

# THE JORDAN TIMES



## INTERVIEW

**UNDP** marks 50 years in Jordan, outlines green growth, jobs, **governance** as 'top' priorities

2



## ASSISTANCE

Diplomatic delegation visits **JHCO** warehouses ahead of joint aid convoy to **Lebanon**

3



## EMPOWERMENT

Jordan marks 1st **7** International Day of Women in Industry — **UNIDO**



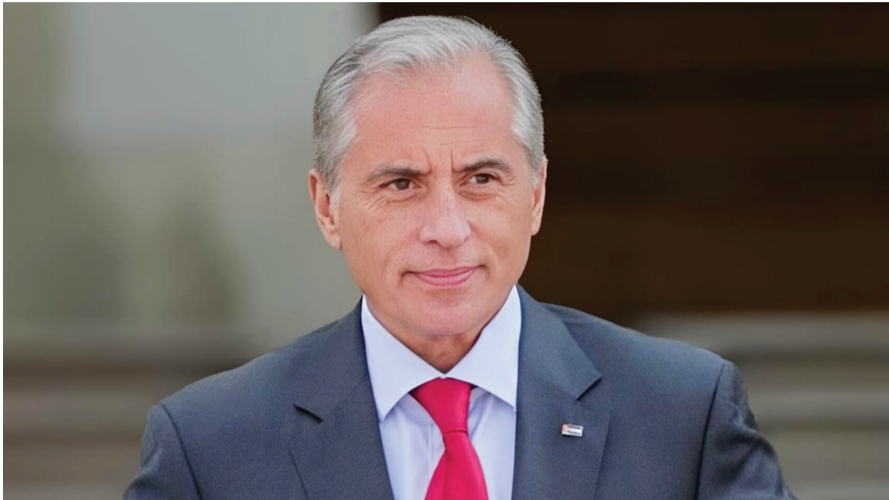
## FOOTBALL

**Nashama** squad welcome relaunch of **Prince Ali Grassroots Centres**

8



Thursday, April 23, 2026 | Dhu al-Qadah 6, 1447 Hijri



## Prime minister urges faster rollout of GAM digital services

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday checked on plans by the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) to advance digital transformation and enhance electronic services.

The prime minister underlined the need to accelerate the implementation of a comprehensive system to modernise municipal e-services, stressing that improvements should translate into better service delivery and faster responses to citizens' feedback, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Amman Mayor Yousef Shawarbeh outlined ongoing administrative reform plans aimed at boosting institutional efficiency and strengthening leadership and staff capabilities.

He also said that the municipality's human resources development system is 78 per cent complete, adding that it is designed to streamline employee services, improve performance evaluation across departments and teams, and enhance responsiveness to public input.

He also highlighted the launch of a "Future

Leaders" programme to develop staff competencies and prepare them for leadership and executive roles within the municipality, according to Petra. The Premier's meeting with GAM officials also addressed the municipality's executive plan to issue Islamic bonds (sukuk).

A committee comprising representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Jordan and the municipality has been tasked with preparing the issuance framework.

Continued on page 5

## Crown Prince joins activists on nature walk in Yarmouk Forest Reserve, highlights eco-tourism's role in empowering local communities

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein on Wednesday joined activists specialising in eco-tourism and domestic tourism on a nature walk at Yarmouk Forest Reserve in Irbid.

During the walk, the Crown Prince emphasised the importance of developing eco-tourism and its role in empowering local communities, highlighting the role of eco-tourism activists in showcasing Jordan's natural and tourist sites, and the need for citizens to protect and preserve them, while maintaining their cleanliness, according to a Royal Court statement.

His Royal Highness listened to the participants' experiences in the fields of environmental awareness and conservation, exploration, adventure and the creation of heritage content, the statement said.

The Crown Prince also observed some of the biodiversity found in the reserve, which was announced as a protected area in 2010 by the Royal Society for the Conservation



Photo courtesy of Royal Court

HRH Crown Prince Hussein on Wednesday joins activists specialising in eco-tourism and domestic tourism on a nature walk at Yarmouk Forest Reserve in Irbid

of Nature, covering an area of 20 square kilometres and home to more than 546 plant

species. Yarmouk Forest Reserve features walking trails and eco-lodges

set amongst its forests and mountainous terrain; it serves as an important mi-

gration corridor for birds and is home to dozens of animal species.

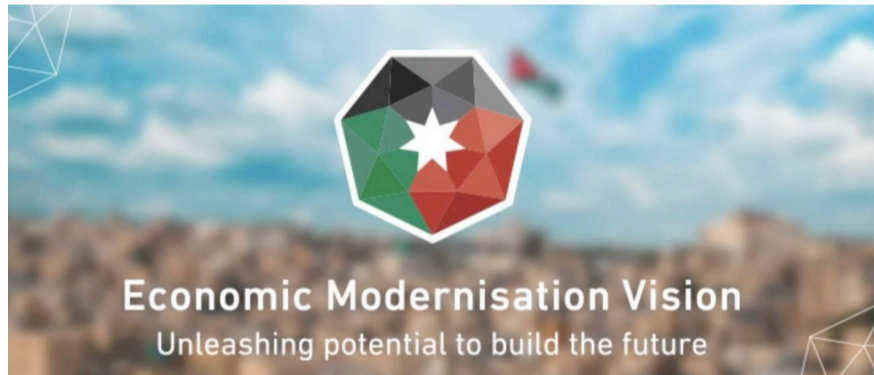
## Gov't completes 8 projects under EMV in Q1 2026

Data shows 334 projects currently under implementation, while 49 still pending

AMMAN (JT) — The government said on Wednesday that it has completed eight projects under its executive programme for the Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) (2026-2029) by the end of the first quarter of 2026, out of a total of 393 projects, representing around 2 per cent.

A further 334 projects, about 85 per cent of the programme, are currently under implementation, while 49 projects have yet to begin, according to progress data monitored by Al Mamlaka.

The data also showed that two projects, accounting for roughly 0.5



**Economic Modernisation Vision**  
Unleashing potential to build the future

per cent of the total, are behind schedule.

Under the "Jordan as a Global Destination" engine, one priority has been completed, 27 are under way and three have not yet started. In the investment engine,

12 priorities are being implemented, one has yet to begin, and one is delayed.

Within the future services engine, four priorities have been completed, while work is underway on 99 others.

A further 21 priorities have not yet started, in addition to one delayed project.

The government also said that it is implementing 43 priorities under the entrepreneurship and innovation en-

gine, while 12 have yet to begin. In the high-value industries engine, 59 priorities are under implementation, compared with 11 that have not yet started.

In the quality of life engine, three priorities have been completed, and 56 are in progress, while 15 have not yet begun.

Meanwhile, 36 priorities are under implementation in the sustainable resources engine, with two yet to start. In the sustainable environment engine, 26 priorities are under way, while eight remain pending.

Continued on page 5



## Royal Decree prorogues ordinary session of Parliament as of 26 April

AMMAN (JT) — A Royal Decree was issued on Wednesday to prorogue

the ordinary session of Parliament, effective from the morning of 26

April 2026, according to a Royal Court statement.

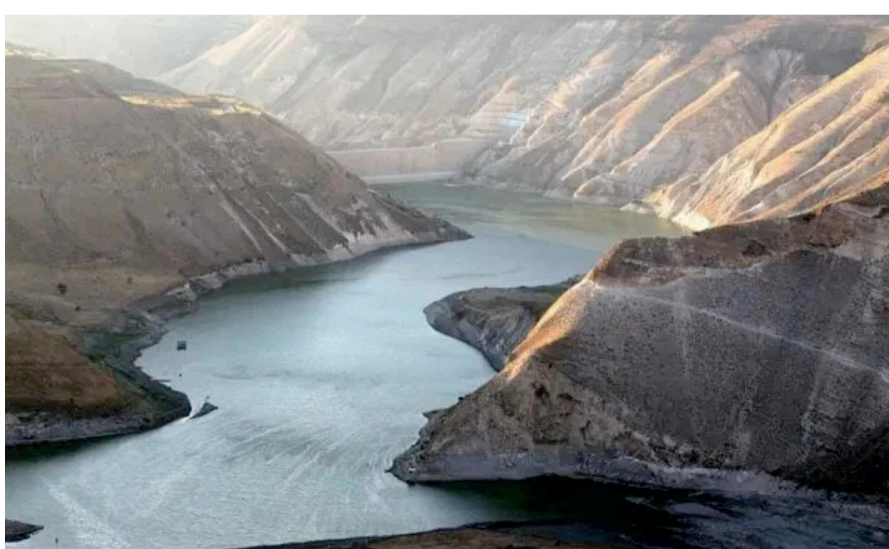


Photo by Mohammad Abu Ghouth

Aerial view of the Wihdeh Dam in the northern region on the northern border with Syria

## Jordan, Syria launch joint platform to manage shared water resources

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan and Syria on Wednesday launched a joint platform to enhance cooperation in managing shared water resource and improving technical coordination and data exchange.

The Jordanian-Syrian

Joint Water Platform, according to officials, is the culmination of cooperation between the two countries in addressing water issues.

The platform was launched in Amman on Wednesday by Minister of Water and Irrigation

Raed Abu Saud. Abu Saud said that the launch reflects a shared commitment to strengthening water sector governance and institutional cooperation through a joined platform.

Continued on page 5

## Capital expenditure rises by 60.4% in early 2026 — Finance Ministry

AMMAN (JT) — Capital expenditure rose by JD53.8 million, or 60.4 per cent, by the end of February 2026 compared with the same period of 2025, reflecting government efforts to increase spending on capital projects and boost economic activity.

According to the Ministry of Finance's monthly bulletin, cited by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, total government spending reached JD1.986 billion by the end of February 2026, including JD1.843 billion in current expenditure and JD143 million in capital spending.

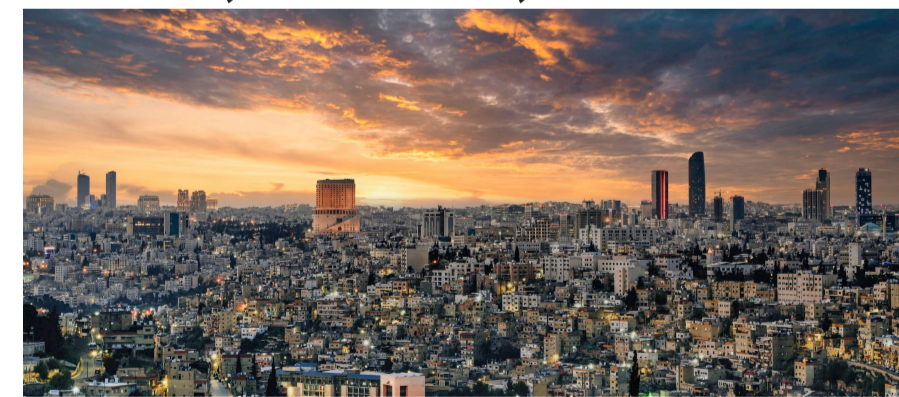


Photo courtesy of the Greater Amman Municipality

Capital expenditure rises by JD53.8 million, or 60.4 per cent, by the end of February 2026 compared with the same period of 2025

The increase in capital expenditure was driven by spending on several key projects, including

the development of the Risha gas field, equipping Maan Military Hospital, teacher training and de-

velopment programmes, municipal development projects, and support for projects by the Jordan

Tourism Board. Domestic revenues rose by JD36.3 million, or 2.5 per cent, by the end of February 2026 to reach JD1.480 billion, compared with JD1.444 billion in the corresponding period of 2025.

