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Princess Basma oversees Goodwill Campaign aid initiatives in Karak

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Princess Basma, chairperson of the Higher Committee of the Goodwill Campaign, on Wednesday checked on the distribution of humanitarian aid to target groups in Karak Governorate.

The initiative, implemented by the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), aimed to support local families, women and students in the governorate, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Accompanied by Karak Governor Qabalan Sharif, JOHUD Executive Director Farah Dagestani and members of the campaign's higher committee, Princess Basma visited the Princess Basma Development Centre in Karak.

During the visit, Princess Basma distributed food parcels to 100 female-headed households and school bags to 100 children participating in the centre's summer club.

She also handed over campaign-funded support to nine women to help develop their productive projects and establish sustainable sources of income for themselves and their families.

Princess Basma also provided educational assistance to a number of university students in Karak, some 140 kilometres south of Amman, studying majors aligned with labour market needs.

The princess reaffirmed the campaign's commitment, rooted in its charitable and humanitarian objectives and supported by its partners, to contributing to national efforts to empower local communities and create suitable employment opportunities, particularly for women and girls.

She stressed that the campaign places particular importance on the economic empowerment of women, highlighting JOHUD's programmes through its 52 development centres across the Kingdom, which provide women with the skills and expertise needed to enter the labour market, establish productive projects and market their products.

Princess Basma also met with women benefiting from the Strong Water Utilities project and listened to their experience in forming a network of women community leaders in Al Yarout village.

She highlighted the importance of water preservation and reducing waste and misuse, particularly at the household level, and the role of women in raising awareness and sharing expertise.

The princess also expressed pride in Jordanian women's active contribution to community service and development, as well as their ability to launch initiatives that help address challenges and turn them into opportunities.

During the visit, Princess Basma was briefed by Princess Basma Development Centre Deputy Director Salam Nawaiseh on the centre's programmes and activities and the campaign's interventions in Karak.

She commended cooperation between the centre and official and civil society bodies in building partnerships to serve target groups.

Jordan highlights Kigali Amendment's role in sustainable cooling on Ozone day

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — Jordan is working to protect the ozone layer and promote sustainable cooling technologies to improve energy efficiency, support the green economy and enhance industrial competitiveness, Environment Minister Ayman Suleiman said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a ceremony marking World Ozone Day under the theme "Global Action for a Cooler Planet", Suleiman stressed the importance of implementing the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, which marks its 10th anniversary this year.

The event was attended by ambassadors and representatives of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme, the industrial sector and national partner institutions.

Suleiman said that Jordan viewed its international environmental commitments as an opportunity to modernise productive sectors, promote innovation and technology transfer, and develop national expertise.

He added that the Ministry of Environment would continue working with national and international partners to reduce the use of ozone-depleting substances and expand access to energy-efficient cooling technologies.

United Nations Resident Coordinator in Jordan Sheri Ritsema-Anderson said that the country's progress reflected strong national commitment and cooperation between the



UNDP photo

Speaking at a ceremony marking World Ozone Day, Environment Minister Ayman Suleiman stresses the importance of implementing the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, which marks its 10th anniversary this year

government, the UN, the private sector and development partners.

She called for building on these achievements to accelerate climate action and expand access to affordable, sustainable cooling solutions.

During a high-level panel discussion, Environment Ministry Secretary-General Omar Arabiyat highlighted the importance of strengthening partnerships, technical training and technology transfer to advance sustainable cooling.

UNIDO Representative in Jordan Salafa Madanat said that the organisation would continue supporting Jordan through technology transfer, factory modernisation, technical capacity-building and efforts to attract green financing for cleaner, more competitive industrial production.

UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Jordan Majda Al Assaf said that the programme was working with the government and partners

to develop financing mechanisms that would help businesses invest in sustainable cooling, reducing energy consumption and emissions.

The panel also discussed Jordan's achievements under the Montreal Protocol...

She cited the Aqaba Marine Reserve and the New Amman Customs Centre in Al Madounah as examples of projects using natural refrigerants, adding that financing, skills and partnerships were needed to expand their adoption.

The panel also discussed Jordan's achievements under the Montreal Protocol...

Participants stressed the importance of implementing the Kigali Amendment and expanding the use of energy-efficient cooling technologies with lower climate impacts.

At the end of the ceremony, Arabiyat, on behalf of Suleiman, honoured institutions, companies and national partners for their contributions to implementing Montreal Protocol programmes in Jordan.

The ministry said that the next phase would focus on expanding partnerships and linking ozone protection with sustainable cooling, energy efficiency and climate action to support the green economy and encourage investment in sustainable technologies.

UNDP, Agriculture Ministry conclude workshop on Jordan's disaster risk financing strategy

By Ahmad Alkhawaldeh

AMMAN — A two-day workshop aimed at finalising Jordan's National Disaster Risk Financing Strategy concluded in Amman on Wednesday with the aim of validating a draft strategy meant to shift the Kingdom's disaster response from reactive to pre-arranged financing.

The workshop, which brought together ministries, donor agencies and private sector representatives, is part of an ongoing effort to put in place a system that helps the government prepare for natural and environmental disasters before they happen.

The session was organised by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Jordan through its Insurance and Risk Finance Facility, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Risk Management Fund.

Some 75 per cent of disaster events recorded in Jordan are linked to climate change, Project Manager for UNDP's Inclusive Insurance and Risk Financing Project Masnat Al Hiary told The Jordan Times, citing World Bank data that puts Jordan's annual losses from climate-related hazards at JD35-45 million.

"The cost of responding to a risk after it happens is far higher than the cost of preparing for it in advance," Hiary said, describing that shift as the strategy's "core" aim.

Hiary said that the draft strategy is organ-



UNDP photo

Project Manager for UNDP's Inclusive Insurance and Risk Financing Project Masnat Al Hiary says that some 75 per cent of disaster events recorded in Jordan are linked to climate change

ised into several thematic pillars, from mapping Jordan's hazard profile to identifying financing instruments for different categories of disaster, which was the focus of Wednesday's sessions.

Under the risk-layered financing framework presented to participants, frequent, low-impact events would be absorbed through government budgets, medium-impact events through insurance and reinsurance, and rare, severe events, such as major earthquakes, through tools like catastrophe bonds or sovereign insurance.

The draft was developed through an analytical diagnostic led by an international expert, followed by consultations with relevant ministries, Hiary said.

Speaking at Tuesday's opening session on behalf of Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khraisat,

Director of the Agricultural Risk Fund Khaled Talafih said that the sector faces mounting and more frequent climate risks, from prolonged drought and flash floods to frost and extreme heat, directly affecting tens of thousands of farming households and the stability of rural communities, particularly smallholder farmers.

He added that the agriculture's ripple effects reach an estimated 23.5 per cent of the broader economy through its linkages with other sectors.

UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Jordan Majda Assaf said that the strategy combines budget-reserved resources, pre-arranged emergency financing and insurance-based risk transfer, with expanded agricultural insurance seen as key to protecting farmers and small businesses from disasters' financial fallout.

This week's sessions drew representatives from the ministries of agriculture, environment, water and finance, along with embassies, donors including the World Food Programme, and the National Centre for Security and Crisis Management, Hiary said.

Discussions between national institutions determined that the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation would decide which body should ultimately house the strategy, said Diana Almor, UNDP regional lead for insurance and risk financing in Asia-Pacific.

Almor added that UNDP is supporting similar strategies in some 20 countries, where exposure of government infrastructure to disaster risk has driven a comparable effort.

Mexican embassy marks 216th Independence Day with musical gala

AMMAN (JT) — The Mexican embassy hosted its official commemoration of the 216th anniversary of Mexico's Independence at the historic Odeon Theatre in Amman.

The event included a Mexican Music Gala featuring Maria Luisa Tamez, mezzo-soprano, and Armando Merino, concert pianist, two of Mexico's most distinguished artists of the National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature, according to a Mexican embassy statement.

The reception was attended by members of the Royal family, including HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal and HRH Princess Wijdan Al Hashimi, as well as Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Nancy Namrouqa.

The "Grito de Independencia" ceremony was presided over by Ambassador of Mexico to Jordan Jacob Prado. The Mexican flag was presented to the ambassador by children from the Mexican community in Amman.

The "Grito de Independencia", or "Cry of Independence", marks the beginning of Mexico's War of Independence.

In the early hours of September 16, 1810, Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla summoned the people of the town of Dolores to rise up against colonial rule, launching the movement for independence with his historic call.



Photo courtesy of the Mexican embassy

The Mexican embassy hosts its official commemoration of the 216th anniversary of Mexico's Independence at the historic Odeon Theatre in Amman

Every year on the eve of Independence Day, Mexicans around the world come together to commemorate this historic moment and pay tribute to those who devoted their lives to Mexico's freedom.

The "Grito de Independencia" is celebrated throughout Mexico and by Mexican diplomatic and consular missions around the world.

This year, the embassy in Jordan marked Mexico's Independence with a Mexican Music Gala featuring renowned Mexican mezzo-soprano Maria Luisa Tamez, accompanied by acclaimed concert pianist Armando Merino.

Born in Mexico City into a family of professional singers, Maria Luisa Tamez is one of Mexico's most distinguished opera singers,

with a career spanning more than 45 years.

She has performed on major stages and concert halls across Europe, the Americas, and Asia, working with renowned international orchestras.

After three decades as a lyric-spinto and dramatic soprano, she made a remarkable transition to mezzo-soprano, with Carmen becoming one of the defining roles of her career — a role she has performed more than 100 times.

