

# THE JORDAN TIMES



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Sunday, May 17, 2026 | Dhu al-Qadah 30, 1447 Hijri

# Crown Prince, Princess Rajwa attend artificial intelligence session at Tawasol 2026 forum

His Royal Highness underscores need to develop applications that utilise AI in public, private sectors

DEAD SEA (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein and HRH Princess Rajwa attended the Tawasol 2026 forum on Saturday, where they participated in a panel discussion focusing on the impact of artificial intelligence technologies on sectoral productivity.

Speaking at the panel discussion, the Crown Prince emphasised the importance of keeping pace with technological developments, which utilise artificial intelligence as a key driver of efficiency and productivity, according to a Royal Court statement.

His Royal Highness underscored the need to develop applications that utilise AI in both the public and private sectors, highlighting the importance of the new generation of AI in improving performance efficiency.

The Crown Prince also noted the importance of developing national

programmes, particularly educational ones, to keep pace with global modernisation by tapping into the large pool of qualified Jordanian talent.

The forum, organised by the Crown Prince Foundation (CPF) and held under the patronage of His Royal Highness, featured an interactive exhibition highlighting the CPF's journey and its role in reflecting young people's aspirations for shaping the future, as well as showcasing their achievements and contributions to national development through its 27 branches across the Kingdom.

The Tawasol 2026 forum, held under the theme Visions for Tomorrow's Opportunities, also featured panel discussions covering a range of topics, including digital media, the economy, programming, and opportunities in emerging technological sectors.



Photos courtesy of Royal Court

HRH Crown Prince Hussein and HRH Princess Rajwa participate in a panel discussion on the impact of artificial intelligence on sector productivity at the Tawasol 2026 forum

## Safadi meets Estonian, Latvian presidents, discusses cooperation, regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi on Saturday met Estonian President Alar Karis during an official visit to Estonia.

Safadi conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Abdullah to the Estonian president during discussions focused on enhancing bilateral relations and reviewing regional developments, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The Estonian president, in turn, asked Safadi to convey his greetings to His Majesty, expressing Estonia's keenness to strengthen cooperation with the Kingdom across various fields.

Safadi also held separate talks with Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal and Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna.

Discussions with Michal and Tsahkna focused on expanding cooperation in information technology, tourism, investment, cybersecurity



Photo courtesy of Foreign Ministry

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi on Saturday meets Estonian President Alar Karis

and defence industries. The talks also underscored the importance of strengthening ties between the private sectors of both countries, the statement said.

Estonian officials reiterated their commitment to deepening relations with Jordan both bilaterally and within the framework of the EU. Safadi and Tsahkna

also discussed efforts to de-escalate regional tensions and restore calm on foundations that ensure lasting security and stability.

Safadi briefed his Estonian counterpart on the deteriorating situation in the occupied West Bank, resulting from illegal Israeli measures that undermine the two-state solution and prospects for a just and comprehensive peace.

The two ministers also discussed the situation in Gaza, where a humanitarian crisis continues amid limited aid access.

Safadi stressed the need to fully implement all provisions of the US president's plan for Gaza. Talks also covered efforts to restore stability in Lebanon, support reconstruction in Syria, and developments in Ukraine.

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US Department of Defence / AFP

In this photo obtained from the US Department of Defence, the US navy's aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) (IKE) transits the Strait of Hormuz on November 26, 2023

## As US reportedly mulls expanded strikes, Hormuz raises stakes in Iran War

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — The Strait of Hormuz is rapidly emerging as a central pressure front in the confrontation between Iran, the United States and Israel.

The development comes as Washington was reportedly studying broader military options against Tehran, while Iran tightens control over one of the world's most critical energy routes. The New York Times

reported on Friday that advisers to US President Donald Trump had prepared plans for renewed military strikes against Iran if the White House decides to break the current deadlock with Tehran.

Trump has not yet made a final decision on the next steps, while his administration continues evaluating multiple escalation scenarios, according to The New York Times. US officials cited

by the report said the options under discussion include expanded bombing campaigns targeting military facilities and infrastructure inside Iran.

The report added that American special forces could also be used in operations targeting Khark Island, a major hub for Iranian oil exports, while other scenarios include targeting underground nuclear facilities.

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## Hussein claim first-ever Jordan Cup title with dominant win over Ramtha



Photo of Hussein

Hussein players greet their fans at Amman International Stadium ahead of the final

By Osama Alkafri

AMMAN — Hussein claimed the Jordan Cup title for the first time in the club's history after defeating Ramtha 3-0 in the final on Saturday at Amman International Stadium. Ramtha had booked their place in the final after eliminating Faisali in the semi-finals, while Hussein advanced after overcoming Wihdat.

The final began at a slow pace, with both sides struggling to create openings as play

remained concentrated in midfield for long periods.

Ramtha produced the first clear opportunity in the 27th minute when Momen Saket made a solo run that put him through on goal, but Hussein goalkeeper Yazeed Abu Laila reacted well to deny the effort.

Hussein responded in the 37th minute through a long-range strike from Mohammed Abu Ghoush, but Ramtha goalkeeper Malek Shalabya pushed the ball away for a corner

as the first half ended goalless.

The league champions doubled their advantage just four minutes later

Hussein returned after the break with greater intensity and quickly took control of

the match. Their pressure finally paid off in the 65th minute when Reziq Bani Hani finished off an organised attacking move from close range to break the deadlock.

The league champions doubled their advantage just four minutes later as Yousef Abu Jalboush scored in similar fashion following another well-worked attack.

Ramtha struggled to respond after conceding the second goal, and substitute Obeida Namarnah sealed the

victory in the 75th minute with Hussein's third goal of the night.

Hussein eased the tempo in the closing stages and comfortably saw out the remainder of the match to secure a historic triumph.

The victory completed another successful season for Hussein, who had already won the Jordan Pro League title for the third consecutive campaign.

Jamal Sellami, head coach of the Jordan national team, was among the spectators at the final.





## Jordanian youth in US launch initiative to promote national products during World Cup

By Merza Noghai

AMMAN — A group of young Jordanians based in the US has launched a national initiative aimed at promoting Jordanian products in international markets during the FIFA World Cup2026, in an effort to transform the global sporting event into a long-term economic and marketing opportunity for Jordanian exports.

The initiative, launched from New Jersey, seeks to strengthen the presence of Jordanian products in the US market through e-commerce platforms, digital marketing campaigns and partnerships with Jordanian and Arab communities across the United States.

Organisers said the project is built around the concept of “economic soft power”, presenting Jordanian products as representatives of the Kingdom’s cultural identity, quality and heritage in international markets.

Drawn in Group J, Jordan faces a formidable challenge against reigning champions Argentina national football team, alongside Algeria national football team and Austria national football team. Their opening match is scheduled on June 16 against Austria, followed by fixtures against Algeria on June 22 and Argentina on June 27.

Ali Al Qudah, general coordinator of the initiative, said that the idea emerged from discussions among Jordanian youth abroad on how Jordan’s historic qualification for the World Cup could become more than a sporting achievement.

“The World Cup offers Jordan unprecedented global visibility,” Qudah said. “We

believe this moment should also be used to introduce Jordanian products, businesses and entrepreneurs to wider international audiences.”

He added that the initiative aims to create sustainable economic opportunities beyond the tournament itself by helping Jordanian producers access new markets through modern branding and digital commerce tools.

According to Qudah, the team is currently developing a specialised digital platform to connect Jordanian food, agricultural and heritage products with consumers in the US, while also supporting logistics, promotion and distribution efforts.

“We are focusing on Jordanian products that reflect the country’s identity, quality and export potential. This includes food and agricultural products such as olive oil, zaatar, sumac, dates, herbs, spices, traditional food products, Dead Sea products, handicrafts, and heritage-based items that tell a story about Jordan,” he told The Jordan Times.

Qudah said that the initiative started with a small group of four Jordanian youth in New Jersey and is now expanding through volunteers, community members, business owners and media professionals across different US states, adding that there are currently eight volunteers.

“We expect the number of volunteers to grow significantly as we move closer to the World Cup and as the campaign becomes more visible among Jordanian and Arab-American communities,” the 33-year-old noted.

