



His Majesty King Abdullah holds talks with Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Canberra, focusing on ways to enhance bilateral cooperation

King holds talks with Australia PM

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah held talks with Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Wednesday, during which they discussed ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

During the talks, held in Canberra, His Majesty highlighted that relations between Jordan and Australia continue to grow in strength and importance, and expressed the Kingdom's

readiness to deepen the partnership, particularly in the economic and defence sectors, according to a Royal Court statement.

The King commended Australia's role in supporting humanitarian relief efforts in the region, particularly with regard to Gaza and UNRWA.

His Majesty underscored the need for the international community to step up efforts to

achieve comprehensive regional de-escalation, and to put an end to Israel's attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem, noting that the repercussions of their actions extend across the entire region.

The King reiterated Jordan's rejection of any attempts to displace Palestinians and expand settlements.

Continued on page 5

King, Australia governor-general discuss regional developments, cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah held talks with Australia's Governor-General Sam Mostyn in Canberra on Wednesday, during which they discussed ways to enhance relations between Jordan and Australia, and the recent developments in the region.

His Majesty expressed his pride in the close bilateral relations between the two countries, which span over 50 years, emphasising the importance of strengthening cooperation in the fields of education, trade, and private-sector investment in energy, infrastructure, technology and mining, according to a Royal Court statement.

The King also expressed his appreciation for Australia's support to Jordan in key sectors, and for its role in supporting the relief efforts in Gaza through the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation.

His Majesty emphasised Jordan's commitment to increasing tourism between the two countries, highlighting Jordan's 2030 millennium celebrations to commemorate



His Majesty King Abdullah holds talks in Canberra with Australia Governor-General Sam Mostyn, addressing ways to advance relations between Jordan and Australia, and recent developments in the region

two thousand years since the baptism of Jesus Christ as a timely opportunity for Australians interested in religious tourism to visit Jordan and the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ (Bethany Beyond

the Jordan).

Speaking on regional developments, the King underscored the need to step up international efforts to de-escalate tensions in the region and restore stability to Arab countries and se-

curity for their people, commending Australia's efforts and stance in support of achieving regional peace.

His Majesty noted the dangers of Israel's constant attacks on Palestinians and the Israeli

government's exploitation of the situation in the region as a pretext for imposing a new reality on the ground in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza.

Continued on page 5

Crown Prince visits Ministry of Justice

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein, the Regent, on Wednesday visited the Ministry of Justice, where he urged continued development of ministry services to streamline judicial procedures, thereby supporting the justice system and serving citizens.

During the visit, the Crown Prince noted the importance of training and qualifying administrative staff, and upgrading court infrastructure to strengthen judicial independence and expedite proceedings, according to a Royal Court statement.

His Royal Highness underscored the need to continue automating



HRH Crown Prince Hussein, the Regent, visits the Ministry of Justice and emphasises the importance of continuing to develop the Ministry's services to streamline judicial procedures, thereby supporting the justice system and serving citizens

the ministry's services in coordination with

relevant entities, and to ensure that electron-

ic services are fully operational before their

launch, in addition to regularly assessing the impact of all services to facilitate their further development and sustainability.

Minister of Justice Bassam Talhouni gave a briefing on the ministry's services and efforts to support the justice sector, thereby reinforcing the rule of law and judicial independence. He also outlined the ministry's plans to further utilise technology to improve judicial and legal procedures and to expand the scope of electronic services.

Director of the Office of the Crown Prince Zaid Baqain accompanied His Royal Highness on the visit.



Prime Minister Jafar Hassan speaks during a meeting on Wednesday with the National Charter Party

Prime minister meets National Charter Party as part of new dialogue with political parties

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan met with the National Charter Party on Wednesday as part of a new round of meetings with political parties aimed at strengthening dialogue and consultation across various sectors.

The meeting, attended by a number of ministers, focused on key is-

suues, particularly the next phase of the political modernisation programme, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

Hassan also briefed party representatives on the government's ongoing work and its policies on a range of issues.

Over the past two years, Hassan has held a

series of meetings with parliamentary party blocs, professional associations and representatives of various organisations and sectors.

The meetings were in line with the government's commitment to maintaining open channels of communication and consultation, the statement said.

Jordan steps up border security amid rising drug-smuggling attempts from Israel — The Telegraph

By Merza Noghai

AMMAN — After years of battling drug-smuggling attempts along its north-eastern border with Syria, Jordan is now facing a new front in the fight against drug trafficking, with a recently published report by The Telegraph pointing to drug-smuggling networks operating across its border with Israel.

Citing unnamed Jordanian officials, The Telegraph has reported that Jordanian security forces have stepped up border patrols and upgraded surveillance systems amid an increase in attempts to smuggle illegal drugs from Israel into the Kingdom.

The British daily reported that organised gangs were using balloons to smuggle drugs across the border, while quadcopter drones were being used to transport crystal metham-

phetamine, amphetamines and hashish into Jordan.

The report said that the smugglers were taking advantage of rising street prices for drugs in Jordan, citing an Israeli estimate that a kilogramme of hashish sells for £7,500 (around JD6,930) in the Kingdom.

Jordanian security forces have increased patrols and upgraded border surveillance towers and drones in response to the smuggling attempts, with tens of thousands of kilogrammes of drugs reportedly smuggled across the border, the newspaper said.

A senior Jordanian security source told The Jordan Times on Wednesday that attempts to smuggle drugs from Israel had become frequent in recent months, even surpassing those originating from Syria.

The source, who requested anonymity, said that Israeli officials, who have long accused Jordan of allowing weapons to be smuggled into Israel, were overlooking criminal activities on their own side of the border.

"Smuggling of illicit drugs from Israel into Jordan has been frequent and is seemingly carried out by organised groups," the source said.

The Israeli media reported in late September that the Israeli military had thwarted an overnight attempt to smuggle 10 guns from Jordan into Israel using a drone.

The Telegraph reported that some Israeli right-wing figures had used weapons-smuggling incidents to argue for a greater Israeli military presence in the West Bank and for the continued presence of Israeli settlements, which they portray as

forming a security corridor between Israel and what they characterise as a hostile Arab state.

"These announcements by the Israeli side are exaggerated and inaccurate and only cover half the story. There are reciprocal smuggling operations of drugs into Jordan. Jordanian border guards have been actively foiling several attempts to smuggle drugs from Israel in recent months," the newspaper quoted an unnamed Jordanian military source as saying.

A Jordanian military source said, "Jordan makes periodic and transparent official announcements about all smuggling attempts that border guards thwart, while Israel's selective policy releases reports on certain incidents and amplifies them to try to suggest there are security issues on the border."

"It appears that these frequent announce-



Photos provided by the Jordan Armed Forces—Arab Army show a drone and guided balloons used to smuggle drugs into Jordan across its western border

ments are aimed at creating an illusion of constant threat on the

border to justify stepping up security and military procedures in

the West Bank and in border areas."

Jordan has long suf-

fered from illicit drug smuggling on its north-eastern frontier with Syria, which stretches to around 400 kilometres.

With Syria emerging as a narco-state under Assad regime and a significant hub for the production and trafficking of Captagon, Jordan had to deal with hundreds of attempts to smuggle drug into the Kingdom.

A review by The Jordan Times of JAF's statements on thwarted drug-smuggling attempts points to an increase in reported incidents along the Kingdom's western border [with Israel].

According to The Telegraph, Jordanian security forces have intercepted more than 15,000 Captagon pills, nearly 20,000 kilogrammes of crystal methamphetamine and 6,000 blocks of hashish since the beginning of 2026, in addition to "large quantities" of other drugs.



Marking the International Day of Rural Women, the Higher Population Council highlights rural women's contributions to food security, poverty reduction, sustainable development and natural resource preservation

HPC calls for protecting agricultural land to sustain rural women's livelihoods

AMMAN (JT) — The Higher Population Council (HPC) has called for protecting cultivated and agricultural land from urban expansion, warning that continued construction licensing on fertile land threatens rural livelihoods and women's economic opportunities.

In a statement marking the International Day of Rural Women on October 15, the council highlighted rural women's contributions to food security, poverty reduction, sustainable development and natural resource preservation, according to an HPC statement.

This year's observance comes during the International Year of the Woman Farmer, highlighting women's roles across agricultural and food systems, beyond those employed as agricultural wage workers.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations defines women farmers broadly, including smallholders, seasonal workers, livestock breeders, beekeepers, producers, processors, marketers and rural entrepreneurs.

In Jordan, rural women contribute to agricultural production, livestock raising, food processing and marketing, while also carrying significant responsibilities for household management and family care.

The HPC said that protecting agricultural land was not merely an environmental concern, but also an economic, social and population issue affecting rural communities' ability to generate jobs and income, particularly for women.

The council identified several challenges facing rural women, including urban expansion onto fertile land, limited access to land ownership and productive resources, inadequate access to technology and agricultural extension services, difficulties reaching markets, and the burden of unpaid domestic and care work.

It warned that construction licensing on agricultural land around cities by the Greater Amman Municipality and other municipalities had contributed to rising land prices, encouraging sales and reducing agricultural production.

To strengthen rural women's economic participation, the HPC called for policies that improve their access to land, financing, markets and technology, while supporting their participation in decisions affecting agriculture and rural communities.

