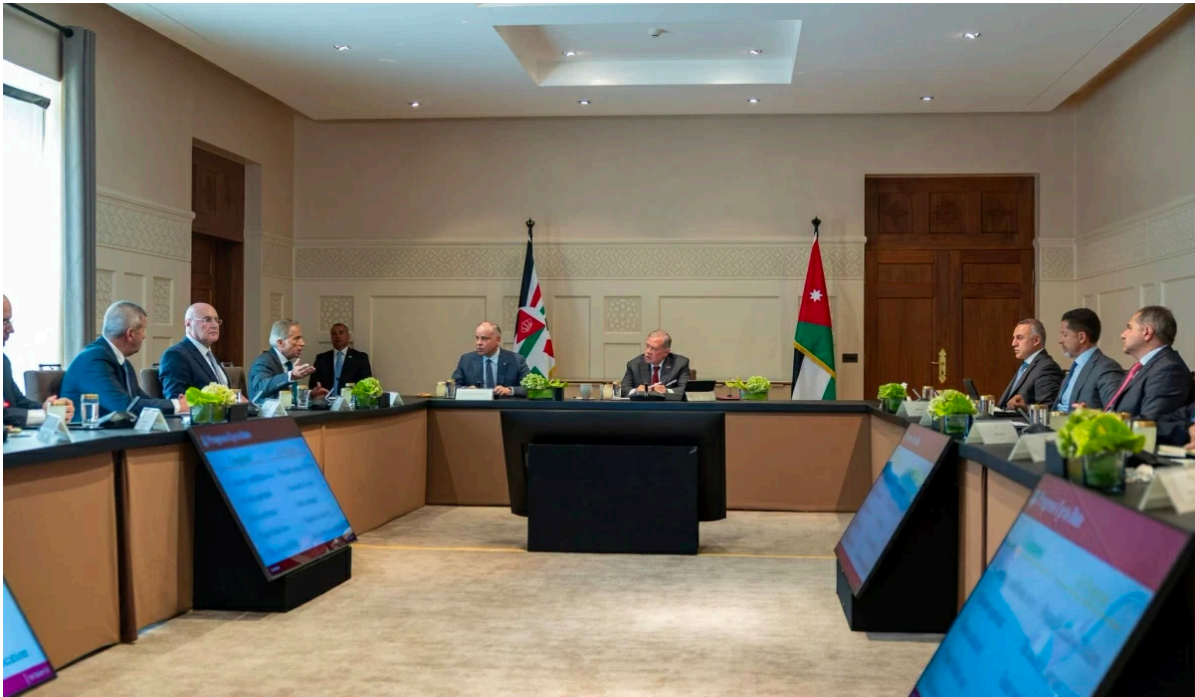




His Majesty King Abdullah chairs a meeting on Tuesday to review government progress in the gas sector

King reviews government progress in gas sector, plans to reinforce energy security

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah chaired a meeting on Tuesday to review government progress in the gas sector, and its strategic plans to reinforce energy

security and boost national economic competitiveness. During the meeting, held at Al Husseinia Palace and attended by Chairman of the National Poli-

cies Council HRH Prince Feisal and Prime Minister Jafar Hassan, His Majesty was briefed on implementation of plans to expand production at Risha Gas Field, and link it to the

Arab Gas Pipeline to boost gas supplies and support the country's growing energy needs, according to a Royal Court statement.

Continued on page 5

King receives Patriarch of All Bulgaria and Metropolitan of Sofia

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Tuesday received Patriarch Daniil, the Patriarch of All Bulgaria and Metropolitan of Sofia, at Al Husseinia Palace.

During the meeting, attended by HRH Prince Ghazi, His Majesty's chief adviser for religious and cultural affairs and personal envoy, the King affirmed that Jordan would continue to safeguard the Christian presence in the region, according to a Royal Court statement. His Majesty reiterated that, under the Hashemite Custodianship, Jordan will uphold its historic and legal role in safeguarding Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, and confronting ongoing violations against them.

The King invited Patriarch Daniil to take part in Jordan's 2030 millennium celebrations commemorating two thousand years since the baptism of Jesus Christ, to be held at the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ (Bethany Beyond the Jordan).

His Majesty noted that the occasion



His Majesty King Abdullah receives Patriarch Daniil, the Patriarch of All Bulgaria and Metropolitan of Sofia, at Al Husseinia Palace

presents an opportunity to highlight the historical and religious significance of the Baptism Site and other sites of religious and touristic importance in Jordan.

For his part, Patriarch Daniil praised the King's custodianship of the Christian holy sites and efforts to safeguard the Christian presence

in the region, expressing his appreciation for the warm welcome afforded by Jordan to international Christian visitors to the Kingdom's Christian religious sites.

Patriarch Daniil also commended the Kingdom for its important role as a model of peace, coexistence, and interfaith harmony.

Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh, Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem and All Palestine and Jordan, and Greek Orthodox Archbishop and Head of the Council of Church Leaders Archbishop Christophoros Atallah attended the meeting.



Official source dismisses as baseless claims of Jordan's participation in alleged meeting with Netanyahu

AMMAN (JT) — A Jordanian source dismissed as baseless claims pushed by Israeli media suggesting a Jordanian representative had attended a meeting with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his recent visit to the United Arab Emirates.

The source said these claims are blatant falsehoods promoted by Israeli media affiliated with Netanyahu for electioneering purposes in the wake of the international isolation facing the Israeli prime minister after his participation in the United Nations General Assembly meetings.

The discussions touched on National Council for Future Technology initiatives aimed at developing digital government services and enhancing Jordan's investment climate. The meetings also explored avenues for cooperation in manufacturing, and the automation of

Crown Prince meets with leaders of tech companies in New York

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein, during meetings in New York on Tuesday with leaders of technology companies, explored opportunities for cooperation and partnership with Jordan focusing on the development of artificial intelligence systems and models.

The discussions touched on National Council for Future Technology initiatives aimed at developing digital government services and enhancing Jordan's investment climate. The meetings also explored avenues for cooperation in manufacturing, and the automation of

logistics operations in Aqaba, according to a Royal Court statement.

'The meetings also explored avenues for cooperation ...'

Director of the Office of the Crown Prince Zaid Baqain attended the meetings.



HRH Crown Prince Hussein explores cooperation opportunities with leaders of technology companies in New York

Amman Stock Exchange honoured as best-performing Arab bourse in 2025

- ASE General Index rose 45.1% in 2025, reaching 3,611.6 points, its highest level since 2007
- ASE ranked 13th globally, according to Bloomberg data on financial market performance
- Total Return Index increased 58.52% during 2025
- Market capitalisation rose 50.1% to about JD26.5 billion
- Trading volume increased 80.6%, average daily trading value doubled to JD8.8 million



The Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) has been named the best-performing Arab stock exchange in terms of price-index growth for 2025 by the Arab Federation of Exchanges. ASE CEO Mazen Wathaifi receives the federation's annual award during its 2026 annual meeting and conference, held in Abu Dhabi

AMMAN (JT) — The Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) has been named the best-performing Arab stock exchange in terms of price-index growth for 2025 by the Arab Federation of Exchanges.

ASE CEO Mazen Wathaifi received the federation's annual award during its 2026 annual meeting and conference, being held in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday and Wednesday in cooperation with the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange.

The award recognises the ASE's strong

performance in 2025, when its General Index (ASEGI) rose 45.1 per cent to 3,611.6 points, up from 2,488.8 points at the end of 2024. The index reached its highest level since 2007, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

According to Bloomberg data on financial market performance, the ASE ranked first among Arab stock exchanges and 13th globally in terms of index growth during 2025.

Continued on page 5

JHCO dispatches 14th humanitarian aid convoy to Lebanon

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO) said on Tuesday it had sent a new humanitarian aid convoy to Lebanon.

In a statement on Tuesday, JHCO, Jordan's humanitarian arm, said that the 14th aid convoy was dispatched in

cooperation with the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) and the World Food Programme.

Continued on page 5



The Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation says on Tuesday it dispatches a new humanitarian aid convoy to Lebanon, in cooperation with the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army and the World Food Programme

Queen Rania launches 4th edition of Amman Design Week under theme ‘accumulations’

AMMAN (JT) — Her Majesty Queen Rania launched the fourth edition of Amman Design Week (ADW) on Tuesday at the Ras El Ain Hangar in Amman, ahead of the opening to visitors this Friday. The event will run from October 2 through October 17, with all exhibitions and programmes free and open to the public.

Founded by Queen Rania in 2016, this year's edition of ADW will take place in venues and participating space across Ras El Ain, Jabal Al Lweibdeh, Jabal Amman, Iraq Al Amir and, for the first time, Aqaba. Held in partnership with the Greater Amman Municipality, its wide-ranging programme includes exhibitions, workshops, talks, stu-



Her Majesty Queen Rania, accompanied by HRH Princess Iman, launches the fourth edition of Amman Design Week on Tuesday at the Ras El Ain Hangar in Amman

dent and community events, and citywide cultural activities, according to a statement from Office of Her Majesty.

Her Majesty, accompanied by HRH Princess Iman and other members of the Royal Family, joined ADW co-directors Sarah Hejazin

and Bisher Tabaa for a tour of the Hangar Exhibition. The installations on display include the works of designers and artists

from Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt, India and Armenia. Held under the theme

"Accumulations", this year's event brings together 220 designers, makers, and innovators from Jordan, the region and around the

world, presenting their creative collections and works across 59 participating spaces and 204 events, the statement said.

The theme of "Accumulations" looks at how design takes shape and evolves over time, and how the objects people live with are shaped by their daily practices, material environments and cultural memories. It also explores how design influences quality of life, impacting processes such as city planning, urban transformation, manufacturing and environmental protection.

ADW provides as an immersive experience in local and regional design influences and culture, aiming to establish Amman as a regional hub for innovation and expression. In addition to its two-week event, it offers year-round learning programs in an effort to empower current and aspiring designers and craftspeople.

Photo courtesy of Her Majesty Office

The Jordan Times, Yarmouk University partner to enhance student skills, practical experience

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Times and Yarmouk University have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to expand co-operation in journalism, media, languages and translation, and provide students with practical training opportunities and skills tailored to the job market.

The agreement was signed by Editor-in-Chief of The Jordan Times Raed Omari and Yarmouk University President Malek Alsharairi.

