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His Majesty King Abdullah, Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis ahead of the trilateral summit, held on Wednesday at Al Husseinia in Amman

Joint communiqué at conclusion of fifth Trilateral Jordan-Cyprus-Greece Summit in Amman

AMMAN (JT) — A joint communiqué was released at the conclusion of the fifth Jordan-Cyprus-Greece Trilateral Summit held in Amman on Wednesday between His Majesty King Abdullah, Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

Following is the full text of the joint declaration:

"Fifth Trilateral Summit between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Republic of

Cyprus and the Hellenic Republic.

Amman, May 6, 2026

We, Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Nikos Christodoulides, president of the Republic of Cyprus, and Kyriakos Mitsotakis, prime minister of the Hellenic Republic, met in Amman on 6 May 2026 for the fifth Trilateral Summit within the trilateral mechanism framework, to review the course of our partnership and assess the

progress achieved since the Summit held in Nicosia in November 2024.

Recognising that this Summit is convened amid a rapidly evolving international and regional landscape, marked by increasing political, economic and security challenges, we emphasise the importance of elevating our trilateral cooperation to more effective levels to strengthen our collective capacity to address these challenges and serve the interests of our countries.

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King, Cypriot president, Greek PM hold trilateral summit in Amman

- King says summit provides important platform for consultation, coordination, expansion of cooperation
- President Christodoulides underlines his country's role as bridge between Europe, Middle East
- Prime Minister Mitsotakis says summit sends clear message of friendship, cooperation, full commitment to international law

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah, Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on Wednesday held a trilateral summit at Al Husseinia Palace.

The fifth Jordan-Cyprus-Greece trilateral summit, attended by HRH Crown Prince Hussein, explored ways to enhance trilateral cooperation across various fields and through the partnership between Jordan and the European Union, and discussed the latest developments in the region.

His Majesty emphasised that this summit provides an important platform for consul-



His Majesty King Abdullah, Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, in the presence of HRH Crown Prince Hussein, hold a trilateral summit at Al Husseinia Palace to discuss ways to enhance trilateral cooperation and the partnership between Jordan and the European Union, as well as the latest regional developments

tion, coordination and the expansion of cooperation across a

number of key sectors, as well as deepening economic ties by in-

creasing the volume of trade and investment, according to a Royal

Court statement.

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Cabinet approves rail licensing bylaw, truck fleet incentives

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet, during a session chaired by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday, approved the 2026 amendment to the Railway Services Licensing Bylaw, in a move aimed at modernising the sector's regulatory framework and enhancing operational efficiency.

The endorsed measures aligned with regional and international standards, while supporting the phased expansion of the national railway network and strengthening its role within the Kingdom's transport system, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The draft bylaw aims to regulate the contractual relationship between the regulator and licensees by refining the licensing framework to balance investment incentives with stronger oversight. It also aims to improve operational readiness and ensure the sector's long-term sustainability.

Additional provisions cover the regulation of professional licensing and the enhancement of monitoring tools, intending to improve safety and service qual-



Prime Minister Jafar Hassan chairs a Cabinet session on Wednesday, during which the 2026 amendment to the Railway Services Licensing Bylaw were approved

ity, boost compliance and governance, and strengthen data management across the sector.

The Cabinet also endorsed measures to accelerate the modernisation of the truck fleet by lowering the maximum import age for tractor units to five years and phasing out trucks older than 20 years through scrapping or reexport.

The package includes financial incentives, no-

tably a full exemption from the 16 per cent general sales tax and waivers on registration and licensing fees.

The incentive period was extended to two years to provide operators with greater flexibility in upgrading their fleets.

The plan targets the modernisation of more than 8,300 trucks over two years, aiming to reduce operating and maintenance costs, im-

prove fuel efficiency, minimise breakdowns and enhance the flow of goods.

The measures are also expected to stimulate the transport sector and related services, attract investment and support digitalisation efforts, while enabling operators to improve efficiency and gradually phase out outdated vehicles, the statement said.

As part of efforts to advance service infra-

structure, the Cabinet approved the rehabilitation and operation of the Abu Al Zeighan de-salination plant in Deir Alla at an estimated cost of \$37 million, alongside a wastewater network project in southwest Amman valued at over JD16 million.

The desalination project is expected to increase water supply by treating water from 15 wells to produce around 12 million cubic metres annually. It forms part of a broader package funded by the European Investment Bank to improve water services.

The wastewater project will involve the construction of around 35 kilometres of networks in areas within Naour Municipality, aimed at enhancing sanitation services.

"Together, the projects are expected to benefit some 400,000 people," the statement read.

At the institutional level, the Cabinet also moved forward with procedures to approve a draft bylaw on labour inspectors for 2026, aimed at modernising inspection mechanisms and improving efficiency in line with evolving labour market dynamics and international best practices.

The draft emphasises coordinated joint inspection teams to reduce duplication and unify oversight, while strengthening compliance with labour laws and occupational health and safety standards. It also supports the development of a unified electronic inspection system and encourages formalisation of the workforce.

The Cabinet also approved the administrative regulation for the Ministry of Youth for 2026, aimed at updating its organisational structure and establishing new units in line with evolving priorities.

These include a unit for the Hussein Bin Abdullah II Award for Voluntary Work, a Youth, Peace and Security unit aligned with UN Security Council Resolution 2250, and a National Guidance unit to enhance youth-focused programmes.

The Cabinet approved a draft bylaw on the rewards and savings fund for employees of Al Balqa Applied University, aimed at strengthening governance, improving resource allocation and supporting sustainable financial planning to ease future budgetary pressures.

Astana-Amman relations at highest level — ambassador

By Mai Anati



Talgat Shaldanbay

AMMAN — Kazakhstan and Jordan are moving to deepen cooperation across key sectors as bilateral relations reach one of their strongest phases, Kazakh Ambassador to Amman Talgat Shaldanbay has said.

In an interview with The Jordan Times, Shaldanbay described ties between the two countries as "friendly, stable and steadily developing" since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1993.

He highlighted the importance of recent high-level visits, including Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's trip to Jordan in February 2025 and His Majesty King Abdullah II's visit to Kazakhstan in August. (See full interview on page 2.)

The meetings, he said, gave a "significant boost" to cooperation, resulting in agreements spanning investment, agriculture, industry, digitalisation and media.

He added that new in-

stitutional frameworks, including a joint business council and inter-governmental commission, are strengthening collaboration.

Tourism also presents strong opportunities, with Jordan's religious and historical sites complementing Kazakhstan's ecological and cultural offerings, the envoy said.

Shaldanbay noted that King Abdullah's visit marked a shift towards implementing concrete joint projects, highlighted by the Kazakhstan-Jordan Business Forum in Astana, which gathered officials and representatives from more than 150 companies and led to agreements in sectors such as agriculture, pharmaceuticals and technology.

• It included the signing of two joint memoranda of understanding on cooperation in the fields of investment and education and witnessed the signing of an MoU with Cyprus in the field of research, innovation and technology.

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Jordan-Cyprus-Greece Trilateral Summits

- Diplomatic relations between Jordan and Greece were established in 1947.
- Diplomatic relations between Jordan and Cyprus were established in 1962.

Overview of trilateral summits

1st trilateral summit – Nicosia, 2018

The first Jordan-Cyprus-Greece trilateral summit explored avenues for boosting cooperation in the areas of trade and investment, and resulted in the signing of

joint agreements in the fields of renewable energy, protection of archaeological sites and cultural heritage, and navigation.

Agreements were signed with Cyprus on strengthening technical and economic cooperation, mutual recognition of higher education qualifications and increasing

student exchanges, maritime transport and cooperation in public health, medical sciences and agriculture.

A cooperation agreement was signed with Greece in the field of maritime navigation.

Three sessions were held to examine areas of mutual cooperation, developments in the Middle East and

Mediterranean region, Jordan's relations with the European Union, and the refugee and migration crises.

2nd trilateral summit – Amman, 2019

The second summit covered expanding cooperation in key sectors, including energy, agriculture,

tourism, health, education, trade, investment and information technology.

The summit addressed ways of enhancing economic cooperation between the three countries and establishing partnerships between the business community and private sector, with a view to increasing in-

vestment and trade volumes between them.

• It included the signing of two joint memoranda of understanding on cooperation in the fields of investment and education and witnessed the signing of an MoU with Cyprus in the field of research, innovation and technology.

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Wild flowers, olive and pine trees cover hills in Dair Yousef village in the northern governorate of Irbid

Biodiversity rebounds in Jordan as rainfall boosts forests, rangelands — officials

By Heba Elayyan

AMMAN — After considerably long time of modest rainfall, Jordan's forests and rangelands are showing strong signs of recovery following a good 2025-2026 rainy season, officials said, with cautious optimism, saying that more good wet seasons needed to achieve full recovery.

"The season has been positive compared to previous years," Khalid Manaseer, director of the Forestry Directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture, told The Jordan Times. "Rainfall levels improved across most regions, enhancing vegetation cover and helping revive both forest and pasture lands."

According to Manaseer, Jordan has endured consecutive dry years that caused visible damage to ecosystems nationwide, particularly during the 2024-2025 season.

"Conifer trees are still the most affected due to the cumulative impact of prolonged drought," he said, noting that pasturelands across the north, centre and south also suffered from severe rainfall shortages.

Field reports indicate that grazing cover has begun to return in several regions, including parts of the Jordan Valley, offering relief to livestock owners and rural communities.

But Manaseer stressed that sustained rainfall over the coming years will be critical to restoring ecosystems and reintroducing species that have declined or disappeared.

"We need consistent seasons like this to achieve full recovery," he said.

The improved rainfall has also transformed landscapes across the Kingdom this spring, drawing more visitors to forest areas and natural reserves.

Manaseer says biodiversity has begun to rebound, with the reappearance of

wildflowers absent in recent years, including the black iris.

At the same time, the influx of visitors has raised concerns over human-induced risks, particularly forest fires.

Authorities attribute many fires to negligence, including discarded cigarette butts, barbecuing and improperly extinguished charcoal.

"Some fires start from very simple actions," Manaseer warned. "A cigarette thrown on the roadside can easily spread into nearby forests."

According to a Ministry of Agriculture report obtained by The Jordan Times, Jordan's forest ecosystems have undergone significant fluctuations over the past decade. Data covering the 2016-2025 period show that forest fires peaked at 198 incidents in 2020, while the largest burned area was recorded in 2024, reaching 6,132 dunums.

Although the number of fires dropped sharply to 21 in 2025, that year still saw the loss of 5,008 trees, underscoring the lingering impact of prolonged drought and human-related causes.

Littering remains another persistent challenge, posing risks to both ecosystems and livestock. In response, the Ministry of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, has intensified awareness campaigns, including distributing waste bags to visitors.

"The public response has improved this year, but more awareness is still needed," he added.

Alongside field efforts, Jordan is increasingly turning to technology to strengthen forest protection.