In 2025, she was awarded the Medalla Bellas Artes in Music, Mexico's most important cultural distinction, in recognition of her outstanding artistic career and contribution to Mexican opera.

Born in Mexico City, Armando Merino is one of Mexico's most respected and ac-

tive concert pianists. Throughout his distinguished career, he has performed as a soloist, with orchestras, alongside renowned singers and as a member of chamber ensembles in Mexico, the United States, and France.

He holds degrees from UNAM and the Manhattan School of Music and is currently a full professor at UNAM's Faculty of Music and a member of the prestigious Concert Artists Group of INBAL.

His commitment to Mexican music is also reflected in his acclaimed discography, which includes world-premiere recordings of works by some of Mexico's most important composers.

The artists' participation brought a distinguished musical dimension to the celebration, offering audiences in Jordan an opportunity to experience the richness of Mexico's musical heritage through a programme that brought together works from its popular and classical traditions.

The Embassy's commemoration reflects its commitment to strengthening the "longstanding" bonds of friendship and understanding between Mexico and Jordan, while fostering cultural exchange and promoting greater appreciation of Mexico's history, heritage, arts and cultural identity.



Gov’t plans \$10 billion PPP projects over next 3 to 4 years — minister

AMMAN (JT) — The government plans to launch a package of mega projects worth about \$10 billion over the next three to four years in partnership with the private sector, Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah said.

The projects, to be implemented under the public-private partnership (PPP) framework, will cover water, energy, transport, infrastructure and public services, the minister said.

Speaking at a recent business meeting organised by the Jordanian Businessmen Association, Qudah said that the key projects include the National Water Carrier and a natural gas pipeline linking the Risha gas field to various parts of the Kingdom, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The gas pipeline is expected to help raise Jordan’s natural gas self-sufficiency to about 80 per cent by 2028, he said, adding that exploration is continuing in areas surrounding the Risha field, with the potential to increase domestic gas production in the coming years.

He said recent economic indicators demonstrate the resilience of Jordan’s economy and its ability to maintain growth despite regional challenges and global economic conditions.

“The government aims to sustain that

growth, building on positive economic and sectoral indicators recorded during the first half of the year,” he said.

Exports were among the strongest indicators, he said, with total exports rising by more than 14 per cent in the first half of the year compared with the same period in 2025.

“Total exports grew by about 11.5 per cent in 2025 compared with 2024.”

He added that national exports increased by 6.2 per cent, reflecting growth in locally manufactured and produced goods sold in foreign markets, while re-exports surged 44 per cent.

Qudah said that the increase in re-exports reflects Jordan’s strengthening role as a regional logistics and trade hub.

“The export gains came despite regional disruptions affecting supply chains, transportation and logistics, as well as growing competition in global markets.”

Qudah also pointed to improved operational performance at the Port of Aqaba, where container handling increased by more than 5 per cent during the first nine months of the year compared with the same period in 2025.

More than 12 industrial sectors recorded export growth during the period, he said, describing the diversification of Jordanian ex-

ports as an important strength that reduces reliance on a limited number of products and markets and improves the economy’s ability to withstand external shocks.

“The government is also seeking to expand Jordan’s export markets through trade agreements and preferential access for Jordanian products. Jordan currently has free-trade agreements linking it with markets including the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada and Arab countries.”

Qudah said that Jordan is also pursuing new, non-traditional export markets. “The government is working to conclude two preferential trade agreements before the end of the year, one with Rwanda and another with Uzbekistan.”

An agreement with Rwanda would open opportunities in East and Central African markets, while an agreement with Uzbekistan would provide Jordanian exporters with greater access to Central Asian markets, he said.

He added that the government has also begun talks with the Eurasian Economic Union on a possible preferential trade agreement aimed at improving access for Jordanian products to new markets with strong purchasing power and growth potential.

Prince El Hassan, French Senate delegation discuss regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince El Hassan on Wednesday received a delegation from the French Senate, comprising the chairperson and members of the French-Jordanian Friendship Group, to discuss regional and international issues of mutual concern and ways to strengthen Jordan-France dialogue and cooperation.

During the meeting, Prince El Hassan stressed the need to rethink regional planning and spatial management across the Levant, placing people, their dignity, fundamental rights and basic needs at the centre of development efforts, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He highlighted the importance of comprehensive development approaches that respond to the needs of the approximately 300 million people living in the region.

The prince also called for a more integrated regional vision to address development, resource and demographic challenges, enhance connectivity



HRH Prince El Hassan on Wednesday receives a delegation from the French Senate

among regional states and contribute to a more stable and equitable future.

He said that future planning should focus on safeguarding human dignity, expanding opportunities for participation and advancing sustainable development.

On Palestinian developments and the situation in the region,

particularly ongoing settlement expansion and the impact of displacement and refugee crises, Prince El Hassan said these challenges require a comprehensive regional strategy addressing their interconnected humanitarian, political and developmental dimensions.

The discussions also covered European

policy towards Palestine and the wider region, with participants stressing the need for an inclusive approach to support regional stability, address the root causes of crises and promote dialogue and cooperation.

The French delegation commended Jordan’s regional role and reaffirmed France’s commitment

to strengthening support and cooperation with the Kingdom, particularly in water resource management and addressing water scarcity.

Both sides stressed the importance of continued dialogue and engagement, as well as strengthening parliamentary ties and cooperation on issues of mutual interest.

Momani calls for greater use of digital media by government units

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani on Wednesday called for greater use of digital media tools by government media units to expand their reach and engage wider audiences.

Momani made the remarks during the opening of a workshop in titled “Capacity Building in Communication and Digital Media through Social Media Platforms”, organised by the Ministry of Government Communication in cooperation with the Ministry of Digital Economy.

He said that the workshop aims to build the capacities of government media personnel and familiarise them with the latest digital media tools



Minister of Government Communication Mohammad Momani

and practices.

A team from Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Threads, delivered

lectures during the workshop, Momani said.

He noted that Jordan has developed a successful experience in digital

media, stressing the need to keep pace with developments in media tools and platforms.

Momani also highlighted the importance of adopting new approaches to journalistic and communication products to ensure they reach the widest possible audience.

The workshop brought together media spokespersons, digital media officials and employees of media units at ministries, institutions, authorities and government-owned companies.

A total of 126 government media personnel took part in the workshop, which is part of the ministry’s ongoing training and development programme to build the capacities of government

press and media staff.

The programme includes training courses and workshops to strengthen skills in using social media tools in official media work and promote safe and positive use of digital platforms.

The workshop covered information content and types of published material, selecting appropriate times for publication and engagement, and tools to improve content reach and distribution using artificial intelligence algorithms.

It also addressed guidelines for handling images and videos, media campaign strategies, performance and impact indicators and other issues related to digital media and communication.

Levant agricultural conference adopts declaration on regional integration

AMMAN (JT) — The Levant Agricultural Exports Conference 2026 concluded in Amman on Wednesday with the adoption of the “Amman Declaration for Agricultural Integration and Exports”, calling for practical steps to strengthen regional agricultural trade and integration.

The declaration, issued under the theme “The Arab Levant: A Unified Agricultural Power and Borderless Markets”, stressed that the conference should mark the beginning of a sustained process of regional agricultural and trade cooperation, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The conference brought together Lebanese Agriculture Minister Nizar Hani, Palestinian Agriculture Minister Rizq Salimiyya and a Syrian ministerial delegation led by Assistant Agriculture Minister Mohammad Miqdadi, along with senior officials, ambassadors, international organisa-



The Levant Agricultural Exports Conference 2026 concludes in Amman on Wednesday with the adoption of the ‘Amman Declaration for Agricultural Integration and Exports’

tions and private sector representatives.

According to the final statement, more than 1,000 agricultural and economic leaders, importers from 25 countries and 35 experts took part in the conference.

The event also hosted 218 direct business-to-business meetings, which participants said could lead to commercial contracts, agency agreements and new areas of

cooperation.

The declaration included eight recommendations, including establishing a permanent regional committee to follow up on the conference outcomes and develop an action plan, as well as an executive office, an integrated database and a digital export platform.

The recommendations also called for a joint initiative for the mutual

recognition of agricultural and technical certificates, a regional crop calendar and three permanent technical committees covering supply chains, investment and quality assurance.

Participants also called for studying the establishment of a regional marketing company, regular follow-up on commercial agreements and institutionalising the conference

as an annual event, with greater Iraqi participation planned for the next edition.

The declaration stressed that the conference’s impact should be measured through practical outcomes, including opening new markets, reducing export costs and simplifying procedures.

Agriculture Minister Saeb Khreisat commended Royal Jordanian for its continued support for agricultural exports and efforts to open new air cargo routes, alongside government subsidies for fruit and vegetable exporters.

He said that the measures had helped sustain the growth and competitiveness of Jordanian agricultural exports.

He said that government subsidies for agricultural air freight had increased the presence of Jordanian produce in European markets, encouraged contract farming and supported the cultivation of crops in demand.



Army foils infiltration attempt along northern border

AMMAN (JT) — The Northern Military Region command on Tuesday thwarted an infiltration attempt involving one individual along one of its border fronts.

Border Guard forces detected the individual as he attempted to cross the border illegally, according to a Jordan Armed Forces

— Arab Army (JAF) statement.

Military units applied the rules of engagement, arrested the infiltrator and transferred him to competent authorities for the necessary legal procedures.

The JAF reiterated that Border Guard units continue to perform their duties with

vigilance and firmness to protect the Kingdom’s borders and safeguard its sovereignty.

It also said it continues to monitor tactics and methods used in illegal operations and is taking the necessary operational measures to foil such attempts and safeguard national security.