The coordinator said that there are initial discussions and net-

working efforts with individuals and businesses connected to distribution, retail and e-commerce in the US.

“The goal is to build practical partnerships that can help Jordanian products reach consumers through online platforms, specialty stores, Arab-American markets and community-based distribution channels.”

Asked about the tourist aspect of the initiative, Qudah said that when people discover Jordanian olive oil, food, heritage products or handmade items, they also discover the places behind them, such as Ajloun, Petra, Jerash, Wadi Rum, and the Dead Sea.

“Our message is that Jordan is not only a football story in 2026, but also a destination for tourism, investment, culture and trade.”

Khaldoun Alqudah, a member of the initiative, said that Jordan’s qualification meant a lot to him personally as a Jordanian living abroad. “It gave me a strong sense of pride, unity, and connection to my country.”

“I think diaspora youth are well suited for this initiative because they understand both cultures and can build bridges between them. They can share the real image of Jordan while staying connected to their roots and identity,” Khaldoun told The Jordan Times.

Ordinary Jordanians and businesses can contribute to this initiative by supporting local events, sharing positive stories about Jordan, promoting Jordanian culture and products and encouraging cultural exchange, he said, adding that even small efforts can help create a stronger and more positive image of Jordan internationally.

# Prince Hassan concludes Vatican, Rome visit focused on dialogue, cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince Hassan, accompanied by HRH Princess Sarvath El Hassan, concluded a visit to Rome and the Vatican City that lasted from Sunday to Thursday, during which Prince Hassan participated in a series of intellectual, religious, diplomatic and scientific meetings.

The meetings reflected Jordan’s active presence in international dialogue and reinforced Prince Hassan’s standing as one of the leading global voices advocating the protection of human dignity and the promotion of pluralism and understanding among peoples and religions, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

At the Vatican, Prince Hassan met with Pope Leo XIV in a meeting that reflected the “deep-rooted historical” ties between Jordan and the Holy See, as well as a shared belief in the importance of promoting compassion, justice and mutual respect amid escalating humanitarian conflicts and growing moral and cultural divisions worldwide.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the Eighth Colloquium between the Vatican’s Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue and the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, held under the theme “Human Compassion and Empathy in Modern Times”, with the participation of prominent re-



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ligious, intellectual and academic figures from around the world.

During the colloquium, His Royal Highness stressed that priority in today’s world must be given to humanity, human dignity and the right to a safe and decent life, noting that any international order that loses its humanitarian compass also loses its ability to achieve justice and stability.

The meeting and seminar also reflected Prince Hassan’s long-standing efforts to advance Muslim-Christian dialogue and promote the concept of “shared humanity” as a foundation for cooperation among peoples and

cultures, based on the conviction that religious and cultural diversity should serve as a space for integration, mutual understanding and shared human responsibility rather than conflict.

During his intellectual engagements, Prince Hassan stressed the urgent need to rebuild a more just and humane global moral framework based on compassion, justice and solidarity, restoring the value of the individual and the right to live in dignity, security and peace, particularly in light of the worsening humanitarian crises affecting the region and the world.

During the visit,

Prince Hassan also participated in meetings at the Italian Institute of International Affairs, alongside the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Discussions during these meetings focused on ongoing geopolitical transformations and the importance of developing new approaches to regional and international cooperation centred on humanity, culture and shared memory, in addition to economics and security.

As part of his scientific programme, Prince Hassan visited the European Space Agency Centre for Earth Observation, where he was briefed on the latest

European technologies in remote sensing, geographic data analysis and smart mapping and their role in supporting sustainable development, resource management, urban and environmental planning.

During the visit, the prince stressed the importance of boosting Jordanian-European cooperation in science, technology and geographic data, noting that maps are no longer merely technical tools, but have become instruments for understanding people, societies, resources and challenges, as well as essential tools in decision-making and public policymaking.

## Marches mark Nakba anniversary, voice support to Palestinian rights

AMMAN (JT) — Marches took place across Amman and other governorates on Friday, with the participation of popular, partisan and union groups, alongside civil society organisations, to mark the anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba.

Participants reiterated Jordan’s support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the Hashemite Custodianship over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

In the capital, a large march set off from Al Hussein Mosque in downtown Amman in response to calls by political parties, professional associations, grassroots groups and civil society institutions.

Similar marches were also held in several areas across the capital following Friday prayers, drawing broad public



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participation.

The events aimed to express support for the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights, while renewing support for Jordan’s firm position on the Palestinian cause and rejecting attempts aimed at displacement and the liquidation of the Palestinian issue.

Participants also stressed adherence to

the Hashemite Custodianship over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem and its role in preserving the city’s Arab and Islamic identity and protecting its sanctities.

Similar gatherings were also held in refugee camps across the Kingdom, particularly Al Talbieh camp, as well as in several cities and villages, where Jordanian and Palestinian flags were

raised and chants rejecting displacement policies were voiced.

Participants told Petra that they were proud of the pivotal and historic role led by His Majesty King Abdullah in international forums in defence of the Palestinian cause, as well as his continued efforts to stop the aggression against the Palestinian people and mobilise political and

humanitarian support for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

They stressed that Jordan’s official and popular stance embodies solidarity and loyalty towards the Palestinian cause.

Speakers at the events said that the “broad” participation from various segments of the society reflected the strength of Jordan’s internal front and its unified support behind the Hashemite leadership in defending the central causes of the Arab nation, foremost among them the Palestinian issue.

Participants stressed Jordan’s unwavering rejection of all forms of aggression, displacement and resettlement, reiterating support for the Palestinian people until they attain their legitimate rights and establish an independent state on their national soil with East Jerusalem as its capital.

## NCFA, IRC partner to boost child, family protection systems

AMMAN (JT) — The National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) have signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at boosting national systems supporting early childhood development, family welfare and protecting women and children in Jordan.

The agreement, signed alongside the council’s celebrations marking the International Day of Families, observed annually on May 15, was signed by NCFA Secretary General Mohammad Megdadi and IRC Jordan Country Director Eka Zhvania, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Under the agreement, the two sides will continue supporting efforts to expand Jordan’s national quality management system for childcare centres, aimed at enhancing quality, safety and accountability in early childhood services across the



The National Council for Family Affairs and the International Rescue Committee sign a memorandum of understanding aimed at boosting national systems supporting early childhood development, family welfare and protecting women and children in Jordan

Kingdom.

The partnership will also support training and capacity-building for childcare providers, social workers and frontline personnel in the areas of child protection, positive parenting and prevention of gender-based violence.

Megdadi said that the MoU represents an “important” step towards en-

hancing national efforts in early childhood development and family protection, noting that the partnership establishes a long-term framework focused on enhancing national systems, building capacities and developing regulatory frameworks related to child and family welfare.

He stressed the impor-

tance of coordinated efforts between national and international institutions to ensure more sustainable and higher-quality services for children, women and families, particularly vulnerable groups.

Megdadi added that the partnership aligns with Jordan’s national priorities and strategies, including the national multi-sector plan for preventing and responding to child abuse, domestic violence and violence against women and girls, as well as the national action plan for implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Zhvania highlighted the importance of cooperation with NCFA in boosting support systems for children, women and caregivers, noting that the partnership will help improve coordination and ensure integrated and inclusive services that empower families and promote well-being.

## Al Nashama Park attracts 30,000 visitors in 3 days

AMMAN (JT) — The Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) on Saturday said that Al Nashama Park attracted around 30,000 visitors by Friday evening since its opening on Tuesday, reflecting its importance as a safe and modern recreational space for residents and visitors.

The municipality said that the 56-dunum park in Amman’s Marj Al Hamam neighbourhood features a modern architectural and aesthetic design, with wide spaces for leisure, sports and entertainment activities, in addition to several playgrounds and facilities built to high standards, including areas designated for people with disabilities.

GAM said that the park is open daily from 6am until 10pm and called on visitors to help maintain cleanliness and protect public facilities to ensure the



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park’s sustainability. Prime Minister Jafar Hassan inaugurated the park on Tuesday.

During the inauguration ceremony, Hassan praised GAM for completing the project within five months of announcing its construction, noting that

the park was developed to high standards.

