

THE JORDAN TIMES



ENVIRONMENT

Prince Hassan participates in international conference on climate action



DIPLOMACY

Safadi, Palestinian vice president call for 'urgent' aid delivery, adherence to Gaza ceasefire



STOCK

Amman bourse defies regional turmoil with strong March performance



WEEKENDER

Energy security urgency grows as Jordan eyes renewables, oil shale



Thursday, April 9, 2026 | Shawal 21, 1447 Hijri

King to former PMs, officials: Jordan is safe and will remain so

- King underlines army's commitment to continue protecting Jordan from any threat
- His Majesty says Kingdom has exerted every possible effort to de-escalate tensions, prevent conflict
- King reiterates his condemnation of Iran's unjustified attacks on Jordan, Gulf states
- His Majesty welcomes recent ceasefire agreement between US, Iran as positive step towards de-escalation
- His Majesty warns that Israel has once again exploited regional situation to expand conflict



Photo courtesy of Royal Court

His Majesty King Abdullah, accompanied by HRH Crown Prince Hussein, holds a meeting with former prime ministers and officials to discuss key regional developments and measures being taken by state institutions to address the repercussions of regional tensions

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday held a meeting with a number of former prime ministers and officials, focusing on key regional developments, and measures being taken by state institutions to address the repercussions of regional tensions.

Armed Forces-Arab Army's commitment to continue protecting the Kingdom from any threat, according to a Royal Court statement. His Majesty said: "I have complete confidence in our security agencies, and the interest of Jordan and Jordanians is our foremost priority."

The King underscored the importance of maintaining cooperation and coordination among state agencies, to ensure readiness in the face of regional developments and their economic repercussions, and to guarantee a secure and strategic reserve of essential goods, the statement said.

is fundamental to the security and stability of the region and the world.

His Majesty welcomed the recent ceasefire agreement between the United States and

Iran as a positive step towards de-escalation in the region, affirming Jordan's support for Pa-

kistan's efforts to mediate a lasting agreement that addresses all the issues that have led to

instability and insecurity in the region.

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JAF says Iran targets Jordan with 2 missiles

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) said on Wednesday that two missiles launched from Iran towards the Kingdom were intercepted over the past 24 hours. The JAF Media Directorate said that the Royal Jordanian Air Force successfully intercepted and destroyed both missiles with high efficiency.

Prime minister condemns Israeli aggression, reiterates full support for Lebanon

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday held a phone call with his Lebanese counterpart Nawaf Salam, reiterating Jordan's full solidarity with Lebanon and condemning the "brutal" Israeli aggression against its territory. Hassan also stressed the Kingdom's unwavering support for Lebanon's security, stability, sovereignty and the protection of its citizens, according to a Prime Ministry statement.



The prime minister said that, following the guidance of His Majesty King Abdullah, Jordan is ready to provide all possible assistance to Lebanon.

He also condemned the Israeli aggression, calling it a "violation of Lebanon's sovereignty," and stressed that targeting civilians constitutes a clear breach of international law and humanitarian law.

Hassan warned that this dangerous escalation could further heighten tensions in the region, underscoring the urgent need for an immediate stop to hostilities and full implementation of the ceasefire agreement reached on 27 November 2024.

Also on Wednesday, the Foreign Ministry condemned the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the targeting of civilians, describing the strikes as a "flagrant violation" of international law and humanitarian law. In a statement, the ministry said that the attacks breach Lebanese sovereignty and represent a dangerous escalation that threatens regional stability.

Jordan welcomes US-Iran ceasefire agreement

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Wednesday welcomed a ceasefire agreement between the United States and Iran, as a "positive" step towards ending the dangerous escalation and tensions in the region. The Foreign Ministry welcomed a statement by US President Donald Trump and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to pause hostilities, stressing the need for the ceasefire to lead to a comprehensive and sustainable de-escalation.

The ministry said that Jordan supports efforts led by Pakistan to reach a lasting agreement that addresses all issues that have de-stabilised security and stability in the region over past decades. It also stressed the importance of reopening the Strait of Hormuz and ensuring freedom of international navigation in accordance with international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

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US-Iran ceasefire marks 'potential' turning point, offers 'fragile' hope for regional stability

AMMAN — The United States and Iran agreed on Wednesday to a two-week ceasefire, marking a potential turning point in a war that has reshaped regional security and raised global economic concerns. US President Donald Trump said the agreement follows significant military progress and could pave the way for a broader settlement.



A woman walks past an anti-USA and anti-Israel mural, in Tehran on Wednesday

He described the deal as a "total and complete victory", while signalling that key issues remain under negotiation, including nuclear activity and regional security arrangements.

Jordan welcomed the ceasefire, describing it as a positive step towards ending escalation in the region.

The Foreign Ministry said the agreement should lead to comprehensive and sustainable de-escalation, stressing the importance of reopening the Strait of Hormuz and ensuring freedom of navigation.

In a post on X platform, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also described the ceasefire as "immediate and comprehensive". He said that Islamabad would host delegations from the United States and Iran later this week following the ceasefire announcement, as part of efforts to reach a broader agreement.

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Development work begins on Amrah City Project, site preparations under way — official

AMMAN (JT) — Development operations at Amrah City have officially commenced, with land preparation and site levelling works now under way, Chairman of the Jordanian Company for Cities and Facilities Development Musab Mheidat said on Wednesday.



Chairman of the Jordanian Company for Cities and Facilities Development Musab Mheidat says on Wednesday that groundwork at the site has begun

Mheidat noted that the initial phase is being implemented under a meticulous planning framework, supported by specialised hydrological studies to assess water flow patterns and the area's topography.

In remarks to Al Mamlaka TV, he said work is also in progress to open access roads to the site, alongside comprehensive land preparation to facilitate upcoming construction phases.

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Petra photo

HRH Princess Rym Ali on Wednesday attends the final regional conference for the project 'Enhancing Prevention and Response Mechanisms to Online Hate Speech in Jordan'

Princess Rym attends conference on online hate speech in Jordan

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Princess Rym Ali on Wednesday attended the final regional conference for the project "Enhancing Prevention and Response Mechanisms to Online Hate Speech in Jordan", with the participation of Government Communications Minister Mohammad Momani, alongside international partners and relevant institutions.

During his remarks, Momani, who is also the government spokesperson, emphasised that confronting hate speech in the digital sphere is no longer a choice but a priority requiring a comprehensive approach, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He noted that this approach must be based on partnership

and the employment of modern tools that enhance social awareness and the ability to distinguish between responsible content and misleading or inciting material.

The minister said that hate speech is no longer a marginal phenomenon that can be contained by traditional means. Instead, it has become a complex challenge necessitating new awareness and innovative tools amidst rapid digital transformations.

He pointed out that in this space, words are no longer mere expressions but a system that shapes, spreads and reproduces itself.

Momani added that Jordan, under Royal directives, continues to consolidate a responsible media discourse

based on professionalism, objectivity, and respect for pluralism while safeguarding human dignity.

He stressed the importance of promoting media and information literacy as a fundamental pillar for building a conscious society.

The minister praised the project's outcomes, including research efforts and the development of reference frameworks.

These contributions help establish methodical foundations for dealing with hate speech in the digital environment, providing a qualitative addition to national and regional discussions and aiding in the development of relevant public policies, he added.

Momani stressed that the Ministry of

Government Communications remains committed to supporting efforts aimed at fostering a positive media environment and developing awareness tools to limit the spread of hate speech while promoting moderation and tolerance.

European Union Ambassador to Jordan Pierre-Christophe Chatzisavas said that the project highlighted the needs of everyday Internet users and explored ways to protect citizens from hate speech and negative digital practices.

He added that the goal is to address these challenges, provide decision-makers with necessary information, and allow policymakers to define their own models for managing this process.

Prince Hassan participates in international conference on climate action

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince Hassan on Wednesday delivered a keynote address at the international conference titled "Climate Action in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East: Regional Cooperation Empowered by Science and Innovation", hosted in Cyprus.

The two-day summit has brought together global leaders, policymakers, scientists and experts to address climate challenges within a complex regional and international landscape, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

In his remarks, Prince Hassan underscored that the climate crisis has transcended environmental boundaries to become a matter of "human security".

He noted that regional challenges ranging from water scarcity and rising temperatures to the degradation of food and health systems are being exacerbated by ongoing conflicts, thereby threatening economic and social stability.

The prince highlighted that the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, historically a shared civilisational space known as Mare Nostrum, is now grappling with an unprecedented accumulation of climate and humanitarian pressures.

He maintained that addressing these challenges in isolation is no longer viable, calling for "integrated thinking based on collective responsibility".

In this context, Prince Hassan pointed to the Gaza Strip as a stark example of the collapse of water, energy, and food systems resulting from the systematic targeting of vital infrastructure.

He warned that the repercussions of armed conflict extend beyond



HRH Prince Hassan

immediate humanitarian suffering to incur a significant global climate cost.

Prince Hassan added that instability in the Eastern Mediterranean has become an "established regional status quo".

Citing World Bank estimates, he noted that the outlook for 2025 remains clouded by high levels of uncertainty due to conflict and extreme weather events.

Referencing UNICEF data, the prince said that some 95 million people, including 45 million children, face life-threatening risks amidst a widening development financing gap.

Moreover, he drew attention to the disparity between the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs) financing gap exceeding \$4.2 trillion annually and the continuous rise in global military spending.

He urged a recalibration of priorities towards fostering life and stability rather than perpetuating the logic of conflict.

Concluding his address, Prince Hassan posed a fundamental question regarding the nature of security, stressing that "true security" is measured not by a state's capacity for war, but by its ability to safeguard life and uphold human dignity.

The opening session featured remarks by Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides, who called for translating discussions into "tangible results".

He emphasised the necessity of decisive,

collective action to transform the crisis into an opportunity for building resilient economies and sustainable societies.

European Commissioner for the Mediterranean Dubravka Suica said that the region is navigating a phase of "interconnected crises", citing the economic burden of fossil fuel dependency alongside the visible escalation of climate change impacts.

The summit aims to shift from planning to implementation by activating a science-based regional action plan and fostering diplomacy between the EU and its southern neighbours, ultimately shaping recommendations for the 2026 EU-Southern Neighbourhood Summit.

Report highlights opportunities, resilience in Jordan's labour market

By Osama Alkafri

AMMAN — Jordan's labour market is demonstrating resilience and adaptability, with expanding opportunities across key sectors despite ongoing structural challenges, according to a recent Labour Market Assessment conducted by the Danish Refugee Council under an EU-funded project.

The report, based on nationwide data collected between late 2025 and early 2026, pointed to steady demand in several core sectors, including manufacturing, food processing, agriculture, construction and retail.

These industries continue to play a vital role in absorbing labour and supporting livelihoods across the Kingdom.