During the signing ceremony, Alsharairi said that the agreement is part of the Irbid-based university's efforts to strengthen ties with media and professional institutions, and create opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience alongside their academic studies.

He said that cooperation with The Jordan Times would help students apply their academic knowledge in professional settings and develop skills needed to meet



Photo courtesy of Yarmouk University

Editor-in-Chief of The Jordan Times Raed Omari and Yarmouk University President Malek Alsharairi sign a Memorandum of Understanding to expand cooperation in journalism, media, languages and translation and provide students with practical training opportunities and skills tailored to the job market

the demands of the job market.

He also highlighted the potential for cooperation in languages, translation, journalism and media, noting that The Jordan Times, as Jordan's sole English-language newspaper, provides a valuable environment for students seeking to develop their language and media skills.

He said that students studying Arabic and foreign languages, including English, Persian, Hebrew and Turkish, as well as translation and other modern languages, would benefit from opportunities to develop professional and media-related skills alongside their academic expertise.

Omari said that

the agreement would strengthen the newspaper's cooperation with Yarmouk University and allow The Jordan Times to benefit from the university's academic and linguistic expertise in journalism, media analysis and related fields.

He said that the partnership would also facilitate the exchange

of expertise and support the development of media work, while giving students the opportunity to gain practical experience at the newspaper.

The MoU provides for cooperation in language, translation, journalism and media, including the involvement of university faculty members in language and editorial review, journalistic analysis, and the preparation of analytical media studies and reports.

It also covers the development of skills in investigative journalism, fact-checking and journalistic analysis, as well as the organisation of joint workshops and discussion sessions.

Under the agreement, students, particularly those majoring in languages, translation and media, will be offered practical training opportunities at The Jordan Times under terms agreed upon by both sides. The training will be supervised jointly by university academics and newspaper editors and professionals.

UNICEF executive director calls for sustained support for children in Jordan as funding declines

AMMAN (JT) — UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell ended a two-day visit to Jordan on Tuesday, commending the country's strong progress for children and calling for continued support to sustain this progress amid a declining funding environment.

During her visit, Russell spent time with children at a Jordan River Foundation community centre, where UNICEF and the foundation work together to provide vulnerable children with learning, protection and support, according to a UNICEF statement.

Minister of Education and Human Resources Development Azmi Mahfazah, and Minister of Social Development Wafa Bani Mustafa met with Russell to discuss the needs of children in Jordan.

Russell highlighted Jordan's strong national strategies for children, including in social protection, child protection and support for young people, reaffirming UNICEF's commitment to working alongside the government to help translate these strategies into lasting improve-



Photo courtesy of UNICEF

During her two-day visit to the Kingdom, UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell spends time with children at a Jordan River Foundation community centre

ments for every child.

Almost every child in Jordan now attends primary school and the Child Rights Law of 2022 sets out children's rights in national law.

Around one in seven children live in multidimensional poverty, without reliable access to services such as healthcare and education, the statement said, adding that nearly three in four children aged 1 to 14 experience violent discipline at home, while around 39 per cent of young people are out of work.

Jordan has shown extraordinary generosity in

hosting Syrian refugees, with 1.3 million refugees at the height of the Syrian conflict. Thousands have returned, but many remain and require continued support from the international community, read the statement.

A declining funding environment is affecting the ability to deliver essential services for the most vulnerable children in Jordan.

UNICEF is calling for continued donor support through flexible, multiyear funding that strengthens Jordan's own systems for every child, according to the statement.

Amman book fair draws ‘strong’ interest from young readers

By Enad Abbadi

AMMAN — The 25th Amman International Book Fair is bringing together readers, writers, publishers and cultural figures, creating a “lively” atmosphere around books, ideas and conversations.

Held under the theme “Jordan: The Land and the People”, the fair brings together 400 publishing houses and local, Arab and foreign institutions representing 22 countries.

On behalf of His Majesty King Abdullah, Culture Minister Mustafa Rawashdeh inaugurated the fair on Thursday.

For those taking part, the event is not only an opportunity to display and sell books, but also a “recurring cultural gathering that brings together people from across the Arab world”.

Iraqi poet and Director General of Al Basaer Foundation for Studies and Publishing Harith Azdi said that this year marks the ninth time the institution has participated in the fair.

“The fair represents a high-level cultural event, with cultural figures whom we need to renew our connection with every



Photo by Enad Abbadi

Held under the theme ‘Jordan: The Land and the People’, the 25th Amman International Book Fair brings together 400 publishing houses and local, Arab and foreign institutions representing 22 countries

year,” he said.

The atmosphere also appeared to reflect an interest in reading, with participants encouraging visitors to make books part of their everyday lives.

Author and Content creator Ahmad Sabouni described reading as “the rare currency of our time”, urging people to read and visit the book fair.

For publishers, the fair, running through October 3, also provides an opportunity to engage directly with readers.

Saeed Banna of the Centre for Arab Unity Studies said that the centre has participated in the fair for several years, adding that attendance has been “very good”.

For writer Rana Fakhour, one of the most notable aspects of this year's fair was the presence of younger visitors.

“What caught my attention was the considerable interest among young people, which genuinely made me happy,” she said.

“I really enjoyed the experience. The fair is great and inspires you to read,” said 20-year-old university student Mohammad Zaki.

With publishers from 22 countries, alongside writers, cultural figures and readers, the fair continues to provide a space where books become a starting point for conversations and cultural exchange.

FAO, Italy complete project supporting rural livelihoods, food security

AMMAN (JT) — The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has marked the completion of a project supporting food security and livelihoods for host communities and Syrian refugees in Jordan.

The project, titled “Enhancing Food Security and Resilience of Host Communities and Syrian Refugees in Jordan through Agrifood Production Chains”, was implemented through a grant of 1 million euros, according to a FAO statement.

The closing ceremony was held under the patronage of Minister of Agriculture Saeb Khraisat and in the presence of Ambassador of Italy to Jordan Pier Luigi Zamporlini.

The project supported 133 people and six local community-based organisations and cooperatives in Ajloun, Balqa and Jerash.

Its activities combined infrastructure support, capacity building, business mentoring and assistance to improve access to markets, with a focus on value chains including mushrooms, medicinal and aromatic plants,



Photo courtesy of FAO

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations marks the completion of a project supporting food security and livelihoods for host communities and Syrian refugees in Jordan

and honey.

These efforts aimed to strengthen agrifood production and help participants develop income-generating activities.

FAO, in coordination with the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation Office in Amman, worked with local cooperatives and community organisations to strengthen their business and technical capacities.

A study tour to Morocco gave Jordanian cooperatives the opportunity to exchange

experiences with their counterparts, and explore approaches to cooperative development and adding value to agricultural products that could be adapted in Jordan.

Khraisat said, “At the Ministry of Agriculture, we believe that investing in rural populations is the most sustainable form of investment. Empowering women, youth, and small-scale producers — and providing them with the necessary tools, knowledge and employment opportuni-

ties — forms the foundation for building a food system capable of withstanding economic and climate-related challenges.”

He added, “The ministry will continue to work with its partners to expand the impact of these initiatives, strengthen the resilience of rural communities and achieve national food security.”

“This project has demonstrated the impact that strong partnerships can achieve in supporting livelihoods, building resil-

ience and creating economic opportunities for rural communities,” said Thaer Yaseen, FAO representative in Jordan.

“The experiences, partnerships and lessons generated through this initiative provide a valuable foundation for future efforts to advance sustainable agrifood systems in Jordan,” he added.

“This initiative is part of Italy's broader and longstanding partnership with Jordan, and reflects our continued commitment to promoting sustainable development, strengthening food security and creating economic opportunities for rural communities,” said Zamporlini.

At the ceremony, women supported through the project, shared their stories and experiences and showcased their products, the successful result of two years of collaborative work.

The event also provided an opportunity to reflect on lessons learned and to chart a path forward, reinforcing FAO and Italy's shared commitment to supporting refugees and host communities across Jordan.



Aerial view of Aqaba Port

JMA discusses measures to reduce vessel delays, improve port flow

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Maritime Authority (JMA) on Tuesday held a coordination meeting chaired by JMA Director General Ahmad Assasleh to discuss vessel waiting times at ports and measures to improve operational flow and speed up cargo handling and clearance.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Transport, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), the Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC), the Royal Naval Force, port operators, the Jordan Navigation Syndicate (JNS) and relevant security agencies.

The meeting reviewed recommendations issued during a ministerial meeting held in Aqaba on August 6 to address bottlenecks at the ports, as well as progress in implementing the recommendations, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

A number of measures have been adopted through Cabinet decisions, contributing to easing congestion and improving the flow of port opera-

tions, according to a JMA statement.

The meeting stressed the need for continued follow-up to assess the impact of the measures and address any further challenges.

A number of measures have been adopted through Cabinet decisions...

Discussions focused on the causes of vessel delays, particularly prolonged waiting times, and the importance of advance planning to ensure the readiness of ships, agents, equipment, transport, storage yards and required documentation.

The meeting also addressed speeding up the clearance of vehicles and cargo, ensuring sufficient numbers of trucks and car carriers and improving the exchange of information on vessel arrival schedules, particularly for transit cargo bound for Iraq.

Participants also discussed measures to regulate vessels waiting offshore, strengthen coordination with shipping lines and agents and expand storage capacity by adding yards for vehicles and cargo.

Proposals to rehabilitate and reactivate the Mou'tah berth to handle vegetable oil vessels were also reviewed, subject to the completion of technical studies, safety requirements and the necessary approvals.

The meeting stressed that reducing vessel waiting times requires closer coordination among government agencies, port operators and the private sector, with clear responsibilities and indicators to monitor waiting times, vessel numbers and operational efficiency.

Safadi, British Parliament delegation discuss cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Tuesday received a delegation from the British Parliament and the Conservative Middle East Council, headed by MP Andrew Bowie.

Safadi and the delegation discussed bilateral relations and prospects for expanding cooperation, particularly in economic fields, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

They underscored the importance of the Jordan-Europe Investment Conference, which the Kingdom will host on November 19, 2026, in fostering mutually beneficial economic partnerships.

The meeting also covered regional developments and efforts to de-escalate tensions and promote lasting security and stability, the statement said.

Also on Tuesday,



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Tuesday receives a delegation from the British Parliament and the Conservative Middle East Council

Safadi and Liberian Foreign Minister Sara Beysolow Nyanti discussed prospects for enhancing bilateral cooperation and coordination within international organisations.