The council stressed the need for legislation regulating land classification and use, preventing inappropriate changes to designated land use and limiting the loss of productive agricultural areas.

Such measures, it said, would support Jordan's Economic Modernisation Vision, food security and environmental sustainability.

The HPC also recommended awareness campaigns highlighting successful rural women entrepreneurs, as well as permanent and seasonal markets where women farmers could sell their products directly to consumers and improve their returns.

Other proposed measures included free digital training in online marketing and the use of social media and digital platforms to sell products, alongside encouraging women to establish or join agricultural cooperatives to improve access to financing, reduce the cost of raw materials and reach wider markets.

The council said that empowering rural women required removing barriers to ownership, production and decision-making, enabling them to become active partners in development and the sustainability of rural communities.

Diwan conference explores Jordan's ancient civilisation, material culture

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — The University of Jordan, American Centre of Research, the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology, French Institute Ippo and the Council for the British Research in the Levant Amman Institute have organised the 10th Diwan under the theme "Ancient civilisation and material culture in Jordan".

The venue for the event dedicated for cultural heritage is the University of Jordan and the conference drew both local and international experts in humanities.

In a presentation titled "Khan Unaiza: A Comparative 'Shaima Alazab from Balqa Applied University said that she documented Khan Unaiza by using architectural drawings and analysis; assess the current condition and identify signs and causes of deterioration; proposed conservation treatment based on international standards and compared Khan Unaiza with similar khans in the region.

Due to its geographic location, Islamic architecture became part of trade routes and pilgrimage way stations.

"The Syrian Hajj route is one of the most important Islamic pilgrimage routes and received particular attention during the Ottoman Empire," Alazab said, noting that different facilities were built beside khans

Khan Unaiza in southern Jordan

to serve and protect pilgrims.

Fortresses, water cisterns and taverns were some of them.

Khan had a multiple purpose: To host travelers and store goods.

"There are two types of khans-one in urban areas that hosts merchants and serve commercial activities, and the road side khans that served travelers and pilgrims along the Hajj Road," Alazab underlined.

Khan Unaiza is located on the road between Amman and Aqaba, on the King's Highway, and has been mentioned since the 14th century on works of travellers and historians.

"The khan incorporates architectural and defensive features, including stepped parapets and defensive openings as well as water well and staircases leading to the first floor," Alazab said, adding that restoration works started in 2001-2002.

The current condition of the khan is the result of the interaction of historical, natural and human

factors that include: The construction of the Hijaz Railway, events of the Great Arab Revolt, harsh desert conditions and neglect with incompatible restoration intervention.

The structure was missing a wall, missing wall stones, missing arch stones and the arch, the scholar said.

Architects compared Khan Unaiza with Sultan Han (Turkey), Khan Asad Pasha (Syria) and Khan Daba (Jordan).

"Khan Unaiza represents a model of Islamic desert khans characterised by simplicity, functionality and central courtyard," Alazab said, noting that the study showed that geographic location and the function were the prime factor influencing variations in architecture of Islamic khans.

The study proposes preliminary conservation measures, including documentation, structural stabilisation, removal of incompatible materials and use of materials compatible to original fabric.



Photo courtesy of Ancient Jordan

Princess Sumaya: Erasmus+ opens doors for Jordan's young people

HRH highlights power of international academic cooperation to inspire young people, advance innovation, build bridges between Jordan, Europe

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Princess Sumaya Bint El Hassan, Chair of the Board of Trustees of Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT), has emphasised the importance of international academic cooperation in empowering young people and preparing them to shape the future, as she patronised the National Erasmus+ Office in Jordan's Information Day launching the 2027 Call for Proposals at PSUT.

In her keynote address, HRH highlighted the role of Erasmus+ in strengthening partnerships between Jordanian and European universities, creating opportunities for students and academics, and encouraging the exchange of knowledge and ideas across borders, according to a PSUT statement.

She said that international cooperation was essential to preparing young people for a rapidly changing world, particularly as advances in science and technology reshape societies and economies.

Reflecting on PSUT's founding vision, HRH reaffirmed the university's commitment to excellence in science, technology and innovation, and to equipping its students with the skills and outlook needed to contribute to Jordan's development and engage confidently with the wider world.

HRH also underlined the importance of en-



Photo by PSUT

Attending the National Erasmus+ Office in Jordan's Information Day launching the 2027 Call for Proposals at Princess Sumaya University for Technology, HRH Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan highlights the role of Erasmus+ in strengthening partnerships between Jordanian and European universities

suring that technological progress is guided by ethical responsibility, particularly in the development and use of artificial intelligence.

Innovation, she stressed, must serve humanity and be grounded in values that promote understanding, responsibility and the common good.

Erasmus+, named after the Dutch philosopher and scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam, has grown from a student exchange initiative into a major European programme supporting education, training, youth and sport.

For Jordan, it offers valuable opportunities to strengthen academic partnerships, expand

international mobility and build lasting connections between institutions and people.

As UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Science for Peace, HRH emphasised the wider significance of scientific and academic cooperation in bringing people together across cultures and borders.

"Knowledge knows no borders. And neither should science, when it is placed in the service of peace, understanding, and humanity," she said.

The Information Day brought together representatives of Jordanian higher education institutions, academics, students and programme stakeholders to explore opportuni-

ties under the 2027 Call for Proposals and discuss how institutions can make effective use of Erasmus+.

Addressing the event, Ambassador of the European Union to Jordan Pierre-Christophe Chatzisavas highlighted the importance of the European Union's partnership with Jordan and the contribution of educational cooperation to strengthening relations between the two sides.

Jordanian participation in Erasmus+ has enabled approximately 9,000 students, academic staff and administrative personnel to benefit from mobility opportunities, while nearly 200 capacity-

building projects have supported cooperation and institutional development.

The event also included technical sessions introducing the programme's opportunities, priorities and application processes, helping participating institutions prepare proposals and develop new partnerships.

Through its commitment to international engagement, PSUT continues to advance the vision on which it was founded: placing science, technology and innovation at the heart of Jordan's development while ensuring that its students and researchers remain connected to the world.

JSMO marks World Standards Day, highlights role in sustainable development

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Standards and Metrology Organisation (JSMO) joins the international community in celebrating World Standards Day on October 14 each year.

This occasion highlights the vital role that standards and standardisation play in supporting sustainable development, improving the quality of products and services, protecting consumers and facilitating trade, according to a JSMO statement.

This year's World Standards Day is celebrated under the theme "A Shared Vision for a Better World", reaffirming the importance of uniting efforts and fostering cooperation among all stakeholders, and harnessing international standards and

conformity assessment as practical tools to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

"The global message for this year reminds us that the challenges facing our societies and economies require a comprehensive and collaborative approach," the statement said.

At the heart of standardisation is cooperation, bringing together knowledge, expertise, and experience to develop practical solutions to sustainability challenges and help communities become more resilient and better prepared for change.

On this occasion, JSMO stressed its commitment to developing and implementing an integrated national standardisation system



JSMO also highlighted its committed to boosting cooperation with partners across the public and private sectors, as well as with academic and research institutions and regional and international organisations.

"Together, we can make greater use of standardisation and conformity assessment to address national challenges and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals."

"On World Standards Day, we reaffirm our belief that standardisation is a shared effort. By bringing together our knowledge, expertise, and collective efforts, we can create more sustainable solutions and contribute to a better future for all," JSMO said.

CERTIFICATIONS

UJ earns ISO recognition for quality, educational management, risk mitigation

AMMAN (JT) — The University of Jordan (UJ) has earned three major international certifications from Bureau Veritas - BIVAC, marking an achievement that reflects its commitment to institutional excellence, governance and educational development.

The university was awarded the ISO 9001 Quality Management System, the ISO 21001 Educational Organisations Management System, and compliance with the ISO 31000 Risk Management Guidelines, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

UJ President Nathir Obeidat said that se-



File photo

The University of Jordan

curing these international accolades reflects the university's drive to advance institutional performance and elevate educational and administrative services in line with global standards of efficiency and

effectiveness.

Obeidat added that the achievement stems from institutional efforts aimed at fostering a culture of quality, refining policies, standardising operational practices and raising aware-

ness of international benchmarks.

He noted that these measures align with UJ's strategic goals, supporting its continuous development and modernisation drive while enhancing its capacity to adapt to the evolving demands of higher education.

Vice President for Quality and National Accreditation Affairs at UJ Amira Masri noted that attaining these certificates represents a "pivotal" milestone in the university's journey towards operational excellence, providing clear frameworks to enhance efficiency and services offered to

students, faculty and stakeholders.

The ISO 9001 standard enhances integrated quality management systems, while ISO 21001 focuses on educational organisation operations to better serve learners.

ISO 31000 offers a framework for systematically identifying, analysing and mitigating risks.

The qualification process also involved training liaison officers across all departments, establishing a qualified team to sustain standard requirements and drive continuous institutional progress.

ROW



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday condemns Colombia's opening of an embassy in Jerusalem

Jordan condemns Colombia's opening of embassy in Jerusalem

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday condemned Colombia's opening of an embassy in Jerusalem as a violation of international law and relevant international resolutions.

Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali said that Jordan rejects the move, stressing that any measures or decisions aimed at changing the legal status or character of Jerusalem are "null and void" and have no legal effect, according to a ministry statement.