While acknowledging existing constraints, the assessment highlighted the labour market's ability to adapt to economic pressures and external shocks, with businesses and workers alike finding flexible pathways to sustain employment.

"Employment opportunities remain active across multiple sectors, providing important entry points into the labour market," the report noted.

A key positive trend identified in the report is

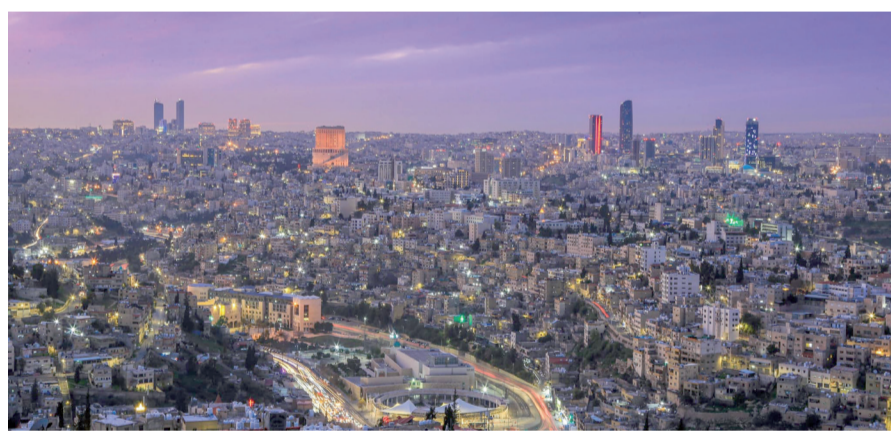


Photo courtesy of the Greater Amman Municipality

A recent report says that Jordan's labour market is demonstrating resilience and adaptability, with expanding opportunities across key sectors despite ongoing structural challenges

the growing emphasis on practical skills and work readiness.

Employers are increasingly prioritising hands-on experience, technical competence, and soft skills such as teamwork and communication, an approach that is helping to shape a more responsive and demand-driven workforce.

Work-based learning is also gaining traction as an effective bridge between education and employment.

Many employers expressed strong willingness to offer internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training, recognising their value in preparing candidates for real workplace conditions while supporting recruit-

ment needs.

The report further highlights emerging opportunities in digital and green sectors. Fields such as ICT, social media services, and renewable energy, particularly solar energy, are gaining visibility, especially among young people seeking future-oriented careers.

Although still developing, these sectors are seen as promising areas for growth, with the potential to create new, skilled employment opportunities in the coming years.

In addition, home-based businesses are playing an increasingly important role in supporting economic participation, particularly among women.

Activities such as food

production, tailoring and handicrafts are enabling flexible income generation and contributing to household resilience.

The assessment notes that women's participation in the labour market can be further enhanced through supportive measures such as flexible working arrangements and improved transport options, areas where both employers and policymakers can play a role.

Importantly, the report underscored the contribution of the private sector, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in driving employment.

Employers across sectors have shown openness to collaboration and innovation, especially when

supported by practical, cost-effective solutions that reduce hiring risks.

Regionally, the labour market continues to show diverse strengths, where Amman and central areas remain key hubs for employment across industries, while northern and southern governorates contribute through agriculture, food processing, and localised economic activities, reflecting a broad-based distribution of opportunities.

The report also highlighted the role of informal employment and flexible work arrangements in sustaining livelihoods, particularly during periods of economic uncertainty.

While formalisation remains a long-term goal, these mechanisms continue to provide essential income sources for many households.

Looking ahead, the assessment called for targeted efforts to build on these positive trends, including boosting skills development, expanding work-based learning, and improving access to employment opportunities.

"Jordan's labour market demonstrates notable adaptability, with multiple pathways supporting employment and livelihoods," according to the report.

Jordan achieves 'record' aviation security rating, tops global standards — CARC

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's achievement of a 94.29 per cent rating in the international aviation security audit is a "historic milestone," Chief Commissioner of the Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission (CARC) Daifallah Farajat said on Wednesday.

Farajat noted that this "qualitative" leap places the Kingdom among the world's leading nations in civil aviation security and facilitation standards, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He added that the result, featured in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) report following an audit conducted from January 26 to February 5, reflects a "massive" jump compared to previous assessments.

The chief commissioner noted that obtaining such a high percentage "was not a matter of chance, but rather the fruit of years of diligent work and strategic planning to develop the security apparatus at national airports, in full compliance with the highest international standards and practices".

The comprehensive



File photo

Chief Commissioner of the Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission Dhaifallah Farajat says that Jordan's achievement of a 94.29 per cent rating in the international aviation security audit is a 'historic milestone'

ICAO audit included a rigorous review of national legislation, security programmes, training, field operations and quality control.

Farajat stressed that Jordan's success in exceeding the global average by a wide margin sends a "powerful" message of confidence to the international community and global airlines regarding the safety and security of Jordanian airspace and airports.

He pointed out that this achievement is the result of high-level integration and coordination between CARC and all strategic partners, led by the Ministry of Transport, security agen-

cies at airports, airport operators and national airlines.

"We highly value the professionalism of our staff in the field and their strict commitment to international standards, which has made our airports a model for balancing maximum security with seamless passenger procedures," the chief commissioner said.

Farajat highlighted that the commission will continue to build on this success, sustain these results and adopt the latest security technologies to ensure the aviation sector remains a primary driver of the national economy and a bright facade for the Kingdom.

Agricultural producer price index rises 3.6% in early 2026 — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — The agricultural producer price index increased by 3.2 per cent during the first two months of 2026 compared with the same period last year, according to the monthly report issued by the

Department of Statistics (DoS).

The report also showed that the index increased by 3.6 per cent in February 2026 compared with the same month of 2025, and surged by 23.8 per cent compared with

January of 2026, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The cumulative index for the first two months of 2026 reached 101.3 points, up from 98.2 points during the same period in 2025.

On a monthly basis, the index stood at 112.1 points in February 2026, compared with 108.3 points in February 2025 and 90.6 points in January 2026.

The increase in the cumulative index was

driven by higher prices for crops, accounting for 23.1 per cent of relative importance, notably tomatoes, zucchini and sweet coloured peppers.

Meanwhile, prices declined for crops representing 76.9 per cent of

relative importance, including potatoes, green beans and chilli peppers, according to the DoS report.

The year-on-year increase in February was attributed to higher prices for crops with a

combined weight of 32.9 per cent, particularly tomatoes, lemons and zucchini.

In contrast, prices fell for crops, accounting for 67.1 per cent of the index, most notably white cabbage, cauliflower

and dates.

On a month-on-month basis, the rise in February compared with January was driven by increased prices for crops representing 33.1 per cent of relative importance.

Safadi, Palestinian vice president call for 'urgent' aid delivery, adherence to Gaza ceasefire

Foreign minister, Arab, int'l counterparts discuss regional developments, reiterate support of ceasefire

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Wednesday met with Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Vice President of the State of Palestine Hussein Al Sheikh.

Talks focused on the situation in Gaza, with both sides stressing the need to fully implement all provisions of the ceasefire agreement and ensure the immediate and sufficient delivery of humanitarian aid, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Safadi and Al Sheikh also called for urgent and effective regional and international action to halt illegal Israeli measures in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, warning that such actions undermine the two-state solution and diminish prospects for a just and lasting peace.

They also warned against the "grave" consequences of Israel's continued annexation of Palestinian land, expansion of settlements, attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo in occupied Jerusalem and its holy sites, and restrictions on Muslims and Christians from practising their religious rites.

They also reiterated that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the pre-1967 border, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the two-state solution, remains the only viable path to achieving peace in the region.

Also on Wednesday, Safadi held a series of phone calls with regional and interna-



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Wednesday meets with Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Vice President of the State of Palestine Hussein Al Sheikh

tional counterparts, focusing on efforts to contain the dangerous escalation in the region and advance diplomatic initiatives to restore security and stability.

During calls with UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud, Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Badr Abdelati, Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdul Latif Bin Rashid Al Zayani, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, discussions reviewed the latest regional developments and underscored the importance of contin-

ued coordination to preserve stability. The ministers also reiterated solidarity in the face of Iranian attacks targeting Arab countries and emphasised the importance of dialogue and diplomacy in restoring calm. The discussions also focused on supporting the US-Iran ceasefire agreement and achieving comprehensive and lasting de-escalation based on respect for international law, state sovereignty, freedom of navigation and addressing all sources of regional tension.

Also on Wednesday, Safadi held a phone call with Japan's Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi. Safadi and Motegi discussed regional developments, ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation, and coordination in efforts to

restore security and stability in the region, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The minister also welcomed the ceasefire agreement reached between the US and Iran, emphasising their support for initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable calm.

Safadi stressed that the upcoming US-Iran talks must produce an agreement that guarantees security and stability, respects international law and state sovereignty, and addresses the root causes of tensions over the past years.

The ministers also addressed the serious deterioration of the situation in Lebanon. Safadi called for an immediate stop to Israeli aggression and expressed support for the Lebanese government's efforts to assert

sovereignty over all its territory. They highlighted the importance of consolidating stability in Gaza and ensuring full implementation of the ceasefire provisions. Safadi briefed Motegi on the critical situation in the West Bank, pointing to illegal Israeli measures undermining the two-state solution, including settlement expansion, land annexation, and violations of the religious rights of Muslims and Christians.

He underscored the need for a genuine and effective international effort to halt these actions. The ministers also reiterated the depth of the strategic partnership between Jordan and Japan and discussed practical steps to expand cooperation across key sectors.

Economy shows resilience, growth amid regional tensions — minister

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's economy continues to demonstrate resilience and growth despite regional tensions, supported by strong supply chains and public-private partnerships, Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah said on Wednesday.

Deputising for Prime Minister Jafar Hassan at the Economic Forum for Diplomatic Missions in Jordan, Qudah said markets have seen no shortages, while Aqaba Port maintained operational levels comparable to 2025, underscoring supply chain stability, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

He highlighted a gradual rise in GDP growth in 2025, from 2.6 per cent in the first quarter to 3 per cent in the fourth quarter, exceeding international expectations. National exports grew by 10 per cent compared to 2024, while foreign investment increased by more than 25 per cent.

Qudah noted that the positive momentum has continued into 2026, with exports rising over 11 per cent in January, alongside ongoing expansion into regional and international markets.

He also highlighted tourism growth exceeding 7 per cent in 2025, despite regional challenges and cited progress on major projects including the National Water Carrier, the railway network, and the Amra development project, which are expected to drive future growth.

Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Dhaifallah Fayeze said economic diplomacy is key to attracting investment, opening markets and supporting the Economic Modernisation Vision, particularly amid global challenges such as supply chain disrup-



Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah says on Wednesday that economy continues to demonstrate resilience and growth despite regional tensions, supported by strong supply chains and public-private partnerships

tions and rising energy and financing costs.