During a telephone conversation, the two ministers also reviewed efforts aimed at de-escalating regional tensions and

safeguarding international peace and security, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Safadi and Nyanti addressed Liberia's

participation in the high-level international conference titled "Upholding Humanity in War", which the Kingdom is scheduled to host on December 7.

Bulgarian Orthodox patriarch visits Baptism Site

AMMAN (JT) — Patriarch of Bulgaria and Metropolitan of Sofia Daniil on Monday visited the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ (Al Maghtas), accompanied by Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem Theophilos III and an official delegation.

HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad, Chief Adviser to His Majesty King Abdullah for Religious and Cultural Affairs and Personal Envoy, welcomed the patriarchs upon their arrival via the King Hussein Bridge, alongside Archbishop of Jordan Christoforos, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Prince Ghazi accom-



Patriarch of Bulgaria and Metropolitan of Sofia Daniil on Monday visits the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ (Al Maghtas)

panied Patriarch Daniil on a tour of several religious and historical

landmarks, including Tell Mar Elias, Saint John the Baptist

Spring and Cave, and Saint Mary of Egypt Church.

At the Baptism Site, Patriarch Daniil received a blessing with water from the Jordan River at the site where Jesus Christ was baptised by Saint John the Baptist.

The delegation also visited the International Orthodox Baptism Site University, where they toured its facilities and were briefed on its academic mission.

The visit reflects the longstanding ecclesiastical ties between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and highlights the Baptism Site's significance as a destination for Christian pilgrims.

Minister says environmental data key to Jordanian products' competitiveness

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Environment Ayman Suleiman on Tuesday stressed that verified environmental data on products has become essential for Jordanian manufacturers seeking to maintain their competitiveness in foreign markets, particularly the European market.

Suleiman made the remarks during the launch of the "Enhancing the Circular Economy Market and Life Cycle Assessment" project, implemented by the Jordan Green Building Council with support from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).

The project is part of a programme to strengthen green activities in industrial facilities, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He stressed the importance of developing national expertise capable of measuring and locally verifying the environmental impact of products.



Minister of Environment Ayman Suleiman on Tuesday launch of the 'Enhancing the Circular Economy Market and Life Cycle Assessment' project

Jordan Green Building Council Chairman Abdullah Bdeir said the project addresses a shortage of locally trained experts in life cycle assessment and environmental product declarations.

GIZ GAIN Project Manager Simon Flott highlighted the importance of the Jordanian-German partnership in supporting the industrial sector's transition to a green economy.

Council's Executive Director and project manager Ghaida Salameh

and GIZ Private Sector Advisor Mohammad Al Shoushan outlined the project's components. The project runs until April 2027 and targets the construction materials, construction, chemical and engineering sectors.

The project aims to strengthen capacity in life cycle assessment and environmental product declarations through training and pilot studies, as well as support industrial facilities in preparing environmental product de-

clarations for Jordanian products.

It also includes preparing a practical guide on high-impact green measures in buildings and industrial cities, in cooperation with the Jordan Industrial Estates Company and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply, as well as a study on Jordan's market for environmentally friendly construction materials.

During the ceremony, the council announced the trainees who completed its life cycle as-

essment training programme and the five industrial facilities selected for the practical phase: Manaseer Group, Al Arabia Concrete, Orbit Aluminium Industries, Arab Fertilisers and Chemicals Company, and Arab Italian Insulation Materials Company.

Ten trainees will conduct five life cycle assessment studies at the selected facilities, with two facilities qualifying to develop verified environmental product declarations for their products and publish them internationally.

The ceremony also included a technical session by environmental product declaration verification expert and life cycle assessment consultant Ipek Goktas Kalkan, founder of Finnish company EPDlogy.

The session addressed the return on investment from product sustainability data, the relationship between life cycle assessment and environmental product declarations, and the carbon border adjustment mechanism and circular economy.

Water security collective responsibility among Mediterranean countries — water minister

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Water and Irrigation Raed Abu Saud stressed on Tuesday that water security is a collective responsibility among Mediterranean countries, warning against using water as a political weapon or monopolising water resources.

Abu Saud co-chaired the second Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Meeting on Water in Rome alongside EU Commissioner Jessica Roswall, Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani and Acting UfM Secretary General Fadi Haj Ali.

He called on representatives of the 43 UfM member states to establish a unified framework for managing surface water and transboundary groundwater, according to a UfM statement.

The minister reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to translating the Mediterranean Water Declaration into practical measures.

He said Jordan remains one of the world's most water-



Minister of Water and Irrigation co-chairs the second Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Meeting on Water in Rome

scarce countries and outlined national efforts to reduce non-revenue water, expand the reuse of treated wastewater and advance the National Conveyance Project.

Jordan has also demonstrated its commitment to international water law through its accession to the 1992 UN Water Convention, Abu Saud said.

He urged participants to translate legal principles into practical mechanisms through three tracks, knowledge exchange, governance cooperation and sustainable

investment.

Tajani affirmed Italy's commitment to financing regional water projects, while Roswall stressed the need for urgent funding in response to climate vulnerability. Haj Ali noted that more than 180 million people in the Mediterranean basin face severe water poverty.

Delegates agreed to focus future cooperation on water governance, sector financing, digitalisation and climate adaptation, and formally adopted three strategic documents to guide regional action.

Cassation Court upholds 5-year sentence for man convicted of sexually assaulting teenager

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Court of Cassation upheld an October 2022 Criminal Court ruling, sentencing a man to over five years in prison after convicting him of sexually assault-

ing a teenage Syrian boy in Mafraq in July 2023.

The court declared the defendant guilty of sodomising the 17-year-old boy at knife point on July 13.

The criminal court sentenced the defend-

ant to five years and four months.

Court papers said the victim, who resided in Mafraq, knew the defendant because they lived in the same neighbourhood.

The defendant lured the victim to his apart-

ment, where he pulled a knife and asked him to undress, court papers said.

"The defendant sexually assaulted the victim at knife point," according to the court transcripts.

The victim managed to

escape from the apartment and notified his family about the sexual assault, court papers added.

The defendant did not appeal the verdict to a higher court.

Meanwhile, the Crimi-

nal Court's attorney general asked the higher court to uphold the sentence.

The higher court ruled that the Criminal Court proceedings were accurate and that the defendant was given the appro-

priate punishment.

"The defendant confessed to the sexual assault incident when he was arrested," the higher court ruled.

Therefore, he deserved the punishment he received, the higher court

added.

The Court of Cassation was headed by Judge Mahmoud Ebtoush and included judges Nayef Samarat, Mohammad Shreiri, Hammad Ghazawi and Mohammad Khashashneh.

8.3m refugees at risk due to ‘severe’ funding cuts — UN

GENEVA (AFP) — Nearly 8.3 million refugees and other forcibly displaced people face losing vital assistance from UNHCR, the UN’s refugee agency warned on Tuesday, as protection services crumble due to “severe” funding cuts.

“UNHCR’s ability to protect and assist refugees, internally displaced people [IDPs] and stateless people is being eroded by a sustained and worsening funding shortfall,” the agency said in a report detailing the human cost of budget cuts.

The agency said its available funding had fallen from \$5.2 billion in 2024 to \$3.9 billion in 2025, while the number of people it is mandated to protect is hovering around historically high levels.

UNHCR said it needed \$8.5 billion this year to protect refugees, but by the end of July had received only 32 per cent of that amount (\$2.7 billion).

This means nearly 8.3 million forcibly displaced people are “at risk of losing access to UNHCR assistance”, the agency said. “Continued severe funding cuts are pushing refugee support and protection structures towards breaking point in the world’s main displacement situations,” it added.

UNHCR said it had undertaken reforms and prioritisation measures to protect its most critical work — but said the scale and persistence of the shortfall meant that even its highest-priority work was now being affected.

“Protection cannot be reduced indefinitely



A Sudanese woman who has fled the fighting in El Fasher city walks in a displaced people camp in the city of Al Dabba, on November 13, 2025

without systems collapsing,” said Dominique Hyde, UNHCR’s external relations chief.

“Below a certain threshold, services do not simply reach fewer people; they can stop functioning altogether, leaving those most at risk without the protection they need.”

The agency said that in Chad, 319,000 refugees faced registration delays, leaving them without the documentation to access services, while around 233,000 children could lose child protection services.

In Ethiopia, child protection coverage in some areas has diminished by up to 85 per cent.

And in Sudan, tens of thousands of survivors of sexual violence and children at serious risk could lose access to criti-

cal protection services, the agency warned.

When registration stops or child protection services disappear, “the very risks that people fled — violence, exploitation and abuse — reappear in displacement”, warned Hyde.

Some 117.8 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced from their homes at the end of 2025, according to UNHCR — down from 2024’s record 123.2 million.

Of those 117.8 million, 35.6 million were refugees under UNHCR’s mandate, with two-thirds coming from Venezuela, Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan and Sudan.

UNHCR shed nearly 5,000 jobs in 2025 — more than a quarter of its workforce. The United States — traditionally the world’s top donor — has

heavily slashed foreign aid, while other major donors have been tightening their belts.

The Geneva-based agency said funding cuts were undermining its efforts to help people move away from reliance on aid.

In Iraq, up to 350,000 refugees and asylum seekers risk losing access to economic inclusion opportunities, it said.

And when people return to their home countries — whether voluntarily or under duress — help is also drying up, said UNHCR.

In Syria, 162,500 vulnerable IDPs and returned refugees will not receive initial financial assistance unless funding is received quickly, reducing their ability to rebuild their lives, the agency said.

UN concerned by Malaysia returns of Myanmar migrants

GENEVA (AFP) — The UN voiced worry on Tuesday over Malaysia’s decision to send 1,500 Myanmar nationals back to the war-torn country, stressing that conditions there “do not permit safe, dignified and sustainable returns”.

“We are concerned by the reported imminent return of some 1,500 individuals from Myanmar to that country,” United Nations refugee agency spokesman Matthew Saltmarsh told reporters in Geneva, insisting that “under international law, no one should be sent to a country where they may face persecution, torture, serious harm, or other threats to life, liberty and security”.

Malaysia began sending back around 1,500 Myanmar nationals Tuesday, the government confirmed.

The batch is the first of 5,000 Myanmar citizens Kuala Lumpur says agreed to “voluntary” repatriation from detention centres amidst a huge uptick in anti-migrant sentiment in Malaysia.