Majali reiterated that a just and comprehensive peace that ensures regional security and stability can only be achieved through the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state along the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

King meets with Australian Parliament opposition leader

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah held a meeting on Wednesday with the Leader of the Opposition in the Australian Parliament Angus Taylor, during which they discussed the deep-rooted ties between Jordan and Australia, as well as recent regional and global developments.

During the meeting, which took place at the Parliament House in Canberra, His Majesty underscored the need for the international community to step up efforts to de-escalate tensions in the region and put a stop to Israel's dangerous actions in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem, according to a Royal Court statement.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh, and Jordan's Ambassador to Australia Janti Kalajoqa attended the meeting.



His Majesty King Abdullah meets in Canberra with Leader of the Opposition in the Australian Parliament Angus Taylor, to discuss the deep-rooted ties between Jordan and Australia, and recent regional and international developments

Jordan, Australia issue joint statement following conclusion of talks between King, Australian PM

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan and Australia issued a joint statement on Wednesday, following talks between His Majesty King Abdullah and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Canberra.

Following is the full text of the joint statement:

"Australia-Jordan Joint Leaders' statement on Enhanced Cooperation

The Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, and His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan met in Canberra on 14 October 2026 and reaffirmed the enduring friendship between Australia and Jordan built on mutual respect and a shared commitment to peace, security and prosperity.

Leaders welcomed the opportunity to set a forward-looking agenda for strengthened cooperation, building on the 2016 Joint Declaration on Enhanced Cooperation and reflecting the growing breadth of the bilateral relationship.

Strengthening bilateral cooperation

1. Leaders reaffirmed the strong and enduring defence partnership between Australia and Jordan, built on decades of cooperation and underpinned by the Australia-Jordan Defence Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding. They welcomed continued strengthening of defence ties and expressed their commitment to maintaining regular engagement through strategic dialogue, education and training, professional military exchanges and cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

2. The two sides reinforced the value of practical defence cooperation in strengthening mutual understanding, enhancing operational effectiveness and supporting the professional development of their armed



forces. They welcomed continued engagement in areas of shared interest, including science and technology, accelerated capability development, defence industry cooperation, joint operations, peacekeeping and trans-national counterterrorism. They also acknowledged the importance of defence cooperation in supporting regional stability, including through operational collaboration where appropriate.

3. Leaders unequivocally condemned terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms and manifestations. Australia and Jordan have a strong history of border management cooperation, driven by the Australian Department of Home Affairs and the Jordanian relevant authorities. Building on longstanding counterterrorism intelligence and law enforcement ties, they agreed to strengthen information sharing and operational coordination between relevant agencies to prevent and disrupt terrorist activity, financing and recruitment.

4. They acknowledged the contribution that stronger trade and

investment links can make to supporting jobs, prosperity and economic resilience in both countries. They committed to working collaboratively with private sectors to encourage closer business-to-business ties and identify mutual opportunities, including in the resources sector. Leaders welcomed the opportunities available through deeper education, research and institutional partnerships that build future-ready skills and support innovation and inclusive economic growth.

5. Leaders reaffirmed the importance of international cooperation to address climate change and strengthen resilience to its impacts. They agreed to explore deeper cooperation on water security, drought preparedness, data-informed resource management and coral reef management. They encouraged collaboration on sustainable agriculture and food security, including technologies and practices suited to arid and water-constrained environments.

6. The two sides acknowledged the importance of mental health and psychological

wellbeing in supporting resilient communities. They welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Mental Health Cooperation, which will strengthen information sharing and collaboration on trauma-informed mental health and psychosocial support.

At the regional and international levels

8. His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein and the prime minister of Australia discussed the situation in the Middle East. They expressed concern over the continued tensions in the region and stressed the need for all relevant actors to work collectively towards de-escalation, emphasising diplomacy and dialogue as the means to achieve this objective.

9. Australia condemned in the strongest terms Iranian attacks targeting Jordan and expressed its solidarity with the Kingdom. The two countries reaffirmed their support for all efforts aimed at reaching a diplomatic solution that would end the crisis, address its root causes, and achieve sustainable security and stability.

10. Leaders underscored the importance of freedom of navigation and overflight, and their strong support for unimpeded trade in the region and other lawful uses of the sea consistent with inter-

national law, particularly the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

11. Australia recognised Jordan's important contribution to regional peace, security and stability. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the two-state solution in accordance with international law and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, as the only path to achieving just and lasting peace. Leaders emphasised their rejection of any attempts to annex the West Bank or displace the Palestinian people, and reiterated their condemnation of the illegal 'E1' settlement project, emphasising it constitutes a violation of international law.

12. The two sides reaffirmed the need to preserve the existing historical and legal status quo of Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Australia stressed the importance of the historical Hashemite Custodianship over these holy sites.

13. Leaders emphasised the importance of implementing the Gaza Peace Plan in full, in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 2803 (2025),

protecting civilians consistent with international law and the full, safe, rapid and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid.

14. Leaders also underscored the importance of supporting UNRWA and enabling it to carry out its UN mandate.

15. Australia reaffirmed its longstanding commitment to supporting Jordan's humanitarian and refugee response, including to the situations in Syria and Gaza. This has included partnerships with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation, UNHCR, Jordan's Ministry of Education and other relevant Jordanian institutions.

16. Leaders recognised Jordan's sustained contribution as a host of refugees and as a regional hub for humanitarian assistance and acknowledged the significant pressures these place on public services, infrastructure and host communities. They called for continued and predictable international support for refugees and the countries and communities that host them, and reaffirmed the importance of durable solutions, consistent with international law.

17. Leaders affirmed their countries' support for Syria's unity, security, stability and sovereignty, and for the Syrian government's efforts to rebuild the country on foundations that meet the aspirations of the Syrian people and uphold the rights of all its constituent groups.

18. Leaders reaffirmed Australia's and Jordan's support for Lebanon's efforts to ensure its security, strengthen its sovereignty over all its territory and ensure that arms remain exclusively in the hands of the state, as well as the need for all parties to comply with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701.

19. The two sides condemned the Houthi

militia's attacks on Saudi Arabia, particularly on civilians and civilian infrastructure. They emphasised their full solidarity with Saudi Arabia. They reaffirmed their support for Yemen's legitimate government and efforts to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable political settlement that preserves Yemen's unity, sovereignty and stability.

20. They reaffirmed their support for a rules-based international order, underpinned by international law including the United Nations Charter. They underscored the importance of dialogue, diplomacy and international cooperation in addressing shared security challenges and advancing a just and enduring peace, security and stability in the Middle East, where sovereignty and territorial integrity are respected.

21. Australia welcomed His Majesty's leadership in promoting international cooperation against terrorism, including through the Aqaba Process. His Majesty welcomed Australia's interest in organising an Aqaba Process meeting in 2027 focused on countering online extremism and the misuse of emerging technologies.

22. Leaders reaffirmed their steadfast commitment to upholding international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles. They welcomed the leading roles played by Jordan and Australia in strengthening respect for international humanitarian law, including through the Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel and the Global Initiative to Galvanise Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law. Australia welcomed Jordan's leadership in advancing the Global Initiative and its convening of the High-Level Conference on Humanity in War on 7 December 2026."



An air traffic control tower is seen at King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh on September 19

Coalition destroys Houthi missile targeting Riyadh, four injured from debris —Saudi media

AMMAN (JT) — The coalition battling Yemen's Houthis said that a missile fired by the Iran-backed militants at Riyadh has been destroyed with four people injured from falling debris.

The coalition spokesperson Maj. Gen. Turki Al Maliki said on a social media post confirmed the interception operation.

The Saudi Civil Defence also lifted danger warnings it earlier issued for Riyadh and Al Kharj, Arab News reported.

Four people were earlier injured by falling debris in Riyadh after air defenses knocked down Houthi missiles in the Saudi capital, the Riyadh-based news outlet reported.

Shrapnel from two intercepted cruise missiles landed around 15 residential homes and injured four people, the Saudi Civil Defence said on Wednesday.

Al Maliki said early Wednesday that a cruise missile was destroyed in Al Kharj governorate, in the centre-south of Riyadh Province.

The Energy Ministry said in a statement that a Saudi Aramco admin building in Dhahran was targeted and there were no injuries reported.

Al Maliki said late on Tuesday that three drones were also destroyed north of Riyadh.

On Saturday, an attack on Riyadh's King Khalid International airport killed 13 people and left hundreds injured.

The attack on the civilian airport was widely condemned.

The Houthis also at-

tacked Abha's international airport and Yemen's Aden International Airport this week, according to Arab News.

Video of the King Khalid Airport attack was released by Saudi authorities and showed civilians, including many religious pilgrims who were heading to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, waiting for their flights before a bright orange flash engulf the terminal.

The dead included four Saudi citizens, a Jordanian as well as two Bangladeshi nationals, a Palestinian, a US citizen, an Egyptian, a Syrian and a Sudanese, according to the Kingdom's aviation authority.

A day later a Pakistani civilian was killed when the same airport came under attack again.

Israeli settlers set fire to mosque in occupied West Bank

MIKHMAS, Palestinian Territories (AFP) — Israeli settlers set fire to a mosque and graffitied its outside walls on Wednesday in the occupied West Bank village of Mikhmas, Palestinian sources and the Israeli military said.

Atta Kanaan, a Palestinian resident of Mikhmas who lives 50 metres from the mosque, told AFP that he heard the sound of breaking glass shortly after midnight on Wednesday and immediately went to the building.