The increase in domestic revenues was mainly driven by higher non-tax revenues, which rose by around JD70 million during the first two months of 2026 to JD424.7 million, compared with JD354.7 million in the January-February period of 2025.

Continued on page 5

## Jordan serves as key ICRC logistics hub for regional operations — official

By Heba Elayyan

AMMAN — Jordan has emerged as a strategic logistics hub for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Middle East, facilitating the delivery of aid to conflict zones including

Gaza and Yemen, the organisation's head of delegation in Amman said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a workshop for journalists titled "Humanity in War", Yann Fridez said that the ICRC's primary regional logistics centre is based in

the Kingdom, where supplies and vehicles are assembled and dispatched to field operations across multiple conflict areas.

He added that the Amman hub also supports missions beyond the region, including in Ukraine. Fridez said the ICRC

delegation in Jordan oversees a broad range of humanitarian activities, including assistance to Syrian refugees and detainees, as well as efforts to promote international humanitarian law among security institutions.

He noted that Jordan

hosts a regional pool of experts providing technical support to ICRC operations in Syria, Yemen and the occupied Palestinian territories, with teams regularly deployed to reinforce field missions.

Continued on page 5



Royal Court Chief Yousef Issawi on Wednesday conducts a field tour in Ajloun Governorate to inaugurate and inspect several projects launched under Royal initiatives

## Issawi checks on Royal initiative projects in Ajloun

AMMAN (JT) — Royal Court Chief Yousef Issawi on Wednesday conducted a field tour in Ajloun Governorate to inaugurate and inspect several projects launched under Royal initiatives. The projects follow His Majesty King Abdullah's directives during his field visits and meetings with local residents, aimed at improving living standards and public services in Ajloun, some 70 kilometres northwest of Amman, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Issawi, who is also the head of the follow-up committee for the implementation of Royal initiatives, began his tour by inaugurating a multi-purpose hall in the Ousara area. The facility is designed to serve the local community for social and cultural events, relieving residents of the financial burden of renting venues outside the area. Issawi toured the hall, which is affiliated with Al Ayoun Municipality, and emphasised the importance of its sustainability. In the same area, he inaugurated a five-a-side football pitch adjacent to the hall, established to serve the local youth and provide a safe environment for athletic talent. Local residents expressed their gratitude to

His Majesty King Abdullah, naming the facility Al Wafaa (Loyalty) Hall. In Kufranjah, Issawi inspected the progress of a housing project for underprivileged families. The project includes 17 housing units distributed across various areas of the governorate based on Ministry of Social Development priorities. Issawi noted that completion rates have reached some 80 per cent, urging the acceleration of work to ensure timely delivery. In 2022, a plan was announced to construct 1,300 new housing units across the Kingdom's governorates and Badia

regions, including 100 units in Ajloun to be implemented in phases. Issawi concluded his tour in Anjara by inspecting the maintenance, rehabilitation and furnishing of buildings belonging to Our Lady of the Mountain Church and the House of the Virgin Mary, Mother of Hope orphanage. He listened to a briefing on the comprehensive maintenance work, stressing that Royal initiatives accord special attention to religious sites. Our Lady of the Mountain Church is a globally recognised Christian pilgrimage site, reinforcing its position on the inter-

national religious tourism map while continuing its humanitarian role in serving orphans. In press remarks, Issawi said that these projects are a direct response to citizens' needs identified during His Majesty's outreach meetings. He said that the initiatives aim to upgrade qualitative services through integrated coordination with national institutions. Issawi underscored that Royal Initiatives remain ongoing, reflecting a vision that prioritises the Jordanian citizen and a field-based approach to ensure tangible impact on daily life.

## SOS Children's Villages Jordan phases out fossil fuels, unveils decarbonisation roadmap

By Osama Alkafri

IRBID — Under the patronage of Minister of Environment Ayman Suleiman, SOS Children's Villages Jordan on Monday held an environmental event at Irbid Children's Village to announce the results of its carbon footprint report and a decarbonisation roadmap.

The event brought together representatives of government entities, international organisations, the private sector, and experts in energy, environment and sustainability.

During the event, the association announced a significant milestone: the complete phase-out of fossil fuels for heating across all its villages and facilities in the Kingdom, shifting instead to high-efficiency clean energy solutions in line with national carbon reduction goals.

The initiative forms part of broader efforts to support national action on climate change and advance the transition towards a low-emissions economy.

It also aims to provide accurate data and scientific analysis to support evidence-based decision-making, marking a strategic step in the association's journey towards institutional decarbonisation.

Mustafa Al Washah, chairman of SOS Children's Villages Jordan, described the launch of the carbon footprint report and sustainability roadmap as "a pivotal moment in the association's environmental work, where we move from achievement to systematic impact grounded in clear scientific foundations".

He added that the association has taken a "bold" step by fully discontin-

ing the use of fossil fuels for heating and water heating at its villages in Amman, Irbid and Aqaba, replacing them with efficient clean energy solutions.

He noted that this shift reflects a "genuine" commitment to reducing carbon emissions and supporting national climate action efforts.

Al Washah also stressed that sustainability at SOS Children's Villages goes beyond energy, encompassing integrated resource management practices such as rainwater harvesting, greywater reuse and the adoption of smart digital systems.

"This report is not merely a set of figures, but a new commitment to our children, our community and our country towards a safer and more sustainable future," he said.

Mohammad Oudah, director of Environment and Public Safety, speaking on behalf of the CEO of Nebras PowerJordan, said that the company's partnership with SOS Children's Villages reflects its commitment to corporate social responsibility.

"We believe that real investment begins with supporting people and empowering local communities," he said, adding that the partnership contributes to initiatives that protect children and youth, provide a more stable environment and create better opportunities for the future, in line with the company's vision of supporting sustainability and community development in Jordan.

Deputising for the minister of environment, Jihad Sawair, the ministry's adviser for technical and international affairs, underscored that the achievement constitutes a leading national model

for transitioning to clean energy and reducing carbon emissions.

He praised the association's efforts in adopting sustainable solutions and eliminating fossil fuel use across its sites.

He noted that the initiative aligns with national directions towards a green economy and strengthened climate action, stressing the importance of collaboration among institutions to promote sustainable environmental practices and build a more sustainable future for coming generations.

The event also featured a detailed presentation of the carbon footprint report, highlighting emission sources, levels and opportunities for reduction, alongside a practical roadmap for decarbonisation in line with national and international sustainability frameworks.

Presentations were also delivered by Earth Watch, with Tamim Al Zou'bi outlining the technical report and roadmap, and by GTE General-Manager Maher Awad who presented technological solutions supporting the transition to sustainable energy.

The event further marked the launch of the second phase of the "Eco Champions" project, aimed at empowering youth and enhancing environmental awareness, in addition to honouring partners and supporters in recognition of their contributions to the success of these initiatives.

SOS Children's Villages Jordan highlighted its commitment to continuing environmental initiatives and working with partners to achieve sustainable impact that contributes to environmental protection and a better future for coming generations.

## UNDP marks 50 years in Jordan, outlines green growth, jobs, governance as 'top' priorities

- Organisation shifted to demand-driven partner in Jordan's development – UNDP official
- 'We are here to support Jordan in achieving its development goals, make ourselves a supporting partner'
- 'Kingdom is very aware of its priorities, where it wants to go'
- 'Funding does not define us... what defines us is our ability to leverage expertise, partnerships, results'

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — As the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) marks 50 years of operations in Jordan, the organisation says its role has evolved in line with the Kingdom's development trajectory, shifting to a demand-driven partnership aligning with the Kingdom's national priorities.

UNDP Resident Representative Randa Aboul-Hosn told The Jordan Times in a recent interview that the organisation's work is rooted in the concept of human development, which places people at the centre of progress by expanding their capabilities and opportunities.

UNDP has been operating globally for 60 years in more than 170 countries and in Jordan for five decades. The human development approach, introduced in the 1990s, has since become a global benchmark and led to the creation of the Human Development Index, which now incorporates dimensions such as inequality, gender and environmental pressures.

Globally, UNDP channels between \$5 billion and \$6 billion annually through government and donor funding. While it is not a donor, it leverages financial and technical resources to strengthen institutions and deliver long-term development outcomes.

At the national level, Aboul-Hosn said that the UNDP operates at the intersection of policy and implementation, supporting governments in achieving nationally defined priorities.

"These are not UNDP projects; they are national projects," she said, adding that the organisation serves as a technical partner providing global expertise, innovation and cross-sectoral knowledge to ensure sustainability and local ownership.

Three priorities for 2023-2027 UNDP's current five-year programme in Jordan (2023-2027) is built around three core pillars.

The first is green growth and climate resilience, covering marine conservation in Aqaba, circular economy initiatives, renewable energy, water harvesting and support for Jordan's international environmental commitments.

The second is economic inclusion and private sector development, focusing on job creation, local economic growth and support for small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in the green economy.

In Aqaba, UNDP is working with the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) to establish a Blue Economy Centre to promote sustainable marine resource use and attract investment.

The third pillar is governance and institutional reform, where UNDP supports efficiency improvements, data systems and public sector capacity building. A long-running digital property mapping and tax system project with the Ministry of Local Administration has significantly increased government revenues over nearly two decades.

The reform, she said, demonstrates the value of system-level interventions that require limited funding but deliver long-term returns. The Property Tax Project has modernised valuation, billing and collection systems, generating JD90 million in revenue in 2025 alone, with cumulative collections exceeding JD834 million over 20 years.

### From strategy to execution

Reflecting on five decades in Jordan, Aboul-Hosn said that UNDP has continuously adapted its approach to changing national needs.

"In the past, UNDP had more resources and could propose interventions across a wider spectrum of development pathways. Today, we are more focused and demand-driven," she said, noting that the organisation's expertise has not diminished — if anything, it is more strategically deployed and

innovative to deliver impact.

The UNDP official also said that Jordan has become increasingly focused on implementation, particularly through long-term national frameworks such as the Economic Modernisation Vision.

"Jordan is very aware of its priorities and where it wants to go. What we are seeing now is a shift from strategy to execution," she said.

Despite regional instability, Jordan has maintained strong institutions and economic resilience and continues to receive positive assessments from international financial institutions, positioning it as a regional cooperation hub.

A key indicator of progress, she added, is that many UNDP-supported initiatives are now fully institutionalised and independently operated.

"The ultimate goal of development work is to create self-sustaining ecosystems," she said.

### Local solutions and scalable models

This principle of building self-sustaining development models is reflected in several initiatives on the ground. At the local level, development efforts face a different set of challenges.

Local initiatives demand complex coordination amongst municipalities, pri-

private-sector actors and supply chains, she said, stressing their importance to sustainable impact.

In this context, Aboul-Hosn pointed to the Deir Alla Agricultural Plastic Recycling Hub in the Jordan Valley as a flagship UNDP-supported initiative, valued at \$1.2 million.

Serving seven municipalities in a key agricultural region, the facility operates under a private-sector agreement. It has directly and indirectly created more than 50 jobs and is expected to process around 2,400 tonnes of agricultural plastic waste annually.

She said that the project underscores the complexity of development programming, which extends beyond infrastructure to include equipment procurement, workforce training and inclusive labour policies, particularly in expanding women's participation.

Ensuring long-term sustainability remains a central challenge. "A municipality cannot run such a facility without effective support," she said, noting that the model is designed to transition into a public-private partnership as a "proof of concept" for replication in other localities and sectors.

