

THE JORDAN TIMES



EDUCATION

Prince Hassan, Princess Sarvath inaugurate new sports field at Amman Baccalaureate School

2



PROGRESS

EMV report highlights advances in 393 national projects in Q1 2026

3



COOPERATION

Jordanian, Saudi investment funds explore strategic opportunities across key sectors

7



WEEKENDER

The Spring That Ran Dry

8



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Photo courtesy of Prime Ministry

The board approves the academy's strategic framework and organisational structure, which comprises specialised units aligned with the institution's mandate

Hassan chairs board meeting of Public Administration Academy

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday chaired the second meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Jordanian Academy for Public Administration.

During the meeting, the board approved the academy's strategic framework and organisational structure, which comprises specialised units aligned with the institution's mandate.

The framework aims to bring about a qualitative shift in preparing and qualifying government personnel at

various levels through specialised training programmes designed to enhance efficiency, boost productivity and improve the quality of public services, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The board also endorsed the executive plan for the remainder of 2026 and for 2027. It includes launching new programmes and initiatives in public administration, advancing digital transformation, and promoting the use of modern technologies and data management in government work.

It also focuses on building the capacities of public sector employees and preparing future government leaders in line with international best practices, in partnership with relevant international institutions.

The meeting stressed the importance of reviewing and evaluating previous training programmes offered by the Institute of Public Administration, retaining effective programmes, and continuing their implementation in the coming months.

Continued on page 5

Crown Prince meets with Germany foreign minister in Berlin

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein met with Germany Foreign Minister Johann Wadepful in Berlin on Wednesday.

The meeting covered the importance of enhancing relations between Jordan and Germany in various fields, particularly in the economic, technological and educational sectors, as well as the need to leverage the opportunities offered by the Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership between Jordan and the European Union, according to a Royal Court statement.

The meeting touched on the Jordan-EU Investment Conference scheduled to take place at the end of this year, and the importance of strengthening cultural and tourism exchanges between the two countries.

Regional developments were also discussed, particularly the need to achieve comprehensive de-escalation that would restore stability and security to the Middle East, the statement said.

The Crown Prince underscored that cur-



Photo courtesy of Royal Court

HRH Crown Prince Hussein meets with Germany Foreign Minister Johann Wadepful in Berlin on Wednesday

rent regional developments must not divert the world's attention from the situation in Gaza and the West Bank, stressing the need to step up international efforts to counter Israel's illegal measures, halt at-

tempts to annex land in the West Bank, as well as attempts to alter the historical and legal status quo in Jerusalem.

His Royal Highness reaffirmed Jordan's continued support for Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq in

their efforts to maintain their security and stability, thereby contributing to peace and stability in the region.

The meeting, which included a dinner held in honour of the Crown Prince, was attended by

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Director of the Office of the Crown Prince Zaid Baqain and Jordan's Ambassador to Germany Fayeze Khouri.

Safadi, Irish prime minister discuss bilateral relations, regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Wednesday met with Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin to discuss bilateral relations and regional developments.

During the meeting, Safadi conveyed greetings from His Majesty King Abdullah to Irish President Catherine Connolly and Prime Minister Martin, who, in turn, conveyed his greetings to His Majesty and stressed the importance of relations between the two countries and the commitment to expanding cooperation.

The talks focused on prospects for enhancing bilateral cooperation and efforts to restore calm in the region, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.



Photo courtesy of Foreign Ministry

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Wednesday meets with Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin

Safadi also commended Ireland's role in supporting efforts to bolster stability and its consistent support for a just peace in the region based on the two-state solution.

During his visit, Safadi also held talks with Irish Minister for For-

eign Affairs, Trade and Defence Helen McEntee on expanding cooperation in the economic, investment, tourism, cultural and defence sectors.

The two ministers stressed the importance of building on the momentum in Jor-

danian-Irish relations and enhancing coordination during Ireland's upcoming presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2026.

They also discussed efforts to stop the dangerous escalation in the region, achieve de-

escalation and restore security and stability on the basis of addressing the root causes of crises and conflicts.

Safadi also stressed the importance of Ireland's positions, including its recognition of the Palestinian state in 2024, in rejecting settlement expansion and land confiscation, and supporting the Palestinian people's right to freedom and an independent state on their national soil on the basis of the two-state solution.

He briefed his Irish counterpart on Israeli violations against Muslim and Christian holy sites in occupied Jerusalem, and warned against the consequences of attempts to alter the city's historical and legal status quo.

Continued on page 5



القيادة العامة للقوات المسلحة الأردنية - الجيش العربي
JORDAN ARMED FORCES - ARAB ARMY

JAF downs unidentified drone over Jerash, no casualties reported

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) on Wednesday morning intercepted and shot down a drone of unknown origin that had

entered the Kingdom's airspace.

According to a JAF statement, the drone was brought down in the Balila area of the northern governorate

of Jerash. It added that the incident resulted in no casualties, with losses limited to minor material damage.



AFP photo

A health worker monitors visitors arriving at the Rodolphe Mrioux Laboratory, National Biomedical Research Institute in Goma, on Tuesday

Gov't bans entry from DRC, Uganda over Ebola concerns

AMMAN (JT) — The government has imposed a ban on arrivals from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda

as a precautionary measure to safeguard the Kingdom from the spread of Ebola, National Centre for Epidemiological and

Communicable Disease Control President Adel Belbaisi said on Tuesday.

Continued on page 5

Int'l tourist arrivals to Kingdom decline 5% in first four months of 2026 — ministry

AMMAN (JT) — The number of international tourist arrivals to Jordan declined by 5 per cent during the first four months of the current year, reaching 2.014 million visitors, according to the Tourism Ministry.

Overnight tourist arrivals fell by 7.8 per cent over the same period, totalling 1.627 million, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) said that tourism revenues dropped by 27.2 per cent in April 2026 to \$517.1 million, driven by a decline in receipts from all nationalities.

Overall tourism rev-

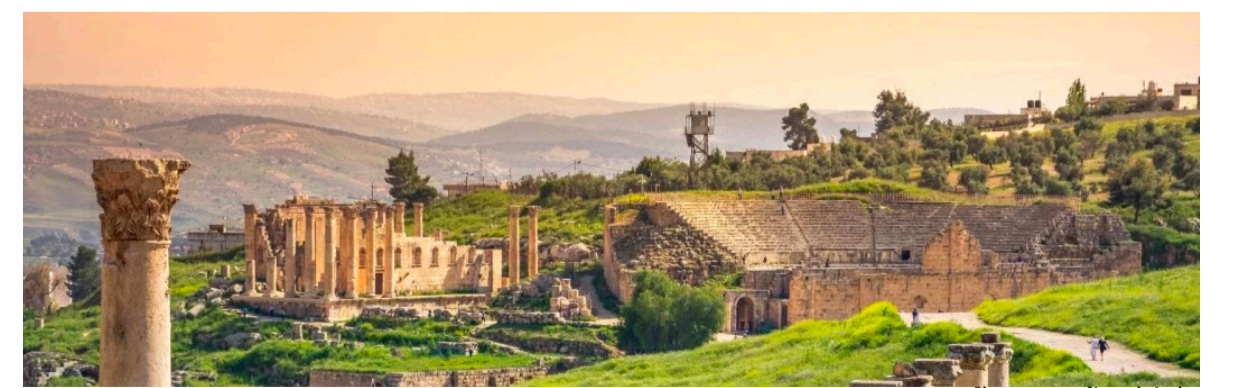


Photo courtesy of Invest in Jordan

Umm Qais, located in the Irbid Governorate of northern Jordan, around 110 km from Amman, is home to the ancient Greco-Roman city of Gadara

enues during the first four months of 2026 decreased by 10.4 per cent to \$2.17 billion, compared with a 15.3 per

cent increase to \$2.43 billion in the same period of 2025.

Breakdown data showed declines in tour-

ism receipts from expatriate Jordanians by 19.5 per cent, US tourists by 17.1 per cent, Europeans by 13.1 per cent, Arab

visitors by 3.3 per cent and other nationalities by 13.2 per cent.

Continued on page 5



Photo by Rahaf Abu Khadijah

People are watching a film during the 'Dutch Film Days', held by the embassy of The Netherlands in Amman to mark 75 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries

'Dutch Film Days' celebrates 75 years of Jordanian-Dutch ties through cinema

Rahaf Abu Khadijah

AMMAN — The embassy of The Netherlands in Amman is marking 75 years of diplomatic relations between Jordan and The Netherlands with "Dutch Film Days", a three-day cinematic event showcasing award-winning Dutch films and cultural exchange through storytelling.

The screenings, which ran from May 17 to May 19, featured a selection of critically acclaimed Dutch films that explore themes of family, identity, resilience and human connection.

In an interview with The Jordan Times, Seema Hneidy, senior press and cultural affairs officer at the embassy of The Netherlands, said that the festival was designed to bring audiences from both countries closer together through culture and cinema.

"We chose to do a Dutch Film Festival to celebrate 75 years of diplomatic relations between Jordan and The Netherlands because we believe that culture is an important part of bringing people of both countries together," Hneidy said.

She added that the event offers Jordanian audiences "a very light-hearted way to introduce Jordanian audiences to The Netherlands, Dutch people and Dutch culture".

Hneidy noted that the embassy "significantly" expanded its cultural programming in 2020 after receiving dedicated funding to support artistic exchange initiatives between the two countries.

"Our cultural programming was expanded in 2020, and that was because the embassy got a small

fund where we could bring Dutch artists, musicians and dancers from The Netherlands to Jordan," she said.

"At the same time, we also funded Jordanian artists to go to The Netherlands."

Among the initiatives highlighted by Hneidy was a project involving two Jordanian muralists who created large-scale murals across Dutch cities.

"In 2020, two Jordanian muralists created massive 10-storey murals in different cities in The Netherlands," she said.

'For us, cinema helps bridge cultural understanding because audiences get a quick window into the lives of people from other cultures'

Hneidy stressed that cinema serves as an effective platform for cultural understanding by allowing audiences to experience the realities and emotions of people from different societies.

"For us, cinema helps bridge cultural understanding because audiences get a quick window into the lives of people from other cultures," she said.

"You could be of different nationalities

living on completely different continents, but at the same time, humans are very alike. Whether you're Jordanian or Dutch, you have the same wants and needs. You need to be loved. It's a universal language."

She added that films allow viewers to "step into someone else's shoes" and recognise the common ground shared between people of different backgrounds.

The programme opened with Memory Lane, a drama that follows an elderly couple confronting dementia, ageing and reconciliation during a road trip to Spain. The film received two awards, including the Golden Calf for Best Film at the 2024 Netherlands Film Festival.