"A fire was burning fiercely and we called the fire brigade. Young men rushed to help us with fire extinguishers and we managed to contain part of the fire before the flames engulfed the entire mosque," he said.

AFP video footage showed that the fire had burned down the mosque's interior carpeting and blackened the walls.

An AFP journalist reported that slogans were spraypainted in Hebrew on the exterior walls, including "just because we are quiet doesn't mean we are asleep".

Settlers also set fire to a car, Kanaan said, adding that in recent weeks villagers had formed night-watch patrols out of fear that settlers might torch homes, particularly those on the outskirts of the village.

Mikhmas is located in the central West Bank between Ramallah and Jerusalem, near several Israeli settlement out-



A Palestinian man reaches through a mosque window as he assesses the damage following a reported arson attack by Israeli settlers in Mikhmas

posts whose residents have attacked the community on several occasions in recent months.

Rouhi Fattouh, president of the Palestinian National Council, described the arson attack on the mosque as "a barbaric act and a dangerous escalation in settler terrorism".

The Palestinian National Council serves as the parliament of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation.

Settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank has soared in recent months. Settler attacks have included physical assaults, land and crop theft, and vandalism of places of worship, homes and other buildings.

Excluding occupied East Jerusalem, around three million Palestinians live in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967, alongside more than 500,000 Israelis residing in settlements considered illegal under international law.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed on Tuesday that displaced residents of a Palestinian refugee camp would not be allowed to return to their homes, after the supreme court ordered the government to provide a timetable for their return.

In a video statement filmed in the vicinity of the Tulkarm refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, Netanyahu praised the Israeli army for "clearing it out under our directives".

"I heard that there is someone in the High Court of Justice who says that the residents should be brought back here. These are not residents, these are terrorists," the premier added.

Since January 2025, tens of thousands of Palestinians have been evacuated from three refugee camps in the northern West Bank — Jenin, Nur Shams and Tulkarm — after an Israeli military operations.

The displaced Palestinians have largely been unable to return.

Iran says ship sank in Hormuz

DUBAI (AFP) — Iran's Revolutionary Guard said on Wednesday that a ship caught fire and sank in the Strait of Hormuz because of a mine, while British security firm Vanguard also reported a sinking.

"A container ship attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz using an unauthorised and dangerous shipping lane struck a mine that exploded," said the navy of the Revolutionary Guard the ideological arm of Iran's military.

Images released by the Guard show a plume of black smoke rising from a ship, while dozens of containers that have fallen into the sea float on the water. The Guard said the ship was carrying more than 2,500 containers.

Iran claims control of the strait, through which one-fifth of the world's hydrocarbons passed before the Middle East war.



The Chinese-flagged container shipping vessel Hui Fa transits the Gulf of Oman off the coast of Khor Fakkan in the emirate of Sharjah in the east of the UAE on Tuesday

It regularly targets ships it accuses of transiting without authorisation, while the US has imposed its own blockade on Iran's ports.

According to Vanguard, the GFS Pride, a Singapore-flagged container ship, was struck by a projectile on Tuesday and sank.

It was not clear if the two statements referred to the same ship.

Vanguard reported three other ships struck on Tuesday, with two of them continuing on their way and the fate of the third unknown.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Centre (UKMTO) reported on Wednesday that two container ships were struck on Tuesday by projectiles but continued on their way after sustaining only minor damage.

UKMTO earlier reported two other attacks on Tuesday targeting a tanker and a container ship, without specifying whether they had caused damage or casualties.

The war was triggered in late February by US-Israeli strikes against Iran.

UK PM Burnham looks to 'repair bridges' between Trump, Zelensky

LONDON (AFP) — UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham said on Wednesday he will seek to "repair bridges" between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky amid strained ties between the pair.

Burnham made the comments before he was due to welcome Zelensky to his official Downing Street residence, in a show of support for Ukraine's president following new criticism by Trump.

In recent days, Trump has announced a diesel-supply deal with heavily sanctioned Russia and blindsided both sides



This video grab taken from footage broadcast by the UK Parliamentary Recording Unit via the Parliament TV website on Wednesday shows Britain's Prime Minister Andy Burnham speaking during the 'Prime Minister's Questions' in parliament in central London

in the almost five-year conflict by announcing an "energy ceasefire".

He has also angrily hit out at Zelensky over Ukrainian long-range attacks on Russian energy infrastructure, suggesting he should be replaced as president.

"What I have to do in my role is try and repair bridges so that the support comes back," Burnham told the British parliament.

"Therefore I should, at this moment in time, be careful in terms of laying the ground to bring people back together. That is the role I intend to play," he added.

Zelensky's visit to London comes as Ukraine accuses the US of helping Russia, saying Washington failed to warn it of incoming missile strikes and has slowed the Starlink satellite Internet system it relies on for its battlefield communications and frontline logistics.



Ministry of Investment

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Ministry of Investment

Request for Qualification (RFQ) Announcement

Al-Mujib Pumped Hydro Energy Storage Project – PPP Project

Amman, 15 /10/ 2026

The Ministry of Investment (MoIN) / Public-Private Partnership Unit of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan hereby announces the tendering of the Request for Qualification (RFQ) for the Al-Mujib 450 MW Pumped Hydro Energy Storage Project, to be implemented through a Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) contract under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

Project Overview

The Al-Mujib Pumped Hydro Energy Storage Project aims to develop, finance, design, construct, own, operate and maintain a 450 MW pumped hydro energy storage facility adjacent to the existing Al-Mujib Dam, under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

The Project will provide seven hours of electricity storage at full load by storing surplus electricity, particularly from solar power generation during daytime hours, and releasing it to the grid during periods of peak demand. This will contribute to enhancing electricity system flexibility, increasing the integration of renewable energy, improving energy security, and reducing dependence on imported fuels.

Eligibility and Procurement Process

The Ministry of Investment seeks to select a private sector partner to implement the Project through a transparent and competitive tender process, in accordance with the provisions of the Jordanian Public-Private Partnership Projects Law No. (19) of 2023 and Public-Private Partnership Projects Regulation No. (9) of 2024, and in line with international best practices.

The procurement process will be conducted in two stages:

- First Stage – Request for Qualification (RFQ):** Interested parties are invited to submit their qualifications for shortlisting.
- Second Stage – Request for Proposals (RFP):** Only shortlisted Applicants will be invited to submit their technical and financial proposals.

Obtaining the RFQ Documents:

Interested parties may obtain the RFQ documents by sending an email titled "Al-Mujib PHES RFQ Documents" to: [PHES.PPP@moin.gov.jo], stating the identity of the applying entity/applicant ("Applicant"). Within the body of the email, please attach the company's registration certificate alongside the bank wire transfer receipt of a non-refundable fee of [JOD 1,000 (or the equivalent of USD 1,410)]. Fee shall be wired to:

- Account Name: MINISTRY OF INVESTMENT / TRUST
- Bank: Central Bank of Jordan
- Account No.: 1208- 3100 - 01
- IBAN: JO76 CBJO 0010 0000 0000 0131 0012 08

Once the RFQ Documents are obtained, Applicants shall follow the detailed submission instructions stipulated therein in order to submit an Application for Qualification.

Submission of Applications for Qualification

The deadline for submitting Applications for Qualification is **Monday, January 18, 2026, at 12:00 PM (Jordan local time).**

Applications shall be submitted in accordance with the requirements and procedures set out in the RFQ documents.

Inquiries

For any inquiries, please contact: [PHES.PPP@moin.gov.jo]

Full digitisation of courts to take up to two years — justice minister

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Justice Bassam Talhouni says on Wednesday that the ministry is working to launch a tender for the full digitisation of court procedures, with the project expected to take up to two years.

Speaking to Al Mamlaka TV, Talhouni said that the ministry was working with the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship to launch the project.

He said HRH Crown Prince Hussein's visit to the Ministry of Justice highlighted the importance of the judiciary and judicial procedures and their impact on the country and its citizens. He stressed the ministry's responsibility to support the judiciary in accordance with the Constitution and relevant legislation.

Talhouni said the ministry had briefed the Crown Prince on measures and policies introduced in cooperation with relevant authorities to simplify procedures, ensure their continuity and reduce the time needed to resolve cases.

He added that the ministry had amended several laws and introduced digital services to facilitate litigation, including digital signatures, electronic judicial notifications and online document filing by lawyers.

He said further electronic procedures are expected in the coming period to automate



Minister of Justice Bassam Talhouni says on Wednesday that the ministry is working to launch a tender for the full digitisation of court procedures

processes and facilitate litigation, adding that full implementation will begin once the entity responsible for the project is selected, in line with the Crown Prince's directives.

He stressed the importance of training staff to handle digital procedures, maintaining service quality before and after the launch, and analysing and using data to support judicial work.

Addressing concerns that the transition

could disrupt court proceedings or undermine the right to defence, Talhouni said the ministry's experience in introducing digital services had shown that obstacles were limited.

He said the procedures were governed by legislation and supported by technical measures, with specialised entities responsible for maintaining digital services and ensuring cybersecurity. He expressed

confidence that the transition would not face major technical difficulties.

Talhouni noted that neighbouring countries had fully integrated digital procedures into their judicial systems, adding that Jordan could complete its transition to digital litigation within 18 months to two years.