"These interventions reflect UNDP's broader approach, piloting solutions that can be scaled up or independently adopted," she added.



50 Years Jordan

### Adapting to financial pressures

Aboul-Hosn acknowledged that UNDP, like many development organisations, is operating in an increasingly constrained funding environment, a trend that has shaped its operations for over a decade.

She said that UNDP relies on a cost-recovery model, mobilising external funding rather than depending on core resources, often initiating projects with seed funding before scaling them through partnerships.

"It often initiates projects with limited seed funding, then scales them through partnerships," she said.

A key focus, she added, is helping countries access global climate and environmental financing, including the Green Climate Fund, while building national capacity to directly manage such resources.

"Funding does not define us," she said. "What defines us is our ability to leverage expertise, partnerships and results."

She also stressed that development must be seen as a long-term process. "If a project ends when funding ends, its impact is lost. Sustainability is a shared responsibility."

### Looking ahead: Food systems and blue economy

Among emerging priorities, Aboul-Hosn highlighted food systems and the blue economy as key areas of focus. She said food systems must be viewed holistically, beyond production to include supply chains, water use and environmental sustainability, particularly amid growing climate pressures.

In Aqaba, she said, UNDP is very proud of its ongoing work with ASEZA to advance a broader blue economy approach linking land and sea, including nature-based solutions to address flooding and protect coral ecosystems.

"Even small-scale interventions, such as providing cold storage for fishermen, can have a significant impact on

# Diplomatic delegation visits JHCO warehouses ahead of joint aid convoy to Lebanon

AMMAN (JT) — A diplomatic delegation from several partner countries on Wednesday visited the warehouses of the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO) in Zarqa Governorate.

The visit aimed to review operational procedures and logistical preparations for a joint humanitarian convoy scheduled to be sent to Lebanon, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The delegation toured the storage and preparation facilities and was briefed on the organisation's integrated logistics system, which manages all stages of relief operations, from receiving aid supplies and sorting them, to smart storage and convoy preparation, according to precise operational plans designed to ensure rapid response and efficient delivery.

Officials also presented tracking systems, quality assurance procedures and governance mechanisms, highlighting an



The visit aims to review operational procedures and logistical preparations for a joint humanitarian convoy scheduled to be sent to Lebanon

institutional approach grounded in transparency and high efficiency in resource management, with the aim of translating assistance

into tangible humanitarian impact.

Representatives of the participating countries commended the level of readiness and

organisation, as well as the ability to rapidly convert aid into fully prepared convoys ready for dispatch within a short timeframe.

JHCO Secretary-General Hussein Shibli said the visit reflects the depth of Jordan's international partnerships in the humani-

tarian field and underscores the Kingdom's position as a trusted regional hub for coordinating multilateral humanitarian responses, alongside growing international confidence in its role.

He added that the organisation operates through an integrated system that combines field expertise with strategic planning, in cooperation with the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army and in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, ensuring the efficient and timely delivery of aid to beneficiaries.

Shibli noted that the visit comes as final preparations are underway to launch a joint humanitarian convoy to Lebanon, with the participation of 10 countries and the EU alongside Jordan, reflecting the strength of international cooperation and the Kingdom's capacity to lead and coordinate cross-border relief operations efficiently.

## AT A GLANCE

JAF, Austria sign agreement to enhance military cooperation



AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Yousef Huneiti on Wednesday signed a cooperation agreement with Austrian Ambassador to Jordan Marieke Zimburg at the General Command of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF). The agreement comes as part of efforts to expand military cooperation and exchange expertise, JAF said in a statement. It also aims to strengthen coordination between the two sides, develop partnerships, and broaden areas of joint training and knowledge exchange, contributing to enhancing the efficiency and readiness of both countries' armed forces. The deal is part of ongoing cooperation programmes implemented by the JAF with partner militaries, reflecting efforts to keep pace with evolving defence requirements and bolster operational capabilities. Senior officers from the JAF and representatives from the Austrian side attended the signing.

JAF thwarts 3 drug smuggling attempts



AMMAN (JT) — The Eastern Military Zone on Wednesday thwarted three attempts to smuggle large quantities of narcotic substances using electronically guided balloons. Border Guard Units detected the attempts at dawn within their area of responsibility. The balloons and their payloads were intercepted and brought down inside Jordanian territory, in coordination with the security agencies and the Anti-Narcotics Department, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) statement. The seized materials were handed over to the relevant authorities to take the necessary legal measures.

## Jordan chairs coordination meeting ahead of Arab-European ministerial talks



During the meeting at the Arab League's headquarters, the permanent representatives of Arab states were briefed on the latest developments in preparations for the sixth Arab-European Ministerial Meeting

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's Permanent Representative to the League of Arab States Ambassador Amjad Adaleh on Wednesday chaired the Arab coordination meeting at the level of permanent representatives to discuss preparations for the sixth Arab-European Ministerial Meeting, which Jordan will host on June 22.

During the meeting at the Arab League's headquarters, the permanent representatives of Arab states were briefed on the

latest developments in preparations for the ministerial meeting and on discussions of the draft declaration expected to be adopted.

In a statement following the meeting, the Arab League said the convening of the Arab-European Ministerial Meeting in Jordan comes at a highly significant time, amid escalating regional and international political developments and growing challenges that require enhanced coordination and unified efforts, the Jordan

News Agency, Petra, reported.

Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the International Political Affairs Sector Ambassador Khaled Manzalawi expressed anticipation for the sixth Arab-European Ministerial Meeting, which comes after a seven-year hiatus since its last session.

He noted that it reflects the commitment of both Arab and European sides to maintaining dialogue channels and strengthening joint cooperation.

## Police dismantle balloon-based drug smuggling network in Rweished

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) on Wednesday announced that they have arrested six suspects who were allegedly specialised in smuggling illicit drugs with balloons in the Rweished area, according to police.

Law-enforcement officers also seized large amounts of illicit pills, automatic weapons and some balloons, which are allegedly used in drug smuggling, according to Police Spokesperson Lt. Col. Amer Sartawi.

"AND agents conducted seven raids in various parts of Rweished and arrested six suspects, including one who was classified as armed and dangerous," Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

In another major drug bust, Sartawi added that police arrested four wanted drug dealers in



Law-enforcement officers seized large amounts of illicit pills, automatic weapons and some balloons, which are allegedly used in drug smuggling

Balqa Governorate. Law-enforcement agents allegedly found a large number of illicit drugs and weapons in their possession, the police official added.

Meanwhile, police arrested six suspects in Madaba, Karak and Amman in various illicit drug bust operations, according to Sartawi.

Police seized Hashish, Captagon pills and Crystal meth during the illicit drug bust operations, he added.

All suspects were referred to the State Security Court prosecution office for further questioning and indictment, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate.

## JAEC inaugurates national nuclear science exhibition 2026

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan Atomic Energy Commission (JAEC) Chairman Khaled Toukan on Wednesday inaugurated the National Nuclear Science Exhibition 2026, organised by the commission with the participation of school students, teachers, university students and researchers in nuclear science and technology.

Toukan said the exhibition aims to introduce Jordan's nuclear programme and promote the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and radiation, highlighting their role in supporting sustainable development in energy, medicine, industry, agriculture and the environment.

He added that the event brings together knowledge, practical experience and innovation, the Jordan News Agency, Petra,



Jordan Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Khaled Toukan on Wednesday inaugurates the National Nuclear Science Exhibition 2026

reported.

The commission also announced the launch of the first Jordan Nuclear Science Competition, held alongside the exhibition in cooperation with national institutions, to enhance scientific knowledge and foster creativity and innovation among students

and teachers across the Kingdom.

Toukan said the initiative seeks to enable participants to engage in national and international activities related to nuclear science and its peaceful applications.

The exhibition showcased a range of innovative student projects

reflecting advanced scientific thinking, covering medical applications of radiation, clean energy, nuclear safety, radiation protection, industrial and agricultural uses, and medical applications of radioisotopes. All projects were evaluated by a specialised panel of experts and

academics based on innovation criteria.

The event also included interactive activities such as guided tours of project pavilions, meetings between students and experts, and presentations on the future of nuclear science and its applications.

Winning projects, along with partners and sponsors, were honoured during the event in recognition of students' efforts and creativity, and to highlight the importance of supporting scientific initiatives that empower youth as key drivers of scientific and technological progress.

The exhibition and competition are seen as a milestone in promoting scientific culture and preparing a generation capable of leading future innovation and development.

## Mexican embassy hosts briefing for Jordanian travel agencies on World Cup 2026 arrangements

AMMAN (JT) — The embassy of Mexico in Jordan on Tuesday hosted an information session for local travel and tourism agencies to present the logistical and promotional framework for the FIFA World Cup 2026, which will be jointly hosted by Mexico, the US and Canada.

The session provided a platform for Jordanian tourism professionals to prepare for the expected increased demand fol-

lowing Jordan's historic qualification for its first-ever FIFA World Cup appearance, according to an embassy statement.

Mexican Ambassador Jacob Prado opened the session by welcoming representatives of leading travel agencies and stressing Mexico's readiness to receive international football fans.

He highlighted the country's diverse tourism offering, describing it as a premier global

destination combining modern infrastructure, hospitality and rich cultural heritage.

The presentation outlined the three Mexican host cities, Mexico City ("The ball returns home"), Guadalajara ("The most Mexican host city") and Monterrey ("Mexico's most northern host city"), along with their main stadiums: The Azteca Stadium (87,500 capacity), the Akron Stadium (48,000,

and the BBVA Stadium (53,500), respectively.

Participants were also introduced to key tourist attractions in each city, showcasing a blend of modern landmarks and historical heritage. Mexico City features sites such as the Templo Mayor, the Zócalo, Chapultepec Park, Teotihuacan and the National Museum of Anthropology. Guadalajara highlights include its Historic Centre, the Guad-

alajara Cathedral, and the nearby town of Tequila, the birthplace of Mexico's iconic spirit. Monterrey is known for attractions such as Fundidora Park, the Santa Lucia Riverwalk and the Sierra Madre mountains, the statement said.

A key highlight of the session was the tournament's opening match, scheduled for June 11, at the Azteca Stadium, which will become the

first venue in history to host three FIFA World Cup opening matches (1970, 1986 and 2026).

The embassy's consular section also provided an overview of visa requirements, including application procedures and entry measures during the tournament period. The session concluded with a question-and-answer segment aimed at facilitating travel arrangements for Jordanian fans.



The session provided a platform for Jordanian tourism professionals to prepare for the expected increased demand following Jordan's historic qualification for its first-ever FIFA World Cup appearance



AFP photo

Pope Leo XIV arrives to lead a Holy Mass at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Mongomo on the tenth day of an 11-day apostolic journey to Africa, on Wednesday

## Pope in Equatorial Guinea criticises prison conditions

MONGOMO, Equatorial Guinea (AFP) — Pope Leo XIV on Wednesday called for “greater room for freedom” in Equatorial Guinea and delivered a rare criticism of living conditions for prisoners before visiting inmates in a jail known for its squalor and ill-treatment of detainees.

The leader of the world’s Catholics was on the second day of his visit to the oil-rich African nation, visiting President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo’s stronghold of Mongomo, near the border with Gabon.

At a mass in Mongomo attended by some 100,000 followers, the US-born Pontiff, 70, urged the country, where the majority of people live in poverty, to close the gap between “the privileged and the disadvantaged”.

“May there be greater room for freedom and may the dignity of the human person always be safeguarded,” he told the congregation, including Obiang, who has ruled with an iron fist since 1979 and is regularly accused of rights abuses.