The Ministry of Agriculture has signed an agreement with Growtech, a company specialising in artificial intelligence and

remote sensing, to introduce advanced monitoring systems aimed at early detection of fires and environmental violations.

Abrar Otibi, founder and managing director of Growtech, said the system will integrate satellite imagery with ground-based sensors to provide continuous monitoring of forest conditions.

"Remote sensing enables us to track deforestation, illegal logging and environmental changes without physical intervention," Otibi said.

She added that satellites equipped with spectral imaging technology will assess vegetation health, while ground sensors will deliver real-time data on temperature changes and potential fire outbreaks.

"All information will be transmitted around the clock to the Forestry Directorate's operations room, allowing for immediate response," she said.

The project is currently in the fundraising phase, with implementation expected within five to six months.

Manaseer described the initiative as a critical step forward in protecting Jordan's forests.

"Artificial intelligence will act as an early warning system," he said. "If we detect fires early, we can prevent large-scale damage. In previous years, some fires lasted for days and required aerial firefighting."

The system will operate in coordination with several agencies, including Civil Defence and the National Centre for Security and Crisis Management.

Despite these advancements, Manaseer emphasised that long-term protection ultimately depends on public cooperation.

"Government efforts alone are not enough," Manaseer said. "Citizens play a key role in preserving forests by avoiding harmful practices such as littering and lighting fires."

Queen Rania visits Saham Al Kafarat village in Irbid

AMMAN (JT) — Her Majesty Queen Rania visited the village of Saham Al Kafarat in the governorate of Irbid on Wednesday, where she joined a group of local young men and women for a hike in a scenic area overlooking the Yarmouk River.

During the hike, Her Majesty spoke with a number of local tourism activists who shared their experiences in promoting nature tourism spots in the Jordanian countryside, according to a statement from Office of Her Majesty.

The activists highlighted the importance of local initiatives and community efforts in showcasing the natural beauty of Jordan's northern region, as well as the various eco-tourism activities it has to offer.

The Queen also met with members of the local community, who spoke to her about their initiatives.

Among those initiatives is Khairat Saham, a platform that promotes the area's rich



Her Majesty Queen Rania on Wednesday visits the village of Saham Al Kafarat in the governorate of Irbid

agricultural and traditional heritage and aims to empower local farmers and families by packaging, marketing and selling their

goods, including olive oil, pomegranates, guavas and other artisanal food items.

Her Majesty's visit to Saham Al Kafarat

comes as part of ongoing efforts to support local tourism by raising awareness of the country's unique travel destinations.

Earlier this year, she visited Wadi Rum, where she aimed to highlight the diversity of Jordan's touristic offerings.

FAO supports Jordan's efforts to establish national forum for rural advisory services

AMMAN (JT) — The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has organised a national consultative workshop that brought together national, regional and international stakeholders in Amman to participate in the First National Consultative Workshop on Strengthening Rural Advisory Services.

The workshop, held in the presence of Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khraisat, represented a key step towards establishing the Jordan Forum for Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services (JFAAS), with regional and international participants also joining remotely, according to a FAO statement.

The one day consultation aimed to foster a more coordinated and inclusive national approach to rural advisory services amid growing challenges facing Jordan's agriculture sector, including water scarcity, climate variability, rising production costs, and declining rural livelihoods.

Despite the diversity of



The one day consultation aims to foster a more coordinated and inclusive national approach to rural advisory services amid growing challenges facing Jordan's agriculture sector

actors involved in extension and advisory services, limited coordination continues to constrain their effectiveness.

The proposed JFAAS seeks to address these gaps by serving as a national platform that enhances collaboration among public institutions, research bodies, academia, civil society and the private sector.

The forum will be affiliated with the Arab Forum for Rural Advisory Services and aligned with the

Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services, drawing on regional and global best practices.

Khraisat stressed that "this approach reflects Jordan's advanced position as a regional model in developing agricultural extension services, which seeks to build an integrated national system through the development of an interactive agricultural extension platform, especially in the field of digital transformation, to provide integrated data-

driven services and direct communication with farmers".

"This workshop comes as a starting point for reviewing the current state of agricultural extension, identifying gaps, and benefiting from regional and international experiences to improve the level of services provided to farmers," he added.

"Rural Advisory Services are essential for improving productivity, strengthening resilience and ensuring farmers-

especially smallholders, women, and youth have access to the knowledge and support they need to adapt and thrive," said Paul Opio, FAO representative in Jordan.

"A national platform like JFAAS can strengthen coordination, facilitate knowledge exchange, and promote more impactful service delivery," Opio added.

The workshop featured discussions on global and regional trends in rural advisory services, the status of extension services in Jordan and stakeholder consultations on the vision, structure and partnership model of JFAAS.

Participants also identified priority actions to operationalise the forum in line with national development goals.

The consultation concluded with agreement to establish a multistakeholder core team to finalise the JFAAS framework, develop its constitution and action plan, and prepare for the official launch of the Forum in alignment with Jordan's National Plan for Extension Services (2024-2030).

INTERVIEW

Kazakhstan, Jordan push for broader partnership amid growing ties

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — Kazakh Ambassador to Amman Talgat Shaldanbay said that his country and Jordan are seeking to expand cooperation across economic, political and investment sectors amid what officials describe as one of the strongest phases in bilateral relations.

In an interview with The Jordan Times, Shaldanbay said that relations between the two countries have remained "friendly, stable and steadily developing" since diplomatic ties were established in 1993.

The envoy highlighted the importance of recent high-level exchanges, particularly the official visit of Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to Jordan in February 2025 and



Kazakh Ambassador to Amman Talgat Shaldanbay during an interview with journalist Mai Anati of The Jordan Times

His Majesty King Abdullah's visit to Kazakhstan in August 2025.

He said that the meetings between the two leaders gave a "sig-

nificant boost" to bilateral cooperation and resulted in the signing of agreements covering investment, industry, agriculture, digitalisa-

tion, media and other sectors.

"Currently, Kazakhstan-Jordanian relations are at one of the strongest stages

in their development," Shaldanbay said.

He added that the two countries now possess a stronger institutional framework for cooperation, including an intergovernmental commission, a joint business council and parliamentary friendship groups.

Despite the political momentum, the ambassador acknowledged that trade and economic cooperation has yet to reach its full potential due to transport and logistics challenges.

"An important practical step could be the launch of direct air service and the simplification of the visa regime," he said.

"This would increase business mobility, reduce transportation costs and make the two countries' mar-

kets more accessible to

each other." Tourism, he added, remains a promising sector for cooperation, citing Jordan's historical and religious destinations alongside Kazakhstan's ecological, cultural and business tourism potential.

On His Majesty's visit to Kazakhstan, Shaldanbay said the trip marked "an important step towards transitioning from political dialogue to the implementation of specific joint projects".

A major highlight of the visit was the Kazakhstan-Jordan Business Forum in Astana, which brought together government officials, investors and representatives of more than 150 companies from both countries.

The forum resulted in the signing of commercial agreements in sectors including agricul-

ture, pharmaceuticals, financial markets and technology transfer.

'This would increase business mobility, reduce transportation costs and make the two countries' markets more accessible to each other'

Shaldanbay said that the recent exchanges between the two lead-

erships created new momentum for practical cooperation and long-term partnership between Amman and Astana.

Jordan and Kazakhstan established diplomatic relations on February 9, 1993. Over the past years, the two countries have expanded cooperation in political, economic and cultural fields, supported by regular high-level exchanges and coordination on regional and international issues.

Relations gained further momentum following the exchange of official visits between His Majesty King Abdullah and President Tokayev in 2025, during which multiple agreements were signed in sectors including investment, agriculture, technology and media.



Photo Courtesy of UNHCR

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees issues on Wednesday the 'Basic Needs Cash Assistance Jordan Programme Assessment 2025'

Many refugees in Jordan still struggle to meet basic needs — UNHCR

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on Wednesday issued the "Basic Needs Cash Assistance Jordan Programme Assessment 2025", highlighting continued financial strain among refugee households despite sustained humanitarian support.

The report showed that for hundreds of thousands of refugees in Jordan, cash assistance remains a critical lifeline, yet, it is still insufficient to fully meet essential living requirements.

"As of October 2025, Jordan hosts more than 450,000 registered refugees, 93 per cent of whom are Syrian. The remainder are primarily from Iraq, Yemen, Sudan and Somalia. Around 81 per cent live in host communities, while 19 per cent, all Syrians, reside in refugee camps," according to the report.

According to UNHCR's 2024 Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF), around two-thirds of refugee households, whether in camps or urban areas, are classified as poor and dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs.

UNHCR's Basic Needs Cash Assistance Programme has been operating in Jordan for nearly two decades, adapting to the evolving needs of refugees, particularly in urban settings.

In 2025 alone, the programme disbursed around \$37.6 million, reaching 214,503 individuals. Camp residents received quarterly assistance averaging JD44 per family, while urban households received monthly support ranging from JD80 for in-

dividuals to JD155 for larger families.

"Aid is delivered through digital systems, including mobile wallets, iris-enabled virtual bank accounts and prepaid ATM cards," the report said.

Eligibility in host communities is based on vulnerability criteria such as household size, work capacity, debt levels and reliance on negative coping strategies. In camps, registration status is required, with additional support provided for infants and women.

Despite continued assistance, the 2025 assessment shows that most beneficiaries remain unable to meet basic needs.

About 63 per cent of recipients reported covering less than half of their essential needs, while only 6 per cent said they could afford most or all necessities. In camps, the situation is more severe, with 67 per cent unable to meet more than half of their needs.

Nearly all beneficiaries fully spend the cash assistance received and often rely on additional income or borrowing. Debt remains widespread, with around two-thirds of households in camps and half in host communities depending on loans.

"We're grateful for the assistance. It keeps our children fed and our home warm, but it's never enough to cover everything," said one Syrian mother in Zaatari camp.

The report also raised concern over harmful coping mechanisms, with more than 15 per cent of families engaging in stress- or crisis-level strategies, including high-risk labour, child labour, or begging.

Around 70 per cent reported missing rent or debt payments, while one-third had taken new loans. This rises to 45 per cent among non-Syrian households in host communities.

Food, healthcare and clothing remain the most unaffordable essentials. Education costs also pose a significant burden, with around 35 per cent of households with school-aged children struggling to cover school-related expenses, increasing the risk of dropout.

Despite financial constraints, the programme's delivery system remains largely effective. More than 90 per cent of beneficiaries reported receiving the correct assistance amounts, with minimal technical disruptions.

Overall satisfaction stands at 97 per cent, although around a quarter of iris-scan users reported occasional technical issues. Improved feedback mechanisms have strengthened accountability and response times.

UNHCR also said that while cash assistance significantly improves short-term welfare, it is not sufficient to address deeper socio-economic pressures.

The agency stressed the need for continued investment in integrated support, including health, education, protection and livelihood programmes, alongside sustained donor funding to ensure long-term resilience.

"Cash assistance is vital, but it is only one part of the solution," a UNHCR spokesperson said. "We must continue to invest in holistic approaches that help refugees not just survive, but thrive," the report added.