He stressed the importance of maintaining the facilities to serve visitors and residents.

GAM Committee Chairman Yusef Shawarbeh said that the park was named “Al

Nashama” in recognition of the national football team’s historic qualification for the FIFA World Cup.

The park includes green spaces covering around 40 per cent of the total area, outdoor seating areas, walking paths, children’s playgrounds and parking spaces for around 150 vehicles, in addition to roadside parking for about 55 cars.

The project also features dedicated running and cycling tracks extending around one kilometre and measuring five metres in width, along with outdoor fitness equipment, including facilities designed for persons with disabilities.

Meanwhile, the adjacent eight-storey building, which was recently acquired, will house the ministries of tourism and environment, as well as the Jordan Tourism Board.



# Momani discusses media challenges, misinformation, AI regulation at Tawasul Forum

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani on Saturday stressed the importance of balancing speed and accuracy in information dissemination, noting that access to information is a fundamental public right.

Speaking during a session at the Tawasul 2026 Forum titled “Media Keeping Pace with the Moment: How Do We Shape the Message in a World Flooded with Content”, Momani said the government seeks to provide information to the public as quickly as possible while avoiding the publication of inaccurate or premature data.

He said that official institutions respond to unfolding events through initial statements confirming that relevant authorities are monitoring developments, pending further details as they be-



Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani on Saturday participates in a session at the Tawasul 2026 Forum titled 'Media Keeping Pace with the Moment: How Do We Shape the Message in a World Flooded with Content'

come available.

Momani said the government's approach to rumours begins with monitoring circulating content and assessing its reach, impact and nature, before coordinating with relevant authorities and media

institutions to determine the appropriate response.

He noted that some rumours may not require an official response to avoid amplifying them, while others may be addressed indirectly

through official media channels or by the government spokesperson.

In certain cases, he added, the prime minister may intervene directly depending on the scale and sensitivity of the issue.

Momani said this framework forms part of the state's communication preparedness, which relies on early monitoring of developments before determining the most effective response mechanism.

He stressed that tim-

ing is a decisive factor in managing information, noting that data may sometimes be available within minutes, while political or international considerations may delay disclosure in other cases.

On artificial intelligence, Momani said the government views the technology as an opportunity across multiple sectors, while also recognising the challenges it poses and the need to mitigate associated risks.

He stressed the importance of regulating digital media in light of rapid AI developments, including clearly labelling content generated using artificial intelligence.

Momani also called for strengthened legal frameworks and ethical guidelines governing AI use, alongside efforts to enhance media and information literacy among the public.

Strategic communication and public opinion analyst Abdurrahman Husami said that previous studies of social media engagement indicate that rumours can be contained if addressed within the first 90 minutes of their spread, while interaction increases significantly after 24 hours.

He added that recent analyses show 62 per cent of rumours originate from international social media platforms, 15 per cent from regional media outlets and the remainder from local sources.

Husami noted that decisions on responding to rumours depend on assessments by decision makers regarding their impact and whether an official response would help contain or amplify their spread.

He stressed the importance of accuracy in reporting and adherence to profes-

sional standards, as well as monitoring public engagement levels to avoid unintentionally contributing to the spread of misinformation.

Policy expert Ghuzayyah Hijazi emphasised the importance of understanding target audiences when delivering official messages, citing indicators of high Internet and smartphone penetration in Jordan. She also warned of the psychological and health impacts of excessive social media use, particularly among young people.

Jordan Media Institute CEO Dana Shuqom said the Jordanian Media Observatory recorded around 200 rumours last month, half of which originated outside Jordan.

She highlighted ongoing efforts to train journalists and media spokespersons in fact-checking and combating misinformation.

## EMPOWERMENT

### Crown Prince Foundation reaches 2.2 million youth across Kingdom

AMMAN (JT) — The Crown Prince Foundation (CPF) has emerged as a leading national model for youth empowerment, reaching nearly 2.2 million young men and women across the Kingdom through more than 14 programmes implemented at 26 strategic locations nationwide.

Established in line with the vision of HRH Crown Prince Hussein, the foundation aims to

help build a brighter future for Jordanian youth by reinforcing their role in shaping the Kingdom's future, according to a CPF statement.

Operating under the slogan “Capable Youth for an Ambitious Jordan”, CPF focuses on three main pillars: Economic participation, leadership and sustainable community development.

Since its establish-

ment in 2015, the foundation has worked to create opportunities that enable young people to shape their future and strengthen their contribution to the development of their local communities and Jordan as a whole.

CPF said its programmes target youth across all governorates, ensuring equal access to opportunities for growth, innovation and development.

### UN chief commends Jordan over 1,600-detainee Yemen deal

AMMAN (JT) — UN Secretary-General António Guterres on Friday commended Jordan for hosting and facilitating Yemeni negotiations in Amman, which led to an agreement between the warring parties to release more than 1,600 detainees held in connection with the conflict.

In a statement, Guterres said the deal represents the largest prisoner-exchange agreement since the outbreak of the conflict.



UN Secretary-General António Guterres

He noted that it “comes as a result of weeks of direct nego-

tiations in Amman under the auspices of the UN special envoy for

Yemen”.

The UN chief also expressed appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman and Switzerland for hosting earlier rounds of talks on the same issue.

He called on the parties to expedite the implementation of the agreement in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, in order to facilitate the swift reunification of families.

Guterres also urged additional releases

in line with the 2018 Stockholm Agreement, under which the parties committed to the release of all conflict-related detainees on an “all-for-all” basis.

He also called the Yemeni government and the Houthis to build on the momentum generated by Thursday's agreement and to engage constructively with his special envoy towards a comprehensive political process aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace in Yemen.

### 310,567 customs declarations processed in the first third of 2026 — syndicate

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian customs clearance and freight forwarding companies processed 310,567 customs declarations during the first third of 2026, according to figures released by the Customs Clearance and Freight Forwarding Companies Syndicate.

The data showed that 65,999 declarations were processed through the Omari Customs Centre, which links Jordan with Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries, while 62,393 declarations were completed through Aqaba Customs.

Companies operating at the Jaber border crossing with Syria processed 20,551 declarations, while 5,132 declarations were recorded at the Karameh Customs Centre connecting Jordan with Iraq, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reproted.

The figures also indicated that 52,303 declarations were processed



Karamah Border Crossing, located about 320 kilometres northeast of Amman, is the only land crossing between Jordan and Iraq

through the Airport Customs Centre in Zizia, 29,347 through Amman Customs and 13,743 through the e-commerce centre.

Cargo handling at Aqaba's main port reached nearly 4 million tonnes during the first third of 2026, up from 3.189 million tonnes during the same period last year, with operations carried out through 566 vessels.

Incoming container

traffic at Aqaba Container Terminal rose by 10,691 containers to 159,852, compared with 149,161 during the corresponding period in 2025. The number of vessels arriving at the terminal increased to 205, up from 198 last year.

Total import and export handling also rose by 56,467 TEUs to 316,010 TEUs, compared with 259,543 TEUs recorded dur-

ing the same period in 2025.

The syndicate said Jordan's truck fleet currently includes 19,432 tractor units, 25,657 semi-trailers and 12,448 freight vehicles.

Truck movement through the Jaber border crossing in both directions reached 157,729 Jordanian and foreign trucks during the first third of 2026, compared with 139,299 trucks in the same period last year. Traffic through Omari rose to 139,016 trucks, up from 85,751 in 2025, while movement through Karameh increased by 14,352 trucks to 72,411, compared with 58,059.

According to the syndicate, 467 licensed customs clearance companies operate across Jordan's customs and border centres through around 2,000 branches, providing approximately 10,000 jobs for Jordanians.

### Flexible regulation key to boosting investment, advancing digital transformation — TRC

AMMAN (JT) — The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) is committed to fostering a “flexible” regulatory environment that encourages investment and enhances Jordan's competitiveness as an emerging regional hub for telecommunications and information technology. Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners Lara Khatib said on Saturday.

In a statement marking World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, observed annually on May 17, Khatib said the commission continues to support innovation and empower startups and entrepreneurial companies in the sector, underscoring the role of the digital economy in job creation and economic growth.

