



Jordan condemns West Bank settler attack on European diplomats

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday condemned attacks by Israeli settlers on a European diplomatic delegation, including the Belgian consul general and diplomats from France and Poland, alongside Palestinian farmers harvesting olives, Catholic Church representatives and journalists in the town of Taybeh, east of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank.

The ministry held Israel, the occupying power, fully responsible for these assaults.

Ministry Spokesperson Fouad Majali reaffirmed the Kingdom's absolute rejection and condemnation of such "terrorist" settler attacks, describing them as an extension of the extremist policies of the Israeli government, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Majali noted that these acts coincide with ongoing illegal Israeli measures in the occupied West Bank, which fuel extremism and violence against the Palestinian people while undermining prospects for achieving peace based on the two-state solution.

He urged the international community to uphold its legal and moral responsibilities by compelling Israel to halt settler terrorism and violence against Palestinians, diplomats, clergy and journalists.

The spokesperson stressed the need to hold perpetrators accountable, end impunity and fulfill the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, chief among which is the establishment of an independent, sovereign state on the June 4, 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as the sole path to a just and comprehensive peace that guarantees regional security and stability.

Ministries save JD94 million in operational spending over nine months — report

AMMAN (JT) — Ministries reduced operational expenditure by JD94 million during the first nine months of 2026, achieving savings of 21.5 per cent against allocations for the period, according to a Ministry of Finance report.

Operational spending reached JD343.2 million out of JD437.1 million allocated for the January-September period, compared with a full-year allocation of JD582.8 million, according to the report, cited by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The report attributed the savings to cost-containment measures and streamlined administrative procedures, which reduced expenditure on stationery, electricity, rent, telecommunications, insurance, maintenance and other operational items.

Savings across the categories ranged from 7 per cent to 45.2 per cent, with the largest percentage reduction recorded in stationery, printed materials and office supplies, reflecting the expansion of digital government services.

Spending on these items totalled JD16.1 million, compared with JD29.4 million allocated for the nine-month period, generating savings of JD13.3 million, or 45.2 per cent. The full-year allocation for the category stands at JD39.2 million.

Electricity recorded the second-largest percentage reduction, at 28.9 per cent, generating savings of JD10.5 million. Spending reached JD25.8 million against a nine-month allocation of JD36.3 million, compared with a full-year budget of JD48.4 million.

The report linked the reduction in electricity costs to the expansion of renewable energy and the use of smart street lighting.



The Prime Ministry in the capital's Jabal Amman neighbourhood

DIPLMACY

Safadi reiterates Jordan's condemnation of 'terrorist' Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Saturday condemned attacks by the "terrorist" Houthi militia against Saudi Arabia, reaffirming Jordan's full solidarity with the kingdom and support for all measures it takes to protect its security, sovereignty, and the safety of its citizens and residents.



Ayman Safadi

Safadi's remarks came during a phone



Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud

call with his Saudi counterpart Prince

Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud, during which the two ministers discussed developments in the region and efforts to de-escalate tensions, restore calm and contain crises.

The two top diplomats also discussed efforts to limit the negative repercussions of regional developments on regional and international security, according to a Foreign

Ministry statement.

The two ministers stressed the importance of continued coordination and consultation on current challenges to strengthen the security of regional countries, and safeguard the interests of their peoples.

They also affirmed the solidarity of the two kingdoms in confronting anything that could undermine their security and stability.



Abdali Boulevard in downtown Amman

Moody's projects Jordan's economic growth to reach 2.7% in 2026

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's real gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to grow by 2.7 per cent in 2026 and accelerate to 3 per cent over the remainder of the decade, supported by major infrastructure projects and expanding regional trade, according to Moody's Ratings.

The agency said that Jordan had weathered the economic spillovers of the regional conflict relatively well, benefiting from a diversified

economy and the rerouting of trade through the port of Aqaba, Al Mamlaka reported.

Tourism revenues remained stable during the first seven months of 2026, as strong arrivals from Gulf countries and other regional markets offset declines in visitors from Europe and the United States.

Moody's expects higher energy costs stemming from regional instability to slow fiscal consolidation. Government debt is

projected to decline gradually from 83.6 per cent of GDP in 2025 to nearly 81 per cent by the end of 2027.

The agency cited Jordan's strong institutional framework, continued international support and credible peg of the dinar to the US dollar as factors supporting the country's credit profile. The currency peg helps protect balance sheets from exchange-rate volatility.

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Remittance inflows rise 14.1 per cent to \$2.97 billion in first seven months of 2026 — Sharkas



AMMAN (JT) — Remittances from Jordanians working abroad rose 14.1 per cent year-on-year to approximately \$2.97 billion in the first seven months of 2026, reinforcing their role as a key source of foreign currency and support for the national economy, Central Bank of Jordan Governor (CBJ) Adel Sharkas said.

Speaking to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Sharkas said that remittances totalled approximately \$4.5 billion in 2025, an increase of 4.5 per cent compared with the previous year.

He said that remittances rank third among sources of foreign currency linked to the current account, after exports and tourism in-

come, highlighting their contribution to Jordan's economic stability.

Beyond their impact on foreign currency inflows, remittances support household incomes and purchasing power, while providing funds that can be directed towards consumption, savings and investment, Sharkas said.

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REPORT

Consumer confidence rises in 3rd quarter on improved economic outlook

AMMAN (JT) — Consumer confidence in Jordan rose in the third quarter of 2026, driven by improved economic expectations, although concerns over personal finances, unemployment and inflation persisted, according to the latest Ipsos Consumer Confidence Index.

The index reached 42.6 points, up 1.1 points from 41.5 in the second quarter and 6.6 points

from 36 during the same period last year, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The improvement was largely driven by more positive views of the local economy. The sub-index measuring confidence in the direction of the domestic economy rose 8.6 points from the previous quarter to 58.5 out of 100. The figure represents a composite index score, not the per-

centage of respondents expressing confidence.

Half of respondents expect economic conditions to improve over the next six months, while 37 per cent anticipate no change and 13 per cent expect conditions to worsen.

Confidence in the country's overall direction also remained relatively strong, with 64 per cent of consumers saying Jordan was moving

in the right direction, according to the report.

Jordan ranked fourth among the 23 countries included in the report's international comparison, behind China, Saudi Arabia and India.

However, trends across the index's sub-components were mixed.

The personal financial confidence sub-index fell 3.1 points to 30.2, while the general job security confidence

sub-index increased 5.2 points to 50.3.

Despite the overall improvement in consumer confidence, unemployment and inflation remained the leading concerns among respondents. Some 56 per cent cited unemployment and job opportunities as major concerns, while 54 per cent pointed to inflation.

The findings highlight the continued impor-

tance of employment prospects and the cost of living in shaping consumer sentiment, even as expectations for the broader economy improve, Petra said.

Overall, the third-quarter results point to growing optimism about Jordan's economic outlook, tempered by concerns over household finances and ongoing financial pressures.

Ipsos conducted the



survey in September through computer-assisted telephone inter-

views with 1,000 people aged 18 and above across Jordan.



During September 2026, Queen Alia International Airport welcomes 847,444 passengers, marking a decrease of 18.6 per cent compared to August 2026 and a slight increase of 1.5 per cent compared to September 2025

Airport International Group reports over 845,000 passengers at QAIA in September

AMMAN (JT) — Airport International Group (AIG), the Jordanian company operating Queen Alia International Airport (QAIA), reported the airport's traffic statistics for September 2026, with passenger traffic recording modest year-on-year growth while aircraft movements and cargo volumes declined compared to the same period last year.

The results reflect differing trends across the airport's passenger, aircraft and cargo activity as the third quarter came to a close, according to an AIG statement.

During September 2026, QAIA welcomed 847,444 passengers, marking a decrease of 18.6 per cent compared to August 2026 and a slight increase of 1.5 per cent compared to September 2025.

The airport also recorded 6,952 aircraft movements, reflecting an 11.6 per cent decrease month-on-month and a 0.2 per cent decrease year-on-year.

Also, QAIA handled 6,964 tons of cargo during the month, representing a 12.1 per cent decrease com-

pared to August 2026 and a slight 3.8 per cent decline compared to the same month last year.

'Maintaining strong connectivity and operational performance in this environment requires continued attention to the needs of our passengers and airline partners'

The September figures point to a moderation in overall airport activity following the higher traffic levels recorded in August.

While passen-

ger traffic remained slightly above September 2025 levels, the decline in aircraft movements and cargo volumes indicates softer activity across other segments.

Against this backdrop, QAIA continues to manage changing traffic patterns while maintaining operational readiness and supporting the connectivity needs of passengers, airlines and the wider Jordanian economy.

Commenting on the results, AIG CEO Nicolas Deviller said, "September's results reflect the varied traffic patterns we are seeing across the aviation sector, with passenger demand remaining resilient while aircraft movements and cargo activity softened."

"Maintaining strong connectivity and operational performance in this environment requires continued attention to the needs of our passengers and airline partners. We remain focused on ensuring QAIA can respond effectively to changes in demand while continuing to support Jordan's tourism, trade and economic activity," Deviller added.

Annual Diplomatic Bazaar celebrates 62 years in service of Mabarrat Um Al Hussein's children

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — HRH Princess Basma on Saturday attended the 62nd annual International Diplomatic Bazaar, organised in support of Al Hussein Social Foundation for Orphans under the slogan "The World in Our Bazaar, Goodness for Our Children".

The event, which is held at Al Hussein Youth City, brought together 35 diplomatic missions accredited at the Royal Hashemite Court. All proceeds from the bazaar are allocated to Mabarrat Um Al Hussein orphanage.

An annual humanitarian event in Amman, the bazaar serves as a meeting point for the diplomatic community in Jordan, and offers an opportunity to celebrate and explore cultures and traditions from around the world.

At the opening ceremony, Princess Basma highlighted the bazaar's humanitarian and charitable mission, describing it as an international gathering in Jordan that promotes solidarity, mutual support and a shared commitment to humanitarian values.

Princess Basma said that since its establishment in 1958, Al Hussein Social Foundation for Orphans has provided a haven for children facing difficult social and living conditions.