Cassation Court upholds over 3-year sentence for drug dealer

By Rana Hussein

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

The court declared the defendant guilty of obtaining a variety of illegal narcotics with the intent to sell it in the local market on Nov. 10.

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

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

Court documents said the Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) learnt the defendant

was in possession of illegal narcotics and dispatched a team to monitor his movement.

“The defendant was arrested while at his house and officers found a variety of drugs, including Hashish, Captagon pills and some medicine that could not be obtained

without a medical prescription,” court documents said.

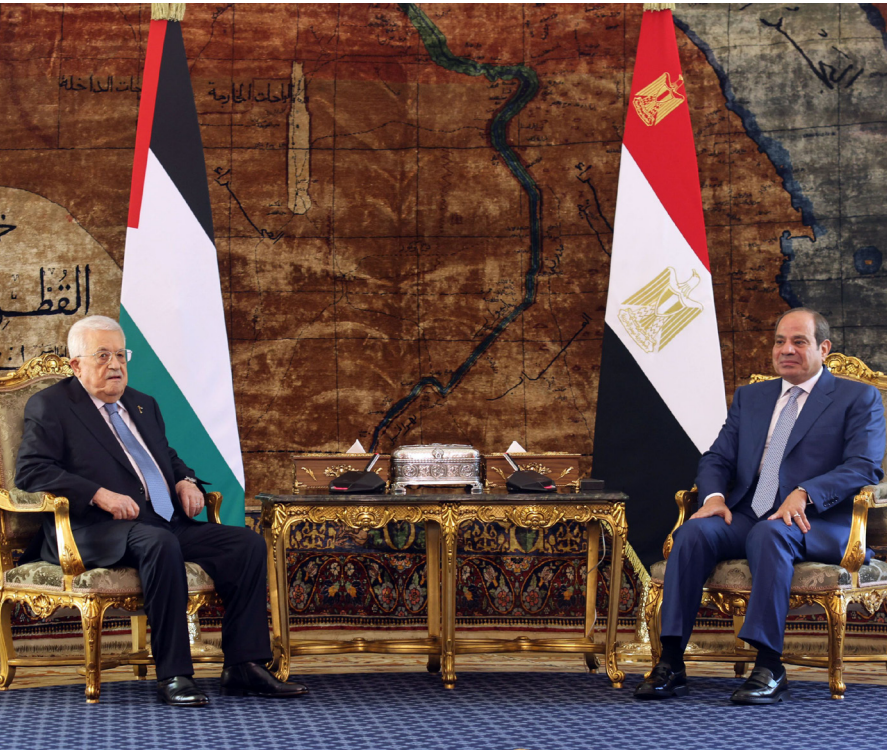
Upon searching the defendant’s vehicle, officers found additional illegal narcotics, including Hashish and Crystal meth, the court added.

The defendant contested the SSC’s rul-

ing through his lawyer, who argued that the court “did not provide solid evidence to implicate his client for drug trafficking”.

The lawyer argued that his client possessed the illicit drugs for “his own personal use”.

Meanwhile, the SSC



AFP photo
This handout photograph provided by the Palestinian Authority's press office (PPO) on Wednesday, shows Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi (right) and Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas holding a meeting in Cairo

Egypt's Sisi rejects Palestinian displacement in Abbas meeting

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi rejected on Wednesday any plans for Palestinian displacement, hours after Israel's defence minister said the army would "finish the job" in Gaza and remove Palestinians.

During a visit by Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, Sisi "reiterated Egypt's firm stance against the displacement of the Palestinian people or any attempt to annihilate the Palestinian cause".

Egypt shares the only land border with the Gaza Strip that is not controlled by Israel, and has since 2023 rejected plans to displace the territory's more than 2 million people into the Sinai

peninsula.

Last year, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty said Cairo had turned down multiple offers to forgive parts of its massive foreign debt bill in exchange for allowing mass displacement into its territory.

US Ambassador Mike Huckabee has denied any plan to 'Displace people out of Gaza against their will'

Israeli defence minister Israel Katz on Wednesday said it was

only a matter of time before Israel resumes full-scale war in Gaza, "to finish the job so that we can also implement the migration plan".

He said earlier this month that Israel was ready to remove Palestinians from Gaza by sea and land but was waiting for the United States, which he said was discussing where the 2 million people would go.

US Ambassador Mike Huckabee has denied any plan to "displace people out of Gaza against their will".

Nearly all of Gaza's population has been internally displaced and most of the territory lies in rubble after three years of war that has killed more than 73,700 Palestinians.

Gaza apartment block collapse leaves 20 dead, many missing

GAZA CITY, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Gaza authorities said Wednesday that at least 20 people including five children had died and dozens more were missing after an apartment building collapsed from damage sustained in earlier Israeli strikes.

The six-storey building, which had four apartments per floor, crumbled overnight onto nearby homes and tents in the Tal Al Hawa area of Gaza City, according to the civil defence agency, which works as a rescue service under Hamas authority.

The vast majority of buildings in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed in Israeli strikes throughout the war with Hamas, according to the United Nations.

AFP journalists saw the collapsed building reduced to an immense pile of shattered concrete, towering over a team of rescuers in high-visibility vests conducting a desperate search.

Excavators bearing Egyptian flags worked to remove the debris next to rows of tents for displaced people, while rescuers and volunteers carried out the dead wrapped in white plastic body bags.

"My friend and neighbours live in this building. I came to help my friend retrieve some clothes and mattresses. He currently has no shelter or home," Mo-hannad Al Mashharawi told AFP.

Civil defence agency spokesman Mahmoud Basal told AFP the



AFP photo
Rescuers excavate rubble to retrieve bodies from a collapsed building in the Tal Al Hawa area of Gaza City on Wednesday

building had sustained structural damage from previous Israeli strikes.

The bodies of "20 martyrs have been recovered from the rubble", he said.

"Among the dead are five infants, while dozens of people remain trapped beneath the debris," he added.

Israel launched relentless strikes on Gaza after the October 7, 2023 attack.

The Israeli military campaign has killed more than 73,700 people, according to Gaza's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations.

'Grave risks'

With so many Palestinians left homeless, and major shortages of

"They have no other choice. With neither tents nor homes available, they are living in cracked, damaged buildings despite the risk of collapse," he added.

Israel launched relentless strikes on Gaza after the October 7, 2023 attack.

The Israeli military campaign has killed more than 73,700 people, according to Gaza's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations.

construction materials, many Gaza residents have taken the risk of moving into the shaky buildings.

The UN's humanitarian coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territories, Ramiz Alakbarov, said he was "devastated" by Wednesday's reports of the building collapse.

"Today's tragedy underscores the grave risks faced by families living in these structures and the urgent need for safer alternatives. No one should have to risk their life simply to find a safe place to shelter," he said in a statement.

Gaza's civil defence agency has identified around 2,000 buildings

in the territory that it says are at risk of collapse.

The Gaza government media office under Hamas pointed to delays in reconstruction of the enclave.

"We hold the Israeli occupation and the international community fully and directly responsible for this catastrophe befalling our Palestinian people," it said.

Israel has allowed additional aid into Gaza since the declaration of a US-brokered ceasefire in October 2025.

But Israel has kept carrying out strikes and has restricted the entry of a range of equipment that it says could also have military use.

Lebanon wants Israel security deal, Hizbollah disarmament without confrontation — president to AFP

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — Lebanese President Joseph Aoun told AFP in an exclusive interview he wants to reach a security agreement with Israel once it withdraws from the south, and is determined to disarm Hizbollah without resorting to confrontation.

Speaking ahead of his departure to France on Wednesday, President Joseph Aoun said Lebanon wanted a new force, European or otherwise, to prevent a security vacuum after UN peacekeepers leave south Lebanon when their mandate expires at the end of the year.

He called on the United States, European Union and Arab countries to support Lebanon's military as it deploys across the south.

In Paris, Aoun will attend a meeting hosted by President Emmanuel Macron and attended by King Abdullah II of Jordan to build international support for Lebanese troops as they deploy across the country.

"What matters is that there is no vacuum," Aoun told AFP on Tuesday. He added that any new force



AFP photo
Lebanese President Joseph Aoun speaks during an interview with AFP at the Presidential Palace in Baabda on Tuesday

for Lebanon's south, part of which is occupied by Israel, would be "temporary until the [Lebanese] army can deploy".

"Whatever the nature of this force, that poses no problem for me: European, non-European, American, another United Nations force, Asian, or even a mix of European, Arab and Asian forces," Aoun said.

"The best and most

optimal option remains extending UNIFIL's mandate," he added.

'Alternative is war'

Under US pressure, the UN Security Council voted last year to end the force's mandate on December 31.

The mission, currently involving around 8,500 peacekeepers from nearly 50 countries, has been

deployed in south Lebanon since 1978.

Aoun also said he wants a security agreement with Israel "primarily to end the state of hostility and the deployment of the army on the border. This could be a prelude to a later peace agreement, but we cannot jump directly to a peace agreement".

"We have no choice but negotiations, because the

alternative is war, which would be very costly for us," Aoun added.

"Our Arab and European partners, as well as the United States and our friends, must share with us the responsibility of supporting the army and strengthening the Lebanese state," he said.

Aoun reiterated Lebanon was determined to disarm the Iran-backed group Hizbollah, saying the decision was "neither negotiable nor open to discussion".

However, he said, "the objective is not a confrontation... We are determined to resolve this issue peacefully.

"This is not about building a state at the cost of a bloody conflict... or a new civil war."

Aoun said he had told Iran that after Hizbollah's disarmament, relations "must be based on mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of the Lebanese people.