She added that the commission is prioritising digital inclusion and efforts to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that telecommunica-



Telecommunications Regulatory Commission Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners Lara Khatib says on Saturday that the commission is committed to fostering a ‘flexible’ regulatory environment that encourages investment

tions and Internet services reach all regions of the Kingdom and enable all segments of society to benefit from modern digital services.

Khatib stressed that the TRC remains focused on developing an advanced, secure and resilient telecommunications sector capable of supporting Jordan's digital transformation and strengthening the readiness of digital in-

frastructure to meet future demands.

She noted that the commission plays a key role in advancing the telecommunications and IT sector through balanced regulatory frameworks that stimulate investment, enhance competition and encourage innovation, ultimately improving service quality.

Khatib also highlighted ongoing efforts

to strengthen cybersecurity and data privacy protections, reflecting the importance of building a secure digital environment that safeguards users' rights while supporting business continuity and reliable service delivery.

She said digital networks have evolved beyond communication tools into “vital infrastructure” that enables access to knowledge, services and opportunities, while also supporting economic activity and social stability.

Referring to this year's World Telecommunication and Information Society Day theme, “Digital lifelines: Strengthening resilience in a connected world”, Khatib said the slogan reflects the growing role of telecommunications networks as a digital lifeline connecting societies and ensuring continuity of services and business operations under various conditions.



Fourteen journalists on Saturday take the legal oath before the Jordan Press Association Council after completing the procedures required for membership

## PRESS

### Fourteen journalists take legal oath before JPA council

AMMAN (JT) — Fourteen journalists on Saturday took the legal oath before the Jordan Press Association (JPA) Council after completing the procedures required for membership and for practising the profession in accordance with the law and journalistic ethics.

During the ceremony, JPA President Tareq Momani described journalism as a national mission and an ethical responsibility, stressing the importance of responsible reporting that upholds truth, safeguards national interests and enhances

public awareness.

Momani stressed the need for greater professionalism in the media sector to confront misinformation, rumours and unprofessional content, noting that journalists remain central to defending credibility and ensuring reliable reporting.

“Taking the legal oath marks a significant milestone in a journalist's career, carrying the responsibility to uphold professional ethics and safeguard the public's right to accurate and trustworthy information,” he added.

Those who took the

oath were Odai Hneiti, Rana Namarat, Adel Tarawneh, Amal Duhoun, Heba Ramadan, Moatasem Bawared, Khaled Zoubi, Dima Daqqas, Mai Enati, Yazid Faroukh, Fadi Hamarneh, Mohammad Hasani, Abdurrahman Balawneh and Israa Hamad.





Despite the fresh strikes, Lebanon's negotiating delegation in Washington on Friday welcomed the 45-day extension of the truce with Israel.

"The extension of the ceasefire and the establishment of a US-facilitated security track provide critical breathing space for our citizens, reinforce state institutions and advance a political pathway toward lasting stability," it said in a statement shared by the Lebanese presidency.

Israeli attacks since the start of the war have killed more than 2,900 people in Lebanon, including more than 400 since the truce took effect, according to Lebanese authorities.

The military has also reported the deaths of 19 soldiers in southern Lebanon since fighting with Hizbollah erupted.

Lebanon was dragged into the Middle East war on March 2 when Hizbollah fired rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei.

On Friday evening, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam condemned the Shia movement.

"Enough of these irresponsible adventures that serve foreign interests," he said.

Despite an October ceasefire, Gaza remains gripped by daily violence as Israeli strikes continue, with both the military and Hamas accusing one another of violating the truce.

At least 856 Palestinians have been killed since the truce began, according to the territory's health ministry.

Over the same period, the Israeli military said 150 soldiers have been killed in Gaza.

**In this pool photo distributed by the Russian state agency Sputnik, Russia's President Vladimir Putin chairs a meeting on economic issues in Moscow on Friday**

and Nigerian forces in the west African country, the two countries' presi-

troops to Nigeria to support and train its forces. Tinubu thanked Trump for his "leadership and unwavering support", as he looked "forward to more decisive strikes against all terrorist enclaves across the nation". No soldiers or assets were reported lost during the operation. Al Minuki oversaw Daesh-linked operations

 **Tender Invitation** 

The General Headquarters of the Jordan Armed Forces/Royal  
Military Services hereby announces Tender  
**P100/2026/A/1**

**(عطاء تعزيز مستشفيات قسرة قلب بالبحرين)**

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

**Closing date sharp 1:00 P.M., MON 15th of JUNE 2026.** Non  
conditional bid bond equal to (3%) of the total value of quotation  
must be submitted along with the quotations.

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

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

For more details please contact us at [jrms.jaf.mil.jo](mailto:jrms.jaf.mil.jo)



# No vaccine for latest Ebola outbreak, DRC warns as toll hits 80

KINSHASA (AFP) — An Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that has caused more than 80 deaths has a “very high lethality rate” and no vaccine or specific treatment, the country’s health minister warned on Saturday.

A total of 88 deaths and 336 suspected cases of the highly contagious haemorrhagic fever have been reported, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC Africa) said in an update on Saturday.

Medical aid group Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said it was preparing a “large-scale response”, calling the rapid spread of the outbreak “extremely concerning”.

“The Bundibugyo strain has no vaccine, no specific treatment,” DR Congo’s Health Minister Samuel-Roger Kamba said on Saturday.

“This strain has a very high lethality rate which can reach 50 per cent.”

The strain has also claimed one life in neighbouring Uganda, officials said on Saturday, that of a Congolese national.

That correlated with an announcement late Friday by Uganda’s health ministry, which said a 59-year-old man



Medical workers lead a young girl with suspected Ebola into the unconfirmed Ebola patients ward run by The Alliance for International Medical Action (ALIMA) on August 12, 2018 in Beni, north-eastern DRC

from DR Congo had died in Kampala after being admitted earlier in the week. His body was repatriated the same day.

Tests showed the victim in Uganda was infected with the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola, first

identified in 2007.

Vaccines are only available for the Zaire strain, which was identified in 1976 and has a higher fatality rate of 60-90 per cent.

Health officials had confirmed the latest

outbreak Friday in Ituri province in north-eastern DR Congo, bordering Uganda and South Sudan, according to CDC Africa.

Adding to concerns of spread are significant cross-border population

movements in the region affected.

“We’ve been seeing people die for the past two weeks,” said Isaac Nyakulinda, a local civil society representative contacted by AFP by phone.

“There is nowhere to isolate the sick. They are dying at home and their bodies are being handled by their family members.”

According to Kamba, patient zero was a nurse who reported to a health

facility in provincial capital Bunia on April 24, with symptoms suggesting Ebola.

Symptoms of the disease include fever, haemorrhaging and vomiting.

MSF said it was mobilising medical, logistical and support staff to help respond to the outbreak.

“The number of cases and deaths we are seeing in such a short time-frame, combined with the spread across several health zones and now across the border, is extremely concerning,” says Trish Newport, MSF Emergency Programme Manager.

## High risk of spread

It is the 17th Ebola outbreak to hit DR Congo, and officials warned of a high risk of spread.

“It is a large outbreak,” said Jay Bhattacharya, acting director of the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Friday.

The previous outbreak of Ebola — which has killed some 15,000 people in Africa over the past 50 years, despite advances in vaccines and treatment — was last August in the central region.

That episode killed at least 34 people, before being declared eradicated in December.

Nearly 2,300 people

died in the deadliest outbreak in the DRC between 2018 and 2020.

Ebola, believed to have originated in bats, is a deadly viral disease spread through direct contact with bodily fluids. It can cause severe bleeding and organ failure.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), outbreaks over the past half century have seen a mortality rate among those affected of between 25 per cent and 90 per cent.

The virus spreads from person to person through bodily fluids or exposure to the blood of an infected persons, who become contagious only once they display symptoms. The incubation period can last up to 21 days.

“Give the uncertainties and severity of the illness, there is concern about the scale of transmission in affected communities,” the WHO said Friday as it prepared to airlift five tonnes of material including infection prevention gear from Kinshasa.

Large-scale transport of medical equipment is a challenge in DR Congo, a country of more than 100 million people which is four times the size of France but has poor communications infrastructure.