He added that investment opportunities in Jordan span priority sectors, including renewable energy, mining, ICT, tourism, logistics and infrastructure, supported by a stable legislative framework, skilled workforce and the Kingdom's strategic location as a regional gateway.

President of the Jordanian Businessmen Association Ayman Alawneh stressed that Jordan's resilience stems from structural reforms and a stable investment climate, positioning the country as a reliable regional and international partner.

He highlighted the private sector as the main driver of growth and a key partner in implementing the Economic Modernisation Vision, emphasising the importance of public-private partnerships in energy, infrastructure, industry, tourism and ICT.

Success stories from Jordanian entrepreneurs were also showcased, demonstrating the private sector's ability to innovate and compete regionally and globally, aiming to attract long-term investment and partnerships in the Kingdom.

Participants used the forum to highlight the Economic Modernisation Vision, structural reforms, and promising investment opportunities in high-value-added sectors. Discussions focused on improving the business environment, boosting competitiveness, encouraging innovation, creating jobs, and expanding public-private partnerships in vital sectors such as water, transport, energy, infrastructure, industry, tourism and ICT.

SSC refers suspect in killing of three anti-narcotics officers to trial

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The State Security Court (SSC) prosecutor general referred the case of a man, who allegedly killed three Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) officers during a raid in March, to court for trial.

The suspect was charged with three counts of physical assault on individuals tasked with enforcing the provisions of the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Law, which resulted in death, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

In addition, the suspect was also charged with physically assaulting and resisting law enforcement officers by using a firearm, Petra said.

Other charges included possession of a weapon and illegal narcotics with the in-

tent of selling in the local market and for personal use, Petra added.

"The SSC General Prosecutor Brig. Gen. Military Judge Ahmad Shehatah upheld the charge sheet issued by the SSC prosecution and referred the case to the SSC for trial," according to Petra.

The suspect was eventually controlled and arrested by other officers during the raid

The three deceased officers were part of an AND force that was dispatched to arrest a dangerous suspect

in an eastern Amman suburb on March 18.

The minute the officers entered the premises, the suspect opened fire, killing three officers at the scene, officials said recently.

A fourth AND officer was also injured during the raid and was rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment.

The suspect was eventually controlled and arrested by other officers during the raid.

The arresting force allegedly seized three firearms, illegal pills, 600 grammes of Hashish, a small amount of Crystal Meth and an undisclosed amount of Marijuana, according to officials.

The deceased AND officers were identified as First Lt. Murad Mawajdeh, Sergeant Khaldoun Rugeb and Corporal Subhi Deweikat.

Lower House endorses 2026 education, human resource development draft law

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — The Lower House on Wednesday approved 2026 draft Law on Education and Human Resource Development.

The draft legislation is part of broader government efforts to overhaul the education sector, in line with the Economic Modernisation Vision and public sector reform plans. It also aims to improve education quality, strengthen research and innovation, and align graduate skills with labour market needs, while maintaining free basic education.

The law also introduces a national council, chaired by the prime minister, to oversee human resource development policies, and expands the mandate of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance



The Lower House on Wednesday approves 2026 draft Law on Education and Human Resource Development

Commission to cover all education and training institutions.

It also establishes a unified institutional framework under a newly structured Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.

Reforms include restructuring the ministry into nine directorates, streamlining regional education di-

rectorates and enhancing university autonomy, while limiting the ministry's role in higher education to policy, regulation and oversight.

Under the legislation, the academic year will include a minimum of 200 school days, to be set within a calendar prepared by the Ministry of Education.

Education Minister Azmi Mahafzah said

the requirement aligns with international practices, noting that school years globally range between 180 and 200 days, with varying daily hours.

He added that Jordan's 12-year education cycle necessitates the 200-day minimum to ensure full curriculum delivery, while allowing flexibility to compensate for disruptions such as weather-related closures.

The law also regulates the General Secondary Certificate (Tawjih), allowing exams to be administered either electronically or in paper format. It also classifies exam materials as protected documents and stipulates that ministry decisions on exam procedures and results are final and not subject to appeal.

Mahafzah said Tawjih results undergo

32 verification stages, describing the process as highly accurate and warning that allowing score reviews would overwhelm the system given the large number of candidates.

The legislation also addresses higher education governance, enhancing university independence while limiting the ministry's role to setting policies, establishing technical standards, licensing institutions, and ensuring alignment between educational outcomes and labour market needs.

The Cabinet endorsed the draft law on January 12, 2026, before referring it to the Lower House in accordance with constitutional procedures. The Lower House referred the draft to its Education Committee on February 1, which approved it on April 1, 2026.

CRIME

Cassation Court upholds over 3-year sentence for drug dealer

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Court of Cassation has upheld a July 2022 State Security Court (SSC) ruling, sentencing a drug dealer to over three years in prison after convicting him of possessing illegal narcotics in the Jordan Valley in December 2021.

The court declared the defendant guilty of obtaining illegal narcotics with the intent of selling the drugs to an undercover agent on December 29.

The SSC handed the defendant five years in prison for the offence of possessing illegal narcotics and ordered him to pay JD5,000 in fines.

However, the court decided to reduce the fine to JD3,500 and the prison term to three years and four months in prison to give the defendant a second chance at life.

Court documents said the Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) learnt the defendant was in possession of illegal

narcotics in northern Shouneh and sent one of its agents to pose as a buyer.

"The AND agent got in touch with the defendant via a mobile application and asked him for four Captagon pills in return for JD10," court documents said.

When the two met, the defendant was sur-

rounded by AND agents who immediately arrested him, court papers added.

The defendant contested the SSC's ruling through his lawyer, who argued that the court "relied on one testimony by a prosecution witness to implicate my client for drug trafficking".

The lawyer also ar-

gued that the sentence was harsh, given that "my client is young and does not have a previous criminal record".

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

The higher court maintained that the SSC

had followed the proper procedures in issuing the sentence against the defendant.

"It was clear to the court that the defendant confessed willingly to possessing the illegal drugs to sell in the local market," the higher court said.

In addition, the court maintained that the "il-

licit drug exchange occurred in front of several law-enforcement officers, who also testified in court against the defendant".

The Court of Cassation judges were Mahmoud Ebtoush, Majid Azab, Mohammad Khashashneh, Qassem Dughmi and Hammad Ghzawi.



Ukrainian rescuers work at a site of a heavily damaged residential building following a massive strike in Odesa on Monday, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine

Kyiv calls for Ukraine ceasefire after Iran truce

KYIV, Ukraine (AFP) — Kyiv on Wednesday called on the United States to pressure Russia into ending its invasion of Ukraine, saying Washington's ceasefire agreement with Iran showed the success of US "decisiveness".

The war in the Middle East suspended US-led efforts to end the four-year Ukraine war.

The Kremlin also said it now hoped a new round of talks with US and Ukrainian delegations would be possible after Tehran and Washington agreed a two-week ceasefire.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga wrote on social media: "American decisiveness works. We believe it is time for sufficient decisiveness to force Moscow to ceasefire and end its war against Ukraine."

President Volodymyr Zelensky echoed those comments in a later post on social media.

"Ukraine has always called for a ceasefire in the war waged by Russia here in Europe against our state and our people, and we support the ceasefire in the Middle East and the Gulf that paves the way for diplomatic efforts," he wrote.

In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters: "We hope that in the foreseeable future they will have more time and more opportunities to meet in a trilateral format. We look forward to this."

Several rounds of US-

led talks have failed to bring the warring sides closer towards an agreement.

Moscow is demanding sweeping territorial and political concessions from Kyiv that Zelensky has ruled out as tantamount to capitulation.

US Vice President JD Vance said Wednesday that the Ukraine war was proving "the hardest" to solve.

'Ukrainian expert military teams will continue to work in the region to help further develop security capabilities'

Speaking during a visit to Budapest, he said Washington would "keep on working" to find a solution and insisted there had been "significant progress."

He also slammed European leaders, saying "they don't seem particularly interested in solving this particular conflict."

Ukraine urges energy ceasefire

Zelensky added that

Ukrainian military teams helping Middle East countries counter Iranian drone attacks would stay in the region.

Kyiv says it has deployed more than 200 military personnel with expertise in downing drones to the region since Iran began retaliatory drone attacks across the Middle East in response to US and Israeli attacks.

"Ukrainian expert military teams will continue to work in the region to help further develop security capabilities," Zelensky wrote on social media.

"The situation in this region has global implications, any threats to security and stability in the Middle East and the Gulf amplify challenges for the economy and the cost of living in every country," he added.

He reiterated readiness to pause strikes on Russian infrastructure if Moscow halted its long-range drone and missile attacks on Ukrainian power plants and grid.

"Ukraine tells Russia once again: We are ready to respond in kind if the Russians stop their strikes. It is obvious to everyone that a ceasefire can create the right preconditions for agreements," Zelensky wrote.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine launched in February 2022 has cost hundreds of thousands of lives and displaced millions, making it the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War II.

Iran hits Gulf states after agreeing 'fragile' truce with US

TEHRAN (AFP) — US Vice President JD Vance warned the truce between Washington and Tehran remained "fragile" on Wednesday as several Gulf nations endured fresh attacks just hours after the rivals agreed a two-week ceasefire.

The strikes on Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates came as two ships passed through the Strait of Hormuz after Iran agreed to temporarily reopen the strategic waterway under threat of annihilation by President Donald Trump.

Both sides claimed victory as the eleventh-hour ceasefire was announced but Iran warned the war was not over until formal terms were negotiated, with talks between Tehran and Washington expected in Pakistan on Friday.

Tehran's demands over future control of Hormuz, a narrow strait through which one-fifth of the world's oil usually passes, uranium enrichment and economic sanctions are at deep odds with Washington.

Vance, speaking in Budapest, said negotiations could turn a "fragile truce" into a deal if Iran was "willing in good faith to work with us".

If not "they're going to find out that the president of the United States is not one to mess around. He's impatient. He's impatient to make progress," Vance said.

Pope Leo was among a chorus of world leaders to call on Wednesday for a full end to the war, which has killed thousands of people, sparked an energy crisis and roiled global markets.

Trump told AFP the deal was a "total and complete victory" for the US, which conducted airstrikes with Israel on



An Iranian resident looks out the window of his damaged home after Israeli-American strikes that according to local media reported destroyed the Rafi-Nia Synagogue and nearby residential buildings in Tehran, on Tuesday

February 28 that killed Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and ignited a regional war.

Iran also hailed the ceasefire as a win but warned it "does not mean the end of the war" unless its terms were met.

Its powerful Revolutionary Guard said on Wednesday they had "no trust" in US promises and warned their "finger is on the trigger".

Gulf strikes

Underscoring the precariousness of the situation, Iranian state media announced fresh "missile and drone attacks" Wednesday on US-allied Gulf states UAE and Kuwait in retaliation for air strikes against its oil facilities.

