Sports Association and soon became a defining feature of the broader boycott movement.

The conventional wisdom has since been that white South African society only truly felt the weight of international isolation when the sports boycott took hold.

The argument is valid, but some important nuances must be understood. Years of intellectual and

nated action by governments and international sporting bodies to hold Israel accountable.

While pressure must continue to mount on FIFA, UEFA and the International Olympic Committee, among other sporting institutions, one must remain realistic: These powerful, profit-generating bodies are unlikely to make moral choices unless sustained pressure compels them to do so.

Individual athletes, however, have already demonstrated the moral courage that these institutions lack, often placing their convictions above personal gain, fame and even their careers.

Among them is Algerian judoka Fethi Nourine, who received a ten-year suspension after withdrawing from the Tokyo Olympics rather than risk facing an Israeli opponent. Sudanese judoka Mohamed Abdalrasool also refused to compete against an Israeli opponent, withdrawing from his scheduled Olympic bout.

Equally deserving of recognition is Ireland’s goalkeeper Gavin Bazunu, who refused to participate in the recent Nations League fixtures against Israel. “My decision is based purely on my personal belief that the killing of innocent people is wrong,” he declared.

But the truth remains: With or without spectators, as long as Israel is allowed to compete, the apartheid state will continue finding its way back into the international sporting community, without accountability and without even ending the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Ramzy Baroud is a journalist, author and the editor of The Palestine Chronicle. He is the author of nine books. His latest books are “Before the Flood” (Seven Stories Press) and “Gaza Rising” (Clarity Press). His other books include “Our Vision for Liberation”, “My Father Was a Freedom Fighter” and “The Last Earth”. Baroud is a non-resident senior research fellow at the Centre for Islam and Global Affairs

BUSINESS

Wednesday, October 21, 2026



People watch the burning oil terminal following an air attack in Saint Petersburg on Sunday

IEA chief sees little chance of oil market 'normalisation' next year

LONDON (AFP) — The head of the International Energy Agency said on Tuesday that he saw little chance of a return to normal oil market conditions next year, as the ongoing Mideast war keeps prices high.

"I personally don't see any credible pathway that 2027 will be a year of normalisation" after the Gulf supply disruptions caused by the US and Israeli attacks on Iran last February, Fatih Birol told a conference organised by The Financial Times.

The war sparked by the attacks has sent oil prices to over \$100 a barrel compared with below \$70 a barrel before hostilities began, while damage to Gulf refineries has helped push diesel prices to record highs.

In response, the IEA has organised the release of up to 400 mil-

lion barrels of oil in strategic reserves held by member countries, and Birol said further releases could be made if warranted.

'In a normal world... there'd be more interest, but it is going down'

Iran has vowed to take control of tanker shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, which has driven up transport insurance costs even though flows have reportedly returned to prewar levels in recent weeks.

"If there's an over-

lapping crisis in the Middle East, I cannot exclude that our governments will look at the other options," Birol told the FT's Energy Transition conference.

"It's a big thing, 400 million barrels, but it's only 20 per cent of the oil we have — 80 per cent is in the pocket," he said.

Birol also lamented that the Mideast war had shifted attention away from the risks of climate change, despite confirmation from scientists that the burning of fossil fuels is a clear cause of global warming.

"Climate change is sliding down in the international policy agenda despite the number, the frequency, and the intensity of extreme weather," he said.

"In a normal world... there'd be more interest, but it is going down," he said.

SSIF investment earnings reach JD12.1 billion since establishment — Kanakrieh

AMMAN (JT) — The Social Security Investment Fund (SSIF) has generated JD12.1 billion in cumulative investment earnings since its establishment in 2003, with assets reaching approximately JD20.1 billion at the end of September 2026, CEO Ezzeddin Kanakrieh said.

Speaking at the Government Communication Forum, Kanakrieh said that the fund is expanding its investments in major projects and building strategic partnerships across water, energy, transport and mining to diversify its income and strengthen long-term returns.

The session brought together media representatives to discuss the fund's financial performance, major projects and investment priorities.

Kanakrieh said that cumulative investment earnings, alongside approximately JD6.4 billion in surplus transfers from the Social Security Corporation (SSC), had increased the fund's assets from JD1.6 billion at inception to their current level.

Assets grew by around 8 per cent, or nearly JD1.5 billion, during the first nine months of 2026, while return on assets stood at 8.3 per cent, he said.