## Indonesian president recognises ‘problems’ with free meal scheme

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto acknowledged on Saturday that the government’s programme to provide free meals to combat malnutrition, his signature project, “comes with many problems”.

Thousands of people have fallen ill since the much-hyped billion-dollar scheme was launched in January 2025, with critics calling for its suspension over hygiene concerns and accusations of corruption.

“It’s true that there are many problems and challenges. Free nutritious meals comes with many problems, we must put things in order,” Prabowo said in

a speech in East Java posted to his official YouTube channel on Saturday.

‘It’s true that there are many problems and challenges. Free nutritious meals comes with many problems, we must put things in order’

The scheme, which is said to have provided

meals to more than 61 million people by March, was also among the first to be cut back as Jakarta seeks to counter the economic impact of the Middle East war.

Indonesia cut the programme from six days a week to five in March to save up to 40 trillion rupiah (\$2.3 billion).

Prabowo said that the scheme still has public support despite the list of problems.

“Free nutritious meals are so important for our nation. Everywhere I go, I meet ordinary people, farmers, saying, ‘sir, please don’t stop the free nutritious meals programme, this really helps my grandchildren to be able to eat,’” he

said.

The scheme was Prabowo’s flagship policy in the 2024 presidential election campaign.

Anti-graft watchdog Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) filed a complaint last week against Dadan Hindayana, the head of the National Nutrition Agency tasked with distributing the free meals, local media reported.

ICW claimed in its submission to the Corruption Eradication Commission that there were discrepancies of nearly \$50 million in the halal certification procurement budget.

Prabowo said he would

take swift action against anyone “who violates the rules”.

“My government has no hesitation: anyone who violates the rules, who strays, who abuses their authority, will be disciplined, we will clean them up, we will remove them from their position,” he said.

More than 20 per cent of children in Indonesia are affected by stunting caused by severe malnutrition.

The government hoped the scheme would provide meals for at least 82.9 million people, or about one-third of the country’s population, in its bid to combat food insecurity.

## Norway court blocks extradition of migrant activist to Greece

OSLO (AFP) — A Norwegian court has blocked the extradition of the founder of a human rights group helping migrants to Greece where he was wanted over human smuggling charges, his lawyer said on Saturday.

Tommy Olsen, founder of the Aegean Boat Report, which helps migrants in distress in the Aegean Sea, was arrested on March 16 by Norwegian police following a European arrest warrant issued by Greece.

On the same day, a district court found that he could be extradited to Greece, but the ruling was challenged. Olsen was released on March 20, pending the appeal.

The Norwegian Court of Appeal then overturned the district court’s decision.

Olsen’s lawyer, Brynjulf Risnes, noted that the court had found that “the acts described in the Greek indictment are not punishable under Norwegian law”.

It also found that “the

conduct of the Greek authorities entails a real risk of violating Olsen’s right to freedom of expression”, Risnes told AFP in an e-mail.

The Aegean Boat Report said in a post on its website that “this is not only an important personal victory for Tommy Olsen”.

The Norwegian Court of Appeal then overturned the district court’s decision

the group said.

Other rights groups, including Amnesty International, had called on Norway not to extradite Olsen.

Earlier in May, the Aegean Boat Report accused the Greek coastguard of endangering a migrant boat that came into distress in the Aegean Sea.

One person died and 43 were rescued from the vessel by Turkey’s coast guard.

The Norwegian NGO said it had received an emergency call from people on the inflatable who said they had been “violently pushed back” by the Greek coast guard.

The NGO documents illegal push-backs blamed on the Greek coastguard — allegations that Greece denies.

Over 1,200 migrants have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean since the beginning of the year, according to the International Organisation for Migration.

## Safadi meets Estonian, Latvian presidents, discusses cooperation, regional developments

Continued from page 1

He said that Jordan has maintained stability and continued economic growth, while advancing economic, social, and investment reforms.

He pointed to major national projects aimed at meeting development needs, including water and railway initiatives linking the Arabian Gulf with Jordan, Syria, Turkey and Europe.

Safadi underscored that building partnerships remains a cornerstone of Jordan’s foreign policy, noting that while the Kingdom is not seeking EU membership, it has developed strong

partnerships with the EU, in addition to free trade agreements with Canada and the US.

Safadi reiterated the need to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-state solution, describing it as the only path to lasting regional security and to ensuring both Israeli security and Palestinian statehood.

He added that Syria is beginning to recover after 14 years of conflict, stressing the importance of investing in new partnerships to support its stability, which he said is vital for the wider region.

On Friday, Safadi met Latvian President Edgars

Rinkevics in Riga, where he conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Abdullah and reaffirmed the Kingdom’s keenness to strengthen ties with Latvia.

The Latvian president, in turn, asked Safadi to convey his greetings to His Majesty, expressing his country’s interest in expanding cooperation with Jordan across various fields.

The meeting addressed ways to enhance cooperation in economic, trade, investment, education, and health sectors, in addition to regional and international developments of mutual concern.

Safadi also held talks with Latvian Foreign Minister Baiba Braze, focusing on prospects for expanding cooperation within the framework of the EU.

The two sides agreed to identify priority areas for cooperation and the necessary steps to boost ties, including in defence industries and security, while stressing the importance of continued EU-level coordination.

Both sides agreed to hold the first round of political consultations at the earliest opportunity and to develop a roadmap for enhancing cooperation in promising sectors and strengthening

private-sector linkages.

They also discussed regional developments and efforts to de-escalate tensions and restore lasting security and stability. Safadi highlighted Latvia’s role as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in supporting international peace efforts.

Safadi is scheduled to meet on Sunday with representatives of the Estonian private sector in key industries to brief them on Jordan’s investment environment.

He will then depart for Lithuania, the third stop of his Baltic tour, which began with a visit to Latvia.

## South Korea to investigate ship debris from Hormuz attack

SEOUL (AFP) — Debris from a fire-damaged cargo ship said to have been attacked by unidentified aircraft in the Strait of Hormuz arrived in South Korea on Friday for investigation, the foreign ministry said.

Iran has largely blocked shipping through the vital strait since conflict broke out with the United States and Israel on February 28 and Washington blockaded Tehran’s ports.

HMM Nambu was struck by “two unidentified aircraft” on May 4, hitting the outer plate of the vessel’s port-side ballast tank near the stern and causing a fire in the engine room, Seoul, a US ally, said at a press briefing on Sunday.

The Panama-flagged cargo vessel, operated by South Korean

shipping firm HMM Co., had arrived in Dubai last week for investigation.

Its debris “arrived in South Korea by air following consultations with the UAE government” on Friday, Seoul’s foreign ministry said in a statement.

The vessel debris is “scheduled to undergo detailed analysis by a specialised institution”, it added without providing further detail.

Seoul said the aircrafts involved in the attack “were captured on CCTV footage, but there are limitations in identifying the exact type, launch origin and physical size of the objects”.

A senior government official told local media this week that the “likelihood that the [attacking] entity was someone other than

Iran is low”.

Tehran has denied responsibility, with its embassy in Seoul posting a statement on its website in the days following the attack, saying it “firmly rejects and categorically denies any allegations regarding the involvement” of its forces.

Seoul strongly condemned the attack and said it hopes to identify those behind it through a thorough investigation.

South Korea, Asia’s fourth-largest economy, relies heavily on Middle Eastern fuel imports, most of which transited through the Strait of Hormuz during peacetime.

As a major petrochemicals producer and refiner, the closure has forced South Korea to impose a fuel price cap for the first time in nearly 30 years.

## As US reportedly mulls expanded strikes, Hormuz raises stakes in Iran war

Continued from page 1

US military officials privately acknowledged that achieving a “decisive victory” against Iran would remain difficult and highly complex, according to the newspaper.

Meanwhile, Iran’s Revolutionary Guards announced on Thursday that naval forces had allowed several Chinese ships to pass through the Strait of Hormuz following agreements related to Iran’s “strait management protocols”.

Iranian state televi-

sion later reported that more than 30 vessels had crossed, although it remained unclear whether all were Chinese ships.

Iran has largely restricted shipping through the waterway since the outbreak of war with the United States and Israel on February 28.

