

THE JORDAN TIMES



REPORT

WFP report shows high food waste in Jordan, minister urges reduction efforts

2



AVIATION

Air traffic at QAIA stable despite regional developments — CARC

3



MARITIME

Jordan monitors shipping disruptions as regional tensions test supply chains

7



WEEKENDER

Small Hands, Heavy Burdens

8



Thursday, March 12, 2026 | Ramadan 22, 1447 Hijri



King, Lebanon president discuss regional developments

His Majesty condemns Israel's attack on Lebanon, affirms Jordan's solidarity with Lebanese people

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah and Lebanon President Gen. Joseph Aoun, during a phone call on Wednesday, discussed the recent regional developments.

His Majesty condemned Israel's attack on Lebanon, affirming Jordan's solidarity with the Lebanese people and the Kingdom's readiness to provide them with support that would bolster their efforts to preserve Lebanon's security and stability, according to a Royal Court statement.

For his part, the Lebanese president praised Jordan's support for his country, highlighting the depth of relations between Lebanon and Jordan, the statement said.

The two leaders emphasised the need to halt the dangerous escalation in the region, respect the sovereignty of states and utilise dialogue to resolve conflicts.

Crown Prince meets with fifth cohort of Al Hussein Fellowship programme

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein met on Wednesday with the fifth cohort of Al Hussein Fellowship, a Crown Prince Foundation (CPF) programme that trains young leaders.

During the meeting, held at Al Hussein Palace, the Crown Prince commended the participants for their leadership skills, which led to their selection for the programme, emphasising the benefits of the opportunities offered by the programme and the importance of the participants investing in learning and development, and harnessing the new skills acquired to serve Jordan, according to a Royal Court statement.

His Royal Highness affirmed that Jordan, bolstered by the strength of its people and institutions, is capable of overcoming the impact of current developments in the region, praising the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army and security agencies for their vital role in protecting the Kingdom and maintaining its stability.



HRH Crown Prince Hussein meets on Wednesday with the fifth cohort of Al Hussein Fellowship, a Crown Prince Foundation programme that trains young leaders

The meeting also addressed a number of issues of concern to young people, with the Crown Prince listening to their views and suggestions on ways to enhance their role in development and community service.

His Royal Highness joined the participants in performing the maghreb prayer and for Iftar,

the statement said.

Al Hussein Fellowship programme, launched by the CPF in 2020, aims to instil modern leadership skills among youth from all regions of the Kingdom by engaging them in training programmes, in collaboration with international and local partners, in

the fields of leadership, politics, economics and social services.

Director of the Office of the Crown Prince Zaid Baqain, Chairman of the CPF Board of Trustees Adey Salamin, CPF CEO Tamam Mango and a number of CPF board members attended the meeting.

Gov't exempts NEPCO fuel purchases from taxes, customs duties

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet, during a session chaired by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday, decided to exempt National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) purchases of diesel and fuel oil from all taxes and fees, including the special tax and customs duties.

The move aims to safeguard the sustainability of the Kingdom's energy and electricity security as part of measures to address the repercussions of regional developments on the energy sector, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The decision follows earlier government measures that included temporarily facilitating the import of goods through land border crossings and exempting increases in maritime shipping costs from taxes and customs duties for six months.

The Cabinet also decided to remove the deduction previously included in the natural gas tariff sold to indus-



Prime Minister Jafar Hassan chairs a Cabinet session on Wednesday

tries for the benefit of NEPCO, a move aimed at reducing costs for the industrial sector.

The Cabinet also approved a draft law amending the 2026 Traffic Law, to be referred to the Lower House for constitution-

al procedures.

The amendments aim to enable citizens to complete vehicle sale and purchase transactions electronically, using audiovisual communication tools and electronic signatures, without the need to ap-

pear in person before a notary public or visit licensing departments.

To safeguard the rights of both parties, the system requires the buyer to deposit the vehicle's price into a special account at the Driver and Vehicle Li-

censing Department, with the amount transferred to the seller once the sale is finalised.

The amendments also grant the relevant authorities the power to sell vehicles held in impound yards after one year instead of two if their owners fail to regularise their status.

The Cabinet also approved a draft amendment to the Civil Status Law, granting digital IDs explicit legal validity as an official means of identification alongside the national ID card and requiring both public and private entities to recognise them.

The draft law also provides for the establishment of a free digital mailbox through the "Sanad" application for every citizen, resident, or business to receive notifications, correspondence and e-commerce parcels, linked to the national number and the location of the individual's residence or establishment.

Continued on page 5



The Foreign Ministry on Wednesday condemns the continued closure of the gates of the Al Aqsa Mosque/Haram Al Sharif by Israeli authorities

Jordan, Arab, Islamic countries condemn Israeli closure of Al Aqsa gates

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Egypt have condemned Israeli occupation authorities' continued closure of the gates of Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif to Muslim worshippers particularly during the holy month of Ramadan.

In a joint statement on Wednesday, the for-

eign ministers of the seven Arab and Muslim countries noted that the "security restrictions on access to the Old City of Jerusalem and its places of worship, coupled with discriminatory and arbitrary access restrictions to the other places of worship in the old city constitute a flagrant violation to international law, including international humanitarian law, the histori-

cal and legal status quo, and the principle of unrestricted access to places of worship".

The ministers affirmed their "absolute rejection and condemnation of this illegal and unjustified measure, as well as Israel's continued provocative actions at Al Aqsa Mosque/Al Haram Al Sharif and against worshippers".

Continued on page 5

Jordan dispatches 25-truck humanitarian aid convoy to Lebanon

AMMAN (JT) — Under Royal directives, the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO), in cooperation with the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF), on Wednesday dispatched a humanitarian aid convoy to Lebanon.

The convoy includes 25 trucks carrying relief supplies, food and medicines prepared as part of Jordan's humanitarian response to support



The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation in cooperation with the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army on Wednesday dispatches a humanitarian aid convoy to Lebanon

vulnerable communities and reinforce relief efforts in affected ar-

eas, according to JHCO.

Continued on page 5

Registered refugees in Jordan drop to about 427,000 by February — UNHCR

AMMAN (JT) — The number of registered refugees and asylum seekers in Jordan fell to around 427,000 by February 2026, down from about 437,000 at the end of January, marking a decline of 2.3 per cent, according to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Refugees from Syria continue to constitute the vast majority of those registered with the UN agency, numbering 403,548 and accounting for 94.5 per cent of the

total, according to UNHCR figures cited by the Mamlaka TV

Iraq followed with 12,309 refugees, representing 2.9 per cent of the total, while Yemen accounted for 6,089 refugees, at 1.4 per cent, and Sudan 4,270 refugees, at 1 per cent. Smaller numbers included 322 refugees from Somalia and 393 from other nationalities.

Data revealed that the majority of refugees live outside camps, with around 343,703, or 80.5 per cent of the total, re-

siding in urban areas across Jordanian cities and towns, while 83,228, or 19.5 per cent, remain in camps.

Within the camps, 49,596 refugees live in Za'atari Refugee Camp and 33,475 reside in Azraq Refugee Camp, according to the UN agency.

Children make up nearly half of all refugees in Jordan, with 209,467 children representing 49.06 per cent of the total, compared with 199,485 adults, or 46.73 per cent.

Continued on page 5



A view of the Za'atari refugee camp in Mafraq Governorate, some 90 kilometres northeast of Amman

WFP report shows high food waste in Jordan, minister urges reduction efforts

Jordanians discard 81.3 kilogrammes of food per person annually

By Osama Alkafri

AMMAN — Food waste remains one of the most overlooked challenges in Jordan's food system, with new national data revealing that households discard an estimated 81.3 kilogrammes of food per person each year.

The figure, released in February through a series of national studies conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Jordan in collaboration with the Higher Food Security Council and the Department of Statistics, provides the first comprehensive evidence of food waste levels across multiple sectors in the Kingdom.

According to the findings, households account for the largest share of food waste, but significant quantities are also generated in the hospitality and service sectors.

Restaurants discard some 12,291 tonnes of food annually, while hotels generate around 3,739 tonnes each year. Hospitals also contribute to the total, producing about 1,302 tonnes of food waste annually.

WFP officials said that the research represents a major step forward in understanding food waste in Jordan, where previous



estimates were largely based on global models rather than country-specific data.

"This research helped close a critical data gap by providing locally generated and statistically supervised evidence," WFP Jordan told The Jordan Times.

Globally, the level of food waste in Jordan sits slightly above the international average

of 79 kilogrammes per capita annually. However, it remains within the typical range observed worldwide.

Beyond the numbers, experts warn that the implications of food waste extend far beyond discarded meals. In a country that imports a significant share of its food supply, wasted food also represents wasted financial resources.

"When food is discarded, the money spent purchasing, importing, transporting, storing, preparing and serving that food is also lost," WFP Jordan said.

For households, this translates into unnecessary spending on food that is never consumed.

For businesses such as restaurants, hotels and hospitals, food waste increases operation-

al costs and reduces efficiency.

At the national level, the consequences are even more significant. Jordan relies heavily on imported food, meaning that discarded food also reflects lost economic value within the national supply chain.

"In a resource-constrained economy, reducing food waste is not only an environmental priority but an economic necessity," WFP Jordan noted.

The environmental impact is equally concerning. Jordan is among the most water-scarce countries in the world, meaning that food waste also represents wasted water, energy and agricultural inputs used in food production and distribution.

Officials say addressing the issue requires both institutional reforms and changes in consumer behaviour.

Under Jordan's National Food Security Strategy 2021-2030, reducing food waste has been identified as a key pillar for boosting food system resilience and improving resource efficiency.

Working under the coordination of the Higher Food Security Council, WFP is supporting several initiatives aimed at addressing the problem,

including the development of governance frameworks, measurement tools and coordination mechanisms to help institutions better track and reduce food waste.

One proposal currently under development is the establishment of a Food Waste and Loss Management Union, designed to enhance national coordination and provide practical tools for stakeholders across the food system.

At the same time, behavioural change campaigns are encouraging households and businesses to adopt more responsible purchasing, storage and consumption practices.

Environmental authorities are also raising concerns about the consequences of food waste once it reaches landfill sites.

Minister of Environment Ayman Sulaiman said that food waste constitutes a major component of municipal solid waste in Jordan, accounting for more than half of total waste.

"When organic waste decomposes in landfills without oxygen, it produces methane emissions, which are among the most powerful greenhouse gases," Sulaiman told The Jordan Times.

According to national reports, the waste sector accounted for about 2,729 gigagrammes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions in 2023, representing roughly 8 per cent of Jordan's total greenhouse gas emissions.