"We have no problem with having a relationship with Iran, but we do have a problem with interference in our internal affairs."

Fourth measles-related death reported in US as outbreak grows

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — Health authorities in the eastern US state of Pennsylvania have confirmed a fourth death linked to measles, as the nation faces the largest outbreak of the vaccine-preventable disease in decades.

All four deaths occurred in unvaccinated individuals, state health officials said.

"My thoughts are with the two families who lost loved ones to this highly contagious virus, as Pennsylvania faces the worst measles outbreak in more than three decades," said state health secretary Debra Bogen.

The latest death was of an 18-year-old, according to local medical examiners, adding to two infants who were too young to be vaccinated and a 40-year-old.

Three other measles-related deaths, including two children, were recorded across the United States last year, when the current outbreak began.

The Pennsylvania deaths have prompted a heated debate between

the state's Democratic governor, Josh Shapiro, and President Donald Trump's vaccine-skeptic health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

"This serious situation continues to be made worse by RFK Jr. playing games with public health and safety," Shapiro wrote in an X post Tuesday, adding "It's long past time" for Kennedy to "stop stoking vaccine scepticism and misinformation."

Shapiro noted there have been to date 693 recorded cases of measles in Pennsylvania alone. More than 3,290 cases of measles have been recorded across the US since early 2026.

The governor also accused Kennedy of ordering federal officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "to not report these Pennsylvania deaths, presumably because it doesn't fit his narrative."

Kennedy denied that allegation in a response on X, and accused Shapiro of politicising the "outbreak instead of implementing a unified public health response".

"I have repeatedly stated that MMR vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles," Kennedy said, referring to the vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella.

Measles cause fever, respiratory symptoms, skin rashes and can have serious complications, including pneumonia, brain damaging inflammation and death.

The disease was considered eliminated in the United States in 2000, thanks to vaccination, but has made a strong comeback in recent years amid declining vaccination rates and a backdrop of growing mistrust of health authorities.

Non-medical exemptions to vaccination have surged since the Covid-19 pandemic, allowing Americans to avoid the shots by invoking religious beliefs or other philosophical reasons.

Before a vaccine was developed in the early 1960s, measles killed hundreds of children every year in the US, and continues to cause tens of thousands of deaths globally.

EU chief calls for creation of 'European Security Council'

STRASBOURG, France (AFP) — EU chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday pitched setting up a "European Security Council" with countries including Britain and Ukraine, part of a rejig to the continent's security architecture in the face of Russia.

The move comes as Europe is grappling with what it calls a campaign of "hybrid attacks" by Moscow aimed at undermining support for

Ukraine and doubts over the US role in NATO.

"For a long time, we have discussed a leaders' format focused on the security of our continent, with partners like Canada, Norway, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and others involved," von der Leyen said in her annual state of the union address.

"This is even more urgent now, given the nature and scale of the risks

at play. This is why we will set out our ideas to make a European Security Council a reality."

Von der Leyen gave no details on how the new body would work or what powers it might have.

Proposals for a "security council" for Europe have been floating around for years, and have previously been promoted by French President Emmanuel Macron.

EU defence commis-

sioner Andrius Kubilius said "key details of new defence architecture" would be fleshed out in an upcoming security strategy document.

Norway said it welcomed initiatives by the EU to include it in discussions on security.

In addition, von der Leyen also said she wanted to establish an EU "emergency security protocol" that would allow any member state to

convene urgent talks of the bloc in case of crisis.

"We should be under no illusions about what is happening here: hybrid threats facing Europe are less and less hybrid and less and less threats," von der Leyen said.

"Europe needs its own counter-hybrid playbook. We urgently need a consensus on how to respond to certain incidents. Those which fall below armed aggression

but clearly threaten our national security."

The mechanism would be similar to NATO's Article 4 which allows members of the alliance to request consultations if they feel threatened.

While the EU is struggling to counter Russian activities, von der Leyen pledged that the bloc would ramp up support for Kyiv as Russia steps up bombardments ahead of the winter.



AFP photo
European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen delivers a speech during her annual State of the Union address at a plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, eastern France on Wednesday

11th Jordan International Film Festival to kick off on Sunday

AMMAN (JT) — The 11th edition of the Jordan International Film Festival is set to kick off in Amman on Sunday at 8:00pm, running through September 24.

The upcoming edition aims to reinforce the presence of Jordanian cinema and foster connection between local film makers and their international peers by showcasing a diverse selection of cinematic works that span various themes, perspectives, and artistic styles, according to a Ministry of Culture statement.

This year, the festival received 2,099 film submissions from around the world. Following evaluation by specialised viewing committees, eight films were selected to compete in the official competition.

The festival will also feature six films produced by the Ministry of Culture and six university student projects, an initiative designed to empower local production and support emerging talent.

Daily film screenings are scheduled to begin at 7:30pm.

The opening ceremony, to be attended by Minister of Culture Mustafa Rawashdeh, will feature a special screening of a film detailing the cinematic trajectory of the festival across its previous editions, produced by the Royal Film Commission-Jordan.

This year's festival honours artist, director, and film critic Adnan Madanat as the honorary personality of the Jordan



International Film Festival, in recognition of his artistic career and contributions to Jordanian and Arab cinema.

Daily film screenings are scheduled to begin at 7:30pm

The ceremony's programme includes a documentary highlighting key aspects of Madanat's cinematic legacy.

The event is overseen by a higher technical

committee chaired by Secretary-General of the Ministry of Culture Nidal Ayasrah.

The opening ceremony will also include a musical performance by the Jordanian Artists Association Troupe, featuring traditional Jordanian songs celebrating national heritage.

Festival organisers emphasised that cinema serves as a "vital" platform for intercultural dialogue, noting that films extend beyond artistic expression to act as a visual document carrying ideas, experiences and human memory across borders.

Screenings for the official competition entries will commence on the second day of the festival at 7:30pm, with film makers, artists, and academics in attendance.

Israel will ‘finish job’ in Gaza and remove Palestinians — defence minister

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel's defence minister said on Wednesday it was only a matter of time before the country resumes full-scale war in Gaza and moves to force out its two million Palestinians.

Israel Katz, who is known for outspoken remarks, was responding to criticism from another right-wing contender ahead of October 27 elections.

Katz said 70 per cent of Gaza had already been emptied of its population in the Israeli offensive launched after the October 7, 2023 war.

He said that an October 2025 ceasefire announced by US President Donald Trump had "supreme value for all Israelis" by leading to the return of remaining hostages and ensuring "a commitment by the United States" to disarming Hamas.

"We all understand that this is not going to happen — and the IDF is prepared, once given the directive to eliminate Hamas, to finish the job so that we can also implement the migration plan," Katz said in a statement, referring to the Israeli military.

He said earlier this month that Israel was ready to remove Palestinians from Gaza by sea and land but was waiting for the United States, which he said was discussing with the two million people would go.



Palestinian children play volleyball on a makeshift court made of rubble in Gaza City on Tuesday, Israel's full-scale war on Gaza — which began after a Hamas attack inside Israel on October 7, 2023 — reduced much of the Palestinian territory to rubble

US Ambassador Mike Huckabee has denied any plan to "displace people out of Gaza against their will".

Katz had described the migration plan as voluntary, saying most Palestinians wanted to leave.

Nearly all of Gaza's population has been internally displaced

and most of the territory lies in rubble after the war.

Israel's military campaign in Gaza has killed more than 73,700 people, according to the territory's health ministry, whose figures are considered reliable by the United Nations.

While the 11-month-

old ceasefire has reduced the level of violence, Israel has still regularly carried out strikes in Gaza.

A total of 1,375 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire came into effect, according to the Gaza health ministry.

Hamas said in late July that it was ready

to disarm, in what Trump hailed as a breakthrough.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected the latest stage of the plan and said there would be no Israeli withdrawal from Gaza until Hamas verifiably de-commissions all weapons.

Brazilian voters the latest to eye Bukele security model with envy

By Lucía Lacurcia
Agence France-Presse

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil — Fed up with witnessing muggings in Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana neighbourhood, William Correia formed a volunteer group to patrol the streets and report robberies on social media.

He dreams of Brazil adopting El Salvador President Nayib Bukele's hardline approach to crime.

"I'd like to see here what is happening in El Salvador, so criminals get a reality check," the 39-year-old martial arts instructor told AFP.

Crime and insecurity are the biggest concerns among Brazilian voters ahead of October 4 elections, and right-wing candidate Flavio Bolsonaro has tapped into these fears, vowing to import the Salvadoran model.

Bukele's formula,



A soldier of the Armed Forces, backed by armoured vehicles, aircraft and heavy engineering equipment, takes part in an operation in the violence-plagued favela of Vila Kennedy, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on March 7, 2018

which has sharply reduced violence under a controversial state of emergency, became a key campaign theme for right-wing politicians

who won elections across Latin America, including Ecuador's Daniel Noboa, Colombia's Abelardo de la Espriella and Keiko Fujimori in Peru.

In Brazil, organised crime groups such as Comando Vermelho and Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) impose their rule over millions of people living in favelas, while street crime in the form of cellphone, handbag and car theft is rampant.

Against that backdrop, 88 per cent of Brazilians favour tougher sentences for criminals and 79 per cent support lowering the age of criminal responsibility, according to recent polls.

'Inspiring'

Bukele has brought down gang violence through mass arrests and imprisonment, drawing criticism from rights groups over arbitrary detentions,

torture and deaths in custody.

Despite questions over his methods, Bukele is now the most popular leader in Latin America, according to a recent regional poll.