“My thoughts go to the poorest, to families experiencing difficulty, and to prisoners who are often forced to live in troubling hygienic and sanitary conditions.”

The Pope’s comments, although delivered diplomatically, are a very rare denunciation of the country, which is criticised for stifling freedom of expression.

He was due to meet

inmates at the prison in Bata, the economic capital and biggest city on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea.

In a 2023 report, the US State Department documented cases of torture, extreme overcrowding and deplorable sanitary conditions in Equatorial Guinea’s prisons.

Amnesty International in 2021 called detainees “forgotten people”, who are often jailed in notorious prisons such as Bata after flawed trials.

“Since they enter the prison walls, they have neither been seen nor heard from and their relatives do not know whether they are alive or dead,” the global rights monitor said.

### Balloons

Pope Leo was welcomed at the Mongomo basilica in a supercharged atmosphere, with fireworks and a release of balloons celebrating his arrival, plus a tour through cheering crowds in the Popemobile.

He has to strike a delicate balance in Equatorial Guinea, supporting the faithful without backing the government of Obiang, who has been in power since 1979 and at 83 is the world’s longest-serving head of state who is not a monarch.

After his visit to Bata prison, he will pay tribute to the victims of a deadly accident that rocked the coastal city in 2021, when a fire set off a series of explosions at a munitions depot

that killed more than 100 people and wounded around 600 others.

The Pope arrived in Equatorial Guinea on Tuesday after stops in Algeria, Cameroon and Angola.

In a speech, he urged the country to place itself “in the service of law and justice”, pointed remarks in an authoritarian country regularly accused of rights abuses.

But his tone was more measured than on his previous stops, when he lambasted the “tyrants” ransacking the world, condemned “exploitation” by the rich and powerful, and clashed with Donald Trump after the US president took issue with his call for an end to the Middle East war.

Eighty per cent of the small coastal country’s two million people are Catholics, a legacy of Spanish colonisation.

Hydrocarbon production accounts for 46 per cent of Equatorial Guinea’s economy and more than 90 per cent of exports, according to African Development Bank figures.

But according to Human Rights Watch, “vast oil revenues fund lavish lifestyles for the small elite surrounding the president, while a large proportion of the population continues to live in poverty”.

The Pope will wrap up his 11-day, 18,000 kilometre Africa trip on Thursday with an open-air Mass in the capital, Malabo, then return to Rome.

## Iran says seized two ships seeking to cross Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran’s Revolutionary Guard said on Wednesday their naval forces had seized two container ships seeking to cross the blockaded Strait of Hormuz, despite US President Donald Trump announcing he was extending a ceasefire to allow more time for peace talks.

UK-based maritime security monitors confirmed that three commercial vessels had reported incidents involving gunboats in the strait, the international gateway for the Gulf oil and gas industry which US and Iranian forces are battling to control.

“The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps naval force this morning identified and stopped in the Strait of Hormuz two violating ships,” the Guard said in a statement.

“The two offending ships... were seized by the IRGC’s naval forces and directed to the Iranian coast.”

They identified one ship as the Panama-flagged container ship MSC Francesca and the Liberia-flagged Epaminodas. The tracking site Marine Traffic showed the last known positions of both vessels closer to the Iranian coast of the strait, northeast of Oman.

Earlier, the British maritime security monitor UKMTO said one container ship reported it was fired upon by an Iranian Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) boat 15 nautical miles northeast of Oman, causing damage to the bridge but no casualties.

Separately, a third ship was fired upon and stopped in the water eight nautical miles west of the Iranian coast, UKMTO said, without identifying the attackers.

British Security firm Vanguard Tech identified it as the Panama-flagged container ship Euphoria, which it said was “transiting out-bound of the Strait of Hormuz”.

The US Navy is attempting to block vessels heading to and from Iranian ports,



AFP photo

Commercial vessels are seen off the coast of Dubai on Monday. Oil prices jumped sharply on Monday over fears hostilities could resume in the weeks-long war, after Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz again over the weekend following its brief reopening on Friday in recognition of a ceasefire in Lebanon

while Tehran has said vessels must seek permission to leave or enter the Gulf through Hormuz, a route that in peacetime accounts for a fifth of the world’s oil and gas exports along with other vital commodities.

### ‘Stateless and sanctioned’

The US Defence Department said on Tuesday that US forces had intercepted and boarded a “stateless sanctioned” vessel. AFP has identified the ship as one linked to Iranian activity. Both sides accuse the other of ceasefire breaches.

Before the latest attacks, Trump had said he had pushed back the end of the two-week truce following a request by Pakistani mediators and to give Iran’s “fractured” leadership time to form a proposal.

The ceasefire has brought some respite to a region engulfed for weeks in war but, with no agreement yet in place, uncertainty remains and brought little relief to global markets.

Trump said the US

blockade of Iran’s ports would continue, while Pakistani mediators try to revive a dialogue.

Iran has all but shut the strait in the seven weeks since the United States and Israel launched a massive attack on the Islamic republic that plunged the Middle East into war.

Residents in the Iranian capital who spoke to Paris-based AFP journalists said life had worsened despite the truce.

“This cursed ceasefire has broken us,” said Saghar, 39. “I don’t know anyone around me who is doing well.”

Oil prices fell, along with stocks, on Wednesday as investors assessed the chances of US-Iran peace talks.

### Pakistan talks?

Britain and other US allies have previously told Washington they would not join any military effort to forcibly reopen Hormuz.

But the British defence ministry said it would host two days of UK-France led talks on the waterway involving more than 30 countries starting Wednesday.

The fate of peace talks hosted by Pakistan remains unclear. A previous round collapsed with Tehran accusing the United States of making excessive demands on Hormuz and its nuclear programme.

A White House official confirmed that Vice President JD Vance would not travel to Pakistan for a new round of negotiations as previously planned, pending the submission of an Iranian proposal.

Iran, on the other hand, never announced whether it had decided to send a delegation, with experts saying its noncommittal was a way to put pressure on the Trump administration.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked Trump for extending the ceasefire.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also welcomed the move.

In Lebanon, which was also plunged into war when Hizbollah launched rockets at Israel to avenge its killing of Iran’s supreme leader, an Israeli strike killed one person and wounded two others on

Wednesday, Lebanese state media said.

### ‘Blatant violations’

A separate 10-day ceasefire was agreed between the two nations on Friday and included Hizbollah.

But the militant group on Tuesday said it had launched rockets and attack drones at northern Israel in response to “blatant” ceasefire violations, which it said included “attacks on civilians and the destruction of their homes and villages”.

The Israeli military said that day that Hizbollah “launched several rockets” towards soldiers still stationed in south Lebanon and that the military struck the launcher in response.

Israel and Lebanon, which have no diplomatic relations, will hold fresh talks in Washington on Thursday, a State Department official told AFP.

Israeli attacks on Lebanon have killed at least 2,454 people since the start of the war, a Lebanese government body said in its latest toll.

### PRESSURE

## Report says US blocked \$500 m cash shipment to Iraq over pro-Iran attacks

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The United States blocked a plane carrying nearly \$500 million in banknotes from delivering the cash to Iraq, US media reported on Tuesday.

The Wall Street Journal reported that Washington has suspended cash shipments to Iraq and frozen funding for security programmes following attacks on US interests in the country by groups showing solidarity with Iran.

An Iraqi government official told AFP only one shipment has not arrived, citing “logistical reasons due to

the war” and airspace closure.

An Iraqi central bank official also downplayed the issue, telling AFP that dollar shipments have ceased during the regional war “due to the suspension of flights and the security situation”.

He added that the central bank has not requested more US dollars as it has sufficient reserves and there is “no current need to boost them”.

But an Iraqi security official confirmed to AFP that the United States has suspended its security cooperation with Iraq over

factions targeting US interests.

US State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott acknowledged efforts by Iraqi security forces to respond to attacks but said that some elements in the Iraqi government “actively provide political, financial and operational cover for the militias adversely impacts the US-Iraq relationship”.

“The United States will not tolerate attacks on US interests and expects the Iraqi government to immediately take all measures to dismantle the Iran-aligned militia groups

in Iraq,” he said.

The State Department said this month it had summoned Iraq’s ambassador to Washington to express “strong condemnation” of attacks by pro-Iran groups on US interests, including an “ambush” on US diplomats in Baghdad on April 8.

Pigott did not comment on any actions. The US Treasury Department declined comment.

### Damage in war

Iraq was drawn into the Middle East war with strikes targeting Iran-backed groups,

which in turn have claimed attacks on US interests, mostly in Iraq but also across the Gulf states.

The US embassy in Baghdad and a logistical and diplomatic center inside the city’s airport have been repeatedly targeted by rockets and drones, with most intercepted.

Missile and rocket attacks also targeted the US consulate in Erbil in Iraq’s northern Kurdistan region, as well as the city’s airport, where US-led anti-extremist coalition troops are deployed.

The United States has leverage over Iraq because the country’s oil export revenue is largely held at the Federal Reserve Bank in New York, under an arrangement reached after the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled former ruler Saddam Hussein.

The Wall Street Journal, quoting unidentified sources, said that the blocked shipment involved nearly \$500 million in cash from Iraqi oil sales.

The Central Bank of



AFP photo

Gas flares at an oil refinery near Iraq’s receding marshes of Hawizeh, which straddle the border with Iran, in the southeastern Missan province on April 25, 2025

Iraq said on Tuesday it was not lacking US dollars and that it had “fulfilled all requests from banks and exchange companies for US dollars, which are intended for pilgrims, travellers and foreign transfers”.

The funding freeze to security programmes includes

training for Iraq’s army and counterterror efforts against the Daesh group, The New York Times reported.

Iranian commander Esmail Qaani arrived in Baghdad on Saturday for meetings with political leaders and commanders of armed factions, a senior Iraqi

official said, aiming to “address regional escalation and its impact on Iraq”.

Pro-Iranian armed groups announced on April 8 that they would suspend their attacks for two weeks, following the announcement of a ceasefire between the United States and Iran.

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The General Headquarters of the Jordan Armed Forces/Royal Medical Services hereby announces Tender P17/2026/1 (UROLOGICAL CATHETERS/1 القسطائر العمامة)

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

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

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

## Islamic Action Front adopts new name, IEC says party still faces unresolved violations

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — The Islamic Action Front party has announced plans to adopt the new name "Ummah Party", ending more than three decades under its previous title.

The decision came after internal procedures culminated in the approval of the party's general conference, which endorsed amendments to the name, bylaws and objectives.

The party said in a statement that the change represents a "step towards broader horizons without altering its core political reference framework".

The move followed correspondence from the Independent Election Commission (IEC) in February, which requested the party to rectify violations related to its internal bylaw, in line with the Political Parties Law.

IEC Spokesperson Mohammad Khair Rawashdeh said, in a press release published on the commission's website in February, that the recorded violations were not limited to the party's name.

He said they also included provisions conflicting with democratic practices, including the mecha-



The Independent Election Commission headquarters in Amman

nism for forming party courts and the method of electing the executive office in a way that concentrated options in the hands of the secretary-general.

Rawashdeh added that other violations related to party finances and spending provisions, as well as clauses governing the liquidation of party assets.

He said that the party's current bylaws allowed assets to be dis-

tributed to charitable associations upon dissolution, while the law stipulates that such funds revert to the State Treasury's party allocation account.

He added that several observations remained unanswered until the party received formal notification from the Parties Register.