Another featured film is Character, the Oscar-winning adaptation of F. Bordewijk's novel that explores the tense relationship between an ambitious young man and his authoritarian father. The psychological drama won 18 awards, including the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1998 and the Golden Calf for Best Film at the 1997 Netherlands Film Festival.

The screenings also included Summer Brother, a coming-of-age drama centred on a 13-year-old boy caring for his disabled brother amid difficult family circumstances. The film won nine awards, including the Dutch Film Critics Award and Best Film at the 2023 Giffoni Film Festival.

Through the festival, organisers hope to strengthen cultural dialogue and highlight the arts' role in fostering mutual understanding between Jordan and The Netherlands.

Prince Hassan, Princess Sarvath inaugurate new sports field at Amman Baccaalaureate School

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince Hassan and HRH Princess Sarvath on Wednesday inaugurated a new sports field at the Amman Baccaalaureate School (ABS), named after the late Ahmad Mango, in the presence of HRH Princess Sumaya, chairperson of ABS Board of Trustees.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the Mango and Tabba families, who funded the construction of the facility, alongside current and former members of the board of trustees, administrative and teaching staff, alumni, students and guests, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

In her address, Princess Sumaya highlighted her deep personal connections to the institution.

"I stand here today as chairperson of the board of trustees of a school to which I am bound by a personal, family and intellectual legacy established by Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath through the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), of which the school constitutes one of its most prominent educational and humanitarian projects," Princess Sumaya said.

The princess noted that Mango was one of Prince Hassan's closest companions and a co-founder of the ABS who firmly believed in its vision and mission.



Petra photo

HRH Prince Hassan and HRH Princess Sarvath on Wednesday inaugurate a new sports field at the Amman Baccaalaureate School (ABS), named after the late Ahmad Mango, in the presence of HRH Princess Sumaya, chairperson of ABS Board of Trustees

She added that Ahmad Mango's name will not merely be a title on a plaque, but a living presence in the memory of the school and in the laughter of the children who will grow up in this place.

Princess Sumaya paid a special tribute to Princess Sarvath, the honorary chairperson of the board of trustees, praising her continuous devotion and inspiring leadership over four decades, which has solidified the school's position as a pioneering educational institution in Jordan and the wider region.

The princess also

highlighted several milestones achieved by the school during the 2025-2026 academic year, including the completion of the joint evaluation protocol between the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and the International Baccaalaureate Organisation.

She noted that the school received the "Fundamental Coaching Culture Award" and secured accreditation to offer National Professional Qualifications, supported by the UK Department for Education.

Dima Cobain, head of the Primary School, welcomed Prince Has-

san and Princess Sarvath, saying that their presence embodies the living extension of the educational and humanitarian vision upon which the school was founded.

Fayyaz Ahmad, principal and CEO of the school, said that the inauguration celebrates a vision that places the child, their well-being and the community at the heart of the educational process.

Ahmed added that the project was the fruit of the generosity of Faisal Tabba and Aisha Mango, describing the initiative as "a sustainable gift that will serve suc-

cessive generations of students".

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath unveiled the commemorative plaque, officially declaring the Ahmad Mango Field open.

Founded in 1981 under the umbrella of the RSS and the patronage of Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath, ABS was the first International Baccaalaureate school in Jordan and the region.

Over more than four decades, it has evolved into a leading national and regional educational benchmark.

Mexico gifts sculpture to Amman marking 50 years of ties with Jordan

AMMAN (JT) — The Mexican embassy and the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) on Wednesday held the dedication ceremony of the sculpture "El Caballito" by the distinguished Mexican artist Sebastian, a present from the People of Mexico to Jordan, commemorating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The sculpture was received on behalf of Jordan by GAM Committee Chairman Yousef Shawarbeh, according to an embassy statement.

The ceremony took place at Shibli Bisharat Park on Rainbow Street in Amman.

It was attended by Jordanian authorities, the creator of El Caballito, renowned Mexican sculptor Sebastian, members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of the cultural community, the Mexican community, and friends of Mexico and Jordan.

During the event, Ambassador of Mexico



GAM photo

The Mexican embassy and the Greater Amman Municipality on Wednesday hold a dedication ceremony of the sculpture 'El Caballito' by distinguished Mexican artist Sebastian

Jacob Prado, who formally delivered the art piece, highlighted that over the past five decades Mexico and Jordan had built a relationship grounded in mutual respect, growing cooperation across multiple fields and sincere friendship.

Prado noted that El Caballito, one of the

most emblematic and widely recognised artworks in Mexico City, stood as a "lasting symbol of the deep ties between both nations".

He added that the piece installed in Amman, a replica of the original sculpture, symbolically established a "sisterly" link between Amman and Mexico

City, reinforcing the cultural bridge between the two capitals.

Shawarbeh welcomed the installation of El Caballito, describing it as a new landmark that enriches Amman's urban landscape and public art scene.

He highlighted the international trajectory of Sebastian, whose work

has transformed public spaces around the world through monumental sculptures that explore science, colour, movement and identity.

Shawarbeh noted that placing the sculpture in one of the city's most vibrant cultural corridors reflects Amman's continued commitment to fostering artistic creativity in public spaces and integrating international artistic expression into the everyday life of the city.

Sebastian stressed that, through this piece, the relationship between Mexico and Jordan has been further boosted by art, understood as a universal language capable of bringing peoples together and transcending borders.

He expressed his hope that El Caballito would endure as a cultural landmark, a place of encounter and mutual understanding, and as a lasting symbol of friendship, cooperation, and shared inspiration between both countries.

Seminar highlights role of Maan in shaping Jordanian narrative

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Culture Mustafa Rawashdeh has said that the Jordanian Narrative Project seeks to document the Kingdom's civilisational and human heritage while highlighting the enduring relationship between Jordanians and their land throughout history.

The minister's remarks came during a seminar at the Al Hussein Bin Talal University in Maan, held as part of the nationwide dialogue sessions, under the Jordanian Narrative Project, according to a ministry statement.

The event, titled "Jordan: The Land and the People: Maan, Gateway to the Great Arab Revolt and Its Role in Building the Jordanian Narrative", was organised in



Culture Ministry photo

During a seminar at the Al Hussein Bin Talal University in Maan, Minister of Culture Mustafa Rawashdeh says that the Jordanian Narrative Project seeks to document the Kingdom's civilisational and human heritage

line with the directives of HRH Crown Prince Hussein and attended by of-

ficials, academics and researchers.

Rawashdeh said that

Jordan's historical legacy stretches from ancient civilisations to the estab-

lishment of the modern Jordanian state, emphasising the pivotal role of the southern city of Maan in the country's founding.

"Maan served as the first headquarters of the founding King Abdullah I Bin Al Hussein upon his arrival in Jordan in 1920," Rawashdeh said, adding that the governorate also played an important role along the Syrian Hajj route and in welcoming the early forces of the Great Arab Revolt.

The minister said that the Ministry of Culture continues to implement the "Dialogues" programme across the Kingdom to enrich cultural content linked to the national narrative and to document the distinct heritage of Jordan's governorates.

He also announced ongoing work on the "Maan Panorama", a project aimed at commemorating key moments associated with the arrival of the founding prince and other milestones in Jordan's modern history.

Rawashdeh stressed that the Jordanian narrative extends beyond linking geography with historical events, encompassing the social, cultural and human transformations that have shaped Jordanian identity over time.

During the seminar, Mansour Sheqirat, dean of the Petra College for Tourism and Archaeology at Al Hussein Bin Talal University, reviewed the historical significance of Maan, describing it as one of Jordan's old-

est and most culturally rich regions due to its strategic location on ancient trade and pilgrimage routes connecting the Arabian Peninsula, the Levant and Egypt.

He said that archaeological evidence indicates human settlement in the area dating back to the Paleolithic era, with discoveries of flint tools and early habitation sites confirming human presence for hundreds of thousands of years.

He added that the establishment of the Hejaz Railway in the early 20th century further enhanced the governorate's administrative and military importance in southern Jordan.

Sultan Maani of the Hashemite University said that Jordan's nation-

al narrative reflects the continuous interaction between land, people and heritage across centuries.

He described Maan as a living embodiment of that narrative, citing its historic links to trade caravans, pilgrimage routes and regional landmarks including Petra, Shobak Castle, and Adhruh.

Anwar Jazi discussed traditional customs and social life in Maan, particularly the governorate's historic role in receiving Hajj caravans.

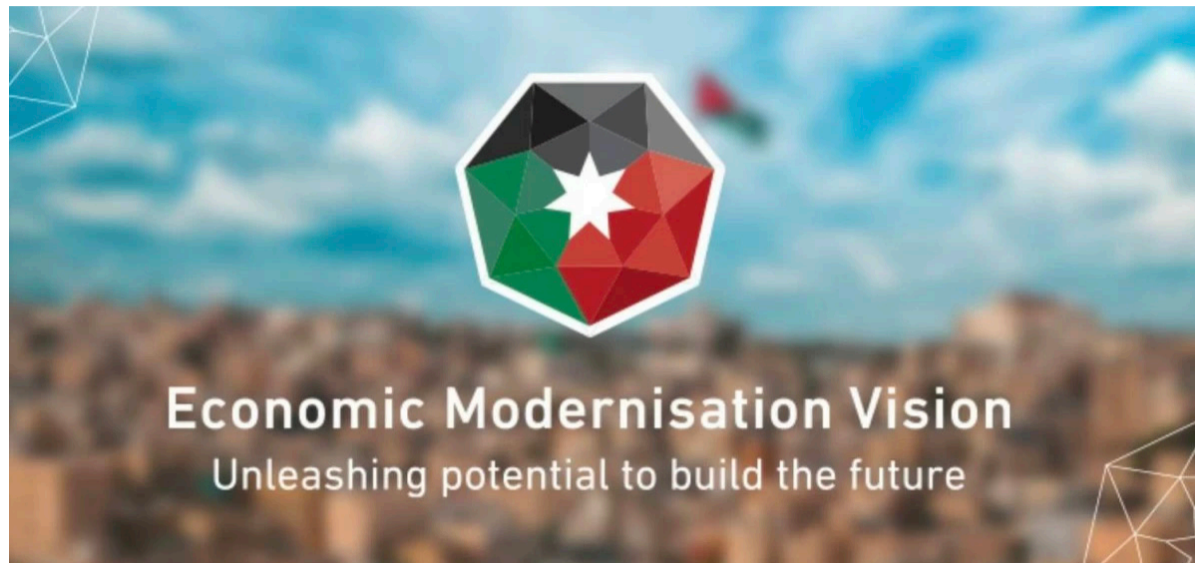
He said that residents traditionally welcomed pilgrims through celebrations known as "Al Jardah", during which locals provided travellers with water and supplies while markets flourished during pilgrimage seasons.