Jordan, Cyprus and Greece discuss cooperation at trilateral summit

Amman summit underscores joint efforts on regional stability

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi, along with Cypriot Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos and Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis, on Wednesday stressed the importance of the fifth Jordanian-Cypriot-Greek trilateral summit in strengthening institutional cooperation and advancing shared interests.

His Majesty King Abdullah hosted the summit, which was attended by Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

Following the summit, the ministers said the three countries seek to further develop the trilateral mechanism, launched in 2018, by reinforcing its institutional framework and expanding cooperation across key sectors, including water, energy, culture, education and tourism, in a way that deepens their strategic partnership.

They underlined that the summit serves as a key platform for coordination and consultation on regional developments, particularly amid ongoing escalation in the region.

They also emphasised the importance of joint efforts to de-escalate tensions, enhance regional security and stability, and position the Eastern Mediterranean as a bridge between Europe and the Arab world.



Photo courtesy of Foreign Ministry

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi, along with Cypriot Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos and Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis, on Wednesday stress the importance of the fifth Jordanian-Cypriot-Greek trilateral summit

Safadi said the trilateral mechanism reflects a shared political will to strengthen cooperation and contribute to regional stability, noting that discussions focused on expanding collaboration across multiple sectors.

He added that talks also addressed regional developments, including efforts to end escalation and reach sustainable political solutions, as well as condemning attacks targeting Jordan and several Gulf countries.

Safadi also said that the discussions covered key regional files, including support for Lebanon's stability and the Lebanese state's

efforts to assert full sovereignty and ensure that arms remain exclusively under state control.

He noted that the Palestinian issue featured prominently in the talks, with leaders reaffirming that the two-state solution remains the only path to a just and comprehensive peace, while rejecting Israeli unilateral measures, including settlements expansion and violations in Jerusalem, and stressing the need to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza.

Talks also addressed Syria, with emphasis on supporting its unity, sovereignty and

stability, rejecting external interference and separatist agendas, and calling on Israel to adhere to the 1974 disengagement agreement and withdraw from occupied Syrian territories.

On Cyprus, leaders stressed the need to resolve the issue in line with international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Safadi said the leaders instructed foreign ministers to follow up on the summit's outcomes, expand cooperation and deepen coordination in support of regional security and stability.

Kombos said the trilateral partnership is

built on strong foundations and long-standing ties, stressing the importance of maintaining momentum and advancing cooperation amid regional challenges, while expressing Cyprus' solidarity with Jordan and Gulf countries.

Gerapetritis praised Jordan's role in promoting peace and stability, noting that the summit reflects the strength of the trilateral partnership.

He also reaffirmed Greece's support for the Hashemite custodianship over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, stressing that Jordan remains a key pillar of regional stability.

Minister highlights Jordan's innovation ecosystem at US investment summit



Petra photo

Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship Sami Smeirat on Wednesday says that Jordan's participation in the SelectUSA Investment Summit in the US came as part of efforts to enhance economic and technological cooperation with Washington

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship Sami Smeirat on Wednesday reiterated Jordan's commitment to strengthening its position as a regional hub for technology and innovation through forging high-impact partnerships that support sustainable growth, in line with Royal directives.

According to a ministry statement, Jordan's participation in the SelectUSA Investment Summit in the US came as part of efforts to enhance economic and technological cooperation with Washington and attract quality investments to

the Kingdom. Smeirat said his official visit to the US included a series of meetings with American officials, institutions and companies on the sidelines of the summit, aimed at expanding partnerships, attracting investments and opening new horizons for Jordanian companies to access global markets.

He added that the participation of Jordanian startups reflected the progress of the Kingdom's innovation ecosystem, highlighting its growing talent pool and competitive capabilities in the fields of technology and the digital economy.

Sahab Municipality, UN-Habitat complete first city-wide public space assessment under 'Rethinking Sahab' project

By Ahmad Khatatneh

AMMAN — The City-Wide Public Space Assessment for Sahab has been completed as part of the "Rethinking Sahab" project, implemented by UN-Habitat in collaboration with Sahab Municipality, with support from the Canton of Basel-Stadt.

The assessment represents Volume I of the broader "Rethinking Sahab: Urban Greening for a Resilient and Sustainable Future" initiative and provides the first comprehensive, data-driven mapping of public spaces across the city, according to a UN-Habitat statement.

It covers streets, open spaces, and public facilities, aiming to support more inclusive and climate-responsive urban planning by identifying key gaps and opportunities to improve the ur-



Photo courtesy of UN-Habitat

The City-Wide Public Space Assessment for Sahab has been completed as part of the 'Rethinking Sahab' project

ban environment. According to the findings, Sahab's public spaces remain fragmented and unevenly distributed. However, the assessment highlights strong potential to reconfigure them into a more connected,

people-centred network that enhances livability, mobility and climate resilience. The study applies a structured methodology based on three main dimensions: Environmental quality, inclusivity, and connectivity and

accessibility. "These are further broken down into indicators such as comfort, greenery, safety, user diversity, vibrancy, amenities and pedestrian accessibility," the statement read.

The assessment also draws on international experience from the City of Basel, particularly in the design, management, and multifunctionality of public spaces, adapting these lessons to Sahab's local context.

The statement said the findings will directly inform Volume II of the project, the Green Public Space Plan (GPSP), which will serve as an action-oriented roadmap for transforming Sahab into a greener, more resilient, and sustainable city.

UN-Habitat Jordan Head of Country Programme Deema Abu Thiab said in a statement to The Jordan Times that

the "Rethinking Sahab" project "was not just another study or assessment. It emerged from a clearly identified need based on the findings of the Multilayered Vulnerability Assessment". She added that the project was designed as an evidence-based response to Sahab's actual needs and challenges, aiming to deliver tangible, meaningful impact on the ground.

"As a key step under the project, a comprehensive assessment of Sahab's public spaces was conducted, covering streets, open spaces and public facilities," Abu Thiab said.

The initiative aims to improve the quality of life for residents, including host communities, refugees and migrants, while aligning with national urban development priorities and global sustainability goals.

Jordan wins ICESCO Executive Council presidency

AMMAN (JT) — The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ICESCO) on Wednesday announced the election of Jordan's representative, Secretary General of the Ministry of Educational Affairs Nawaf Ajarmeh, as president of the organisation's Executive Council during a meeting held in Rabat.

According to a Ministry of Education statement, the win reflects Jordan's standing at both the regional and international levels, as well as the high level of confidence it enjoys among ICESCO member states.

The ministry said the election crowns a sustained record of Jordanian engagement and contributions and highlights the Kingdom's



active role in advancing joint action under the organisation's umbrella. It also underscores the recognition of Jordanian expertise and the trust placed in the Kingdom's diplomacy, reaffirming Jordan's role, under its Hashemite leadership, in promoting dialogue, peace and sustainable development across the Islamic world.

The achievement was the result of ongoing coordination and strong support from Jordanian embassies in ICESCO

member states, reaffirming the Kingdom's commitment to the organisation's goals, the statement said.

Jordan looks forward to continuing cooperation with ICESCO's General Secretariat and member states to advance shared aspirations for development, knowledge and innovation, the statement said.

ICESCO comprises 53 member states across four regions: Africa, the Arab region, Asia and Latin America.

CONFLICT



Smoke rises from Israeli bombardment on the village of Yohmor in southern Lebanon behind the 12th century Crusader-era Beaufort Castle, known locally as Qalat Al Shaqif or Shaqif Arnun, as seen from nearby Marjeyoun on Wednesday

Israel military issues evacuation warning for dozen villages in south Lebanon

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel's military on Wednesday issued a new evacuation warning for a dozen villages in south Lebanon ahead of expected strikes, despite a truce with Lebanon intended to halt fighting with Iran-backed Hizbollah.

"For your safety, you must evacuate your homes immediately and move away from the villages and towns by at least 1,000 metres into open areas," the military's Arabic-language spokesman Avichay Adraee posted on X, listing 12 villages.

Despite the ceasefire agreement, Israeli forces and Hizbollah have traded fire daily, mostly in southern Lebanon.

Israel has also announced a "yellow line" extending up to 10 kilometres inside southern Lebanon, inside which it has stationed troops and barred residents from returning.

Most of the villages included in Wednesday's evacuation warn-

ing are north of the Litani River, outside the area occupied by Israeli soldiers.

'For your safety, you must evacuate your homes immediately and move away from the villages and towns by at least 1,000 metres into open areas'

In a separate statement on Wednesday, the military said its air force hit several structures the previous day that were used by Hizbollah for military purposes.

"The structures were

struck while Hizbollah terrorists were operating inside, advancing and carrying out terror attacks against IDF soldiers and the state of Israel," it said.

"During the strikes, several terrorists were eliminated."

Lebanon was drawn into the Middle East war in early March, after Hizbollah fired rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a US-Israeli military campaign.

Israel responded with massive air strikes across Lebanon and a ground invasion in the south.

Since then, Israeli strikes in Lebanon have killed more than 2,700 people, including dozens since the April 17 ceasefire brokered by Washington between Israeli and Lebanese representatives.

The Israeli military says it has also lost 17 soldiers and a civilian contractor in the fighting.

US pauses guiding ships through Hormuz, cites Iran deal hopes

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — President Donald Trump said he was pausing the US military operation to guide stranded commercial ships through the Strait of Hormuz shortly after it began, citing a chance to seal a deal that would end two months of war with Iran.

The US leader said Washington's blockade of Iranian ports would remain in place as Tehran kept up its own closure of the vital trade route in response to the US-Israeli war on the country, which has rocked markets and spiked fuel prices.

Trump wrote on social media that the decision to halt his so-called "Project Freedom" a day after it began came after requests from "mediator Pakistan and other countries", saying "Great Progress has been made toward a Complete and Final Agreement" with Tehran.

"We have mutually agreed that, while the Blockade will remain in full force and effect, Project Freedom... will be paused for a short period of time to see whether or not the Agreement can be finalised and signed," Trump wrote late Tuesday.

The decision means more than 22,000 seafarers and 1,500 commercial ships are still waiting to transit the strait, according to US officials.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif — a key mediator in the Middle East war — wrote on X that he was "hopeful" the current momentum would bring help bring an end to the conflict with a "lasting agreement".

Trump made the abrupt U-turn as Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing for talks on Wednesday, his first trip to Tehran's close ally since the beginning of the war.



This US Navy handout photo released on Tuesday by US Central Command Public Affairs shows Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77) sailing in the Arabian Sea on Sunday

According to Iranian state TV, Araghchi told Wang that Tehran would "only accept a fair and comprehensive agreement".

After the talks, Wang called for an end to hostilities and for both countries to reopen the Strait of Hormuz "as soon as possible", his ministry said.

Before the visit, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, a vocal China critic, called on Beijing to put pressure on Araghchi to end the blockade of the crucial waterway.

"I hope the Chinese tell him [Araghchi] what he needs to be told, and that is that what you were doing in the straits is causing you to be globally isolated," Rubio said.