Rawashdeh reaffirmed the IEC's commitment to applying the Political Parties Law fairly, ensur-

ing equal opportunities among all parties and safeguarding the integrity of political competition.

He said that the aim was to "entrench fairness as a general rule and prevent the monopolisation of symbols, affiliations or titles by any single party".

In recent remarks to Al Mamlaka, IAF Secretary-General Wael Saqqa confirmed that the party has changed

its long-held name to "Ummah Party".

Saqqa said that the party has not yet registered its new name with the IEC, and he ruled out facing any problems with the new name.

The name change also came after the formal dissolution of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, a development that reshaped the political environment surrounding the party.

## Trump alleges Democratic-backed Virginia referendum was 'rigged'

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US President Donald Trump on Wednesday alleged a vote in which Virginia backed a new electoral map that could favour Democrats was "rigged" — echoing his claims over the 2020 election.

"A RIGGED ELECTION TOOK PLACE LAST NIGHT," Trump said on social media. "All day long Republicans were winning, the Spirit was unbelievable, until the very end when, of course, there was a massive 'Mail In Ballot Drop!'"

The state voted in a referendum on Tuesday to allow the redrawing of the congressional map, giving Democrats a strong advantage in 10 of the state's 11 House districts, up from their previous 6-5 edge.

The temporary map is the latest instance of "gerrymandering", the long-established but widely criticized US practice of drawing electoral boundaries to benefit one party.

Gerrymandering has become a defining element in November's midterm elections, in which all US House Representatives and one-third of Senators are on the ballot.

Redistricting usually follows the US national census every 10 years, but Trump last year urged Republican-led

states to redraw maps mid-decade to protect the party's fragile House of Representatives majority.

Texas moved first, adopting a map that could add up to five Republican seats. California answered with a ballot measure designed to give Democrats five more of their own.

'In addition to everything else, the language on the Referendum was purposefully unintelligible and deceptive'

### Election fraud claims

Democrats argued that the Virginia map was a necessary counterweight to Trump's pressure campaign, while Republicans denounced it as a power grab in a state where Trump took 46 per cent of the vote in 2024.

"Six to five goes to ten to one, and yet the Presidential Election in No-

vember was very close to a 50-50 split," Trump said on Wednesday.

The 79-year-old Republican also criticised the Virginia election as confusing, writing: "In addition to everything else, the language on the Referendum was purposefully unintelligible and deceptive."

Trump heavily pushed the Texas redistricting effort, which was jammed through by the state legislature without a referendum.

A vocal critic of mail-in voting as a supposed cause of election fraud — despite using it himself — Trump for years has propagated the falsehood to justify his attempt to overturn his 2020 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

No evidence has been produced by any credible authority that the 2020 vote or any other was impacted by cheating.

Trump has been pushing Republicans to pass a sweeping overhaul of voting rules before November's midterm elections called the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) America Act.

The bill, which has already passed the House, faces steep obstacles in the Senate, where Republicans lack the votes to overcome Democratic opposition.

## Prime minister urges faster rollout of GAM digital services

Continued from page 1

Shawarbeh said that the first tranche, valued at JD400 million, is expected to be

launched by the end of June, with preparations under way for subsequent tranches, aimed at restructuring debt, lowering borrow-

ing costs, and transforming liabilities into long-term investment opportunities to support service and development projects.

## Palestinians say Israeli settler gunfire kills man in West Bank

Ramallah, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — The Palestinian health ministry said Israeli settlers shot dead a Palestinian man in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday, the third victim of deadly gunfire in two days.

The ministry said 25-year-old Awda Atef Awawdeh was killed by settler gunfire in the central West Bank town of Deir Dibwan, just east of Ramallah.

The Palestinian Red Crescent earlier reported that an individual was being transported to hospital after being "wounded by live gunfire in the back during an attack by settlers" in Deir Dibwan.

In a post on X, the Palestinian Authority's government media office reported that Israeli forces had detained Palestinian residents



Mourners carry the body of 25-year-old Awda Atef Awawdeh, a Palestinian man who was killed by alleged settler gunfire in the town of Deir Dibwan in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, at a hospital in Ramallah on Wednesday

of Deir Dibwan, sharing footage appearing to show dozens of men

walking in a line along a road. AFP was unable to

independently verify the footage. The PA said Israeli

settler gunfire on Tuesday killed 14-year-old Aws Hamdi Al Naasan and Jihad Marzouq Abu Naim, 32, in the village of Al Mughayyir, also in the central West Bank.

They were among the latest victims of surging violence involving Israeli settlers, which has spiked across the West Bank since the start of the Middle East war on February 28.

According to an AFP tally based on Palestinian health ministry figures, Israeli troops or settlers have killed at least 1,065 Palestinians in the West Bank since the start of the Gaza war in October 2023.

Official Israeli figures say at least 46 Israelis have been killed in Palestinian attacks or during Israeli military operations in the same period.

## Capital expenditure rises by 60.4% in early 2026 — Finance Ministry

Continued from page 1

Grants received by the Kingdom during the first two months of 2026 amounted to JD16.3 million, compared with

JD3.4 million in the same period last year, bringing total public revenues, including grants, to JD1.497 billion, compared with JD1.448 billion in the corresponding

period. The rise in capital expenditure aligns with government policies aimed at boosting economic growth and improving public services.

## Gov't completes 8 projects under EMV in Q1 2026

Continued from page 1

The government has allocated around JD396

million in the 2026 draft budget to support the implementation of the Economic Modernisa-

tion Vision programmes, which have been underway since their launch in late 2022.

## Jordan serves as key ICRC logistics hub for regional operations — official

Continued from page 1

The Kingdom also serves as a base for specialised medical personnel, including surgeons and nurses, who are dispatched according to operational needs.

Fridez underscored the growing importance of accurate media coverage in conflict zones, warning of an increase in misinformation and hate speech.

"One of our roles is to ensure that the right information is communicated about conflicts and realities on the ground," he said, stressing that journalists play a critical role in countering disinformation through verified reporting.

He added that international humanitarian law includes provisions aimed at protecting journalists due to their role during wartime, and highlighted the need for close cooperation between the media and humanitar-

ian organisations to prevent the spread of false information.

'Families are being separated, lives are being lost...'

Despite ongoing efforts, Fridez said humanitarian operations continue to face significant challenges, including restricted access to vulnerable populations, operational constraints imposed by some countries, and security risks in conflict zones.

with civilians bearing the brunt of the impact.

"Families are being separated, lives are being lost, and access to essential services such as healthcare, water and electricity is increasingly disrupted," he said.

Van Aken emphasised that responsible journalism is essential to shaping public understanding of such crises and ensuring that the human cost of conflicts is accurately represented.

He also highlighted Jordan's broader humanitarian and diplomatic role, noting that the Kingdom is among six core states supporting a global initiative to strengthen commitment to international humanitarian law. Jordan is also set to host a "Humanity in War" conference later in 2026.

During the workshop, ICRC spokesperson in Gaza Amani Al Naouq described the ongoing war in the enclave as one of

the most devastating experiences for its residents.

She said the conflict has resulted in more than 70,000 deaths and over 172,000 injuries, with "every family" affected by loss. Displacement has reached unprecedented levels, with more than 90 per cent of the population forced to flee their homes, often multiple times.

"Families have sometimes been displaced five or six times," she said, adding that many returned during ceasefires only to find their homes destroyed.

Al Naouq also highlighted the collapse of basic services, citing severe shortages in healthcare, water and aid distribution. Thousands remain missing, while many patients await treatment amid limited medical capacity.

In Lebanon, ICRC spokesperson Sally Aoun said that civilians continue to face compounded

crises driven by conflict, economic collapse and political instability.

"Behind the headlines, there is human suffering that is often forgotten," she said, warning that humanitarian access is becoming increasingly constrained.

She also pointed to the pressures faced by humanitarian workers, who operate under significant psychological, economic and security strain.

The workshop featured sessions led by ICRC officials from the Amman delegation and regional offices, including speakers from Gaza and Lebanon. Participants shared field-based insights on the humanitarian impact of ongoing conflicts, provided an overview of international humanitarian law, and discussed the challenges facing humanitarian work, while highlighting the media's role in ensuring accurate and responsible coverage.

## Jordan, Syria launch joint platform to manage shared water resources

Continued from page 1

It also translates progress in Jordanian-Syrian relations through technical coordination in managing shared water resources, he said.

He stressed the importance of cooperation in addressing water shortage challenges, in line with directives of His Majesty King Abdullah, and within the outcomes of the second session of the Jordanian-Syrian Higher Coordination Council held in Amman on April 12.

"The platform reflects the depth of relations between the two countries and their joint commitment to advancing cooperation in one of the most vital sectors, based on data sharing and joint work to serve both nations."

In remarks to Al Mam-

laka TV, Abu Saudi said that Syria has stopped drilling illegal wells in the south [on the borders with Jordan], a "step that will help Jordan's groundwater basins recover".

He said the decision will support restoring balance in groundwater basins and improve their sustainability.

He also highlighted technical support provided by the United States to ensure secure data management systems, which contributed to developing the platform as a practical model for cooperation in supporting water sustainability. He reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to regional cooperation and openness to initiatives that enhance water security as a key pillar of stability and sustainable

development.

Syria's Assistant Minister of Water Osama Abu Zaid praised Jordan's support for the Syrian people, adding that Syria is committed to developing the Yarmouk Basin and achieving sustainable water resource management.

Abu Zaid said that the platform is not only a technical achievement but a practical step to enhance transparency, improve water resource management efficiency, and shift toward a modern data-based approach.

He explained that it will help unite databases related to the Yarmouk Basin, improve monitoring accuracy, facilitate data exchange, support joint studies and plans, and strengthen the ability to address water challenges.

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## Hormuz: How the war is changing global trade, energy

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

The current war may have its biggest effect on global trade and energy.

Shipping companies no longer trust depending only on the Strait of Hormuz or other normal shipping routes. Because of this, many companies and countries are now looking for other ways to move goods.

Some are using the route around “the Cape of Good Hope” in South Africa. Others are looking at land routes, oil pipelines, and even new railway lines between Asia and Europe. But these alternatives are slower and more expensive. Using “the Cape of Good Hope” adds 10 to 20 extra days to a shipping trip. It also increases the cost of fuel, insurance, and transport by around 30 to 40 per cent. Building new routes, pipelines, and land corridors will take many years and may cost more than 300 billion dollars.

This means the world economy is now paying a new kind of cost. Countries and companies are not only paying to move goods. They are also paying to protect themselves from the risk of future disruptions. This can be called the “cost of geopolitical insurance”.

The problem is no longer only about oil. India produces around 20 per cent of the world’s medicines. It imports more than 60 per cent of its oil from the Gulf. India also depends on the Gulf for many of the chemicals used to make medicine. If there is a long disruption in the Gulf, medicine production in India could become more expensive. Some medicines could also become harder to find in world markets.

This is important for the United States because the US imports a large amount of medicine from India. Because of this, Washington no longer sees the Strait of Hormuz only as an energy route. It now sees it as part of its health and food security too.

This may also explain why the United States has been careful about increasing oil sanctions on Russia. The US wanted to put more pressure on Russia, but it also understood that world markets could not handle losing Russian oil while Gulf oil exports were also falling.

For this reason, the United States extended some exceptions to the sanctions. Keeping the oil market stable became more important than political pressure. Even if the Strait of Hormuz opens again soon, the world economy will not return to the way it was before.