Flavio Bolsonaro, the son of jailed far-right former president Jair Bolsonaro, said El Salvador's turnaround on violence was "inspiring".

Among other measures, he has pledged to build maximum-security mega-prisons and designate the Comando Vermelho and PCC criminal factions as terrorist organisations, as US President Donald Trump's administration did recently.

Leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who is seeking reelection and whose rivals accuse him of being soft on crime, has steered clear of such rhetoric.

His main strategy is what he calls "financial suffocation" — choking

off the assets and businesses criminal factions use to launder money.

'Brazilian law protects criminals'

Correia, who was barred by a court in May from organising patrols, believes human rights violations are an unavoidable price to pay.

"It's like cancer. Chemotherapy is bad for the body, but it works against the disease. Faced with this absurd violence, we need chemotherapy" for criminals, said Correia, who is now running for a seat in the Chamber of Deputies for a center-right party.

Taxi driver Wallace Ferreira, 53, says "Brazilian law protects criminals, not law-abiding citizens" and complains that suspects are quickly released after being arrested.

Ferreira stopped working nights out of fear after a colleague was robbed

by a passenger who lured him into an ambush.

'Many mothers will cry'

Others, like Sonia Bonfim Vicente, warn of the consequences of a hardline approach, pointing to alleged police impunity that already exists and has claimed innocent lives.

In 2018, a police officer shot and wounded her five-year-old daughter during an operation in the Chapadao favela, where they live.

She said that three years later, police killed her husband and 17-year-old son Samuel during another operation, accusing them of being armed.

She is still seeking to prove that allegation false in an ongoing court case.

"Brazil will become a bloodbath" if it adopts the Bukele model, Bonfim, 41, told AFP.

"If security forces are allowed to act with greater impunity, it will only

make things worse. Many mothers will cry, many children will die," said the hairdresser, who now works for an association supporting other mothers in similar situations.

Political scientist Robert Muggah of the Igarape Institute, which specializes in security, said the Bukele model could "weaken democratic safeguards without achieving the dramatic reduction in violence seen in El Salvador".

"Brazil's criminal landscape is more complex," he said.

Salvadoran gangs built their power on territorial control and extortion, whereas Comando Vermelho and PCC have expanded into dozens of countries, with their money flowing through legitimate businesses and financial networks, he said.

With less than three weeks before elections, Lula and Bolsonaro are neck-and-neck in polls.

Jordan condemns Houthi attack targeting Mecca

Continued from page 1

The Saudi coalition vowed retaliation, warning that the security of holy sites was a "red line".

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation — a bloc of 57 Muslim countries — condemned the "heinous" attack.

Saudi Arabia had issued brief alerts on Tuesday over possible attacks in Mecca and across swathes of the kingdom's south, which borders Yemen.

The alerts came a day after a wave of ballistic missile and drone attacks launched from Yemen wounded 13 people in the kingdom's south, according to AFP.

Fighting flared in July when the Houthis, who have for years controlled swathes of northern Yemen, launched a

large-scale offensive against Yemeni government forces.

The conflict in the Arabian Peninsula's poorest country has forced 82,000 people to flee their homes since the start of September, according to the United Nations.

The Houthis have also targeted oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia...

Yemen's permanent representative at the UN, Abdullah Al Saadi, said Yemenis were fight-

ing to restore "national institutions across every inch of their land", and called on the international community to take action against the Houthis, AFP reported.

'Hostile and extremist'

Yemen's plea came as Saudi Arabia and Egypt called for free navigation in the Red Sea following the Houthi's offensive in the vital waterway.

Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi called on Tuesday for "ensuring the freedom and security of maritime navigation" through the Hormuz and Bab Al Mandab — which links the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden, the Egyptian presidency said.

Disruption in the

strait could cause Egypt to feel the pinch too, as the Red Sea serves as the gateway to the Suez Canal, upon which Cairo relies for crucial foreign revenue.

Canal revenues are currently around half of what they were before the Houthis first started attacking Red Sea shipping in 2023, a campaign they said was in solidarity with Palestinians during Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza.

On Tuesday, Qatar warned of dire consequences if Bab Al Mandab was closed, saying it would be "catastrophic for the entire world".

The Houthis have also targeted oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, the world's leading crude exporter, helping push global prices above the \$100-a-barrel

threshold.

The Saudi-led coalition said it would deal with the attacks "firmly to protect the sovereignty of the Kingdom", and would take "all necessary operational measures to deter this... hostile and extremist approach".

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said on Tuesday that Saudi Arabia launched 52 air strikes on Yemen over the past 24 hours, accusing it of targeting civilian sites, including schools and bridges.

But Riyadh's strikes have failed to reverse the group's gains.

A US military task force is working to enhance intelligence-sharing and planning assistance for Saudi forces as they face attacks, a US official told AFP on Tuesday.

Crown Prince chairs part of Cabinet meeting

Continued from page 1

The Crown Prince also expressed his condolences to the families of the National Military Service conscripts who died in a bus accident on the Desert Highway recently, and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

His Royal Highness also expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army and the security agencies in safeguarding the security and safety of citizens.

For his part, Prime Minister Jafar Hassan expressed the government's appreciation for His Royal Highness' interest in the projects and programmes being

implemented across various sectors, emphasising the government's commitment to advancing implementation of key national projects included under all pillars of the Economic Modernisation Vision.

Minister of Transport and Minister of Labour Nidal Katamine gave a briefing on the progress of the Aqaba Railway project and its integration with the Maan-Aqaba Land Development Corridor, as well as transport and freight development projects.

Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah, and Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabsheh also gave brief-

ings on the current state of supply chains at the ports of Aqaba, and on strategic stocks of essential commodities and energy, in light of the current regional circumstances.

Furthermore, Interior Minister Mazen Farraya, Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship Sami Smeirat, and Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Imad Hijazin each presented an overview of progress in the National Military Service Programme, efforts to develop digital services, particularly the "Sanad" and "Sanad for Business" applications, as well as tourism development and promotion projects.

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WTO warns of ‘most serious and sustained’ trade disruptions

Agence France Presse

GENEVA — The global trading system is enduring its most sustained disruption in living memory amid challenges to trading rules that could batter living standards in a “geo-fragmented world”, the WTO warned Tuesday.

The system is now in a decisive phase, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) said in its annual report, which “provides new evidence that a reversion to unilateral trade policy would impose large costs”.

Such a reversal could slash global GDP by around 5 per cent and drag down exports 18.6 per cent by 2050, it warned.

“Global trade policy and the WTO are experiencing the most serious and sustained disruptions since the multilateral trading system was created 80 years ago,” the report said.

It echoed a warning by its director general Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in March, shortly after the start of the US-led war on Iran.

“We have seen trade rules challenged on a scale unseen since multilateral institutions were created to underpin open, stable and predictable global trade in the wake of the Great Depression and the Second World War,” Okonjo-Iweala wrote in a preface to the report.

She said trade cooperation had “helped narrow income gaps between developing and advanced economies, and contributed to peace among members”.

Although “the global trading landscape has changed significantly... the founding logic of the system, that all economies are better off cooperating rather than acting unilaterally, remains as relevant today as ever”, she added.

‘Safeguard what works’

But the outlook has darkened after US President Donald Trump launched a tariff blitz since returning to the White House in January 2025, and amid soaring geopolitical tensions, particularly in the Middle East.

The WTO pointed to a range of factors that have hit cooperation, including shifts in economic power and the growing prominence and diversity of government intervention in markets.

Looking forward, WTO economists analysed the likely economic growth development under different scenarios.

They found that “fragmentation along geopolitical lines could reduce global GDP by about 5 per cent”, Okonjo-Iweala told diplomats on Tuesday.

And “in a world where the WTO disappears and is replaced by a network of FTAs [free trade agreements], the losses would be closer to seven percent”, she warned.

Moreover, the costs of any erosion of multi-lateral trade would not be born equally, as the smallest and poorest economies would be particularly vulnerable.

“In contrast, if members act purposefully to reinforce multilateral trade cooperation, safeguard what works, reform what doesn’t, it could boost global GDP by roughly 3 per cent,” Okonjo-Iweala said.

Growing restrictions

The WTO, which will unveil an update to its global trade forecasts on October 8, remains the linchpin of the rules-based global trading system, with a full 72 per cent of global trade still operating under its rules.

“At the same time, two years ago, that share stood at 80 per cent,” the agency’s chief economist, Robert Staiger, told AFP, acknowledging that “the trend is disturbing”.

“Another sign that global trade is coming under pressure is that new tariffs and trade restrictions now cover 11 per cent of global imports, and that represents the highest coverage in over 15 years,” he said.

Jordan and the international shift: From condemning the occupation to protecting the Palestinian State

By Hasan Dajah

Israel faces a political moment where the gap is widening between its ability to impose facts on the ground by force and its ability to convince the world of the legitimacy of its actions. The humanitarian tragedy in Gaza, alongside the dangers of killing, displacement and settlement expansion in the West Bank, is subjecting Western governments to an increasingly rigorous test of their credibility. At the heart of this landscape, Jordanian diplomacy, led by His Majesty King Abdullah, is gaining heightened significance, as growing international stances align with the Jordanian vision that links regional security to ending the occupation and establishing an independent Palestinian state.

The discussion regarding this shift in public opinion is not based on impressions alone. A Pew Research Centre poll published in April 2026 revealed that 60 per cent of Americans view Israel negatively, up from approximately 53 per cent the previous year. These results reflect a tangible decline in Israel's image among its key allies-though this does not automatically imply that all respondents support a single policy regarding the conflict. Nevertheless, the findings reveal that continued political support is now contending with a public environment that is increasingly critical and demanding of accountability.