Neither Malaysia nor Myanmar have officially clarified the number of Rohingya in the first group, and there is worry they may be returned to a country where they face persecution rights groups say amounts to genocide.

On Tuesday afternoon, AFP reporters saw three ships belonging to the Myanmar navy departing from Malaysia’s Lumut naval base around 5pm local time (09:00 GMT). This included the auxiliary support and hospital ship Than Lwin and the amphibious landing platform



A policeman walks in front of buses carrying Myanmar nationals being repatriated from Malaysia to their homeland, seen heading towards the navel base in Lumut, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, on Tuesday

ship Moattama, which had been used in a previous repatriation exercise.

Malaysia’s Home Affairs Ministry in a statement confirmed that the repatriations were under way.

“Today, 1,476 individuals have commenced Phase One of the repatriation program, based on a list submitted by the Myanmar Government via an official Diplomatic Note,” it said in a statement.

It added that the repatriation was part of the government’s plan to resolve the “legacy issue” of foreign asylum-seekers in Malaysia — of which it said 95 per cent were from Myanmar.

“This long-standing issue has imposed a significant financial burden on the nation, triggered serious social crises and created tangible security threats for the Malaysian people,” the statement said. But in Geneva, United

Nations refugee agency spokesman Matthew Saltmarsh told reporters “we are concerned by the reported imminent return of some 1,500 individuals from Myanmar to that country”.

“Under international law no one should be sent to a country where they may face persecution, torture, serious harm or other threats to life, liberty and security,” he said.

Earlier Tuesday dozens of buses arrived under police escort at the Majlis Perbandaran Manjung stadium near the Lumut naval base in northwestern Malaysia, AFP correspondents saw, where the migrants were processed.

A Myanmar security source, requesting anonymity because they were not authorised to talk to media, said the boats are due to dock at Thanlyin Navy Base just south of Yangon around the end of this week. Rohingya, a perse-

cuted Muslim minority, make up two-thirds of the 190,000 Myanmar refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia, according to the United Nations.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim announced in July that Myanmar had agreed to take back 5,000 members of the Rohingya.

The plan was announced after authorities detained more than 100 Rohingya who had gathered outside the UN refugee agency’s office in Kuala Lumpur.

They were seeking help after being threatened with eviction from an informal settlement in northern Penang state.

They were later released after officials confirmed they held valid UN documentation.

Myanmar earlier this month pledged “safe and dignified” returns for its citizens displaced abroad, after criticism from the United Nations and rights groups.

PRE-ANNOUNCEMENT

EPC Tender for the New Oil Terminal

Port of Aqaba | Aqaba Special Economic Zone

Issued by: Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC) | Date: September 2026

Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC), the Landlord and developer of port and logistics infrastructure within the Aqaba Special Economic Zone, is pleased to inform your organization of its intention to launch a competitive tender for the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) of the New Oil Terminal at the Port of Aqaba.

This notice is issued ahead of the formal tender launch to allow interested and qualified companies sufficient time to prepare their submissions.

KEY INFORMATION

Project	EPC of the New Oil Terminal, Port of Aqaba
Procuring Entity	Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC)
Tender Type	International Competitive Tender — EPC
Anticipated RFP Release	Early October 2026
Local Contractor Engagement	Mandatory — bidders must engage local contractors
Marine Works Specialization	The lead contractor must be specialized in marine works

The full Request for Proposal (RFP) document, including scope of work, technical requirements, qualification criteria and submission instructions, will be made available to registered/interested parties upon release.

ACTION REQUESTED

Companies and joint ventures with relevant EPC experience in marine and liquid bulk terminal infrastructure are encouraged to:

- 01

Begin internal preparations, including assembly of technical and financial qualification documentation;
- 02

Confirm points of contact for tender correspondence by email to tenders@adc.jo;
- 03

Monitor ADC’s official channels for the formal tender announcement and RFP release in early October 2026.

TENDER CORRESPONDENCE

Email: tenders@adc.jo

Further details on registration procedures, pre-qualification requirements (if applicable), and the tender timeline will be communicated in the formal announcement accompanying the RFP release.

ADC looks forward to the participation of qualified and experienced firms in this important addition to the Kingdom’s energy and logistics infrastructure.

Aqaba Development Corporation

Aqaba Special Economic Zone, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

ATTACK

Ship hit in Hormuz, sparking fire — maritime agency

DUBAI (AFP) — An “unknown projectile” struck a ship in the Strait of Hormuz, sparking a fire on board that has been extinguished, a British maritime agency reported on Tuesday.

The ship was hit on Monday evening but the crew were safe, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Centre said.

“The fire has since been extinguished and the vessel is under way,” the agency said. “There has been no reported environmen-



In this photo obtained from Iran’s ISNA news agency on June 1, vessels sail at Suru Beach in Bandar Abbas along the Strait of Hormuz

tal impact or damage assessment.”

The Strait of Hormuz

is currently at the centre of the Middle East war between Iran and

the United States.

Around a fifth of the world’s oil and liquefied natural gas passed through the strategic shipping lane before the war.

But since the conflict broke out, Tehran has been blocking the passage of commercial ships, firing on vessels it accuses of unauthorised crossings.

Washington has responded with a counterblockade of Iranian ports in an effort to prevent Tehran from exporting its oil.

Trump denies he offered Iran sanctions relief, release of frozen funds

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — President Donald Trump on Monday denied a report by the news outlet Axios that he offered Iran sanctions relief and the release of frozen funds, as the Mideast war drags on.

“Axios just released a story that ‘Trump’ offered Sanctions Relief and Frozen Funds to Iran’

The 80-year-old Republican called the story “a HOAX” and said the news site should withdraw it.

regarding the nuclear programme.” It quoted unnamed US officials.

‘Axios just released a story that ‘Trump’ offered Sanctions Relief and Frozen Funds to Iran’

The 80-year-old Republican called the story “a HOAX” and said the news site should withdraw it.

The reaction comes as Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was slated to meet with Qatari mediators on Monday in New York.

US and Iranian officials met last week in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

The state news agency IRNA reported on Monday that Tehran had no more direct talks scheduled with Washington.

On Saturday, Trump publicly rejected a proposal from Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

On Sunday, Trump told Axios he expected talks to resume in

coming days.

The strategic Strait of Hormuz lies at the heart of the conflict. The narrow waterway normally carries a fifth of the world’s oil and liquefied gas.

The route has been effectively blockaded by Tehran since the war began with US and Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28.

Prices for gas and other products in the US have risen dramatically since the war began, as Trump faces dwindling popularity in national polls and his party worries about losing their majority in Congress in midterm elections come November.

National exports grow 4.6%, trade deficit narrows 6% — DoS

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's exports rose 4.6 per cent during the first seven months of 2026, reaching JD5.509 billion, compared with JD5.267 billion during the same period in 2025, according to the Department of Statistics (DoS) monthly foreign trade report.

Re-exports surged 67.2 per cent to JD886 million, bringing total exports to JD6.395 billion, an overall increase of 10.3 per cent, Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Imports also increased by 2.4 per cent to JD11.585 billion during the January-July period.

The trade deficit narrowed by 6 per cent to JD5.190 billion, down JD331 million from JD5.521 billion during the same period last year.

The export-to-import coverage ratio also improved to 55 per cent



Jordan's exports rose 4.6 per cent during the first seven months of 2026, reaching JD5.509 billion, compared with JD5.267 billion during the same period in 2025, according to the Department of Statistics monthly foreign trade report

through July, compared with 51 per cent during the corresponding period of 2025.

Sectoral data showed that national exports of garments and knitted accessories increased by 4.1 per cent, while exports of chemical and nitrogenous fertilisers rose 12 per

cent and crude potash exports grew 11.7 per cent. In contrast, exports of jewellery and precious metals fell 14.2 per cent, while crude phosphate exports de-

clined 12.6 per cent.

On the import side, crude oil and petroleum products rose 45.8 per cent, while grain imports increased 9.7 per cent.

Meanwhile, imports of jewellery and precious metals fell 13.9 per cent, power tools declined 24.1 per cent, vehicles and motorcycles dropped 31.3 per cent and electrical machinery decreased 8 per cent.

The increase in national exports was driven by higher shipments to Syria, Iraq, non-Arab Asian markets, including China and European Union markets, particularly The Netherlands.

The largest increases in imports were recorded from Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) countries...

Imports stood at JD1.746 billion in July, resulting in a monthly trade deficit of JD820 million.

The largest increases in imports were recorded from Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) countries...



A Palestinian man inspects a house that was damaged during a late-night attack by Israeli settlers in Abu Falah village, northeast of Ramallah, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Sunday

Settler attack village in West Bank village, drawing rare rebuke

JALUD, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — More than 100 Israeli settlers attacked a Palestinian village in the occupied West Bank early Tuesday, drawing rare Israeli government condemnation after they injured three members of the occupation forces.

The raid, along with another attack on a different West Bank village on Tuesday, comes amid mounting international criticism of settler violence, which Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu downplayed in an address last week to the United Nations.

Settlers stormed the village of Jalud in the northern West Bank as the military attempted to accompany a Palestinian family back to their home after they had been displaced by settler attacks two months earlier.

The Israeli military said "more than 100 Israeli rioters" were in the area of Jalud overnight and soldiers and border police tried to disperse them.

One person was arrested and two minors were taken in for questioning, police said.

The military said the settlers had blocked roads, set tyres on fire and thrown rocks at security forces, as well as setting fire to Palestinian buildings and vehicles in the village.

It added that the attack had prevented the return of the family, who had been displaced "following several incidents of [Israeli] nationalist crime against them".

Israel has occupied the West Bank since 1967 and has been accelerating settlement expansion. Some 500,000 Israeli settlers live among 3 million Palestinians.

Netanyahu condemned the attack, which he blamed on a "a small group of rioters".

Their actions "cause great harm to that community and interfere with our forces as they carry out their mission", Netanyahu said.

President Isaac Herzog, who holds a largely ceremonial role, called the attack "a moral stain,

an assault on the rule of law and our most fundamental values as a people and a nation".

Settler attacks against Palestinians including beatings, vandalism and arson averaged six a day in the first half of the year, according to the United Nations.

Recent weeks have also seen high-profile attacks against Israelis in the West Bank, including the shooting death of a settler by a Palestinian.