Oil tumbles

Trump's tone came hours after Rubio said the US had completed its offensive operations against Iran.

Investors welcomed the decision to pause the ship-guiding plan, with Brent oil price tumbling

more than 5 per cent and West Texas Intermediate back below \$100 a barrel.

Araghchi was visiting China days before Trump is also scheduled to visit on May 14 and 15 to meet President Xi Jinping — a trip he had delayed due to the war.

The Iranian minister later held a phone call about the war with Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, Iranian media said, as back-channel diplomacy to find a solution continues.

But progress in talks has largely stalled since a first round of negotiations in Pakistan last month ended without a deal as Tehran maintains its grip on the Hormuz strait, giving it key leverage.

Despite Rubio's announcement of the end to "Operation Epic Fury", the stand-off in the vital waterway has led to claims of attacks by both sides.

Iran fired missiles and drones at US forces on Monday, while Washington said it struck six Iranian boats it accused of

threatening commercial shipping.

The United Arab Emirates said it had engaged a barrage of missiles and drones from Iran for the second consecutive day on Tuesday — an accusation denied by Tehran.

It was the sharpest escalation since a truce took effect on April 8.

A container ship owned by French shipping company CMA CGM was also the "target of an attack" in the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday, the major shipping firm said.

'High alert'

Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth said Washington was "not looking for a fight" over the waterway and downplayed the latest Iranian attacks while warning that any more would be met with a "devastating response".

Washington and Gulf have meanwhile drafted a UN Security Council resolution demanding Tehran halt attacks, disclose the location of mines and end efforts to charge tolls, Rubio said.

The proposed measure would also require Iran to support a humanitarian corridor, with a vote expected in the coming days.

Despite that resolution, Iran's powerful chief negotiator said on Tuesday that Tehran "had not even started yet" in the Hormuz strait.

On another front, Israel's military on Wednesday issued a new evacuation warning for a dozen villages in southern Lebanon.

Israeli bombardment later hit at least two villages including one near a 12-century Crusader-era castle, according to AFP images.

Israel and Iran-backed Hizbollah have kept up their attacks despite a ceasefire in Lebanon.

On Iran, Israel's new air force chief said Tuesday the country was prepared to deploy its entire fleet of fighter jets against Iran if necessary.

Israel's military chief of staff Eyal Zamir also said the country remained "on high alert across all fronts".

French aircraft carrier pre-positions for possible Hormuz mission

PARIS, France (AFP) — France's aircraft carrier the Charles de Gaulle was on Wednesday heading towards the southern Red Sea to preposition for a possible mission to restore navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, Paris said.

The move was intended to send "a signal that not only are we ready to secure the Strait of Hormuz but that we are also capable of doing so", an aide to President Emmanuel Macron told reporters.

Traffic in the strategic waterway, through which around one-fifth of the world's crude oil normally transits, has all but stopped since conflict erupted in the Middle East in late February.

Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer are leading a multinational mission towards restoring freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, which they say would be entirely defensive and only deployed once the war ended.

Macron said on X he told his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian on Wednesday of his "deep concern" at escalation in the Gulf region amid stalling peace talks.



A handout photo released by the Marine Nationale (French Navy) on Wednesday shows the French Navy's Carrier Strike Group that includes the flagship aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle (unseen) and its escort transiting the Suez Canal en route to the southern Red Sea

"All parties must lift the blockade of the strait, without delay and without conditions," he said on X, in reference to a US blockade of Iranian ports and Tehran's own chokehold on the vital sea route.

The Charles de Gaulle, the flagship of the French navy, and its escorts were transiting through the Suez Canal en route to the southern Red Sea, the defence ministry said.

The decision was intended "to reduce the time needed to implement this initiative as soon as circumstances allow", the ministry

said. More than 40 countries have begun military planning towards the Hormuz mission following talks hosted by Britain.

Macron's aide said France was taking action as "the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz continues, the damage to the global economy is becoming increasingly severe, and the risk of prolonged hostilities is too serious for us to accept".

'Common interest'

France has proposed to the United States and Iran that they

"deal with the issue of the Strait of Hormuz separately" from the rest of the conflict.

"It is in the common interest," the aide said.

"We can offer Iran the chance to pass through the Strait of Hormuz again," on the condition that it agrees to take part in talks with the United States, the aide said.

The Americans must in turn "lift their blockade of Hormuz and take advantage of Iran's willingness to negotiate on key issues", the Elysee representative added.

If those conditions are met, the coalition can deploy resources to guarantee the safety of vessels passing through the strait and "help restore the confidence needed to calm the markets".

The aircraft carrier has around 20 Rafale fighter jets and is escorted by several frigates.

It set sail from the south-eastern French port city of Toulon in January for a deployment to the North Atlantic.

Bus-tanker crash kills 16 in Indonesia — disaster official

JAKARTA (AFP) — A road accident involving a passenger bus and a fuel tanker killed 16 people and injured four others on Indonesia's Sumatra island on Wednesday, a disaster agency official told AFP.

"Fourteen passengers of the bus and two people from the oil tanker died" in the crash in North Musi Rawas Regency, official Hasbi Hasidiqi said by telephone as local TV broadcast images of wreckage in flames.

Four people were hospitalised, three of them with serious burns, according to



Initial information suggested one of the bus tyres had burst

another emergency official.

Initial information suggested one of the bus tyres had burst, Hasbi said.

The driver "lost control and crashed", causing "a massive fire" that engulfed both vehicles, he added. The tanker was transport-

ing diesel.

Transport accidents are not uncommon in Indonesia, a vast archipelago nation where buses, trains and even planes are often old and poorly maintained.

Last month, a long-distance train slammed into the last, women-only carriage of a stationary commuter train near the Bekasi Timur station in West Java on Monday, killing 16 women and injuring at least 90 people.

Days later, a train hit a car in Central Java, killing four people including two children.

FBI raids office of leading Virginia Democratic lawmaker

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The FBI conducted searches on Wednesday at the office and a business of a top Democratic lawmaker in Virginia as part of a corruption investigation, US media reported.

Louise Lucas, a long-serving member of the Virginia State Senate, is the co-owner of a legal marijuana dispensary business that is a target of the probe, according to Fox News and The New York Times.

Asked about the raid, the FBI said that it was "executing a court-authorized federal search warrant" in Portsmouth, Virginia, as part of an ongoing investigation but declined to specify what it was about.

Lucas was instrumental in the recent move to redraw Virginia's congressional districts, an initiative that could see Democrats pick up four more seats in the House of Representatives.

The Times said the corruption investigation started during the Biden administration, but a Democratic member of Congress from Virginia questioned whether the raid on Wednesday was politically motivated.

"While we await the full facts of the investigation, it must be acknowledged that this FBI raid occurs in the broader context of President [Donald] Trump's repeated abuse of the

Department of Justice to target his perceived political opponents," Representative Bobby Scott said in a statement.

Scott noted the recent indictment of former FBI director James Comey, an outspoken critic of the president, for allegedly threatening Trump's life, as well as a failed attempt to bring charges against another of his foes, New York Attorney General Letitia James.

Joint communiqué at conclusion of fifth Trilateral Jordan-Cyprus-Greece Summit in Amman

Continued from page 1

We express our satisfaction with the progress achieved in trilateral cooperation and reaffirm our commitment to further advancing the existing institutional frameworks, including the Permanent Secretariat in Nicosia, in a manner that enhances coordination, and delivers tangible and practical outcomes.

We reaffirm our determination to increase our cooperation in the key sectors of trade, energy, investment and culture. We will also strengthen our collaboration in strategic priority areas, including enhancing supply chain resilience, supporting the security of trade routes, and developing transport and logistics infrastructure in a manner that reinforces economic interconnectivity, and positions the Eastern Mediterranean as a vital hub linking Europe and the Arab region. We also emphasise the importance of deepening cooperation in the areas of food and water security. To that end, we will work to ensure the exchange of expertise, encourage innovative and practical solutions, and strengthen resilience to regional pressures and global shifts, thereby contributing to sustainable development and stability.

We reaffirm our commitment to the principles underpinning our cooperation, foremost among them are respect for international law, the United Nations Charter, the maintenance of international peace and security, respect for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of states, the prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force, the promotion of friendly relations among nations, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

We express our deep concern over the dangerous escalation in the Middle East and its severe humanitarian, economic and security consequences. We stress the need to intensify international efforts to advance de-escalation endeavours and reinforce regional peace and stability. We underline the importance of addressing the root causes of conflicts as a pathway to achieving security, stability, and a just and lasting peace.

We also emphasise the importance of sustaining the ceasefire between the United

States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and working towards a comprehensive and lasting solution on grounds that would prevent the recurrence of tensions and ensure respect for international law, state sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, in accordance with international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982).

We stress the need for concerted regional and international efforts to sustain the ceasefire in Lebanon and ensure compliance with all its terms and to support the Lebanese government in exercising its sovereignty over all its territory, ensure that arms remain exclusively in the hands of the state, and to continue supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces. We further emphasise the need to implement Security Council Resolution 1701, and all relevant Security Council resolutions. We reaffirm the need to ensure the safety and protection of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which plays a fundamental stabilisation role. Furthermore, we underline the importance of diplomatic efforts aimed at preventing further escalations.

We stress the importance of an effective regional and international humanitarian response to the mounting humanitarian crisis resulting from the displacement of over a million Lebanese citizens. We commend, in this regard, the initiatives undertaken by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, including the organisation and delivery of humanitarian aid convoys to Lebanon in cooperation with 11 countries and the European Union, the aerial dispatch of humanitarian aid, and financial material support provided by the Hellenic Republic, and the financial and material support from the Republic of Cyprus.

We emphasise that the implementation of the two-state solution, so that an independent, sovereign Palestinian state on Palestinian national soil can live in peace and security side by side with Israel, on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, is the only path to a just and lasting peace.

We condemn all illegal unilateral Israeli

measures in the occupied West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, that undermine the two-state solution. We emphasise the illegality of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territory and the necessity of stopping all settlement activity, land confiscation and the escalating extremist settlers' violence against Palestinians. We reiterate our rejection of all attempts and measures to annex the occupied West Bank or any parts thereof. We stress our rejection of any displacement of the Palestinian people.

We emphasise the necessity of upholding the Historic and Legal Status Quo at Jerusalem's Muslim and Christian holy sites, and of allowing safe access thereto. Cyprus and Greece reaffirm their support of the historic Hashemite Custodianship of Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

We reaffirm our commitment to the principles underpinning our cooperation

We urge the full implementation of US President Donald Trump's comprehensive plan for Gaza and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803, with a view to ending the dire humanitarian crisis, the creation of conditions conducive to early recovery, reconstruction, and the establishment of a credible pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood. We underscore the importance of ensuring the continued, sufficient, safe and unhindered flow of humanitarian assistance into the Gaza Strip.