The event was attended by Director of Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Amjad Qahyoui, ambassadors and representatives of participating diplomatic missions, and Executive Director of the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development Farah Dagistani.

The foundation of



Photo by Ahmad Khleifat

HRH Princess Basma on Saturday attends the 62nd annual International Diplomatic Bazaar, organised in support of Al Hussein Social Foundation for Orphans under the slogan 'The World in Our Bazaar, Goodness for Our Children'

fers children shelter, care and an environment that enables them to grow, learn, prepare for the future, achieve success and build self-confidence, she said.

Princess Basma highlighted the foundation's commitment to ensuring that every child under its care can pursue their dreams and aspirations in a safe, stable and supportive environment. This approach combines academic education with extracurricular activities and training to help children develop their potential.

The princess also praised the bazaar for supporting the foundation's humanitarian and charitable objectives, while celebrating the diverse cultures, products and cuisines of participating countries.

She expressed her appreciation to the

participating diplomatic missions and the Jordanian institutions sponsoring and supporting this year's event.

In a speech on behalf of the diplomatic corps, Venezuelan Ambassador to Jordan Omar Vielma Osuna noted that the bazaar is a distinguished annual event that promotes cultural exchange, and demonstrates a shared commitment to solidarity and the rights of vulnerable groups.

The bazaar's 62-year history reflects sustained efforts, perseverance and co-operation in pursuit of shared humanitarian goals, particularly supporting orphaned children and those facing difficult family and living circumstances, Osuna said.

The ambassador added that the initiative helps provide children with a digni-

fied life, equips them with essential skills and prepares them to build their futures and eventually participate in public life and the labour market.

Osuna said that the bazaar holds particular significance for the diplomatic corps in Jordan as a symbol of coexistence at a time when peaceful coexistence around the world faces mounting challenges from wars, displacement and inequality.

He noted that charitable gatherings bringing together people of different nationalities carry a noble humanitarian value under such circumstances, as they contribute to the well-being of others and help improve their lives.

The Venezuelan ambassador thanked the participating diplomatic missions and the organisers, stressing the importance

of preserving the bazaar's legacy for future generations and encouraging them to engage responsibly in their communities.

Princess Basma was accompanied by ambassadors and representatives of diplomatic missions, and toured the bazaar's pavilions and viewed a range of products, handicrafts and traditional foods reflecting the cultural diversity of participating countries.

The programme also featured folklore performances by several participating countries, showcasing their cultural heritage.

The bazaar attracted large numbers of visitors, who explored the various pavilions, discovered international cultures and traditions, and contributed to supporting the foundation's humanitarian and charitable mission.

ARCHEAOLGY

Khirbet Qabla sheds light on agricultural, religious life in ancient Jordan

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — The Department of Antiquities (DoA) last week held a lecture covering the Khirbet Qabla site and discoveries that were announced by the team of archaeologists from Yarmouk University in Irbid.

The lecture highlighted agricultural activities at the site located southwest of Zobia in the Irbid Governorate of northern Jordan. Khirbet Qabla was occupied during Roman, Byzantine and early Islamic periods.

Vice Dean of the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology and Associate Professor of Islamic Archaeology and Architecture at Yarmouk University Maan Omoush underlined the discovery of a wine press, adding that "the team found installations used for liquid collection".

Before the area became significant for Christian churches, wine and olive presses were scattered at Khirbet Qabla.

Head of the Heritage Resources Conservation Department and Director of the Jordan Heritage Museum at Yarmouk University Hussein Sabbah said that "remains of the church built over the installation provide evidence of architec-



Photo courtesy of Yarmouk University

Archaeological remains at Khirbet Qabla during Yarmouk University's 2026 excavation season in northern Jordan. The site has revealed evidence of agricultural production, religious activity and burial practices spanning for several periods

tural and religious transformation at the site".

Nasser Gharaybeh, an expert in biological anthropology at Yar-

mouk University, analysed graves at Khirbet Qabla, examining their distinctive characteristics, and emphasising their value in study-

ing the burial practices and funerary customs of the communities that inhabited the area.

"These findings offer important insights into

social developments, prevailing beliefs and patterns of daily life. Collectively, the excavations and archaeological investigations have contributed to a comprehensive scientific understanding of the history of Khirbet Qabla and the economic, religious and social transformations it experienced across different historical periods," Gharaybeh said.

Rock-cut wine press was discovered and it uncovered a highly sophisticated Byzantine wine-processing facility.

The installation includes a complex, purpose-built system of interconnected basins and channels designed to master liquid flow and stone engineering during ancient food production.

The regional importance of the site was highlighted by an official visit from the Director General of the DoA Fawzi Abudana.

Scholars also identified individual and family tombs dating to the Roman and Byzantine periods.

The presence of these tombs broadens the picture significantly showing that the full circle was closed at Khirbet Qabla where people worked in farming, worshipped and buried deceased members of the community.

A week with a strong arts backbone — Darat Al Funun's major exhibition in its final days, a confirmed electronic music concert, and one of the region's most distinctive chamber music programmes — alongside the ongoing Jordan Trail regional hikes.

Ongoing: October 18–24

"In Remembrance of Khalid Shoman" (closing October 30) | Darat Al Funun, Jabal Al Weibdeh, Amman

Running through October 30, this exhibition at Darat Al Funun honours the legacy of Khalid Shoman and his role in establishing the art centre. Now in its final weeks — one of the most significant exhibitions of Jordan's autumn cultural season. Free entry.

Wednesday, October 21

Chamber Music — Winds Quintet | Amman

A confirmed chamber music concert on the official Jordan calendar — a winds quintet performance in Amman. Details and venue to be confirmed via calendar.jo. A welcome addi-

tion to a week otherwise dominated by electronic music and outdoor events.

Tuesday-Friday, October 20-23

Zikuk 2026 | Mazkeka, Amman

Four days of music and human connection — Zikuk 2026 begins on Tuesday October 20, and ends on Friday October 23. The festival brings together an eclectic lineup across multiple stages at Mazkeka, including electronic, experimental and acoustic acts.

Performers include Zohar Fresco, Mikazuki, Ryskind Acoustic, Electrolil Synth Trio and Nico Teen, among many others, across the Stage, Swiss, Studio and Bar performance spaces, with sets running from early evening through to the early hours. The event is one of Amman's most distinctive multiday music gatherings. Check Mazkeka's website for the full daily programme and tickets.

Looking Ahead: Thursday–Saturday, October 29–31

Three major events follow immediately after this window — worth

planning ahead:

Stephan Bodzin | Panorama Dead Sea, October 30

German techno pioneer Stephan Bodzin performs at Panorama Dead Sea on October 30 — one of the most scenically dramatic concert settings in the region.

Note: The official Jordan calendar lists a Stephan Bodzin event on October 21 in Amman — this may be a separate local event or a listing error; confirm via calendar.jo before attending.

Ramy Ayach & Maya Diab | The Dead Sea, October 30

Two of the Arab world's most popular pop artists sharing a stage at the Dead Sea. Details via calendar.jo.

Global Real Estate Investment Expo 2026 | Amman, October 29–31

Jordan's major international property and investment gathering — relevant for business-minded readers in the region.

The Jordan Trail regional hikes continue through October. The Red Sea Half Marathon in Aqaba follows on December 4.

Jordan cultural, arts, outdoors agenda: October 18–24



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomes a UN Security Council statement condemning attacks on Saudi Arabia

Jordan welcomes UN Security Council statement on attacks on Saudi Arabia

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday welcomed a UN Security Council statement condemning attacks on Saudi Arabia and continued threats to maritime navigation in the Red Sea and Bab Al Mandeb.

The ministry stressed the importance of fully implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2216 of 2015 and subsequent relevant resolutions.

It also called for stronger international cooperation to prevent the militia from ob-

taining arms and other support, according to a ministry statement.

The ministry also reiterated Jordan's condemnation of the attacks on Saudi Arabia as a violation of the Kingdom's sovereignty, a threat to regional security and a breach of international

law and the UN Charter.

It also reaffirmed Jordan's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia and support for all measures taken by the Kingdom to safeguard its security, sovereignty, stability, assets and the safety of its citizens and residents.

Environment minister highlights Jordan's biodiversity efforts at COP17

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy for His Majesty King Abdullah, Minister of Environment Ayman Suleiman on Saturday participated in the Leaders' Summit of the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17), hosted by Armenia.

Suleiman stressed the need to translate international commitments under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework into tangible action to address biodiversity loss, climate change, water scarcity and land degradation.

He noted that protecting biodiversity is a strategic priority for Jordan, closely linked to water and food security, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

He highlighted Jordan's efforts in 2026 to update its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, prepare its seventh national report and develop a national biodiversity financing



Minister of Environment Ayman Suleiman on Saturday participates in the Leaders' Summit of the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17)

plan through the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN).

During a roundtable on aligning financial flows with nature-positive development, the minister stressed the importance of public-private partnerships,

integrating biodiversity into sectoral policies and adopting innovative financing tools, including green and blue bonds, specialised conservation funds and sukuk.

Jordan's participation reflects its com-

mitment to international cooperation and ecosystem restoration, alongside national efforts to expand marine and nature reserves, including the Aqaba Marine Reserve, which was recently listed by UNESCO.



This photo shows a view of Jerusalem with an empty Al Aqsa Mosque compound and its Dome of the Rock on March 18

Jordan, 18 countries condemn Colombia's opening of embassy in Jerusalem

AMMAN (JT) — The foreign ministers of Jordan and 18 countries have condemned Colombia's inauguration of its embassy in Jerusalem, saying the move violates relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and undermines international efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace based on the two-state solution.

In a joint statement, the ministers said any measure or decision aimed at altering the historical and legal status of occupied Jerusalem or recognising it as Israel's capital was "null and void" and had no legal effect.

They cited relevant UN Security Council and General Assembly

resolutions, particularly Resolutions 476 and 478, adopted in 1980, which reject attempts to alter Jerusalem's character or status and call on states to withdraw their diplomatic missions from the city.

They also urged Colombia to uphold its obligations under international law...