Mahmoud Al Toubasi, a member of the family seeking to return to Jalud, told AFP that he and his relatives had left the house more than two months ago, and that it had been occupied by settlers until the attack on Tuesday.

"My wife, my son and I went to the house in the car, accompanied by an army vehicle in front of us and another behind us," he said.

Settlers attacked the group upon their arrival at the house and were pushed back by soldiers with pepper spray, he added.

German far-right aims to lead Saxony-Anhalt gov't in December

BERLIN (AFP) — The leader of the far-right AfD in the eastern German state of Saxony-Anhalt said on Tuesday he hopes to become state premier in December after the party's crushing election victory earlier this month.

If Ulrich Siegmund does succeed in becoming the state's leader, it would be a first for the AfD and the first time any far-right party has held such a position in post-war German history.

Siegmund told the Welt television station that "we will stick to this timetable" of December after discussions within the party and with other state lawmakers who will choose the next head of the state's government.

The AfD won 44 per cent of the vote in this



Ulrich Siegmund, the far-right AfD's lead candidate in the Saxony-Anhalt state election, at a party conference in Magdeburg, Germany, on Tuesday

month's state assembly election but fell just three seats short of an outright majority.

Most German political parties have maintained a "firewall" against the AfD, refusing to enter

coalitions with it.

However, the small left-wing, pro-Moscow BSW party, which has five state MPs, has held agreed to discuss some form of co-operation with the AfD.

ernments have wide-ranging powers over areas such as health and education, and even security.

The AfD campaigned on a pledge to immediately begin a "remigration and deportation offensive" in the state.

The party's "anti-woke" agenda also includes vows to replace LGBTQ pride rainbow flags at public schools with the German standard, and to lessen the emphasis on the horrors of Nazi Germany in history teaching.

The AfD notched up another state election victory this month in the eastern state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, where it won 37 per cent and Chancellor Friedrich Merz's CDU crashed out of the state assembly with just 4.9 per cent.

King reviews government progress in gas sector, plans to reinforce energy security

Continued from page 1

The King was also briefed by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Khar-

absheh on gas sector plans under Jordan's comprehensive energy strategy, local gas market developments, gas import and ex-

port plans, as well as the Amman-Zarqa Gas Distribution Network Project, which aims to expand domestic use.

Director of the Of-

fice of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Muhannad Shehadeh,

Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh, and a number of government officials attended the meeting

JHCO dispatches 14th humanitarian aid convoy to Lebanon

Continued from page 1

JHCO Secretary General Hussein Shebli said that 20 trucks, carrying essential food supplies, were dispatched to Lebanon, where, according to the UN, the humanitarian crisis has become "severe and deteriorating".

Shibli added that the new assistance aimed at addressing critical

field requirements and enhancing food security for vulnerable communities across Lebanon.

Shebli said that the organisation continues its efforts alongside JAF and WFP to prioritise urgent needs under organised mechanisms designed to streamline response times.

He also expressed appreciation to Syrian authorities for their co-

operation and for facilitating the transit of the convoy through Syrian territory.

Since the beginning of the crisis, Jordan has sent 13 previous convoys to Lebanon, comprising 239 trucks carrying 2,756 tonnes of various relief supplies, according to the organisation.

The United Nations has significantly increased its humanitar-

ian funding appeal for Lebanon, amid worsening humanitarian crisis following four months of Israeli war on the country's south.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs initially appealed in June for nearly \$640 million to support relief efforts over a six-month period. However, only \$185 million has been received

so far, prompting the agency to request an additional \$331 million to meet growing humanitarian needs.

According to Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health, Israeli attacks have killed 3,526 people and wounded 10,733 others since March 2, when Israel launched its campaign against Iran-backed Hizbollah in Lebanon.

Amman Stock Exchange honoured as best-performing Arab bourse in 2025

Continued from page 1

The ASE Total Return Index (ASETR) rose 58.52 per cent, while the market capitalisation of listed shares increased 50.1 per cent to about JD26.5 billion, the highest annual growth rate since 2005.

Trading activity also increased significantly.

Trading volume rose 80.6 per cent, while average daily trading value doubled from JD4.4 million to JD8.8 million.

Wathaihi attributed the exchange's per-

formance to the resilience and positive performance of the Jordanian economy despite challenging regional and global conditions and continued uncertainty, Petra reported.

He said that the results reflected improvements in the investment environment, government measures to stimulate economic activity and investment, and efforts to strengthen Jordan's position as a regional and international investment destination.

He also pointed to positive macroeconomic indicators, including growth across a number of economic sectors, higher exports and investment, increased remittances from Jordanians abroad, contained inflation, foreign reserves of about JD28.4 billion, and continued political, monetary and fiscal stability.

The performance of listed companies also contributed to the results. Their combined net profits rose 12.9 per cent in 2025, mak-

ing it the second-highest annual profit level recorded by companies listed on the ASE.

Wathaihi also highlighted government measures aimed at boosting trading activity and market liquidity. These included allowing investors seeking Jordanian citizenship to move their investments within the stock market, exempting mutual investment funds from taxation, reducing brokerage commissions and extending trading hours.

He said that the mar-

ket's performance was further supported by its regulatory and technical infrastructure, which he described as being aligned with international standards and practices, as well as cooperation among the Jordan Securities Commission, the Securities Depository Centre, listed companies and financial services firms.

The ASE has continued its positive performance in 2026, he said.

"As of the end of September 28, the ASE Gen-

eral Index had risen 15.7 per cent since the beginning of the year, while the Total Return Index had gained 20.1 per cent. The market capitalisation of listed shares increased 14.5 per cent."

Listed companies recorded the second-highest first-half profits in their history, with profits rising 14.3 per cent compared with the first half of 2025. Trading volume increased 65.3 per cent, while average daily trading value rose from JD8.8 million to JD13.4 million.

Wathaihi said that the award recognised the efforts of the ASE and other capital-market institutions to strengthen the market's regulatory and technical frameworks and enhance its position among Arab and international financial markets.

He said that the exchange would continue developing Jordan's financial market, improving its competitiveness and attractiveness to domestic and foreign investors, upgrading its electronic

systems and regulatory and technical frameworks, and implementing projects under the Economic Modernisation Vision and its strategic plan.

The Abu Dhabi conference brought together officials from Arab stock exchanges and capital-market institutions, regulators, clearing, depository and settlement institutions, brokerage firms, asset managers and investors, as well as experts and policymakers from regional and international markets.

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The day after the speech:
What comes next?

By Mohammad Abu Rumman

Two main trends can be identified in the way Jordan's political elites have responded to the King's historic address to the United Nations General Assembly, which devoted considerable attention to challenging the policies of Benjamin Netanyahu's government and dismantling the narrative underpinning them.

The first argues that there is no real "day after the speech". Its purpose has already been served: To warn the international community of the dangers posed by Netanyahu's policies towards the Palestinians, Syria and regional security, and to make unequivocally clear that Jordan will firmly defend its water and national security. From this perspective, there is little to be done now except await the outcome of the Israeli elections and Netanyahu's political fate. If he remains in power, Jordan will have to live with that challenge and deal with its consequences; if he leaves, the problem becomes considerably less acute. The political strategy, according to this view, is therefore essentially one of "wait and see".

The second trend has moved in the opposite direction, immediately sounding the drums of war, warning of an extremely dangerous phase ahead and gravitating toward worst-case scenarios without sufficiently examining the different possibilities, expectations and strategic options at each stage.

Against both approaches, what is required first is a calm and careful rereading of the King's speech: Unpacking the issues and files it addressed, identifying the messages and objectives behind them and connecting these conclusions to an internal national dialogue that begins by framing the questions the speech itself raises. With regard to the West Bank and Jerusalem, for example: What exactly are the emerging sources of threat to Jordan's national security? The King spoke explicitly about forced displacement. This was neither accidental nor rhetorical exaggeration before the international community. The speech reflects an assessment that this scenario has become both serious and dangerous. More importantly, the King made clear that what is currently happening in the West Bank and Jerusalem is not simply another round of familiar Israeli practices and policies against the Palestinians. Rather, a fundamental and deeply troubling shift is taking place — one that could lead to forced displacement.

This leads to another question: Was the King warning the world that such a scenario would destroy the prospects for Palestinian statehood, undermine the political settlement and threaten regional security? Or was he warning of a danger that has become considerably more imminent?

Another question concerns the Israeli elections. Could something dangerous occur in their aftermath at the hands of Netanyahu and the extremists surrounding him, similar to what we have witnessed over the past two days at Al Aqsa Mosque, triggering a "black swan" scenario — to borrow from Walid Abdel Hay's analysis of scenarios and forecasting — leading to chaos and forced displacement? Or will the Israeli elections themselves constitute the turning point that determines the nature of the next phase and Jordan's approach toward the Israeli government, particularly given that the King's speech focused clearly on the current government and its policies?

At the same time, we are fully aware that mainstream Israeli politics has moved considerably beyond Oslo and the Palestinian Authority in their traditional forms. Even Avigdor Lieberman, one of the leading figures in the current opposition, has recently proposed assigning Jordan security and administrative responsibilities in parts of the West Bank. Jordan therefore needs to develop a political vision and a roadmap not only for the possibility that Netanyahu remains in power, but also for how it would deal with the opposition should it form the next government.

Another major dimension of the King's speech concerns southern Syria. The King explicitly placed this issue within the broader matrix of water security, national security and threats to regional stability. This, too, raises a set of important questions: To what extent does Israel's expansion in southern Syria and the Yarmouk Basin threaten Jordan's water interests? What are the implications of Israeli forces reaching and establishing positions in areas close to water resources shared by Jordan and Syria?

This comes at a time when Netanyahu's government has declined to renew the agreement under which Israel supplied Jordan with an additional 50 million cubic metres of water annually, beyond the amount stipulated under the peace treaty. This represents a serious development, particularly because water scarcity constitutes one of Jordan's most significant security and existential challenges. It is also a critical issue in Jordan's dialogue with Syria's new government. In this regard, the analyses and studies published by the Politics and Society Institute on the Yarmouk Basin, southern Syria and their implications for Jordan's water security provide an important reference point.

The bottom line is that this is how we should approach the King's speech: Extracting from it a set of critical questions and issues for serious national discussion, while developing a structured framework of possible scenarios, probabilities and policy options for dealing with the next phase — away from preconceived positions, ready-made assumptions and temporary emotional reactions.