The minister noted that the problem is particularly sensitive in Jordan because municipal waste contains a high proportion of organic material, largely made up of food scraps.

As these quantities increase, landfill sites face growing pressure, including higher methane emissions, unpleasant odours and the formation of leachate that can threaten groundwater resources.

Large volumes of organic waste also accelerate the filling of landfill sites, raising operational and management costs for municipalities.

To address the issue, the Ministry of Environment is implementing several measures within the framework of Jordan's waste management and circular economy strategies.

These include encouraging the separation of waste at the source, particularly organic waste, promoting projects that convert food waste into compost or fertiliser,

and exploring the production of biogas from organic materials.

The government has also introduced new instructions requiring industrial and commercial sectors to separate recyclable waste at the source, helping to support recycling industries and circular economy practices.

Jordan is also working to align its national efforts with Sustainable Development Goal 12.3, which aims to halve global per capita food waste by 2030.

According to Sulaiman, achieving this target requires close coordination among government institutions, municipalities, the private sector and civil society organisations.

Partnerships with restaurants, hotels and food redistribution initiatives, particularly during large social events such as weddings and condolence gatherings, are also being explored as part of broader efforts to reduce food waste.

For Jordan, officials say, addressing food waste is not only about environmental protection but also about improving economic efficiency, conserving scarce resources and building a more sustainable food system.

FARMING



Funded by the UN Joint SDG Fund, the programme aims to transform Jordan's fruits and vegetables sector into an inclusive, climate resilient and market driven system

Jordan launches SDG funded programme to transform agri food systems

AMMAN (JT) — Under the patronage of Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khreisat, the government and the United Nations on Wednesday launched the "Local financing solutions to support Jordan's agri food system transformation" Joint Project during a virtual inception workshop.

The event brought together national institutions, municipalities, producer organisations, and UN agencies, including UN Resident Coordinator Sheri Ritsema Anderson, FAO Representative Nabil Assaf, and UNIDO Country Representative Sulafa Madanat, according to a FAO Jordan statement.

On behalf of the minister of agriculture, the secretary-general said, "This initiative is a major step toward strengthening Jordan's agricultural resilience."

"By investing in climate smart practices and modern post harvest systems, we are ensuring that farmers — especially smallholders — have the tools and support they need to increase productivity, reduce losses, and access better markets," the secretary-general added.

Funded by the UN Joint SDG Fund, the programme aims to transform Jordan's fruits and vegetables sector into an inclusive, climate resilient and market driven system.

The project uses a blended finance model combining grants, producer contributions, and credit...

The project uses a blended finance model combining grants, producer contributions, and credit...

It will support more than 1,500 smallholders and MSMEs in Deir Alla through climate smart agriculture investments, business planning, governance strengthening and market integration. It also includes the establishment of two

modern post harvest centres, designed to reduce losses by 30-40 per cent and expand access to higher value domestic and export markets, according to the statement.

The UN resident coordinator said, "Strengthening local food systems is about more than agricultural productivity — it is about building economic, environmental, and social resilience. And it is about ensuring that everyone benefits, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable groups. This UN Joint Programme responds directly to that need."

The project uses a blended finance model combining grants, producer contributions, and credit, while aligning with Jordan's Food Security Strategy (2021-2030) and the UN Cooperation Framework (2023-2027).

The project places strong emphasis on supporting women, youth, and refugees, offering targeted training, financing windows, and inclusive employment opportunities to ensure that no one is left behind in the transformation of Jordan's agri food systems.

Tkiyet Um Ali delivers 1,000 tents for displaced people in Gaza

AMMAN (JT) — Tkiyet Um Ali (TUA) has completed the delivery of 1,000 tents as part of its humanitarian response in the Gaza Strip, aimed at improving shelter conditions for displaced families.

The TUA said that the assistance was distributed across five shelter sites in eastern and western Gaza City, northern Gaza in Jabalia, the central area of Deir Al Balah, and southern Gaza in Khan Younis, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported on Wednesday.

The project was valued at around JD950,000.

The initiative was implemented over four phases, beginning with eastern and western Gaza City, followed by Jabalia in the north, then Deir Al Balah in central Gaza, and concluding in Khan Younis in the south.



Tkiyet Um Ali completes the delivery of 1,000 tents as part of its humanitarian response in the Gaza Strip, aimed at improving shelter conditions for displaced families

Beyond shelter, the response included essential services such as water supply, sanitation, food assistance and educational support,

aimed at preserving human dignity, reducing health risks and helping affected families cope with the ongoing crisis, particularly during Ramadan.

The project was carried out in coordination with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation and in part-

nership with the Palestine Tomorrow Association for Social Development inside Gaza.

As part of the initiative, nine temporary classrooms were established, providing around 243 seats for some 1,696 students from kindergarten through the 10th grade to continue their education on a shift basis.

The project also included the construction and rehabilitation of 40 sanitation units after assessing existing facilities and prioritising the most urgent needs across the camps.

Additional measures included the creation of a safe space for widowed women and families of orphans, as well as the replacement and repair of damaged tents to help ease the suffering of displaced families amid the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Jordan's consumer prices rise by 1.17% in February — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's consumer prices rose by 1.17 per cent in February 2026 compared with the same month in 2025, while recording a slight monthly increase of 0.22 per cent from January.

According to a report issued by the Department of Statistics (DoS), the figures indicated that inflation is nearing a stable trend, with monthly increases remaining limited and below one percentage point, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

On a cumulative basis, the consumer price index (CPI) for the first two months of 2026 rose by 1.11 per cent compared with the same period in 2025.

Price increases during January and Febru-



The Department of Statistics says that consumer prices rise by 1.17 per cent in February 2026 compared with the same month in 2025

ary 2026 were also lower than the monthly levels recorded throughout 2025, the report noted.

The rise in the CPI in February was mainly driven by increases in several commodity

groups, including personal belongings (40 per cent), oils and fats (13.95 per cent), tea, coffee and cocoa (11.95 per cent), fruits and nuts (5.19 per cent), and tobacco and cigarettes (3.99 per cent).

Meanwhile, prices declined in other categories, including meat and poultry (7.43 per cent), household appliances (3.24 per cent), fuel and lighting (2.07 per cent), and transport (1.48 per

cent). Comparing the cumulative CPI for the first two months of 2026 with the same period of 2025, the largest increases were recorded in personal belongings (39.47 per cent), oils and fats (13.70 per cent), tea, coffee and cocoa (11.99 per cent), fruits and nuts (4.71 per cent), and tobacco and cigarettes (3.99 per cent).

In contrast, vegetables, dried and canned legumes and fuel and lighting recorded declines of 2.09 per cent and 1.48 per cent, respectively.

The CPI is calculated based on a consumer basket of 850 goods, including 325 food items and 525 non-food items, the report added.



Prime Minister Jafaar Hassan on Wednesday announced that the Eid Al Fitr holiday will begin on Friday March 20

March 20 to 23 announced as holiday in observance of Eid Al Fitr

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafaar Hassan on Wednesday announced that the Eid Al Fitr holiday will begin on Friday, March 20, and continue until Monday March, 23. Under the circular, all ministries, government departments, public institutions, official universities, municipalities, joint service councils, the Greater Amman Municipality, and companies wholly owned by the government will observe the holiday during this period, according to a Prime Ministry statement. The decision excludes ministries and official departments whose work nature requires otherwise.

Air traffic at QAIA stable despite regional developments — CARC

AMMAN (JT) — Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission (CARC) Chief Commissioner Daifallah Farajat on Wednesday said that air navigation at Queen Alia International Airport (QAIA) remained steady and stable during the first third of March despite regional developments. Farajat highlighted the high readiness and efficiency of technical and operational teams in handling both arriving and departing passenger traffic, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. He noted that analytical data from March 1 to 10 shows an upward trend in flight numbers, reflecting the sector's resilience. Farajat noted that March 6 saw significant activity, with a total of 141 flights. He attributed this operational momentum to continued confidence in the safety and se-



Petra photo

Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission Chief Commissioner Daifallah Farajat on Wednesday says that analytical data from March 1 to 10 shows an upward trend in flight numbers, reflecting the sector's resilience

curity of Jordanian airspace. The commissioner said that the airport maintained a daily operating rate ranging between 110 and 130 flights throughout most of this period. "We look forward to the upcoming phase with great optimism," Alfarajat said, noting that data indicate QAIA's ability to regain its regular pace of 240 aircraft per day, supported by high-quality

navigation services and the resumption of operations by several airlines to Amman. He also affirmed that the commission is committing all resources to ensure continued stability and is working closely with airport partners to provide a safe and seamless travel experience, bolstering Jordan's role as a vital regional aviation hub and tourism destination.

Foreign minister discuss regional escalation with UAE, Brunei, Singapore, Estonia, counterparts

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi on Wednesday held a phone call with UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. During the call, Safadi conveyed Jordan's condolences to the UAE over the death of two members of the country's armed forces while carrying out na-

tional duty, according to a Foreign Ministry statement. The two ministers also discussed the repercussions of the dangerous regional escalation and its implications for regional and international peace and stability. Safadi reaffirmed Jordan's support for the UAE in confronting Iranian attacks and for any measures taken to safeguard its security,

sovereignty and stability, as well as the safety of citizens and residents. Bin Zayed expressed the UAE's solidarity with Jordan in facing Iranian attacks, the statement added. Also on Wednesday, Safadi received phone calls from Brunei's Second Foreign Minister Erywan Pehin Yusof, Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan and

Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna. The ministers discussed the impact of the recent regional escalation on international security and stability, and explored diplomatic measures to restore calm and safeguard the region. Safadi also reiterated Jordan's condemnation of Iranian attacks on its territory and on fellow Gulf Cooperation Council states.



Ayman Safadi

SUPPLY

Medicine stocks sufficient for six months — stakeholders

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Health Ibrahim Badour on Wednesday met with representatives of the Jordanian Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and the Association of Pharmaceutical Warehouse Owners. During the meeting at the Ministry of Health, Badour emphasised reviewing the current status of medical supply chains and exploring measures to enhance their sustainability, ensuring the continuous availability of medicines and medical supplies in the local market.