The ministers described Jerusalem as part of the Palestinian territory occupied

in 1967 and called on the Colombian government to reconsider and reverse its decision.

They also urged Colombia to uphold its obligations under international law and refrain from taking measures that prejudice the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to an independent and sovereign state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The statement was issued by the foreign ministers of Jordan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey, Algeria, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Egypt and Yemen.

Peace requires Palestinian statehood, end to Israeli occupation— Namrouqa

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Nancy Namrouqa on Saturday took part in the 52nd session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), held in Baghdad.

In her remarks, Namrouqa reiterated that Palestine remains the central cause and a key test of the international community's credibility, according to a ministry statement.

She stressed that achieving peace and lasting security in the region requires ending the occupation and ensuring the Palestinian people's right to freedom and an independent, sovereign state on their national soil along pre-1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with the two-state solution and international legitimacy resolutions.

Namrouqa called for full adherence to the Gaza ceasefire agreement, implementation of all its provisions and the lifting of Israeli restrictions on the entry of sufficient and sustained humanitarian aid into the Strip.

She warned against the consequences of illegal Israeli measures in the occupied West Bank, including



Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Nancy Namrouqa on Saturday participates in the 52nd session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

settler violence, settlement expansion, land confiscation and violations of the historical and legal status quo at Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

She said that these measures undermine prospects for the two-state solution and a just and comprehensive peace that ensures regional security and stability.

Namrouqa reiterated Jordan's commitment to protecting the historical and legal status quo at Jerusalem's holy sites under the historical Hashemite

Custodianship of Islamic and Christian holy sites.

She also stressed the need to support and protect the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and enable it to carry out its duties in accordance with its UN mandate.

Addressing regional crises, Namrouqa said Jordan remains committed to supporting national states and safeguarding their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

She highlighted Jor-

dan's support for the Syrian government's efforts to rebuild the country while preserving its unity, sovereignty, security, stability and territorial integrity, protecting its citizens and upholding the rights of all Syrians.

Namrouqa also reaffirmed Jordan's support for Lebanon and efforts to consolidate stability, backing the Lebanese government in extending its sovereignty over all Lebanese territory. She stressed the need for Israel to withdraw from occupied Leba-

nese territories and for the understandings reached with the Lebanese government to be implemented.

She reiterated Jordan's condemnation of attacks on Arab states and expressed full solidarity with Saudi Arabia, condemning Houthi attacks on its territory and civilian and economic facilities.

Namrouqa also rejected attacks on ships and maritime routes, stressing that freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, the Red Sea and Bab Al Mandab is guaranteed under international law.

"Protecting our peoples begins with safeguarding international law against selective application. A law applied in one crisis but disregarded in another loses its authority and undermines confidence in the international system," she said.

Namrouqa called on OIC member states to participate at the highest level in the "Humanity in War" conference, which Jordan will host on December 7, to promote respect for international humanitarian law, protect civilians and humanitarian workers and ensure accountability.

Mujib hydropower project to provide 450MW of electricity storage — NEPCO

AMMAN (JT) — The Mujib pumped-storage hydropower project is part of a master plan to identify the most viable options for expanding electricity generation and storage to meet rising demand, National Electric Power Company (NEPCO) Director General Sufian Bataineh said on Saturday.

Speaking to Al Mamlaka TV, Bataineh said the 450-megawatt (MW) project comprises two units, each with a capacity of 225MW, and can supply electricity to the grid for seven hours.

The project will operate on a closed-loop system using two reservoirs separate from the Mujib Dam. The required water volume of around 2.8 million cu-



Aerial view of Mujib Dam

bic metres will be filled once, with annual evaporation losses replenished, he explained.

Bataineh said the project is among the schemes being prepared by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, adding that

companies meeting the pre-qualification requirements will proceed to the technical evaluation stage of the tender.

He outlined three main objectives of the project, starting with strengthening energy

security and self-reliance by using surplus daytime renewable energy to pump water to upper reservoirs.

The water will then be released into lower reservoirs to generate up to 450MW during peak demand, reducing the need for additional conventional power generation capacity, he added.

The second objective is to address fluctuations in renewable energy generation and improve grid stability, helping ensure a reliable electricity supply, Bataineh said.

The third is to reduce costs by limiting investment in conventional power plants needed to meet peak demand and making greater use of renewable energy generated during the day.

The Ministry of Investment has launched a pre-qualification call for the 450MW project, which offers seven hours of storage capacity under a public-private partnership framework.

It is the first investment opportunity of its kind to be offered through the Investment Portal.

Located adjacent to the Mujib Dam, the project will be implemented under a Build-Own-Operate model, under which the private investor will finance, construct and operate the facility.

The project is expected to create direct jobs, improve grid flexibility, increase the integration of renewable energy and reduce reliance on imported fuel.



Naval Force and Royal Coastal Guard personnel on Friday rescues two tourist boats that drifted towards a pier in the Gulf of Aqaba

Naval Force rescues two tourist boats in Aqaba

AMMAN (JT) — Naval Force and Royal Coastal Guard personnel on Friday rescued two tourist boats that drifted towards a pier in the Gulf of Aqaba due to a technical failure.

Public safety boats

from the Coast Guard unit were dispatched after the Maritime Operations Centre received a report of the incident, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The crews rescued all passengers aboard the

two boats and towed the vessels to the nearest safe port. No casualties were reported.

The operation highlights the readiness of Naval Force personnel to respond to maritime incidents and protect lives and property.

Russia hails Trump waiving sanctions as ‘historic’

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia on Saturday hailed US President Donald Trump’s move to waive new sanctions on it as “historic”, as Ukraine worries he is taking Moscow’s side in Europe’s worst conflict since World War II.

Trump signed an executive order on Friday that waived sweeping US sanctions targeting Russia’s energy revenues amid a clash with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The decision came despite Russia increasing strikes on Ukraine, especially its capital, Kyiv, in the fifth year of its offensive, which has killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced millions.

“The Trump administration’s suspension of the Graham Act is an important and truly historic moment,” Kirill Dmitriev, envoy for Russian President Vladimir Putin, said on social media.

The Lindsey Graham Act, named after the deceased US senator who sponsored the bill, targeted Russia’s energy and defence sectors, as well as Putin and the so-called “shadow fleet” of tankers used by Moscow to circumvent Western sanctions.

The Kremlin and Putin have not yet reacted to the move, which is a major diplomatic win for Moscow.

Dmitriev said the act would have caused “serious damage first and foremost to the US economy and global markets”.



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during an RNC fundraising event at Mar-a-Lago on Friday in Palm Beach, Florida. President Trump is spending the weekend at his Mar-a-Lago resort

Trump’s waiver comes after he struck a deal with Putin to ease existing sanctions on Russia in exchange for Moscow releasing large amounts of diesel onto global markets.

He announced the executive order Friday, shortly after Putin appeared in military uniform and said Moscow aims to capture the rest of east Ukraine.

US-led talks to end the war in Ukraine have not led to a breakthrough. Both Putin and Zelensky have frustrated Trump in the past with a lack of progress in halting the grinding war.

The move is bound to spook Ukraine’s European allies, who worry the White House is taking the Kremlin’s side.

Zelensky rallied his allies on Friday on a visit to Brussels for a European Union summit, urging them to keep financing Ukraine’s fight and insisting he

was standing up for his country amid the row with Trump.

Russian forces struck Ukraine’s southern city of Kherson Saturday after Trump’s announcement, killing one person and wounding 22, local officials said.

Putin vows more

Russia has increased strikes on Kyiv in recent weeks, squeezing the city as Ukrainians brace for another winter of war.

Ukraine has been struggling to shoot down Russian missiles and has been left scrambling to boost defences ahead of winter.

Russia controls large swathes of eastern and southern Ukraine and Putin has repeatedly said Moscow intends to seize the rest of east Ukraine by force.

“On the whole I see a positive trend in the operations of the troop

groupings,” Putin told army leaders Friday, dressed in military attire.

“Undoubtedly, one of the main objectives remains the liberation of the Donetsk People’s Republic,” he added, using the Kremlin’s name for the eastern Donetsk region.

European leaders put on a show of unity with Zelensky on Friday as he grappled with Trump.

“This is no time to withdraw the support to Ukraine. This is no time to relieve Russia’s sanctions,” said European Council chief Antonio Costa.

“Now it is time to increase our support, to increase our pressure.”

European concerns have been heightened by disruptions to a critical US-provided satellite system that has hampered Ukraine’s ability to counter Russia’s intense bombardments.

Clashes erupt in France as protesters vow to make government ‘tremble’

PARIS, France (AFP) — Police and protesters clashed in Paris and other French cities on Saturday, sending smoke from fires and tear gas over several demonstrations nationwide against high prices in the run-up to elections to replace President Emmanuel Macron.

Masked youths set a tourism office in the city of Lyon ablaze, as riot squads resorted to tear gas and water cannon to disperse hundreds confronting them.

In the second-largest city of Marseille, protesters broke into the town hall, overturning a bust and smashing furniture before being forced out by police, AFP journalists saw. The mayor called for police reinforcements.

In the northern city of Lille, protesters smashed their way into the mayor’s office and vandalised the premises before leaving.

In Paris, tens of thousands marched across the east and north of the city, some shouting “Everyone hates the police” and “Macron, resign”.

“For years we’ve had climate, economy and equality problems but the government is not doing anything about it,” said Agnes, a 50-year-old actor who did not give her second name, as she marched.

High school student Kamil Alahyan, 18, said he was protesting “for so many reasons — the elections coming up in 2027, politicians who lie, the ultra-rich who’ve been taking more and more wealth over the past 10 years”.

Yellow Vest movement

The windows of the offices of French broadcasters CNews and Europe 1 in western Paris were broken by protesters and AFP journalists saw several parked cars torched.

Police in the capital fired a water cannon and teargas when



Police officers charge on Place de la Republique during a demonstration to protest against the ‘high cost of living’, in Paris on Saturday

hundreds of protesters wearing face masks, some setting off fireworks, confronted them at several locations, AFP reporters saw. More than 130 people were arrested in the capital, police said.