While Gaza dominates the UN,
these are the people keeping it alive

By Ramzy Baroud

When I first saw footage of Gaza doctor Munir Al Bursh and his family kneeling beside the white-shrouded body of his son, surrounded by mourners, I thought it was an old video. It was not.

My conclusion, however, was understandable. In December 2023, only months after the start of the Israeli genocide in Gaza, the Bursh family was targeted in an Israeli attack. Dr Munir, director-general of Gaza's ministry of health, was wounded. So were other members of his family. His daughter, Jinan, only 13, was killed.

That same day, Gaza's beloved doctor was back at work, joining the many doctors across the Strip trying to save lives as Israel's killing machine claimed them by the thousands.

Alas, the latest footage was not old footage resurfacing. It was a new coffin, a new funeral, another child buried by the same family. This time, the attack took place during what some in the media continue to call the "Gaza ceasefire".

On September 19, an Israeli drone strike killed Bursh's eldest son, Basir, outside a tent west of Jabaliya refugee camp.

"We were together side by side," the grieving father recalled. Basir had warned him: "The Israelis are targeting both of us." Moments later, his son stepped outside the tent and was killed.

One can be forgiven for confusing Gaza's present with its recent past. The scenes emerging today are almost indistinguishable from those that preceded the so-called ceasefire of October 2025. The sequence repeats itself with terrible familiarity: Israeli strikes, shelling and sniping; Palestinians killed; the bereaved carrying their dead through Gaza's destroyed streets, searching among the ruins for somewhere to bury them.

Bursh's story is part of this terrible continuum, but its significance extends beyond his personal loss. Throughout the genocide, he and other Palestinian doctors became Gaza's de facto spokespeople. They counted the dead and wounded, documented hunger and destruction, and chronicled the collapse of the medical system from within its hospitals. In the process, they became Gaza's highest moral authority, more credible than politicians or self-proclaimed leaders.

And the world listened. Gaza's doctors forged a bond with global civil society that no political institution could manufacture.

Perhaps that helps explain the staggering price Gaza's medical community has been made to pay. According to the World Health Organisation, more than 1,700 healthcare workers have been killed since 2023, amid at least 920 attacks on healthcare.

Hussam Abu Safiya, like Bursh, became a symbol of that medical resistance. The director of Kamal Adwan Hospital remained at his post through siege and repeated Israeli attacks before Israeli forces detained him in December 2024. He remains imprisoned without charge or trial, amid reports from his lawyer of beatings and deteriorating health.

Bursh, meanwhile, remains steadfast despite repeated blows that would have broken many others. His wife, too, embodies sumud, the Palestinian tradition of steadfastness nurtured at home and passed from one generation to the next.

Even in the immediate after-

math of his son's killing, al-Bursh continued warning about Gaza's collapsing healthcare system. Indeed, hospitals have been forced to suspend scheduled surgeries and outpatient services, while severe shortages of fuel, medicines and equipment continue.

"The limited quantities of fuel reaching the enclave barely keep health facilities alive," Bursh warned a day after his son's murder.

His statement came as world leaders gathered thousands of miles away, in New York, for the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly.

And once again, Palestine echoed through speech after speech, though this time the language carried a new urgency.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez condemned "the genocide that Netanyahu continues to perpetrate in Gaza". UN Secretary-General António Guterres described Israel's mass extermination as involving "a scale of killing and destruction unlike anything I have witnessed" during his tenure. Even French President Emmanuel Macron called Gaza "a spectacle that shames us all", asking: "What is our credibility worth if we remain inactive on Gaza?"

Then came Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Dozens of delegates walked out as he approached the podium, leaving row upon row of empty seats, while protests continued outside the UN. Netanyahu responded by calling those who departed "moral cowards".

One might pause here and speak of tides turning, currents changing and a world slowly loosening the decades-long grip of Israel and its American benefactor.

But Gaza does not have the luxury of time. While the words

reverberate through the halls of the United Nations, children are still killed in front of their families. Mass funerals remain part of Gaza's daily rhythm. Approximately 1.7 million people remain displaced, many under inadequate shelter, without sufficient clean water or sanitation. Hospitals remain crippled. And above this landscape of ruin, the drones still circle.

Between today and the next UN General Assembly lies an entire year — 365 days in which those words can either acquire meaning or become yet another entry in the long archive of speeches on Palestine. However, there is time for rhetoric to become policy: for sanctions to be imposed, boycotts activated, meaningful aid delivered and those responsible for war crimes held accountable.

Until then, Munir Bursh and thousands of Gaza's men and women will continue to hold the fort amid shattered hospitals, destroyed homes and an exhausted population.

Their resilience is extraordinary. But Gaza cannot be expected to endure simply because it has proved capable of enduring.

In New York, Palestine is spoken of from the podium. In Gaza, Palestinians are still being carried to their graves.

It is time to close the distance between words and action, once and for all.

Ramzy Baroud is a journalist, author and the editor of The Palestine Chronicle. He is the author of nine books. His latest books are "Before the Flood" (Seven Stories Press) and "Gaza Rising" (Clarity Press). His other books include "Our Vision for Liberation", "My Father Was a Freedom Fighter" and "The Last Earth". Baroud is a non-resident senior research fellow at the Centre for Islam and Global Affairs (CIGA)

Trump may not let voters
decide the outcome of this election



WASHINGTON
WATCH

James J. Zogby

This will undoubtedly be one of the most consequential midterm elections in recent history. In the past two years, policies enacted by President Trump and enabled by a compliant Republican-led Congress have had a corrosive impact on the very foundations of governance and our democracy.

As a result, the stakes are high for both parties in November. For Democrats, the election represents the opportunity to roll back changes Mr Trump has imposed on Washington and the nation, expose questionable business transactions benefitting the president and his family, and reestablish congressional oversight and prerogatives. For the president, winning this election represents his only chance to continue freely wreaking havoc in Washington and the world and avoiding congressional investigations into his unethical and illegal behaviours.

With just six weeks left before Election Day, the news media and political prognosticators usually turn to pollsters and pundits to better understand expected electoral outcomes. In a normal year, analysts will review a few standard metrics to project likely results — favourable ratings of the president and two major parties; whether voters believe the US is on the right or wrong track; and voters' assessment of which

party would better address their most important issues.

Based on these standard measures of electoral success, no one would fault Democrats for anticipating victory in November.

The president's approval and job performance ratings are in the mid-30 per cent range. And while voter confidence in the Democrats is even lower (mid-20 per cent's), when asked which party they trust to do a better job of handling issues (including health care, immigration, the economy, cost of living, the Iran war and Israel-Palestine) majorities or pluralities of voters express more confidence in Democrats.

Further, more often than not, the party that holds the White House loses seats in midterm congressional elections. With President Trump's very low approval ratings, it's safe to assume that Republicans face the prospect of significant losses.

More disturbing for the GOP is that the president doesn't seem

to get this, determinedly trying to make this election be about Donald Trump. For example, at his recent midterm convention, he bizarrely asked attendees to stand and pledge both to the flag and to him, "the greatest president in the history of the United States", and to commit to keep Republicans in control of Congress or, in his words, they could "go to hell!"

Despite Trump's efforts, many Republican candidates, who read the polls and are listening to their voters, stayed away from the "convention" and have shied away from making the election a referendum on Trump.

But while the factors normally considered for election predictions point toward a Democratic win, the outcome this year may ultimately be different because Trump and his operatives are taking steps that may impact this election more than the quality of the candidates, or voter perceptions of the president's performance or confidence in the two parties.

Since beginning his second White House term, Trump and his movement have taken steps to rig this midterm contest in the GOP's favour. They engineered unprecedented redistricting of congressional seats in several states to net 5-7 additional Republican congressional seats in November.

The president has also pushed to restrict mail-in voting — which, after months of back in forth in the courts, now seems to be on hold. Then there are real concerns that Mr. Trump may send immigration enforcement police or the National Guard to polling places in heavily Democratic areas to suppress voter turnout. This past week the Department of Justice sent a memorandum to election officials in all 50 states threatening imprisonment for any official who knowingly allows undocumented individuals to vote.

Meanwhile, Trump allies have been focusing on filling the ranks of election monitors and poll watchers. In the past these volunteers are stationed at polls simply to observe and assist if needed. These new GOP recruits, however, have been weaponised to make, not solve, problems. These disruptive tactics are laying the groundwork to pressure the Republican Speaker of the House to refuse to certify the election results — something like a replay of January 2021.

It goes without saying that nothing like this has ever happened before. But like so much of what President Trump has done during his time in office "nothing like this has ever happened before" doesn't mean it won't be tried now.

Beyond crisis: Positioning Jordan
in the region's emerging economic order

By Rawan Al Hiyari

Beneath wars, geopolitical tensions and disrupted supply chains, a deeper transformation is under way: Nations are rebuilding the architecture of their interests. Jordan faces a strategic choice: to remain primarily a country managing the consequences of regional crises, or to position itself as an active economic partner in the order emerging from them.

Peace is increasingly intertwined with energy, food and water security. Supply chains have become matters of national security, investment has become an instrument of strategic positioning, and reliability has become an economic and political asset.

For Jordan, the question therefore extends beyond managing the crises around us. It is about

defining the position we intend to occupy in the regional economy now taking shape. Wars end, and crises change, but the trade corridors, production networks and partnerships established during periods of transition can shape economies for generations.

The opportunities are substantial. Syria will require reconstruction; Iraq is expanding infrastructure and regional connectivity; Gulf states are strengthening energy, trade and logistics resilience; and Europe is seeking reliable partners and more diversified supply chains.

Jordan should not approach these developments as isolated opportunities. We need a national portfolio of strategic interests that defines the industries we seek to expand, the technologies we intend to localise, the markets

we want to enter and the partnerships required to achieve them.

This demands a more ambitious economic diplomacy. Opening doors is no longer enough. Behind every door, Jordan should have an investment-ready proposition: Identified partners, financing structures, local suppliers, target markets and clear employment outcomes.

Most importantly, economic policy must build youth employment into its design. Investment should be measured not only by capital attracted, but by skills transferred, productive capacity created, Jordanian businesses integrated into supply chains, and sustainable jobs generated.

Jordan already possesses strong capabilities in pharmaceuticals, food production, engineering, manufacturing, mining, technology and services. The task

now is to bring these strengths together into a coherent national economic proposition based on quality, reliability and the ability to deliver.