EMV report highlights advances in 393 national projects in Q1 2026

AMMAN (JT) — The Government Performance and Achievement Follow-up Unit at the Prime Ministry has released its first-quarter 2026 report on the implementation of the Executive Programme for the Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) (2026–2029).

The report outlined key achievements across the Vision's eight growth drivers, highlighting progress in implementing economic and industrial projects aimed at stimulating investment, accelerating economic growth and enhancing the competitiveness of the national economy.

According to the re-



port, the first quarter of 2026 marked a critical stage in completing the executive

requirements of the programme, which includes 393 projects. The phase focused

on advancing institutional and regulatory procedures, preparing project frameworks

and strengthening coordination among government entities, the private sector and in-

ternational partners to accelerate implementation in the coming stages.

The report also underscored the government's commitment to advancing the objectives of the Economic Modernisation Vision through an institutional approach focused on implementation, follow-up and impact assessment.

It added that the approach seeks to align government efforts and strengthen effective partnerships with the private sector in a bid to improve public services and reinforce Jordan's regional and international competitiveness.

AT A GLANCE

Prince Ali meets Jordanian refereeing team participating in World Cup



AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince Ali, president of the Jordan Football Association, on Wednesday met the Jordanian refereeing team participating in the FIFA World Cup 2026. Prince Ali wished the refereeing crew success at the tournament, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. The officiating team, which will mark the first participation of a Jordanian refereeing team at the World Cup, includes referee Adham Makhadmeh and assistant referees Ahmad Rawaili and Mohammad Khalaf.

Army thwarts infiltration, narcotics smuggling attempts



AMMAN (JT) — The Northern Military Region command on Tuesday thwarted an infiltration attempt by four individuals along one of its border fronts within its area of responsibility. The individuals were spotted while attempting to cross the border illegally, prompting troops to apply the rules of engagement, according to the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF). All four suspects were arrested and referred to competent authorities. Also on Wednesday, the Southern Military Region, in coordination with military security agencies and the Anti-Narcotics Department, foiled an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics using three drones along its western front, a military source at JAF said. Border guard units detected the drones and applied the rules of engagement, bringing them down inside Jordanian territory. The seized items were handed over to competent authorities, according to a second JAF statement.

Royal Court chief sponsors ceremony honouring King's support for charity work

AMMAN (JT) — Royal Hashemite Court Chief Yousef Issawi on Tuesday sponsored an honouring ceremony titled "Thank You, Our Majesty" organised by the Jordanian Charity Medication Bank in appreciation of the continuous Royal interest in humanitarian and charitable initiatives.

The initiative is affiliated with the "Sons of the Kingdom" Association, according to a Royal Court statement.

During the ceremony, which was attended by official figures, supporters, partners, artists, and media representatives,



Royal Hashemite Court Chief Yousef Issawi on Tuesday sponsors an honouring ceremony titled "Thank You, Our Majesty" organised by the Jordanian Charity Medication Bank

speakers expressed their pride in the Royal care and continuous support extended by His Majesty King Abdullah

to humanitarian and voluntary work across the Kingdom, contributing to serving citizens and promoting social

solidarity. Chairman of the Jordanian Charity Medication Bank Ashraf Kilani said that the Royal atten-

tion serves as a badge of pride for the bank, its employees, volunteers, and supporters, adding that it acts as an incentive to continue its humanitarian mission of providing medicine to those most in need, contributing to achieving drug security and strengthening the community healthcare system in Jordan.

For their part, Mahmoud Khalidi and Lama Boubli reviewed the bank's most prominent achievements since its establishment and its humanitarian role in serving the local community.

They highlighted its

efforts to deliver treatment and medicine to the needy across the Kingdom's governorates, in partnership with official institutions, the private sector, and supporting entities.

Director of Programmes and Projects at the bank Shahd Otaishat briefed the attendees on the "World of Medicine" magazine project, which has been officially licensed by the Media Commission. She noted that the upcoming first issue will highlight the achievements of the pharmaceutical sector under the reign of His Majesty.

EDCO launches real-time power fault detection system

AMMAN (JT) — The Electricity Distribution Company (EDCO) on Wednesday announced the development of an advanced electronic system capable of instantly detecting emergency power outages and connectivity disruptions at substations and transformers, enabling technical and maintenance teams to respond immediately without waiting for subscriber reports.

According to an EDCO statement, the system was developed entirely through local expertise in cooperation between the company's contracted specialists and its IT department, making it the first system of its kind in the region.

The company said the system operates through a dedicated smart application used by technical and on-call teams, providing automated real-time alerts around the clock for faults affecting more than 6,000 substations and transformers across EDCO's concession areas. These areas include the governorates of Karak, Tafilah, Maan and Aqaba, in addition to the Jordan Valley and the Kingdom's eastern region.

EDCO added that the system uses GPS technology to dispatch technical crews directly to fault locations while documenting all maintenance procedures carried out

to address the issues. The company said the system is expected to accelerate response times, improve network management efficiency and ensure the continuity of electricity supply.

The company also noted that it is currently developing a package of advanced technological systems and applications through local expertise in cooperation with its IT department. These systems, EDCO said, will be announced progressively after completion and testing as part of efforts to further enhance electricity grid management and improve the quality of services provided to consumers.

Jordanian Field Hospital South Gaza receives delegation from Gaza

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordanian Field Hospital South Gaza on Tuesday received a delegation comprising notables, tribal leaders and figures from Khan Yunis and Rafah in the Gaza Strip, who met with hospital personnel and expressed gratitude for the facility's ongoing medical and humanitarian services to residents of the Strip.

The delegation was received by the hospital's force commander, director and staff members, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF).

During the visit, the delegation voiced appreciation for Jordan's "historic and steadfast" positions, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah and HRH Crown Prince Hussein, in support-



The Jordanian Field Hospital South Gaza on Tuesday receives a delegation comprising notables, tribal leaders and figures from Khan Yunis and Rafah in the Gaza Strip

ing the resilience of the Palestinian people and standing by them under all circumstances.

The delegates praised Jordan's humanitarian efforts, saying the Kingdom was among the first to break the

humanitarian blockade through land and air bridges delivering relief and medical aid under Royal directives, which they described as a lifeline for Gaza residents. They also commended the professionalism of

the medical, nursing and technical teams at the field hospital, noting their role in alleviating the suffering of the wounded and sick.

For his part, the commander of the Jordanian Field Hospital South

Gaza welcomed the delegation, stressing that the hospital personnel are fulfilling their duty to provide the highest level of medical care and assistance, driven by the bonds of brotherhood between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples.

Jordan runs two military field hospitals in Gaza - one in the Strip's north and was established in 2009 following the war in 2008 and the second is in Khan Yunis in the south, which was established in November 2023 at the peak of the Israeli war of aggression on the coastal enclave that erupted on October 7, 2023.

Besides the field hospitals in Gaza, the JAF established the Jordanian field hospital in Nablus in late November 2023.

Water Ministry activates emergency plan for Eid Al Adha to ensure fair water distribution

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Water and Irrigation Raed Abu Soud said on Wednesday that the ministry, the Water Authority, the Jordan Valley Authority and water companies are implementing an emergency plan during the Eid Al Adha holiday to ensure fair distribution and secure water supplies across the Kingdom.

During a meeting with senior water sector officials and water company directors, Abu Soud stressed the importance of responding effectively to citizens' complaints, addressing service disruptions and operating new water sources to meet the expected rise in demand during the holiday period, according to a ministry

statement.

He directed all entities to roll out water distribution schedules across governorates and to redistribute water allocations in certain areas to improve efficiency and ensure fairness among citizens.

Abu Soud noted that Prime Minister Jafar Hassan is closely following the measures

being taken to enhance water distribution, particularly in governorates facing shortages.

He also called for intensified technical and monitoring efforts, including rehabilitating water sources, drilling new wells and activating round-the-clock emergency response plans.

The minister

stressed the need to strengthen inspection campaigns and curb illegal water use and violations targeting water sources and networks, in coordination with the Interior Ministry, Public Security Directorate and the judiciary.

Abu Soud urged citizens to cooperate with water sector teams and use the unified com-

plaints centre via hotline 117116.

Separately, Abu Soud on Wednesday received British Ambassador to Jordan Philip Hall at the ministry, where discussions focused on water sector challenges and ongoing efforts to secure supplies through sustainable projects, including the National Carrier Project.

The minister expressed the government's appreciation for the support provided by donor and friendly countries, particularly the United Kingdom, in addressing Jordan's water challenges.

For his part, Ambassador Hall said the United Kingdom is interested in expanding cooperation and supporting modern wa-

ter management solutions. He added that British companies and the private sector are ready to contribute to the implementation of water projects and reaffirmed the UK's support for sustainable initiatives, particularly the National Carrier Project, while praising the water sector's efforts in managing current challenges.

JEDCO launches Jordanian-Omani project to boost SMEs' digital capacity

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation (JEDCO) on Wednesday announced the launch of a joint Jordanian-Omani project under the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

According to a JEDCO

statement, the project aims to build the capacities of business support organisations in designing digital support programmes for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in the tourism and hospitality sector, thereby driving digital transformation and boosting SME readiness to leverage e-com-

merce and digital economy tools.

The initiative is based on a memorandum of understanding and an executive action plan signed between JEDCO and the Youth Fund (Sharakah) in Oman. JEDCO will lead the implementation of the project in partnership with the Omani side, and in cooperation with the

Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development, which will provide technical support and specialised expertise during the upcoming phase.

JEDCO Acting Executive Director Dana Zoubi emphasised that the project underscores the importance of regional partnerships in developing modern, innovative

support instruments for SMEs, particularly in promising economic sectors like tourism and hospitality, which are witnessing a rapid shift toward digital solutions and e-commerce.