Petra photo

Minister of Health Ibrahim Badour on Wednesday meets with representatives of the Jordanian Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and the Association of Pharmaceutical Warehouse Owners

The meeting, held under the directives of Prime Minister Jafar Hassan, aimed to review measures to maintain the continuity of supply chains, reinforce medicine and medical supply inventories, and meet the needs of the health sector, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. Badour highlighted the need to maintain adequate and safe levels of medicine stocks and to monitor the availability of essential medicines in the local market, ensuring

the continued delivery of health services efficiently and effectively. He also affirmed that the Ministry of Health maintains close coordination with all components of the pharmaceutical sector and relevant authorities to ensure integrated efforts and enhance the efficiency of supply chains. The minister noted that this cooperation helps support the operations of companies and warehouses, tackle challenges in importing, manufac-

turing and distributing, and ensure that medicines and medical supplies remain consistently available to citizens. "The Cabinet last week approved the settlement of arrears owed to pharmaceutical companies and warehouses for 2024, totalling JD70 million, in a move to support the stability of the pharmaceutical sector and strengthen the capacity of companies and warehouses to continue supplying the health sector with

medicines and medical supplies," he added. Jordanian Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers CEO Hanan Shoul confirmed that Jordanian pharmaceutical factories continue production to meet local market needs and that stocks of locally manufactured medicines are reassuring, sufficient for at least six months, reflecting the national pharmaceutical industry's ability to support the Kingdom's medicine security. Drugstore Owners

Association Secretary-General Thamer Obeidat noted that stocks of imported medicines in the local market are also sufficient for at least six months. He added that warehouses continue to secure supplies and ensure the smooth distribution of medicines across all health sectors, highlighting close coordination with official health authorities to maintain the sustained availability of medicines in Jordan and safeguard the country's medicine security under all conditions. Head of the Syndicate of Medical, Scientific and Laboratory Supplies Traders Taisser Abusheikha said that stocks of medical supplies and laboratory materials are available for more than six months. He also highlighted the stability of supply and distribution in the local market, attributing it to ongoing coordination with relevant authorities and daily communication with importing companies to ensure the safe and timely shipment and clearance of these materials.

Lower House reviews Audit Bureau 2024 report

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — The Lower House on Wednesday discussed the Financial Committee's report on the Audit Bureau's 2024 annual report. During a session chaired by Speaker Mazen Turki Qadi and attended by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan and members of the ministerial team, the House reviewed government institutions' compliance with legislation and the management of public funds and assessed the implementation of financial oversight measures. Presenting the committee's findings, the rapporteur said the report covered 171 oversight outputs, divided into several categories based on the nature of the findings and required follow-up. "Of these, 60 cases, encompassing 451 items or 35.3 per cent of all audit outputs, were fully corrected after corrective measures by the concerned institutions and were

subsequently closed," he added. "Eleven outputs, representing 6.5 per cent, confirmed violations of public funds and were referred to the judiciary. Thirteen outputs, accounting for 7.6 per cent of the total, indicated suspected corruption and were forwarded to the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission for further investigation." The committee also identified 45 cases, or 26.5 per cent of all outputs, involving unauthorised payments, bonuses or allowances exceeding legal limits. The total value of these payments reached JD2.463 million, with recovery procedures initiated, though only 4.4 per cent has been collected to date. Overall, the Audit Bureau's oversight efforts were credited with preventing potential losses to the public treasury estimated at JD22.3 million. Several MPs raised concerns over financial management, oversight of govern-



Photo courtesy of Lower House

The Lower House on Wednesday discusses the Financial Committee's report on the Audit Bureau's 2024 annual report

ment-affiliated companies, and delays in implementing public projects. The Financial Committee said its review focused on three main areas: Analysing audit outputs and the implementation of post-audit mechanisms, examining the final accounts for the 2024 fiscal year and outlining its decisions regarding oversight findings. Internal audit units across government entities were also evaluated. A programme targeting 169 internal audit units aimed to enhance efficiency

through specialised training and the development of a best-practices guide by the Audit Bureau. The initiative seeks to strengthen oversight standards and improve compliance within public institutions. The committee's review of the 2024 final accounts also highlighted discrepancies in public revenue estimates, particularly tax revenues, which were attributed to overly optimistic assumptions regarding economic growth. Some projections failed to adequately account for

sectoral performance, unemployment, inflation, and rising living costs. The committee stressed that future revenue forecasts should be aligned with realistic economic indicators and consumption trends to ensure accurate budgeting and reduce gaps between projected and actual revenues. Financial Committee members called for the continuation of reforms under the economic modernisation framework, balancing the need for fiscal sustainability with the economic pressures facing citizens and key sectors. The session underscored Parliament's ongoing role in monitoring public spending, enhancing transparency and ensuring that corrective measures are implemented promptly. The committee reiterated that robust financial oversight is essential to safeguarding public resources and maintaining public trust in government institutions.



Petra photo

The Jordan Logistics Association says that some shipping lines have temporarily suspended outbound cargo from certain Gulf ports due to ongoing regional developments

Aqaba Port operations stable despite slight rise in shipping fees — syndicate

AMMAN (JT) — Aqaba Port continues to operate normally for both incoming and outgoing cargo, despite a slight rise in shipping fees imposed by international shipping lines, the Jordan Logistics Association (JLA) said on Wednesday. In a statement, Syndicate President Nabil Khatib said some shipping lines have temporarily suspended outbound cargo from certain Gulf ports due to ongoing regional developments. Meanwhile, exports to Europe, the United States,

China, and other destinations continue as usual. Khatib noted that shipping costs have risen slightly from several countries due to higher oil prices and increased vessel insurance, stressing that this trend affects all countries in the region, not just Jordan. He added that most global shipping lines have implemented "emergency conflict fees" since the outbreak of the war, \$2,000 per 20 foot container and \$4,000 per 40 foot container for both imports and exports,

which could negatively impact the shipment of lower-value local goods. "Despite these measures, maritime operations remain relatively stable," he said. Statistics from the syndicate show a 15.1 per cent increase in containers arriving at Aqaba Container Port during the first two months of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025. The port handled 82,659 containers in January-February 2026, up from 71,822 containers in January-February 2025.

Fils Al Reef committee approves JD535,000 for 237 electricity connections in March

AMMAN (JT) — The higher steering committee of the Fils Al Reef, a fee added to each kilowatt a household uses, on Wednesday approved electricity connections for 237 homes and sites in March at a total cost of

JD535,000. During a meeting chaired by Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Saleh Kharabshah, the committee endorsed projects to be connected to electricity through both conventional net-

works and solar systems funded by the Rural Electrification Fund. The projects cover residential clusters and economic activities, following recent amendments expanding the scheme, according to an Energy

Ministry statement. Director of the Electricity and Rural Electrification Directorate at the Ministry Hisham Momani presented details of the approved projects. He said the list includes residential clusters of five

homes outside zoning boundaries at a cost of JD42,000, clusters of three homes costing JD36,000, and individual houses outside zoning areas benefiting from existing networks at JD27,000. Low-income house-

holds located within zoning areas in electricity concession zones will also receive support amounting to JD6,000, he added. In support of livestock and agricultural production, the fund will finance electricity connections

for poultry, cattle, sheep, and fish farms in poverty pockets outside zoning areas at a cost of JD24,000, as well as farms with artesian wells at JD12,000, contributing to food security and self-reliance. The fund further al-

located JD193,000 to support productive, industrial, and investment projects in poverty pockets and areas outside zoning boundaries, provided that they create employment opportunities for local residents.



AFP photo

An Emirates Airlines plane is parked at Dubai International Airport in Dubai on Wednesday

Drones fall near Dubai airport, ships hit as Iran presses on with attacks

DUBAI (AFP) — Drones fell near Dubai airport, injuring four people, while ships were hit in or near the Strait of Hormuz on Wednesday as Iran kept up its campaign disrupting oil markets and air and maritime traffic.

The oil-rich Gulf has borne the brunt of Iran's attacks in response to US-Israeli strikes that sparked the Middle East war, with Tehran targeting US assets but also civilian infrastructure.

Iran has also targeted Gulf energy infrastructure and choked shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, which normally carries nearly 20 per cent of global oil production, prompting wild swings in prices.

A container ship and a bulk carrier were hit off the coast of the UAE, one off Dubai and the other off the northern Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah by unknown projectiles, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO).

A third ship was also hit by a projectile off Oman, in the Strait of Hormuz, which caused

a fire that was later extinguished according to the UKMTO.

Saudi Arabia intercepted drones targeting the Shaybah field, crucial to its production, while explosions rang out over Qatar and the UAE reported fresh attacks.

The oil-rich Gulf has borne the brunt of Iran's attacks in response to US-Israeli strikes...

Saudi Arabia also said it intercepted seven ballistic missiles

targeting its eastern region and the Prince Sultan Air Base, where an American service member was fatally wounded on March 1.

Tehran appears to be attempting to knock major Gulf refineries offline while also tightening its chokehold on the strait in a quest to inflict maximum pain on the global economy.

In the past few days, Saudi Aramco's sprawling Ras Tanura facility, home to one of the Middle East's largest refineries, was targeted as well as the UAE's Ruwais refinery, one of the largest in the world.

Iranian attacks have already forced state-owned QatarEnergy, one of the world's largest producers of liquefied natural gas, to halt production last week and declare force majeure.

Energy producers in Kuwait made similar declarations, which are a warning that events beyond their control may lead them to miss export targets.

Israel strikes central Beirut as Lebanon death toll tops 630

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — Israel carried out a strike in the heart of Beirut on Wednesday for a second time since Lebanon was dragged into the Middle East war, as the death toll in the country climbed past 630.

In New York, around 30 countries backing the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon voiced concern over the fighting in the country, which became a front in the wider conflict last week when Hizbollah attacked Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Israel, which had kept up strikes in Lebanon even before the war despite a 2024 ceasefire with Iran-backed Hizbollah, has since launched air raids across the country and sent ground troops into border areas — an offensive that has killed 634 people, including 91 children, according to authorities.

Israel's UN envoy Danny Danon said Wednesday that Israeli forces would continue to operate in Lebanon "as long [as] there will be a threat against us".

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) said "the enemy targeted an apartment in the Aisha Bakkar area" in central Beirut, a densely populated neighbourhood close to one of the city's biggest shopping malls.

AFPTV's live broadcast captured the sound of an air strike followed by a fireball erupting in an apartment in a multistorey residential building.

An AFP correspondent saw destroyed walls on the building's



AFP photo

Smoke billows from the site of an Israeli air strike that targeted the Hadath Lailaky neighbourhood in Beirut's southern suburbs on Wednesday

seventh and eighth floors, with damaged cars nearby and security forces present at the scene.

When the strike hit, "I ran from room to room, pulled my wife and daughter out of the rooms and hid them behind a wall, then the second strike hit," said Fawzi Asmar, owner of a bakery on the same street.