Comprehensive income reached approximately JD1.37 billion, comprising JD879 million in net income, up 8.6 per cent year on year, and JD492.4 million in net valuation



CEO of the Social Security Investment Fund (SSIF) Ezzeddin Kanakrieh speaks during a Government Communication Forum on Tuesday

gains on the strategic equity portfolio. SSC also transferred nearly JD110 million in insurance surpluses to the fund.

Kanakrieh said that investment decisions are based on technical and financial assessments of viability, expected returns and risks, within an established investment policy and governance framework. Portfolio management balances investments across sectors, instruments and maturities while maintaining liquidity for SSC's future obligations.

He described government bonds as attractive fixed-income instruments widely held by pension funds and institutional investors internation-

ally, providing stable returns at low levels of risk.

Assets grew by around 8 per cent, or nearly JD1.5 billion, during the first nine months of 2026

Cumulative earnings from SSIF's bond portfolio reached JD5.2

billion, he said, adding that the government continues to meet interest payments on schedule.

The fund's real estate portfolio stood at approximately JD1.1 billion, encompassing land and commercial complexes across the Kingdom, with valuation gains of JD291 million over acquisition cost. Its strategy combines long-term land ownership with leasing and build-operate-transfer agreements, some extending to 25 years.

SSIF also holds approximately JD4 billion in companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange, representing more than 13 per cent of its market capitalisation, across banking, mining, tele-

communications, tourism and services.

Among this year's major investments, Kanakrieh highlighted a 7 per cent stake in the Aqaba-Al-Shidiya-Maan railway project company and the establishment of the National Water Investments Company to acquire a 15 per cent stake in the National Water Carrier project company. SSIF is also contributing directly to the water project's financing through a consortium of Jordanian commercial banks.

Other partnerships include establishing the Jordanian-Omani Investment Company with the Oman Investment Authority and signing a memorandum of understanding with the Saudi Jordanian Investment Fund.

The fund is assessing opportunities in technology, real estate development, energy, mining and transport, including projects under the Economic Modernisation Vision, while seeking strategic partners and improving existing investments, according to a statement from SSIF.

Kanakrieh stressed that investment viability remains central to the fund's expansion, with its long-term strategy focused on generating sustainable returns within acceptable risk levels, protecting the interests of contributors and retirees, and supporting Jordan's economic growth.

Investors pledge 230 billion euros at German summit — Merz

BERLIN (AFP) — Major companies at an economic summit hosted by the German government have committed to investing around 230 billion euros (\$258 billion), Chancellor Friedrich Merz said on Tuesday in Berlin.

"Investments are a key factor for the future of our country, for its growth and its competitiveness. They bring with them more jobs, increased production, more services, and a better future for our children and grandchildren," Merz said.

The chancellor noted Amazon investments worth 16 billion euros and a German government partnership with US chipmaking giant Nvidia.

He also mentioned unspecified commitments by the German retail conglomerate Schwarz Group, US investment firm Blackstone, software giant Microsoft and the French pharmaceuticals giant Sanofi.

Merz's government hosted the two-day Invest in Germany summit as part of a push to draw more foreign money into Europe's largest economy, which has struggled for years with sluggish growth and diminished global competitiveness for some of its blue-chip firms.

Current growth in Germany — projected at 1.3 per cent for 2026 — is driven primarily by public investment, according to economic forecasters.

During the gathering, which drew more than 200 corporate



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz speaks at the Deutschlandtag congress of the Junge Union (JU), which is the youth organisation of his conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party, in Bonn, western Germany on Saturday

leaders to Berlin, Merz touted reforms aimed at streamlining regulatory requirements and cited a massive spending campaign on the country's infrastructure and military.

The inaugural German investment summit topped the 93 billion euros announced at President Emmanuel Macron's "Choose France" summit in June, an event that served as the model for Merz's gathering.

During his year and a half in power, Merz's coalition government — an alliance between his conservative CDU/CSU and the centre-left Social Democrats — has focused on tax cuts and regulatory relief to stimulate the economy.

But business leaders have grown impatient with the slow pace of reforms as German companies have battled high energy prices, US tariffs and stiff Chinese competition, particularly in Germany's renowned automotive sector.

"The government

will continue to improve the conditions for investment in Germany — for example by reducing bureaucracy, accelerating the approval process and enhancing infrastructure," Merz said on Tuesday.

The chancellor also touted efforts to get Germans — who by reputation are thrifty and conservative with their savings — to put more money into stocks and other riskier investments.