The Strait of Hormuz carries nearly one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments, making it one of the world’s most strategically sensitive trade routes.

The passage of Chinese-linked vessels

came as Trump visited China and met President Xi Jinping for talks that included the Iran war and regional security developments.

Political analyst Amer Sabaileh said that there is a growing current inside the United States that leans towards the Israeli approach in dealing with Iran.

“A long-term blockade can produce results, but it may eventually reach a stage of stagnation and adaptation,” he noted.

“The strikes are more likely to take the form of targeted operations

against vital energy infrastructure, assassinations of figures obstructing agreements and special operations inside Iran,” he warned.

Areej Jabr, a political science professor, said that Washington’s escalating rhetoric towards Iran reflects strategic confusion as much as pressure tactics.

“Washington appears trapped between a costly military confrontation and returning to diplomacy in a way that could be interpreted as retreat,” she argued.

“The growing militarisation around strategic waterways reflects attempts to manage negotiations through pressure, deterrence and maximum political and military leverage,” she warned.

She also explained that the latest developments suggest the Strait of Hormuz is no longer being treated solely as a maritime passage, but increasingly as a geopolitical leverage point tied to military confrontation, energy security and global power competition.



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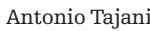
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**By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal**

Once again, Jordanian sports clubs do not suffer from a lack of fans or sporting passion, but rather from the absence of an economic model capable of transforming this social value into real investment value. In a world where countries compete to build new sectors and attract investments, the sports industry may become one of the opportunities through which Jordan can build a more diversified and growth-oriented economy.

For this reason, at the be-



On the diplomatic front, I have maintained constant contact with my friend the US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, whom I met in Rome in recent days. We agreed on the need to preserve the transatlantic bond...

We cannot forget the repression of youth protests in Iran, brutally suppressed by

We nevertheless believe that lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved with-

In this context also falls the arrival in Italy, in recent days, of 72 Palestinian students awarded scholarships at Italian universities: an investment we consider part of the training of the future Palestinian ruling class.

Antonio Tajani is deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation of Italy

**By Amal Awwad Al Ma'aytah**

This distinction is critical. Around the world, governments are rushing to brand

What Tawasil did especially well was broaden the conversation beyond artificial intelligence itself. Discussions surrounding the freelance economy reflected a sophisticated understanding that the future of work is rapidly changing. For many young Jordanians, traditional employment pathways no longer guarantee economic security or upward mobility. By examining how freelance work can evolve from an individual choice into a recognised macroeconomic sector, the forum acknowledged



Perhaps the most forward-looking aspect of Tawasal 2026 was its willingness to explore industries that barely exist today but may define tomorrow's economy. Panels examining the "post-coding era" and the development of sports as a sustainable economic sector reflected leadership willing to think beyond immediate crises and short-term political calculations. In a region often consumed by reacting to events rather than preparing for them, that kind of long-range strategic thinking is particularly valuable.

The presence of Her Royal

Ultimately, Leadership in the twenty-first century requires more than ceremony. It requires strategic vision, engagement with emerging realities, and confidence in the potential of one's people. At Tawasol 2026, the Crown Prince presented all three.



# Jordan strengthens investment environment with new funds, Sukuk, investor protections

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — Jordan is expanding its investment landscape through new mutual funds, private-sector Islamic Sukuk issuances and enhanced investor protections.

Speaking at the Government Communications Forum in April, Jordan Securities Commission Chairperson Emad Abu Haltam said the reforms align with the Economic Modernisation Vision and aim to diversify investment opportunities while improving market transparency.

Mutual investment funds in Jordan are witnessing renewed momentum after years of limited activity. Following the registration of only one fund over the past 15 years, two new funds were launched in 2024 and early 2025, includes Capital Investments Fund from JD2 to 50 million, Safwa Bal-



'What we guarantee is a mature legal and regulatory environment, transparency and a stable currency' says Jordan Securities Commission chairperson

anced Fund \$5 million. Islamic Sukuk issuance is also expanding, with growing private sector participation through

offerings by Al Kawthar Leasing and Bindar Finance, indicating broader confidence in Jordan's evolving capital market.

## Investor Guidance

Abu Haltam urged investors to exercise prudent decision-making:

"Stick to your expertise, don't mortgage essential assets chasing overnight gains."

He highlighted that

all licensed companies, including virtual asset platforms, operate under strict oversight, with a robust complaints system and transparent reporting of financial results.

The JSC chairperson also noted that Jordan's investment process is seamless, with registration and trading streamlined for both domestic and foreign investors.

Regarding digital assets, licensing ensures that investments remain within Jordan, supporting local economic growth rather than flowing to global platforms.

Abu Haltam concluded: "There are no guaranteed profits in markets anywhere. What we guarantee is a mature legal and regulatory environment, transparency and a stable currency, factors that allow investors to focus on growth, industry and services."

# UAE to 'accelerate' new oil pipeline bypassing Hormuz

DUBAI (AFP) — The UAE is to fast-track construction of a new oil pipeline bypassing the Strait of Hormuz, official media said on Friday, after the Middle East war crippled exports through the vital waterway.

Oil facilities in Fujairah have been repeatedly struck during the Middle East war...

The West-East Pipeline will double state oil giant ADNOC's capacity through Fujairah Port and is expected to become operational next

year, the Abu Dhabi Media Office said.

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Khaled Bin Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan "directed ADNOC to accelerate delivery of the project", the report said.

An existing, 360-kilometre pipeline from the Habshan oil fields to Fujairah has a capacity of 1.8 million barrels per day, according to the Port of Fujairah website.

The UAE, which quit oil cartel OPEC at the start of this month, has plans to raise production capacity to five million barrels a day by next year.

Oil facilities in Fujairah have been repeatedly struck during the Middle East war. Three Indian nationals were wounded in the latest attack on May 4.

# Trump traded hundreds of millions in US securities in 2026

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — US President Donald Trump was involved in buying and selling securities linked to American companies in transactions that totalled hundreds of millions of dollars in the first quarter of 2026, according to government documents released recently.

Trump's financial disclosure report to the Office of Government Ethics detailed purchases of securities for tech companies like Nvidia, Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, Adobe, Oracle and Uber, with each transaction ranging between \$1 million and \$5 million.

There were more than

2,300 purchases in the period from January to March.

The nearly 1,300 sales in the quarter included transactions involving Microsoft, Amazon and Meta worth between \$5 million and \$25 million, the disclosure report showed.

The filing did not give specifics on the type of security, for example, if they were stocks or bonds.

The Office of Government Ethics oversees the executive branch, working to "prevent financial conflicts of interest and other violations of the ethics rules", according to its website.

## CRISIS

# Energy-hungry German industries in decline since Ukraine war — data

FRANKFURT, Germany (AFP) — Germany's energy-hungry industries have suffered sharp falls in output since the start of the Ukraine war, data showed Friday, with little hope of an imminent rebound.

After Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Moscow slashed gas supplies to Europe amid soaring tensions with the West, sending up power costs for German industry.

Production in Germany's most energy-intensive sectors fell by 15.2 per cent between February 2022, the month when the



An illuminated power station, flyover and Hamburg docks

conflict began and March this year, according to statistics agency Destatis.

The decline in these sectors, ranging from chemicals and metal processing to glass

and paper production, was sharper than for industry as a whole over the period, it said.

Over 53,000 fewer people were employed in the country's energy-intensive industries by March this year, a 6.3 per cent decline.

It is the latest bleak news for Europe's biggest economy, which has been stagnating for years due to a manufacturing slump, weak demand for exports and the US tariff blitz.

There had been hopes the economy would recover this year, helped by hefty public spending on defence and infrastructure, but the energy shock unleashed by the Iran war is weighing

heavily.

After an encouraging start to the year, recent indicators "point to a significant setback in the second quarter", the economy ministry warned Friday.

"Rising prices, supply chain problems, and uncertainty are weighing on sentiment in both businesses and private households," it said in a monthly report.

"The further economic outlook depends on how long the conflict in the Middle East persists and continues to disrupt trade routes and production capacities," it added.