Samer Knio, a civil defence paramedic, said glass and debris fell on his team as they were evacuating casualties "but God protected us".

Lebanese authorities said on Wednesday that about 816,000 people had been registered as displaced, with around 126,000 staying in collective shelters.

Some residents fear being caught in Israeli air raids targeting people sheltering nearby.

"We don't know who they're targeting. May-

be someone related to something, maybe not," Amal Hisham, 46, said.

The health ministry announced an initial toll of four people wounded in the apartment strike — the second in central Beirut after Israel a seafarer hotel days ago, saying it was targeting Iranian foreign operations officers.

Iran later said the raid killed four of its diplomats.

Senior UN officials and member states called on Wednesday for an end to fighting in Lebanon at a Security Council meeting in New York.

Jerome Bonnafont, the French ambassador to the United Nations, told reporters before the meeting that "we troop-contributing countries to the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, joined by several other member states, express our

deep alarm at the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon".

Also on Wednesday, the Israeli army resumed strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs, where Hizbollah holds sway, after issuing a new evacuation warning.

AFPTV live footage showed smoke rising from the area following strikes.

Israeli air raids also continued in southern and eastern Lebanon, with the NNA reporting strikes in several areas.

The health ministry eight people killed in a strike in the south-eastern Bint Jbeil district, with NNA reporting the toll included five members of one family.

The ministry said seven people were also killed in a strike on the east Lebanon town of Tamnin Al Tahta, while "successive raids" overnight on the southern

town of Qana in the Tyre district killed five people.

In Hennawiyyeh, also in the Tyre area, the ministry said an overnight Israeli strike wounded two people who were then killed in a subsequent attack along with a rescue worker who attended the scene.

It also announced the death of a Red Cross paramedic from wounds sustained when "the Israeli enemy targeted the ambulance he was travelling in... on a rescue mission" two days earlier in the same district.

An AFP correspondent saw mourners, including some in Red Cross uniform, taking part in the paramedic's funeral procession on Wednesday in Tyre city.

Authorities said 15 healthcare workers are among those killed in Israeli strikes since March 2.

Iran's new supreme leader injured but 'safe', says president's son

PARIS, France (AFP) — Iran's new supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei is injured but "safe and sound", the son of the president said on Wednesday, offering the first official explanation for why the 56-year-old has not been seen since his appointment at the weekend.

"I heard news that Mr Mojtaba Khamenei had been injured. I have asked some friends who had connections," Yousef Pezeshkian, who is also a government adviser, wrote in a post on his Telegram channel.

"They told me that, thank God, he is safe and sound," added the son of President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Mojtaba Khamenei, until now a low profile if powerful behind-the-scenes figure, was named Iran's number one following the killing of his father Ali Khamenei in an air strike at the start of the US-Israeli war against the Islamic republic.

But there had been mounting questions



AFP photo

Iranians walk past a damaged building as they attend the funerals of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps commanders at Enghelab Square in Tehran on Wednesday

about his whereabouts and physical condition after his appointment by the Assembly of Experts clerical body, with the new supreme leader yet to be seen, let alone speak, in public.

State television had called Khamenei a "wounded veteran of the Ramadan war" without giving details, in reference to the conflict which broke out during

the holy Muslim fasting month.

In a report on Wednesday, The New York Times quoting three unnamed Iranian officials said that Khamenei "had suffered injuries, including to his legs, but that he was alert and sheltering at a highly secure location with limited communication".

There has been speculation that he was injured in the day-time air strike on a compound in Tehran that killed his father, as well as his mother and wife on the first day of the war on February 28.

His face has appeared on giant billboards in Tehran, with one showing him symbolically receiving the national flag from his father Ali while the founding leader of the Islamic republic, Ruhollah Khomeini, looks on.

Posters of him were

out of public view for some time.

Emile Hokayem at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies said he expected him "to sit in a bunker somewhere for a very long time because he saw what happened to his father, his wife, his mother who were all killed in the initial attack".

"Killing him early is certainly an Israeli priority. If he survives, he becomes a totem, a testimony to the resilience of the system," Hokayem told an online event organised by his think-tank on Monday.

He said he expected Khamenei to delegate power to run the government to national security chief Ali Larjani and the war effort to powerful parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

The army and the powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps both pledged allegiance to Khamenei after his nomination, as did the Tehran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen and the Hizbollah armed group in Lebanon.

Russian President Vladimir Putin promised "unwavering support". Before his nomination to the position, US President Donald Trump had warned that Khamenei would be "unacceptable" as new supreme leader.

"He's going to have to get approval from us," Trump told ABC News on Sunday. "If he doesn't get approval from us he's not going to last long."

Given that he instantly became a target for assassination by the United States and Israel at the weekend, analysts said he would remain

Trump said Iran 'welcome to compete' in World Cup, says Infantino

LAUSANNE (AFP) — US President Donald Trump has said that Iran is "welcome" to participate at the upcoming World Cup in North America, despite the ongoing Middle East war, FIFA chief Gianni Infantino said on Wednesday.

The war, triggered by US-Israeli strikes on February 28, has thrown into doubt Iran's participation at this summer's men's football World Cup, jointly hosted by Canada, Mexico and the United States.

During a meeting to discuss preparations for the competition, "we also spoke about the current situation in Iran", Infantino, the head of world football's governing body, wrote on Instagram.

"During the discussions, President Trump reiterated that the Iranian team is, of course, welcome to compete in the tournament in the United States," he wrote.

The comments marked the first time that Infantino, who in December created a FIFA peace prize and awarded it to Trump, has acknowledged the ongoing war in the Middle East.

Trump's remarks to Infantino are a stark contrast to his comments to Politico last week.

Trump told Politico: "I really don't care" if Iran play at the World Cup.

FIFA's president has grown close to Trump since he returned to the White House, even attending his inauguration.

Iran's federation football chief on Tuesday cast doubt on his team's participation in the sporting



AFP photo

FIFA President Gianni Infantino created a FIFA peace prize and awarded it to US President Donald Trump

extravaganza, following the defection of several women footballers from the Islamic republic during the Asian Cup in Australia.

"If the World Cup is like this, who in their right mind would send their national team to a place like this?" Mehdi Taj asked on Iranian state television.

While the event is spread out across three countries, Iran are scheduled to play all three group games in the United States, two in Los Angeles and one in Seattle.

Should Iran withdraw from the sport's quadrennial showpiece, it would be the first time a country did that since France and India pulled out of the 1950 finals in Brazil.

On Tuesday, at the Women's Asian Cup in Australia, some players from Iran's team claimed asylum after they came under fire from state television for not singing the country's national anthem before one match.

Five players, including captain Zahra Ghanbari,

slipped away from the team hotel under the cover of darkness to claim sanctuary from Australian officials, the Australian government announced.

At least two more team members applied to stay later in the day, according to local media.

However, Australia's Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke said on Wednesday that one of them had subsequently changed her mind.

Burke said in parliament on Wednesday that he had since been advised that one of the group "had spoken to some of the team mates that left and changed their mind".

"She had been advised by her team mates and encouraged to contact the Iranian embassy," he said.

"As a result of that, it meant the Iranian embassy now knew the location of where everybody was."

The remaining players have been moved from a safe house to another location, he said.

Tender Invitation

The General Headquarters of the Jordan Armed Forces/Royal Medical Services hereby announces Tender
P500/2025/95

شراء احتياج الخدمات الطبية الملكية من أجهزة (Nasal CPAP)

Bidders who desire to participate therein can obtain a copy of the tender documentation against a fee of 75JD non-refundable, provided that they bring along a valid trade licence.

Closing date sharp 1:00 P.M., WED 8th of APR 2026. Non conditional bid bond equal to (3%) of the total value of quotation must be submitted along with the quotations.

Any quotations/offers will not be accepted after above mentioned closing date and sharp time.

(The winning bidder is responsible for paying advertisement fees, regardless how often the bid is announced.)

For more details please contact us at www.jrms.jaf.mil.jo

Over 250 debris incidents reported across Kingdom — PSD

By Rana Hussein



AMMAN — The Public Security Directorate (PSD) said on Thursday that emergency service personnel dealt with over 250 reports of incidents caused by falling objects and debris across most governo-

rates of the Kingdom since February 28, with no new injuries recorded. The Civil Defence Department (CDD) and police personnel inspected some 259 scenes of debris and falling objects since Saturday until 3:00pm

on Thursday, Police Spokesperson Lt. Col. Amer Sartawi said. Sartawi urged citizens to adhere to instructions issued by the PSD and relevant authorities and to contact the unified emergency number (911) in the event of any

sightings. The police official reiterated previous warnings by the relevant authorities to refrain from approaching any suspicious object under any circumstances due to the extreme danger it may pose to the public.

FOCUS

Mideast war transforms Saudi oil pipeline into economic lifeline

By David Stout

Agence France-Presse

RİYADH, Saudi Arabia — Faced with an unprecedented crisis in shipping its oil to clients overseas, Saudi Arabia is moving rapidly to activate a decades-old contingency plan — pumping millions of gallons across vast tracts of desert to reach tankers on the Red Sea.

With the vital Strait of Hormuz all but closed, the region's petroleum-exporting monarchies are facing a potentially disastrous situation as Iran targets energy installations, storage capacity fills and production is throttled due to the shipping paralysis caused by the Middle East war.

The Gulf has been battered by Iranian attacks in retaliation for the US-Israeli strikes that sparked the conflict, with Tehran targeting both US assets in the region and civilian infrastructure alike.

To help manage the fiasco, Saudi Arabia is ramping up the use of the Petroline, its east-west pipeline bisecting the kingdom, Saudi state energy giant Aramco said during an earnings call this week.

"While we have faced



A view of the logo on the ARAMCO headquarter, the national Saudi Arabian Oil Company, towers in the King Abdullah Financial District of Riyadh on Monday

disruptions in the past, this one by far is the biggest crisis the region's oil and gas industry has faced," Aramco CEO and president Amin H. Nasser said, warning of "catastrophic consequences for the world's oil markets the longer the disruption goes on."

The CEO said the company was working hard to increase flows to the Petroline in the coming days, with the infrastructure's capacity reported to be an estimated seven million barrels a day.

The 750-mile network of pipes connects two waterways crucial for global commerce — the Gulf in the east and the Red Sea to the west.

"This will not 'fix' the Strait of Hormuz problem," warned Jim Bianco, president and founder of Bianco Re-

search, in a note posted on X.

According to Bianco, the Petroline carried roughly one million barrels a day before the war -- meaning just six million more can be added.