The government has recently passed plans to create investment accounts for children to help fund eventual retirement costs, and is pushing to put some pension funds into stocks as well.

"We're turning the 'country of savers' into a country of investors," Merz said.

Amazon and Nvidia For the time being, only Amazon has announced a specific investment figure, saying it would spend 16 billion euros by the end of 2027.

Amazon's plans include putting nearly five billion euros into expanding its cloud computing division Amazon Web Services in the Frankfurt area as demand grows for AI services.

Other planned investments include spending on Amazon Leo, which aims to provide high-speed internet via a network of satellites, and upgrading the company's retail and logistics warehouses to use more robotics.

The company's Prime Video arm is also planning a slate of new film productions in Germany, according to the firm.

Merz opened the event late Monday, holding an on-stage discussion with Nvidia's chief executive Jensen Huang, who praised Germany's high-end engineering firms and research institutions.

A partnership between Nvidia and the German government aimed at applying artificial intelligence to industry was also announced, although no figures were disclosed.

Merz has been weakened by record-low popularity ratings, persistent infighting in his coalition government and a string of significant setbacks for his conservative party in regional elections.

The chancellor has been seeking to regain some of his lost momentum by demonstrating Germany's appeal to investors and bolstering the muted economic recovery.

Macron secures 200,000 tonnes of extra diesel per month from UAE, Bahrain — presidency

MANAMA (AFP) — French President Emmanuel Macron has secured the delivery of an additional 200,000 tonnes of diesel per month from the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain during a tour of the Gulf, the French presidency said on Tuesday.

He obtained commitments for around 100,000 tonnes per month from the Emirates, while an additional 100,000 tonnes monthly will be secured during the stop in Bahrain, the Elysee Palace said.

With the addition of deliveries from Saudi Arabia, France has commitments for 295,000 tonnes per month, representing just over 10 per cent of its consumption, the presidency added.



UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (2nd-L) and France's President Emmanuel Macron (3rd-L) inspect an honour guard during a reception ceremony at Abu Dhabi International Airport in Abu Dhabi on Monday

Macron is undertaking a tour of key energy suppliers in the Gulf in an effort to secure oil and diesel and bring down prices in France, after a week-end of violent protests over soaring living costs.

The French president arrived in Manama on Tuesday and was greeted by crowds of schoolchildren waving Bahraini and French flags.

The trip also included stops in the UAE, Kuwait

and Qatar, all of which have been thrown into turmoil by the US-Iran war since February.

Crude oil prices have ballooned during the eight-month conflict, as Iran blockades the Strait of Hormuz — the main exit route for the Gulf's energy exports — with diesel prices among the hardest hit.

The G-7 countries, chaired this year by France, agreed in early October to draw up to 100 million barrels of oil from their strategic reserves to ease pressure.

Kuwait has also given "very clear commitments" to deliver diesel and kerosene to the French overseas territories of Mayotte and Reunion in the Indian Ocean, the French presidency said.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Tuesday reached JD12.6 million while 4.2 million shares were traded through 4,428 transactions.

The ASE shares price index closed at 4195.50 point, a decrease of 0.04 per cent.

The shares of 99 companies were traded, the shares prices of 23 companies rose, and the shares prices of 39 declined.

The top five gainers were, the Jordanian Co. For Developing & Financial Investment by 4.35 per cent, Amad Investment & Real Estate Development by 3.85per cent, Jordan International Trading Centre by 2.8 per cent, Jordan Dairy by 2.58 per cent and Tuhama For Financial Investments by 2.5 per cent.

The top five losers were, Shira Real Estate Development & Investments by 4.88 per cent, United Financial Investments by 4.32per cent, Amwaj Properties by 4.17 per cent, AlTahdith For Real Estate Investments Company by 4 per cent and Jordan Poultry Processing & Marketing by 3.85 per cent.



CYCLING

O'Connor, Sivakov join Seixas at Decathlon CMA CGM

PARIS, France (AFP) — Australian Ben O'Connor has rejoined Decathlon CMA CGM, where he will race alongside rising star Paul Seixas, the French team announced on Tuesday. The 30-year-old is also joined at the outfit by fellow new signing, Frenchman Pavel Sivakov. "Ben O'Connor is back home! He left his mark on the team between 2021 and 2024, with a stage win at the Tour de France in 2021 and another at the Vuelta in 2024, where he also finished 2nd overall," Decathlon CMA CGM posted on social media. O'Connor, who has spent the last two years riding for Jayco Al Ula, has signed a contract until 2028. As well as his stage victory on an unusually cold day at the Tour in Tignes with the French team in 2021 — then known as AG2R Citroen — he also won a stage at the Tour in 2025 with Jayco Al Ula, on the Col de la Loze. Sivakov, 29, was also announced by the team on Tuesday after joining from Tadej Pogacar's UAE Team Emirates on a three-year deal.