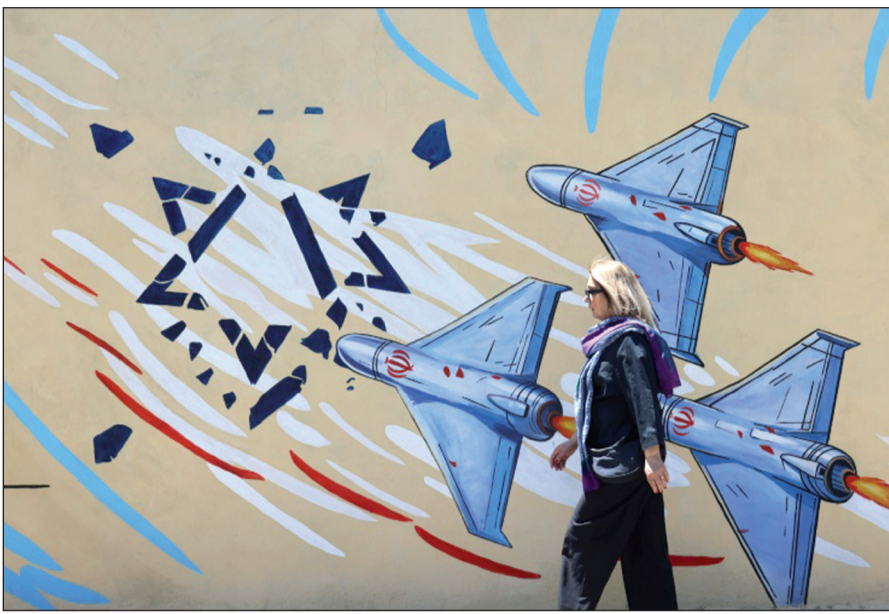
Zoubi added that the project aligns with the Economic Modernisation Vision and JEDCO's priorities to support

the digital transition of SMEs. She noted that exchanging expertise among business support organisations in Islamic countries will facilitate the creation of more efficient and sustainable support programmes, while preparing tourism ventures to tap into opportunities within the digital economy.

She explained that the project seeks to enable business support organisations to design targeted financial and digital assistance packages for tourism businesses, drawing on regional and international best practices to enhance SME competitiveness and market access.

The project will also

produce practical, guided frameworks to develop scalable support models that can be utilised across OIC member states, reinforcing the role of business support organisations in keeping pace with digital transformation and empowering small businesses to maximize their economic potential.



Iran and the United States have exchanged threats while continuing to negotiate for a peace deal

Iran Guard warn of war beyond Mideast as Trump repeats threats

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran warned on Wednesday that the Middle East war would spread far beyond the region if the United States and Israel resumed their attacks, after President Donald Trump threatened to strike again unless a deal is reached.

A ceasefire on April 8 brought a halt to the conflict, which has roiled the global economy, but with Washington and Tehran seemingly reluctant to resume the fighting a war of words has taken its place.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened Tehran with renewed military action, while Iranian officials have hit back with their own warnings of devastating action.

Nevertheless, despite sporadic outbursts of violence, the two countries have continued to take part in diplomatic exchanges, mediated by Pakistan, aimed at bringing a formal end to the war.

On Tuesday, US Vice President JD Vance told reporters that “a lot of good progress is being made” and “we’re just going to keep working at it”, even as he told Iran the US military was “locked and loaded”.

Iran’s Revolutionary

Guard issued their own threat on Wednesday, saying, “if the aggression against Iran is repeated, the promised regional war will this time spread far beyond the region and our devastating blows will crush you”.

“The American-Zionist enemy... must know that despite the offensive carried out against us using the full capabilities of the world’s two most expensive armies, we have not deployed the full power of the Islamic revolution,” the Guard said in a statement on their Sepah News website.

Citing Iranian diplomatic sources, official news agency IRNA meanwhile announced a visit to Tehran by Pakistan’s Interior Minister, his second in less than a week.

Under pressure

On Tuesday, Trump insisted the US retained the upper hand and that Iran was desperate for peace.

“You know how it is to negotiate with a country where you’re beating them badly. They come to the table, they’re begging to make a deal,” he said.

“I hope we don’t have to do the war, but we

may have to give them another big hit. I’m not sure yet.”

He has previously made similar claims without a deal being concluded.

The US leader is himself under pressure, with rising energy costs beginning to bite at home.

While the ceasefire brought a halt to the fighting, it has not reopened the vital Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world’s oil and liquefied natural gas usually pass.

The future of the waterway is a key sticking point in negotiations, but without a deal fears are growing for the global economy as pre-war stockpiles of oil are used up.

Rising fuel prices have caused widespread pain, with protests erupting in Kenya, which like many African countries is dependent on imports from the Gulf and where the public transport system has ground to a halt.

“It’s unfortunate that we lost four Kenyans in today’s violence, which also saw more than 30 people injured,” Interior Minister Kipchumba Murkomen told reporters.

Shot for throwing stones: Israeli forces killing West Bank teens weekly

NABLUS, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Youssef Shtayyeh came home from school on an April afternoon, dropped his bag in the hallway and headed straight back out to join his friends.

Minutes later, he was dead, shot by an Israeli soldier, just 100 metres from his home.

He was 15. His is not an isolated case.

Since Israel launched a major military operation in the northern West Bank in January 2025, one Palestinian minor has been killed every week on average across the territory, up from one every three weeks in 2021, according to UNICEF.

Seventy teenagers, mostly aged 15 to 16, have been killed to date, 65 of them by Israeli forces, according to a UNICEF report dated May 12.

Then came Youssef Kaabnah, 16, killed on May 13.

Then Fahd Oweis, 15, two days later.

The Israeli military said both had “hurled stones” at soldiers.

It is almost certainly what Shtayyeh had been doing too, on April 23, in Nablus, the largest city in the northern West Bank, a Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967.

Youssef and his friends were on a side street above a main road when a couple passing in a car spotted them throwing stones, and the military convoy below.

One jeep stopped. Then the others.

“A soldier got out, then two more. They started shooting at the kids,” the passing driver told AFP, declining to be named for safety reasons.

‘Designed to kill’

A neighbour filmed what followed. Two shots. Then



Palestinian Sameh Shtayyeh, the father of 15-year-old Youssef Sameh Shtayyeh who was killed on April 23, by Israeli soldiers in the city of Nablus, hugs his son as they visit his grave at the cemetery in the village of Till, west of Nablus, in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian West Bank on May 12

screams. Youssef grabbed the car door.

“He said, ‘Please don’t leave me, I’m scared. Take me to my father, take me home,’” the driver recalled.

Youssef’s father Sameh Shtayyeh, a 48-year-old building contractor, told AFP he had no idea what had caused the soldiers to open fire on his son as he “wasn’t there”.

In a panic, the driver told the boy to get in the car and sped to the hospital.

By the time they reached the facility, the boy was silent.

Youssef’s heart had stopped.

“A gunshot wound, entry in the back, exit through the chest,” surgeon Bahaa Fattouh, who treated him, told

AFP.

Doctors resuscitated him and rushed him to the operating theatre. His heart stopped again.

This time, it did not revive.

“Earlier, we used to treat minor injuries, legs, arms, rubber bullets,” said Fattouh.

But since the Hamas surprise attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, “we only see lethal wounds, chest, head”.

Wounds, Fattouh said, that were “designed to kill”.

“Most patients die on the operating table.”

‘Standard procedure’

AFP contacted the Israeli military on the day of the incident and again after returning from Nablus last week.

The response was identical, word for word: “A terrorist threw stones at soldiers. The soldiers applied the standard arrest procedure, which ended with fire being directed at the suspect.”

Israeli daily Haaretz recently quoted the military’s commander for the West Bank, Major General Avi Bluth, saying troops had killed 42 Palestinians for throwing stones in 2025.

He described stone-throwing as “terrorism”.

Standing at the spot where his son fell, Sameh Shtayyeh stares down at the road below.

“Whether he threw stones or not, what does it matter? Where is the danger to an army patrol?” he asks bitterly.

In protests “in Israel, in France, people throw stones and bins” and face nothing worse than arrest, he said.

He buried Youssef in the family village of Tell, 5 kilometres from Nablus.

Weeks later, women were still holding a vigil at the flower-covered grave, topped with a portrait of the teenager showing him on a football pitch with a ball at his feet.

His father had promised to take him to Saudi Arabia to watch Cristiano Ronaldo play.

Now, each time Sameh comes home, Youssef is not there to greet him.

His eldest son returns from school, but Youssef is not there.

He glances at the back seat of his car. Youssef is not there

Putin, Xi hail ‘unyielding’ ties in talks after Trump visit

BEIJING (AFP) — President Xi Jinping hailed China and Russia’s “unyielding” ties in talks with Vladimir Putin on Wednesday, as the pair met to underscore their alliance days after Donald Trump’s own visit to Beijing.

The two countries’ ties have deepened since Moscow’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine, as Russia has become increasingly dependent on China, its main oil customer.

Putin was received by Xi outside Beijing’s opulent Great Hall of the People in much the same fashion as Trump last week, complete with chanting children and military fanfare.

But the language was much warmer, with Xi telling the Russian leader Beijing and Moscow have “continuously deepened our political mutual trust and strategic coordination

with a resilience that remains unyielding”, according to Chinese state media.

Opening talks, both were quick to laud their countries’ special ties as they extended their treaty of “friendly cooperation”.

Putin, quoting a Chinese phrase, told Xi: “A day apart feels like three autumns,” adding that relations had reached an “unprecedentedly high level” despite “unfavourable external factors”, Russian media footage showed.

In an apparent swipe at the United States, Xi warned of “unilateral and hegemonic counter-currents running rampant” in the world.

In contrast to Trump’s visit last week, which yielded little in the way of immediate concrete announcements, Putin and Xi signed a slew of agreements on Wednesday on trade, media

and energy.

The two leaders will have tea later, at which “the most important issues” such as Ukraine, Iran and relations with the US will be discussed, Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov told Russian state media on Monday.

“It could be a very long discussion,” he added.

Fossil fuel push

Beneath the camaraderie, Putin is now perceived by many to be the junior partner in the relationship.

The Russian leader has been weakened over four years of the Ukraine conflict, with his country’s economy shrinking in the first quarter of the year as factors such as war-time spending, labour shortages and sanctions take their toll.

Analysts believed Pu-

tin would use his visit to push for progress on the “Power of Siberia 2”, a major natural gas pipeline running from Russia to China through Mongolia, a land alternative to crude imported by sea from the Middle East.

But Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Russian media Wednesday that while the two sides had reached a “basic understanding”, including on “the route and how it will be built” — there was no “clear timeline”, and “there are still some details to be worked out”.

The US-Israel war on Iran has hampered crude and gas flows from the Middle East, giving an opportunity for Putin to offer Russian energy sources as an alternative.

“Russia and China are actively cooperating in the energy sec-

tor... We are, of course, ready to continue reliably supplying all these types of fuel to the rapidly growing Chinese market,” Putin said Wednesday.

His priorities may differ from China’s, which wants the Middle East conflict concluded as soon as possible.

Underlining that, Xi told Putin on Wednesday that “a comprehensive ceasefire is of utmost urgency, resuming hostilities is even more inadvisable and maintaining negotiations is particularly important”.

‘Sovereign foreign policy’

Xi has played host to a series of world leaders as an increasingly unpredictable United States under Trump has pushed many to shore up alliances with Beijing.

Many have urged him to use his influence with Russia and Iran to help bring an end to the respective conflicts there.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had asked Trump to discuss ending the war with Xi during his trip last week.

The pair did talk about the issue, but the US president left China without a breakthrough.