Success will not be measured by the number of agreements we sign, but by our ability to convert relationships into interests, interests into projects, and projects into production, exports and opportunities.

Jordan's strategic choice is therefore not whether change is coming, but whether we position ourselves early enough to help shape our place within it. In a region being reshaped, building is not merely an economic choice. It is strategic positioning and a national interest.

The writer is vice chairman of the Jordanian American Business Council (JABC)



Jordan participates on Tuesday in the 2026 Annual Conference of the Arab Federation of Exchanges, hosted by the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

Jordan participates in Arab Federation of Exchanges Conference in Abu Dhabi

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan participated on Tuesday in the 2026 Annual Conference of the Arab Federation of Exchanges, hosted by the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange, with more than 600 participants and 50 speakers representing over 25 stock exchanges and clearing institutions.

The two-day conference brings together chief executives and senior financial market officials to discuss the future of Arab capital markets, ways to enhance their integration and connectivity, and how to keep pace with rapid technological developments.

The conference opened on Tuesday with a trading bell-ringing ceremony at the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange, attended by chief executives of several regional exchanges and members of the AFE, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

On the sidelines of the conference, Amman Stock Exchange (ASE)

Chief Executive Officer Mazen Wathaihi said discussions focused on how capital markets can address the repercussions of the circumstances affecting the region and develop mechanisms for overcoming crises through collective action.

Arab stock exchange chiefs, financial market experts and heads of depository, settlement and clearing institutions discussed ways to strengthen cooperation and coordination amid regional challenges, he said.

The participants also examined the introduction of new financial and investment products in line with global developments, as well as the use of artificial intelligence applications and tools and their potential impact on Arab markets.

Other discussions covered linking Arab markets, investment funds, and ways to stimulate market activity and enhance liquidity, Wathaihi said.

The conference is also addressing the modernisation of capital markets, digital transformation, cross-market connectivity and the development of financial market infrastructure.

The agenda includes sessions on energy trading, market making, derivatives, exchange-traded funds, and the impact of artificial intelligence valuations on financial markets.

The conference is attended by representatives of regulatory authorities, policymakers, institutional investors, listed companies, investment banks and market infrastructure providers, alongside leaders of stock exchanges and clearing institutions.

The first day of the conference will also feature a ceremony recognising the best-performing Arab stock exchanges during the current year, with a focus on notable performance among Arab market indices.

NEPCO says it bears higher electricity generation costs as global fuel prices rise

AMMAN (JT) — The National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) has said that it directly bears any increase in electricity generation costs resulting from higher global fuel and gas prices, warning that the gap between generation costs and electricity selling prices is reflected in its financial statements as operating losses and rising debt.

NEPCO said the increase in global oil prices directly affects the cost of electricity generation, adding that natural gas accounts for the largest share of the energy mix used for power generation.

Gas prices are relatively linked to Brent crude under pricing mechanisms set out in long-term supply contracts.

Oil prices bounced back at the start of the week, with Brent back above \$106 a barrel.

In statement to Al Mamlaka, the company said the average cost of generation is also affected by the extent to which liquefied natural gas (LNG), diesel and heavy fuel oil are used, as well as the contribution of other sources to electricity generation.

According to NEPCO data, cited by Al Mamlaka, natural gas accounted for 63 per cent of electricity generation in 2025, compared with 56 per cent during the first eight months of 2026. The share of renewable energy increased from



The increase in global oil prices directly affects the cost of electricity generation, adding that natural gas accounts for the largest share of the energy mix used for power generation, says NEPCO

18 per cent in 2025 to 21 per cent during the first eight months of 2026.

'The gap between generation costs and the selling price is reflected in the financial statements as direct operating losses.'

Oil shale accounted for 17 per cent of generation in 2025, de-

clining to 16 per cent during the first eight months of 2026. Diesel's share increased from zero to 1 per cent, while heavy fuel oil rose from 1 per cent to 3 per cent.

The contribution of the Egyptian electricity interconnection also increased from 1 per cent to 3 per cent, according to NEPCO data.

NEPCO said that it bears the additional generation costs because it is the legally mandated entity responsible for securing fuel supplies for power generation companies, ensuring the security and stability of electricity supplies in

the Kingdom.

"The gap between generation costs and the selling price is reflected in the financial statements as direct operating losses and an accumulation of debt," the company said.

NEPCO said that it has contingency plans to deal with potential supply disruptions and maintain the uninterrupted operation of the electricity system. The floating storage and regasification unit in Aqaba also gives NEPCO the option of importing LNG to meet the needs of the electricity system and support energy security for Jordan

and neighboring countries, depending on available quantities, the company said.

Regarding gas from the Risha field, NEPCO said it is currently used daily to generate electricity at the Risha Power Plant, within the quantities available from the field and the capacity of the generating units.

The company said it is discussing with the National Petroleum Company the possibility of using additional quantities of Risha gas in the future, alongside plans to develop the field, conduct further drilling and connect it to the Arab Gas Pipeline.

Banking sector accelerates digital transformation amid fintech growth

By Ilham Darwazeh

DEAD SEA — The Jordan FinTech Festival 2026 highlighted the growing role of financial technology in transforming banking, expanding investment opportunities and supporting economic development.

Held under the theme "Where Regulation Meets Innovation", the festival brought together financial institutions, fintech companies, policymakers, investors and technology specialists to discuss digital transformation, regulation and the future of financial services.

Speaking during a session on the future of banking, Jordan Ahli Bank CEO Ahmad Abu Eideh said innovation should extend across



Jordan Ahli Bank CEO Ahmad Abu Eideh says innovation shall extend across all areas of banking, while technology shall remain centred around people

banking while keeping people at the centre of technology.

He said the bank is focused on expansion, with several projects under development, and stressed the importance

of skilled employees and continuous training.

Abu Eideh said Jordan's young, bilingual workforce gives the Kingdom potential to become a regional fintech hub. However, he identified

implementation as a key challenge, noting that good digital ideas can lose momentum during execution.

He said successful implementation requires strong management support, employee engagement, clear communication and ongoing training. He also stressed that innovation should be driven by clear benefits rather than simply adopting technology first.

Governance important as AI adoption grows

Abu Eideh also stressed the need for strong governance and accountability as banks adopt advanced technologies and artificial intelligence.

He said technology should remain under human control and op-

erate within clear governance and regulatory frameworks. He also highlighted operational risks linked to new technologies, including unexpected AI behaviour, and said these risks must be properly managed.

He encouraged employees to continue learning throughout their careers, saying professional development requires more than simply repeating the same tasks over time.

The festival also highlighted the expansion of digital banking services in Jordan.

Jordan Commercial Bank representatives told The Jordan Times that the bank offers digital payment services including CliQ, eFAWATEERcom, local and international transfers, and QR-code payments.

Three partnerships signed at FinTech Festival to boost skills, innovation

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan FinTech Festival 2026 highlighted growing cooperation in financial technology through three agreements focused on skills development, innovation and regional knowledge exchange.

The Jordanian FinTech Academy signed an MoU with the Palestinian Payments Services Company to strengthen cooperation in fintech, digital payments, professional training and capacity building, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The Institute of Banking Studies (IBS) and the Hussein Fund for Excellence and Creativity signed an agreement covering specialised train-



A memorandum of understanding is signed between the Jordanian FinTech Academy and the MENA Fintech Association to expand regional cooperation

ing, digital skills, professional development, fintech and innovation, with a focus on preparing graduates for labour-market needs.

A third MoU between the Jordanian FinTech

Academy and the MENA Fintech Association aims to expand regional cooperation, knowledge exchange, professional development and joint initiatives in fintech and digital transformation.

Stocks move lower despite oil prices dropping

LONDON (AFP) — European and US stocks mostly traded lower on Tuesday despite oil prices retreating from recent highs as investors weighed the prospects for increased tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

Hopes for easing Middle East tensions were dashed at the weekend when US President Donald Trump rejected Iran's offer for a seven-day truce, sending oil prices sharply higher on Monday.

But prices reversed course after Trump said he expects talks with Iran to continue as well as reports that considerable volumes are continuing to flow from the region.

"Crude oil's slide to \$91

a barrel reflects growing hopes that Middle East tensions can ease, while the restoration of Saudi pipeline flows is helping offset disruption through the Strait of Hormuz," said IG analyst Axel Rudolph.

The benchmark US crude contract WTI was trading around \$91 per barrel on Tuesday while its international equivalent, Brent crude, was above \$104 per barrel.

Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare said oil prices were also "reacting favourably to a report that oil exports out of the Middle East hit a post-war high".

Wall Street's main indices were lower in late morning trading, with sentiment hit by data

showing US consumer confidence plunged sharply in September to a level not seen since 2014.

In Europe, London and Paris both finished in the red but Frankfurt ended the day with a small gain.

Oil prices still remain elevated, however, and government bond yields are trading at multiyear highs, contributing to losses on some Asian stock markets on Tuesday.

Officials in Tehran have privately expressed pessimism about making a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz before US midterm elections in just five weeks, Bloomberg News reported sources as saying.

The waterway is key to the world's oil and gas deliveries and is now cen-

tral to the US-Iran conflict, particularly with the Iran-backed Houthis seizing Yemen's entire Red Sea coast, including the Bab Al Mandab Strait, another vital shipping lane.

The situation is keeping global inflation high, pushing the US Federal Reserve and European Central Bank to raise interest rates earlier this month.

US inflation and jobs data this week will help signal whether the Fed hikes again in October, an outcome already likely according to prices in the US Treasuries market.

Expectations of more rate increases are supporting the dollar, in turn weighing on gold, which is priced in the US currency.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Tuesday amounted to JD18.5 million spread over 17.4 million shares that traded through 4,152 transactions.

The ASE share price index closed at 4178.86 points, with an increase of 0.17 per cent.

Out of 113 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 44 companies rose while the share price of another 27 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Al Zarqa Educational and Investment by 6.23 per cent, Arab Phoenix Holdings by 4.95 per cent, Babelon Investments Company Plc. by 4.52 per cent, Real Estate and Investment Portfolio Company by 4.50 per cent, and Arab East Investment by 4.35 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Philadelphia Pharmaceuticals by 5 per cent, Jordanian Management and Consulting Company by 5 per cent, Jordan Dairy by 4.88 per cent, Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 4.17 per cent, and International Arabian Development and Investment Trading Company by 3.85 per cent.