Kuwait said its oil facilities and power and de-salination plants

were damaged in "an intense wave" of strikes that lasted hours, and demanded Iran cease its attacks.

The UAE said it was intercepting Iranian attacks while Bahrain also said its capital Manama had been hit.

Iran has unleashed weeks of aerial attacks on Gulf Arab states, citing their role as hubs for US troops and shattering their hard-fought reputation for safety and stability.

There was also no let-up to fighting in Lebanon, where Israel renewed strikes against Hezbollah on Wednesday despite the Iranian-backed armed group not claiming any operations since 1:00am.

It announced its "largest coordinated" strikes across Lebanon, while Lebanese state media reported strikes on Beirut and its suburbs.

The White House said Israel had agreed to the ceasefire but prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu said it did not include Lebanon, where Israel's operation has killed more than 1,500 people, according to local authorities.

Israel had encouraged Trump to launch the war against Iran, its arch-foe, according to a report in The New York Times.

A peace agreement would leave in place the Islamic republic despite US and Israeli hopes of toppling it. The United States and Israel said that they attacked Iran to degrade its military capacity.

In Tehran, streets were quieter than usual on Wednesday, with many shops closed after a long and anxious night for city inhabitants fearing a massive US attack.

Trump had earlier warned a "whole civilisation will die" in Iran if the Strait of Hormuz was not opened by midnight GMT but said he held off after speaking with Pakistan's leaders.

He later told AFP he believed China had helped get Tehran to negotiate.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi confirmed safe passage for two weeks for ships through the strait, which Tehran sealed off in retaliation for the war, sending global energy prices soaring.

A Greek-owned bulk carrier and a Liberia-flagged vessel sailed through on Wednesday, said the maritime monitor Marine Traffic.

Trump posted on Wednesday on social media that the US would "be helping with the traffic buildup in the Strait of Hormuz".

Starmer heads to Gulf, welcomes Iran war truce

LONDON (AFP) — British Prime Minister Keir Starmer will travel to the Gulf on Wednesday to meet with regional leaders in an effort to bolster the ceasefire in the Middle East war, Downing Street said.

"I welcome the ceasefire agreement reached overnight, which will

bring a moment of relief to the region and the world," a statement from Starmer's office quoted him as saying.

"Together with our partners we must do all we can to support and sustain this ceasefire, turn it into a lasting agreement and reopen the Strait of Hormuz."

The visit follows a virtual meeting Tuesday of military planners from over 30 countries hosted by Britain.

The meeting explored measures for an international coalition to make the Strait of Hormuz accessible and safe after a ceasefire according to the Ministry of Defence.

Last week, a UK-led diplomatic virtual meeting of around 40 countries also discussed the critical waterway.

It has been largely closed since the US-Israeli war against Iran started on February 28, impacting global supplies of oil, liquefied natural gas, and

fertiliser.

UK armed forces personnel have intercepted more than 110 drone attacks in the region during the hostilities, while the Royal Air Force have conducted more than 1600 hours of defensive operations, the Downing Street statement added.

Pakistan to host US-Iran ceasefire talks on Friday

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AFP) — Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Wednesday that Islamabad would host delegations from the United States and Iran later this week following their ceasefire announcement.

"... extend deepest gratitude to the leadership of both the countries and invite their delegations to Islamabad on Friday, 10th April 2026, to further negotiate for a conclusive agreement to settle all disputes," he said in a post on X.

Pakistan, which has forged a close relationship with US President Donald Trump and is sensitive to developments in neighbouring Iran, has emerged as a channel for messaging between Tehran and Washington in recent weeks.

"We earnestly hope, that the 'Islamabad Talks' succeed in achieving sustainable peace and wish to share more good news in coming days," Sharif said.

Both Tehran and



A vendor displays morning newspapers at his roadside stall in Islamabad on Wednesday

Washington said they had agreed to a two-week ceasefire barely an hour before Trump's deadline to obliterate Iran was set to expire.

The war began when Israel and the United States launched strikes on Iran that killed its supreme leader on February 28, sparking retaliatory attacks from Tehran on Gulf nations and Israel.

Lebanon has also been drawn into the

conflict after Iran-backed group Hezbollah launched attacks on Israel, which has since carried out strikes, including on the capital and launched a ground operation in the south of the country.

Sharif said the ceasefire applied "everywhere" including Lebanon, though Israel later said it would not stop its aerial and ground operations there against Hezbollah militants.

The temporary ceasefire came after a down-to-the-wire bid by Pakistan and other mediators to avert Trump's threat to destroy all power plants and bridges across Iran, a move that legal experts said could constitute a war crime.

Turkey and Egypt had also been helping mediate in recent days. China helped get Iran to the negotiating table, Trump told AFP on

Wednesday.

Sharif, in a separate X post, said China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and Qatar had all provided "support towards reaching the ceasefire and giving peaceful diplomatic efforts a chance".

The Pakistani leader also thanked Arab Gulf nations for their "commitment to peace and stability in the region".

Despite trading missile fire with Iran two years ago and holding an at-times rocky relationship with the United States, Pakistan currently shares warm ties with both countries.

That helped boost its moderating credentials, burnished by its strong bonds with heavy-weight regional players, including Saudi Arabia and Beijing.

Pakistan is home to the world's second-biggest Shia Muslim population after Iran, with which it shares a 900 kilometre border, and represents some Iranian diplomatic interests in Washington where Tehran has no embassy.

UN probe: Israeli fire, Hezbollah IED killed peacekeepers in Lebanon

UNITED NATIONS, United States (AFP) — Three UN peacekeepers who died in Lebanon in March were likely killed by Israeli tank fire in one incident and by a Hezbollah improvised explosive device in another, according to a United Nations probe shared Tuesday.

"We have requested with the relevant parties that the cases be investigated and prosecuted by national authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice and ensure criminal accountability for crimes against peacekeepers," Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for the UN secretary-general, told reporters.

On March 29, an Indonesian peacekeeper was killed and three others wounded by a projectile that exploded near a UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) position.

The next day, two other soldiers from the same force were killed by an explosion that destroyed their vehicle. A third was seriously wounded and a

fourth more lightly.

In the first case, the investigation indicates "the projectile was a 120 mm tank main armament round, fired by an Israel Defense Forces Merkava tank from the east", Dujarric said.

He added that UNIFIL had communicated the location of all its positions and installations to the Israeli military twice in the days before the incident.

The March 30 explosion was caused by an IED, Dujarric said.

"The investigation has assessed that, given the location of the incident, the nature of the explosion, and the current context, the IED was most likely placed by Hezbollah," he said.

UNIFIL has served as a peacekeeping force between Israel and Lebanon since 1978 but now finds itself caught in the crossfire between the Israeli army and Iran-backed Hezbollah.

Indonesia's foreign ministry said on Wednes-

day it had received the preliminary findings from the UN.

"The government of Indonesia has urged all relevant parties to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators, and to ensure accountability for the crimes committed against peacekeeping personnel," ministry official Veronica Vicka Ancilla Rompis told reporters in Jakarta.

She said Israel's ongoing military operations in south Lebanon "will continue to endanger peacekeeping personnel".

"All actions that endanger peacekeeping personnel constitute a serious violation of international law and must not be allowed to continue," added Vicka.

Asked whether Indonesia was considering a halt to peacekeeper deployments in Lebanon, ministry spokeswoman Yvonne Mewengkang said: "Every decision we make related to this issue will go through very, very careful consideration."



A man walks past a television screen showing a news broadcast with file footage of a North Korean missile test, at a train station in Seoul on Thursday

North Korea fires multiple ballistic missiles in two rounds — Seoul military

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles in two rounds on Wednesday, South Korea's military said, hours after reporting an "unidentified projectile" launched from the North's capital area the previous day.

South Korean President Lee Jae-myung has sought to repair ties with North Korea since taking office last year, criticising his predecessor for allegedly sending drones to scatter propaganda over Pyongyang.

The launches follow Seoul's expression of regret on Monday over civilian drone incursions into the North in January, with President Lee calling it "irresponsible" and noting that government officials had been involved in the operation.

They are seen as North Korea's latest rebuff of South Korea's peace overtures, according to analysts.

Seoul's military said early Wednesday it had detected "an unidentified projectile" launched from the Pyongyang area a day earlier.

About an hour later, the military said it also detected "multiple unidentified ballistic missiles" fired from North Korea's Wonsan area towards the East Sea on Wednesday morning, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

Later the South Korean military clarified they were short-range

ballistic missiles, fired at around 8:50 am (23:50 GMT) and flew around 240 kilometres.

Hours later, they announced North Korea fired at least one other ballistic missile towards the East Sea, without giving details.

Shortly afterwards, the Japan Coast Guard also said an "object suspected to be a ballistic missile has been launched from North Korea".

"Ships are advised to remain vigilant for further updates and, should they spot any falling debris, to keep their distance and report any relevant information to the Japan Coast Guard," it added.

The Wednesday launches marked North Korea's fourth and fifth known ballistic missile tests this year, including a salvo of around 10 fired from the Sunan area in March.

The Office of National Security at the presidential Blue House held an emergency meeting over the launch, asking Pyongyang to immediately stop provocations.

"Given the ongoing war in the Middle East, [the office] instructed relevant agencies to exercise even greater vigilance in maintaining a state of readiness," it said in a statement.

The office also "urged North Korea to immediately cease its ballistic missile launch, deeming it a provocative act that violates UN Security Council resolutions", it added.

Following president Lee's expression of regret over the drones on Monday, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said Lee's regret was "wise behaviour".

"Our government appreciated it as very fortunate and wise behaviour for its own sake," Kim Yo-jong said on Monday.

'World-startling fools'

But on Tuesday, a senior North Korean foreign ministry official described the South as "the enemy state most hostile" to North Korea, reiterating a label previously used by Kim Jong-un.

Referring to South Korean media reports that cast a positive light on Kim Yo-jong's comments about Lee, the official said such a stance was "nonsense".

"Regarding the rapid response from our government as an 'exceptional friendly response'... this will also be recorded as 'world-startling fools', Jang Kum-chol, first vice-minister of Pyongyang's foreign ministry, said in a statement carried by Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency.

The launches are Pyongyang's message to Seoul that its anti-South stance remains firm despite Seoul's repeated overtures, said Lim Eul-chul, an expert on North Korea at Kyungnam University.

Energy sector cuts losses by JD113 million in 2025 — ministry

Report says 12 green hydrogen projects underway with int'l partners

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's energy sector cut its losses by JD113 million in 2025, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources said on Wednesday.

The ministry attributed the improvement to lower electricity losses and reduced operating costs, according to its first quarterly report for 2026.