That total is a fraction of the roughly 21 million barrels of oil that passed through the Gulf before the war.

'No Plan'

The situation the Gulf finds itself in was unthinkable just weeks ago.

Despite the presence of an archipelago of US military bases dotting the region, Iran was able to effectively close the Strait of Hormuz and cause widespread disruptions in just a matter of days.

With a mix of missile strikes and drone barrages, Iran has

wreaked havoc on the Gulf's energy production and commercial aviation — two economic cornerstones — all while weathering punishing bombing raids by the US and Israel.

In a line stretching from Kuwait City to Abu Dhabi, Iran has methodically knocked major refineries offline and forced Qatar to shutter LNG installations that provide roughly a fifth of the world's liquefied natural gas.

The stranglehold only appears to be deepening, with the US appearing to acknowledge this week that Iran has begun mining the Strait of Hormuz — a chokepoint where around 20 per cent of global energy passes.

"Strait of Hormuz will either be a Strait of peace and prosperity for all or will be a Strait of defeat and suffering for warmongers," Iran's national security chief Ali Larijani wrote in posts in multiple languages Tuesday on X.

Murmurs from Washington have suggested that no immediate solution to the strait's issues is coming soon.

"On the Strait of Hormuz, they had NO PLAN," Democratic US Senator Chris Murphy wrote on social media

after a classified briefing this week.

"I can't go into more detail about how Iran gums up the Strait, but suffice it [to] say, right now, they don't know how to get it safely back open. Which is unforgivable, because this part of the disaster was 100% foreseeable."

Back in the Saudi Arabia, the plan to bypass the Strait of Hormuz is not without risks.

Finished in the 1980s when the Gulf was rattled by the Iran-Iraq war, the Petroline was constructed as a strategic contingency to get around any blockage of the Strait.

But the conduit transfers oil to export terminals on the Red Sea coast, which lies squarely in the Houthi rebels' crosshairs.

For nearly two years, the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen held the Red Sea hostage and halted much of maritime traffic there using similar tactics to those now being embraced by their sponsors in Tehran.

The Houthis have yet to enter the war, but their decision could be significant.

"How soon before Iran/Houthis hit the alternate export terminals and pipelines," analyst Michael Knights mused on X.

Iran warns of long war that would 'destroy' world economy

TEHRAN, WASHINGTON (AFP) — Iran warned on Wednesday it was ready for a long war of attrition that would "destroy" the world economy, after firing on two commercial ships and threatening vessels transiting through the Strait of Hormuz.

As Tehran tightened its chokehold on the crucial sea passage for the global fuel trade, the International Energy Agency announced a record release of 400 million barrels of oil reserves by its members in a bid to tame prices.

Oil prices have surged since February 28, when the United States and Israel attacked Iran, killed its supreme leader and plunged the Middle East into war.

"This is a major action aiming to alleviate the immediate impacts of the disruption in markets," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol told reporters.

"But to be clear, the most important thing for a return to stable flows of oil and gas is the resumption of transit through the Strait of Hormuz."

US President Donald Trump told reporters at the White House that "very quickly" there would be "great safety" for oil tankers in the strait, through which 20 per cent of global crude oil and liquefied natural gas supplies transit.

In an interview with Axios, he said the war could end "soon" and US forces had "practically nothing left to target".

With the conflict now in its 12th day, Iran's Revolutionary Guard vowed to target "economic centres and banks" that it deems linked to US and Israeli interests, prompting more international firms to evacuate employees from Dubai.

The US and Israel "must consider the possibility that they will be engaged in a long-term war of attrition that will destroy the entire American economy and the world economy", Ali Fadavi, advisor to the Revolutionary Guards' commander-in-chief, told state television.

Iran said it had struck the Liberian-flagged container ship Express Rome and the Thai bulk carrier Mayuree Naree because they had entered the Strait of Hormuz "after ignoring the warnings of the IRGC naval forces".

Oman's navy rescued 20 crew members, but efforts were underway to find three more. Pictures shared by the Thai navy



This handout photo taken on Wednesday and released by the Royal Thai Navy shows smoke rising from the Thai bulk carrier 'Mayuree Naree' near the Strait of Hormuz after an attack

showed black smoke pouring out of the vessel.

Iran also threatened to target regional ports if its own were attacked after the US accused Iran of using civilian ports in the strait for military operations and warned that it would consider them legitimate targets.

Analysts say a prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which also carries a third of the fertiliser for world food production, would have a devastating effect on the global economy, particularly in Asia and Europe.

French President Emmanuel Macron urged G7 leaders to act to restore navigation there "as soon as possible", while the UN asked for all parties to allow humanitarian cargo to transit.

Iran has amplified the economic fallout by targeting US allies in the Gulf. On Wednesday, drones fell near Dubai airport, injuring four people, the city's government said.

Drones also hit fuel tanks at Oman's Salalah Port, Oman News Agency reported.

Lebanon was drawn into the war last week when Iran-backed militant group Hizbollah attacked Israel in response to the killing of Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Israeli strikes on Wednesday hit an apartment building in central Beirut.

AFP's live broadcast captured the sound of an air strike followed by a fireball erupting.

An AFP correspondent saw destroyed walls in the building's seventh and eighth floors, with damaged cars nearby and security forces present at the scene.

When the strike hit, "I ran from room to room, pulled my wife and daughter out of the rooms and hid them behind a

wall, then the second strike hit", said Fawzi Asmar, owner of a bakery on the street where the strike took place.

Lebanon said the death toll in 10 days of fighting between Israel and Hizbollah during the Middle East war had reached 634, while more than 800,000 people have registered as displaced.

The Israeli-US attacks came weeks after Iranian authorities crushed mass protests, although the United States and Israel say they are not necessarily seeking to topple the Islamic republic.

Iranian authorities warned against dissent at home, with the country's police chief Ahmad-Reza Radan saying protesters would be viewed and dealt with as "enemies".

"This is the bitter reality of the Islamic republic: Even in the midst of a crisis, it seizes the opportunity for repression," Nobel peace prize laureate Shirin Ebadi wrote in a post on Telegram.

"When the police chief says 'hands on the trigger' it means he is ready to kill citizens instead of protecting people's lives," she added.

"The Islamic republic says in a thousand languages that its first enemy is its own people, followed by Israel and America."

The United States and Israel launched the war with an attack that killed Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

His son Mojtaba Khamenei has been named his successor, though he has yet to appear in public, and on Wednesday officials said the new ayatollah was injured but "safe".

Iran's health ministry said on March 8 that more than 1,200 people had been killed in US and Israeli strikes. AFP was not in a position to independently verify the figures.

Gov't exempts NEPCO fuel purchases from taxes, customs duties

Continued from page 1

The Cabinet also decided to allocate JD2.5 million to support the Civil Consumer Corporation, with the aim of strengthening its stock of essential commodities and ensuring their availability at reasonable prices amid potential increases in market prices.

The Cabinet also reviewed measures to accelerate the disburse-

ment of export rebates owed to industrial companies for 2020, 2021 and 2022, amounting to around JD15 million, and tasked the ministers of industry, trade and supply and finance with developing an appropriate mechanism to release these dues.

In the investment sector, the Cabinet approved measures related to investment in the Hammad and Sarhan basins, including con-

sidering companies that failed to sign investment agreements within the legal timeframe as having withdrawn.

It also approved leasing parts of the land to several companies for a period of 25 years under a temporary lease arrangement, as well as to re-offer other plots for agricultural investment through the Land and Survey Department's official website.

The Cabinet also ap-

proved the 2026 bylaw regulating and monitoring electoral campaigning within the Greater Amman Municipality, aimed at organising election advertising and reducing disorder and visual pollution.

It also decided to allocate JD1.7 million to the Department of Palestinian Affairs to support camp service committees and sports clubs, and to cover land rental costs for the camps.

The Cabinet also approved the justifications for the 2026 draft law on the Jordan National Museum of Fine Arts, paving the way for its submission to the Legislation and Opinion Bureau.

The museum will serve as the legal successor to the Royal Society of Fine Arts, safeguarding its artistic heritage, which includes thousands of works of art.

Jordan, Arab, Islamic countries condemn Israeli closure of Al Aqsa gates

Continued from page 1

They also stressed that Israel has no sovereignty over occupied Jerusalem or its Islamic and Christian holy sites.

The top diplomats reiterated that the entire area of the Al Aqsa Mosque, which amounts to 144 dunams, is a place of worship exclusively for Muslims, and that the Jerusalem Endowments and Al Aqsa Mosque Affairs Department, affiliated with the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, is the "legal entity with exclusive jurisdiction to administer the affairs of

the Al Aqsa Mosque and regulate entry to it."

The ministers called on Israel, as the occupying Power, to "immediately" end the closure of the gates of Al Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site, remove access restrictions to the Old City of Jerusalem, and refrain from obstructing Muslim worshippers' access to the mosque.

They also called on the international community to take a firm position that compels Israel to halt its ongoing violations and illegal practices against Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, as well as its violations

of the sanctity of these holy places.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Foreign Ministry condemned the continued closure of the gates of the Al Aqsa Mosque/Haram Al Sharif by Israeli authorities, preventing worshippers from performing religious rituals, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan.

In a statement, the ministry described the measure as a "flagrant" violation of international law, and the historic and legal status quo governing the holy site, as well as a breach of the principle of unrestricted access to places of worship.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Fuad Majali reiterated Jordan's firm rejection and condemnation of what he described as an illegal and unjustified measure, as well as Israel's continued provocative actions at the compound and against worshippers.

He stressed that East Jerusalem and its Islamic and Christian holy sites are occupied territories and that Israel holds no sovereignty over them.

Majali urged Israel, as the occupying power, to immediately reopen the gates of Al Aqsa Mosque and refrain from obstructing wor-

shippers' access to the site.

He also called on the international community to take a firm stance obliging Israel to halt its violations and illegal practices against Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

The spokesperson reiterated that the entire 144-dunum Al Aqsa Mosque is exclusively a place of worship for Muslims, and that the Jerusalem Awqaf Department, affiliated with the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, is the sole legal authority responsible for managing the site and regulating access.

Registered refugees in Jordan drop to about 427,000 by February — UNHCR

Continued from page 1

The refugee population included 107,299 boys and 102,168 girls, the figures showed, noting that among adults, there are 103,034 women and 96,451 men.

Geographically, the largest concentration of registered refugees is in Amman, where 147,038 refugees reside, followed by Irbid with 71,939 refugees and Mafraq with 52,803.