A joint statement issued on September 8, 2026, by the foreign ministers of twelve nations-Britain, France, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden-has given significant diplomatic expression to this shift. The statement focused on the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, the escalation of settler violence and settlement expansion, warning against undermining the two-state solution and rejecting the annexation of Palestinian territory and the forced displacement of its inhabitants.

The statement is particularly significant for its shift toward economic tools; the participating nations announced their intention to implement national restrictions-or support European ones-on trade in settlement goods, or to seriously consider such measures in accordance with their domestic laws. Britain, France, and Canada confirmed they would introduce measures to ban trade in these goods. This distinction is crucial, as the announcement does not imply the immediate implementation of a unified

ban across all these countries; nevertheless, it opens the door to linking political opposition with economic costs that directly impact the settlement enterprise.

The danger of the situation in the West Bank lies in the fact that the accumulation of daily realities could determine the future of the cause before any negotiations even begin. Every Palestinian community that loses the means of its survival, and every tract of land carved out for settlements, makes the establishment of a contiguous, viable state increasingly difficult. Consequently, protecting the population from killing and displacement becomes both a humanitarian and political imperative, and halting settlement expansion becomes a prerequisite for safeguarding the land upon which a settlement is meant to be built-and for ensuring its inhabitants can remain there.

The ultimate measure of success remains halting the killing and displacement, protecting Jerusalem, preserving the unity of Palestinian territory...

As for Gaza, the scale of the tragedy dictates that protecting civilians, providing relief and rebuilding lives be treated as an urgent responsibility. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved by politically separating the Strip from the West Bank or by turning reconstruction into a vehicle for displacing the population from their homeland. Humanitarian efforts must lead to the restoration of rights and the ability to sustain life within a unified Palestinian political framework, ensuring that crisis

management does not become a permanent substitute for addressing the root causes of the catastrophe.

In this context, the importance of Jordanian royal diplomacy in keeping the Palestinian cause at the forefront of regional and international attention is evident. During his discussions with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi on September 13 His Majesty warned of the dangers posed by Israeli measures aimed at annexing territory and expanding settlements in the West Bank, as well as violations affecting Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

The two leaders affirmed their commitment to continued coordination and consultation to foster security, stability, and peace in the region. This move reflects Jordan's recognition that safeguarding prospects for a settlement requires confronting actions that undermine it on the ground, and transforming Arab and international rapprochement into effective pressure that protects Palestinian rights and preserves the possibility of establishing an independent state.

The strength of Jordan's position stems from its direct link to the region's interests and security. Displacement threatens the Palestinian people in their homeland while simultaneously opening the door to instability that transcends borders. Consequently, defending the Palestinians' continued presence on their land is tantamount to defending regional stability.

Furthermore, protecting Jerusalem and its Islamic and Christian holy sites, under the Hashemite Custodianship, imbues Jordan's efforts with historical and moral significance, underscoring the necessity of preserving the city's identity and the rights of its inhabitants within any just settlement.

Nevertheless, the global shift must be viewed realistically. A decline in Israel's international image does not equate to the collapse of its alliances, and Western statements alone cannot guarantee an end to violations. Moreover, growing support for the two-state solution requires measures that safeguard the feasibility of its implementation. This highlights the importance of coordination-between Jordan, Arab nations, and states willing to act-to forge a cohesive stance that demands civilian protection, accountability for perpetrators of aggression, an end to support for settlements and practical guarantees to prevent the continued erosion of the foundations of a future Palestinian state.

The current phase also demands support for Palestinian institutions, strengthening their capacity to deliver services and shielding the local economy from collapse. People's resilience relies on access to schools, hospitals, and employment opportunities, as well as freedom of access to their land and livelihoods. Nations supporting a settlement must incorporate these requirements into their policies and match their recognition of rights with concrete steps to uphold them.

The strength of Jordan's position stems from its direct link to the region's interests and security

Any delay only widens the gap between the state the world theoretically supports and the increasingly complex reality on the ground. The opportunity available today lies in translating the convergence between the Jordanian visions and shifting international stances into tangible results that enhance the security and freedom of the Palestinian people.

The ultimate measure of success remains halting the killing and displacement, protecting Jerusalem, preserving the unity of Palestinian territory, and opening a serious path toward an independent, sovereign state. Only then can this global shift serve as a springboard for a just peace and diplomacy transform from a voice warning of catastrophe into a force that helps avert it and shape a different future.

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

Berlin’s run-down public spaces at heart of election campaign

Agence France Presse

BERLIN — Politicians campaigning for Sunday's Berlin state election have painted an unflattering picture of the German capital, vowing to clear garbage-strewn streets and promising “syndrome-free playgrounds”.

Town hall-hopefuls have also pledged to clean up graffiti-covered train stations, end “forever-building sites”, fix buckled cycling lanes and take steps to ease a desperate shortage of affordable housing.

Taken together, the list of woes hardens the image of a chronically broke city whose administration often struggles to reliably provide services for its almost 4 million people.

Certainly, many who live in Berlin love its rich artistic and cultural life, green spaces, lakes and children's playgrounds, vibrant start-up scene and hedonistic, anything-goes nightlife.

The long-divided city boasts countless museums, galleries and sites reflecting its troubled history, as well as two zoos, three opera houses and multiple techno clubs known around the world.

But all of that has gone hand-in-hand with persistent complaints about a slow bureaucracy and a dysfunctional city administration which famously took almost 15 years to build an international airport with next-door Brandenburg Gate.

Cross-financed by Germany's wealthier states, Berlin is deep in the red, with 2.2 billion euros in debt calculated in late 2024, which forced painful spending cuts in multiple areas.

Berlin's former mayor Klaus Wowereit once famously labelled Berlin “poor but sexy”, but since then many of its residents have at times struggled to stay in love with the city.

‘Garbage mountains’

Local newspapers often write about Berlin's “crime hotspots” and rising homelessness, and make great sport of documenting ever-new Berlin disasters, from rat-infested police stations to the closure of the Technical University's main campus due to structural defects and fire safety issues.

With renovations now set to cost around 2.4 billion euros, university president Fatma Deniz blamed “decades of delayed investment and budget cuts in public infrastructure”.

The small party Volt has been running campaign posters with the promise to “unf* berlin” that list a litany of complaints from potholes to “garbage mountains” and, more generally, “Berlin frustration”.

One Berlin resident fed up with filthy streets has taken matters into her own hands.

Valeriia Tancyreva, 31, started the volunteer group Sauber-berlin (Clean Berlin), which on a recent outing in the working-class district of Wedding filled a secure disposal box with syringes discarded by drug users.

“No one cares about the city,” she charged, calling the waste management service “useless”. She said she decided to take action after her dog was repeatedly injured by broken glass and other refuse.

City hall told AFP, when asked about the garbage problem, that

there were “no operational failures”, pointing instead to many residents' lack of civic responsibility.

Another pet peeve for many are sketchy cycling lanes in a city where 18 per cent of all trips are made by bike.

The long-divided city boasts countless museums, galleries and sites reflecting its troubled history, as well as two zoos, three opera houses and multiple techno clubs known around the world

They are often “outdated, too narrow, overgrown with vegetation and buckled by tree roots”, complained Lisa Feitsch of the cycling association ADFC.

‘Chaos city’

The city's politics may be even messier than its streets, and the next government is certain to

again be run by a multi-party coalition.

Four parties are leading the race for the Rotes Rathaus (Red Town Hall), all polling in the range of 16 to 21 per cent, with the centre-left SPD trailing behind them.

Frontrunners for the top spot are the centre-right CDU, which is strongest in Berlin's leafy western suburbs, and the far-left Die Linke, whose heartland lies in parts of the former east.

The far-right AfD, whose bastion is among the communist-era residential tower blocks of the former East Berlin, expects new record results, but also to remain shut out of power by all other parties.

Also among the top four are the Greens, who dominate in hip inner-city areas known for trendy cafes, organic supermarkets and cargo bicycles.

When Berlin voters head to the polls on Sunday, they will hope to elect a capable new government, but also simply that the city-state doesn't mess up the vote itself, like it did in 2021.

Citizens back then waited in hours-long queues while some polling booths ran out of ballot papers and resupplies were obstructed by a marathon the city had decided to stage on the same day.

The 2021 election fiasco, as well as subsequent street unrest on New Year's Eve, led the Bavarian state premier Markus Soeder, based in far tidier Munich, to thunder that Berlin was a “chaos city”.

Berlin eventually held a successful re-run of the vote in 2023.



The total exports grew by more than 14 per cent in the first half of 2026 says Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah

Exports climb 14% as kingdom moves to open new trade markets — minister

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah, said that the total exports grew by more than 14 per cent in the first half of 2026.

He said that the exports increase resulted from extending last year's gains as the government moves to open new markets in Africa and Central Asia and advance a \$10 billion pipeline of Public-Private Partnership projects.

Speaking at a recent business meeting organised by the Jordanian Businessmen Association, Qudah said export growth has maintained momentum for a second consecutive year after total exports increased by around 11.5 per cent in 2025 compared with 2024.

National exports rose 6.2 per cent in the first half of this year, while reexports jumped 44 per cent, he said, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Qudah said the rise in locally produced goods, which are sold abroad, reflects stronger export activity, while growth in reexports reinforces the Kingdom's role as a regional trade and logistics hub.

Export gains were spread across more than 12 industrial sectors, helping diversify the country's export base and reduce exposure to fluctuations affecting individual products or markets.

The performance came despite regional conditions that have disrupted supply chains, transport and logistics, as well as increasing competition in international markets, the minister said.