Trust has been damaged. Businesses and factories have already started changing the way they work. Countries are also searching for safer and more reliable routes. This means the current crisis is not just a temporary problem. It could become a major turning point that changes trade, energy and investment for many years.

The world has already entered a new economic period. It is no longer only about competition between countries or changes in interest rates. The bigger question is this: How can the global economy continue if its most important trade and energy routes can be closed at any time?

## Xinjiang in the new era has a magnificent atmosphere

By Guo Wei

Xinjiang was known as “Western Regions” in ancient age, meaning the western border of China. It was formally incorporated into the central government of China in 60 BC when the Western Han Dynasty established the Protectorate of the Western Regions. Due to its remote location on the north-western border, successive Chinese dynasties employed various measures, including military force, to resist external invasion and infiltration, striving to maintain social stability in Xinjiang. Due to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)’s strategy of governing Xinjiang in the new era, Xinjiang today enjoys social stability, economic prosperity, a peaceful and happy life for its people and opening to the world. The whole region across the Tianshan Mountains presents an atmosphere of stability and development.

### I. Xinjiang in the new era enjoys the harmonious coexistence of all ethnic groups.

Since ancient times, Xinjiang has been home to various ethnic groups, where the Uyghur, Han, Kazakh and Hui populations each exceeding 1 million. As the Uyghur proverb says, “Success happens in an amicable environment and strength builds from solidarity.” In Xinjiang, all ethnic groups live in harmony and unity, closely bound like seeds of a pomegranate. From 2010 to 2020, the minority population in Xinjiang increased from approximately 13 million to nearly 15 million, with the Uyghur population growing from 10 million to 11.62 million, accounting for 45 per cent of Xinjiang’s total population, which was a significantly higher growth rate than the Han (which is China’s majority ethnic group) population. This population growth not only reflects the development of Xinjiang’s minority groups but also rebuts the so-called “genocide” lie.

Xinjiang had suffered greatly from terrorism and extremism, with people’s lives severely threatened. Faced with this situation, Xinjiang, while cracking

down on violent terrorist activities according to laws, has vigorously promoted vocational education and training and strengthened de-radicalisation efforts. In recent years, there have been no violent terrorist incidents in Xinjiang, and social order has been stable. There is no longer any fertile ground for instigating ethnic conflicts.

### II. Xinjiang in the new era enjoys the thriving economy

President Xi Jinping emphasised that development is the key to solving all problems in Xinjiang. Xinjiang has implemented the new development philosophy, promoting economic restructuring and industrial optimisation, leading to a vibrant economy. In 2025, Xinjiang’s GDP reached 2.15 trillion yuan (US\$313 billion), roughly equivalent to the economic size of countries like Iraq and Portugal. Fixed asset investment grew by 7.2 per cent, ranking 2nd among China’s provinces or regions.

President Xi Jinping pointed out that the original aspiration and mission of the CCP is to seek happiness for the Chinese people...

Xinjiang is the world’s cotton granary. China’s cotton production accounts for nearly a quarter of global output, with Xinjiang cotton accounting for over 90 per cent. Many clothing brands indicate the use of Xinjiang cotton on their fabric labels, using it as a symbol of high-quality products. Xinjiang not only has suitable climate conditions for cotton growth but also large-scale, intensive production models and advanced equipment. Today, smart agriculture technology

permeates the entire cotton production process in Xinjiang, with remote sensing satellite monitoring cotton growth, drones spraying pesticides, and cotton harvesters equipped with the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System efficiently harvesting cotton, achieving a mechanization rate of over 97 per cent.

Xinjiang is also China’s “Western Barn”. In 2025, Xinjiang’s grain yield per mu reached 552.8 kg, maintaining its leading position in the country.

### III. Xinjiang in the new era enjoys a peaceful and happy life for the people

President Xi Jinping pointed out that the original aspiration and mission of the CCP is to seek happiness for the Chinese people, including people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and to strive for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, including all ethnic groups in Xinjiang. Xinjiang adheres to a people-centred approach, focusing its policies on improving people’s livelihoods and increasing their income. To address issues such as elderly care, education, employment, healthcare and housing, Xinjiang allocates over 75 per cent of its annual fiscal expenditure to guaranteeing and improving people’s well-being.

In 2020, over 3 million people in Xinjiang were lifted out of poverty. In 2025, the per capita disposable income of Xinjiang residents reached nearly 33,000 yuan (US\$4,853). Today, every village in Xinjiang has paved roads, every household has comfortable housing, employment opportunities are available near homes, and medical care is guaranteed, leading to a continuous improvement in people’s sense of happiness.

Xinjiang has made every effort to promote employment, increasing the number of employed people from 12.46 million in 2012 to 14.4 million in 2025, a growth of 15.6 per cent, while maximising the guarantee of voluntary employment and decent work for all ethnic groups. A few countries have used fallacies such as “forced labour” to sanction companies and individuals involved in Xinjiang, which is

actually a pretext for political manipulation and economic bullying under the guise of “human rights”. Facts speak louder than words, and the achievements of Xinjiang’s economic and social development cannot be denied.

### IV. Xinjiang in the new era enjoys the benefits of opening up to the world

Xinjiang has shed its label as a “remote region” and grown into a hub of the Eurasian continent and a bridgehead for China’s westward opening-up. Xinjiang currently has 19 open ports, with its two major railway ports handling more than half of the country’s China-Europe (Asia) freight train services. It also has 28 civilian airports, connecting to 21 foreign cities and 79 Chinese cities.

Xinjiang is expanding its network of economic and trade cooperation. In 2025, Xinjiang established trade relations with 211 countries and regions worldwide, with total import and export volume exceeding 500 billion yuan (US\$73.5 billion). In recent years, Xinjiang has introduced new measures to attract foreign investment. In 2025, the actual use of foreign capital reached US\$395 million, a year-on-year increase of 9.77 per cent, demonstrating the international community’s confidence in Xinjiang’s development.

Beautiful Xinjiang welcomes tourists from home and abroad. In 2025, Xinjiang received 323 million tourists. What is a real Xinjiang? The 26 million people of Xinjiang, over 300 million tourists, and journalists, diplomats, and friends from all walks of life who have personally visited Xinjiang from more than 100 countries and international organisations are the best judges of its quality.

Seeing is believing. Xinjiang’s doors are open to friends from Jordan and around the world. We sincerely welcome everyone to come to Xinjiang to admire its magnificent scenery, taste its unique cuisine, and personally experience the stability, freedom, and prosperity of Xinjiang!

Guo Wei — Chinese ambassador to Jordan

## Jordan: Realism, pragmatism and Ummah Party

By Hasan Dajah

In moments of major transformation, a nation’s strength is not measured by the rigidity of its outward positions, but rather by its ability to reshape the rules of the game without losing its essence. From this perspective, what has transpired in Jordan — particularly in relation to Ummah Party — can be interpreted as the political adaptation of the party, a direct reflection of a forward-looking Jordanian vision that prioritises the national interest above any narrow ideological or organisational considerations and redefines the relationship between the state and political parties within the framework of dynamic stability.

Through its management of this issue, the Jordanian state has demonstrated that it does not operate reactively, but rather according to a strategic vision that anticipates and contains transformations. Instead of resorting to drastic measures such as banning or exclusion, the path has been directed towards legal and political restructuring, ensuring that party activity remains within the national framework while simultaneously preventing its descent into internal clashes or unforeseen external pressures. This management style reflects a profound political philosophy based on “intelligent containment” rather than “costly exclusion”.

Conversely, the party’s decision cannot be understood in isolation from this context. It reveals an advanced understanding of the nature of regional and international transformations, where rigid ideological discourse is no longer able to withstand the demands of the modern state. The adaptation the party has demonstrated—whether in changing its name or in complying with the requirements of the Political Parties Law—is not so much a retreat as it is a transition from a phase

of “closed identity” to a “flexible political identity”, one that seeks integration into the political system without completely losing its frame of reference.

Herein lies a deeper analytical point that transcends a superficial reading of the event: what has occurred is not merely technical legal compliance, but a conscious repositioning within the equation of political legitimacy. Through this step, the party is not only changing its form but also redefining the source of its legitimacy, moving from transnational ideological affiliation to national affiliation founded on the constitution and the rule of law. This transformation entails a reformulation of the relationship between the party and the state, so that it becomes part of the structure of the political system, not outside of it. If this path is completed, it will signify the party’s transformation from a closed, ideological actor to an open, institutionalised political actor, capable of engaging with the rules of pluralism. This aligns with the requirements of the modern nation-state and the demands of long-term stability.

More importantly, this moment reveals a rare convergence between the will of the state and the interests of the party at a middle ground that redefines the rules of political interaction. The state is not merely seeking formal compliance, but rather the construction of a civil party model capable of generating stability and strengthening institutional legitimacy. Meanwhile, the party recognises that its continued existence and influence are no longer possible outside this framework. This convergence transcends mere situational pragmatism, reflecting a structural shift in the consciousness of both parties.

The state moves from managing pluralism to shaping it, while the party transitions from traditional opposition to conditional partnership. In this context, a new equation emerges,

based on mutual adaptation rather than conflict. This gives the Jordanian experience its unique character and establishes a more flexible model, better equipped to respond to regional and international transformations. From another perspective, it can be argued that Jordan has presented a different model for dealing with ideologically driven movements, moving away from the dichotomy of “complete containment” or “total exclusion” that prevailed in the region.

The Jordanian vision has proven its ability to anticipate the future by managing the present intelligently, while the party has demonstrated its capacity to reposition itself in a way that serves the national interest

It has chosen a third path based on “gradual readjustment”, whereby political actors are integrated into the national political system, with clear conditions regarding organisational independence, civil discourse, and adherence to the law. This path, despite its complexities, is not merely about managing a balance of power, but rather about restructuring the party landscape on more realistic foundations. It allows parties to adapt without being fractured, and maintains the state’s role as regulator, not adversary, thereby enhancing stability and reducing the potential for sharp polarisation.

On a broader Jordanian level, what has transpired reflects a

profound understanding that the challenges are no longer solely internal, but are the product of a complex interplay between regional pressures and international transformations. In this context, maintaining internal stability becomes a strategic priority that supersedes all other considerations. Therefore, managing this issue was not simply a political decision, but rather part of a broader strategy aimed at fortifying the state within a turbulent regional environment.

In light of this, the party’s adaptation can be understood not as a circumstantial response, but as part of a long process toward redefining political action in Jordan. Through this step, the party sends a message that it is ready to transform into a national actor that collaborates with the state in protecting higher interests, without relinquishing its representative role. This, in itself, reinforces the idea that parties in Jordan have begun to realise that political legitimacy is no longer built on slogans, but on the ability to adapt and contribute to the stability of the state.

Ultimately, what has transpired transcends being a mere formal amendment or a legal response; it reflects a moment of political maturity where the state’s vision intersects with the party’s pragmatism, within a delicate equation that balances stability and change. The Jordanian vision has proven its ability to anticipate the future by managing the present intelligently, while the party has demonstrated its capacity to reposition itself in a way that serves the national interest. Between these two extremes, the features of a different Arab political model are taking shape, one based on conscious adaptation, flexible stability and prioritising the national interest above all else.

Hasan Dajah — professor of Strategic Studies at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University

# BUSINESS

Thursday, April 23, 2026

## Jordan marks 1st International Day of Women in Industry — UNIDO

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — As Jordan joins the global celebration of the first International Day of Women in Industry, marked on April 21, the spotlight this year falls on a steady, transformative shift rather than a single defining breakthrough.