We underline the indispensable role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). We stress the importance of enabling the Agency to continue its operations in accordance with its UN man-

date, including through ensuring adequate and sustainable funding. We also condemn any measures that obstruct or undermine its ability to fulfil its mandate.

We emphasise that Syria's security, stability, and prosperity are key for regional stability. We stress our support for the Syrian Government in its efforts to rebuild Syria on an all-inclusive, Syrian-led and Syrian-owned basis that guarantees its security, stability, unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and fulfils the aspirations of all Syrians and preserves their rights. We are determined to continue supporting efforts aimed at recovery, reconstruction and institutional building in Syria, and stress the importance of upholding good, neighbourly relations in accordance with all aspects of international law.

We stress the importance of the full implementation of the Roadmap announced by Jordan, Syria and the United States, and endorsed by the European Union, to end the crisis in Suwayda and stabilise southern Syria. Furthermore, we categorically reject any separatist agendas, all unilateral actions, and interference in Syria, urging Israel to withdraw from occupied Syrian territory, and respect the 1974 Disengagement Agreement.

We warn against the serious consequences of the decline in support for Syrian refugees and underline the importance of sustaining international support to refugees and host countries, to help efforts to meet the needs of refugees and maintain the resilience of host communities. Greece and Cyprus express appreciation of the role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in hosting Syrian refugees.

We commend the assumption of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union by the Republic of Cyprus as of 1 January 2026, and express our confidence in its ability to play a pivotal role in advancing collective European action, particularly in addressing evolving regional and international challenges. We reaffirm our support for the priorities of the Cypriot Presidency, including strengthening stability and security in the Eastern Mediterranean, addressing migration and asylum challenges, enhancing cooperation with neighbouring re-

gions, and advancing the green and digital transitions within the European Union.

We welcome the Pact for the Mediterranean as an important framework for strengthening cooperation between the European Union and its Southern Neighbourhood.

We welcome the inauguration of the Cyprus Regional Aerial Firefighting Station, officially launched on 23 April 2026 in the city of Paphos, underscoring that this centre represents a significant step in strengthening civil protection mechanisms and rapid disaster response in the Eastern Mediterranean region, and contributes to enhancing cooperation between EU Member States and neighbouring countries in addressing climate-related challenges.

We emphasise our support to a just, comprehensive and viable settlement of the Cyprus issue, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, which provide for bicomunal, bizonal federation. We underline that all unilateral measures or acts that are inconsistent with relevant United Nations resolutions and international law, or undermine efforts towards a negotiated peaceful solution must cease. We stress the important role of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus in safeguarding peace and stability in line with the United Nations' purposes and principles. We also stress that a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue will not only benefit the people of Cyprus but will also significantly contribute to regional peace and stability. Towards this end, we reaffirm our steadfast support to the ongoing UN-facilitated negotiation efforts.

We emphasise the importance of the significant progress our partnership has witnessed since the launch of the first Trilateral Summit in 2018. We reaffirm that the trilateral cooperation mechanism remains a flexible and dynamic framework, reflecting our shared commitment towards building a long-term strategic partnership that contributes to enhancing stability and prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean.

We agreed to convene the sixth Trilateral Summit in the Hellenic Republic next year."

King, Cyprus president, Greece PM hold trilateral summit in Amman

Continued from page 1

The King expressed Jordan's commitment to building on the cooperation agreements signed during previous trilateral summits, particularly those relating to the water, energy, education, and tourism sectors, noting the importance of capitalising on the strategic locations of the three countries, which serve as vital bridges between various regions.

His Majesty highlighted that trilateral coordination between Jordan, Cyprus and Greece, within the framework of the partnership with the European Union, contributes positively to efforts to achieve regional and global stability and prosperity, the statement said.

Speaking of global developments, the King emphasised that the ongoing conflicts and their economic repercussions require continued coordination and a commitment to achieving stability and peace, noting that cooperation between Jordan, Cyprus, and Greece constitutes an important mechanism for dialogue and joint action, based on respect for international law and the preservation of state sovereignty.

His Majesty reiterated the need to step up efforts to consolidate the ceasefire agreement, noting that any agreement to end the war must ensure an end to hostilities and safeguard the security of the region's countries.

The King emphasised Jordan's unwavering stance in rejection of Israeli measures aimed at exploiting the situation in the region to create new facts on the ground in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, stressing the need for adequate humanitarian aid to

reach all areas of the Strip without any delay or obstruction.

Regarding development in Lebanon, His Majesty affirmed Jordan's full support for the Lebanese government's efforts to preserve their country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

For his part, the Cypriot president noted that the summit took place at a period of time marked by numerous geopolitical challenges, expressing his gratitude to the King for hosting the summit in Amman.

President Christodoulides also highlighted the significance of the timing of the summit, which is taking place whilst Cyprus holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union, noting his country's role as a bridge between Europe and the Middle East and emphasising the importance of the Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership between Jordan and the European Union.

The Cypriot president expressed his country's pride in its trilateral partnership with Jordan and Greece, which plays a vital role in promoting stability, strengthening cooperation to address shared challenges, and investing in opportunities to expand economic partnerships.

President Christodoulides also expressed Cyprus' solidarity with Jordan in the wake of the attacks it suffered during the recent crisis in the region, emphasising the need to commit to dialogue in order to resolve the conflict and establish a framework for peace in the region.

For his part, Prime Minister Mitsotakis spoke of the importance of the summit, particularly given the current regional circumstances, emphasising that it sends a clear message of friendship, cooperation, and full commitment to international law.

Mitsotakis noted that the partnership between Jordan, Greece, and Cyprus has already yielded tangible results, highlighting the potential to further strengthen cooperation in energy, investment, transport, defence, tourism, and climate action sectors. The Greek prime minister also praised Jordan's support to Greece in tackling wildfires.

Prime Minister Mitsotakis also highlighted Jordan's pivotal role, under the leadership of His Majesty, and its efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region. He emphasised the importance of the Hashemite Custodianship over Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, noting Jordan's efforts to preserve the Status Quo in the Holy City.

Speaking about the partnership between Jordan and the European Union, Mitsotakis affirmed that Greece and Cyprus are always keen to strengthen European cooperation with Jordan, given that Jordan's security and prosperity are central to the European Union. Ahead of the trilateral summit, the King held separate meetings with the Cypriot president and the Greek prime minister to discuss ways of strengthening bilateral cooperation and exchange views on developments in the region.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh, Jordan's Ambassador to Cyprus Basheer Zoubi, and Jordan's Ambassador to Greece Zuhair Ensour attended the summit.

Transport minister reviews sector progress, urges faster services, digital expansion

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Transport Nidal Qatamine on Wednesday chaired a series of meetings at the Land Transport Regulatory Commission (LTRC) to review operational progress and address upcoming sectoral requirements.

The meetings were attended by LTRC Director-General Riyadh Kharabsheh, alongside senior officials from both the ministry and the commission, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

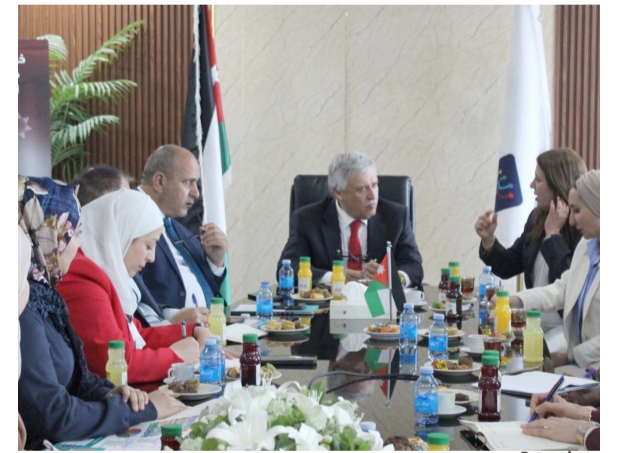
Qatamine underscored the necessity of intensifying efforts and enhancing staff readiness to keep pace with rapid sectoral developments.

He noted that the recent surge in transport activity across the Kingdom, driven by regional circumstances, demands a flexible and swift response to ensure high-efficiency service delivery.

The minister stressed the importance of expanding the use of modern technology and digital platforms in managing the transport system to bolster performance and service quality.

He also highlighted the need to support the sector with specialised and qualified personnel to accelerate work cycles.

Qatamine called for the establishment of an



Minister of Transport Nidal Qatamine on Wednesday chairs a series of meetings at the Land Transport Regulatory Commission to review operational progress and address upcoming sectoral requirements

independent, specialised directorate within the LTRC dedicated to public transport complaints.

The proposed unit would be responsible for the rapid processing of grievances to enhance public trust and improve the user experience, which he described as a top priority amidst growing demand, he noted.

In a separate meeting, the minister received Executive Director of the Zaha Cultural Centre Rania Subaih and an accompanying delegation to discuss the centre's transport needs across its various locations.

Qatamine urged officials to provide all possible support to facilitate

transport services for the centre, which operates some 25 branches across the Kingdom.

He emphasised the importance of providing suitable transport solutions for children and visitors to bolster the centre's cultural and community role.

To ensure institutional coordination and streamlined performance, the minister called for establishing a permanent office for himself at the LTRC headquarters.

The move aims to foster integration between the ministry and the commission, ultimately improving the quality of services provided to citizens, he added.

Jordan-Cyprus-Greece Trilateral Summits

Continued from page 1

It addressed developments in the region and efforts to achieve peace based on the two-state solution, and support was expressed for His Majesty's efforts to safeguard the holy sites in Jerusalem.

3rd trilateral summit – Athens, 2021

The third summit emphasised the strengthening of trilateral partnership and coordination in the political, economic, and security spheres.

It explored ways to expand cooperation in the sectors of trade, investment, water, energy, agriculture, telecommunications, information technology, tourism and environment. Support was expressed for the need

to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian cause based on the two-state solution. It emphasised Jordan's role, through the Hashemite Custodianship, to safeguard Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, and addressed issues relating to refugees and migration, relations with the European Union, the fight against terrorism and extremism and the strengthening of security coordination.

It covered a number of regional issues and emphasised the need for political solutions to crises.

4th trilateral summit – Nicosia, 2024

The summit focused on strengthening trilateral cooperation in the face of regional and in-

ternational geopolitical and economic challenges, and welcomed the resumption of the work of the Permanent Secretariat based in Nicosia, as well as the appointment of a secretary general to enhance coordination and achieve tangible results.

It emphasised the need to respect international law and the United Nations Charter, and to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. The overall situation regarding the war on Gaza was reviewed.

Three MoUs were signed in the fields of water resources, education, and investment.

Discussions covered establishing a regional firefighting centre in Cyprus as part of civil defence cooperation, as well as expanding cooperation in the fields

of tourism, religion and culture, and tackling climate change.

5th trilateral summit – Amman, 2026

Summit reaffirmed determination to increase cooperation in the key sectors of trade, energy, investment and culture and strengthen collaboration in strategic priority areas, including enhancing supply chain resilience, supporting the security of trade routes, and developing transport and logistics infrastructure.