Turning to alternative penalties, Talhouni said Jordan had made progress in implementing non-custodial

sentences despite the system's relatively recent introduction, with their use continuing to increase.

Alternative penalties and alternatives to pre-trial detention, provided for under Jordanian legislation, help reduce the number of convicted inmates and detainees in correctional and rehabilitation centres, he said, adding that clear legislation and straightforward implementation had supported their wider use.



Police announces on Wednesday the arrest of two suspects accused of defrauding individuals by collecting cash instalments under the pretext of selling them mobile phones

Police arrest two suspects in mobile phone instalment fraud

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Police announced on Wednesday the arrest of two suspects accused of defrauding individuals by collecting cash instalments under the pretext of selling them mobile phones.

The matter was discovered when several individuals contacted the Cyber Crime Unit claiming to have been scammed after allegedly using a website offering mobiles via instalments, Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

"The website the individuals used demanded a down payment and their money was eventually stolen," Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

A special investigation team was able to pinpoint the location of the suspects and two were arrested, Sartawi added.

"Police are looking for two other suspects who were involved in the electronic fraudulent operation," the police official added.

Police reportedly seized a large amount of cash, hand watches and some jewellery with the two suspects, according to Sartawi.

He reiterated previous alerts for the public to exercise caution and diligence when buying and selling online.

Individuals are also urged to avoid dealing with suspicious and unverified pages, and should always verify the legitimacy of transactions before sending money electronically to avoid falling victim to online financial fraud, Sartawi added.

The two suspects were referred to the concerned judicial authorities for further questioning and indictment, according to a statement by the PSD.



A protester kicks back a tear gas canister during a demonstration of high-school students in Paris, on Tuesday, as part of a nationwide high school mobilisation

Macron says French student protesters 'exploited' by political forces — spokeswoman

PARIS (AFP) — French President Emmanuel Macron believes the students waging three weeks of protests that have closed many schools have "legitimate" grievances but are also being "exploited" by political forces, a government spokeswoman said on Wednesday.

The leader, who is in his final six months of office, has asked the government to come up with "concrete responses" to the unrest by high school pupils within weeks, spokeswoman Maud Bregeon told reporters.

She spoke following Macron's weekly meeting with his cabinet, a day after nationwide solidarity demonstrations showed

significant support for the students.

The interior ministry said 161,500 people turned out for Tuesday's demonstrations held in Paris and other cities. Unions organising the rallies put the figure at 480,000.

Some violent scenes erupted on the sidelines of marches in Paris and Lyon, with police firing tear gas in response.

In his cabinet meeting, Macron "stressed that young people have legitimate concerns, but said these are being exploited for political purposes and turned into urban violence", Bregeon said.

With French presidential elections due in April and May next year,

some opposition parties have seized upon the demonstrations.

Jean-Luc Melancon, the presidential candidate for the far-left France Unbowed (LFI) party, participated in one of the Paris protests.

The far-right National Rally Party of Marine Le Pen, whom surveys give as the frontrunner for the elections, has voiced support for police deployed to the demonstrations and blamed students for violent episodes.

Students, unions, rights groups and parents have accused the police of brutality against the students, with some of the young protesters maimed.

Nobel winner Pillay blasts 'unlawful' Trump ICC sanctions — AFP interview

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Nobel Peace Prize winner Navi Pillay on Wednesday hit out at Donald Trump's "illegal" sanctions against the International Criminal Court, saying the US president needed a lesson in international law.

In an interview with AFP, Pillay also said it was no coincidence the US sanctions on the ICC were announced just hours after her Nobel, as a "reaction to the fact that the award was not given to President Trump".

Asked what her message was for Trump, the 85-year-old judge told AFP: "Call in your legal advisers to explain to you what international law is."

"He should call in his advisers to tell him why we say that it is unlawful for him to interfere with an independent international court."

On Friday, the US announced sanctions against the ICC aimed at crippling the day-to-day operations of the court, which tries individuals for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

Trump's administration has vowed to dismantle the court "brick-by-brick", furious that judges have issued an arrest warrant for Israel's



Nobel Peace Prize winner Navi Pillay on Wednesday hit out at Donald Trump's 'illegal' sanctions against the International Criminal Court, saying the US president needed a lesson in international law

prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu for alleged crimes in Gaza.

Pillay noted that previous US administrations had welcomed an ICC arrest warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying, "that's selective, that's double standards, and that's wrong".

The sanctions, which will hit the court's technology and banking operations, take effect in six months and Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten has urged talks with Washington during that

time to discuss reforms to the court, based in The Hague.

But Pillay said the idea of reforms to the ICC was "euphemistic", adding that what Trump wanted was "an undertaking that they won't pursue investigations of US citizens".

"You can't do that, because you can't have double standards. You can't selectively pursue one lot of people and not the other," Pillay told AFP.

"It will be such a bad, dangerous precedent."

Pillay also hit back at Israeli officials who re-

acted with outrage to her Nobel, after she headed the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry, which found last year that genocide was occurring in Gaza.

Netanyahu called her a "bigot" while Israel's foreign ministry said Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels must be "applauding from hell" at her award.

"I think it's very hurtful and insulting," said Pillay.

"Goebbels had blood on his hands...responsible for the death of thousands of people. Not only

Jews, but people of colour like me," she added.

She acknowledged there was little political appetite to arrest Netanyahu to face the ICC accusations, which he furiously denies.

"But all my life I've seen people get around difficulties, so I'm confident that it will happen," she said, asked if Netanyahu was ever likely to appear in the ICC dock.

Pillay said she was still digesting the news that she had won. She found it difficult to believe at first "because they give their awards to very few women, gross inequality in the practice so far".

At 85, she frets she will be unable to travel far and wide to sing the praises of international justice with the amplified voice of a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

"I think that age will constrain me somewhat. I can't be as active as I used to," she said, noting that she visited 79 countries when she was UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

She said she was consulting people about how best to spend the 12 million Swedish krona prize but hinted some of it might be invested in her native South Africa.

King, Australia governor-general discuss regional developments, cooperation

Continued from page 1

The talks also touched on developments in Syria and Lebanon, and the importance of supporting the security, stability, sovereignty, and ter-

ritorial integrity of both countries, the statement said.

For her part, Governor-General Mostyn expressed her pride in the depth of relations between Australia and

Jordan, and her commitment to expanding them across various sectors, commending Jordan's efforts to promote stability and de-escalation, as well as its vital humanitarian role.

Upon arrival at Australia's Government House in Canberra, an official welcoming ceremony was held for the King. His Majesty also signed the guestbook.

Deputy Prime Minis-

ter and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh, and Jordan's Ambassador to Australia Janti Kalajoqa attended the talks.

King holds talks with Australia PM

Continued from page 1

For his part, Prime Minister Albanese emphasised the importance of continuing to develop relations between Australia and Jordan, and strengthening cooperation in a number of areas, the

statement said.

The prime minister also commended Jordan's efforts, under the leadership of His Majesty, to bring about stability in the region and de-escalate tensions, as well as the Kingdom's support for international cooperation in

the fight against terrorism and extremism.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh, and Jordan's Ambassador to Australia Janti Kalajoqa attended the talks.

THE JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975	Published by the Jordan Press Foundation
Chairman of the Board	Queen Rania Al Abdullah Street P.O. Box 6710 Amman 11118
Samih Maaitah	E mail: editor@jordantimes.com jotimes@jordantimes.com Website: jordantimes.com
Director General	Follow us on X Platform: @jordantimes Like our facebook page: thejordantimes Youtube: thejordantimes
Hasan Jazzazi	National Library registration number: D/1998/2062 Telephone: 5600800 ext. 2392 Facsimile: 5696183
Editor-in-Chief	Advertising facsimile: 5696183
Raed Omari	Circulation Department: 5600800 ext. 2383
Editorial and advertising offices Jordan Press Foundation	
The Jordan Times is published daily except Saturdays	

EU takes a page from Ireland’s AI playbook

Agence France-Presse

DUBLIN — The European Union wants to catch up in the AI race by taking a cue from Ireland, an early adopter of the technology, which has rolled out the red carpet for data centres despite local backlashes.

Ireland showcased the role it aims to play in the technological revolution as it hosted an international AI summit in Dublin on Wednesday.

While the European Union is pushing for strong governance to limit the risks of AI becoming too powerful to control, the bloc also believes it must invest and exploit its potential to avoid falling further behind the United States and China.

“We need to make AI real for our competitiveness and for our industries,” EU tech chief Henna Virkkunen told the conference, attended by leading AI minds and executives including Google DeepMind chair Demis Hassabis and Microsoft president Brad Smith.

Around 20 per cent of companies in the 27-country bloc used AI last year, with the adoption rate rising to 55 per cent for the biggest businesses, figures the EU wants to see increase.

Most still use AI for relatively simple tasks, research shows.

Europe has around 5 per cent of the world’s data centre capacity, while the United States has around 75 per cent and China approximately 15 per cent, according to Andrea Renda, director of research at the CEPS think tank.

The EU wants to ramp up its capacity and is pouring billions of euros into so-called gigafactories made up of advanced AI processors and energy-efficient data centres for companies and research labs.

But that might not be enough.

“If you only build data-centre capacity, you have not done much,” Renda told AFP, calling for “political leadership” to help “identify the road-blocks, the obstacles and the enablers of this transformation”.