NBA

Warriors' Curry 'fine' after limping out of practice — Kerr

SAN FRANCISCO, United States (AFP) — Golden State coach Steve Kerr said superstar guard Stephen Curry was "fine" after limping out of the team's open practice on Sunday. Curry pulled up short after his right foot skidded on the court as he made a turn. He immediately pounded the basketball on the floor and made his way gingerly to the sideline before departing for the locker room. Kerr told reporters after the practice that Curry told him he hurt his ankle, allaying fears that Curry might have aggravated the right knee injury that kept him out of 27 games late last season. "He's fine," Kerr said. Curry, a four-time NBA champion and two-time Most Valuable Player, played in just 43 games last season. The 38-year-old returned from the knee issue to play the last handful of games and in September the Warriors extended their long-term contract with Curry for two more years in a deal worth a reported \$116 million. The Warriors also resigned Draymond Green and brought back coach Steve Kerr on a two-year deal.

By Paul Nolp
Agence France-Presse

LOS ANGELES, United States — French phenomenon Victor Wembanyama, knocking on the door almost since his arrival in the NBA three years ago, is poised for the ultimate breakout season with the San Antonio Spurs.

"He just changes everything," superstar LeBron James said of the towering 22-year-old, who will be aiming to further break the mold with his ferocious defense and an extraordinarily versatile playing style for a player who stands 2.24m.

Wembanyama was unanimously voted Defensive Player of the Year last season. With spectacular averages of 25 points, 11.5 rebounds and 3.1 blocks he finished third in Most Valuable Player voting.

With another year under his belt Wembanyama is widely tipped to contend for both awards — and lead the young, ultra-talented Spurs back to the Finals a year after they were agonisingly denied by the New York Knicks.

"We're very hopeful, very ambitious and ready," Wembanyama said as training camp began.

Rejoining Wembanyama for another title tilt are 21-year-old Stephon Castle and 20-year-old Dylan Harper.

In the offseason they added another piece to



Victor Wembanyama and the San Antonio Spurs take on the New York Knicks in the 2026 NBA Finals

AFP photo

the puzzle in 34-year-old veteran Tobias Harris, who along with experience adds size and strength in the paint.

Harris was tabbed as the most under-rated signing of the offseason in a survey of the league's general managers.

But the Spurs fortunes will ultimately rest with Wemby.

"I think he has a ton of room to improve in all aspects," says Spurs coach Mitch Johnson, who took the helm in May 2025 as the Spurs

said goodbye to the iconic Gregg Popovich, who led the team to five titles.

"One thing for him will just be continue to manipulate the game and dictate the game, not just by scoring but by making plays for his teammates forcing the defence to make a decision and taking advantage of opportunities in front of him," said Johnson, who wants to see his star "almost puppeteering the game as we see the best players in our game do and

we've seen him do".

"I think that's an area for him to continue growing."

Steve Nash, the former two-time Most Valuable Player, says Wembanyama has the tools to earn MVP honors.

"In my eyes, Wemby had a case for MVP last year because of the totality of how he affects the game," Nash said as he discussed Wembanyama's MVP prospects with James on the "Mind the Game" podcast.

MVP? 1000%

"I think the difference is that traditionally you look at who closed the game for your team and Wemby can close games, but he doesn't, he's not necessarily a closer," Nash said. "Some nights, it's not his thing."

Nevertheless, Warriors veteran Draymond Green didn't hesitate to tip Wembanyama for MVP — and Defensive Player of the Year again.

"With his impact de-

fensively and offensively, the only thing that can stop him from MVP this year is injury... 1000 per cent I think he takes home both of them this year," Green said on his podcast.

Having enjoyed a spectacular ascent in his first three seasons, Wembanyama seems more than happy to embrace the expectations.

"We're fighting for the top spot of the mountain," he said. "We're going to have to move people in our way."