The report also highlighted ongoing progress in renewable energy and energy efficiency, including the advancement of 12 green hydrogen projects in cooperation with international companies.

A preliminary report was also released on developing a shared infrastructure mechanism for hydrogen projects, designed to attract investment and regulate the sector, the ministry said.

In the oil and gas sector, the ministry noted continued efforts to enhance exploration and production.

The report said that around 50 per cent of consultancy agreements for drilling 80 wells in the Risha field have been completed, adding that drilling has begun on the first sections of two wells at a depth of 500



Risha gas field in Ruweished in Mafrqa, some 330 km north of Amman

metres, with work ongoing on a third.

"Three additional wells were connected to production lines, while 3D seismic permit clearance in the Jafr area has been completed and data processing has started."

The report also detailed energy efficiency

initiatives, with 399 solar systems installed for underprivileged households out of a target of 1,086 beneficiaries under the National Aid Fund.

In Mafrqa, 1,611 conventional streetlights were replaced with LED units under the second phase of an energy ef-

iciency programme. A contract was also signed to install solar water heaters in nine government hospitals in the northern region.

Efforts to expand electricity access in remote areas continued, with 359 applications approved under the "Fils Al

Reef" programme out of 480 reviewed.

Support included installing 27 solar systems for injured military personnel, part of a plan targeting 175 beneficiaries, and approving final designs for municipal projects in the northern region.

Nearly 5,000 S.African Afrikaners take up Trump refugee offer

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Nearly 5,000 white Afrikaners have entered the United States under a programme launched by President Donald Trump nearly a year ago based on unfounded claims that the South African minority faces persecution, a document seen by AFP on Wednesday showed.

The Trump administration has essentially ended refugee admissions as part of a crackdown on immigration but made an exception for South Africa's white Afrikaans community, descendants of the first European settlers.

All of 4,499 people

listed as resettled across 48 US states between October 1 last year and March 31 this year were South Africans except for three Afghans, according to the document from the US Department of State's Bureau of Population.

Another 340 South Africans were admitted in the previous financial year, after Trump's return to the White House in January 2025.

February and March this year saw the most arrivals, with more than 1,300 people resettled each month.

Trump's administration in May last year made the offer of refu-

gee status to the minority white Afrikaner community claiming they were victims of racial discrimination and even "genocide", which the South African government strongly denies.

The first group of around 50 travelled to the United States on a chartered flight on May 12, while later arrivals took commercial flights.

The US government in October announced it would slash refugee admissions to 7,500 in fiscal year 2026, down from more than 100,000 a year under Democratic President Joe Biden, and give

priority to white South Africans.

Washington has repeatedly claimed that Afrikaners are being persecuted since the end of white minority rule in 1994...

Pretoria and Washington, already at odds over a range of policy issues, clashed in December after South Af-

rica raided a centre set up to fast-track resettlement applications to the United States.

Washington has repeatedly claimed that Afrikaners are being persecuted since the end of white minority rule in 1994, citing attacks on their farms and requirements for black representation in business.

Pretoria firmly rejects the allegations, pointing out that black South Africans are the main victims of the country's high crime rate and that economic empowerment laws are intended to redress stark inequalities inherited from apartheid.

King to former PMs, officials: Jordan is safe and will remain so

Continued from page 1

The King stressed the need to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and ensure freedom of navigation in accordance with international law.

His Majesty warned that Israel has once again exploited the situation in the region to expand the conflict, emphasising that Jordan

continues to communicate with the international community on the need to address the situation in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza.

The King warned of the dangerous developments in the West Bank and Jerusalem, stressing the importance of launching an international effort to halt Israel's plans to annex

parts of the West Bank, or alter the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem and its holy sites.

His Majesty also emphasised the need to end Israel's aggression against Lebanon, and to support its government's efforts to maintain Lebanon's security, stability and sovereignty.

The meeting was attended by former prime ministers Abdul Karim Kabariti, Abdur-Rau'f Rawabdeh, Faisal Fayez, Adnan Badran, Nader Dahabi, Samir Rifai, Abdullah Ensour, Hani Mulki, Omar Razzaz and Bisher Khasawneh. Also present were Abdul Ilah Khatib, Nasser Judeh, Mahmoud Freihat, and Hussein Hawatmeh.

Royal Hashemite Court Chief Yousef Issawi, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti, General Intelligence Department Director Maj. Gen. Ahmad Husni, and Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh also attended the meeting.

Prime minister condemns Israeli aggression, reiterates full support for Lebanon

Continued from page 1

Reiterating Jordan's unwavering support for Lebanon's security, stability, and sovereignty, the ministry expressed support for the Leba-

nese government's efforts to assert control over its entire territory, reactivate national institutions, and ensure that weapons remain under state authority.

The ministry urged

the international community to uphold its responsibilities, take decisive action to compel Israel to halt violations, respect international law, and end all hostilities against Lebanon.

US-Iran ceasefire marks 'potential' turning point, offers 'fragile' hope for regional stability

Continued from page 1

The ceasefire comes amid continued tension on the ground.

Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz, a critical route for global oil supplies, while military activity across the region remains active despite the temporary halt in direct confrontation.

Early signs of movement have already emerged. Two ships have passed through the Strait of Hormuz since Iran agreed to reopen the waterway under the ceasefire deal, maritime monitor Marine Traffic said on Wednesday.

An Israeli strike in the Jnah area of Bei-

rut early on Wednesday killed Hizbollah's top commander for Iraq military affairs, Yousef Hashem, according to AFP, highlighting the ongoing spillover of the conflict beyond Iran.

The human cost of the conflict is also mounting. A US-based monitoring group said at least 3,597 people have been killed in Iran, including 1,665 civilians and 248 children.

In Lebanon, the health ministry reported 1,530 deaths and more than 4,800 wounded since the start of the war.

At the same time, Trump said Washington would assist in managing congestion in the Strait of Hormuz,

indicating continued US involvement in securing energy flows even as it seeks to reduce direct military engagement.

Markets have already reacted to the shifting tone.

Oil prices fell after Iranian statements signalled willingness to end the war under certain guarantees, reflecting how political messaging continues to influence global economic trends.

Despite the ceasefire, the broader trajectory of the conflict remains uncertain. The agreement is seen as a temporary pause rather than a definitive end, with key points still unresolved.

A transcript of Trump's remarks to AFP indicated that negotiations are based on multiple points, with most areas of disagreement narrowed, but without clear confirmation that a final deal has been secured.

Political analyst Amer Sabaileh said the ceasefire reflects a gradual move towards a negotiated framework shaped by US priorities.

"The ceasefire reflects signals previously hinted at by President Trump, suggesting a shift towards a less hardline and more pragmatic approach," he said.

He added that the arrangement points to

partial alignment with US demands, despite the likelihood of limited concessions.

"The ceasefire, even under continued pressure, will likely lead to clearer US demands," he said.

"Core issues such as uranium enrichment, ballistic missiles and regional policies remain non-negotiable."

The current phase suggests that the war is transitioning from open confrontation to a more complex political and strategic process.

Even if the ceasefire holds, the coming period will be defined not by how the war paused, but by how its unresolved issues reshape the region.

Development work begins on Amrah City Project, site preparations underway — official

Continued from page 1

"The development timeline aims to complete three major projects by the end of 2027, with an additional project slated for completion by the end of 2028."

Construction of the planned football stadium is expected to continue until its delivery in late 2029, he said.

Mheidat stressed that the project is being carefully planned to position Amrah City as a pioneering model for smart cities in the Middle East.

The Amrah City Project was launched by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan in late November 2025, marking the start of infrastructure works for what the government describes as a new model for urban development and long-

term population growth management.

Designed as a nucleus for a future model city targeting younger generations, the project will be developed over a 25-year period under strict planning frameworks that extend beyond successive governments.

According to official estimates, the project aims to ease demographic pressure on Amman and Zarqa, where the population could reach 11 million within 25 years if current growth trends continue.

The project spans nearly 500,000 dunums of state-owned land, with the first phase covering 40,000 dunums. The Jordanian Company for Cities and Facilities Development will oversee implementation.

Amrah City will follow a comprehensive land-use plan that allocates space for investment, education, commerce, industry, housing, tourism, and public services. The city is envisioned as a green, technologically advanced hub powered by clean energy, modern public transport, and digital infrastructure.

The first phase includes several major projects, including an international exhibition centre expected to be completed in 2027, an integrated sports city featuring an international football stadium by 2029, an Olympic city, indoor arenas built to Olympic standards, a car racing track, a 1,000-dunum environmental park, and an entertainment city scheduled to open in 2028.

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The cost of war despite the truce

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

Beyond traditional growth indicators, data on human development, as well as the services and financial sectors, reveal the depth of the war's long-term economic impact, even amid the announcement of a two-week truce. While this de-escalation may reduce the intensity of military confrontation, it does not eliminate the economic effects that have already begun to materialise. Estimates indicate a decline in the Human Development Index in the region by between 0.2 per cent and 0.4 per cent, equivalent to a loss of between half a year and a full year of development progress. In some Gulf countries, losses may reach between 1.2 and 2 years, while in the Mashreq they range between 0.9 and 1.5 years. These figures suggest that part of the region's development gains has already been eroded, even before any potential recovery begins.

This regional disparity reflects the nature of the shock. Losses remain relatively limited in North Africa, but they are deeper in countries more directly linked to trade and energy or those suffering from structural fragility. In less developed countries, even a small numerical decline represents a significant setback, given their already low development levels, making recovery more difficult. The truce does not imply an immediate restoration of the development path, but rather a temporary halt in deterioration, while the losses themselves remain.

On the fiscal front, governments continue to face clear pressure despite the truce. The war has led to declining revenues in some countries, particularly due to disrupted trade and heightened uncertainty, while expenditures have increased as a result of rising military and security spending. Although higher oil prices may provide partial relief for some countries, the overall fiscal burden is increasing, limiting governments' ability to expand spending or provide broad-based support. The truce may ease pressures slightly, but it does not restore fiscal conditions to their pre-crisis state.

In the health sector, the impact of the war is immediate and not easily reversible. Medical supplies worth \$18 million have been disrupted, with an additional \$8 million in shipments unable to reach their destinations, alongside the closure of 43 health centres and two hospitals. Even with the truce, restoring operations and ensuring the flow of supplies will take time, meaning continued pressure on healthcare systems, especially in countries with already weak infrastructure, according to the United Nations Development Programme report.

In the education sector, the long-term cost is even more pronounced. More than 325 schools have been converted into shelters hosting around 12,000 displaced families, leading to a widespread disruption of the education process. This impact does not end with the cessation of hostilities. The loss of weeks or months of schooling creates a gap in human capital that is difficult to recover, particularly in systems that already suffer from weak educational quality. While the truce may allow for a gradual return to schooling, it does not eliminate the losses that have already occurred.