The country’s Yellow Vest movement, which eight years ago staged street protests against Macron’s government over planned fuel tax hikes, had called for the “yellow and youth” demonstrations.

More than 600 demonstrations were planned across France, according to a website set up by organisers.

In Paris, authorities banned protests around government buildings, the Champs-Elysees shopping avenue and train stations.

Many of the demonstrators complained about inflation sent soaring over three percent by the war in the Middle East.

Others slammed perceived police brutality in student protests that have gripped France over the past four weeks.

The combined unrest of both protest movements makes for a febrile climate as the country heads towards presidential elections in six months’ time.

Le Pen blames ‘rioters’

Opposition politicians vying to succeed Ma-

cron have seized upon the protests.

Far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen, who has sided with the police, said on X: “Looting, pillaging, attacking police — rioters have once again sullied the October 17 demonstrations over the cost of living.”

She claimed that the protesters’ demands had been “hijacked by the far left”.

Her far-left rival Jean-Luc Melenchon, for his part, insisted that “everything is passing off peacefully” in most of the nationwide demonstrations, while accusing television news of “flooding us with images of violence in dozens of cities”.

Macron on Friday urged “respect for people and property”.

Several protesters sought to draw parallels with the French Revolution of 1789.

“It’s the Revolution — we’re taking the Bastille!” some shouted in Marseille during the forced entry of the mayor’s offices.

In the western city of La Rochelle, marchers streamed behind a placard reading: “Revolution or death.”

And in the southern city of Montpellier, a giant blue sign reading “The people will win” was unfurled above a central square.

“The government

is trembling and it’s right to tremble because when the French people are angry, they never let up,” Ryad Rani, the head of the LSU high school student representative body, told journalists in Paris.

‘Suffocating’ from inflation

The soaring cost-of-living has become a major concern of the French, worrying around 45 percent of them, according to a survey of 2,000 people published earlier this month.

“At the end of the month, I have nothing left. Prices are going up but wages aren’t,” said Franck, a civil servant in his forties who would not give his surname, as he demonstrated in the central town of Gueret with around 300 people, a quarter of them high school students.

“We can’t take it anymore, we’re suffocating,” he added.

Purchasing power in France has dwindled since 2024, while the price of fuel has soared since the start of the US-Iran war earlier this year.

The eurozone’s second largest economy is struggling to rein in its public debt, projected next year to reach more than 120 per cent of GDP — double the EU limit of 60 per cent.

DIPLOMACY

All contenders for UN chief receive veto — diplomat

UNITED NATIONS, United States (AFP) — All seven candidates to lead the United Nations received a vote of “discourage,” effectively a veto, from a permanent UN Security Council member in the latest informal poll, a diplomat said on Friday.

Friday’s vote was the first time in the anonymous informal polling that Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States used coloured straws to indicate their vetoes, while the Security Council’s 10 elected members continued to use plain markers.

Costa Rica’s Rebeca Grynspan, who has been among the front-runners in the five previous polls, received the most “encourage” votes this time, but also got five “discourage” votes, including two from permanent members.

US media reports suggest Washington opposes all of the seven contenders in the race.

Washington’s envoy to the UN Mike Waltz refused to comment on the report, but said Friday: “We have always said we just simply need the best.”

On the question of new contenders joining the race, Waltz said “countries, if they want to to put more candi-



The United Nations Security Council holds an emergency meeting on the Ukraine-Russia war at UN Headquarters in New York, on July 27

dates in, that’s certainly within their sovereign rights”.

Turkey’s Feridun Hadi Sinirlioglu, Secretary General of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), has also had his name floated.

Grynspan performed best on average in the first five rounds of informal polling, again coming top on Friday, despite the two vetoes.

The other candidates are Guyanese ex-foreign minister Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Argentina’s Rafael Grosi, the current head of the UN nuclear watchdog, Macky Sall of Senegal, Ecuador’s Ivonne A-Baki and Maria Fernanda Espinosa, and Uganda’s Olara Otunnu.

Among those considered by diplomats to be potential entrants are Nickolay Mladenov, the high representative for Gaza under the US-backed “Board of Peace”, and the UAE’s

minister of state for foreign affairs Lana Nusseibeh.

Each of the 15 Security Council members must anonymously assign each candidate one of three labels: “encourage”, “discourage”, or “no opinion”.

It is tradition that the UN’s top job should rotate between different regions.

Under that premise, the role should go to a candidate from Latin America this time. There are many candidates from the region, though Sall and Otunnu hail from Africa.



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:

- 1. First Stage – Request for Qualification (RFQ):** Interested parties are invited to submit their qualifications for shortlisting.
- 2. 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]

Egypt’s Sisi asks parliament to authorise support for Saudi Arabia

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt’s parliament will hold an emergency session on Sunday after President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi asked lawmakers to authorise support for Saudi defences against attacks by Yemen’s Houthis, if requested by the kingdom.

Sisi on Saturday said Egypt was ready to defend Saudi Arabia “if requested”.

Speaking at a graduation ceremony at the Egyptian military academy, Sisi said Egypt was “not looking for a role to play” in regional conflicts, but added that it was “inconceivable” for Cairo to stand by while Saudi Arabia was “harmed or its security and stability



Abdel Fattah Al Sisi

threatened”.

“Egypt, of course, with the directives of His Majesty King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, will carry out any measure to protect you or defend you,” he said.

He added that any deployment would require parliamentary approval and said he hoped lawmakers would convene in an emergency session to grant authorisation “if it is requested of us”.

“I’m not talking about fighting anyone or attacking anyone,” Sisi said. “We are speaking

only about defence.”

Meanwhile, Sisi also said he would not seek to remain in office when his current term expires in 2030, describing the matter as “completely settled”.

“The period leading up to 2030 will be the end of my term as president of the state, if I am still alive. This is completely settled and there will be no discussion about it,” he said.

On Saturday, he said the run-up to 2030 would be used to groom a new generation of leaders, with the Military Academy training hundreds of prospective officials, ministers and presidential candidates in statecraft and leadership.



AFP photo

This screengrab taken from a UGC video posted on social media on Thursday, shows smoke rising near the Maasheq lighthouse following a Houthi missile attack on the Yemeni government’s presidential palace in the interim capital of Aden

Yemen’s military claims 1,417 strikes on Houthis, about 800 fighters killed or wounded

AMMAN (JT) — Yemen’s government forces said on Saturday they had carried out 1,417 strikes against Iran-backed Houthi targets over 24 hours, claiming about 800 fighters had been killed or wounded and more than 190 military vehicles and other assets destroyed or disabled.

The strikes targeted Houthi gatherings and reinforcements, fortified positions, firing points, armored vehicles, combat equipment and drone launch sites, the spokesperson said in a statement, cited by Arab News.

The operations had disrupted Houthi movements and prevented the group from sending reserves to the front lines or achieving tactical objectives on the battlefield.

The spokesperson said the military’s operations were restricted to legitimate military targets and conducted in accordance with international humanitarian law and customary rules.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Saturday that Tehran supports a “political process” to resolve the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Yemen’s Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

“We support an inclusive and comprehensive political process as the only practical and sustainable way to resolve the issue,” Araghchi said in a speech at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Baghdad.

Haze triggers highest alert level in southern ASEAN zone — monitor



AFP photo

Motorists drive past the Prime Ministers’ Office in Putrajaya on Saturday, as the country continues to be shrouded in haze caused by fires in Indonesia

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Ongoing fires in Indonesia that have blanketed parts of Southeast Asia with toxic haze have triggered the highest-level alert by the regional bloc’s climate and fire monitor.

“Activation of Alert Level 3 for the Southern ASEAN region,” the Singapore ASEAN Specialised Meteorological

Centre said on its website, seen on Saturday.

Based near Singapore’s Changi Airport, the ASMC uses a four-tiered alert level system, from zero to three, with the highest triggered if there is a “high risk of severe transboundary haze in the region”.

This included significant and persistent hotspot activities with

widespread moderate to dense smoke haze, observed over two or more consecutive days, dry weather persisting and wind continuing to blow haze towards neighbouring ASEAN countries.

The ASMC alert was issued on Friday, but similar alerts have already been handed out twice this year, on August 26 and March 27.

Japan says hosting record number of foreigners

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan has registered a record number of foreigners living in the country this year despite growing anti-immigration sentiment, as the country grapples with problems caused by an ageing and shrinking population.

Data showed 4.28 million foreigners staying in Japan as of the end of June, excluding short-term visitors, the Immigration Services Agency said on Friday.

That marks an increase of 156,000 people from the end of last year, and accounts for roughly 3.5 per cent of Japan’s total population, according to calculations based on government estimates.

Immigration expert Toshihiro Menju told AFP that Japan is facing a labour shortage on all levels, from highly skilled professionals to service workers.

“With Japan’s popu-



AFP photo

The number of foreigners in Japan hit a record 4.28 million

lation shrinking by more than 900,000 a year... we have no choice but to rely on foreign workers,” said Menju, a visiting professor at the Kansai University of International Studies.

Government measures such as “the use of AI and robotics, and greater [workforce] participation by women and older people cannot fully make up for the shortfall,” he added.

Japanese businesses

have urged the government to come up with a comprehensive policy to support foreign residents.

But growing anti-immigration sentiment has prompted Prime Minister Sanae Takachi to push for stricter regulations.

Japan tightened rules for permanent residency this month, with foreigners required to have higher annual incomes and greater fluency in Japanese.

Ministries save JD94 million in operational spending over nine months — report

Continued from page 1

Building operating costs fell by 27.8 per cent, saving JD500,000. Expenditure totalled JD1.3 million out of JD1.8 million allocated for the period, while the full-year allocation stood at JD2.4 million.

Rent expenditure declined by 21.9 per cent, generating savings of JD3.5 million, mainly following the relinquishment of rented school buildings. Spending reached JD12.3 million against a nine-month allocation of JD15.8 million, compared with an annual allocation of JD21 million.

Service expenditure fell by 21.8 per cent, generating savings of JD34.7 million. Spending totalled JD124.5 million out of JD159.2 million allocated for the first nine months, while the full-year allocation stood at JD212.2

million.