Malaysian embassy celebrates National Day, Malaysia Day

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — The Malaysian embassy in Jordan on Monday celebrated Malaysia's 69th National Day and 63rd Malaysia Day.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Nancy Namrouqa, members of the diplomatic corps, senior government officials, business leaders, media representatives and members of the Malaysian community in attendance.

In his keynote speech, Malaysian Ambassador to Jordan Mohamad Nasri Abdul Rahman highlighted His Majesty King Abdullah's state visit to Malaysia on October 11–12 as a milestone in bilateral relations.

During the visit, the two countries exchanged notes establishing a bilateral consultation mechanism and strengthening academic and diplomatic cooperation between Malaysia's Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations and the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy, Abdul Rahman said.

He commended Jordan's efforts to promote dialogue and de-escalation in the region under King Abdullah's



Photo courtesy of Malaysian embassy

Ambassador of Malaysia to Jordan Mohamad Nasri Abdul Rahman highlights relations between Jordan and Malaysia in his keynote speech on the occasion of the National Day of Malaysia on Monday

leadership and praised the Kingdom's role in safeguarding Muslim and Christian holy sites under the Hashemite Custodianship.

Discussions between King Abdullah and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim during the visit also explored opportunities to expand cooperation in trade, investment, semiconductors, technology, defence and skilled labour, the ambassador said.

He welcomed plans to reactivate the Jordan-Malaysia Trade Committee, noting that the two sides had explored ways to improve air connectivity, including the possible resumption of direct flights between Kuala Lumpur and Amman.

Bilateral trade reached nearly \$232 million in 2025, up 15 per cent from the previous year, with cooperation continuing to expand in renewable

energy, pharmaceuticals, technology, food products and the halal sector in 2026.

The ambassador also highlighted the recognition by Malaysia's Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) of the Jordan Standards and Metrology Organisation, which supports cooperation in the halal sector.

Education and people-to-people exchanges remain central to bilateral relations, with

1,848 Malaysian students currently pursuing higher education in Jordan, alongside efforts to boost tourism under the Visit Malaysia 2026–2027 campaign.

In 2025, Malaysia welcomed 8,957 visitors from Jordan, while 8,033 Malaysians travelled to the Kingdom, Abdul Rahman said, inviting Jordanians to visit Malaysia and experience its diverse cultures and cuisine.

"Malaysia is a country of many communities, cultures, languages and faiths. Our diversity has shaped who we are," the ambassador said, adding that nation-building also requires respect for differences and ensuring that progress benefits all members of society.

He also praised Jordan's role in addressing regional challenges and its emphasis on diplomacy and de-escalation.

Malaysia and Jordan share a commitment to the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state on the June 4, 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital, he said.



AFP photo

This photo taken on October 1 shows people attending the launch of the Indian multilingual rap album on climate crisis 'Climate Emergency Mixtape' at The Humming Tree in Bengaluru

Indian rappers use music to sound climate alarm

BENGALURU, India (AFP) — Indian rapper Kali needed little inspiration to write about dwindling water supplies — he drew on childhood memories of hauling plastic pots full of the precious resource.

Kali's "Neer Kodu" — "Give Water" in the Kannada language — is one of six tracks on the "Climate Emergency Mixtape", billed by its organisers as India's first multilingual rap album about the climate crisis.

The 29-year-old, whose real name is Akshay, grew up in Bengaluru and has been making music for more than a decade, citing Eminem and Akon as influences.

As a child, Kali walked for around 10 minutes to fill pots with water from

a public tap.

"We would always think... we should not waste this," he told AFP during the album launch this month.

Water shortages are a chronic problem in Bengaluru, India's tech hub, where many residents rely on groundwater wells that often run dry in summer.

Others depend on expensive water trucked in from elsewhere.

Climate change threatens to worsen water stress as temperatures rise and weather patterns shift.

India, the world's most populous country and third-largest greenhouse gas emitter, is vulnerable to extreme weather.

While some areas have

faced drought, others have suffered deadly floods and landslides triggered by heavy rain.

Briakesh Singh from Asar Social Impact Advisors, which is one of the collaborators on the album, said music helped express the challenge faced.

"If we want to reach out to people who are experiencing the climate crisis, we need to change how society tells those stories," Singh said.

"Music, we felt, is an extremely powerful medium."

Rapper Abisha also drew on experience for "Veppa Marathadiyila" — "Under the Neem Tree" in Tamil — a song about climate change's impact on marginalised communities.



DOWNLOAD
OUR APP NOW

Available on the
App Store

ANDROID APP ON
Google Play