A woman wearing leggings bearing the flag of the United States, and a dog, walk past a house displaying a poster of the late Venezuela’s leader Hugo Chavez, former Cuba’s president Raul Castro and late revolutionary leader Argentine-born Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara, in Havana, on Tuesday

US, Cuba held talks on aid offer — US official

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The United States and Cuba held talks this week on a US offer of \$100 million in assistance for the crisis-hit adversary, a US official said on Tuesday.

Mike Hammer, the US ambassador to Havana, met on Monday with foreign ministry officials, the State Department official said on condition of anonymity.

“We have been in close coordination with the Cubans. We had a meeting yesterday [Monday] and con-

tinue to pursue that proposal aggressively,” the official said.

The aid would be distributed through Christian charities and not handed over directly to the Cuban government, he said.

“We care a tremendous amount about the Cuban people, and want to be able to provide that assistance directly to them.”

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, a sworn foe of Havana’s communist government, has publicly offered the \$100 million but has demanded that Cuba

take steps to open up.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez last week said that Havana was open to reviewing the aid proposal, after earlier saying Rubio was lying about the offer.

Cuba has been in the throes of a major economic crisis with persistent energy blackouts after the United States overthrew Venezuela’s leftist leader Nicolas Maduro and ended the flow of free oil from Caracas in exchange for Cuban medical expertise and other services.

Tender Invitation

The General Headquarters of the Jordan Armed Forces/Royal Medical Services hereby announces Tender **P43/2026/1**

(CAPSULE ENDOSCOPY)

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., SUN 21th 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 www.jrms.jaf.mil.jo

Tender Reininvitation

The General Headquarters of the Jordan Armed Forces/Royal Medical Services hereby announces Tender **P45/2026/A/4**

(مستهلكات الأريطة والضمادات العامة)

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., THU 11th 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 www.jrms.jaf.mil.jo

Police defenders of US Capitol sue to stop Trump 'slush fund'

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — Two police officers filed a lawsuit on Wednesday seeking to block the Trump administration from creating a compensation fund that could provide payouts to the president's supporters who attacked the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

"In the most brazen act of presidential corruption this century, President Donald J. Trump has created a \$1.776 billion taxpayer-funded slush fund to finance the insurrectionists and paramilitary groups that commit violence in his name," the officers said in their suit filed in federal court in Washington.

"Although Trump and his cronies have been secretive about the Fund's ends, reporting leaves no doubt that it will be used, among other purposes, to pay the nearly 1,600 people charged with attacking the Capitol," they said. Trump issued a mass pardon to the January 6 defendants on his first day in office last year.

The two officers who filed the suit — Harry Dunn and Daniel Hodges — were among those who defended the Capitol from the pro-Trump mob that was seeking to block congressional certification of Democrat Joe Biden's election victory.

The Justice Department announced the creation of the "Anti-Weaponisation Fund" on Monday as part of a settlement in which Trump dropped a lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for a years-old leak of his tax returns.

Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche told a Senate committee on Tuesday that the fund was needed to "compensate for what



Trump supporters clashed with police as they stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021

the Democrats and what Biden and what [former Biden attorney general Merrick] Garland did for four years".

Blanche would not rule out that Trump supporters who were convicted of attacking police during the assault on the Capitol would be eligible for payouts.

"Anybody in this country is eligible to apply if they believe they were a victim of 'weaponisation,'" said Blanche, who is Trump's former personal attorney and who will appoint the five commissioners to oversee the fund.

'Corrupt sham'

Trump, speaking to reporters on Wednesday, also defended the fund.

"People were destroyed, they went to jail, their families were ruined, they committed suicide," he said. "The Biden administration was horrible... We're reimbursing those people for their legal fees and for their costs."

The lawsuit, which names Trump, Blanche

and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent as defendants, said the "Anti-Weaponisation Fund" is "illegal".

"No statute authorises its creation, the settlement on which it is premised is a corrupt sham, and its design violates the Constitution and federal law," it says.

After leaving the White House in 2021, Trump was charged by special counsel Jack Smith with attempting to overturn his 2020 election loss to Biden and allegedly mishandling classified documents.

Both cases were dropped after the Republican won the 2024 presidential election.

Trump, his two eldest sons Eric and Donald Jr. and the Trump Organisation filed a lawsuit against the IRS in January seeking \$10 billion in damages over the tax returns leak.

A former IRS contractor pleaded guilty in 2023 to leaking the tax returns of Trump and other wealthy Americans to the media and received a five-year prison sentence.

Iran's threat to Hormuz submarine cables

PARIS, France (AFP) — Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps threatened on Monday to impose "permits" on submarine fibre-optic cables passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

Here is what you need to know about cable infrastructure in the region and how the threats could play out:

What cables run through Hormuz?

Major connections running through Hormuz include a branch of AAE-1 (Asia, Africa, Europe), which connects points from Hong Kong to Italy and France.

Meanwhile, the FALCON and Gulf Bridge cables connect countries in the Gulf — including Iran — with India and eastern Africa as far as Egypt.

Data running over the cables includes "all kinds of traffic, any data you can think of — videos, e-mail, social media, financial transactions, government communication", Alan Mauldin, research director at specialist data firm TeleGeography, told AFP.

The potential for global disruption is limited as data flowing between Asia and Europe on AAE-1 does not pass via the Gulf branch, Mauldin said.

What's more, "all of the Gulf countries using submarine cables that traverse the Strait of Hormuz have multiple other connectivity options", he added.

But Mauldin did note in a March blog that "the capacity of terrestrial networks may not be sufficient to handle the complete re-routing of traffic" if the Gulf's subsea connections are cut off.

As host of AAE-1's Gulf terminal, Qatar especially would be affected by any disruption to the link.



Vessels are seen anchored in the Strait of Hormuz, off the port city of Khasab on Oman's northern Musandam Peninsula on May 17

What threat could Iran pose to cables?

Hormuz is "a closed-in geographic area in a strait, with relatively shallow waters... it's especially favourable for harassment operations using manned or unmanned systems", said Eric Lavault, a former French naval officer.

Lavault pointed out that American forces have not been able to prevent Iran launching operations from its long Gulf coast, with Tehran retaining "solid military potential".

Iran could both attack the cables themselves and "prevent the cable firms from carrying out operations, either for maintenance or for laying new cables," he said. "If Iran damages them, they'll have to

be repaired," Lavault added.

Cables around the world are regularly damaged — mostly by accidents, such as ships dragging their anchors. The International Cable Protection Committee tallied around 200 incidents a year, Mauldin wrote in March.

"A dedicated fleet of repair vessels is on standby," he noted.

But these require permits to enter a country's waters and must remain stationary on site for long periods — making them potentially vulnerable to attack.

Only one repair vessel owned by UAE-based e-Marine is currently in the Gulf, Mauldin pointed out, limiting capacity until the Strait of Hormuz is reopened. Can Iran legally tax

or forbid the cables?

It was not immediately clear from Iranian statements who it could target for demands to pay tolls or permits — whether cable layers, owners, operators or users.

In territorial terms, "given the long-standing issues with Iran, all cables were laid in Omani waters as they passed through the Strait of Hormuz," Mauldin wrote in March.

But Tehran has claimed "absolute sovereignty over the bed and subsoil of its territorial sea".

Iran's threat "calls international law into question," said Lavault, as the country is a signatory to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) —

"a bit like the rules of the road at sea".

"In normal conditions they don't have the right to demand tolls" from passing ships — "and the same goes for cables", he added.

UNCLOS allows laying cables and pipelines within countries' exclusive economic zones, which extend up to 200 nautical miles (370 kilometres) from their coastlines.

"The coastal state normally has no right to object," Lavault said.

But although Iran has signed UNCLOS, it never ratified the treaty — the same position as the United States.

If the treaty is called into question, "it would be a crack in another fundamental pillar of international law", Lavault warned.

Gov't bans entry from DRC, Uganda over Ebola concerns

Continued from page 1

Belbaisi told Al Mamlaka TV that the decision aims to preserve Jordan's Ebola-free status following an assessment of epidemiological data related to outbreaks in both countries.

He said that Jordanian citizens currently in the DRC or Uganda will still be allowed to return home but will be required to undergo a 21-day quarantine, the maximum incubation period for Ebola.

The quarantine may take place in designated facilities or at home, depending on each individual's circumstances and ability to isolate safely, he said.

The move comes amid growing international concern over the outbreak. The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Tuesday warned about the "scale and speed" of the Ebola flare-up in the DRC, cautioning that the outbreak could persist for an extended period, according to AFP.

Belbaisi said the decision followed directives from the minister of health and was finalised during a meeting involving officials from the Ministry of Health, the Directorate of Epidemiology, the National Centre for Epidemiological and Communicable Disease Control and a representative from the WHO office in Jordan.

The meeting reviewed data provided

by the WHO and authorities in the DRC and Uganda, indicating a significant spread of the virus in both countries. According to Belbaisi, approximately 131 suspected deaths and more than 500 confirmed and suspected cases have been recorded.

'Beyond the confirmed cases, there are almost 600 suspected cases and 139 suspected deaths'

He noted that the recommendation was submitted to the minister of health and later approved by the Prime Ministry as part of efforts to protect public health in the Kingdom.

Belbaisi added that the entry ban will be reviewed monthly in light of updated epidemiological data and could either be extended or lifted depending on the progression of the outbreak.

Explaining the nature of the disease, Belbaisi said Ebola is a severe haemorrhagic

fever virus initially transmitted to humans through contact with infected fruit bats and later spread through blood, bodily fluids and contaminated surfaces.

He stressed that Ebola does not spread in the same manner as COVID-19 and is unlikely to trigger a global pandemic, although it remains highly dangerous because of its elevated mortality rate.

Belbaisi also urged anyone experiencing unexplained fever after visiting affected areas or coming into contact with suspected or confirmed cases within the previous 21 days to seek immediate medical attention and disclose their travel history.

He affirmed that Jordan possesses the laboratory capacity needed to detect the virus, with testing kits available at the Ministry of Health's central laboratories and the National Centre for Epidemiological and Communicable Disease Control.

Belbaisi reassured the public that there is no cause for panic.

WHO on Wednesday said the risk of the Democratic Republic of Congo's deadly Ebola outbreak was currently high at the national and regional levels but low worldwide.

WHO experts said that while investigations into its origins were ongoing, given the scale of the situation

in the eastern DRC, the outbreak probably began a couple of months ago, according to AFP.

But the UN health agency's emergency committee said it did not currently meet the pandemic emergency threshold.

"WHO assesses the risk of the epidemic as high at the national and regional levels, and low at the global level," said the organisation's chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

So far, 51 cases have been confirmed in the DRC, in the eastern provinces of Ituri and North Kivu, "although we know the scale of the epidemic in DRC is much larger", he told a press conference at the WHO's headquarters in Geneva.