It also stressed the need to intensify international efforts to advance de-escalation endeavours and reinforce regional peace and stability and underline the importance of addressing the root causes of conflicts as

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Jordan's Open Budget 2025

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

Public budgets are no longer viewed merely as technical financial documents detailing revenues and expenditures. In today's global economy, they have become a key measure of governance quality, institutional accountability, and the strength of the relationship between governments and citizens. Against this backdrop, Jordan's results in the 2025 Open Budget Survey provide important insight into the country's broader reform trajectory and its efforts to modernise public financial management.

According to results announced by Partners-Jordan, Jordan scored 62 out of 100 in the transparency pillar, placing it within the "sufficient" category internationally. The country also scored 18 out of 100 in public participation and 46 out of 100 in oversight. While participation and oversight remain relatively weak, the overall results indicate gradual progress compared with previous survey cycles and position Jordan above regional averages across all three pillars.

The improvement in transparency is particularly significant. Jordan's score increased from 60 in the previous survey cycle to 62 in 2025, more than double the regional average of 30. This reflects continued efforts by the government to improve fiscal disclosure through the publication of key budget documents, including the executive budget proposal, enacted budget, citizens' budget, in-year reports, year-end reports and audit reports.

This progress is not merely symbolic. Fiscal transparency plays a critical role in strengthening investor confidence and improving perceptions of economic stability. The clearer and more accessible a country's financial information becomes, the easier it is for investors, credit rating agencies, and international financial institutions to assess fiscal risks and evaluate policy credibility.

Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank increasingly consider public financial management standards when assessing reform performance and financing conditions. Consequently, stronger transparency indicators can positively influence Jordan's economic reputation and support efforts to attract investment and external financing.

However, the survey also highlights persistent structural weaknesses, particularly in public participation. Despite Jordan's improvement from 4 to 18 out of 100, the country still falls within the "weak" category. Most notably, Jordan scored zero in public participation during the budget preparation stage, indicating that citizens, civil society organisations and economic stakeholders remain largely excluded from shaping fiscal priorities before the budget is finalised.

This issue carries important economic implications. Public participation is not only a democratic principle but also a mechanism for improving spending efficiency. Local communities and economic sectors often have better knowledge of development needs and service gaps, whether related to healthcare, education, infrastructure or employment. Limited participation reduces the government's ability to align spending decisions with actual public priorities.

The report's recommendations regarding participatory budgeting therefore deserve serious attention. Expanding citizen engagement at the municipal and sectoral levels could strengthen public trust while also improving resource allocation and policy effectiveness.

The oversight pillar also reflects mixed progress. Jordan's overall oversight score rose from 39 to 46, while parliamentary oversight improved from 42 to 47 and Audit Bureau oversight increased from 33 to 45. Although these improvements are meaningful, both indicators remain within the "limited" category.

The core challenge is not simply the existence of oversight institutions, but their effectiveness and independence. Effective financial oversight requires stronger parliamentary engagement before budget approval, broader involvement of specialised parliamentary committees and more systematic monitoring of budget execution throughout the fiscal year.

The recommendations concerning the independence of the Jordan Audit Bureau are equally important. Strengthening institutional independence enhances the credibility of financial oversight and improves the state's ability to combat inefficiency and waste in public spending.

Ultimately, Jordan's performance in the 2025 Open Budget Survey reflects a broader transition toward greater fiscal openness and institutional modernisation. Yet the findings also demonstrate that transparency alone is not enough. Sustainable reform requires deeper public participation, stronger accountability mechanisms and more effective oversight institutions.

The real success of fiscal reform will not be measured solely by improvements in international rankings, but by whether these reforms lead to more efficient public spending, better public services, and stronger trust between citizens and the state. Jordan has made important progress, but building a fully transparent, participatory and accountable budget system remains an ongoing challenge central to the country's broader modernisation agenda.

The Iran stand-off and the future of oil

By James K. Galbraith

We do know that Donald Trump's presidency is dominated by a real-estate culture. The president, his family, key Cabinet members, advisers and donors are drawn from the world of hotels, luxury resorts and casinos. They are not lawyers, elected officials or life-long bureaucrats, let alone college professors. Prices and asset values are their bread and butter. So, let us suppose that they have thought this through in terms of the economics of oil.

Our analysis can start with the fact that the United States is now the world's largest oil producer, owing to fracking in the Permian Basin of West Texas and south-eastern New Mexico. With the estimated break-even price for Permian crude (about \$65 per barrel) higher than the oil price was between July 2025 and February 2026, the well count in the Permian has fallen by about one-third since 2023, with production reaching a record in 2025, thanks to improved efficiency. Arguably, the pre-war price was too low for sustained profitable drilling and so for the private-equity interests who had moved into the Permian Basin in 2020-21, when oil properties were very cheap. The effect of the war's first month was to take oil supplies from the southern Gulf largely offline, reducing global oil flows by about 10 per cent. From these basic facts, a valuation formula that Jing Chen and I present in our book "Entropy Economics" predicts a price increase of 60 per cent. In the event, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude rose by 60 per cent — from around \$65 to \$104 per barrel — during the first month

of the war.

From the US producers' perspective, this was a good result — a bit too good. When prices rise above \$90 per barrel, cost-push inflation begins to bite at home, and Asia and Europe begin to suffer painful shortages (not only oil, but also sulfur, urea and helium). And if the price goes much higher, demand begins to fall. As the war continued, prices surged above \$110 per barrel until April 8, at which point the US declared a ceasefire, and they fell. No one can ever be sure what Trump is thinking, but he may have realised that another attack on Iran will not work. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has made clear that it would retaliate by destroying critical infrastructure across the entire Gulf and in Israel. According to our formula, a full shut-off of the Persian Gulf would drive the WTI price to about \$155 per barrel, which would collapse the market and bring prices back down the hard way. The best result for the US side, then, is an open Gulf with a reduced flow, yielding a US price between \$80 and \$100 per barrel.

The problem is that if Iran controls the flow, this optimal price for the US is also very good for Iran. Indeed, Iran upped its production in March, taking market share from the blocked and damaged southern Gulf. The irony is striking. Although the two countries are at war, their governments' economic interests appear to coincide. Of course, from the US-Israeli perspective, the wrong country is benefiting from a partial shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz. The Trump administration thus responded with a blockade, though with-

out enough ships to catch all the Iranian ones. The choice of a blockade implies hope for a deal, whose unstated purpose could be to stabilise the price in the desired range for the rest of Trump's term. This would be a win-win for the US and for Iran. But it would likely mean sacrificing the US-allied Arab monarchies in the Gulf and delivering a strategic defeat for Israel. The United Arab Emirates' departure from OPEC might be read as a reaction to this possibility; so, too, might Israel's pressure to renew the war. The result is a gigantic game of chicken, with the world economy on the block. Even a leaky blockade might, over time, force Iran to fill its oil storage and then to curtail production. With that potential leverage, Trump has an interest in drawing out the face-off for as long as possible. But naval deployments cannot last indefinitely and one damaged aircraft carrier is already heading home.

If Iran can hold out, the US eventually will have to fold, and the oil price will fall as production recovers. By tolling traffic through the Strait, Iran can then prosper at a lower price level, even with an entirely open Gulf and all taps flowing. As for the US, its own energy independence, and Europe's recent dependence on US oil and liquefied natural gas, will gradually decline. Much of the world would then have to turn to Russia and to the Persian (now very "Iranian") Gulf.

Trump and his people therefore face a dilemma. They could collapse the world economy now (and maybe they will); they could walk away (and maybe they will), accepting both an immediate defeat and longer-term erosion of

the US position; or they can stall and hope for a deal. And if an unpalatable deal is the best Trump can get, his interest is to stall for as long as possible and pray for a miracle.

His prayer is unlikely to be answered, though. Iran is tough, and time is (mostly) on its side. The Iranians know that the usual American endgame (not unique to Trump) is to walk away from defeat, take the humiliation and move on. In that case, the oil price will fall, and eventually the private-equity interests in the Permian Basin will go bust. It may take a while to get there, with flip-flops and bombast along the way; but short of a global calamity (still a distinct possibility), this seems to be the way out.

In principle, the US could take another path over the longer term. Voters could kick out the speculative class now in charge, and the country could develop a national energy policy — and start producing, pricing, and allocating energy for the benefit of the whole US population. It could even return to the international community as a partner, rather than as a would-be imperator.

Then again, one should never bet on something just because it is possible.

James K. Galbraith, professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin, is the co-author (with Jing Chen), most recently, of "Entropy Economics: The Living Basis of Value and Production" (University of Chicago Press, 2025). His forthcoming book, "The Power to Destroy: How Obsolete Economics Drive American Decline" (University of Chicago Press), will be published in 2026. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2024. www.project-syndicate.org

Trump reminds Republicans it is still his party

By Frankie Taggart

Agence France-Presse

WASHINGTON, United States — US President Donald Trump is demonstrating that he still holds a firm grip on Republicans despite sinking poll numbers and mounting unease over the Iran war — delivering a bruising primary-night display of political strength in the midwestern state of Indiana.

The president's allies routed most of a group of Republican state senators who had crossed him, underscoring his dominance over the conservative base even as the party frets about inflation, foreign policy turmoil and the risks of a difficult mid-term environment.

Five of seven Indiana Republican incumbents targeted by Trump-backed challengers lost their primaries on Tuesday, most by double-digit margins, after millions of dollars were poured into races that normally attract scant national attention.

One incumbent survived and another race remained too close to call.

The results amounted to one of the clearest demonstrations yet that, for Republican primary voters at least, dissent from Trump still carries enormous political danger.

"There's a big message here, but the message isn't a new message," Jim Banks, one of the party's two Indiana senators, told Politico. "The message we've learned over the last 10 years is: It's Donald Trump's Republican Party."

Trump revelled in the outcome, taking victory laps on social media as the results rolled in.

The Indiana battle centred on an increasingly fierce national fight over congressional redistricting ahead of November's midterm elections, which will decide which party controls Congress for the rest of Trump's presidency.

The targeted lawmakers had resisted Trump's push last year to redraw Indiana's House map in a way that could have eliminated the state's remaining Democratic-leaning congressional districts.

Trump allies responded with an unusually aggressive campaign to defeat the incumbents, securing an outcome is likely to echo far beyond Indiana.

Conservative states across the South are weighing new redistricting plans after a recent Supreme Court ruling weakened a key provision of the Voting Rights Act, potentially opening the door to more Republican-friendly congressional maps.

'Unwavering allegiance'

"If you're a Republican in a state taking a redistricting vote, you probably just became a lot more likely to support it after tonight," a strategist involved in the Indiana effort told Politico.

The primaries also highlighted a growing split-screen reality in American politics heading into the midterms.

Trump's standing nationally has weakened amid economic frustration and divisions within the Republican coalition over the Iran conflict. But among the deeply conservative voters who dominate Republican primaries, his influence remains formidable.