# Mines 'draining Turkey's water sources', environmentalists warn

By Burcin Gercek  
Agency France-Presse

ANKARA — Guney was once a water-rich village fed by 50 springs in Turkey's western Usak province, but since a gold mine opened 20 years ago, they have all dried up.

"Before, you only had to drill 60 metres to find water," said Ugur Sumer, environmental activist and resident of Guney, which is about 170 kilometres (100 miles) east of the resort city of Izmir.

"Today, even drilling 400 metres yields nothing. The mine has used all our water."

With Turkey hosting COP31 in November, its own environmental record is being scrutinised, and activists have warned about the growing number of water-intensive mining projects as resources dry up.

Since 2000, Turkey has rapidly expanded the number of drilling and mining permits granted, notably for gold and coal. The number reached 410,000 last year after the procedures were streamlined by a new law adopted in July.

"I am convinced this law will speed up the arrival of foreign investment in Turkey," Energy Minister Alparslan Bayraktar said in March



This aerial view shows protesters during a protest march against mining at the Aybasti Plateau in Ordu Province, northeastern Turkey, on May 8

while visiting Canada.

While there, he met officials from the Turprag gold mine in Usak, which is owned by Vancouver-based Eldorado Gold.

Turkey is hoping to hike its gold production from 28 tonnes to 100 tonnes per year "without compromising human health and the environment", Bayraktar said. It also wants to be a major player in global rare earths.

But experts and environmentalists warn this explosion in mining permits is endangering water resources and the economies of rural areas.

Not only does the extraction of metals like gold involve large amounts of water, but it also uses cyanide and releases other pollut-

ants, posing major environmental and health risks.

According to official data, in 2024 mining used 5.8 per cent of Turkey's 20.3 billion cubic metres of water consumption — four times the amount used in 2016.

**Farmers' protest**

On the Aybasti plateau in the northeastern Ordu province, villagers turned out en masse earlier this month to protest plans to mine an area they use for farming.

"Our pastures have been closed off because of an exploratory drilling plan for a gold mine," said Nuriye Dilek, a 48-year-old livestock farmer.

"What are we supposed to do if we can no

longer raise livestock? Are we supposed to abandon our land and leave?"

Farming and animal husbandry are the main sources of income for locals in this region known for its hazelnuts, which are exported across the world.

"Once the gold mine opens, we won't be able to grow hazelnuts here any more," says Omer Aydin, a nut producer and exporter.

"What's above ground here is more valuable than what's underground. The real gold is the hazelnuts this country produces," he said.

"We are hearing that 80 per cent of Ordu's land has been declared a mining site," he told AFP.

Last month, the government's anti-disinformation unit Centre for Combating Disinformation denied claims "a large portion of land" was being actively used for mining.

It said the total area corresponded to "only 0.18 per cent of Turkey's surface area", denouncing efforts to "tarnish the mining sector".

But the increase in mining permits has infuriated environmentalists, including Ozer Akdemir, who says investment in the sector is being prioritised at the expense of pollution risks and harm to local econo-

mies.

"Mining uses excessive water and chemicals. The water isn't just used, it's also polluted," explained hydrologist Erol Kesici.

"The whole world is experiencing a prolonged drought but Turkey is also facing a severe hydrological drought," he said of a phenomenon where rainfall shortages hit the wider water system, depleting water bodies and groundwater.

"Our lakes, rivers and groundwater reserves have dried up as a direct consequence of poor water management," said Kesici.

He recently resigned from Turkey's National Water Council over its "inaction".

"When mountains are levelled to dig mines, the ecosystem is destroyed. Heat islands form, reducing rainfall and consequently groundwater levels," he explained.

"How is it possible to grant so many mining permits? Turkey is suffering from overexploitation," he said.

For lawyer and activist Arif Ali Cangı, the legislation approved in July, which allows companies to appropriate or rezone agricultural land for mining, will only aggravate the situation.

"Environmental impact assessments and

oversight mechanisms are now completely ineffective," he told AFP.

"There are now no longer any obstacles to mining operations being set up anywhere."

**'Pollution is killing farming'**

Using emergency procedures, mining permit requests can be fast-tracked so companies can immediately seize land, a move that seeks to hobble the growing protest movement across Turkey, Cangı said.

Among them are villagers from Izkizkoy in the Mugla region, who have mobilised to protect their olive groves from plans to expand a nearby brown coal lignite mine.

Back in Guney, local resident Sumer said the issue of protecting water sources from overexploitation or pollution was ultimately a matter of survival.

"In 2006, nearly 2,000 residents suffered from vertigo, sight problems and nausea after it rained in Guney, with blood tests showing cyanide in their blood," he said.

"Pollution is killing livestock farming and grape harvests, once the backbone of the local economy," he said.

"We wonder how we're going to survive."

# Amman Stock Exchange Weekly Summary

AMMAN (JT) — The average daily trading volume for the period 10-14 May reached JD13.7 million compared to JD13.3 million for the last week, a increase of 2.6 per cent.

The total trading volume during the week reached JD68.5 million compared to JD66.7 million during the last week. Trading a total of 33.5 million shares through 22813 transactions.

Financial led the trading with JD28.12 million or 41.06 per cent of the total trading volume. The Industrial followed with a JD22.32 million or 32.58 per cent. Finally, the Services with a JD18.06 million representing 26.36 per cent of the total trading volume.

The shares price index closed at 3905.3 points, compared to 3863.0 points for the last week, an increase of 1.09 per cent. The Financial index decreased by 0.62 per cent, the Industrial index increased by 1.68 per cent, and the Services index increased by 4.63 per cent.

The shares of (125) companies were traded, the shares prices of (58) companies rose, and the shares prices of (42) declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose

shares gained the most were during the week were the Premier Business And Projects Company Ltd. by 18.09 per cent, Amad Investment and Real Estate Development by 14.54 per cent, Latent Energies for Investments by 12.64 per cent, Ihdathiat Coordinates by 12.50 per cent, and First Insurance by 11.21 per cent.

The shares of (125) companies were traded, the shares prices of (58) companies rose

The companies whose shares dropped the most during the week were the Real Estate Development by 11.43 per cent, Jordan Decapolis Properties by 7.14 per cent, Century Investment Group by 6.82 per cent, Arab International for Education and Investment by 4.92 per cent, and Arab International Hotels by 4.82 per cent.



MOTORSPORT

Prince Feisal attends Jordan International Rally in Dead Sea

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince Feisal, chairman of the Board of Directors of Jordan Motor-sport, on Friday attended the Jordan Inter-national Rally, the third round of the Middle East Rally Championship, currently being held in the Dead Sea region.Prince Feisal was accompanied by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah Bin Feisal and Prince Mo-hammad Bin Feisal, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.During the visit, His Royal Highness inspected the rally's technical and organisational preparations and toured the competitors' service park. He expressed sat-isfaction with the level of participation and competition, wishing all drivers success and safety throughout the event.Prince Feisal said that the Jordan International Rally re-flects the Kingdom's position as a leading re-gional and international sports destination.

FOOTBALL

Santander return to La Liga after 14 years

MADRID (AFP) — Racing Santander ensured a return to La Liga next season when they beat Valladolid 4-1 at their Sardinero ground on Saturday.With two games to play, Santander, one of the founders of the Spanish league, lead the second division by seven points and are assured of finishing in one of the two automatic promotion places. Deportivo La Coruna, playing on Monday, could still beat Santander to the title but third-placed Almeria, who conceded two goals in the last 12 minutes to lose 2-1 at home to Las Palmas, cannot catch up. Santander last played in La Liga in 2011-12, when they finished bottom of the table. They slid into the third tier at the end of the following season. Last season they finished fifth in Liga 2 but were eliminated in the play-off semifinals.



Italy's Jannik Sinner is congratulated by Russia's Daniil Medvedev (left) after winning the semifinal at the ATP Rome Open tennis tournament on Saturday

Sinner completes Medvedev win and passage into Italian Open final

ROME (AFP) — Jannik Sinner will face Casper Ruud in the men's final of the Italian Open after finishing off Daniil Medvedev in Saturday's closing chapter of an enthralling last-four clash, which was paused overnight due to rain in Rome.