بورصة عمان

Amman Stock Exchange

THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ▲ 4178.86 0.17% September 29, 2026

Live Data

Historical Data

Click and drag in the plot area to zoom in

DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market

OTC Market

Bonds

Trading Value (JDs)

18,537,245

Trading volume

17,414,685

No. of Transactions

4,152

No. of Securities

114

Losers: 27

Gainers: 44

Unchanged: 42

CRICKET

Davidovich Fokina beats Hurkacz to win Chengdu Open

CHENGDU, China (AFP) — Alejandro Davidovich Fokina won the Chengdu Open on Tuesday, seeing off Poland's Hubert Hurkacz in a hard-fought contest 6-4, 7-6 (9/7). The Spaniard notched his second career title in a protracted encounter in central China that was decided by fine margins. The World No. 28 logged the match's only break of serve in the seventh game and saw out the first set comfortably. Hurkacz, ranked 41st, dug deep but squandered a 6-3 lead in the second set tie-break to hand his opponent the victory. Davidovich Fokina was seeded second for the ATP 250 event, while Hurkacz was seeded fifth. Top seed Valentin Vacherot was eliminated in the round of 16 by South African qualifier Lloyd Harris, ranked 125th.

CRICKET

Race against time as Asian Games cricket quarter-finals washed out

NAGOYA (AFP) — Sri Lanka and Bangladesh reached the semifinals of the men's Asian Games cricket on Tuesday without a ball being bowled following more wet weather in Nagoya. The Sri Lankans will meet India in the last four and Bangladesh play Pakistan, with both matches scheduled for Thursday. Organisers are now racing to get the converted baseball field at Korogi Athletic Park ready in time. Sri Lanka progressed when their quarter-final with Nepal was washed out — higher-ranked teams go through in the event of bad weather. Bangladesh was awarded victory over lower-ranked Malaysia for the same reason. Pakistan and reigning champions India sealed their semifinal spots after rain also washed out both matches on Monday. "Cricket, like baseball, you can't play it in the rain," said Jarrad Shearer, who is in charge of the cricket tournament. There has been heavy rain in Games host Nagoya and Aichi prefecture in recent days, but better weather is forecast from Wednesday. "Come tomorrow morning it will be all hands on deck to dry up the areas that aren't under the covers," said Shearer. "We've got some soppers, we've got some squeegees, some big old brooms, we've got sponges."

FIFA boss Infantino blasted as would-be 'emperor' by UEFA's Ceferin

By Andy Scott
Agence France-Presse

COPENHAGEN — UEFA chief Aleksander Ceferin on Tuesday launched an attack against FIFA President Gianni Infantino following his failed proposal to sell stakes in the World Cup to private investors, insisting that "football has no need for emperors".

"Yes, let's grow, let's innovate, let's make our clubs and competitions even more successful, but let's never forget that football is bigger than those who govern it. We are custodians, we are not owners. Nobody has the right to sell its future," the head of European football's governing body told the European Football Clubs (EFC) general assembly in Copenhagen.

UEFA, whose clubs and national teams dominate football's global economy, has been outspoken in its opposition to Infantino ever since it emerged in late July that FIFA was aiming to create a commercial subsidiary called FIFA Forward Enterprise to run its biggest events, such as the World Cup and Club World Cup.

It said it would consider boycotting FIFA-organised tournaments before suspending that threat after receiving written assurances in late August that world football's governing body would not try to revive the sell-off plans.



FIFA President Gianni Infantino holds an official ball of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup at the WTO headquarters in Geneva, on May 1, 2023

UEFA has also gone to a court in the US state of Florida in an attempt to access documents related to Infantino's failed plan with the aim of gathering evidence for a potential criminal complaint in

Switzerland — UEFA and FIFA are both based there.

The latter has responded to that by accusing the European body of a "misinformation campaign" and saying that UEFA was

attempting to "influence" the FIFA presidential election scheduled for next year.

'Time to say enough'

Ceferin used his address to delegates of the pow-

erful EFC organisation in the Danish capital to liken Infantino to the emperor in the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale "The Emperor's New Clothes".

"We all know the story. An emperor is persuaded that he is wearing magnificent clothes, clothes which he thought only the foolish or unfit could not see," Ceferin said.

"His court goes along with it until a child says aloud what everyone can see — the emperor is naked.

"Perhaps the moral of this story is that convenient words cannot change uncomfortable realities."

"My friends, I think it is time to say enough," he added, with Infantino not in attendance but FIFA General Secretary Mattias Grafstrom in the room.

"Money can help the game grow, but it should never decide what we let go, never. Europe should make no apology for saying so."

Numerous leading European national associations have withdrawn their support for Infantino in his bid to be re-elected president of FIFA next year.

Nasser Al Khelaifi, the Paris Saint-Germain president who is also chairman of the EFC, lamented that time was being wasted "dealing with these problems and issues".

"Football works when we listen to each other, when we are transparent," said the Qatari, who is close to Ceferin. "Football is bigger and more important than any one of us."

He also backed Ceferin to stand again to be re-elected president of UEFA next year, saying "we need strong leadership like you to protect our sport".

The blend of Asian cuisine

By Saeb Rawashdeh

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysian cuisine is a blend of Malayan, Chinese, Indian and Bornean culinary traditions. Due to the modern trends and globalisation, Malaysian dishes were influenced by Spanish, Dutch and British meals.

Laksa: It is a popular soup with many variations. Asam laksa is based on tamarind while curry laksa. Asam laksa is a famous noodle soup known for its tangy, spicy and sour fish-based broth. Curry laksa is a creamy soup made with a fragrant coconut milk and curry broth.

Nasi lemak: The dish consists of fragrant rice cooked in coconut milk and pandan leaves, served with spicy chilli sambal, crispy anchovies, peanuts, cucumber and eggs. This dish is an integral part of the Malay cuisine and it is common throughout the Malay world and the areas of southeast Asia with significant ethnic Malay populations.

Nasi kandar: It is a popular northern Malaysian dish from Penang, originally introduced by Tamil Muslim traders from India. The meal consists of steamed rice combined with an array of distinct curries, side dishes and gravies. The selection of curries consists of various blends of vegetables,



Satay skewered meat

seafood or meat. The surrounding toppings may include curry, okra, papadum and an omnipresent in Malaysian cuisine — egg.

Satay: It is a dish consisting of small pieces of seasoned meat, seafood or vegetables skewered on sticks and grilled over charcoal. It is typically served with a sauce, most commonly peanut-based and accompanied by rice cakes, cucumber and it re-

minds of the Middle Eastern kebab. The food can be served with chopped onion and cucumber.

Bubur: Malaysian porridge, which is a coconut-milk based, sometimes sugary soup, that includes various vegetables and meats. Each region prepares its own bubur.

Prawn mee: A noodle soup dish popular in Malaysia and Singapore.

Egg noodles are served in richly flavoured dark

soup stock with prawns, fish cake slices and bean sprouts topped with fried shallots and spring onions.

Nyonya ayam: The meal is traditional chicken dishes from the Peranakan (Straits Chinese) culture, famous for blending Chinese ingredients with local Southeast Asian spices and herbs.

Apam balik: It is a popular Southeast Asian sweet, street food pancake filled

with crushed peanuts, sugar and creamed corn, then folded in half.

Dim sum: The dish influenced by Chinese dumplings, is served bamboo vessels that are steam-fried. Dim sum is eaten in restaurants for brunch. Most modern dim sum dishes are commonly associated with Cantonese cuisine, although dim sum dishes also exist in a few other Chinese cuisines.

In the 10th century, when the city of Canton (Guangzhou) began to experience an increase in commercial travel, many customers frequented teahouses for small-portion meals with tea called "yum cha" (brunch).

Lemon chicken: This meal also comes from China, more precisely from Hong Kong. It remains a popular fixture of Western-Chinese takeaway menus across the UK, US, Canada and Australia where large Chinese communities live.

Kuih: It is colourful variety of kuih made of rice flour, coconut milk, sugar and various ingredients responsible for their colouring. The culinary legacy of kuih can be traced to the 15th century when it flourished in the Southeast Asia from a combination of local ingredients and food culture brought through trade or colonisation

Putu piring: This sweet

came from India and it is steamed rice flour cake filled with melted palm sugar (gula melaka) and served over pandan or banana leaves with freshly grated coconut. Putu piring belongs to a group of street foods that are typical for Malaysia.

Durian: It is considered a king of fruits and is a distinctive Southeast Asian tropical fruit with its rich, custard-like texture and complex sweet-savory flavour, though it is equally infamous for an intense, pungent aroma often compared to onions or ripe cheese.

Pandan cake: Many cakes and cookies in Malaysia are green due to pandan palm, which is loved by locals. It is light, fluffy and spongy looking sweet.

Sarawak layer cake: Served on special occasions like Christmas, Eid, Deepavali, weddings and birthdays, it is eaten during evening tea. This spiced Betawi cake boasted a unique blend of spices like cinnamon, cardamom, clove and star anise, creating a distinctive flavour profile.

Malaysian food relies on rice and noodles which form foundation of most of meals with added coconut milk. The cuisine is generally spicy and flavourful, combining coriander and cumin, lemongrass, cardamom and star anise.



Astra 6.1 was an improvement over previous models in some aspects

OpenAI cancels release of newest model due to safety concerns

SAN FRANCISCO, United States (AFP) — OpenAI will not release its newest artificial intelligence model, known as Astra 6.1, after internal testing by the ChatGPT-maker revealed it did not meet safety standards, the company confirmed on Monday.

The news comes one day before the AI giant hosts an annual developer conference known as OpenAI DevDay in San Francisco, where the company is expected to make several announcements — though it is unclear if a new version of Astra will be among them.

Astra 6.1 was an improvement over previous models in some aspects, but "it didn't quite meet the bar in terms of staying within scope and

authorization, and how it communicates back to the user about the type of work it's done", Saachi Jain, OpenAI's head of safety systems, said in a statement.

"We want to make sure our model development is safe no matter whether that's in the company, or when we ship it to users. But when we ship it to users, we have an extremely high bar in terms of safety and alignment," Jain continued.

OpenAI chief Sam Altman will open the conference at 10:00 am (17:00 GMT) at Fort Mason, on the shores of the San Francisco Bay.

On the agenda is the demonstration of a "persistent personal agent", in line with rumours circulating on social media.

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