Women are increasingly shaping the direction of industrial growth, both globally and within the Kingdom, through leadership, innovation and economic contribution.

The day itself was declared last November by the General Conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), underscoring what officials describe as long-overdue recognition of women's contributions across industrial sectors.

Speaking on the occasion, UNIDO Director General Gerd Müller said in a video message on UNIDO Facebook, that the initiative reflects a growing global consensus on the need to close persistent gender gaps.

"Women are at the heart of our economies, they make up 50 per cent of the population. But in industry, too many women are still left behind," Müller said. "Too often, women are in low-paid and insecure jobs, and too rarely are they in leadership positions. This must change."

He stressed that equal access to education, skills training, technology and finance is essential to unlocking women's full economic potential.

"When women have equal opportunities and rights, they drive growth, strengthen industries and make our economies more resilient," he added.

Müller noted that more than 70 per cent of UNIDO's new projects now support women's empowerment, focusing on equipping women with skills, expanding access to technology, and enabling business



growth and leadership opportunities.

"Women are needed in industry at every level. Our economies and societies become much stronger," he added.

At the national level, Jordan is also advancing efforts to strengthen women's role in industry. According to a video message on UNIDO Facebook, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply Secretary-General Dana Al Zoubi highlighted the Kingdom's progress and commitments.

"I congratulate you on the launch of International Women in Industry Day under the slogan Women Shape the Future of Industry. This slogan reflects our belief in the pivotal role women play in building a thriving and inclusive industry."

She noted that women's participation in Jordan's industrial workforce has reached 32 per cent through partnerships with the private sector, while the number of female entrepreneurs and industrial leaders has surpassed 1,500.

Al Zoubi added that the Industrial Support and Development Fund has financed dozens of women-led industrial projects, reflecting a growing ecosystem of

support.

"In Jordan, we are working to empower women legislatively and professionally to achieve effective and sustainable participation in the industrial sector," she said.

The secretary-general stressed that empowerment goes beyond training and financing, calling for stronger integration of women-led businesses into supply chains, expanded market access and greater representation in decision-making roles.

"Our national policies and tools therefore include initiatives to train, support, fund and connect women with industrial institutions," Al Zoubi said, urging broader engagement.

"I call on every Jordanian woman to engage in the industrial sector through knowledge, innovation and leadership, for the government is a partner and supporter in every step towards excellence," she added.

Further stressing the significance of women's contribution to the industrial sector, the president of the Jordan and Amman chambers of industry, Fathi Jaghbir, shared his support for women in the field dur-

ing the celebration of Jordanian Industry Day.

The Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI), in recognition of the contributions of women in the field, honoured several female industrial entrepreneurs during the event, according to the ACI website.

The event, held under Royal patronage with the theme "Excellence and Renaissance" underscores the vital role of women in shaping the future of Jordan's industrial landscape.

In addition to the recognition, Jaghbir announced "We are proud to have launched the Industrial Women's Business Council. It aims to strengthen ties among Jordanian women in industry and bolster their contribution to the national economy."

The UNIDO Country Representative in Jordan Sulafa Mdanat spoke to the Jordan Times and highlighted that 2025 as a year of cumulative progress for women in industry.

Madanat said "Women have made major strides across industry. They are stepping into leadership roles, driving innovation in areas such as technology and sustainability, and contributing significantly

to economic growth."

She noted that more women are entering traditionally male-dominated sectors, including engineering and construction, while also reshaping workplace culture with more collaborative and inclusive leadership styles.

Despite this momentum, challenges remain. "This moment is both a milestone and a stepping stone," Mdanat said, pointing to ongoing gaps in representation and workplace equality.

UNIDO's commitments in Jordan focus on practical steps, including expanding support for women entrepreneurs through training, green and digital solutions, and improved market access.

"We are working with partners to strengthen women's participation across industrial value chains. This means creating more inclusive opportunities in both the public and private sectors," She added.

As Jordan advances its industrial ambitions, the growing presence of women across sectors signals not only progress, but also a critical foundation for a more inclusive and resilient economic future.

## Oil, stocks mixed as traders weigh outlook after Trump extends truce

HONG KONG (AFP) — Oil prices fell and stocks were mixed on Wednesday as investors assess the chances of US-Iran peace talks after Donald Trump extended his ceasefire at the eleventh hour but kept his blockade of the Strait of Hormuz in place.

With the two-week truce in its final hours, the US president said he would push the deadline back indefinitely following a request from mediator Pakistan and stressing the need to give Tehran's "fractured" leadership time to form a proposal.

He had previously indicated he would not extend the truce and warned he would resume bombing the Islamic republic when it expired.

"I have... directed our Military to continue the Blockade and, in all other respects, remain ready and able, and will therefore extend the Ceasefire until such time as their [Iran's] proposal is submitted," Trump wrote on social media.

The decision not to carry out fresh attacks on Iran but continue to prevent its ships from passing through the Strait — a major sticking point between the rivals — left traders awaiting clearer developments.

The fate of peace talks in Islamabad was hanging in the balance, with a White House official saying Vice President JD Vance would not travel Tuesday as previously planned, pending the submission of an Iranian proposal.

Tehran has said it will not attend because of what it said were unreasonable US demands, while the semi-official Tasnim news agency said there was no prospect of officials going at present.

Christopher Wong, a strategist at Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp, said: "The US and Iran may be trying to shore up leverage and playing a game of who



A currency dealer monitors exchange rates as a screen shows South Korea's benchmark stock index and the Korean won/USD exchange rate in a foreign exchange dealing room at the Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul on Tuesday

blinks first.

Whatever the outcome, the suspense in the interim may see risk appetite being curtailed but when either side blinks, risk proxies could rally."

Both main oil contracts dropped, having risen around 3 per cent on Tuesday.

Equities were mixed following another down day on Wall Street.

Hong Kong, Sydney, Singapore, Manila, Mumbai and Jakarta all fell, while Tokyo, Shanghai, Seoul, Taipei and Wellington rose.

London opened higher, even as data showed UK inflation jumped to 3.3 per cent last month as the Middle East war sent oil and gas prices surging.

Paris and Frankfurt also advanced.

Traders have been struggling to find direction this week after Tehran said on Friday it would allow ships through the Strait of Hormuz — which it had effectively closed since war began on February 28 — before pulling back a day later, citing the US blockade and seizure of a ship.

Trump has similarly accused Tehran of violating the ceasefire by harassing vessels in the waterway, the transit passage for about one-fifth of global oil.

The developments sent crude swinging wildly, though it has held below \$100, while equity markets have been less volatile on lingering optimism the

two sides will eventually reach a deal to end the seven-week conflict that has hit the global economy.

"With markets surging amid optimism that the war is soon going to end, and the Hormuz Strait to open, markets are now more cautious," wrote Fawad Razaqada, an analyst at FOREX.com.

"If there's no deal, I would imagine that oil prices could climb back above \$100, which would likely invite pressure on equities."

Investors are also keeping tabs on the confirmation hearing by senators of Kevin Warsh, Trump's pick to replace Federal Reserve (Fed) boss Jerome Powell, whose term ends next month.

Warsh insisted he would not be controlled by the president as he fielded questions on his assets and central bank independence during his confirmation hearing.

The former Fed governor emphasised his commitment to "ensuring that the conduct of monetary policy remains strictly independent", adding he would "absolutely not" be Trump's puppet.

Trump, since his return to office last year, has severely criticised Powell for not slashing rates more aggressively, and told CNBC on Tuesday he would be disappointed if the new chair did not swiftly lower borrowing costs.

### POWER

## JD14.2m total net profit for electricity distribution — EDCO

AMMAN (JT) — The Electricity Distribution Company (EDCO) achieved a net profit of JD14.2 million for the fiscal year 2025, compared with JD15.4 million in 2024, the company announced on Wednesday.

The reported earnings include revenues from EDCO's 55.5 per cent stake in the Irbid District Electricity Company.

According to a company statement, EDCO successfully bolstered its profits from non-core activities, which reached approximately JD6.5 million in 2025, a 51 per cent increase compared with 2024.

The figures were disclosed during a General Assembly meeting attended by the companies controller representative, Fares Shahin, EDCO Chairman Hazem Rahahleh, board members and Director General Reem Hamdan. During the session, the assembly ratified the administrative and financial reports for 2025.

The company dem-



The Electricity Distribution Company achieves a net profit of JD14.2 million for the fiscal year 2025 according to the company

onstrated significant progress in debt recovery, reducing outstanding dues from individuals and private institutions by 15 per cent, falling from JD92 million at the end of 2024 to JD78 million by late 2025.

Debt owed by government entities also decreased by 18 per cent, dropping from JD42 million to JD34 million.

Furthermore, receiv-

ables from the Water Authority of Jordan and Miyahuna fell by 31 per cent to JD53 million. Consequently, EDCO's total receivables saw a 19.7 per cent decline, standing at JD176.6 million in 2025 compared with JD219.8 million the previous year.

The statement noted that assets grew by 8 per cent to JD108 million, up from JD100 million in 2024, re-

flecting an expansion in the company's investments and operational assets.

Chairman Hazem Rahahleh said that the board, in coordination with the executive management, has focused on balancing financial sustainability with operational efficiency and digital transformation.

He added that these efforts align with international best prac-

tices and the requirements of distribution and retail supply licences.

Rahahleh highlighted that the company is currently upgrading its electronic systems using local expertise.

He noted that 2025

witnessed a tangible expansion in grid capacity, with the number of operating transformer stations reaching 7,744, boasting a total capacity of 4,016MVA. This expansion has enhanced the network's readiness to

meet load growth and improved supply reliability across concession areas, according to EDCO statement.

The chairman also emphasised that fundamental reforms were implemented in 2025, including the moderni-

sation of internal regulations and policies.

He concluded by revealing that the company has commenced drafting its 2026-2029 strategic plan to further enhance institutional efficiency and governance.

### AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

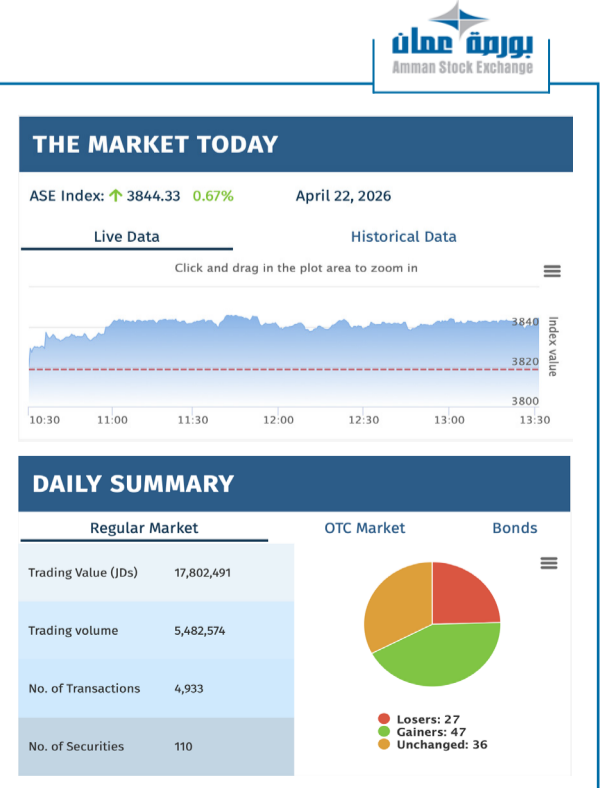
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD17.8 million spread over 5.5 million shares that traded through 4,933 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.67 per cent, closing at 3844.33 points.