Telecommunications expenditure declined by 20.5 per cent, with spending reaching JD3.1 million against a nine-month allocation of JD3.9 million. The full-year budget for the category is JD5.2 million.

Materials expenditure fell by 19.9 per cent, generating savings of JD26.7 million. Spending reached JD107.7 million out of JD134.4 million allocated for the period, compared with an annual allocation of JD179.2 million.

Insurance expenditure declined by 17.7 per cent, saving JD600,000, with spending totalling JD2.9 million against an allocation of JD3.5 million for the period. The full-year allocation stands at JD4.7 million.

Maintenance expenditure on machinery, furniture and supplies

fell by 17.6 per cent, generating savings of JD1.5 million.

Spending reached JD6.8 million out of JD8.3 million allocated for the nine-month period, compared with an annual allocation of JD11 million.

Expenditure on vehicle and machinery use recorded the smallest reduction among the listed categories, falling by 7.7 per cent. Spending totalled JD3.6 million against a nine-month allocation of JD3.9 million, while the full-year allocation stood at JD5.2 million.

The report follows directives issued earlier this year by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan, who instructed ministries, government departments and public institutions to rationalise consumption and tighten spending controls.

Hassan also instructed the minister

of finance to prepare an action plan to reduce operational expenditure across ministries, public institutions and independent bodies by 15 per cent next year.

In a related measure, the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) is implementing its 2026 Smart Lighting Project to replace conventional lighting units with smart LED lights on main roads, in tunnels and on bridges, Petra said.

The project aims to replace 32,500 conventional units, with 24,025 installations completed by the end of September.

The municipality expects the project to reduce energy consumption by up to 50 per cent through an electronic control system that adjusts lighting according to real-time requirements and reduces routine maintenance needs.

Separately, the planned merger of the Civil and Military Consumer Corporations aims to streamline logistics, supply chains and procurement, improve resource efficiency and strengthen financial sustainability.

The integration is also intended to expand joint procurement, improve storage and transport efficiency, reassess branch distribution and secure better prices and quality standards while reducing operating costs.

In the healthcare sector, the Electronic Pharmaceutical Inventory Management System generated savings of approximately JD3.099 million between April and October 21, 2025, by controlling disbursement, regulating prescriptions and tracking medicines from central warehouses to hospitals and healthcare centres.

Jordan condemns West Bank settler attack on European diplomats

Continued from page 1

Belgium’s foreign minister on Saturday condemned “in the strongest terms” an attack by Israeli settlers on a European diplomatic convoy in the occupied West Bank that

left one French official injured and a Belgian car damaged, AFP reported.

“Impunity for violent settlers must end,” the Minister Maxime Prevot said on X. “This violence cannot be separated from Israel’s illegal settlement

policy. Belgium condemns settlement expansion and attempts to forcibly displace Palestinians from their land.” He said the Belgian consul general was among those in the delegation.

A French mayor who

was attacked on Saturday by Israeli settlers in the West Bank told AFP that the incident showed a tolerance by Israel’s right-wing government for settler violence.

“I think that if settlers are behaving like this,

there is a tolerance on the part of the Israeli government,” Bernard Baudoux, mayor of the northern French town of Aulnoye-Aymeries, said after he was attacked on a goodwill visit to the town of Taybeh.

Moody’s projects Jordan’s economic growth to reach 2.7% in 2026

Continued from page 1

However, elevated public debt, structural constraints on economic growth, high unem-

ployment and geopolitical risks continue to weigh on the outlook.

Moody’s maintained a stable outlook, balancing these risks

against ongoing broad-based reforms that could attract greater foreign investment and support stronger medium-term growth.

Remittance inflows rise 14.1 per cent to \$2.97 billion in first seven months of 2026 — Sharkas

Continued from page 1

Incoming remittances accounted for approximately 7.3 per cent of Jordan’s gross domestic product in 2025. In July 2026 alone, they reached \$470.2 million, up 13.1 per cent from the same month a year earlier, Petra said.

Sharkas said that the resilience of Jordan’s economy depends on several interconnected factors, including a flexible external sector, a sound banking system,

continued economic and financial reforms, and monetary policies aimed at maintaining stability.

He added that diversifying sources of foreign currency helps reduce the economy’s reliance on any single source and strengthens its ability to withstand regional and international economic fluctuations.

UAE, US lead sources of remittances

The United Arab Emirates was the largest source of remittanc-

es to Jordan during the first seven months of 2026, according to Petra, accounting for 20.9 per cent of total incoming transfers.

The United States ranked second at 19.3 per cent, followed by Saudi Arabia at 17.7 per cent, Qatar at 10.5 per cent and Kuwait at 5.5 per cent.

The remaining 26.1 per cent came from other countries, reflecting the presence of Jordanian workers across a diverse range of re-

gional and international labour markets, it said.

Remittances from Qatar recorded the strongest growth among the countries highlighted, rising 25.8 per cent. Transfers from the United States increased 13.3 per cent, while those from Saudi Arabia and the UAE grew by 11 per cent and 10.7 per cent, respectively.

Sharkas stressed the importance of improving the competitiveness of Jordanian workers and ensuring their skills

meet evolving labour market demands, particularly as technological advances and artificial intelligence reshape a range of productive and service sectors.

He said that investment in skills and professional specialisations is essential to maintaining and expanding employment opportunities for Jordanians abroad, helping sustain the income flows they send home.

He cited Qatar’s platform for employing Jor-

danians as an example of an organised initiative designed to connect Jordanian talent with employers’ needs and create additional job opportunities.

Outgoing transfers reach \$1.14 billion

Outgoing remittances from Jordan totalled approximately \$1.8 billion in 2025 and reached \$1.14 billion in the first seven months of 2026, according to Petra.

Egypt accounted for

42.1 per cent of outgoing transfers during the seven-month period, followed by Bangladesh at 11.8 per cent, the Philippines at 4.8 per cent and Yemen at 3.9 per cent. The remaining transfers went to other countries.

The difference between incoming and outgoing remittances resulted in net positive inflows of approximately \$2.7 billion in 2025 and \$1.8 billion during the first seven months of 2026.

Sharkas reaffirmed that maintaining monetary stability remains the Central Bank’s primary objective, supported by adequate foreign currency reserves, a sound banking sector and price stability.

The Central Bank’s foreign currency reserves stood at approximately \$28.38 billion, providing a financial buffer to help Jordan meet its external obligations and respond to foreign currency needs, Petra said.

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Chairman of the Board
Samih Maaitah

Queen Rania Al Abdullah Street
P.O. Box 6710
Amman 11118

E mail: editor@jordantimes.com
jotimes@jordantimes.com
Website: jordantimes.com

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When energy costs undermine economic growth

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

The economic cost of an energy shock extends far beyond higher fuel prices. It lies in the resources diverted away from investment, production and consumption to cover rising energy bills. This is the central concern highlighted in the latest report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which projects global economic growth to slow from 2.9per cent in 2025 to 2.6per cent in 2026. Growth in developing economies is expected to decline from 4.7per cent to 4per cent.

The recent war has pushed Brent crude oil prices from around \$70 to more than \$110 per barrel. Yet the real economic damage goes beyond the immediate increase in oil prices. Higher energy costs spread throughout the economy, raising production expenses for businesses, increasing import bills for energy-dependent countries and reducing household purchasing power. Resources that could otherwise support investment, consumption and savings are redirected towards covering higher costs, without generating additional economic output.

The consequences are reflected in UNCTAD's projections for private consumption. Global private consumption growth is expected to fall from 2.9per cent in 2025 to 2.6per cent in 2026, before declining further to 2.4per cent in 2027. Oil prices are also expected to remain more than \$30 per barrel above pre-conflict levels through the end of 2026. For households, the pressure can be substantial. An increase of \$0.25 per litre in fuel prices could reduce real household income by more than 5per cent on average, further weakening purchasing power and domestic demand.

However, the energy crisis also highlights a significant economic opportunity. Since 2010, battery storage costs have fallen by 95per cent, solar panel costs by 89per cent, and wind energy costs by 71per cent. These reductions have fundamentally changed the economics of energy investment. Diversifying energy sources is no longer simply an environmental objective. It is increasingly a strategy for improving energy security, stabilising production costs and reducing exposure to international price volatility.

The challenge becomes more complex when higher energy prices coincide with tighter financing conditions. UNCTAD reports that capital flow volatility has doubled since the outbreak of the war, reflecting increased uncertainty in financial markets. Businesses facing rising operating costs and less predictable access to finance are more likely to postpone investment, scale back expansion plans and reconsider new projects. An external price shock can therefore develop into a broader slowdown in investment, production and productivity.

This creates a difficult policy dilemma for central banks. Higher interest rates may help contain inflationary pressures, but they cannot resolve disruptions in energy supply. Instead, they increase borrowing costs and may further discourage productive investment. Effective policy must therefore distinguish between inflation driven by excess demand and inflation caused by supply-side shocks, while avoiding measures that unnecessarily weaken the economy's productive capacity.

Can the crisis become a catalyst for structural change? UNCTAD's report indicates that, in 2024, renewable energy sources were less expensive than the cheapest new fossil-fuel-based alternative. For countries that depend heavily on imported energy, this strengthens the case for accelerating investment in renewable generation and storage. The economic benefits extend beyond lower energy costs to include greater supply security, reduced exposure to external shocks and improved long-term competitiveness.

For Jordan, the priority should be to move from managing the consequences of higher energy prices to reducing the economy's underlying vulnerability to them. This requires accelerating renewable energy and storage projects, improving energy efficiency and linking industrial incentives to measurable reductions in energy consumption. Financing should also be directed towards productive sectors capable of generating domestic value added, expanding exports and creating sustainable employment.

Social protection must form part of this response. Rather than relying exclusively on broad-based subsidies, Jordan could explore more targeted support for households most affected by rising energy costs. The Sanad digital government application could potentially serve as an access channel for eligible beneficiaries, provided that the necessary systems are developed to verify eligibility, protect personal data and coordinate payments with the relevant institutions. The objective should be to direct assistance where it is most needed while improving the efficiency of public spending.