Other areas include Zarqa with 26,465 refugees, Balqa with 11,735, Madaba with 8,781, Maan with 6,964, and Karak with 5,487. Smaller numbers were recorded in Jerash with 4,850 refugees, Aqaba with 3,252, Ajloun with 3,079 and Tafflah with 1,081, in addition to 229 refugees in other locations.

On voluntarily returns, the agency said that more than 185,000 Syrian refugees have re-

turned from Jordan between December 8, 2024 and mid-February 2026 and noted that return rates have declined since the start of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting.

Between February 22 and 28, more than 350 refugees registered with the UN agency returned from Jordan to Syria, showing a drop of nearly 65 per cent compared with the previous week, when around 1,000 refugees returned.

Jordan dispatches 25-truck humanitarian aid convoy to Lebanon

Continued from page 1

JHCO said the initiative reflects the continued humanitarian role of the Kingdom in standing alongside other countries during times of crisis.

JHCO Secretary General Hussein Shibli said that the organisation is working in coordination with national

institutions to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches beneficiaries efficiently and without delay.

Shibli noted that the convoy forms part of continued efforts by Jordan to support Lebanon, stressing that the Kingdom continues to mobilise logistical and humanitarian capabilities to deliver assist-

ance amid the difficult circumstances facing the country.

JHCO will continue its humanitarian role in cooperation with the JAF and in coordination with official entities and humanitarian partners to ensure sustained delivery of relief aid to beneficiaries across affected areas, he added.

THE JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975

Chairman of the Board
Samih Maaitah

Director General
Hasan Jazzazi

Editor-in-Chief
Raed Omari

Editorial and advertising offices
Jordan Press Foundation

The Jordan Times is published daily except Saturdays

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

Trump team's Iran war rhetoric fuels backlash

By **Frankie Taggart**

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON, United States — When the top US general spoke Tuesday of his “respect” for Iranian fighters, the remark underscored a striking divide between the restrained language of the military brass and the swaggering rhetoric used by President Donald Trump and his administration.

From Trump joking that it was “more fun” to sink Iranian warships than capture them, to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth boasting that US forces were “punching them while they’re down”, critics say the administration’s messaging, reveling in the destructive power of the US military, has been jarring.

Professor Rachel Van Landingham, a retired Air Force judge advocate who teaches the law of war, said the tone amounted to a “crass trivialisation” of combat operations that suggested a “bloodthirsty” administration that “revels in the carnage”.

“This type of dangerous language is unusual for modern American leadership, and it demonstrates an extremely cavalier attitude towards the death and destruction that war entails,” she told AFP.

The rhetoric has also been amplified online, where official accounts circulate slick videos celebrating US strikes, blending real combat footage with imagery drawn from Hollywood films and video games.

It has marked a departure from the more restrained language traditionally used by American leaders during wartime, even when describing battlefield success.

War as spectacle

Hegseth has emerged as the administration’s most outspoken public voice since Washington joined Israel in launching the campaign against Iran.

At press briefings and public events, the former television host has adopted an at times boastful, mocking tone in describing the offensive.

“This was never meant to be a fair fight, and it is not a fair fight. We are punching them while they’re down, which is exactly how it should be,” Hegseth said last week.

In a television interview, he described the sinking of an Iranian vessel as “a quiet death”, while declaring that “the only ones that need to be worried right now are Iranians that think they’re going to live”.

He has also mocked allies uneasy about the widening conflict, referring to those who “wring their hands and clutch their pearls, hemming and hawing about the use of force”.

Trump himself has used similarly combative language.

Recounting a discussion with a military official, the president said he had questioned why Iranian ships were sunk rather than seized.

“We could have used it. Why did we sink them?” Trump said he had asked.

“He said, ‘It’s more fun to sink them.’”

Critics say repeating the remark publicly reinforced the impression of a White House treating war as spectacle.

Military contrast

Pushback intensified after the official White House account posted a video montage celebrating US strikes.

Cardinal Blase Cupich, the archbishop of Chicago, condemned the clip as turning real violence into entertainment.

“A real war with real death and real suffering being treated like it’s a video game, it’s sickening,” he said.

“Hundreds of people are dead, mothers and fathers, daughters and sons, including scores of children who made the fatal mistake of going to school that day.”

Top Democrats have accused the administration of sending contradictory messages about the conflict and demanded Tuesday that Trump, Hegseth and Secretary of State Marco Rubio testify before Congress on the war’s objectives.

Military leaders, by contrast, have largely maintained a more traditional tone.

General Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, drew attention when he was asked for his assessment of Iran’s military capability and noted the commitment of its fighters.

“I mean, I think they’re fighting, and I respect that,” he told reporters.

Is debt-to-GDP misleading? Rethinking public debt sustainability

By **Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal**

Public debt debates are often centered on one number: the debt-to-GDP ratio. When this ratio rises, concerns about financial stability increase. When it reaches certain levels, warnings about possible debt crises usually follow. For many years, this ratio has been the main tool used by governments, international organisations and financial markets to judge whether a country’s public debt is sustainable. It is widely used because it is simple and allows easy comparison between countries.

However, a recent study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research raises an important question: Are we relying too much on the debt-to-GDP ratio to judge fiscal sustainability? The study, written by economists Jonathan Berk of Stanford University and Jules van Binsbergen of the Wharton School, argues that this single indicator does not always show the full picture of a country’s financial position.

The main issue is that the debt-to-GDP ratio compares two different things. Public debt is a stock that builds up over many years of borrowing. GDP, on the other hand, is a flow that measures the value of goods and services produced in one year. This comparison only works well if we assume stable economic growth and stable interest rates in the future. But in today’s global economy, growth and financial conditions can change quickly. Because of this, the ratio may sometimes give a misleading impression about the real risks of public debt.

For this reason, the researchers suggest looking at other indicators that may provide a clearer understanding of debt sustainability. The first indica-

tor is interest payments as a share of GDP. This measure focuses on the real cost of debt. What matters most for governments is not only the total size of their debt, but whether they can afford the interest payments required to maintain it. If interest payments remain manageable compared with the size of the economy, even high levels of debt may not create immediate problems. But if interest rates rise sharply, even smaller debt levels can become difficult to manage.

The key message

is clear. Debt sustainability is not determined by a single number. Looking beyond the debt-to-GDP ratio and focusing on affordability...

The second indicator compares public debt to national wealth. Instead of comparing debt with one year of economic output, this measure compares it with the total value of assets in the economy, including infrastructure, capital and other productive resources.

In this sense, public debt can be viewed in a similar way to how companies manage borrowing. Businesses often carry significant debt, but investors evaluate their financial health by looking at their total assets

and their ability to generate income over time.

When researchers examined long-term data using these alternative indicators, they found interesting results. While debt-to-GDP ratios have increased in many advanced economies, interest payments have often remained relatively stable as a share of GDP. In some cases, they have even declined because global interest rates were low for long periods. Similarly, when debt is compared with national wealth, the long-term increase appears less dramatic than what the debt-to-GDP ratio alone suggests.

These findings help explain an important puzzle in the global economy. Some countries face debt crises even though their debt-to-GDP ratios are not very high. At the same time, other countries manage to sustain very high levels of debt for many years without experiencing major financial problems.

The difference often depends on several factors, including borrowing costs, economic strength, and the credibility of government policies. Countries with strong institutions, stable economic policies and developed financial markets usually have more flexibility in managing higher levels of debt. Investors trust their ability to repay. In contrast, countries with weaker institutions may face financial stress even with lower debt levels if market confidence declines.

This broader view shows that debt sustainability cannot be judged by a single number. It depends on many factors, including economic growth, interest rates, institutional strength and investor confidence. For policymakers, this has important implications. If governments focus only on reducing the debt-to-GDP ratio,

they may adopt policies that slow economic growth or reduce productive public investment.

A better approach is to look at a wider set of indicators. These include the cost of servicing debt, the strength of the national balance sheet, and the credibility of fiscal policy. This does not mean that high public debt is harmless. Instead, it means policymakers need a deeper understanding of when debt becomes a real problem and when it can remain manageable. In a world of economic uncertainty, rising public spending needs and changing financial conditions, improving how we measure debt sustainability has become increasingly important.

These findings help explain an important puzzle in the global economy...

The key message is clear. Debt sustainability is not determined by a single number. Looking beyond the debt-to-GDP ratio and focusing on affordability, national wealth, and economic strength can lead to better analysis and better policy decisions.

Saudi market and domestic tourism: Two pillars for stabilising Jordan’s tourism sector



Hakam Shatnawi

Jordan is currently experiencing a period of cautious anticipation amid rising regional tensions, which have begun to affect travel flows across the region. Although the Kingdom achieved strong tourism performance in 2025, the ongoing situation calls for a high level of national preparedness and a balanced strategy capable of protecting the tourism sector, whether the circumstances are short-lived or prolonged.

In 2025, Jordan welcomed approximately 6.5 million international visitors, generating around \$7.8 billion in tourism revenues. These figures underscore the sector’s significant role in supporting the national economy. A closer look at visitor distribution highlights the growing importance of nearby Arab markets, which accounted for the largest share of tourist arrivals, with more than 3.5 million Arab visitors.

Among these markets, Saudi

Arabia stands out as one of Jordan’s most important sources of tourists, with over 1.3 million Saudis visiting the Kingdom in 2025. Most entered via land border crossings that serve as continuous tourism bridges between the two countries. The Palestinian market also recorded nearly 594,000 visitors during the same year, reflecting the resilience of regional tourism flows even during periods of political uncertainty.

Gulf tourism, particularly from Saudi Arabia, possesses characteristics that make it relatively stable during times of regional tension. It is geographically close, largely family-oriented, and often involves

short, repeat visits, which are less affected by fluctuations in distant travel markets. This presents Jordan with a valuable opportunity to strengthen its position in this segment by improving border facilities, simplifying procedures, and developing short-stay packages that appeal to families and younger travelers alike.

At the same time, domestic tourism remains an essential pillar for maintaining sector stability. Recent experiences—particularly through the “Urdunna Jannah” initiative—have shown that Jordanian citizens can play an important role in sustaining tourism activity, not only during normal periods but also during external slowdowns.

Domestic tourism, therefore, represents a “safety valve” for national strategies navigating current challenges. Its impact can be enhanced by expanding tourism routes, reducing travel costs, encouraging the private sector to offer compet-

itive packages, and intensifying promotion of governorates and destinations that have received less attention.