The EU insists it is working on several fronts, mobilising funds from various existing schemes and appointing a Siemens executive to push manufacturers to integrate the technology under a strategy called “Apply AI”.

But Renda said the strategy had “zero” dedicated budget, warning that without “bold intervention, we are not going to be able to do this”.

Ireland, already home to many US tech giants because of its minimal tax policies and favourable location, wants to help drive the momentum in Europe.

‘Recognise AI’s impact on humans’

“We have been to the forefront of every tech wave over recent decades and we will be to the forefront of this one,” Irish Prime Minister Micheal Martin told the summit.

Yet while it boasts one of the highest adoption rates in the bloc, Ireland also shows some of the pitfalls of Europe’s AI push.

Its heavy reliance on US giants runs counter to the EU’s sovereignty efforts, and the rapid expansion of data centres is putting Irish infrastructure under increasing strain, especially its power grid, fuelling local opposition.

The Central Statistics Office says data centres accounted for 23 per cent of the country’s electricity consumption last year, as much as all Irish households combined.

“A world record,” said Patrick Bresnihan, a researcher at Maynooth University.

During a “counter summit” held a few days before Wednesday’s gathering, he said the centres employed just 3,300 people in total.

“Particularly in Ireland, I would say that we need a moratorium. So we need to press pause on data centre development,” he said, to give policymakers space “to think about what a more progressive green industrial strategy would look like”.

Neil Bennett, a former tech worker attending the protest event, urged Irish leaders and senior officials “to recognise the human impact of AI on workers in Ireland”.

The former translator has been deeply impacted by AI. After he lost his job because of the technology, he describes crossing “to the dark side” to work as a data operator.

But he soon became disillusioned when his new job was replaced, by AI.

Islamic sukuk: Rethinking debt management

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

The Cabinet’s approval of a JD400 million Islamic sukuk issuance by the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) marks an important step towards modernising public financing and improving debt management in Jordan. Sukuk will offer an annual return of 5.5 per cent over five years. Beyond providing an alternative source of funding, the initiative aims to restructure the Municipality’s debt, reduce borrowing costs and diversify the financing instruments available to public institutions.

The economic rationale is straightforward. GAM is seeking to replace part of its commercial borrowing, which carries an estimated cost of 8.25 per cent, with financing at a lower rate. This 2.75 per cent age-point differential could ease debt-servicing pressures and release financial resources for infrastructure investment and public services. According to the announced estimates, the issuance is expected to generate

The defences have largely kept commercial centres safe, but residents of other areas have been left to fend for themselves.

Around 20 kilometres from Ayutthaya’s centuries-old temple ruins, a UNESCO heritage site, residents say floods that once reached their knees now rise above their heads in some areas and can take several months to recede.

Office worker Kamonchanok has been forced to commute by boat, and hoist her household appliances and other belongings above the waterline.

“All we can do is deal with the consequences,” she said.

“There’s only so much we can do to adapt.”

‘Cruel’ but effective

Thai irrigation department spokesman Thanet Somboon said climate change, low-lying geography and recently built embankments that altered the natural flow of the Chao Phraya have contributed to more severe flooding of downstream communities.

“Even when water is released from the Chao Phraya Dam at the same rate as before, the impact is greater than it used to be,” Thanet told AFP.

And after irrigation channels were completely full of diverted water, he said authorities had “no choice but to discharge the remaining water downstream”.

But Thanet acknowledged that officials may need to review infrastructure to “ensure

savings of approximately JD70 million over five years, potentially rising to JD140 million if the sukuk are extended for a further five years under the same financial assumptions.

The initiative forms part of a broader financing plan. GAM intends to issue an additional JD300 million in sukuk in each of 2027 and 2028, bringing the planned total to JD1 billion. If implemented effectively, this programme could support the refinancing of existing obligations at more favourable costs.

Nevertheless, its ultimate contribution to financial sustainability will depend on how the proceeds are deployed and whether refinancing is accompanied by effective expenditure management and control over future borrowing.

The significance of this initiative extends beyond the Municipality’s balance sheet. As the first issuance of its kind by a municipal public institution in Jordan, it represents a potential milestone in the development of the country’s Islamic finance

The defences have largely kept commercial centres safe, but residents of other areas have been left to fend for themselves.

Around 20 kilometres from Ayutthaya’s centuries-old temple ruins, a UNESCO heritage site, residents say floods that once reached their knees now rise above their heads in some areas and can take several months to recede.

Office worker Kamonchanok has been forced to commute by boat, and hoist her household appliances and other belongings above the waterline.

“All we can do is deal with the consequences,” she said.

“There’s only so much we can do to adapt.”

‘Cruel’ but effective

Thai irrigation department spokesman Thanet Somboon said climate change, low-lying geography and recently built embankments that altered the natural flow of the Chao Phraya have contributed to more severe flooding of downstream communities.

“Even when water is released from the Chao Phraya Dam at the same rate as before, the impact is greater than it used to be,” Thanet told AFP.

And after irrigation channels were completely full of diverted water, he said authorities had “no choice but to discharge the remaining water downstream”.

But Thanet acknowledged that officials may need to review infrastructure to “ensure

market. The sukuk will offer a new investment instrument for banks, insurance companies, and savings, investment and retirement funds, broadening the range of financial assets available to institutional investors.

The Central Bank of Jordan’s role in managing the issuance, together with the sukuk’s eligibility for trading on the Amman Stock Exchange, adds another important dimension. Tradability could give investors greater flexibility in managing their portfolios while expanding investment opportunities and strengthening the capital market’s capacity to mobilise domestic savings. Over time, a successful issuance could encourage other public institutions to explore sukuk financing, helping diversify funding sources and deepen Jordan’s capital market. Realising these benefits, however, will require adequate secondary-market liquidity, transparent disclosure, and efficient pricing mechanisms.

GAM’s wider fiscal position also matters. Its own-source

The defences have largely kept commercial centres safe, but residents of other areas have been left to fend for themselves.

Around 20 kilometres from Ayutthaya’s centuries-old temple ruins, a UNESCO heritage site, residents say floods that once reached their knees now rise above their heads in some areas and can take several months to recede.

Office worker Kamonchanok has been forced to commute by boat, and hoist her household appliances and other belongings above the waterline.

“All we can do is deal with the consequences,” she said.

“There’s only so much we can do to adapt.”

‘Cruel’ but effective

Thai irrigation department spokesman Thanet Somboon said climate change, low-lying geography and recently built embankments that altered the natural flow of the Chao Phraya have contributed to more severe flooding of downstream communities.

“Even when water is released from the Chao Phraya Dam at the same rate as before, the impact is greater than it used to be,” Thanet told AFP.

And after irrigation channels were completely full of diverted water, he said authorities had “no choice but to discharge the remaining water downstream”.

But Thanet acknowledged that officials may need to review infrastructure to “ensure

revenues reportedly increased by approximately 13 per cent compared with the previous year, while the 2027 budget allocates JD177 million to capital expenditure. Planned investments include public transport, road infrastructure, waste management, green spaces and smart-city projects. These priorities highlight the importance of integrating debt management with stronger revenue generation and more efficient public spending.

Islamic sukuk should be assessed not simply by the amount of financing they mobilise, but by their contribution to fiscal sustainability and economic development. Lower borrowing costs can create valuable fiscal space, but lasting benefits will depend on disciplined debt management, productive investment and measurable improvements in public services. The success of this initiative will therefore lie in translating financial savings into tangible economic and social gains for the people of Amman.

The defences have largely kept commercial centres safe, but residents of other areas have been left to fend for themselves.

Around 20 kilometres from Ayutthaya’s centuries-old temple ruins, a UNESCO heritage site, residents say floods that once reached their knees now rise above their heads in some areas and can take several months to recede.

Office worker Kamonchanok has been forced to commute by boat, and hoist her household appliances and other belongings above the waterline.

“All we can do is deal with the consequences,” she said.

“There’s only so much we can do to adapt.”

‘Cruel’ but effective

Thai irrigation department spokesman Thanet Somboon said climate change, low-lying geography and recently built embankments that altered the natural flow of the Chao Phraya have contributed to more severe flooding of downstream communities.

“Even when water is released from the Chao Phraya Dam at the same rate as before, the impact is greater than it used to be,” Thanet told AFP.

And after irrigation channels were completely full of diverted water, he said authorities had “no choice but to discharge the remaining water downstream”.

But Thanet acknowledged that officials may need to review infrastructure to “ensure

Deluge by design: Thai villages flooded to protect capital

Agence France-Presse

The defences have largely kept commercial centres safe, but residents of other areas have been left to fend for themselves.

Around 20 kilometres from Ayutthaya’s centuries-old temple ruins, a UNESCO heritage site, residents say floods that once reached their knees now rise above their heads in some areas and can take several months to recede.

Office worker Kamonchanok has been forced to commute by boat, and hoist her household appliances and other belongings above the waterline.

“All we can do is deal with the consequences,” she said.

“There’s only so much we can do to adapt.”

‘Cruel’ but effective

Thai irrigation department spokesman Thanet Somboon said climate change, low-lying geography and recently built embankments that altered the natural flow of the Chao Phraya have contributed to more severe flooding of downstream communities.

“Even when water is released from the Chao Phraya Dam at the same rate as before, the impact is greater than it used to be,” Thanet told AFP.