He said Uganda had also reported two confirmed cases in the capital Kampala, including one death, while a US national working in the DRC has been confirmed positive and transferred to Germany.

"There are several factors that warrant serious concern about the potential for further spread and further deaths," said Tedros.

"Beyond the confirmed cases, there are almost 600 suspected cases and 139 suspected deaths.

"We expect those numbers to keep increasing, given the amount of time the virus was circulating before the outbreak was detected."

On Sunday, Tedros declared the situation to be a public health emergency of international concern — the second-highest level of alarm under the legally binding International Health Regulations (IHR) — triggering emergency responses in countries worldwide.

The WHO emergency committee convened to assess the outbreak met on Tuesday.

"The current situation and criteria for a public health emergency of international concern have been met, and we agree that the current situation does not satisfy the criteria for a pandemic emergency," the committee's chair, Lucille Blumberg, told reporters from South Africa.

Anais Legand, WHO technical officer on viral haemorrhagic fevers, said investigations were under way to pinpoint how long Ebola has been spreading in the eastern DRC.

"Given the scale, we are thinking that it has started probably a couple of months ago, but investigations are ongoing and our priority is really to cut the transmission chain by implementing contact tracing, isolating and caring for all suspect and confirmed cases," she said.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Tuesday said the WHO was "a little late" in identifying a deadly outbreak.

Hassan chairs board meeting of Public Administration Academy

Continued from page 1

It also approved the formation of permanent committees under the Board of Trustees. These include the Learning and Future Readiness Committee, the Partner-

ships and Institutional Sustainability Committee, and the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Government Communication and government

Spokesperson Mohammad Momani, Minister of State for Public Sector Development and Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees Badria Balbeisi, and Academy President Mustafa Hamarneh.

Safadi, Irish prime minister discuss bilateral relations, regional developments

Continued from page 1

The two ministers stressed the need to maintain stability in Gaza, ensure the full implementation of US President Donald Trump's plan and remove obstacles to the entry of sufficient humanitarian aid into the Strip. They also stressed the importance of supporting UNRWA and enabling it to fulfil its UN mandate.

Safadi and McEntee also discussed developments in Syria and Lebanon, with Safadi stressing the importance of security and

stability in Syria, respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the need to consolidate the ceasefire in Lebanon and support the Lebanese government's efforts to extend its sovereignty over all Lebanese territory.

Safadi noted that Jordan will host the sixth Arab-European ministerial meeting on June 22-23, 2026, as an opportunity to enhance Arab-European cooperation and expressed hope that McEntee would take part.

Safadi also met Chair of the Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Af-

fairs and Trade John Lahart and a number of committee members, with the talks covering ways to enhance cooperation in a number of vital sectors of interest to the two countries, as well as regional and international issues.

Safadi on Tuesday also held talks with Jordanian entrepreneurs from the Jordanian community in Ireland on national economic priorities, investment opportunities in the Kingdom and ways to enhance the contribution of Jordanians abroad to economic development efforts.

Int'l tourist arrivals to Kingdom decline 5% in first four months of 2026 — ministry

Continued from page 1

The figures also indicated a 12.9 per cent decrease in outbound tourism spending by

Jordanians and residents abroad during the first four months of 2026, reaching \$562.6 million. In April alone, expenditure dropped

by 33.7 per cent to \$103 million.

Net tourism revenues for the first four months of 2026 declined by 9.5 per cent to \$1.61 billion.

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Jordanian banks in 2025

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

Despite the global economic slowdown, rising financing costs, and persistent regional uncertainty, Jordan's banking sector demonstrated remarkable resilience in 2025 by maintaining stability and achieving balanced growth across most key financial indicators. The figures presented in the study "Comparative Performance of Banks Operating in Jordan 2024–2025" issued by the Jordan Banks Association, reveal that Jordanian banks not only preserved their traditional strength, but also began reshaping their operational and credit models to adapt to new economic realities.

What stands out in the sector's performance is that growth was not limited to a single indicator. It extended across assets, deposits, credit facilities and shareholders' equity, reflecting continued confidence in the Jordanian banking sector as one of the most stable pillars of the national economy. Total banking assets increased to nearly JD 71 billion, recording growth of 6.5 per cent, while deposits rose by 7.3 per cent to JD 58.3 billion. Credit facilities reached JD 33.2 billion with growth of 4.3 per cent, while shareholders' equity climbed to JD 8.26 billion.

These figures highlight an important reality: The banking sector continues to possess a strong ability to attract liquidity, even amid increasing competition from alternative investment instruments. Moreover, the faster growth in deposits compared to credit facilities indicates that banks remain cautious in lending activities and continue adopting more conservative risk management strategies.

From a market structure perspective, the study confirms the continued dominance of Jordanian commercial banks within the banking landscape. These banks account for around 74.5 per cent of total assets, 72.9 per cent of total deposits, and 64.5 per cent of total credit facilities. However, the most significant indicator lies in the rapid growth of Islamic banks, whose assets expanded by 12.6 per cent, compared with only 5.1 per cent for Jordanian commercial banks.

This shift reflects a gradual transformation in customer preferences, especially with growing demand for Islamic financing instruments. Islamic banks have also demonstrated an increasing ability to expand financing for individuals, housing, and small and medium-sized enterprises. Furthermore, the 12.45 per cent increase in Islamic banks' financing portfolios indicates a clear expansion of their economic role within Jordan.

In contrast, foreign banks operating in Jordan appear to be gradually losing market share in assets, deposits and lending activities. This may be linked to broader strategic repositioning by parent banks globally, or to the limited expansion opportunities available compared with local and Islamic banks that possess stronger market understanding and wider domestic networks.

A closer analysis of credit distribution also reveals important economic implications regarding the nature of growth in Jordan. Large corporations accounted for nearly 40 per cent of total credit facilities, while retail lending represented 27 per cent, government and public sector financing accounted for 14 per cent, and small and medium-sized enterprises received only 8 per cent of total financing.

Here lies one of the structural challenges facing the Jordanian economy. The limited share of financing directed towards SMEs suggests that a major segment of economic activity still struggles to access adequate funding, despite the fact that SMEs represent the primary engine for employment creation and economic dynamism. This indicates that the challenge is no longer merely about the availability of liquidity within banks, but rather about directing that liquidity toward productive sectors capable of generating real economic growth.

At the same time, the continued expansion of retail lending reflects the banking sector's ongoing reliance on consumer financing, raising questions about the balance between consumption-driven lending and productive investment financing within the economy.

On profitability, Jordanian banks maintained relatively stable performance levels. The return on assets stood at 0.93 per cent, while return on equity reached 6.44 per cent. Although these levels remain relatively solid compared to regional conditions, they also reveal increasing pressure on profit margins, particularly amid higher financing costs, growing digital competition, and expanding compliance and governance requirements.

Meanwhile, the continued rise in shareholders' equity and bank capital reflects the strength of the sector's capital base and its ability to absorb potential shocks. Capital adequacy indicators and the regulatory oversight imposed by the Central Bank of Jordan continue to represent key pillars of stability within the local financial system.

However, the greatest challenge facing Jordanian banks in the coming years will not simply be preserving financial stability, but transitioning towards a more dynamic and innovative banking model. Digital transformation, the rise of fintech, and changing customer behaviour are all factors that will force banks to redefine their traditional roles.

Accordingly, the future of Jordan's banking sector will depend on three key pillars. First, expanding productive financing towards sectors capable of generating growth and employment. Second, accelerating digital transformation and improving operational efficiency. Third, strengthening financial inclusion and expanding access to underserved individuals and businesses.

The results of 2025 confirm that Jordan's banking sector remains one of the strongest and most resilient sectors within the national economy. Yet, the sector now stands at a critical turning point. The challenge is no longer limited to achieving financial growth alone, but rather to enhancing banks' developmental role within an economy facing accumulated domestic pressures and growing regional and global uncertainties.

Has the world forgotten Gaza amidst the smoke of war with Iran?

By Hasan Dajah

Every year, the anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba returns to remind the world that the tragedy of the Palestinian people is not a historical event that ended in 1948, but rather an open wound that is renewed daily with the continuation of occupation, killing, displacement, and siege. However, this year's Nakba anniversary comes amidst a highly complex regional and international landscape, where the war between Israel and Iran has captured the attention of the global media, and the Gaza issue has suddenly faded from the forefront of the international scene, as if the suffering of more than 2 million people inside the Strip has become a marginal news item in a world governed by calculations of power, interests and major conflicts.

It has become clear in recent weeks that the world, or at least a large part of it, has been preoccupied with the new war, its potential regional expansion, oil prices, maritime routes and military balances. Meanwhile, international calls for a ceasefire in Gaza have diminished, talk of delivering humanitarian aid has subsided, and political and media pressure on Israel regarding the crimes and violations committed against Palestinian civilians has eased. It is as if the new war has given the occupying government a golden opportunity to reshape the political and media landscape, diverting attention from the images of massacres and destruction that have shaken the world's conscience in recent months.

This raises a serious and legitimate question: Was the confrontation with Iran, or the expansion of the regional conflict, one of the political and

strategic objectives to escape mounting international pressure regarding Gaza? And did the war contribute to redirecting the world's attention away from the crimes committed against the Palestinians?

On the anniversary of the Nakba, Palestinians need more than just statements of sympathy or temporary media pronouncements. They need a genuine international stance

During the war on Gaza, more than 73,000 Palestinians were killed or remain missing under the rubble, in addition to hundreds of thousands wounded and injured, in one of the bloodiest wars in the region's modern history. Entire cities were destroyed, hospitals were rendered inoperable, and schools and camps for displaced persons were bombed, while the population lived under a suffocating siege and severe shortages of food, medicine, water and electricity. Despite some humanitarian gestures, the international community has thus far failed

to impose a permanent ceasefire or hold the occupation accountable for the violations documented by numerous international and human rights organisations.

Even more alarming is that the suffering of the Palestinians is no longer confined to Gaza. It has escalated in the West Bank, where recent months have witnessed an unprecedented surge in settler attacks against Palestinians, under the direct protection and sponsorship of the extremist Israeli government. Palestinian villages and towns in the West Bank have been transformed into scenes of raids, attacks and the burning of homes and farms, in a clear attempt to impose a new demographic reality based on settlement expansion and the gradual displacement of Palestinians.

What is happening today brings to mind the very essence of the Nakba itself; the issue was never merely a displacement that occurred 78 years ago, but rather an ongoing project to weaken the Palestinian presence and dismantle the land, identity and people. What is happening in Gaza and the West Bank today is a direct extension of that project, even if the tools and methods have changed.