The water sector is equally critical. Around 100 million people in Gulf countries depend on approximately 400 desalination plants that provide about 40 per cent of the world's desalinated water. Any disruption to this infrastructure, even if temporary, creates serious risks to water security. The truce does not remove these risks entirely, but only reduces the likelihood of further escalation.

These indicators show that the current truce, despite its political importance, does not mark the end of the economic cost of the war. The effects on development, services and economic structures have already materialised and will persist even if escalation stops. Economies do not recover at the same pace as the cessation of military operations; rebuilding what has been damaged takes time. The region has effectively entered a post-shock phase, where the economic cost remains present even amid relative calm.

Reviving early Christian heritage as catalyst for religious tourism development

In the evolving landscape of global tourism, where authenticity and spiritual depth increasingly shape travel motivations, Jordan stands uniquely positioned as a living archive of religious heritage. While sites such as the Baptism Site and Madaba have long captured international attention, the northern village of Rehab quietly preserves one of the most significant yet underutilised chapters of early Christianity. This ancient settlement offers not only archaeological richness but also a compelling opportunity to redefine religious tourism through a model grounded in heritage, sustainability and cultural continuity.

Located between Mafraq and Jerash, Rehab is widely recognized by scholars as an important ecclesiastical centre during Late Antiquity and the early Byzantine period. Excavations have revealed a remarkable concentration of early Christian structures, including churches, inscriptions and mosaics dating primarily to the sixth and seventh centuries AD. These findings are not isolated; rather, they reflect a broader historical pattern in which Jordan emerged as a key landscape in the development of early Christianity. Archaeological research indicates that the region contains hundreds of Christian sites, including more than 150 well-preserved churches, illustrating the depth and continuity of Christian presence across centuries.

What distinguishes Rehab in particular is the density and diversity of its religious architecture. The site is home to more than twenty churches, suggesting that it was not merely a peripheral settlement but a



Lubna Ammari

vibrant urban and spiritual hub. These churches, built across successive periods, reflect evolving architectural styles and theological expressions, from basilica layouts to intricate mosaic floors bearing Greek inscriptions. The presence of such a large number of churches within a relatively small geographic area positions Rehab as one of the earliest and most concentrated expressions of organised Christian worship in the region.

Beyond its archaeological value, Rehab carries profound symbolic and narrative significance. Historical references trace its origins back to ancient times, with mentions in biblical and Near Eastern records, and its strategic location along caravan routes contributed to its development as a crossroads of cultures and faiths. During its peak in the Byzantine era, Rehab was not only a religious centre but also a thriving community integrated into regional trade and pilgrimage networks. This dual identity as both a sacred and socio-economic space offers a powerful framework for contemporary tourism development.

Despite this immense potential, Rehab remains largely absent from mainstream tourism circuits. This gap reflects a broader challenge in heritage management: The disconnect between archaeological significance and tourism integration.

While recent efforts by international organisations and Jordanian authorities have focused on site rehabilitation, including conservation of mosaics and improved visitor infrastructure, these initiatives have, yet, to translate into sustained tourism flows. Bridging this gap requires a strategic reimagining of Rehab not merely as a collection of ruins, but as a living narrative embedded within Jordan's identity as a land of faith and coexistence.

The concept of religious tourism itself has evolved significantly in recent years. No longer limited to traditional pilgrimage, it now encompasses experiential journeys that combine spirituality, education and cultural immersion. In this context, Rehab holds exceptional promise. Its churches, inscriptions, and urban remains can be curated into interpretive experiences that allow visitors to engage with the early Christian world in a tangible and meaningful way. Such an approach aligns with global trends towards sustainable tourism, where preservation and community engagement are central priorities.

Moreover, integrating Rehab into Jordan's broader religious tourism strategy would create a more diversified and geographically balanced tourism map. Northern Jordan, often overshadowed by southern destinations such as Petra, could emerge as a complementary hub for faith-based travel. This would not only distribute economic benefits more equitably but also strengthen local communities by connecting them to their historical heritage. Initiatives that involve local stakeholders such as cultural

storytelling, guided tours and community-based hospitality can transform Rehab into a dynamic destination that bridges past and present.

Equally important is the role of digital innovation in amplifying Rehab's visibility. Virtual reconstructions, augmented reality applications and digital storytelling platforms can bring its ancient churches to life for global audiences, attracting interest even before physical visits occur. For a country like Jordan, which has already demonstrated leadership in promoting its heritage internationally, leveraging technology to showcase lesser-known sites represents a logical and impactful next step.

Ultimately, the story of Rehab is not merely about stones and structures; it is about reclaiming a narrative that speaks to shared human values faith, resilience, and coexistence. In a world increasingly seeking meaningful connections, destinations like Rehab offer a rare opportunity to engage with history in ways that are both intellectually enriching and spiritually resonant.

By investing in its preservation and promotion, Jordan can position Rehab not only as a site of archaeological importance but as a cornerstone of a forward-looking, sustainable religious tourism strategy.

In doing so, Rehab may finally assume its rightful place not as a forgotten village on the margins of history, but as a central voice in the story of early Christianity and a catalyst for a new era of cultural and spiritual tourism in Jordan.

The author is a specialist in educational technology.

Netanyahu's 2026 budget... a 'danger' to the occupied West Bank

The Israeli parliament (Knesset) has approved on the 30th of March Israel's 2026 state budget in its final reading, a move that prevents the far-right government's immediate collapse and avoids early elections, locking in the political calendar for a vote expected in October.

The vote concluded a tense, hours-long parliamentary session marked by opposition filibusters and repeated interruptions after sirens warned of Iranian ballistic missile fire, forcing lawmakers to evacuate the plenum multiple times.

As Israeli lawmakers from a fortified bunker voted on the budget, totalling (\$271 billion) 850 billion shekels, the largest budget in their nation's history, one of the main aims of the spending bill is the massive financial injection into extreme right-wing projects that analysts say will fundamentally alter the occupied West Bank.

Citing "national security" amid the ongoing war with Iran, the ruling coalition has bypassed legal frameworks to direct billions towards ideological goals, including supporting Israeli settlers establishing outposts and settlements in the West Bank, analysts say.

While the record defence allocation of \$45.8bn has dominated headlines, the budget's fine print also reveals a calculated shift towards entrenching the occupation and empowering the far-right elements of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

A key pillar of this strategy is the allocation of 400 million shekels (\$129.5m) to the Ministry of Settlement and National Missions, which is the body that ultimately authorises illegal Jewish-only settlements and outposts on Palestinian land.

Far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, called the defence package the "core" of the wartime budget, adding that it would allow Israel to "dramatically improve our geopolitical and diplomatic standing" and "dismantle and rebuild the Middle East".

Smotrich, who is a settler himself, has been open about his opposition to any form of two-state solution, stating recently: "On the ground, we are

blocking the establishment of a Palestinian terror state."

Netanyahu, who has a long history of scuttling peace accords by allowing settlement expansion, has echoed this sentiment.

"There will be no Palestinian state to the west of the Jordan River," he said in a recent address, openly defying the internationally backed two-state solution, which is supported by the United Nations, the International Court of Justice and a vast majority of nations.



Najla M. Shahwan

primarily the Shas and United Torah Judaism parties, which hold 11 and seven seats, respectively.

Together, their 18 seats in the 120-seat Knesset make them unignorable as Netanyahu has no governing majority without them.

Opposition lawmakers harshly criticised the budget for the allocations to Heredi institutions, West Bank settlements and other priorities of coalition parties.

Yesh Atid chair Yair Lapid, the opposition leader, called the budget "the greatest theft in the history of the state". Addressing the plenum, Lapid said: "This isn't a budget — it's a robbery."

The Israeli public is not stupid. It understands that this budget is a bonanza for the corrupt and for draft evaders who are celebrating at our expense." Former prime minister Naftali Bennett described the plan as "the most reckless and anti-Zionist" in the state's history. "We are at war, and, when cuts are necessary, the people of Israel know how to bear them. But the government is doing something entirely different: Looting the public purse," he said in a video statement.

Yair Golan, the leader of the left — wing Democrats party likewise said the "worst government in Israel's history" was passing a budget that amounted to "a working plan for dismantling the State of Israel".

Netanyahu sees the budget as an "insurance policy" for his political survival, trading state funds for such projects in return for the continued support of his coalition partners. Observers state that, the immediate survival of the government hinges on maintaining the backing of the ultra-Orthodox, or Haredi, political factions —

These actions have resulted in the displacement of Palestinians from their land and homes. Simultaneously, the government has allocated substantial public funds to settlements and settlers, often at the expense of broader national interests.

In early March 2026, following the war on Iran, the government increased defence spending by approximately NIS 42 billion. To finance this, it reduced budgets across all ministries, increased borrowing, and raised the deficit but settlement funding remained assured and secured.

Earlier, on the 4th of December, 2025, the government adopted a far-reaching decision to invest a massive sum of NIS 2.75 billion over the next five years in settlement development.

This budget allocation comes against a backdrop of surging violence by settlers as well as Israeli armed forces' raids on Palestinian communities across the West Bank, which have intensified since the onset of Israel's genocide al war on Gaza in October 2023.

While attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank have occurred for decades, UN data shows that settlers — often protected by Israeli soldiers — attacked Palestinians nearly 3,000 times over the past two years.

Besides, according to the UN, Israeli settlement expansions have now reached their highest level since 2017 and under the current far-right government, the number of settlements and outposts in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has risen by nearly 50 per cent — from 141 in 2022 to 210 in 2025.

Approximately 700,000 settlers, making up nearly 10 per cent of Israel's Jewish population, now live in these illegal settlements.

The 2026 Israeli budget, poses significant dangers to Palestinians by accelerating West Bank settlement expansion, funding surveillance and cutting development funds for Arab communities.

The budget facilitates infrastructure projects that cut through Palestinian towns and allocates funds for settler security, further complicating the potential for a viable Palestinian state.

BUSINESS

Thursday, April 9, 2026



A liquefied natural gas tanker is moored at a LNG berth in Kawasaki, Kanagawa prefecture on Wednesday

Amman bourse defies regional turmoil with strong March performance

By Ilham Darwazah

AMMAN — Despite five weeks of regional conflict that have unsettled financial markets worldwide, the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) has demonstrated "notable" resilience, reinforcing its position as a stable investment destination during times of uncertainty.

Market analysts said that the exchange's performance suggests that the strong gains recorded over the past year were not merely the result of short-term conditions, but rather reflect "solid" economic fundamentals, structural strength and sustained investor confidence in Jordan's institutions.



JT file

Despite five weeks of regional conflict, Amman Stock Exchange has demonstrated 'notable' resilience, reinforcing its position as a 'stable' investment destination during times of uncertainty

Data from March highlights the market's stability even at the height of the crisis. Trading volume on the ASE surged by 130 per cent compared with March 2025, and rose by 18 per cent from February, before the outbreak of hostilities.