Strengthening domestic production is equally important. This does not mean replacing imports regardless of cost or efficiency. It means identifying products and inputs for which domestic alternatives are economically viable, particularly where excessive dependence on imported energy-intensive inputs exposes local industries to recurring external shocks.

The success of economic policy should not be measured solely by its ability to ease the immediate burden of an energy crisis. It should be measured by whether it strengthens the economy's capacity to withstand future shocks without undermining investment, productivity and employment.

A resilient economy is not one that escapes external shocks, but one that can absorb them while preserving its capacity to produce, invest and grow.

AI washing and the new currency of trust in the digital world

By Lubna Hanna Ammari

Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming one of the most powerful symbols of technological progress. Across industries, organisations are investing in AI-driven solutions, businesses are incorporating AI into their products and governments are exploring its potential to improve public services and economic productivity. Yet, as artificial intelligence gains prominence, a critical question emerges: How can society distinguish genuine innovation from the appearance of innovation? This is where the concept of AI washing becomes increasingly important.

AI washing refers to the practice of exaggerating, misrepresenting or making misleading claims about the use or capabilities of artificial intelligence. Similar to greenwashing, in which environmental credentials are overstated for commercial advantage, AI washing exploits public enthusiasm for a transformative technology. A product may be marketed as AI-powered when its capabilities are limited, while an organisation may promote its AI adoption without clearly demonstrating how the technology contributes to its performance. The concern is not that every ambitious claim is misleading, but that technological language can sometimes advance faster than the evidence supporting it.

The implications extend far beyond marketing. When investors make decisions based on exaggerated AI claims, capital may flow towards perceived innovation rather than demonstrated value. When customers purchase products on the assumption that artificial intelligence offers capabilities that do not exist, confidence in legitimate technologies can suffer. Over time, this gap between promise and performance risks undermining the credibility of the wider AI ecosystem, including the work of researchers, entrepreneurs and businesses developing genuinely useful solutions.

Regulatory developments illustrate why this issue deserves serious attention. In the United States, the Securities and Exchange Commission has

warned that misleading statements about the use of artificial intelligence can violate existing securities laws. In 2024, the SEC brought enforcement actions against two investment advisers over misleading claims concerning their use of AI. The Federal Trade Commission has also pursued companies over deceptive representations about AI-powered products and services. These actions demonstrate a fundamental principle: Presenting a technology as innovative does not exempt its claims from scrutiny or established standards of accountability.

This approach also matters for education and employment. Developing AI literacy means more than teaching people to use new tools; it means enabling them to evaluate technological claims critically

Trust, therefore, must become a central measure of technological progress. The OECD AI Principles emphasise transparency, explainability and accountability, including the importance of providing meaningful information about AI systems' capabilities and limitations. These principles are not obstacles to innovation; they help create the conditions in which people can adopt new technologies with greater confidence. When or-

ganisations explain what their systems actually do, disclose relevant limitations and remain accountable for their outcomes, they strengthen the relationship between technological advancement and public trust.

The European Union has also advanced transparency requirements through its AI Act. As of 2 August 2026, relevant provisions under Article 50 began applying to covered AI systems and uses, including requirements concerning the identification of certain AI-generated or manipulated content and disclosure in specified circumstances. These rules address transparency risks rather than AI washing alone, but they reflect a broader recognition that people need reliable information about their interactions with artificial intelligence.

For Jordan, the global discussion presents an opportunity rather than an accusation. As the country continues to pursue digital transformation and develop its technology sector, the emerging lesson is that ambition becomes more valuable when supported by measurable outcomes. AI initiatives can be assessed through practical questions: Do they improve service quality? Do they increase productivity? Are their results independently verifiable? Are users informed about relevant limitations, and is human oversight maintained where decisions carry significant consequences? Such questions can help strengthen confidence among citizens, investors and international partners without diminishing the importance of experimentation or innovation.

This approach also matters for education and employment. Developing AI literacy means more than teaching people to use new tools; it means enabling them to evaluate technological claims critically. Universities, businesses and public institutions can contribute by promoting evidence-based assessment, responsible deployment and a clear distinction between adopting AI and merely advertising it. The objective should not be to discourage organisations from exploring artificial intelligence, but to ensure that genu-

ine progress is recognised and rewarded.

Ultimately, trust may become one of the most valuable assets in the digital economy. Algorithms can be developed, products can be replicated and technological claims can be made with increasing ease. Credibility, however, must be earned through transparency, evidence and consistent performance. The future will not belong simply to those who claim to use artificial intelligence, but to those who demonstrate that it delivers meaningful value.

The European Union has also advanced transparency requirements through its AI Act. As of 2 August 2026, relevant provisions under Article 50 began applying to covered AI systems and uses...

For countries seeking to strengthen their position in the digital world, including Jordan, the challenge is not merely to participate in the AI revolution. It is to help shape a culture in which innovation is judged by what it achieves, not by how convincingly it is presented. In an age when intelligence can be marketed as a brand, trust is the currency that gives technological progress its real worth.

The author is a specialist in educational technology

Japan needs higher interest rates

By Koichi Hamada

NEW HAVEN — On a recent visit to Sapporo, the city on Japan's northern island where my parents came from, my wife and I found gentle people, mild autumn days, and excellent food. As tourists who live and work in the United States, we also enjoyed very low prices: Lunch at a high-quality restaurant cost only about \$20 per person. While that was convenient for us, like so many other tourists who have headed to Japan to take advantage of favourable exchange rates, the cheap yen (yen yasu) has been hard on Japan's economy.

To understand the pressure Japan is under, it is worth looking at the purchasing-power-parity equilibrium exchange rate — the rate at which a representative basket of goods and services would cost the same across two countries. This month, the OECD reports a PPP equilibrium exchange rate between Japan and the United States of around 93 yen per dollar. That is a far cry from the actual yen-dollar exchange rate, which has been hovering in the 150–160 range.

This means that goods produced in Japan cost much less than goods produced in the US. As a result, Japanese exporters enjoy high demand and strong profit margins, but importers are under severe pressure. The weak yen also hurts Japanese consumers, as it creates strong incentives to raise prices: With imported goods more expensive, domestic producers know that their output will find buyers, and importers might pass their mounting costs on to buyers.

Japan used to have the opposite problem. In the early 1980s, it was a dominant economy experiencing strong growth. But the 1985 Plaza Accord, under which major economies agreed to take coordinated action to strengthen their currencies vis-à-vis the US dollar, changed everything. After the accord was implemented, the PPP exchange rate was higher than the actual exchange rate, reaching almost double in 1995.

The strong yen (yen daka) persisted for decades, contributing to chronic deflation and stagnant growth. During this period, a visit to Tokyo strained tourists' pocketbooks, Japanese goods found few customers abroad, and Japan's once-formidable industries struggled. The situation deteriorated further around the 2008 global economic crisis, when the US embraced monetary easing.

In the decades after the Plaza Accord, Bank of Japan (BoJ) governors (with the possible exception of Toshihiko Fukui) consistently failed to loosen monetary policy in line with changing economic conditions. Deflationary pressures intensified.

After returning to power in 2012, prime minister Abe Shinzo sought to turn things around with an economic-reform package (I served as an adviser), which came to be known as Abenomics. This package included a recommendation for monetary expansion, which then-BoJ governor Haruhiko Kuroda embraced.

Now, conditions have changed. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the US experienced

a surge in inflation, which forced the US Federal Reserve to abandon monetary expansion and raise interest rates. As the dollar strengthened, and the US-Japan interest-rate differential widened, the yen depreciated in value and deflationary forces gave way to inflationary pressures.

The strong yen (yen daka) persisted for decades, contributing to chronic deflation and stagnant growth. During this period, a visit to Tokyo strained tourists' pocketbooks...

To some extent, Japanese policymakers seem to recognise this. After keeping the short-term interest rate around 1 per cent for some time, the BOJ raised its policy rate to 1.25 per cent last month. This is high for Japan (the highest in 31 years, to be precise). But with the US short-term money market pushing the interest rate close to 4 per cent, and more US rate hikes likely, it is not nearly enough. Speculators continue to exploit the interest-rate differential via the so-called carry trade (borrowing cheaply in yen to invest in higher-yielding assets abroad).

Under the gold standard or a fixed exchange rate, if a major country pursued monetary expansion, another, weaker country might need to reduce its money supply and raise its interest rate. Under a flexible exchange-rate regime, however, an expansion in one country should be met with a (moderate) expansion in another, just as tightening should be met with tightening.

We know that US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Japanese Finance Minister Katayama Tatsuki are communicating about fiscal and monetary matters. Ultimately, however, monetary policy must be pursued autonomously, with BoJ Governor Kazuo Ueda doing what is best for Japan's economy. Under the current circumstances, that means reducing the money supply and raising interest rates more aggressively.

Koichi Hamada, professor emeritus at Yale University, was a special adviser to former Japanese prime minister Abe Shinzo.

BUSINESS

Sunday, October 18, 2026



Friedrich Merz and Emmanuel Macron are pictured in Bergisch Gladbach, Germany, on July 16

France, Germany unveil deal to safeguard European car industry

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AFP) — France and Germany confirmed Friday that they had reached a deal aimed at protecting Europe's struggling automotive sector, with agreements on the flashpoint issues of EU car emissions and "made in Europe" components.

The pact, which is likely to shape EU policy going forward, envisages a further relaxing of CO₂ emission rules and the inclusion of Britain in a public procurement scheme to bolster European car industries.

"We are driven by a clear ambition: To successfully transform our automotive industry while maintaining our climate goals and our production in Europe," French President Emmanuel Macron said.

Writing on X, Chancellor Friedrich Merz of Germany hailed "a good day for motorists

and employment in Germany, France and Europe".

'We are driven by a clear ambition: To successfully transform our automotive industry while maintaining our climate goals and our production in Europe'

Paris and Berlin had been at loggerheads on the course Europe should take as it tries to revive a sector that accounts for 13 million jobs and 7 per cent of the bloc's collective GDP.

Germany wanted

less stringent carbon emission targets for carmakers and a broad interpretation of "made in Europe" requirements to include key non-EU trade partners.