Maintaining Jordan’s tourism momentum requires a clear and practical vision built on two complementary pillars: strengthening engagement with Arab and Gulf markets as key sources of inbound tourism and developing domestic tourism as a stabilising force. Flexible marketing campaigns that can be launched swiftly once regional conditions improve are also essential.

Tourism in Jordan is not merely a leisure activity; it is a vital economic driver. When managed through a realistic national vision that leverages data, opportunities, and regional partnerships, it remains one of the country’s most reliable engines of growth.

Hakam Shatnawi, professor of Tourism and Hospitality Management — Yarmouk University — hakamss@yu.edu.jo

Airlines grapple with impact of Mideast war

By **Tangi Quemener**

Agence France-Presse

PARIS, France — Global airlines are grappling with the effects of the war in the Middle East, as fuel prices soar and customers reassess their travel plans.

The war has sent the price of oil and gas soaring, after Iran’s Revolutionary Guards vowed to choke off traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world’s key energy transit routes.

The average global price of jet fuel has surged even faster, reaching \$173.91 per barrel on Monday, according to the Platts benchmark index, double what it was on the levels of January 2.

While the region’s airlines like Qatar Airways, Emirates and Etihad have been hit the hardest, most major international carriers have been af-

ected, as they operate flights both to and through the Gulf region.

“As soon as the price of a barrel of oil rises, airline profits fall, and vice versa,” said Paul Chiambaretto, professor of strategy and marketing at Montpellier Business School and an air transport specialist.

Fuel hedge

European airlines will be able to withstand the shock in the short term as many purchase fuel at fixed prices for several months in advance.

Lufthansa, for example, said in early March that it had bought 80 percent of its annual fuel needs at a fixed price.

Air France-KLM, for its part, said in February that it had secured a fixed price for 70 percent of its fuel for the first two quarters, and 60 percent for

the quarter following.

Budget airline Ryanair is also well protected because of a similar strategy, according to report by Bernstein analysts published Tuesday.

Some carriers, however, have started hiking prices already, with Scandinavian airline SAS on Tuesday announcing a “temporary” increase in its fares.

The Bernstein report said that the trio of largest US carriers, United, Delta and American, “do not hedge”, which could weaken them on North Atlantic routes where competition with European airlines is fierce.

If oil prices remain high, airlines will have no choice but to pass on the price increases to customers, analysts say.

Airlines in the Asia-Pacific region, including Qantas, Air India and Cathay Pacific, said they have hiked fares, or will soon, to factor in surging jet

fuel prices spurred by the war.

Summer travel

The war has broken out during a key time for the tourism industry, as Americans and Europeans make their summer travel reservations, the busiest time of the year.

“This conflict is already having a negative impact on people’s willingness to travel. If you raise ticket prices, it’s going to be a [new] negative effect,” said Transavia France CEO Olivier Mazzucchelli on Tuesday.

“It’s likely that there will be a bit more hesitancy and that passengers will book their flights less far in advance,” a phenomenon already seen during the Covid pandemic, Chiambaretto said.

European carriers could also see a benefit from a shift of customers to the Middle East.

BUSINESS

Thursday, March 12, 2026



Jordan's industrial production edges up 0.62 per cent, industrial producer price prices fall 2.89 per cent in January 2026, according to Department of Statistics

IPI edges up 0.62%, PPI prices fall 2.89% in Jan 2026 — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's industrial production rose slightly in January, increasing by 0.62 per cent compared with the same month of 2025, according to a report issued on Wednesday by the Department of Statistics (DoS).

The Industrial Production Index (IPI) reached 88.55 points in January, compared with 88 points in January 2025.

On a monthly basis, however, production edged down by 0.25 per cent compared with December 2025, when the index stood at 88.78 points, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The year-on-year increase was driven by a 6.99 per cent rise in output from the extractive industries sector, which accounts for 5.4 per cent of the index weight, and an 8.62 per cent increase in electricity production, representing 5.9 per cent.

Meanwhile, manufacturing output declined by 0.26 per cent, although the sector

remains the dominant contributor to the index with a weight of 88.7 per cent.

Compared with December 2025, the overall decline in January was mainly due to a 1.11 per cent drop in manufacturing output, despite increases in extractive industries production by 6.45 per cent and electricity output by 7.09 per cent, the report said.

The year-on-year increase was driven by a 6.99 per cent rise in output from the extractive industries sector...

While the report indicated that the Industrial Producer Price Index fell by 2.89 per cent in January 2026 compared with the

same month of 2025, and 0.79 per cent compared with December 2025.

The index stood at 104.02 points in January 2026, down from 107.12 points in January 2025 and 104.85 points in December 2025, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

By sector, the decline in the January index was mainly driven by a 3.51 per cent drop in manufacturing prices, which carry the largest weight in the index at 88.74 per cent.

Meanwhile, extractive industries prices rose by 3.63 per cent, accounting for 5.36 per cent of the index weight, while electricity prices increased by 0.82 per cent, representing 5.91 per cent.

Compared with December 2025, the overall decline in January was attributed to a 0.97 per cent decrease in manufacturing prices, despite 0.41 per cent growth in extractive industries prices and a 0.76 per cent rise in electricity prices, the report said.

Jordan monitors shipping disruptions as regional tensions test supply chains

By Ilham Darwazah

AMMAN — Rising Mideast tension is beginning to affect shipping and transport activity in the region, with freight costs increasing and some shipping lines imposing additional fees to cover operational risks.

Government officials and logistics sector representatives held meetings earlier this week to examine possible scenarios stemming from regional developments and their potential impact on trade and supply chains.

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan highlighted the vital role of shipping, freight and logistics companies in maintaining the smooth flow of goods and strengthening Jordan's ability to respond to potential disruptions in global supply chains.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to working closely with the private sector and taking the necessary measures to maintain adequate and sustainable strategic reserves of essential goods and energy.

The premier also referred to a series of recent government decisions aimed at addressing regional challenges and ensuring the continued availability of goods and energy supplies, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

An ad hoc committee has been formed tasked with monitoring the potential impact of regional developments on supply chains, shipping and



The local market is currently witnessing a 'steady' inflow of remittances from the Gulf and other countries says representative of the financial and banking from Jordan Chamber of Commerce

trade activity in the local market.

At the same time, experts say persistent instability in the Strait of Hormuz could lead to a significant reconfiguration of global shipping routes, particularly for energy shipments and container trade, potentially creating new strategic opportunities for Jordan.

President of the Jordan Logistics Association Nabil Khatib said the Strait of Hormuz remains one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints for oil and commercial cargo.

He said that if disruptions become prolonged, shipping companies may gradually reduce calls to major Gulf ports as operators seek safer and more predictable routes, including ports such as Jebel Ali Port and King

Abdulaziz Port.

In such a scenario, cargo flows could increasingly shift toward ports along the Red Sea, strengthening an alternative maritime corridor connecting directly to the Suez Canal and onward to global markets, he said.

"Several ports could emerge as key hubs along this route, including Jeddah Islamic Port, port of Jizan, port of Aqaba and Port Said. The growing importance of these ports would reinforce the strategic role of the Red Sea corridor linking Asia, the Middle East and Europe."

He also explained that a longer-term shift away from Gulf shipping routes could also strengthen a Red Sea-Mediterranean logistics network connecting major maritime hubs such as

port of Aqaba, Jeddah Islamic Port, port of Piraeus and port of Rotterdam.

"This corridor could become an increasingly vital route for containerised trade between Asia and Europe."

For Jordan, he said, such a shift could significantly enhance the role of the port of Aqaba as a logistics gateway serving Levant markets.

"Expanding the Aqaba logistics zone and improving connectivity could position the port as a key distribution centre for regional cargo. A major element of this potential lies in the land corridor linking Jordan and Iraq. The route from Aqaba through Amman to the Al Karama Border Crossing connects directly to major Iraqi markets including Baghdad and Basra."

"If Gulf ports become less reliable due to regional tensions, Iraq could increasingly rely on Aqaba as an alternative maritime gateway," he said.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard claim they have "complete control" of the Strait of Hormuz and warned that any vessels seeking to use it risk damage from missiles or stray drones.

The US military said it had destroyed 16 mine-laying Iranian boats near the Strait of Hormuz, after President Donald Trump warned of a drastic escalation if Iran moved to mine the pivotal waterway.

Iran vowed that no Gulf oil would pass through the key waterway, with oil prices remaining highly volatile over the virtual halt of shipping in the strait.

'Ring The Bell' for gender equality initiative highlights rights, justice, action — ASE

AMMAN (JT) — The Amman Stock Exchange (ASE), in collaboration with UN Women, UN Global Compact Jordan, and the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative, hosted the 12th annual Ring The Bell (RTB) for Gender Equality event.

Held in celebration of International Women's Day 2026, the global initiative focused on advancing inclusive and sustainable business practices in over 110 stock exchanges worldwide.

The theme of this year is "Ring the Bell for ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Justice. Action", which called for urgent action to address structural barriers to gender equality, including discriminatory laws and harmful practices that hinder women's economic participation.

The RTB initiative, led by the World Federation of Exchanges, has been raising awareness about gender equality for more than a decade, according to a statement of ASE.

ASE has been a steadfast participant in this global campaign, joining in 2015 and hosting the event each year since.

In 2022, ASE further solidified its commitment by signing the Women's Empowerment Principles, aligning with global efforts to empower women in the workplace and marketplace.



The Amman Stock Exchange in collaboration with UN Women, UN Global Compact Jordan and the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative host the 12th annual 'Ring The Bell' for Gender Equality event

During the event, ASE CEO Mazen Wathafi underscored the significance of the initiative, stating, "Ring the Bell for Gender Equality is a global moment for companies and investors to turn ambition into measurable progress."

"Advancing gender equality strengthens governance, resilience and long-term value creation," Wathafi emphasised the importance of embedding gender equality into business operations, citing policies, reporting standards.

The 2026 RTB theme, "Rights. Justice. Action", focused on three core pillars; safeguarding women's rights in the workplace, embedding justice within corporate systems and implementing concrete actions to achieve gender equality.

The theme highlighted the need for businesses to take measurable steps to eliminate violence, discrimination and exploitation and to address structural inequalities within their organisations.

The theme also called for the private sector to integrate fairness and transparency into governance and operations, with a focus on advancing gender equality beyond token commitments.

"Implementing concrete, measurable actions aligned with gender equality goals is key to driving inclusive, sustainable growth," said Wathafi. In line with these goals, ASE participated in a new round of the online Gender Equality in Capital Markets training, which helps companies understand

sustainable finance and corporate reporting while integrating gender considerations into investment strategies.