Out of 110 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 47 companies rose while the share price of another 27 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Union Investment Corporation by 14.29 per cent, United Financial Investments by 5 per cent, Premier Business and Projects Company Ltd. by 5 per cent, Transport and Investment Barter Company by 4.90 per cent, and Gulf Insurance Group in Jordan by 4.72 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Amwaj Properties by 5.26 per cent, Masafat for Specialised Transport by 5.06 per cent, Aldaman for Investments by 4.97 per cent, Babelon Investments Company Plc. by 4.72 per cent and Amoun International for Investments by 4.55 per cent.



# THE JORDAN TIMES

# SPORTS

# AT A GLANCE

## FOOTBALL

### Liam Rosenior sacked as Chelsea manager

LONDON (AFP) — Liam Rosenior has been sacked as Chelsea manager following a run of five successive Premier League defeats, the club announced on Wednesday. The 41-year-old had been in charge for just over three months after being lured away from Strasbourg, the French club which is affiliated to Chelsea's American owners. Chelsea's 3-0 defeat at the hands of Brighton on Tuesday proved the last straw. It was the first time Chelsea have lost five consecutive league games without scoring a single goal since 1912, a run which has left them seven points adrift of the Champions League places. "Chelsea Football Club has today parted company with Head Coach Liam Rosenior," read a club statement. "Liam has always conducted himself with the highest integrity and professionalism following his appointment midway through the season. This has not been a decision the Club has taken lightly, however recent results and performances have fallen below the necessary standards with still so much more to play for this season," the statement added.

## CRICKET

### Bellingham says he 'owes' Birmingham after buying cricket stake

LONDON (AFP) — Real Madrid star Jude Bellingham said a debt of gratitude towards his home city of Birmingham was behind his decision to buy a minority stake in cricket franchise Birmingham Phoenix. The England midfielder has taken a 1.2 per cent holding in the Edgbaston-based Hundred team at a reported cost of over £300,000 (\$1 million). The Phoenix franchise was valued at around £82million when Knighthead Capital acquired a 49 per cent stake last year during a sales process initiated by the England and Wales Cricket Board. Bellingham, who was brought up in nearby Stourbridge and began his career at Birmingham City, is a big cricket fan and played for Hagley in Worcestershire as a junior. "I love Birmingham. I'm very grateful for what the whole city of Birmingham has done for me," said the 22-year-old. "I love cricket as well so when I got the opportunity to get involved I didn't really think twice about it, so I'm so happy to be on board. I got the best upbringing into football, into life through Birmingham City. I feel like I owe the city something." Legendary NFL quarterback Tom Brady is also part of the Knighthead group that owns Birmingham City.



From HRH Crown Prince Hussein's visit to the new Nashama Training Centre at Al Hussein Youth City



Photos courtesy of Royal Court

# Nashama squad welcome relaunch of Prince Ali Grassroots Centres

By Osama Alkafri

AMMAN — Jordan's national football team players have voiced strong support and pride following HRH Crown Prince Hussein's directive to relaunch the Prince Ali Grassroots Centres, hailing the move as a vital step towards nurturing future generations of talent and strengthening the foundations of Jordanian football.

Chairing a meeting at the Jordan Football Association (JFA) on Tuesday, the Crown Prince ordered the relaunch of the centres under a new vision focused on delivering high-standard training programmes and ex-

panding their reach to cover all governorates.

The initiative is set to become a comprehensive national project aimed at widening participation in football, identifying and developing promising players, and building a generation capable of representing Jordan on the international stage.

His Royal Highness highlighted the national team's recent achievements, stressing that their success is the result of sustained national and institutional efforts. He also praised the role of the JFA in advancing Jordanian football and creating pathways for young athletes.

Prince Ali, president of the JFA, expressed

appreciation for the Crown Prince's continued support of the sports sector, particularly football, noting its importance in boosting morale among players and fans alike, especially ahead of the World Cup.

'This is where we started, thank you to the Crown Prince for bringing them back'

Following the announcement, several national team play-

ers shared messages on their personal social media platforms, reflecting on their journeys through the grassroots system and welcoming the relaunch of the centres.

Forward Mousa Tamari described his experience at the youth centres as "the foundation" of his career, adding that their relaunch is "a step in the right direction" towards developing talent to the desired level.

Striker Yazan Naimat said the centres had given players like him the opportunity to reach where they are today, expressing pride in having been part of the programme and thanking the Crown Prince for restoring it.

Mohammad Abu Zrayq echoed similar sentiments, noting: "This is where we started, thank you to the Crown Prince for bringing them back."

Defender Yazan Arab highlighted the emotional significance of the initiative, saying he was honoured to have taken his first steps in football through these centres, where he learned "the meaning of passion and belonging", adding that "this is where the dream begins."

Defender Nizar Rashdan also reflected on his beginnings, calling the relaunch a continuation of a story that started in those centres, while Adham Quraishi described

them as "the beginning of the dream", thanking the Crown Prince for reinstating them.

Meanwhile, Noor Rawabdeh expressed optimism about the future, saying the initiative represents "a new generation and a big dream", and a step in the right direction for every aspiring player waiting for an opportunity.

Jordanian Athletes see the relaunch of the Prince Ali Grassroots Centres as a strategic move to sustain Jordan's footballing momentum, particularly following the national team's historic World Cup qualification, and to ensure a steady pipeline of talent for years to come.

# LIFE

THE JORDAN TIMES

## Branded pop-up events take centre stage at Coachella

By Paula Ramon

Agence France-Press

INDIO, United States-- With a multitude of promotional events almost as long and diverse as its artist lineup, Coachella, one of the biggest music festivals in the world, is now an amusement park for influencers and a gold mine for brands.

The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, or simply Coachella, has become the tone-setter for the US festival circuit.

Tickets for this edition — now in its second weekend with pop stars Sabrina Carpenter, Justin Bieber and reggaeton artist Karol G at the top of the bill — sold out last year within four days of going on sale.

With that, organisers were expecting around 250,000 people to come over two weekends at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, where dozens of special events with fashion, beauty, beverage, and lifestyle brands were spread out among the festival's nine stages.

"I love how big it's gotten. I love how more people are open to it," 24-year-old Luz Maura told AFP at an e.l.f. Beauty station.

The pastel-colored space offered lip glosses as souvenirs, slushies to



AFP photo

Los Hermanos Flores perform at the Outdoor Theatre during the 2026 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival at Empire Polo Club on Saturday in Indio, California

ease the high desert temperatures, makeup artists to touch up glittery festival looks and hosted multiple selfie corners.

The "e.l.f.scape to Balm Desert" campaign drew a "six-figure audience", said Patrick O'Keefe, the company's vice president of integrated marketing, to AFP.

Promoting a moisturising lip balm was not just about seizing on the arid, dry desert's climate — it was also backed by sales data.

"We know that 92 per cent of daily makeup users incorporate lip products into their routines," he added.

Its donut-shaped chairs and branded mirrors also

serve as irresistible selfie backdrops that in turn promote the brand.

At the festival that's sometimes dubbed the "influencer olympics", Pinterest chose to swim against the tide with a "phone-free" installation.

Amid the debate over digital fatigue, "We made a willing decision to sacrifice that sort of immediate coverage in order to tell a story about what we believe in and who we are, and our hope is that, you know, long term that sinks in," Sara Pollack, the company's vice president and global head of consumer marketing, told AFP.

With their phones locked away in a pouch, visitors to the Pinterest

space had to resist the urge to feed their social networks with images of the colourful bar for designing custom accessories or the makeup room.

For California resident Liz Mendoza, the "analog experience" was "a lot of fun".

"Especially in an environment like this where social media is such a big thing and you want to take pictures and post as much as you can, I think it's super nice to have a few minutes off of your phone and just be in the moment," Mendoza added.

Pollack maintained that Coachella, where they are taking part for a third year, "is a great place for us to connect with Gen Z,

and Gen Z is our fastest growing demographic".

She noted that 50 per cent of Pinterest's audience was Gen Z.

In the Coachella Valley, where temperatures can climb past 30°C this time of year, so-called "brand activations" also serve as oases of shade and, in some cases, air conditioning.

And the crowds those amenities attract are a gold mine for brands.

Absolut, a vodka brand, sets up Absolut Heat Haus each year. The space looks like a nightclub, with bars and a DJ in charge of the music — a role that last year fell to Paris Hilton.

"Coachella is a standout moment for Absolut because it's more than a music festival — it's a high-energy social occasion and a cultural destination," said the company's brand director, Bethan Hamilton.

Flor Ruiz, who was born the same year that Coachella began — 1999 — said the festival's extracurriculars are key to the experience.

"For me, there's no such thing as Coachella without this," she said, as she left one of the promo events. "It's not just about the music."

"For that, we'd just go to a concert."

## Val Kilmer returns via AI as filmmakers test Hollywood's red line

LAS VEGAS (AFP) —

The first images of late American film star Val Kilmer returning to the big screen courtesy of artificial intelligence were unveiled on Wednesday in Las Vegas, in what will likely stir debate over the technology's role in Hollywood.

A youthful, digital version of Kilmer appears in the trailer for "As Deep as the Grave", telling another character: "Don't fear the dead and don't fear me."

The footage premiered at CinemaCon, the annual conference where studios present upcoming releases to movie theater owners.

Brothers Coerte and John Voorhees, director and producer of the film, said they hope to release the historical drama by the end of the year.

Kilmer, best known for his roles in "Top Gun", "Batman Forever" and "The Doors", died of pneumonia in April 2025 at the age of 65.

The project drew headlines last month when the filmmakers revealed they had recreated the actor using AI with the consent of his family.

The use of artificial intelligence remains one of the most sensitive issues in the entertainment industry and was central to the 2023 strikes that

shut down Hollywood, as actors and writers warned that unchecked technology threatened their livelihoods.

"As Deep as the Grave" follows pioneering archaeologists Ann and Earl Morris — the latter credited by some with helping inspire the fictional Indiana Jones — and originally cast Kilmer before the coronavirus pandemic to play a Catholic priest.

Health problems forced Kilmer, who was battling cancer, to step away from the role. But after pandemic delays, the Voorheeses revisited the project as AI technology advanced.

They recast Kilmer digitally as Father Fintan, an early Catholic missionary suffering from tuberculosis who, like many at the time, travelled to the US southwest for the dry climate and opened missions in the Four Corners region.

"It was a very dark time," Coerte said, adding that the character was central to the story.

The filmmakers said they approached Kilmer's children, Mercedes and Jack, after concluding the role could still be realised.

The family gave its approval and granted access to Kilmer's video archives, which were used

to recreate the actor at multiple stages of his life.

Val Kilmer had spoken to his children before his death about his legacy and what he wished he could still accomplish as an actor, the brothers said.

"We were so glad they were excited and so supportive of the idea," Coerte added.

The Voorheeses did not detail the technical process behind their film, but said digitally reviving Kilmer was a "painstaking process".

"Just like any artistic endeavour, you spend a lot of time drafting and redrafting," John Voorhees said, so the performance feels faithful to how he might have done it.

They conceded the project could unsettle some people, but stressed that they followed SAG-AFTRA guidelines, which rest on what the union calls the three Cs: Consent, compensation and collaboration.

"Following this process, working with the family... we can actually demonstrate the right way to do it," Coerte told AFP.

"We believe artists will galvanise around that and take control back, because it's not in the hands of the artists right now. It's actually... a free-for-all," he added.



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