France had pushed to preserve the bloc's climate ambitions and to restrict the "made in Europe" public procurement scheme to EU nations.

Berlin won the first argument while Paris carried the day on the latter.

"France and Germany propose a comprehensive package that combines an ambitious European decarbonisation pathway with the regulatory flexibility needed to reflect different market realities and technological conditions," the statement said.

"It also provides concrete incentives for investment, research and development, European production and resilient supply chains."

IMF chief flags 'optimism', 'worry' after Bangkok annual meetings

BANGKOK (AFP) — International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Kristalina Georgieva said on Saturday this year's Annual Meetings with global policymakers were marked by "optimism and worry" about the global economic outlook as the event wound down in Bangkok.

Georgieva also said her organisation had a "responsibility" to help low-income countries struggling with price shocks stemming from the US-Israel war on Iran.

Meetings in the Thai capital this week brought together finance ministers, central bank chiefs and other top officials from around the world, with surging inflation, spiking bond yields and economic growth driven by artificial intelligence at the top of the agenda.

"[The meetings] were marked by both optimism and worry," said Georgieva, who was speaking at a press briefing alongside Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al Jadaan.

"Optimism from the resilience of the global economy, the promise of AI, the dynamism of Asia. But AI is also recognised to be a source of worry and so are inflation, high levels of debt, wars, climate risks."

All week, the IMF has warned that high levels of debt and rising bond yields in advanced economies are tightening financial conditions just as central banks need to



Left to right: IMF Communications Director Julie Kozack, Saudi Arabian Finance Minister and IMFC Chairman Mohammed Al Jadaan and IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva attend the IMFC press briefing at the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Center in Bangkok on Saturday

focus on bringing inflation down, likely by increasing interest rates.

Global energy prices have spiked since late February, when the United States and Israel launched the war on Iran, with Tehran's retaliatory actions targeting Washington's Gulf allies and curtailing oil and gas supplies.

The price increases have rippled across the globe, fuelling inflation in economies across a range of income groups.

The most vulnerable to the shock, the IMF has said, are low-income oil-importing countries that are not exposed to the boom

in AI investment that has propped up growth in many advanced economies.

"I can tell you that people everywhere, but especially in poorer countries, they don't like inflation. Inflation is like a tax on the poor," said Georgieva.

She said such countries needed to set spending targets such that they prioritised growth and protecting the most vulnerable people, adding that the fund had a "relentless pursuit of more resources for low-income countries".

Higher global interest rates and bond yields, however, were driving up debt repayments for low-income

countries, she said.

The share of debt repayments as a percentage of government revenue had gone up from eight to 14 per cent for low-income countries in recent years, the IMF chief said.

She said her organisation had a responsibility to help countries to restructure debt if needed; to assist with domestic resource mobilisation; to bring in international finance; and to create conditions for private investment.

"When we do our best, it translates into better lives for people."

On the AI investment boom, Georgieva said that member countries had recognised

its value in propping up growth, but "when we are dependent on one particular driver of growth, it is like we stand on one leg".

A key debate at this year's meetings has been on whether the technology's most advanced frontier models require regulation and guardrails.

The question has grown more urgent after recent revelations of security incidents involving autonomous AI agents.

Georgieva said she was "impressed" by the spirit of cooperation between AI companies, governments and other stakeholders that she witnessed in Bangkok on the issue.

Qatar pledges to help spark Lebanon energy, electricity revival

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — Qatar will help revive Lebanon's ailing energy sector and solve its chronic problems in providing reliable electricity, the Lebanese and Qatari prime ministers said Friday.

"We have agreed to establish a comprehensive framework for cooperation in the energy sector and to present viable solutions," gas-rich Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said during a visit to Lebanon.

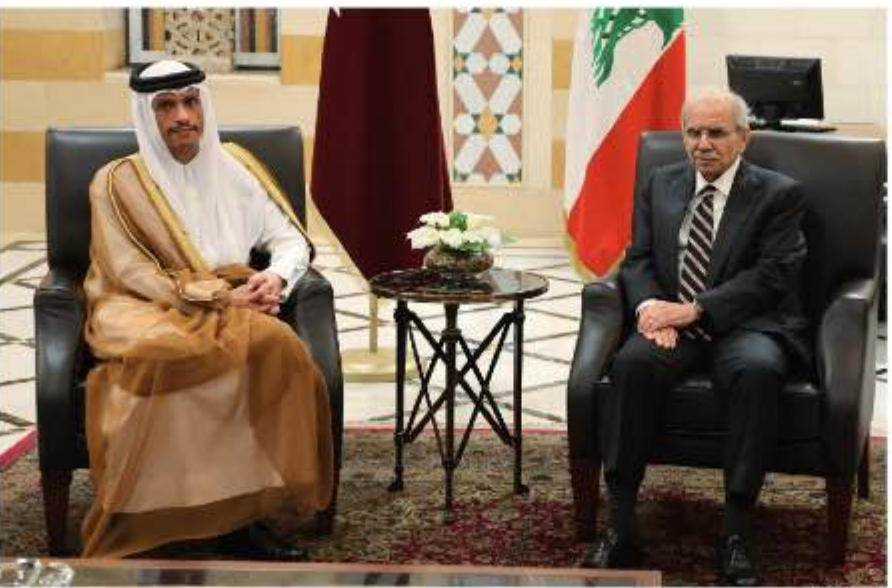
This is an "old project that Qatar had discussed with Lebanon... for years", he

added, saying it was now "about to see the light of day".

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the project would be carried out and financed by Qatar.

"We are close to reaching a project... aimed at rehabilitating, developing and modernising the electricity production infrastructure... at a lower cost," Salam said.

Lebanon's electricity sector has cost Lebanon more than \$40 billion since the end of its 1975-1990 civil war, and successive governments have failed to reduce losses or repair crumbling infrastructure.



This handout photo taken and released by the Lebanese Government Press Office on Friday, shows Lebanon's Prime Minister Nawaf Salam and Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Bin Jassim Al Thani holding a meeting in Beirut

Moody's raises Egypt credit rating, gives positive outlook

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Moody's on Friday raised Egypt's long-term debt rating by one notch from Caa1 to B3, also noting a positive outlook, meaning a further upgrade could be considered in coming months.

The ratings agency cited fiscal reforms that Egypt has undertaken as part of its \$8 billion funding package from the International Monetary Fund.

These reforms have "placed government debt and interest burdens on a declining path, albeit from elevated levels," Moody's said in a statement.

Egypt notably ended food aid measures deemed too extensive,



A felucca, a traditional wooden sailing boat, sails on the Nile River in central Cairo on Thursday

as inflation is expected to exceed 13 per cent this year, after reaching over 33 per cent in 2025.

"Stronger revenue collection and expenditure restraint have supported this

progress," it said, adding that "the shift to a flexible exchange rate and tighter monetary policy has strengthened external buffers and the economy's capacity to absorb shocks".

Airbus wins order for 75 A320neo planes from leasing group ACG

PARIS (AFP) — European aerospace giant Airbus said on Friday that it had secured an order for 75 of its A320neo jets from Aviation Capital Group, a leasing company that is gearing up for increased demand for more fuel efficient planes.

The order brings ACG's Airbus fleet to 190 planes, and follows an order for 50 Boeing 737 MAX jets earlier this year.

"Placing the largest

order in our nearly 40-year history is a statement of confidence in the long-term future of air travel," ACG's Chief Executive Thomas Baker said in the Airbus statement.

According to ACG's parent company Tokyo Century, a Japanese leasing firm, the 75 planes have a total list price of nearly \$12 billion, though aircraft makers usually offer discounts with large orders.

The A320neo is 20 per cent more fuel efficient than the previous A320s, a single-aisle jet that is one of the world's most popular passenger planes.

"Demand for aircraft operating leases is expected to continue increasing as global passenger traffic grows and airlines accelerate the replacement of existing fleets with next-generation aircraft," Tokyo Century said in a statement.

Stocks struggle to bounce back from AI angst-fuelled rout

NEW YORK (AFP) — The Nasdaq tumbled more than 2 per cent last week as a rebound in tech shares sputtered amid angst over AI investments, while most European and Asian exchanges had solid trading sessions.

Recent days have seen heavy selling of AI-related stocks, with investors shifting money to other sectors and into bonds.

Reassuring comments from Nvidia chief Jensen Huang on the financial health of CoreWeave, an AI data centre firm, sought to draw investors back into tech stocks

ahead of the weekend.

That helped boost sentiment in Asia, where the Seoul and Tokyo indices led gains thanks to strong bounces by the chipmakers SK hynix and Kioxia.

The positive sentiment continued on European stock markets, but fizzled as Wall Street opened.

"There's little love for tech stocks right now, investors are dumping them at a rather undignified pace," said IG analyst Chris Beauchamp.

"A recovery last night provided only brief respite, as the selling resumed in the US session,"

he added.

AI weakness became more pronounced as the session proceeded in New York. So-called "neocloud" companies CoreWeave and Nebius both sank about 12 per cent.

"We're clearly seeing some areas of stress in this very unique part of the AI market," said Arun Sundaram of CFRA Research.

Markets had been spooked by concerns about CoreWeave's huge debt pile. Yields on CoreWeave bonds have soared this week, reflecting worries over its future.

The weakness in these stocks "is really driven by financing risk" and the chance that interest rates will rise, which affects their interest payments, according to Sundaram.

All three major US indices fell Friday, with the S&P 500 losing 1.1 per cent and the Dow down 0.3 per cent.

US stocks also lost ground as oil prices rose, with both major crude contracts finishing up more than 3 per cent.

At the IMF and World Bank meetings in Bangkok, Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh said AI

was the "most consequential change" to the global economy in his lifetime.

He said the investment boom would drive prices up in the short term, but "there really is, I think, a huge benefit to the global economy, to the US economy over the horizon".

Nonetheless, "the path from where we are to there is likely to be a very bumpy one, bumpy in our understanding of the technology, bumpy because we really don't know what the market structure is going to be of these new technologies," he said.