That dynamic could shape several looming Republican contests, including a closely watched Kentucky primary later this month in which Trump is backing a challenger against Representative Thomas Massie, one of the few House Republicans willing to openly oppose him.

Elsewhere on Tuesday, Ohio voters finalised several key November matchups that could help determine control of Congress.

They include a marquee Senate contest between Republican incumbent Jon Husted and Democratic challenger Sherrod

Brown, who is attempting a political comeback in one of the handful of races likely to decide control of the upper chamber. Republican Vivek Ramaswamy, the biotech entrepreneur and former presidential candidate backed by Trump, easily won the Republican nomination for governor.

Analysts say Tuesday's contests underscored the broader battle taking shape ahead of November, with Republicans tightly aligned behind Trump and Democrats hoping broader voter dissatisfaction can produce a midterm backlash.

David Axelrod, who was Democratic former president Barack Obama's chief strategist, said the results in Indiana demonstrated why so many elected Republicans stick with Trump, even if it means opposing their long-held principles.

"Trump is epically unpopular with two-thirds of the country... But he maintains the unwavering allegiance of his base and the threat to use it as cudgels against any apostates in primary elections," Axelrod posted on X.

"That's why following through on his retribution threat against Indiana state senators for having the temerity [and courage] to oppose the extraordinary, mid-decade redistricting he demanded was so essential."

'No pilgrims': Regional war hushes Iraq's holy cities

By Salam Faraj and Qassem Al Kaabi

Agence France-Presse

NAJAF, Iraq — In Iraq's holy city of Najaf, the majestic shrine of Imam Ali stands quiet, its vast courtyards no longer echoing with the multilingual whispers of pilgrims from before the Middle East war.

The absence of tourists leaves nearby shopkeepers and hotel owners with little to do, their days dragging on as they hope for the crowds to return and revive their businesses.

"Iranians used to keep us busy, whether the jeweller, the fabric merchant or the taxi driver. Now there are none," said jewellery shop owner Abdel Rahim Harmoush.

"It used to be hard even to step into the market because of foreigners... Even street vendors drew huge crowds of visitors," the 71-year-old added.

Millions of Shia Muslims from around the world typically flock to Najaf and fellow holy city Karbala every year.

But the regional war ignited in late February by US-Israeli strikes on Iran has stemmed the

usual influx of pilgrims from the Islamic republic, Lebanon, the Gulf states, India, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Iraq was drawn into the conflict from the onset, with strikes targeting US interests and Tehran-backed armed groups in the country.

People in the holy cities "live on religious tourism", said Harmoush, who for 38 years has worked in the old market near Najaf's golden-domed mausoleum.

The shrine is the ornate burial place of Ali — the Prophet Mohammed's son-in-law, the fourth Islamic caliph and the first Shiite Imam.

Harmoush warned of economic ruin were the crisis to persist: Shop owners unable to pay rent and taxes, cab drivers left without passengers and labourers struggling to find work.

Hotels closed

Hotel owner Abu Ali, 52, was forced to lay off five employees, leaving just one to tend to nearly 70 empty rooms.

"How can I pay salaries if there

is no work?" he said.

Saeb Abu Ghneim, head of the hotel association in Najaf, told AFP that 80 per cent of the city's 250 hotels had closed, with more than 2,000 employees laid off or on unpaid leave.

He added that most of Najaf's religious tourism relies on Iranians, followed by Lebanese visitors — also trapped at home by war — and other nationalities.

The sector, which already weathered the closure of mosques and shrines in the pandemic, is a rare type of tourism in a country reeling from decades of conflicts.

Religious tourism also constitutes a significant source of revenue for Iraq's non-oil economy.

Before the war, 28-year-old Moustafa Al Haboubi could barely manage the crowds queuing to exchange foreign currency for Iraqi dinars.

He now spends the long hours idly scrolling through his phone or chatting with neighbours.

"We barely receive one or two customers," he said. "There are no pilgrims now, Iranian or otherwise."

Even after a fragile ceasefire took effect on April 8 and Iraq's

airspace reopened, little has changed.

Some pilgrims trickle through during the week, while on weekends the area grows somewhat livelier as Iraqis visit the sacred sites.

'Catastrophe'

The situation is no different in Karbala, which is around 80 kilometres north of Najaf and home to the shrines of the revered grandsons of Prophet Mohammed, Imam Hussein and his brother Abbas.

The main corridor linking the two golden shrines and the surrounding alleyways were once alive with the murmurs of tourists walking to prayers.

Today, the visitors are almost exclusively Iraqi. "The situation is dangerous... a catastrophe," said Israa Al Nasrawi, head of Karbala's tourism committee.

She warned that the war had devastated the city's economy, slashing tourist numbers by around 95 per cent and forcing hundreds of hotels to close.

The city's many pilgrim tour companies sit idle.

BUSINESS

Thursday, May 7, 2026

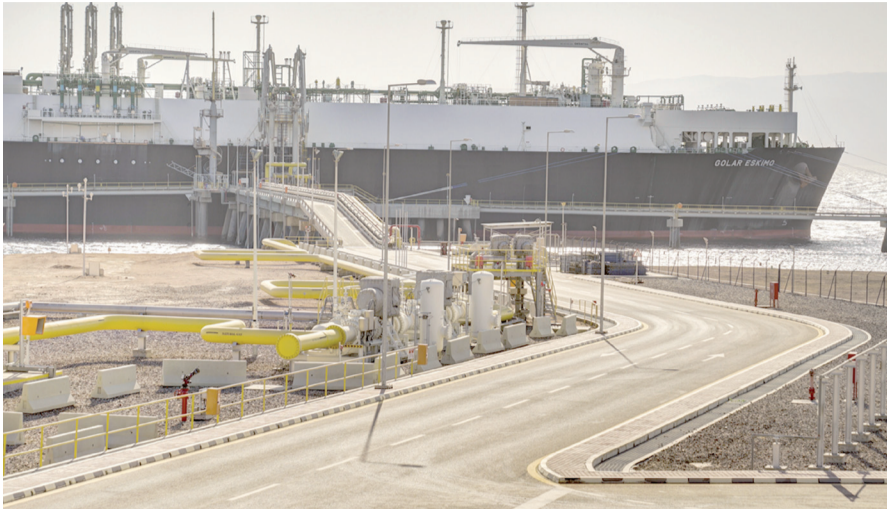


Photo Courtesy of Aqaba Development Corporation

An view of the Liquefied Natural Gas Terminal at Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Terminal

NEPCO signs deal for floating LNG unit to ensure gas supply continuity

AMMAN (JT) — The National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) on Tuesday signed an agreement with global firm Excelerate Energy to lease a floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) for the Sheikh Sabah Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Terminal in the port city of Aqaba.

In a statement on Wednesday, NEPCO said that the deal aims to ensure the continuity of natural gas supplies and strengthen the Kingdom's energy security.

The agreement is part of efforts to maintain the readiness of national infrastructure to receive LNG shipments from international markets, regasify them and inject them into the national gas network.

It comes ahead of the

expiration of the current FSRU, Energos Force, at the end of June 2026, the statement said.

NEPCO Director General Sofian Bataineh said the agreement underscores the company's commitment to enhancing the flexibility of the natural gas system and its capacity to handle various operational scenarios, including supplying local power plants and supporting regional energy cooperation within approved frameworks.

He added that the deal represents a transitional measure to ensure uninterrupted operation of LNG facilities in Aqaba until the completion of an onshore regasification unit project aimed at improving efficiency and reliability.

Bataineh said that the move is particularly sig-

nificant given the growing regional role of Jordan's gas infrastructure.

He pointed to existing arrangements to supply Syria with natural gas via the Arab Gas Pipeline, following the import and regasification of LNG in Jordan, with deliveries having already begun earlier this year.

He added that, in coordination with the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, similar arrangements with Lebanon are being finalised, pending the completion of technical and contractual requirements, stressing that meeting domestic energy needs remains the top priority.

Excelerate Energy is a global company specialising in LNG solutions and floating storage and regasification units.

Agreement signed to launch direct flights between Aqaba, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi

AMMAN (JT) — The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) has signed a cooperation agreement with Royal Jordanian (RJ) to launch direct, regular international flights linking Aqaba with Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, in a step aimed at enhancing air connectivity and boosting tourism and economic activity.

ASEZA Tourism and Youth Commissioner Thabet Nabulsi and RJ Chief Commercial Officer Karim Makhoulf signed the agreement in the presence of ASEZA Chief Commissioner Shadi Majali.

Under the deal, two weekly direct flights will operate to each destination via King Hussein International Airport, according to an ASEZA statement.

The Aqaba-Abu Dhabi route is set to launch on September 18, followed by the Aqaba-Riyadh route on September 24.

Nabulsi noted that the



ASEZA photo

The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority signs a cooperation agreement with Royal Jordanian to launch direct, regular international flights linking Aqaba with Riyadh and Abu Dhabi

agreement falls among efforts to develop Aqaba's air transport system and expand links with regional and international markets, supporting the tourism sector and economic movement in the coastal city.

He added that the Cairo-Aqaba route continues to operate with two weekly flights, pointing out that ASEZA is considering the launch of new routes to European markets and

Russia to diversify tourism sources and reduce seasonality.

Makhoulf said that the new routes align with plans to stimulate Arab and international tourism, adding that Royal Jordanian, through its tourism platform "Explore Jordan", seeks to attract new visitor segments to Aqaba as part of broader efforts to boost its position as a regional tourist destination.

ABJ Launches guide to support green financial products in Jordan

- Jordan has made progress in reducing its carbon footprint
- 30 % of the Kingdom's energy mix now comes from renewable sources
- The guide provides a methodology covering the entire green financial product development cycle

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — Under the patronage of Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Adel Sharakas, the Association of Banks in Jordan (ABJ) on Wednesday launched the "Guide to the Development of Green Financial Products for Banks and Financial Institutions".

The guide aims to promote the transition towards sustainable finance and provide practical tools for banks to support the green economy while aligning with national sustainability priorities.

The launch event was attended by Minister of Environment Ayman Suleiman, Deputy Governor of CBJ Ziad Ghanma, representatives of banks and financial institutions, as well as international partners.

It was organised in partnership with the German International Cooperation (GIZ) and supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), highlighting Jordan's growing role as a regional hub for sustainable finance initiatives.

Minister Suleiman stressed that the shift towards a green and blue economy is now a necessity, driven by environmental challenges and climate change. "The transition to a green economy is essential for the sustainability and resilience of our economy," he said.

He added that the government, through the second executive programme of the Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) for 2026-2029, continues to prioritise sustainability and green growth, with the blue economy included as a central focus for the next phase.

The minister emphasised that tools for this transition are not the sole responsibility of governments and require strong partnerships with the private and financial sectors.

"Banks have become a key partner in di-



Photo Courtesy of Association of Banks in Jordan

The Association of Banks in Jordan on Wednesday launches 'the Guide to the Development of Green Financial Products for Banks and Financial Institutions'

recting investments toward green and blue activities," he said.