With the world preoccupied with the war with Iran, the Palestinian cause once again appears to be a victim of the fluctuations of the international order, where the suffering of peoples sometimes becomes a secondary issue in the face of major geopolitical calculations. The global media, which just weeks ago was broadcasting images of children under the rubble, now focuses on the exchange of missiles, military bases and international reactions, while images of Gaza have faded into the back-

ground, even though death, siege, and starvation continue their daily.

However, history has proven that the Palestinian cause does not die, no matter how hard wars and crises try to push it to the forefront. Gaza is no longer just a besieged city; it has become a global symbol of human resilience in the face of the war machine and international abandonment. Furthermore, the Nakba, despite the passage of decades, remains present in Palestinian, Arab and international consciousness because it represents the cause of a people who continue to demand their right to freedom, dignity and justice. On the anniversary of the Nakba, Palestinians need more than just statements of sympathy or temporary media pronouncements. They need a genuine international stance that restores respect for human justice, ends the policy of impunity, imposes effective protection for civilians, ensures the continuous delivery of humanitarian aid and prevents regional wars from becoming a political and moral cover for the perpetuation of crimes and violations.

The most dangerous thing that could happen today is not just the continuation of the war, but the world's desensitization to scenes of killing and destruction, and the transformation of the Palestinian tragedy into "ordinary news" amidst the din of international conflicts. Therefore, the commemoration of the Nakba remains more than just a historical event; it is a constant reminder that when injustice persists without accountability, it reproduces itself in even more brutal and bloody forms.

Hasan Dajah is professor of strategic studies at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University

Jordan's resilience in the age of information warfare

By Mamdoh Suleiman Al-Ameri

In the contemporary strategic environment, national security is no longer confined to military capability, territorial protection, or economic stability alone. States increasingly face complex threats targeting perception, trust, identity and societal cohesion through digital manipulation, disinformation campaigns, psychological operations and algorithm-driven influence operations. As a result, the concepts of information integrity and cognitive resilience have emerged as central pillars of modern state resilience and national security governance.

Furthermore, Jordan's experience demonstrates that information integrity cannot rely solely on censorship or reactive communication...

nitive resilience, in parallel, reflects the capacity of individuals, institutions and societies to critically assess information, resist manipulation, maintain social cohesion and sustain confidence in national institutions during periods of uncertainty and crisis. Contemporary research increasingly identifies governance quality, institutional credibility, and healthy information ecosystems as decisive factors in strengthening resilience against cognitive warfare and information manipulation.

Within this context, Jordan presents an important regional example of a state that has sought to maintain stability, institutional continuity and societal cohesion despite operating within one of the world's most volatile geopolitical environments. Jordan's strategic experience demonstrates that cognitive resilience is not built solely through technological capabilities, but through a broader national framework integrating political legitimacy, institutional trust, strategic communication, social cohesion and credible state narratives.

Jordan's resilience model is closely connected to the legitimacy and historical continuity of the Hashemite leadership, which has long emphasised moderation, institutional stability and national unity as strategic foundations of the state. In periods of regional turbulence—including terrorism, regional wars, refugee crises, economic pressures and information warfare campaigns—the Jordanian state has consistently prioritised maintaining public trust, preserving institutional credibility, and managing national narratives through coordinated governmental communication and whole-of-government approaches.

At the institutional level, Jordan has increasingly recognised that modern crises unfold simultaneously across operational and informational domains. Consequently, stra-

tegic communication, media governance, digital awareness, and coordinated public messaging have become essential components of crisis management and national resilience. The evolution of government communication mechanisms, national media engagement, cyber governance and public awareness initiatives reflects an understanding that protecting the "information environment" is now inseparable from protecting national security itself.

Jordan's resilience model is closely connected to the legitimacy and historical continuity of the Hashemite leadership..

Jordan's approach also highlights the importance of societal cohesion as a defensive layer against cognitive and informational threats. National identity, social solidarity, and trust in public institutions function as stabilising factors that reduce susceptibility to polarisation, hostile narratives, and externally driven disinformation campaigns. International studies on cognitive resilience similarly emphasise that institutional effectiveness, media credibility, governance coherence, and social inclusion are among the most important determinants of national resilience against

information manipulation and cognitive warfare.

Furthermore, Jordan's experience demonstrates that information integrity cannot rely solely on censorship or reactive communication. Rather, sustainable resilience requires proactive strategic communication, transparency, rapid institutional response, media literacy and public engagement. In the digital era, the competition is increasingly centred on narrative legitimacy, public perception and the ability of states to maintain trust under conditions of continuous informational pressure. This aligns with emerging international perspectives that describe cognitive resilience as a form of "societal cognitive firewall" capable of resisting manipulation and disinformation.

The Jordanian case also illustrates the growing importance of integrating security institutions, civilian agencies, media actors, educational institutions and digital governance structures into a unified resilience framework. Information integrity is no longer exclusively a media issue; it has become a multidimensional governance challenge requiring coordination between political leadership, security institutions, public communication systems and civil society.

Ultimately, the experience of Jordan demonstrates that cognitive resilience is fundamentally rooted in institutional legitimacy, strategic communication credibility, societal cohesion and adaptive governance. In an era defined by information saturation, digital influence operations, and cognitive warfare, states capable of preserving trust, maintaining coherent national narratives and strengthening public confidence will possess a decisive strategic advantage in protecting both stability and sovereignty.

Mamdoh Suleiman Al-Ameri is an expert in strategic communications

BUSINESS

Thursday, May 21, 2026



Photo Courtesy of Jordan Businessmen Association

Chairman of Jordanian Businessmen Association Ayman Alawneh, and Hamad Al Matrooshi, chargé d'affaire at the UAE Embassy in Jordan, on Wednesday discuss prospects for economic and investment cooperation

Jordan, UAE strengthen economic, investment ties — JBA

AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) Ayman Alawneh, and Hamad Al Matrooshi, chargé d'affaire at the UAE Embassy in Jordan, on Wednesday discussed prospects for economic, investment and trade cooperation between the two countries.

According to a JBA statement, Alawneh stressed that Jordanian-Emirati relations represent a "deep-rooted" model of strategic Arab ties based on mutual cooperation, genuine brotherhood, trust, mutual respect and a shared developmental vision.

He noted that the UAE is one of Jordan's prominent economic partners and among the largest investors in the Kingdom, contributing to economic growth, sustainable development and job creation, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

During the meeting, which was attended by business leaders from both nations, Alawneh pointed out that Jordan is a key strategic partner for the UAE, given the robust economic ties between the two countries, adding that comprehensive economic partnership agreements contribute to boosting trade exchange and increasing mutual investments.

Alawneh said that Emirati investments in Jordan span vital sectors, most notably energy, real estate, tourism and infrastructure. He underscored the importance of intensifying efforts to increase trade volume and enhance communication between the two business communities through the exchange of trade delegations and participation in economic exhibitions

and conferences to support economic growth. For his part, Al Matrooshi affirmed the UAE's commitment to strengthening economic relations with Jordan and expanding trade and investment cooperation, highlighting the vital role of the private sector in both countries in driving economic development and promoting strategic partnerships.

He noted that Emirati-Jordanian relations are witnessing continuous development across various fields, supported by the leaderships of both countries.

Al Matrooshi also emphasised the importance of building on available investment opportunities and intensifying communication between business communities to achieve mutual interests and support sustainable economic growth, Petra reported.

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Al Matrooshi also emphasised the importance of building on available investment opportunities and intensifying communication between business communities to achieve mutual interests and support sustainable economic growth, Petra reported.

SSIF, SJIF sign agreement to accelerate investment cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — The Social Security Investment Fund (SSIF) and the Saudi Jordanian Investment Fund (SJIF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at accelerating investment cooperation and identifying strategic opportunities across priority sectors in Jordan.

The agreement reflects growing efforts to expand long-term institutional investment partnerships and channel capital toward infrastructure, healthcare, technology and tourism projects, according to a statement from SSIF.

The signing ceremony was attended by Labour Minister and Chairman of the Social Security Corporation Khaled Bakkar, Chairman of the Saudi Jordanian Investment Company Mutaib Al Shathri and Chairman of the Social Security Investment Board Omar Malhas.

The MoU was signed by Chief Executive of the SSIF Dr Izzedine Kanakrieh, and Chief Executive Officer of the SJIF Fadi Al Saeed, the statement said.

The memorandum establishes a framework for cooperation between the two investment institutions through the exchange of technical and investment expertise and the



SSIF photo

The Social Security Investment Fund and the Saudi Jordanian Investment Fund have signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at accelerating investment cooperation and identifying strategic opportunities across priority sectors in Jordan

acceleration of studies related to high-priority investment opportunities.

The agreement is also intended to support the attraction of long-term investment flows, strengthen institutional partnerships and improve capital allocation toward targeted sectors to support sustainable economic growth.

Kanakrieh said the MoU aligns with the fund's broader strategy of enhancing investment efficiency through participation in strategically significant projects along-

side regional investment institutions with specialised expertise and strong market presence.

He added that the partnership supports shared development objectives and contributes to strengthening growth opportunities across Arab economies.

Al Saeed said the agreement reflects the company's strategy of directing investments toward high-potential projects through long-term institutional partnerships capable of accelerating the development of strategic

investments.

He added that the company aims to further expand its investment portfolio in infrastructure, healthcare, tourism and technology while increasing growth investments in promising Jordanian companies.

According to the statement, SSIF remains the largest institutional investor in the Jordanian economy through a diversified portfolio spanning major economic sectors and regional and international partnerships.

The Saudi Jordanian

Investment Company currently holds investments in several sectors within the Jordanian market, including Jordan Capital Bank Group, Today's Bakery and OpenSooq, the statement said.

Its investments also include the Kingdom Healthcare and Medical Education project, which comprises Kingdom University for Medical Sciences and the Kingdom University Hospital, expected to open in late 2027, in addition to feasibility studies for several strategic projects.

Jordan Internal Audit Forum 2026 aims to advance AI-driven governance, public trust

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordanian Internal Audit Association on Wednesday launched the "Jordan Internal Audit Forum 2026", gathering over 320 financial experts, policymakers and risk management professionals to exchange experiences and enhancing cooperation between the private and public sectors.

Held under the patronage of Audit Bureau President Radhi Al Hamadeen, this year's forum convenes under the theme "An Impact that Lasts... Trust that Builds", focusing heavily on integrating artificial intelligence, risk-based auditing and public-private sector integration.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Al Hamadeen underscored the forum's role as a strategic national platform to align internal auditing with Jordan's ongoing Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) and public sector reforms, according to an Audit Bureau statement.

"Internal auditing is no longer just a regulatory compliance measure; it is a strategic tool to ensure institutional sustainability, improve public services and bolster societal trust in our national institutions," Al Hamadeen said.