And after irrigation channels were completely full of diverted water, he said authorities had “no choice but to discharge the remaining water downstream”.

But Thanet acknowledged that officials may need to review infrastructure to “ensure

fazed.

“It floods like this every year recently. What’s the point of complaining?” she said.

‘Flood-free tax’

Sasin acknowledged that the area’s low-lying land made it a natural route for floodwater.

“But the villagers have no choice. They are being forced to make sacrifices,” he said.

Sasin, who lives in a protected part of Ayutthaya, has proposed a “flood-free tax” on those who benefit from the defences, to help impacted families raise their homes and repair damage.

Thanet from the irrigation department said the idea warranted further study to determine “how to support people who sacrifice their land to accommodate floodwater”.

The government’s flagship fix is a \$780 million flood diversion canal, designed to carry 1,200 cubic metres of water, around half the volume of an Olympic-size swimming pool, per second around the bottleneck where the Chao Phraya narrows through Ayutthaya.

It is expected to be completed by 2030.

Until then, Kamonchanok said her community was not even demanding an end to intentional flooding, but rather a cap on water levels and financial support for those whose homes sit below the flood line.

“All we’re asking for is to be able to live comfortably in our own homes,” she said.

“Why can’t they give us that?”

Vietnam mourns 700 war dead in major push to identify missing

Agence France-Presse

Vietnam’s largest push to locate some of the hundreds of thousands missing since the war.

Since July, hundreds of experts and soldiers have been working to unearth layers of remains at the park, aided by bulldozers, excavators and water pumps but often sifting through the mud by hand.

At the funeral service on Wednesday, patriotic songs blaring, the city’s deputy mayor Nguyen Manh Cuong said authorities “will not overlook any opportunity or method to continue the journey of searching for the fallen comrades”.

Race against time

“Due to the ferocity of the war and the passage of so much time, we have not yet been able to identify the names or hometowns of most of the soldiers recovered in this phase,” Cuong said.

The government has announced the identity of one dead soldier, squad leader Huynh Van Quen who fought in 1968 and whose remains were found in Le Thi Rieng Park, according to state media.

Quen was identified in July thanks to a scrap of paper bearing his name that was found with his remains, and DNA samples that matched his relatives.

Up to 1.2 million Vietnamese soldiers are estimated to have been killed between 1945 and 1975, during wars involving

former colonial power France, and then the United States as well as its allies.

There are 230,000 graves nationwide for unidentified soldiers, while thousands of others are believed to remain buried in remote jungles, or under farmland or other former battlefields.

The government aims to recover 7,000 sets of remains by July 2027, “a political task of special importance but also a command from the heart”, according to Deputy Prime Minister Pham Thi Thanh Tra.

More than 1,500 people have been deployed to search old battlefields in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, neighbouring countries drawn into the war, alongside thousands more engaged in data collection and analysis.

They are collecting samples from the 230,000 unidentified graves as well as conducting DNA analysis on 18,000 samples of remains and setting up a genetic database of their next of kin.

Colonel Trinh Tung Lam, part of the project’s command team, said their task was not easy, but it was the “right” time for this “most special and humane” effort.

In a lab at the Centre for DNA Identification in Hanoi last week, technicians carefully cut into bone fragments separated from remains to extract samples for DNA analysis.

Director Tran Trung Thanh told AFP the state institution

had acquired and developed “a world-first process for handling remains that have undergone severe degradation”.

Using US-funded technology through the International Commission on Missing Persons, a pilot programme had reported genetic data was successfully pulled from 54 of 58 samples, he said.

But he warned the process was “lengthy”, and they were in a race against time.

‘Final hope’

“As the surviving relatives and close kin of the fallen age and pass away, we risk losing a vital source of reference data,” Thanh said.

Meanwhile, “the remains continue to decompose under natural conditions”, he said, making it harder to extract DNA.

For many, finding their loved ones has been a lifetime’s work.

Van Cong, 68, and his family spent years touring cemeteries and talking to witnesses to discover what happened to his uncle, who died in 1950, when he was in his early 20s.

They believe he was among communist combatants buried in a mass grave 50 kilometres from his home after an ambush by French troops.

But “there were no opportunities to excavate” the suspected sites, he told AFP.

Now, Cong said, the government drive for answers is his “final hope”.

BUSINESS

Thursday, October 15, 2026



The King Hussein Cancer Foundation and the Microfund for Women company sign a partnership agreement Wednesday to promote social solidarity and expand health protection for all

KHCF, Microfund for Women partner to expand health protection

AMMAN (JT) — The King Hussein Cancer Foundation (KHCF) and Microfund for Women (MFW) signed a partnership agreement on Wednesday to promote social solidarity and expand access to health protection.

Under the agreement, MFW will enable subscribers to the foundation's Taameen Riaaya (Care Insurance) programme to pay their annual premiums in instalments on accessible terms, with no interest, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, KHCF Director General Nisreen Qatamesh described the partnership as an effective model of co-operation between the foundation and national institutions, based on a shared vision of strengthening health protection and widening access to the programme.

She said such partnerships translate institutional cooperation into tangible benefits by making the programme more accessible and raising public awareness of the importance of preparing for the health and financial challenges associated with cancer.

The director general added that the initiative reinforces the concept of sustainable health protection.

MFW Chief Executive Officer Maha Saeed said the agreement reflects the company's social and humanitarian responsibility towards all segments of society.

She said MFW believes financial barriers should not prevent people from accessing preventive and medical care, adding that offering interest-free financing for Riaaya premiums was a practical expression of that commitment.

Under the agreement, MFW will provide financing to enable people seeking treatment at the King Hussein Cancer Centre through Taameen Riaaya to pay their subscription fees in instalments through simplified procedures.

KHCF, meanwhile, will provide the necessary support to ensure the smooth implementation of the agreement and the effective delivery of treatment services to patients at the centre.

Jordan climbs to 6th place in 2026 Arab Digital Economy Index

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan climbed to sixth place in the 2026 Arab Digital Economy Index, released on Wednesday, achieving its highest ranking to date and leading among digitally emerging countries.

The Kingdom's score rose to 59.6 points in 2026, up from 52.6 in 2024, according to the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship. The improvement ended a four-edition streak in seventh place, which Jordan had held since 2018.

Jordan's score exceeded the Arab regional average of 44.33 points by more than 15 points, placing the Kingdom behind the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The Kingdom outperformed the regional average across all eight pillars assessed by the index. Its strongest performances were in social and economic impact, with 71.85 points; cybersecurity and data sovereignty, with 69.7 points; and digital governance and institutions, with 60 points.

Jordan scored 53.8 points in both innovation and emerging technologies, and the data economy and ar-



Jordan climbs to sixth place in the 2026 Arab Digital Economy Index according to Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship

tificial intelligence (AI), exceeding the regional average by more than 19 points in each category.

Key improvements between 2024 and 2026 included a rise in the e-government services score from 46.8 to 75.9 points, an increase in cybersecurity from 70.5 to 98.3 points, and a jump in emerging technology adoption from 27.9 to 76.8 points. Jordan also scored a perfect 100 in its national AI strategy.

The report highlighted Jordan's strengths in AI policy, cybersecurity, industrial diversity, technology adoption and integrated public e-services.

However, it identified several areas for improvement, including digital trade logistics, online shopping adoption, technology knowledge absorption, ownership of digital payment tools and start-up financing.

Every two years since 2018, the Arab Digital Economy Index publishes measures digital readiness across the region to help guide policymaking and investment. The 2026 edition placed particular emphasis on digital sovereignty and data control, Petra reported.

Germany's Merz says cuts still needed to EU budget plan

BERLIN (AFP) - German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said on Thursday that more cuts were still needed to the European Union's proposed budget but insisted he wanted a deal by the end of the year.

Ireland, which holds the EU's rotating presidency, suggested at the week-end slashing the bloc's next proposed seven-year budget by 141 billion euros (\$157 billion), seeking to bridge deep divisions over the spending plans.

It came after Germany, Europe's biggest economy, led a drive for major cutbacks to an earlier proposal by Brussels of nearly 2 trillion euros.

Ahead of an EU summit starting Friday, Merz told parliament that only "limited" funds were available.

"We will therefore not be able to avoid further reducing the current proposal in all areas," he said.

"We will have less at our disposal than was origi-



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz addresses delegates on Wednesday at the Bundestag (lower house of parliament) in Berlin, on the eve of a two-day EU summit to take place in Brussels from October 15 to 16

nally planned by the [European] Commission.

"At the same time we want to set the priorities more clearly and correctly."

Noting negotiations were entering the "decisive phase", he insisted it was his "firm intention that we should bring them to a good conclusion before the end of this year".

about what eurosceptic victories in France and elsewhere would mean for future dealmaking.

Merz also said he and French President Emmanuel Macron had put forward proposals on trade protection, which would be debated at the summit.

He did not name China directly, but concerns have been growing in the EU about the threat posed by increasing Chinese competition in sectors ranging from cars to factory equipment.

"We will no longer stand idly by when other states harm our economy through high subsidies, artificially devalued currencies, overcapacity and aggressive pricing," Merz said.

"Anyone who seeks a trade conflict with us will find that we are now prepared to fight back — and with appropriate responses."