The World No.1 could claim a record-extending sixth Masters 1000 title on Sunday thanks to a 6-2, 5-7, 6-4 win which had almost everything over the course of its two-and-a-half hours.

Sinner had to have treatment on his right thigh and even vomited during Friday night's leg of the semifinal as Medvedev gave the Italian by far his toughest test of the tournament.

But he looked in much better spirits before the restart as he joked and played football with his coaching team during

his warm-up in the bowels of the centre court arena, just as warm spring sunshine started to shine after a few days of volatile weather.

"I struggled a bit to sleep this night. It has been a situation I haven't been in yet, where you need to finish when you're nearly over with the match.You sleep, you don't know what's coming out the next day," Sinner told reporters.

"I think it's normal that not every day we feel 100 per cent. I tried to play with the best possible energy I have. Yesterday brought me to a point where I was up today.Today I'm very happy that I finished it."

The match was scheduled to restart at 3.00pm local time (13:00GMT) but was again delayed by an hour both due to more rain and the men's doubles semi-final, won

by Sinner's compatriots Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori.

A 4-2 lead in the third set for Sinner when play was stopped was too much for Medvedev to overcome, and the 24-year-old sealed his 33rd straight win in Masters 1000 tournaments.

Seventh seed Medvedev was at advantage in game seven of the third set, which he immediately won, but Sinner won the next game on his service to love and closed out the match in less than 20 minutes.

Ruud gets a chance for revenge for a brutal hammering against Sinner here last year after dismantling Luciano Darderi 6-1, 6-1 on Saturday, another match interrupted by heavy rain.

The Norwegian, who will be back in the top

20 of the world rankings on Monday, has not won a single set in any of his four matches with Sinner and was destroyed 6-0, 6-1 in the 2025 last eight in one of the most one-sided matches ever seen at the Foro Italico.

"I think he's playing much, much better tennis right now, so its going to be very tough," said Sinner.

"Every match every week, even if you play with the same player week after week. It's completely different, so I'm just happy to stand again here in the final."

Later Coco Gauff will attempt to claim her first Rome title in the women's final against Elina Svitolina.

American star Gauff lost to Jasmine Paolini in the last year's final but could go one better ahead of her Roland Garros title defence.

Pistons pound Cavaliers to stay alive

LOS ANGELES, United States (AFP) — Cade Cunningham scored 21 points as the Detroit Pistons staved off elimination from the NBA play-offs with a 115-94 victory over the Cleveland Cavaliers in their NBA Eastern Conference semifinal series on Saturday.

The top-seeded Pistons — trailing 3-2 in the best-of-seven series before must-win game in Cleveland — produced a dazzling early onslaught to build a double-digit lead that proved the difference between the two sides.

Cleveland, unbeaten at their Rocket Arena home so far this postseason, will now have to win on the road in Sunday's decisive game seven in Detroit to advance.

Cunningham's 21 points included five three-pointers, while at the defensive end, Detroit centre Jalen Duren delivered a dominant performance that included 11 rebounds, three blocks and a steal.

Cunningham was one of six Pistons players to finish in double figures, with Paul Reed adding 17 off the bench, and Duren and Daniss Jenkins scoring 15 points apiece.

"We're just playing our brand of basketball, coming out competing, trying to execute our system to the best of our ability and we're together," Cunningham said afterward.

"We stick together through everything, so it's a great win for us."

James Harden led Cleveland's scoring with 23 points while Donovan Mitchell was restricted to 18 points.

The Cavs started Friday's game brightly, opening up a six-point lead in the first quarter before the Pistons started firing to take a grip on the contest.

'We stick together through everything, so it's a great win for us'

A devastating 22-4 run by Detroit saw the visitors accelerate into a commanding 39-27 lead in the second quarter and although Cleveland closed the gap to 54-51 at half-time, the Pistons regrouped impressively to snuff out the Cavs' threat with a 30-19 third quarter.

That left Detroit leading by 14 points heading into the fourth and the result was never in doubt, with the Pistons maintaining a double-digit lead to close out victory.

THEATRE

Hungarian film maker Ildiko Enyedi tackles beauty and science

LOS ANGELES, United States (AFP) — A solitary ginkgo tree in the botanical garden of a university stands silent witness to the ebb and flow of generations trying to find a way to connect in the delicately beautiful "Silent Friend", which opens in US theatres this week.

The film — a winner at last year's Venice Film Festival — centres on the passion for discovery and the flowering of scientific inquiry, director Ildiko Enyedi told AFP.

"In an era when academic autonomy is questioned, the findings of science are questioned and sometimes really widely attacked... I found it somehow important to show the beauty of this sort of curiosity, the beauty of scientific research," said the Hungarian film maker.

"It is such an exceptional and beautiful trait of humankind that I thought it would be nice to show it in a film and draw attention to [it]."

The production weaves together three stories across different decades on a German



AFP photo

Ildiko Enyedi's new film 'Silent Friend' tackles the human need for connection, and the obstacles that get in its way

campus.

In 1908, Grete (Luna Wedler) becomes the first woman admitted to the university, where she is forced to contend with the cruel sexism prevalent in academia at the time.

In 1972, Hannes (Enzo Brumm) arrives from the countryside and struggles to assimilate into a campus defined by rebellious fervour.

Then, in 2020, a neuroscientist (Tony Leung) finds himself stranded within the facility alongside an

employee who speaks a different language during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All three characters navigate moments of solitude during their time at the university; yet, across their distinct eras, they are captivated by the equally solitary ginkgo tree that stands in the institution's botanical garden — a tree they observe in their search for connection.

"The whole film is in the same garden, but covers more than 100 years. It also shows

how much human perception changed," said Enyedi, who was nominated for an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film for her acclaimed "On Body and Soul" (2017).

**Women**

The film maker said the movie also illustrates how human perception regarding gender has evolved.

The vignettes range from a student for whom gaining admission is an exceptional feat, to a young woman striving to be taken seriously on a more open campus during the 1970s and finally to an academic who, in 2020, stands as a leading authority in her field of study.

"The 20th century was a century of women, where women's position in society so widely changed. So it was a very good tool to show the change," she said.

The film also centres on the innate human need for connection, the barriers posed by language and the various ways in which human beings navigate

these challenges.

When the protagonists of "Silent Friend" find themselves unable to truly communicate with their peers — whether due to personal differences or linguistic hurdles — they seek out ways to listen to nature; and nature, through a kind of sensory immersion and thanks to the film's sound design, ultimately finds its voice within the narrative.

"It is not by chance that I put some linguistic obstacles between some of the humans," Enyedi said.

It speaks to "the desire of communication, the difficulty of communication, the beauty when it rarely happens, and also [the need to] discover alternative channels of communication when the very basic... one is not working".

That fundamental need, Enyedi insists, lies at the very heart of the human experience — as does "the passion of discovering the world, the passion of shifting the gaze and what you can discover."

"Silent Friend" is in select US cinemas.

ART



AFP photo

Visitors look at the artworks during the World Art Dubai annual event in Dubai on Friday

Dubai's annual art fair opens despite regional war

DUBAI (AFP) — The Middle East's largest annual contemporary art fair opened in Dubai on Friday against the backdrop of the Iran war, drawing fewer galleries and a more local crowd than usual.

This year, in its 20th edition, Art Dubai opened a month late and in a scaled-down format after the regional conflict forced the organisers to re-vise their plans.

"When the conflict broke out, we were only a few weeks out from the fair and so we had to make a decision

as to whether to go ahead" with the three-day event, its Executive Director Benedetta Ghione, told AFP.

"For us, the message is about resilience," she added.

The organisers, who normally sell around 10,000 tickets, made admission free to attract visitors, and have so far received 16,000 registration requests on their website.

A ceasefire was agreed last month, but regional tensions remain high, disrupting air and sea transport, and tourists are still few and far between.

Despite the climate of uncertainty, some international gallery owners made the trip to Dubai, including France's Frank Elbaz.

"Despite the situation, you can feel that things are bubbling here and that it's a place with a future," he said.

Based in Lebanon, which has also been dragged into war, gallerist Saleh Barakat also felt it was important to attend the fair out of solidarity.

"We are all here this year in order to be present and to say life goes on," he said.

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