The ASE's efforts reflect a broader commitment to fostering a more inclusive financial market in Jordan.

Chairperson of the Jordan Securities Commission (JSC), Emad Abu Haltam, stated, "Greater participation of women in capital markets contributes to stronger institutions and supports sustainable economic growth."

Abu Haltam also noted that the JSC is working towards launching ESG (environmental, social, and governance) guidelines that will incorporate diversity considerations, including gender, as part of efforts to promote well-gov-

erned institutions.

UN Women Representative to Jordan, Nicolas Burniat, stressed the need for systems that enable women's full participation in the economy, while addressing workplace violence and expanding opportunities for women-led businesses.

He pointed to the success of the Women Empowerment Principles (WFP) Programme, which has shown that companies adopting these principles strengthen their brand value and reputation.

In 2025, 62 per cent of participating companies reported im-

provements in these areas.

One of the key objectives of the principles programme in Jordan is to increase women's employment by 5 per cent by 2030, aligning with Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision, which aims to double women's labour force participation by 2033.

The UN Women Jordan office also reported progress through its WEPs Regional Monitoring Tool, which recorded a 66 per cent response rate from 256 signatory companies in 2025.

These companies reported gradual but clear progress, with

women now holding 42 per cent of jobs in signatory companies, up from 41 per cent in 2024.

Moreover, 56 per cent of new recruits were women, reflecting stronger gender-responsive recruitment practices.

Chairperson of UN Global Compact Network Jordan, Jamal Fariz, noted that this year's theme served as a reminder that achieving gender equality requires collective action, sustained commitment and partnerships that transform global principles into tangible impact.

The event concluded with the ceremonial

ringing of the bell at ASE, symbolising Jordan's commitment to creating inclusive workplaces and equitable opportunities for women and girls.

The initiative continues to raise awareness of the critical need for private-sector involvement in gender equality, with a growing emphasis on measurable actions and long-term commitments.

As gender equality remains a key pillar of sustainable development, ASE's role in the RTB initiative reinforces Jordan's dedication to ensuring women's full participation in the economic and financial sectors.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

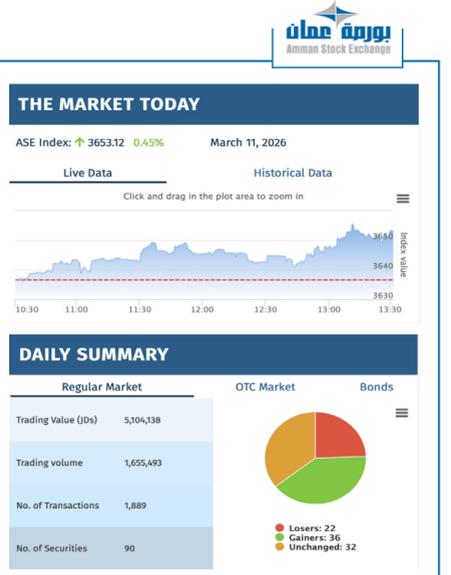
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD5.1 million spread over 1.7 million shares that traded through 1,889 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.45 per cent, closing at 3653.12 points.

Out of 90 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 36 companies rose while the share price of another 22 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Union Tobacco and Cigarette Industries by 11.11 per cent, Al Nisr Al Arabi Insurance by 6.84 per cent, Arab Jordan Investment Bank by 5.56 per cent, Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 5.26 per cent, and Jordan Decapolis Properties by 5 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Northern Cement Company by 7.06 per cent, Arab East Investment by 3.41 per cent, Future Arab Investment Company by 3.23 per cent, Afaq Holding for Investment and Real Estate Development Company Plc. by 2.70 per cent, and Jordan International Investment Company by 2.60 per cent.



Small Hands, Heavy Burdens

Children with disabilities in Jordan are being pushed into the workforce — unseen, uncounted, and unprotected.

By Hussameldin Al-Ibrahim

Under a crumbling roof, between cracked walls and with scant second-hand furniture, Um Mahdi — a Syrian refugee — lives with her mother-in-law and four sons, each living with a different disability. She rents a house in a village in Irbid governorate, surviving on 75 dinars a month from UNHCR and whatever neighbours can spare.

She fled to Jordan in 2011, bringing with her Mahdi, who has an intellectual disability; Salem, who has a speech impairment and lost a foot to the war; and younger sons Karam and Rashid, who also cannot speak. She does not know their precise diagnoses.

“I don’t want them to work,” she says. “But I can’t even give them half a dinar.”

None of the boys had turned eighteen when they arrived in Jordan, and none completed school. Salem went straight to work in local shops. Despite barely being understood — his mother admits she sometimes cannot follow what he is saying — he secured a steady job packing and delivering customers’ orders, standing for most of his shift in exchange for one-and-a-half dinars a day.

Now 26, Salem earns four dinars for shifts of more than ten hours. He still wrestles with his prosthetic leg — its screws constantly work loose — and with an employer who periodically dismisses him, forcing him to plead for his job back.

His younger brothers, Karam (15) and Rashid (14), have inherited the same compound burden of disability and poverty. Neighbours say both boys have intellectual as well as speech impairments. Rashid stays out late at a local shop, seeking tips from customers or work stacking shelves. Karam spends most evenings — often past three in the morning — inside a billiard hall that, according to neighbours, is regularly frequented by people with criminal records.

Rising numbers, vanishing childhoods

Jordan’s 2016 National Child Labour Survey found 76,000 working children, 59 per cent of them in hazardous occupations. By 2020, the Jordan Labour Watch estimated that figure had risen to 100,000 — a 31.6 per cent increase — with more than 60 per cent engaged in dangerous work. Indicators from 2024 and 2025, though limited, show no reversal of the trend.

Yet within this already alarming picture, one group is entirely invisible. Hammada Abu Najma, Director General of the Jordanian Centre for Labour Rights (Beit Al Ommal), says that neither child labour surveys nor Ministry of Labour reports include cases involving children with disabilities. Dr Mohannad Al Azza, Secretary General of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, confirms that the phenomenon has never previously been studied or monitored in Jordan — though he pledges it will now become a priority.

The scale of the crisis is suggested by one stark statistic: the Higher Council estimates there are 300,000 children with disabilities of school age (6-16) in Jordan. According to government reporting, only 28,600 were enrolled in educational institutions in the 2023-24 academic year. That leaves roughly 271,000 children with disabilities outside the education system — and dangerously exposed to the labour market.

Exploited by design

Dr Al Azza identifies the forces at work: economic pressure on families, weak oversight mechanisms, and the particular vulnerability of the child, which makes it easier for families to put them to work — sometimes doubly so. Investigative journalist Nadine Al Namri adds that children with disabilities are disproportionately concentrated in begging, which is regarded as one of the worst forms of child labour. Their presence generates greater public sympathy and, therefore, larger returns.

Researcher Mais Al Omro describes how exploitation can extend to deliberate neglect — withholding medical care, ignoring a child’s appearance, even displaying the disability in ways that demean the child’s dignity. Asia Yaghi, President of the Ana Insaan association for disability rights, points to the broader pattern: Children with disabilities are more likely to enter the workforce early because of the absence of social protection policies, discrimination and exclusion, and their failure to access education.

A UN report on childhood and disability warns that children with intellectual, psychological and developmental disabilities are particularly susceptible to being coerced into inappropriate activities and face elevated risks of exploitation, violence and abuse.



ILLUSTRATION: BY OMAR ALEES WITH AI TOOLS

The cost to body and mind

Dr Abdullah Al Ajarma, a primary healthcare specialist, says children with disabilities exert disproportionate effort to prove themselves at work, causing chronic pain and progressive deterioration of their condition. Dr Majid Dweiry of Princess Basma Hospital adds that an unsuitable work environment can transform a stable disability into a worsening one, while increasing the risk of accidents because cognitive difficulties impair hazard awareness, sensory impairments prevent children from hearing warnings or seeing dangers, and mobility impairments slow their ability to respond.

The psychological damage is equally serious. Consultant psychiatrist Dr Alaa Al Faroukh says that exposure to bullying and harassment in the workplace causes anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and, over time, severe depression. Children who are exploited, overworked and underpaid relative to their peers develop damaging patterns of self-image, which may ultimately, he warns, lead to suicidal ideation.

The law and its limits

Jordan’s Labour Law prohibits employment of children under 16 in any form, and bars those under 18 from hazardous or harmful work. But the law contains no explicit provisions addressing children with disabilities. Lawyer Omar Muhaitat argues that when a disability is involved, the matter shifts from a labour violation into the domain of serious criminal offences: under Article 3 of Jordan’s Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law, exploiting a state of weakness — which applies doubly to a child with a disability — can constitute human trafficking when criminal intent is present.

Lawyer Kamal Al Mushriki, an expert in international protection mechanisms, concurs that work which is legal or non-hazardous for a child without a disability may represent serious exploitation when a disability is present — and that Jordan’s international commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and ILO Conventions 138 and 182 require a broader, more protective interpretation.

In practice, enforcement is almost non-existent. During the first eleven months of 2025, the Ministry of Labour inspected 6,217 establishments and identified just 179 cases of child labour — a fraction of a per cent of the estimated total. In the same period, the Ministry received only 28 complaints about child labour through its online reporting platforms. Jordan’s National Strategy to Combat Child Labour (2022-2030) and the National Framework to Reduce Working and Begging Children (2020) both fail to mention children with disabilities at all.

A road to nowhere

Ziad, 47, sells nuts from a pavement stall. He left school early and spent years transporting vegetables from his wheelchair, before moving to selling cigarettes and coffee. He has heard the insults — cripple, paralysed — and has learnt to brush them off. But he regrets leaving education, blaming inaccessible schools: His classroom was on the second floor, and he depended on his family to carry him up and down.

Sociologist Dr Maysoun Al Atoom argues that when a child with a disability is pushed into the workforce early, they lose education — the one resource most capable of changing their social position later in life. Instead of disability becoming something that knowledge and rehabilitation can compensate for, it becomes a mechanism that locks in fragility. The family perceives the child’s earnings as short-term relief; in the medium and long term, the child enters adulthood without skills, trapped in the same cycle of poverty, which becomes not an emergency measure but an inherited social norm.

Karam and Rashid know little of whether their future will look different from Salem’s. They wake each morning knowing one thing: The need to find enough money to survive — even if it is only half a dinar.

Unless Jordan confronts the exploitation of children with disabilities as a national priority — through legislative reform, systematic monitoring, inclusive education, and genuine social protection — the country risks condemning an entire generation to the slow erasure that Salem and Ziad already know.

Names in this report have been changed.