Asian stocks mostly down as tech firms struggle to claw back losses

HONG KONG (AFP) — Asian stocks mostly fell on Wednesday as investors struggled to claw back the previous day's steep tech losses following disappointing comments from Dutch giant ASML, with focus turning to US inflation data.

Tech firms took a hammering on Tuesday amid concerns about China's progress in developing artificial intelligence chips and following comments by Broadcom's boss likening the AI buying frenzy to gambling.

The ructions felt in Seoul and Tokyo — which have big tech weightings — saw giants SK hynix and Advantest suffer huge losses, pushing them back towards levels last seen following their summer rout.

All three markets bounced early on Wednesday as the same firms provided much-needed support, but were

unable to maintain momentum and Tokyo and Seoul ended lower, with traders disappointed by earnings from chip-equipment maker ASML. Taipei closed higher.

The firm, a critical cog in the global economy and a bellwether for the semiconductor sector, announced a jump in third-quarter net profit and hiked its full-year sales forecast citing huge demand for AI and vowing to scale up production.

However, it warned demand was currently outstripping supply and it was seeking ways to boost capacity for 2028 beyond a 30-percent increase already announced.

Taiwan's TSMC, which makes advanced processors for companies including Nvidia and Apple, is due to report on Thursday.

Ahead of the ASML announcement, Saxo Markets' Charu Chanana

said: "After a strong first half [of 2026], semiconductor stocks have come under pressure as higher bond yields, geopolitical uncertainty and concerns about the scale of AI capital expenditure have prompted investors to reassess valuations."

"The recent selloff across US and Asian chipmakers suggests that strong demand alone may no longer be enough to sustain the rally."

The results of ASML and TSMC "offer a useful health check on the AI investment cycle".

"TSMC tells us whether demand for advanced chips continues to accelerate, while ASML tells us whether chipmakers are investing in enough equipment to meet that demand."

SK hynix and Advantest ended lower.

There were also losses in Shanghai, with investors appearing unmoved

by data showing China's exports picked up pace in September and soared 36.3 per cent, far more than expected.

Hong Kong, Sydney, Singapore, Manila, Mumbai and Bangkok all fell, although there were gains in Wellington and Jakarta.

London was flat while Paris and Frankfurt rose.

The gains were helped by hopes that the US Federal Reserve could avoid hiking rates further next year, after the bank's New York boss suggested the policy board could hold off after lifting once more this year.

"I haven't changed my view that it may be appropriate to have one more rate hike," John Williams told Bloomberg News in an interview.

"I don't think at this time I have any reason to believe that we would need to do more" after that.

GAS

Diesel supplies to remain 'tight' into 2027 — IEA

PARIS (AFP) — Diesel supply disruptions in the Gulf stemming from the US war against Iran will keep the market tight into 2027, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Wednesday, as it will take time to rebuild depleted stocks.

"The gasoil market balance will remain tight well into 2027 and is dependent on a recovery of product supply from the Middle East," the Paris-based agency said in its monthly energy markets report.

Diesel prices have hit record highs across Europe and in the United States in recent weeks, due to both reduced oil exports from the Gulf and damage to refineries in the region from retaliatory attacks by Iran.

Governments have responded by reducing fuel taxes or providing subsidies, and by releasing strategic reserves that will need to be rebuilt.



A motorist fills his car at a Total Energies petrol station in Faches-Thumesnil near Lille, northern France on August 10, 2023

The IEA predicted that refining capacity will recover and lead to a surplus on the diesel market in the first quarter of next year, "lifting stocks broadly in line with normal seasonal patterns".

But that will not fully compensate for the deficit accumulated since the US and Israel launched strikes against Iran in late February, which sent energy prices soaring around the globe.

And if Gulf supplies do not return to normal levels soon, "further demand reductions and the heavy economic costs these will entail may be needed to balance markets", the IEA warned.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD 17.4 million spread over 6.8 million shares that traded through 5,609 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.98 per cent, closing at 4222.01 points.

Out of 108 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 52 companies rose while the share price of another 29 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Latent Energies for Investments by 4.8 per cent, Jordanian Real Estate Company for Development by 4.17 per cent, Middle East Holding by 4.15 per cent, Jordan Petroleum Refinery by 4.12 per cent, and Middle East Insurance by 4 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordan Investment Trust by 4.41 per cent, Jordanian Company for Developing and Financial Investment by 4.38 per cent, High Performance Real Estate Investments by 4.26 per cent, International Arabian Development and Investment Trading Company by 4 per cent, and Zara Investment Holding by 3.85 per cent.

THE MARKET TODAY

ASE Index: ▲ 4222.01 0.98% October 14, 2026

Live Data

Historical Data

Click and drag in the plot area to zoom in

DAILY SUMMARY

Regular Market		OTC Market	
Trading Value (JD)	17,430,478		
Trading volume	6,847,354		
No. of Transactions	5,609		
No. of Securities	108		

BREAKING THE SILENCE

Stigma Still Keeps Jordanians from Seeking Psychiatric Help



15.18%

Prevalence: Population living with mental conditions.



JOD 251.8M

Economic Cost: Annual loss to Jordan's economy.



0.8 / 100k

Shortage: Psychiatrists per 100,000 people.



30 to 72

Expansion: Ministry clinics growth over a decade.

Demand Rises, Doctors Remain Few: Jordan's Mental Health Services Under Strain

By Hadeel El Bis

“What will people say?” For some people living with mental health conditions, that question can weigh heavier than the condition itself. Fear of being judged, or branded weak or “mad”, leads some to hide what they are going through for years, enduring anxiety, depression and other disorders in silence despite needing help.

Others have begun to treat a visit to a psychiatrist as a normal part of looking after their health, just as they would see a doctor for any physical symptom. The shift comes as demand for mental health services grows, amid accumulated economic and social pressures, the fallout from regional crises and the Covid-19 pandemic. Access to treatment and early intervention is therefore a public health and societal issue, not merely an individual one.

A 2024 World Health Organisation (WHO) report on mental health in Jordan puts prevalence at about 15.18 per cent,

based on Global Burden of Disease 2019 data. That indicates the scale of need, but does not mean Jordan has a recent, comprehensive national survey.

Dr Alaa Farroukh, president of the Jordanian Psychiatric Association, says the figure should not be treated as definitive, as no study covers all governorates, age groups and communities. A national study is now urgently needed, he said.

Rising demand, strained services

Farroukh sees two contradictory meanings in the growing number of people attending psychiatric clinics: a positive one, reflecting greater awareness and willingness to seek help, and another reflecting the level of psychological pressure on individuals.

Health Ministry data he cites show the capital's five psychiatric clinics see around 200 patients a day. Higher demand does not necessarily mean more illness alone, he stresses; it may also reflect a lower psychological barrier to seeking treatment.

Globally, the WHO estimates about 1.2 billion people, roughly one in seven, were living with a mental disorder in 2023, while most of those needing care still do not

receive effective services.

In Jordan, the problem is also one of human resources. The WHO's Mental Health Atlas 2024 puts the number of psychiatrists at about 0.8 per 100,000 people, against roughly one mental health worker of any kind per 100,000.

Farroukh says psychiatrist numbers have improved in recent years but remain short of need. He calls for investment in training psychiatrists, psychologists and psychotherapists, and for dividing roles among them rather than leaving psychiatrists alone to bear the burden.

A culture of shame

Despite greater awareness, stigma remains one of the main obstacles to seeking treatment, according to Farroukh. Some people fear that seeing a psychiatrist will damage their image; some families worry about the effect on social ties or marriage prospects; and some young people fear a psychiatric record could harm their job prospects.

Such fears can lead people to delay treatment, though delay can make problems more complex. His message to anyone with psychological symptoms is clear: Do not be

ashamed to ask for help, because mental illness is treatable and early intervention can spare years of suffering.

The cost of inaction is also economic. A WHO study shows mental disorders cost Jordan's economy about JD251.8 million in 2023, equivalent to 0.75 per cent of GDP, with productivity losses alone reaching about JD198.7 million.

Free treatment, limited resources

Government mental health services are free for Jordanian citizens, Farroukh says, and health insurance is not required to attend Health Ministry clinics. Private-sector fees, however, can be a barrier for some families. Some public-sector doctors may see dozens of patients a day, limiting the time available for each.

Dr Mohammad Al Taaani, director of the National Centre for Mental Health, says that the ministry and the centre provide the largest share of mental health services in the kingdom. He says the number of ministry psychiatric clinics rose from about 30 in 2014 to 72 today, and the number of ministry psychiatrists to about 120, from 20 to 30 more than a decade ago.

Most patients are seen the same day, he says, medication is provided free where needed, and talking therapy is available at a number of clinics, particularly outside the capital.

Taaani stresses that patients' privacy and dignity are fundamental rights. Students and trainees may attend sessions only with the patient's consent, and patients may refuse without affecting the service they receive. He also warns against turning to people offering psychological services without qualifications or a licence, urging the public to check that a provider is licensed by the Health Ministry rather than relying on social media content.

Jordan is also moving to integrate mental health into primary care and train family doctors to handle a range of conditions. Yet a 2026 WHO report noted that the health system still faces challenges, including stigma, limited mental health literacy, and limited integration of services in schools and communities.

On World Mental Health Day, marked on 10 October, the key message goes beyond adding clinics or doctors. Access to treatment begins with breaking down the barrier that stops people asking for help.