Aqaba Port also recorded a more than 5 per cent increase in container handling during the first nine months of the year compared with the same period in 2025.

The government is now seeking to broaden access to overseas markets through preferential trade arrangements alongside its existing free trade agreements with the United States, European Union, United Kingdom, Arab countries and Canada.

He said two preferential trade agreements are expected to be signed before the end of the year, one with Rwanda to expand access to East and Central African markets and another with Uzbekistan to provide a gateway to Central Asia.

The government has also opened talks with the Eurasian Economic Union on a preferential trade agreement aimed at improving access for locally produced goods to markets across the bloc.

Qudah noted that the trade strategy focuses on both expanding the number of export destinations, and increasing

the diversity and domestic value added of products sold overseas.

Alongside its trade push, the government plans to launch major projects worth around \$10 billion in partnership with the private sector over the next three to four years.

The investment pipeline covers water, energy, transport, infrastructure and public services, with projects intended to stimulate private investment and generate employment.

Among them are the National Water Carrier and a natural gas pipeline linking the Risha gas field with different parts of the Kingdom.

Qudah said the pipeline, coupled with continued exploration around Risha, is expected to help raise natural gas self-sufficiency to around 80 per cent by 2028.

He also cited Airport City as a strategic development intended to create an integrated urban and economic hub for housing, employment and investment while accommodating urban expansion and easing pressure on Amman.

The Minister concluded that the government aims to sustain the positive economic trajectory by expanding exports, attracting investment and strengthening private-sector participation under the Economic Modernisation Vision.

Agriculture minister, Lebanese counterpart discuss boosting agricultural trade, cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Agriculture Minister Saeb Khreisat and his Lebanese counterpart Nizar Hani on Wednesday discussed ways to strengthen agricultural cooperation and expand agricultural trade between Jordan and Lebanon.

The two ministers stressed the importance of closer coordination in the agricultural sector and making use of the comparative advantages of both countries to facilitate access for Jordanian and Lebanese agricultural products to regional markets, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

They also discussed exchanging technical expertise and experience in agricultural production and marketing, as well as facilitating the movement of agricultural products between the two countries.

The meeting covered cooperation in developing agricultural value chains, improving product quality and enhancing the competitiveness of agricultural products in local and international markets.

The ministers stressed the importance of supporting agricultural producers and expanding access to regional and international markets through stronger coordination between relevant authorities in both countries, serving farmers, producers and exporters, and supporting sustainable agricultural development.

They also discussed opportunities to build



Agriculture Minister Saeb Khreisat and his Lebanese counterpart Nizar Hani on Wednesday discuss ways to strengthen agricultural cooperation and expand agricultural trade

tance of supporting agricultural producers and expanding access to regional and international markets through stronger coordination between relevant authorities in both countries, serving farmers, producers and exporters, and supporting sustainable agricultural development.

They also discussed opportunities to build on Jordan and Lebanon's positions as agricultural trade hubs in the region, strengthen export cooperation and identify new markets for agricultural products.

The two sides also addressed the export of Jordanian agricultural products to the Lebanese market in line with required quality, technical and phytosanitary standards, with the aim of supporting agricultural trade between the two countries.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of Jordan's hosting of the Levant Agricultural Exports Conference, which brings together stakeholders to discuss challenges and opportunities related to agricultural exports, regional cooperation and access to international markets, as well as to exchange expertise in production and marketing.

The meeting was attended by ministry Secretary-General Mohammad Hayari, Lebanese Agriculture Ministry Secretary-General Louis Lahoud and Lebanese Ambassador to Jordan Brigitte Touq.

Jordan participates in Arabian Travel Market in Dubai



Jordan is participating in the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai from September 14 to 17 through a national pavilion organised by the Jordan Tourism Board

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan is participating in the Arabian Travel Market

in Dubai from Sept. 14 to 17 through a national pavilion organised by the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB).

The pavilion will

bring together representatives from the Jordanian Consulate in Dubai, travel agencies, hotels, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority, and Royal Jordanian Airlines.

According to a JTB statement issued on Wednesday, the participation aims to promote Jordan's tourism treasures and assets, strengthen its presence in regional and international markets, and expand cooperation with travel companies, airlines and Gulf markets.

During the participation, business meet-

ings will be held with tourism industry representatives from various markets to explore opportunities to attract more visitors to Jordan, particularly Gulf families, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

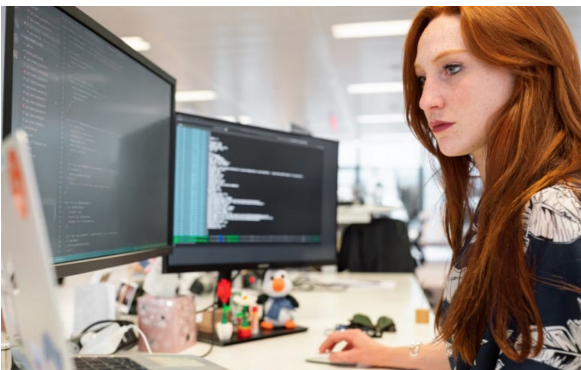
The JTB said Jordan's presence also focuses on promoting the Kingdom's tourist diversity and expanding marketing efforts in regional and international markets to support inbound tourism and strengthen "competitiveness" of Jordan's tourism sector.

AI risks wider gender inequality in jobs market — WEF

LONDON (AFP) — The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) could exacerbate gender disparities in the labour market, the World Economic Forum (WEF) and careers platform LinkedIn warned in a joint report on Wednesday.

"What we found is that the type of roles that are being disrupted by AI tend to be the type of roles that women have been concentrated in," Saadia Zahidi, a managing board member at the World Economic Forum, told a London gathering for the launch of the Global Gender Gap Report 2026.

"It is white-collar work that has brought in a lot of women and given them very good



An employee works in an office in a stock photo

livelihoods over the last few decades, and here are exactly those roles that are being disrupted," she added.

Within AI companies, the picture is even more striking, with women significantly less represented than in comparable non-AI companies —

at all levels — according to the report.

"Women hold just one in every five AI engineering roles," Sue Duke, managing director at LinkedIn, told the event.

Without more women in scientific fields and emerging AI roles, the economic oppor-

tunities created by this technology could primarily benefit men, suggested Duke, based on the report's findings.

To avoid widening inequalities, Duke believes it is crucial for governments and businesses to invest in bringing women into AI training pathways and roles from the outset — and to continue investing at every stage of their careers.

While gender disparities have narrowed worldwide since the first such WEF report was published 20 years ago, its latest data shows the trend towards closing the inequality gap has slowed in the last decade compared with the previous ten years.

US stocks mixed as markets anticipate Fed rate hike

NEW YORK (AFP) — Wall Street stocks were mixed amid investor anticipation of a Federal Reserve (Fed) interest rate hike Wednesday as data showed higher US retail sales in August.

Markets are convinced that Fed Chair Kevin Warsh will oversee an interest rate

hike later Wednesday, potentially sparking criticism from US President Donald Trump but lessening the odds of further upset in the Treasury market.

"The Fed typically does not like to surprise markets unless they absolutely have to," said Steve Sosnick of Interactive Brokers.

"And so, I think at this point they're sort of boxed into a corner, whether they want to or not."

About 15 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.2 per cent at 51,983.64.

The broad-based S&P 500 gained 0.2 per cent to 7,598.81, while

the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index advanced 0.5 per cent to 26,099.71.

US retail sales climbed 1.2 per cent month-on-month in August to \$773.9 billion, topping expectations. The figures were boosted by rising gasoline prices in the period.

US retail sales higher than expected as oil prices stay up

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — Retail sales in the United States surged past analyst expectations in August, government data showed on Wednesday, as energy prices remained elevated amid war with Iran.

US retail sales climbed 1.2 per cent month-on-month to \$773.9 billion, reversing a 0.5 per cent decline in July, according to an advance estimate by the Department of Commerce.

Sales at gasoline stations were up 3.1 per cent from the prior month and were 21 per cent higher than the same period a year ago.

The estimates are adjusted for seasonal variation but not price changes, and gaso-

line costs have surged since US-Israeli strikes targeting Iran in late February prompted Tehran to choke off the Strait of Hormuz.

The waterway is an important route for global energy transit.

Economists had expected a lower 0.8 per cent uptick in retail sales, according to a forecast published by MarketWatch.

For the first time ever, the national average in August remained above \$4 per gallon every day as of August 27, making it the most expensive August at the pump.

Excluding sales at gasoline stations, retail sales were up 1.1 per cent in August from the prior month.

Sales also rose at restaurants and bars.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

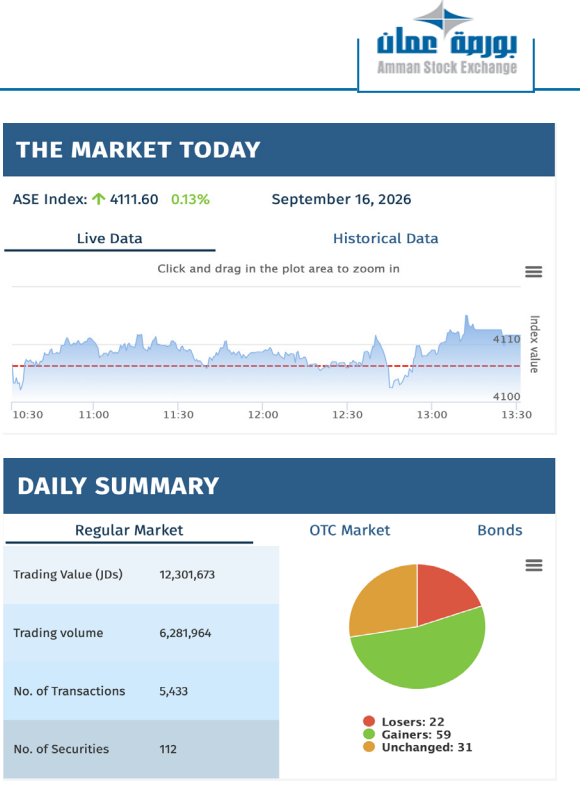
AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stocks Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday reached JD12.3 million and 6.3 million shares were traded through 5,433 transactions.