Suleiman noted that Jordan enjoys significant opportunities in sustainable finance, particularly given the country's stability compared with the region, and that international bodies increasingly view the Kingdom as a regional platform for implementing international cooperation programmes.

He highlighted Jordan's selection to host the Regional Office of the Green Climate Fund as an indicator of international confidence in the Kingdom's ability to manage and implement environmental and climate finance programmes.

The minister also cited indicators of Jordan's progress in the green transition, including a reduction in the national carbon footprint, a growing share of renewable energy, which now accounts for around 30 per cent of the energy mix, and the accelerated adoption of electric and hybrid vehicles.

Deputy Governor of the CBJ Ziad Ghanma described the launch of the guide as an "advanced practical step" reflecting the banking sector's commitment to promoting sustainable finance and turn-

ing strategic directions into practical tools.

"Sustainability has become a key criterion in measuring the readiness of economies and their ability to withstand challenges, especially amid accelerating economic, climate and geopolitical pressures," he said.

'Going green is not just sustainable, it's smart business. It helps companies export more, survive in the long term...'

Ghanma added that international experience shows a direct link between economic and financial stability and the adoption of green finance strategies and practices.

He said that the shift toward sustainable finance has become a strategic approach that reshapes financing priorities and channels resources towards more efficient and sustainable

opportunities.

Ghanma also noted that the EMV emphasises the role of a proactive financial sector in directing capital towards value-added sectors and emerging growth drivers, while embedding sustainability into the national economic model to boost productivity, stimulate innovation and create jobs.

Head of Project at the GAIN project Simon Floeth told The Jordan Times: "Going green is not just sustainable, it's smart business. It helps companies export more, survive in the long term, save costs, and use resources efficiently."

He added, "Access to finance and the banking sector are key to making this transition possible, and this toolkit guides banks to support green projects effectively."

ABJ Director-General Maher Al Mahrouq said the guide resulted from collaboration between the Association, GIZ, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply within a national framework to promote sustainable finance in Jordan.

"Its significance lies in being a practical, hands-on tool developed specifically

to meet the needs of banks and financial institutions and to help them move from strategy and vision to implementation and application," Al Mahrouq said.

He noted that recent years have seen marked progress in national frameworks supporting green finance, including the CBJ's Green Finance Strategy for 2023-2028, the national classification of green activities, and initiatives on disclosure and climate risk management.

Al Mahrouq stressed that the real challenge lies not in drafting frameworks but in translating them into financial products that banks can implement.

The guide provides a comprehensive methodology covering the entire green financial product development cycle, from understanding green finance and classification criteria, to analysing market and customer needs, designing products, assessing feasibility, launching and monitoring them.

It aims to bridge the gap between policy frameworks and actionable financial solutions, helping Jordanian banks support the country's green transition while enhancing competitiveness and sustainability.

Oil sinks, stocks rally on peace hopes, Samsung tops \$1 trillion

HONG KONG (AFP) — Oil prices extended losses and stocks rallied on Wednesday on fresh hopes for an end to the Iran war and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, while Samsung blasted past the \$1 trillion valuation mark as the AI tech boom continued apace.

Investors welcomed Donald Trump's decision to pause efforts to help stranded ships through the crucial waterway, which drew Iranian attacks, threatening an already fragile ceasefire.

The US president, who had been quoted as warning that Iran would be "blown off the face of the Earth" if it attacked US ships, appeared to take a

more conciliatory tone Tuesday.

"Project Freedom [The Movement of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz] will be paused for a short period of time to see whether or not the Agreement can be finalised and signed," he wrote in a social media post.

The US blockade of Iranian ports remained, however.

Oil prices sank around 4 per cent on Tuesday, and on Wednesday they continued to fall, with West Texas Intermediate briefly dipping below \$100 a barrel.

The cheaper oil prices provided support to equities, with investors taking their cue from another record day for the S&P 500 and Nas-

daq, fuelled again by tech firms.

Hong Kong, Shanghai, Sydney, Wellington, Taipei, Manila and Jakarta were all up.

"Investors found some reassurance in comments from President Donald Trump... despite ongoing disruption to shipping routes," said Fiona Cincotta, a senior market analyst at City Index.

"Investors are also finding some reassurance in the fact that the diplomatic push to resolve the conflict continues."

She added: "Sentiment remains vulnerable. Even US entities could face serious headwinds should the Strait of Hormuz remain closed for an ex-

tended period."

The standout performer was Seoul's KOSPI index, which piled on more than 5 per cent to pass 7,000 points for the first time.

That came on the back of an eye-watering surge by Samsung, which rocketed as much as 12 per cent to hit a market capitalisation of more than \$1 trillion thanks to huge demand for its AI chips.

That makes it just the second Asia firm after Taiwan's TSMC to reach the figure.

Rical SK hynix soared around 10 per cent.

Samsung's shares have risen around 300 per cent over the past year as the AI boom boosts South Korean growth.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD14.2 million spread over 6.1 million shares that traded through 4,374 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.62 per cent, closing at 3862.53 points.

Out of 98 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 47 companies rose while the share price of another 21 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Northern Cement Company by 6.45 per cent, Amwaj Properties by 5.26 per cent, Jordan Decapolis Properties by 5.00 per cent, Premier Business and Projects Company Ltd. by 4.97 per cent, and Rumm Financial Brokerage by 4.67 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Real Estate and Investment Portfolio Company by 3.28 per cent, Al-Manara Islamic Insurance Company by 3.13 per cent, Jordan Insurance by 2.05 per cent, Jordan Industrial Resources by 1.96 per cent, and Noor Capital Markets for Diversified Investments by 1.90 per cent.

بورصة عمان
Amman Stock Exchange

THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ↑ 3862.53 0.62% May 06, 2026



DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market		OTC Market	
Trading Value (JDs)	14,214,944		
Trading volume	6,070,058		
No. of Transactions	4,374		
No. of Securities	98		

ENERGY DRINKS IN SCHOOLS: A HEALTH RISK TOO LONG IGNORED

By Hadeel El Bis

As energy drinks proliferate across local markets, health experts are raising the alarm over the growing number of children and teenagers consuming them without any awareness of the risks involved — particularly given their high concentrations of caffeine and stimulants.

Amid repeated medical warnings about the negative effects of these drinks on the nervous and cardiovascular systems of those under 18, the Food and Drug Authority is moving to tighten oversight and ban their circulation within schools. The measure aims to protect students and curb consumption, accompanied by calls to raise health awareness among families and pupils about safer alternatives.

The World Health Organisation estimates that caffeine consumption among children and adolescents should be strictly limited, warning that exceeding safe thresholds can lead to disturbances in heart rhythm, sleep patterns and behaviour. The European Food Safety Authority similarly recommends that daily caffeine intake not exceed 3mg per kilogram of body weight — a limit that can easily be surpassed by a single can of certain energy drinks.

A number of parents have pointed out that the ready availability of these drinks near or inside schools encourages students to consume them, and have called for stricter oversight and intensified awareness campaigns — particularly given the widespread belief among some teenagers that energy drinks enhance alertness and concentration.

A necessary step, long overdue

Paediatric consultant Dr Manar Al Shawabkeh welcomed the decision, describing it as a necessary measure that had been delayed far too long. She argued that the presence of energy drinks within the school environment is entirely illogical, especially in spaces that are supposed to promote healthy behaviours.

Dr Shawabkeh noted that a number of countries treat this issue with considerable strictness, imposing restrictions on selling these drinks to those under 16 or 18. In Canada, for instance, children are not permitted to purchase them individually.

Not all drinks are equal

She also addressed a common source of confusion regarding different types of beverages. Fizzy drinks, despite their drawbacks, are generally consumed for recreational purposes and carry comparatively lower risks when consumed in moderation. Sports drinks are designed to replenish fluids and salts for those engaged in intense physical activity and can be used sparingly when necessary.

Energy drinks, however, are an entirely different matter. Dr Shawabkeh explained that they rely primarily on caffeine, which can cause health harm even in adults when consumed excessively. The safe daily caffeine limit stands at around 100mg, yet some energy drink

cans contain up to 300mg per unit — several times the permissible amount for children.

The danger is not limited to caffeine alone. These drinks also contain other additives, including guarana — a plant with a very high caffeine content. Some products fail to clearly indicate either the quantity of caffeine or the presence of guarana on their nutritional labels. Guarana can contain up to four times the caffeine found in coffee, meaning a child could unknowingly consume the equivalent of six times the safe dosage.

The Jordanian Food and Drug Authority has stressed the importance of compliance with nutritional labelling requirements and greater consumer awareness of caffeine content in these products, particularly given the presence of ingredients such as guarana that can significantly increase total caffeine intake without the consumer realising it.

Serious symptoms

Dr Shawabkeh warned that excessive consumption of these drinks can produce symptoms including a rapid heartbeat, elevated blood pressure, tremors and irregular heart rhythms, alongside psychological effects such as anxiety, tension and sleep disturbances — all of which negatively impact concentration and academic performance.

She also highlighted that the high sugar content in these drinks — reaching approximately 25 grammes per can — causes a rapid spike in energy levels followed by a sudden crash, and increases the long-term risks of obesity and insulin resistance.

The widely held belief among some students that these drinks enhance focus or energy is, she said, entirely misleading. They can in fact produce the opposite effect, particularly with repeated consumption and insufficient sleep.

Real solutions lie in healthy habits

On the question of alternatives, Dr Al-Shawabkeh stressed that genuine solutions lie in adopting a healthy lifestyle — one that includes adequate sleep, a balanced diet, regular physical activity and reduced screen time, along with monitoring one's health and addressing any vitamin deficiencies where needed.

She emphasised that dealing with teenagers requires a careful balance between awareness and oversight, with both schools and families playing a central role in guiding healthy behaviours. Banning energy drinks from schools is an essential step, she said, but it must be sustained by ongoing education and follow-up to ensure it achieves its intended effect.

Official measures

Sources at the Ministry of Education confirmed that steps are under way to strengthen oversight of school canteens in line with health guidelines issued by the relevant authorities, and to prohibit the circulation of products that could adversely affect students' health — with energy drinks topping that list.

These measures include monitoring schools' compliance with the relevant instructions and taking appropriate action against those in violation, all within the framework of a learning environment that promotes healthy behaviour.

ENERGY DRINK ALERT

1. THE HIDDEN DOSE

 **300mg Caffeine**  **25g Sugar**
High levels of stimulants & sugar

3. THE MARKETING MYTH


 **FAKE ENERGY BOOST**
Temporary Rush, Fatigue Crash

 **TRUE SUSTAINED VITALITY**
Misleading Promises



2. INSIDE THE BODY

 **INCREASED HEART RATE**
Arrhythmias, Palpitations

 **IMPAIRED COGNITION**
Anxiety, Jitters, Jitters, Poor Focus

4. REAL POWER

 **OPTIMAL SLEEP**
Restorative Rest

 **HEALTHY DIET**
Nutrition

 **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**
Natural Energy



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