FOOTBALL

Dortmund go top despite Union Berlin stalemate

BERLIN (AFP) — Borussia Dortmund returned to the top of the Bundesliga table despite a stodgy 0-0 draw away to Union Berlin on Saturday. Serhou Guirassy had a golden chance to snatch all three points for his side at the end of a match of few opportunities, but headed just wide with 11 minutes remaining to cap a poor game up front for the Dortmund striker. Bayern Munich hosted RB Leipzig in Saturday's final match and can leapfrog Dortmund into top spot with victory. After starting the season strongly with six wins in a row in all competitions, Dortmund have stalled of late, drawing two and losing one of their last three matches. Compounding Dortmund's woes was a serious-looking ankle injury to substitute midfielder Konstantinos Kareltsas, who was helped from the pitch just eight minutes after coming on. It was the first draw between the two sides in their history, with each of their previous 16 clashes in all competitions producing a winner. Stuttgart were handed a blow just days out from Tuesday's home Champions League clash with Atletico Madrid, going down 1-0 at Hamburg after an 88th-minute Miro Muheim goal.

GOLF

Chacarra takes lead as McIlroy falls away in Delhi

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Spain's Eugenio Chacarra will take a two-shot lead into an extended final day as a faltering Rory McIlroy fell away at the weather-hit DP World India Championship on Saturday. Chacarra, who won the Hero Indian Open earlier this year, was 14-under after his incomplete third round at Delhi Golf Club. Although the weather was much improved, play was held up by nearly five hours on day one leaving the European Tour event playing serious catch-up. Chacarra along with six-time major champion McIlroy finished their second rounds earlier in the day. The Spaniard, second in the Race to Dubai, has seven holes to play in his third round going into the final day, when good weather is expected. Northern Ireland's McIlroy, after two good opening days, slipped badly with four bogeys and a double bogey in his incomplete third round. He clawed back ground with an eagle on the 14th but was two-over with three holes to go in round three.

Ersan and Bakhit lead scoring race as Faisali surge ahead in CFI Pro League week 5

By Rayan Jaafra

AMMAN — Week 5 of the Jordanian Pro League (CFI) featured late-minute heroics, a master-class goal fest and a high-stakes clash at the top of the table as the competition intensified across local venues.

Arabi Irbid landmark victory over Shabab Ordon

The round kicked off on Thursday at Petra Stadium as Arabi Irbid earned their first-ever victory in the Pro League following their promotion, edging Shabab Ordon 1-0 in a tightly contested match full of chances.

The decisive moment came in the 89th minute when a goal-line clearance by a Shabab Ordon defender fell directly to Mo'taz Obaidat, who made no mistake in finishing from close range to trigger ecstatic celebrations for Arabi.

Bakhit hat-trick fuels Jazeera's 5-1 rout of Doqara

Action continued on Friday with a spectacular display from Al Jazeera, who dominantly dispatched newly promoted Doqara 5-1. Doqara took an early shock lead in the 7th minute when defender Omar Al Khatib headed home from a Hamza Al Saifi corner.

Al Jazeera responded in the 21st minute through veteran forward Yaseen Al Bakhit, who latched onto a long pass from Sanad Jaarah, rounded both defender



Ahmad Al Ersan header in Faisli's 4th goal against Ramth

and goalkeeper, and levelled the score. Rawad Abu Khaizraneh put Jazeera ahead in the 33rd minute, pouncing on a rebound from a corner kick saved by Doqara's goalkeeper.

Despite Doqara mounting heavy pressure — hitting the woodwork and forcing key saves from Jazeera goalkeeper Qais Abbasi — Jazeera extended their lead in the 58th minute as Bakhit capitalised on defensive hesitation to score his second.

Yahya Al Bakhit added a fourth in the 83rd minute with a brilliant volley following a long pass from Karam Abu Sha'ban. Yaseen Al Ba-

khit rounded off his hat-trick in style in the 87th minute, successfully executing a Panenka penalty after drawing a foul in the box two minutes earlier.

The hat-trick took Bakhit's tally to four goals for the season, placing him among the league's top scorers.

Salt and Baqa'a share points at Qweismeh

On Friday's late kick-off at King Abdullah Stadium in Qweismeh, Al Salt and Baqa'a played out a hard-fought 0-0 draw, with neither side able to break the deadlock despite end-to-end action.

Faisali extend lead with convincing victory over Ramtha

On Saturday at Amman International Stadium, league leaders Faisali pulled five points clear at the top of the table after defeating title rivals Ramtha 4-1.

Faisali struck early in the 12th minute when Anas Al Awadat dispossessed a Ramtha defender and set up Malek Allan, who finished smartly into the far corner. Faisali doubled their lead in the 55th minute through Majdi Al Attar following a thread-through pass from Ivorian teammate



Hattrick hero Yaseen Al Bakhit celebrating his first goal Against Doqara

Ahoua. Ramtha cut the deficit in the 63rd minute when Faisali goalkeeper Noor Bani Attiah dropped a corner kick into his own net.

However, Faisali swiftly restored their two-goal cushion when Brazilian forward Claudio Maradona scored his first goal of the season, reacting quickest to convert the rebound after Ahmed Al Ersan's header was parried. In the 90th minute, Ersan capped off a fine individual performance by rising to head home a cross from Anas Al Badawi, joining Yaseen Al Bakhit at the top of the goalscoring charts.

Wihdat edge Hussein Irbid in Qweismeh

Closing out the round at King Abdullah Stadium, Wihdat claimed a crucial victory over Hussein Irbid, who entered the match fresh off an Asian victory.

In a highly tactical encounter between head coaches Emad Al Nahas (Wihdat) and Curro Torres (Hussein), Wihdat secured all three points thanks to a decisive header from Hamza Al Na'eem, who converted a pinpoint cross from Mohammad Al Daoud following a sustained spell of pressure.

Singapore puts seven Indonesian firms on notice over toxic haze

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Singapore said on Friday it would issue warnings to seven companies in Indonesia it identified as responsible for fires that have sent toxic smoke across Southeast Asia, warning the worst may be yet to come.

The city-state has beefed up measures to combat the months-long fires and had vowed legal action against companies responsible for the blazes that have made regional air quality among the world's worst.

"Our investigation so far suggests that some of the haze experienced in Singapore originated from fires on the lands of seven companies in Indonesia," Sustainability and Environment Minister Grace Fu said.

Singapore will send the "preventative notices" to the companies, which are based on Indonesia's Sumatra island to the west.

The notices tell the companies to deploy fire fighting teams, stop burning or starting new fires and submit their action plans to Singapore's National Environmental Agency.

Asked what steps Singapore could take to ensure the companies complied, Fu said meas-



Children play basketball in front of a government public housing apartment in Singapore on Saturday, as the country continues to be shrouded in haze caused by fires in Indonesia

ures like "fines or charges" were "all within our realm of consideration".

The companies named by the Singaporean government are mainly pulpwood and timber suppliers in Sumatra and include Bumi Andalas Permai, Bumi Mekar Hijau and SBA Wood Industries.

'Haze to persist'

Authorities said on Friday that four people have died fighting the blazes on Indonesia's Java island.

Two others suffered

serious burns and were receiving further medical treatment, according to Indonesia's fire ministry.

The blazes in Indonesia have closed schools and fuelled a surge of respiratory complaints and growing frustration about the inability to contain the situation.

"We should be prepared for the haze to persist for some time," Singapore's Fu said, adding that "the situation is fluid".

"Depending on the weather, we can expect air quality to fluctuate,

including the possibility of reaching hazardous levels," Fu said.

Singapore topped IQAir's live ranking of the world's most polluted major cities on Friday afternoon, with Kuala Lumpur second and Jakarta tenth.

Legal experts have cautioned that pursuing companies linked to the smoke is challenging, with investigations reliant on cooperation from foreign authorities.

Singapore has no plantations or forests of its own, but several companies with concessions in

Indonesia are reportedly based in the city-state.

Heavy haze

Singapore's investigations into four Indonesian companies over their alleged role in the 2015 haze crisis remain open, a case that strained relations with Jakarta at the time.

Indonesia experiences wildfires regularly during its dry season, but this year the blazes have been especially severe because a strong El Nino weather pattern has brought drought.

While drought contributes to the fires, experts say de-forestation and drying of peatlands has also damaged previously fire-resistant landscapes.

"We cannot control the weather or the winds, nor can we directly control what happens beyond our borders," said Singapore leader Lawrence Wong.

On Friday afternoon, the city-state's air pollution lay at around 230 on IQAir's Air Quality Index, considered within "very unhealthy levels".

Under the Swiss-based company's system, readings of 151-200 are considered unhealthy, 201-300 very unhealthy and above 300 hazardous.



US director Ethan Coen (right) and US director Joel Coen pose with their prizes after being awarded the Prix Lumiere 2026 award during the 2026 Lumiere Film Festival award ceremony in Lyon, central-eastern France, on Friday

Coen brothers say they plan to make film together again

LYON (AFP) — Oscar-winning film maker brothers Ethan and Joel Coen told AFP they plan to make another movie together, having taken a break from their joint directing work that produced a string of classics from "Fargo" to "Barton Fink".

Both of them have latterly turned to personal projects, working with their wives — film editor Tricia Cooke and actress Frances McDormand — on movies such as "Honey Don't" and "The Tragedy of Macbeth".

But they said they planned to reunite soon behind the camera, joking that it had to come soon

because of their advancing ages.

"We're getting old. It better be the near future," Joel, 71, told AFP in a joint interview ahead of a prize ceremony in the French city of Lyon where they are being given the "Lumiere" lifetime achievement award.

"We have a number of different things in what we call the library, things that we've written before," he added. "And then other things that we've thought about writing scripts about and never gotten around. So we don't know yet."

He denied reports that "there's some kind of

schism, that there's some kind of break that happened. In fact, it's not anything like that".

Their last film together was 2018's "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs", an offbeat Oscar-nominated Western starring Tim Blake Nelson, which followed the 1950s Hollywood-set satirical comedy "Hail, Caesar!" in 2016.

Joel will release another solo project next year called "Jack of Spades" with Josh O'Connor, while Ethan has done a documentary about American pianist Jerry Lee Lewis as well as two other films with lesbian heroines.

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