The ASE share price index closed at 4111.6 point, an increase of 0.13 per cent.

The shares of 112 companies were traded, the share price of 59 companies rose, and the share price of 22 declined.

The top five gainers were, the First Insurance by 7.46 per cent, Ready Mix Concrete and Construction Supplies by 6.62 per cent, Al Ouds Ready Mix by 5.71 per cent, Amwaj Properties by 5.26 per cent, and Int'l Arabian Development and Investment Trading Co. by 5 per cent.

The top five losers were, Jordan Investment Trust by 40.79 per cent, Siniora Food Industries Plc. by 4.99 per cent, Ibn Alhaytham Hospital Company by 4.88 per cent, Jordan Dairy by 3.76 per cent and Arab East Investment by 3.33 per cent.





DROUGHT PUSHES KARAK'S FARMERS TOWARDS HYDROPONICS AND SOLAR POWER

By Ala' El Btoush

The effects of climate change, dwindling rainfall and shrinking water reserves are pushing farmers in Karak governorate to change their farming and irrigation methods, with some expanding their use of hydroponic techniques and modern systems that help reduce both water consumption and production costs.

In recent years, the governorate has experienced fluctuating and delayed rainy seasons, which has affected crops and water sources and prompted farmers to seek alternatives to traditional soil-based farming, which relies more heavily on land and larger volumes of irrigation water.

Farmer Muthanna Al Nawaiseh said his project has shifted from traditional soil farming to a closed hydroponic system, aiming to produce high-quality vegetables — including tomatoes, cucumbers and leafy crops — while using less water.

He explained that the system involves growing plants in inert growing media or within water channels, allowing dissolved nutrients to reach plant roots directly, without the need for traditional soil.

He noted that fluctuating rainfall and delayed rainy seasons in recent years have

affected agricultural output and led to a decline in groundwater and other water sources, driving up irrigation costs and, in turn, affecting crop costs and farmers' incomes.

He said the system he uses relies on closed-loop technology, including the Nutrient Film Technique, whereby nutrient-enriched water is recirculated and reused repeatedly, reducing water loss through both soil absorption and evaporation.

Engineer Jamal Al Nawaiseh, chairman of the Renewable Energy Association, believes that using renewable energy — particularly solar power — can lower the cost of pumping water and help farmers run modern irrigation systems more cheaply.

He said combining solar energy with modern irrigation techniques helps save both water and energy, and boosts the profitability of agricultural production, at a time when desertification is a growing problem requiring practical measures to curb its effects.

Nawaiseh called for expanding rainwater harvesting, adopting modern irrigation technologies, and improving water management across all sectors — not just agriculture — to address the effects of drought and climate change.

For its part, the Karak Directorate of Agriculture said the Ministry of Agriculture is working to support farmers' shift towards climate-smart agriculture by providing advisory services and financial facilities in cooperation with the Agricultural Credit Corporation.

Director of Karak Agriculture, Engineer Ma'moun Al Adaileh, said the directorate, in partnership with the Agricultural Credit Corporation, offers a package of financial and advisory services to help farmers adopt techniques and methods capable of coping with climate change and water scarcity, while easing their economic burdens.

He added that the directorate has run training courses in cooperation with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation to introduce farmers to sustainable farming methods and affordable technologies they can apply.

He noted that the Agricultural Credit Corporation provides low-interest financing of up to 15,000

dinars for farmers running pioneering agricultural projects, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, alongside guiding farmers towards designing more efficient irrigation networks and building rainwater collection pools for use in production.

According to Adaileh, the Karak Directorate of Agriculture's 2026 budget has allocated around 505,000 dinars from the Karak Governorate Council's funds to

The directorate, in partnership with the Agricultural Credit Corporation, offers a package of financial and advisory services to help farmers adopt techniques and methods capable of coping with climate change and water scarcity, while easing their economic burdens.

Ma'moun Al Adaileh, director of Karak Agriculture

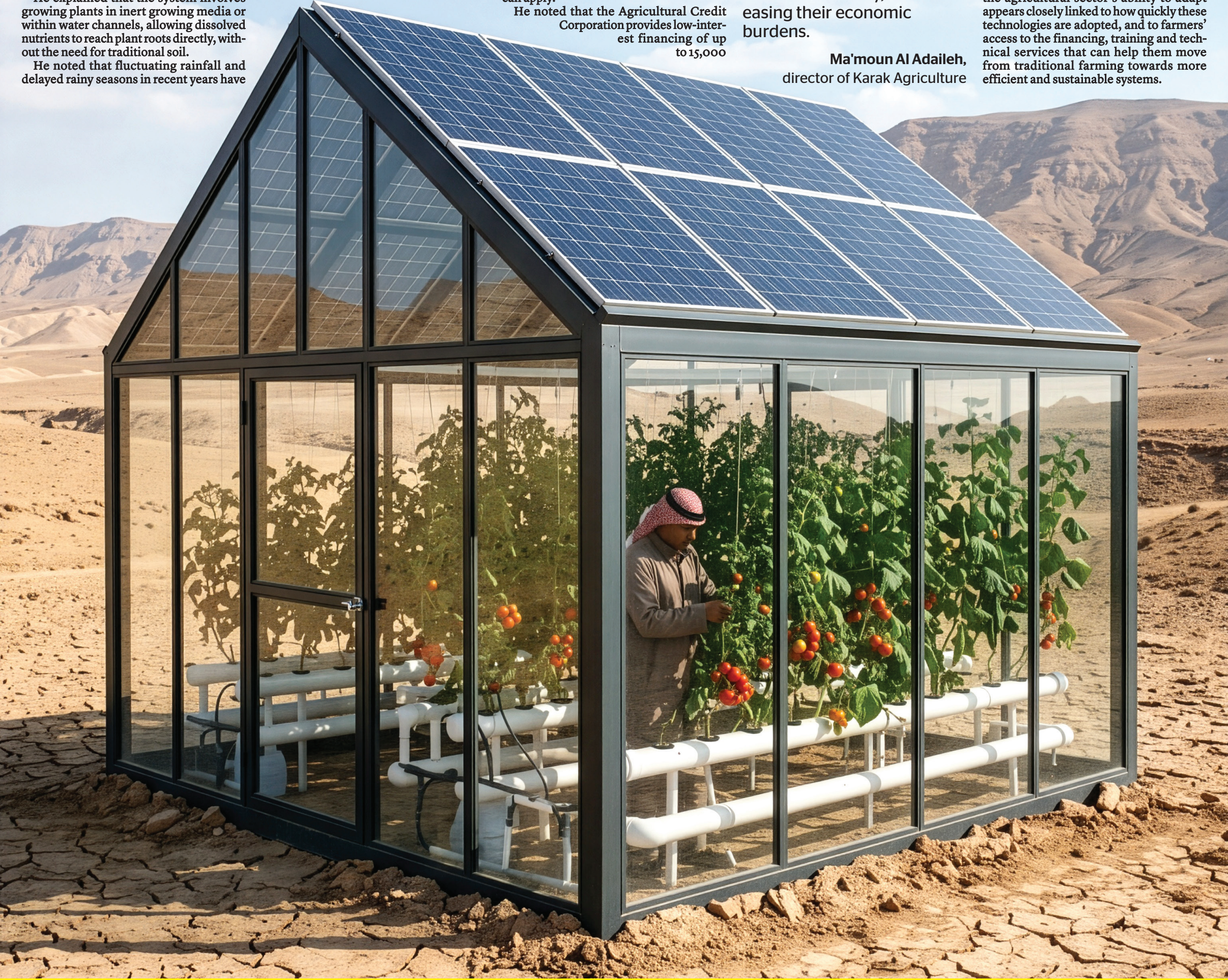
develop infrastructure and provide veterinary, agricultural and technical equipment and facilities.

These measures come at a time of mounting pressure on Karak's agricultural sector, driven by declining rainfall and rising water and energy costs, making the shift to more resource-efficient production systems one of the options available to farmers.

Modern farming is not only about reducing water consumption: solar power also lowers the cost of running irrigation pumps, while closed hydroponic systems help recycle water rather than losing it to the soil or through evaporation.

The experience of Karak's farmers suggests that tackling the effects of climate change does not rely on a single water source or technology, but on a combination of measures — beginning with rainwater harvesting, improving irrigation efficiency, using renewable energy, and developing agricultural production methods, alongside continued advisory support and financing for farmers.

As water resources continue to decline, the agricultural sector's ability to adapt appears closely linked to how quickly these technologies are adopted, and to farmers' access to the financing, training and technical services that can help them move from traditional farming towards more efficient and sustainable systems.



JOD 505,000

The 2026 budget allocated by the Karak Governorate Council for the Directorate of Agriculture to develop infrastructure and provide technical equipment.

JOD 15,000

The maximum low-interest financing limit provided by the Agricultural Credit Corporation to support pioneering climate-smart farming projects.

2026

The target fiscal year for the allocated budget aimed at developing infrastructure and climate-resilient facilities in Karak.