The Audit Bureau chief revealed that the bureau has successfully executed a national capacity-building project in cooperation with the Jordanian Academy for Public Management. The initiative evaluated 166 government entities and trained 660 public sector employees



Photo Courtesy of Audit Bureau

The Jordanian Internal Audit Association launches the 'Jordan Internal Audit Forum 2026' to enhance cooperation between the private and public sectors

across 155 agencies.

He added that the bureau is aggressively transitioning toward data analytics and risk-based oversight to enhance transparency and public accountability.

Nora Al Kilani, president of the Internal Audit Association and chief audit and risk officer at Trust Holding Group, emphasised that strong oversight, strict governance, and institutional integrity are foundational

to the success of any national development strategy.

"Knowledge transforms into tangible impact only when shared," Kilani said, highlighting the association's commitment to adopting the latest global standards issued by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA).

Central Bank of Jordan Deputy Governor Khaldoun Al Wshah also addressed the gathering, noting that

technological disruptions, digital identities and cybersecurity threats have fundamentally shifted the auditing landscape.

"Predicting and navigating future challenges is no longer an intellectual luxury," Al Wshah stated. "Internal auditors must evolve into strategic partners for executive boards, utilising smart oversight to support Jordan's transition into a regional technology and innovation hub."

The structural sessions of the forum tackled critical contemporary financial issues, including corporate integrity, anti-corruption strategies and "Internal Audit 4.5", a specialised module examining digital trust and automation in the banking sector.

The forum concluded with a ceremony honoring key national sponsors, speakers, and regulatory bodies committed to driving governance standards across the Kingdom, according to the Audit Bureau statement.

Jordan seeks to expand exports, trade ties with EU — minister

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah called for enhancing trade exchange between Jordan and European Union countries and increasing Jordanian exports to European markets to support economic growth and stimulate national productive sectors.

During a meeting on Wednesday with the board of the European Chamber of Commerce in Jordan (EuroCham), Qudah said economic relations between Jordan and European countries continue to develop, underscoring the need to build on existing agreements and partnerships to create more opportunities for Jordanian products in European markets.

Talking at the meeting, he announced Jordan's exports to EU countries rose by 72.3 per cent during the first two months



Photo Courtesy of Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply

Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah calls for enhancing trade exchange between Jordan and European Union countries

of this year, reaching JD112 million compared with JD65 million during the same period in 2025, according to the Ministry's statement.

Qudah stressed the importance of intensifying promotional and marketing efforts for Jordanian products in European markets and enhancing cooperation with the private sector and European trade chambers to

expand trade exchange and attract more high-quality investments to the Kingdom.

He noted the vision also aims to implement "major strategic" projects, including the National Water Carrier, railway projects, the Amra City project, linking industrial zones to natural gas networks and transport projects aimed at improving the

business environment, reducing production costs and increasing Jordan's investment appeal.

The EuroCham Chairman Mohammad Smadi affirmed the chamber's commitment to strengthening economic and trade cooperation with the EU and expanding partnership opportunities in support of the national economy and Jordanian exports.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD18 million spread over 5.1 million shares that traded through 4,568 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.09 per cent, closing at 3978.27 points.

Out of 102 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 32 companies rose while the share price of another 27 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Arab Pesticides and Veterinary Drugs Manufacturing Company by 6.51 per cent, Arab International for Education and Investment by 6.25 per cent, Philadelphia Pharmaceuticals by 4.85 per cent, Noor Capital Markets for Diversified Investments by 4.73 per cent and Jordan Dairy by 4.64 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Latent Energies for Investments by 4.90 per cent, Ready Mix Concrete and Construction Supplies by 2.86 per cent, Al Tahdith for Real Estate Investments Company by 2.56 per cent, Darat Jordan Holdings by 2.53 per cent and Jordan Decapolis Properties by 2.44 per cent.



THE SPRING THAT RAN DRY

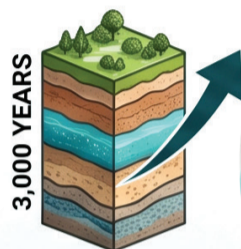
How a ancient spring's disappearance revealed the hidden cost of Jordan's groundwater crisis

JORDAN WATER CRISIS:

THE DISAPPEARING AQUIFER

TIMELINE (History)

3,000 YEARS TO FORM AQUIFER



40 YEARS TO DRY



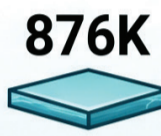
THE DROP (Comparison)

1983



17.2M m³

2024



876K m³ (95% DROP)

95% DROP

IMPACT (Consequences)



DRILL DEPTH: 1,164 meters

LOCAL ECONOMY: DEAD ORCHARDS & CLOSED POOLS

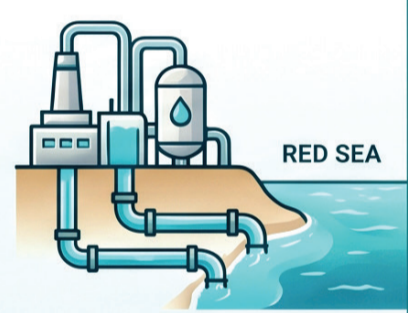
NEW REALITY: WATER TANKERS DEPENDENCY

THE CAUSE & SOLUTION (Future)

CAUSE: URBAN PUMPING (AMMAN)



FUTURE: RED SEA DESALINATION



By Ammar Al Shukairi and Rami Kakish

More than 150 years ago, a man from the Shammari tribe of the Arabian Peninsula set out on a journey in search of water for his livestock. He travelled thousands of kilometres northward, eventually settling in the village of Kafri Hareb in the Golan Heights.

The Shammari married in the village. After his death, his only son, Muharib, drove the herd southward in search of water. He stopped at the edge of the Golan Heights, gazed down into the valley below, and spotted a spring nestled among date palms and reeds, with a cluster of houses nearby. He led his animals down to the water and never returned to the Golan. His words at the time were simple: "The livestock are drinking from the spring — so shall we."

That spring sits at the heart of Mukheiba al-Fawqa, a village in the far north-west of Jordan. For generations it supplied the villagers with water for their crops and animals, despite being warm and carrying a faint smell of sulphur.

Today, decades after Muharib's descendants settled beside it, Youssef (60), his great-grandson, stands on his rooftop and watches as the spring runs dry for the first time in thousands of years.

This spring is one of dozens of thermal springs scattered across Jordan and Palestine, formed by tectonic movement, their waters rising through fissures in the earth at temperatures between 31 °C and 60 °C. Its drying raises urgent questions about the fate of the other thermal springs along both sides of the Dead Sea Fault — and sounds a warning about the depletion of groundwater aquifers across Jordan, the country's primary source of drinking water.

The warm waters of Mukheiba Al Fawqa once flowed from two adjacent springs at the village centre — Al Maqlā and Al Balsam — feeding into a natural pool called Al Rih. Al Balsam dried up roughly twenty years ago,

whilst Al Maqlā continued to supply the village for farming, livestock, and drinking.

Three kilometres across the River Yarmouk on its western bank lies the Palestinian village of Hamma, which also sits atop thermal springs. For millennia, people travelled there to bathe in the mineral waters, believing them to have healing properties. Levantine merchants recognised the tourism potential early; among them was Lebanese trader Suleiman Nassif, who in 1936 built bathhouses and leisure facilities around the Hamma springs.

Nassif later crossed to the eastern bank and, together with a partner, purchased three thousand dunams of land near Mukheiba, apparently intending to build a similar resort. He sold the land in 1952 to Shibli Al Bisharat — as recounted to us by Bisharat grandson, Abu Midhat.

Abu Midhat describes how his grandfather shifted from road contracting and trade into farming in Mukheiba, attracted by the abundance of water. The village, though small

— never exceeding 1,400 residents until the 1990s — transformed from a community of subsistence farming into one sustained by both modern agriculture and tourism. The springs seemed inexhaustible.

In 1981, the Jordan Valley Authority began drilling for groundwater within the Rift Valley, funded by five million dollars from USAID. Drilling commenced near Rahma in the south and moved northward, reaching Mukheiba in 1982, close to the two springs. According to Munther Haddadin, then deputy director-general of the Authority, the drills reached 900 metres with no water found — until, at 1,164 metres, water erupted from the earth.

The volume was so encouraging that the Authority drilled further. A few kilometres away, in a valley known as Al Shaqq Al Bared, they expected to drill to 500 metres, but water burst through at just 245 metres with such force that it toppled the drilling rig. The region seemed to float upon an underground river.

Youssef Shammari, watching through the

1980s, noticed the springs diminishing as the wells pumped. "Even the water changed on us," he says. "It started to decrease, little by little."

Groundwater migrates beneath Jordan much as people migrate above it. Rainwater percolates through rock layers and settles in an aquifer known as B2/A7, which stretches across vast areas of the country and supplies most wells in Amman, Mafraq, and Ajloun. Water entering this layer travels just a few centimetres per year, taking roughly three thousand years to reach the springs at Mukheiba. Continuous extraction across Jordan has steadily depleted it; by 2017 the aquifer was partially dry near the valley slopes. Production from Mukheiba's wells fell by nearly half, and flow from Al Maqlā and Al Balsam plummeted from 17.2 million cubic metres in 1983 to just 876,000 cubic metres in 2024.

The resort built around the springs closed in 2006 amid pollution violations and was demolished for redevelopment — a project still

unfinished today, mired in disputes between the company, the municipality, and the Jordan Valley Authority. In the meantime, villagers opened forty small private swimming pools fed by whatever water still flowed. Youssef Shammari was among them, running a modest hot-springs retreat with a café.

Then, in 2024 and 2025, drilling rigs arrived to deepen the government wells. Al Maqlā slowed to a trickle — then stopped.

Farms have dried out. Pools have closed. Eight workers at Shammari's pool were made redundant. Water tankers now rumble through the village each morning, selling what the spring once gave freely.

"In all my life I never imagined the spring water would run dry," says Abu Mithat Al Bisharat, standing in his orchard, its clementines shrunken and parched. "I planned for everything — everything except that."

Experts say the spring could potentially recover if pumping from nearby wells were halted and groundwater levels were allowed to rise — a process that would take years. A comparable spring in Kufri Rakib dried up twenty years ago and resumed flowing five years ago, albeit weakly.

For now, Mukheiba's story stands as a parable for Jordan's wider water crisis. The country relies on groundwater to bridge its water deficit, and that reliance is only expected to grow until the National Water Carrier project — which aims to desalinate Red Sea water — eventually comes online.

"We have no solution except desalination," says water expert Elias Salameh. "That is the project the government is pursuing."

Until then, Youssef Shammari stands where Muharib once stood — between the heights of the Golan and the last outlet of the thermal springs at the River Yarmouk — and remembers: "The Yarmouk used to be like a sea. We never drew from it, because the village springs were enough for us."



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