The average daily trading volume reached JD12.1 million, up from JD9.9 million in February and an annual average of JD8.8 million in 2025.

The industrial sector led this growth, recording a 104 per cent increase in trading volume compared to the previous month.

The expansion spanned multiple sub-sectors, including; chemicals, engineering and construction, electrical industries, textiles, leather and garments, as well as mining and extractive industries, sectors considered vital for exports and employment.

The ASE's general share price index also posted gains, rising by 1.2 per cent in March

compared with February, and by 38 per cent compared with March of the previous year.

Industrial shares climbed by 6.4 per cent compared with February, and surged by 60 per cent compared with March last year, while service sector shares increased by 2 per cent from February and by 29 per cent over the same comparison periods.

Financial sector shares, however, recorded a "slight" decline of 1 per cent compared with February, despite posting a "strong" annual increase of 31 per cent compared with March 2025.

Analysts attributed the monthly dip to banks holding general assembly meetings and announcing dividend distributions for the previous fiscal year.

According to analysts, the exchange's performance during a period of height-

ened geopolitical tension underscores the strength of Jordan's financial market and its ability to maintain investor confidence amid regional instability.

Amman bourse achieved recently "remarkable" performance, which placed it among the world's top-performing markets, ranking 13th globally and first in the region, according to Bloomberg.

Chief Executive Officer of the ASE Mazen Wathaifi told The Jordan Times in a recent interview, about launching a "comprehensive guidance report to reform the regulatory framework and policies governing the market".

Accordingly, Jordan became fifth globally in reporting compliance with the International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation.

The ASE remarkable performance is mainly

driven by long-term structural reforms and strong corporate earnings.

Wathaifi noted government support, increased liquidity, and solid macroeconomic conditions played a key role, in addition to policy measures, such as reforms to the citizenship-by-investment programme, tax incentives and extended trading hours, made the market more attractive and active.

Digital upgrades, including advanced trading systems and mobile access, further enhanced accessibility and transparency.

Meanwhile, improving economic indicators like higher remittances, tourism revenues and foreign reserves, along with upcoming large-scale development projects, reinforced the market's upward momentum and future outlook.

The CEO added that ASE actively partici-

pated in global forums, including the Arab Federation of Exchanges and the Euro-Asian exchanges network.

These collaborations have helped strengthen ties with other exchanges, further positioning ASE as a "key player" in the regional and global financial ecosystem, he said.

The committee has launched the Sustainability Guidance for Small and Medium Enterprises, aiming to align regional businesses with global sustainability standards.

ASE introduced the Middle East's first climate disclosure regulatory framework, in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation and the Kingdom of The Netherlands.

CEO Mazen Wathaifi emphasised the ASE's dedication to upholding Environmental, Social, and Governance standards as part of this initiative.

Oil prices plunge, stocks surge on US-Iran ceasefire

LONDON (AFP) — Oil and gas prices plunged, stock markets soared and the dollar retreated on Wednesday after the United States and Iran agreed to a temporary ceasefire that includes the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

"It is a massive market reversal," Kathleen Brooks, research director at XTB traders, told AFP after oil prices tumbled around 15 per cent to under \$100 a barrel.

"There's a lot of hope in the market... that this [ceasefire] deal will primarily allow the flow of commodities through the Strait of Hormuz."

European gas prices opened down 20 per cent on news of the truce that followed a conflict lasting more than one month, in turn killing thousands and hammering the global economy.

Stock markets soared on Wednesday, with Europe's main indices winning between 3 and 5 per cent in midday trades.

The Tokyo stock market closed up 5.4 per cent and Chinese indices jumped around 3 per cent.

US futures were sharply higher ahead of

Wall Street reopening on Wednesday, while Middle East stocks rallied.

The dollar, a safe haven investment in times of market turmoil, slid against the euro, yen and British pound as investors returned to riskier assets.

"We expect volatility to remain high in the coming days, as investors scrutinise both details out of the negotiations and vessel traffic data," said Matthew Ryan, head of market strategy at global financial services firm Ebury.

"Should talks falter or activity through the strait remain subdued, oil prices and the dollar could reverse course fairly quickly."

Maritime monitor Marine Traffic noted that two ships had passed through the strait since Iran agreed to reopen the waterway, through which much of the world's oil, gas and fertiliser passes.

Trump said the United States would help with the traffic build-up, as shipowners and charterers prepared to move their vessels stuck in the Gulf.

Shipping journal Lloyd's List estimated

that around 800 ships were hampered.

The International Air Transport Association meanwhile said that it would take months for jet fuel supplies and prices to normalise even with the strait's reopening.

"I don't think it's going to happen in weeks," said Willie Walsh, as he pointed to "disruption to the refining capacity in the Middle East".

Across global stock markets, most sectors saw sizable gains. Among the biggest winners were mining groups, banks and airlines, with gains of more than 10 per cent in some cases.

Energy majors slumped, however, having made huge gains over the past few weeks.

And despite Wednesday's hefty falls to oil and gas prices, they remain far above their levels on the eve of the Mideast war at the end of February.

"I don't think we're going to [quickly] go back to the levels we were at before the war," said Brooks.

"The reason why is that energy infrastructure across the Gulf has been targeted."

Jet fuel supplies to take 'months' to recover from war disruption — IATA

SINGAPORE (AFP) — It will take months for jet fuel supplies and prices to normalise even with the Strait of Hormuz open, the head of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said on Wednesday.

The Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping route for oil, has been virtually paralysed for weeks by the Middle East war, pushing up prices for crude and related products.

IATA director gen-

eral Willie Walsh told reporters in Singapore it was difficult to say how long fuel supplies would take to recover, but "it's not going to happen quickly".

"It will still take a period of months to get back to where supply needs to be given the disruption to the refining capacity in the Middle East," he said.

"I don't think it's going to happen in weeks," Walsh added.

Oil prices plunged

on Wednesday after the United States and Iran agreed to a two-week ceasefire that will see Tehran temporarily reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

The ceasefire was agreed barely an hour before US President Donald Trump's Wednesday deadline threat to obliterate Iran was set to expire.

Tehran later said it had agreed to safe passage in the Strait of Hormuz, through which

a fifth of global oil and gas passes.

"Even if you have the flow of crude start again, if you've had disruptions in refining capacity, then the problem continues for some time," Walsh said.

"I don't think everybody fully appreciated how concentrated the capacity was in certain parts of the world," he added.

Past experience shows that the aviation industry will respond

to higher oil prices by raising ticket prices, he said. "It's inevitable."

While some air traffic that would have passed through the Middle East has gone to airlines outside the region, this is "a temporary issue", Walsh said.

"There's no way they can replace the capacity that was provided by the Gulf carriers," he added.

"I think the Gulf hubs will recover and recover very quickly."



AFP photo

A KLM Royal Dutch Airlines plane lands at Milan Linate airport northern Italy, on Tuesday

Shell says upcoming results boosted by high oil prices

LONDON (AFP) — British energy giant Shell on Wednesday said first-quarter earnings were set for a "significant" boost from oil prices soaring during the Middle East war, which nevertheless lowered its production.

Despite world crude futures tumbling Wednesday following the announcement of a two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran, they remain considerably higher compared with the start of the conflict on February 28.

First-quarter adjusted earnings in Shell's marketing division, which includes its global network of service stations, "are expected to be signifi-



AFP photo

A digital display shows the price of petrol at a Shell petrol station in Dortmund, western Germany on Wednesday

cantly higher" compared with the same January-March period last year, the company said ahead of its full results due May 7.

It added in a statement

that gas production is expected to be lower than at the end of 2025, which "reflects the impact of the Middle East conflict on Qatari volumes".

Qatar has long-term

liquefied natural gas agreements with Shell and international rivals including ENI, TotalEnergies, Petronet and Sinopec.

Ras Laffan in northern Qatar, the world's largest LNG hub, has suffered significant damage in the war.

Shell's net profit rose 11 per cent last year to nearly \$18 billion as higher sales volumes and lower costs offset falling oil and gas prices.

After oil and gas prices plunged Wednesday, Shell's share price slid 6.4 per cent and peer BP shed 7 per cent in afternoon deals on London's benchmark FTSE 100 index.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD22.4 million spread over 5.9 million shares that traded through 5,068 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 1.32 per cent, closing at 3704.99 points.

Out of 109 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 67 companies rose while the share price of another 19 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Middle East Holding by 7.48 per cent, Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 5.26 per cent, Amwaj Properties by 5 per cent, Arab International for Education and Investment by 5 per cent, and Ibn Al Haytham Hospital Company by 4.88 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordan Worsted Mills by 7.14 per cent, Jordan Commercial Bank by 5.47 per cent, Arab International Hotels by 4.94 per cent, Professional Company for Real Estate Investment and Housing by 4.88 per cent, and Jordan Industrial Resources by 3.77 per cent.

THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↑ 3704.99 1.32% April 08, 2026

Live Data | Historical Data

Click and drag in the plot area to zoom in

DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market		OTC Market	
Trading Value (JDs)	22,395,724		
Trading volume	5,878,803		
No. of Transactions	5,068		
No. of Securities	109		

Energy security urgency grows as Jordan eyes renewables, oil shale

Experts urge accelerated efforts to achieve energy independence amid rising global fuel prices

By Hadeel El Bis

As global oil and gas prices continue their volatile climb, Jordan's energy file has returned to centre stage, underlying the urgency for larger investment for a resource-limited country.

Despite meaningful progress in diversifying energy sources and consolidating international agreements, experts have urged more effort to capitalise fully on its considerable potential.

Oil shale and renewable energy projects stand out as the most major components in this endeavor.

Former interior minister Samir Habashneh said that serious expansion into these sectors could have put Jordan on the path to electricity self-sufficiency, substantially cushioning the country from the impact of sudden global fuel price spikes.

Energy expert Mohammed Zoubi said that Jordan began contemplating renewables as far back as the 1980s, yet investment never matched the country's genuine capacity.

He added that self-sufficiency of up to 90 per cent was achievable. "Today, renewables account for roughly 27 per cent of electricity consumption, a figure he regards as capable of rising further if citizens are empowered to own small-scale energy systems that can serve as backup reserves in times of crisis."

The Iraq-Jordan oil pipeline from Basra to Aqaba looms equally large among strategic projects. Despite being proposed more than four years ago, it has yet to move into implementation.

Jordan was once among the region's early adopters of renewable energy, but implementation stalled for years before recovering momentum in the recent decade.

Zoubi explained that Jordan was a regional pioneer in solar and wind energy, only for execution to slow markedly until the past ten years, when these projects finally took a tangible place in national energy strategy. "Initial targets were cautious, with renewables set to contribute just 5 per cent of supply, before the figure gradually climbed to the current 27-28 per cent."

These numbers align with official data from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, which records an increase in renewables' contribution from less than 1 per cent before 2014 to approximately 27 per cent by the close of 2024, reflecting a governmental drive to reduce import dependency and bolster energy security.

On the question of self-sufficiency, Zoubi was direct: the 90 per cent threshold was a realistic goal, with only a limited proportion of imports needed to ensure grid stability.

"Reaching that level would have substantially reduced exposure to external supply risks."

Legislative factor

The legislative environment has proven a decisive factor in accelerating Jordan's renewable energy growth.

Zoubi traced part of the sector's slow progress to regulations that have "constrained" citizen participation. "In particular, the net-metering system, which previously allowed households and businesses to generate electricity and sell surplus back to the grid, was replaced by a net-billing arrangement. The change eroded the economic incentive and prompted many businesses to step back from investment."

He nonetheless insisted that raising the renewables share to significantly higher levels remains feasible, pointing to countries where renewable sources account for 40 to 50 per cent of daily consumption.

He advocated enabling citizens to own off-grid systems of up to 5 kilowatts as emergency backup, a measure that would enhance system flexibility and reduce pressure on the national grid.

Technological advances, particularly in energy storage, make a 90 per cent reliance on renewables within the next two decades a credible target, he argues, without compromising grid stability.

The government continues to update the legislative framework with the aim of encouraging investment and pushing the renewables share above 30 per cent by 2030, including broader provision for citizen self-generation.

The Basra-Aqaba Pipeline

The concept dates back more than four decades: a pipeline stretching from Basra to the Port of Aqaba, offering Iraq an alternative export route and positioning Jordan as a regional energy corridor.

On 29 March, former energy minister Hala Zawati announced that Iraq had completed the necessary pre-

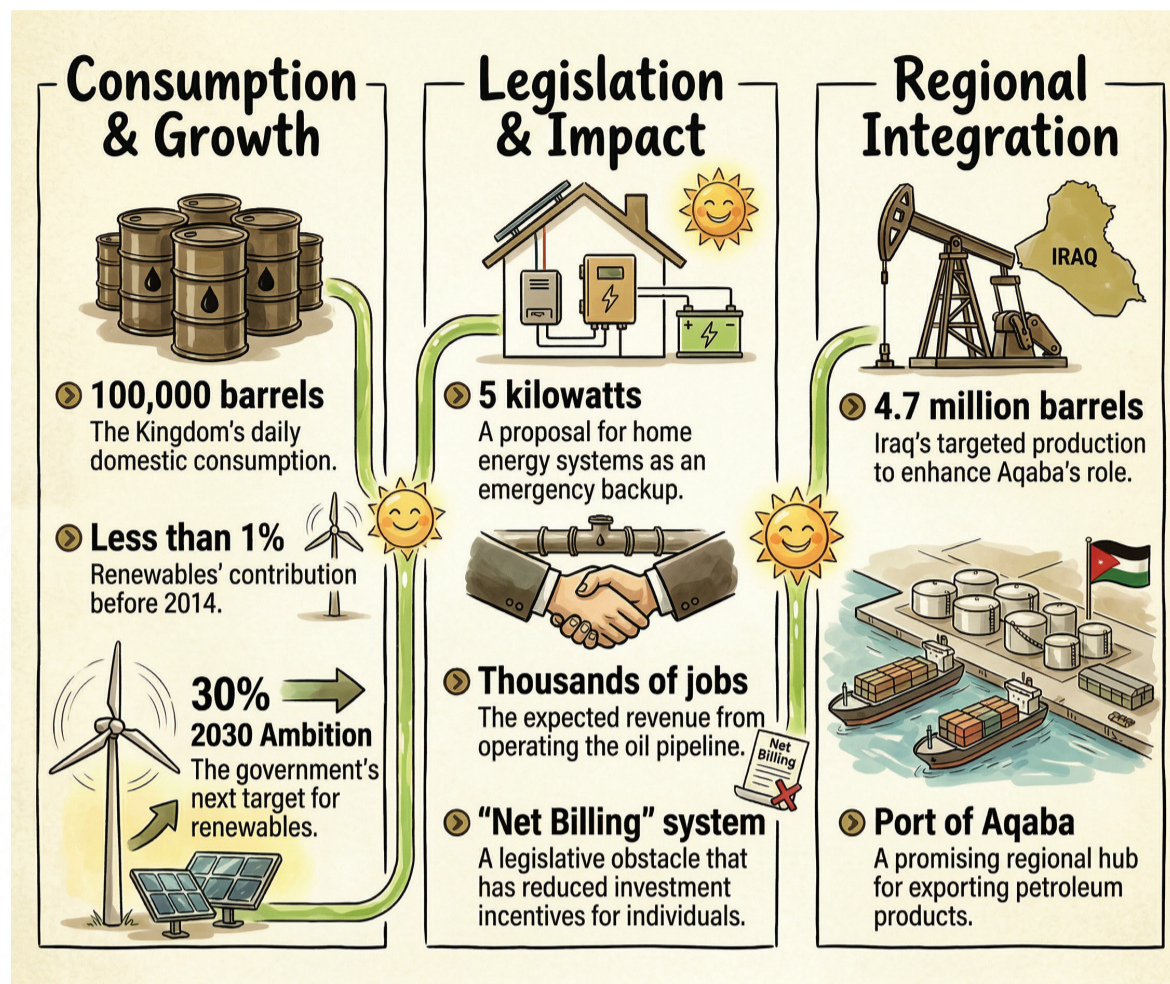


ILLUSTRATION AND INFOGRAPHIC: BY OMAR ALEES WITH AI TOOLS

paratory work and was awaiting final approval from its Cabinet before signing an agreement and commencing implementation.

The deal would see Jordan receive approximately 150,000 barrels per day, whilst opening new markets for Iraqi crude.

Former energy minister Ibrahim Saif confirmed that the project is approaching an implementation phase, with both sides working on the pipeline's preliminary technical specifications.

He described it as a regional project serving Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt—one that would create jobs and generate economic returns for all parties.

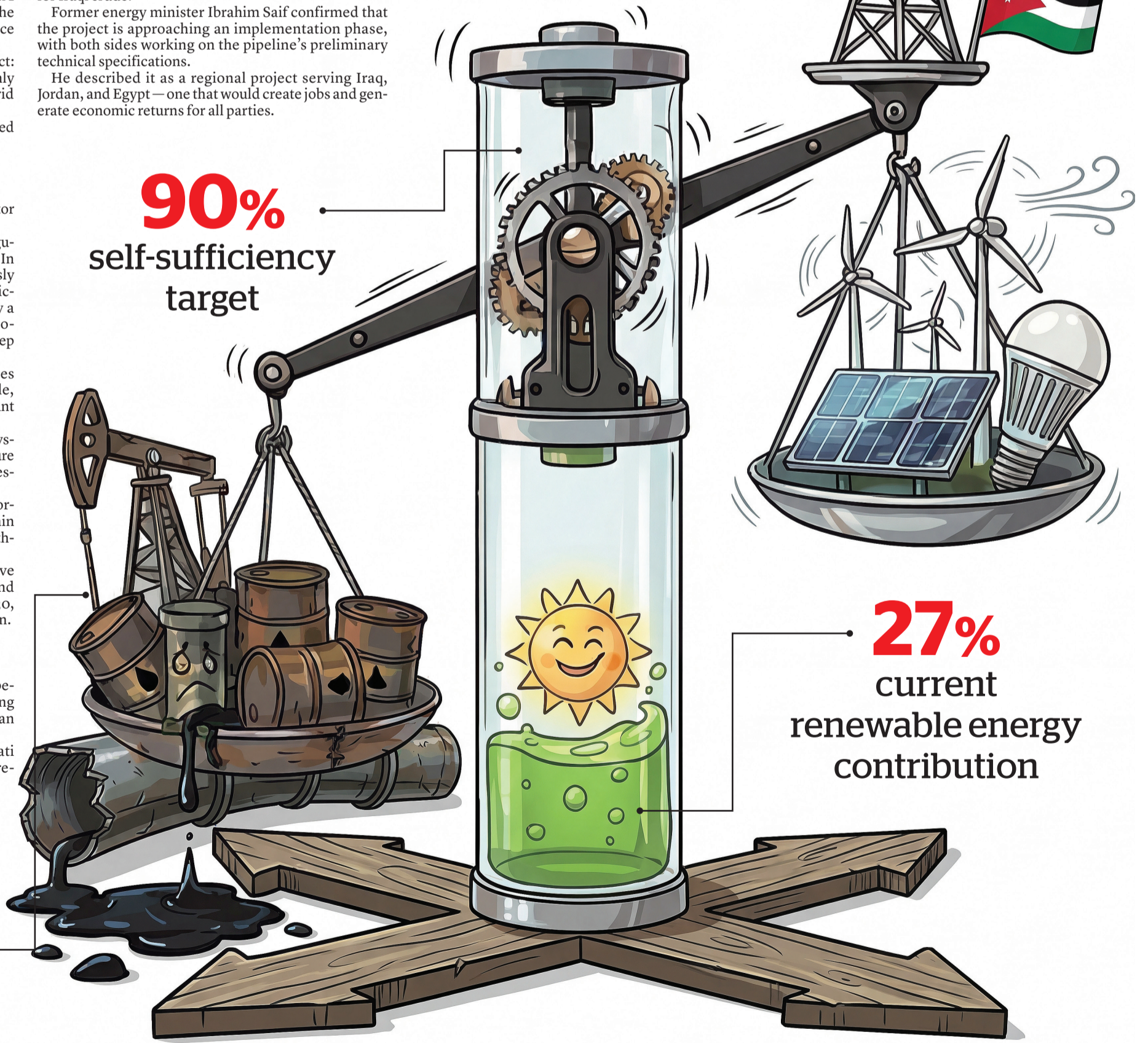
Iraqi Ambassador to Jordan Haider Mansour Al Adhary adds that technical discussions have entered an advanced and serious stage, with the Iraqi leadership committed to completing the project in coordination

with both Jordan and Egypt.

Energy expert Amer Shawabkeh said that Iraq currently exports around 3.7 million barrels per day, with plans for further production increases of close to one million additional barrels annually—figures that underscore Iraq's near-total dependence on oil, which comprises roughly 95 per cent of state revenues.

A functioning pipeline to Aqaba, he argued, would have offered Iraq vital alternative export solutions given the current closure of its traditional routes due to the regional security situation.

For Jordan, the benefits would have been multiple: local employment, transit fee revenues, and the possibility of receiving a portion of Iraqi oil at no cost to meet the kingdom's daily consumption of approximately 100,000 barrels. The Port of Aqaba stood to be developed into an active oil terminal, boosting both traffic and revenues, alongside the potential construction of a refinery to export petroleum derivatives.



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