



Photo courtesy of Royal Court

His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday receives Qatar Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani

King receives Qatar PM

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Wednesday received Qatar Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

The prime minister conveyed to His Majesty the condolences of Qatar Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani over the loss of the victims of the terrorist attack that targeted a church in Karak, and wishes for a full recovery of the injured, according to a Royal Court statement.

The King underscored the deep-rooted ties and friendship between Jordan and Qatar, noting the importance of continuing to strengthen cooperation between the two countries across various fields.

Speaking about overall regional developments, His Majesty emphasised the need to achieve comprehensive de-escalation that guarantees the security of Arab states and restores stability to their peoples.

The meeting also touched on the latest developments in the West Bank and Jerusalem, with the King warning of the dangers of Israel's continued unilateral measures against Palestinians.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi attended the meeting.

Crown Prince directs launch of national initiative to collect digital data

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein on Wednesday chaired a regular meeting of the National Council for Future Technology, during which he directed the council to launch a national data-collection initiative focused on ensuring accuracy, quality, seamless flow and promoting responsible use, in order to speed up the transition toward an artificial intelligence and data-driven digital economy.

The Crown Prince noted that the initiative will support the creation of applications that improve citizen services in vital areas...

During the meeting, held at Al Husseiniya Palace and attended by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan, who is chairman of the council, the Crown Prince emphasised the need to establish regular performance monitoring, as well as to develop robust skill-development programmes to drive the initiative's projects, thereby elevating institutional efficiency, innovation, productivity and enabling decision-making based on accurate information,

according to a Royal Court statement.

His Royal Highness highlighted the need to collaborate with relevant public and private sector entities on the initiative, and establish communication channels to foster partnerships and support implementation efforts.

The Crown Prince noted that the initiative will support the creation of applications that improve citizen services in vital areas, particularly healthcare and education.

His Royal Highness was also briefed on the progress of a number of the council's ongoing projects and future plans.



Jordan, Syria reaffirm deep relations

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi held a phone call on Tuesday with Syria's Foreign Minister Asaad Al Shibani.

In a joint statement, the two ministers emphasised the deep ties between Jordan and Syria and their shared commitment to strengthening and developing relations across various fields.

They stressed the importance of addressing any issues that could strain ties, based on their firm belief in the interconnected security and shared destiny of the two countries.

Safadi reaffirmed Jordan's full respect for Syria's sovereignty, territorial integrity, security, stability and the safety of its citizens.

He said that Jordan considers Syria's security and stability an integral part of its own security, expressing pride in the unprecedented levels of cooperation, coordination and trust achieved in relations between the two countries and their peoples.

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Cabinet approves satellite investment incentives, circular economy roadmap

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet, during a session chaired by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday, approved financial incentives for investments exceeding \$10 million in satellite communications infrastructure, aiming to position Jordan as a regional hub for digital infrastructure and data traffic.

To qualify for the incentives, projects must establish at least six gateway earth stations and points of presence across the Kingdom, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The incentives aim to strengthen Jordan's digital infrastructure without affecting the regulatory rights of existing licensees, while enabling satellite networks to complement terrestrial and submarine cables, and improve telecommunications resilience.

The Cabinet also adopted the National Circular Economy Roadmap, which sets a framework through 2050 for improving resource use and expanding recycling.

Developed by the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply and the Royal Scientific Society, the roadmap aligns with the Economic Modernisation Vision, according to the statement.

The roadmap identifies five priority areas, including circular material supply, resource efficiency, circular water management, energy efficiency and waste recovery.

It applies circular economy principles to sectors including agriculture, mining, food processing, construction and tourism, while targeting a 50 per cent reduction in food waste by 2030.

The Cabinet also approved the validating reasons for a draft 2026 regulation governing the number of municipal council members and the division of electoral districts, referring it to the Legislation and Opinion Bureau for further procedures.

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Jordan, Montenegro sign visa waiver agreement, diplomatic training MoU

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi and Montenegro's Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Foreign Minister Ervin Ibrahimovic on Wednesday agreed to expand bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, tourism and several other sectors.

During a meeting, the two ministers reviewed bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to building on the outcomes of His Majesty King Abdullah's visit to Montenegro in May 2025 to strengthen ties and expand cooperation, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

They also agreed to task joint working groups with identifying practical steps to advance cooperation in economic, investment, trade and tourism sectors, as well as energy, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, digital transformation and education.

Safadi and Ibrahimovic signed an agreement exempting holders of diplomatic and service passports from visa requirements, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Montenegro's Foreign Ministry and the Jordan Diplomatic Institute to promote cooperation and the exchange of diplomatic expertise.

The agreement and memorandum are the first official documents signed between the two countries since they established diplomatic relations in 2010, the statement said.

Safadi expressed Jordan's hope that Montenegro would participate in the high-level international conference, "Upholding Humanity in War", which the Kingdom will host on December 7.

Ibrahimovic condemned the terrorist attack targeting a church in Hmoud, Karak Governorate, expressing solidarity with Jordan, offering condolences for those killed and wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

The talks also covered regional developments and efforts to end escalation, restore calm and strengthen regional security and stability.

The two ministers agreed to maintain contact to strengthen bilateral cooperation...

On the occupied Palestinian territories, Safadi stressed the need to consolidate stability in Gaza, fully implement US President Donald Trump's plan and ensure the sustained delivery of sufficient humanitarian aid to the Strip.

He also called for an end to illegal Israeli measures in the West Bank that undermine the two-state solution and prospects for peace, commending Montenegro's support for the two-state solution.

The two ministers agreed to maintain contact to strengthen bilateral cooperation, coordinate within international organisations and continue consultations on regional and international issues of mutual concern.

Montenegro, Jordan see eye to eye on global issues, seek enhanced cooperation across all sectors — Foreign Minister

By Raed Omari

AMMAN — Montenegro's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ervin Ibrahimovic, highlighted the strong and friendly relations between Montenegro and Jordan, expressing a shared commitment to expanding political, diplomatic and economic cooperation.

During an interview with The Jordan Times, Ibrahimovic emphasised the importance of strengthening bilateral ties through regular political consultations, new agreements on diplomatic training and visa exemptions for diplomatic and official passport holders, and closer institutional coordination.

He also identified significant opportunities for cooperation in tourism, investment, healthcare, agriculture, energy, and the digital economy, including the potential establishment of seasonal direct flights between the two countries.

On security, Ibrahimovic praised Jordan's leadership of the Aqaba Process and reaffirmed Montenegro's commitment to international cooperation in combating terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational threats.

Following is the full interview:

1. How would you assess the level of diplomatic and economic cooperation between Montenegro and Jordan?

Montenegro and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan enjoy friendly relations, mutual respect and a shared commitment to multilateralism, interregional dialogue, tolerance and mutual understanding. Our ties have deep historical roots, dating back to the time of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), whose experience of cooperation with Jordan provided a valuable foundation for the development of our bilateral relations.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2010, our two countries have built stable political ties and maintained constructive dialogue, both bilaterally and within multilateral fora.

Our cooperation within the United Nations system, including mutual support for candidacies, as well as through the Union for the Mediterranean and other international initiatives, reflects our shared commitment to international cooperation and strengthening trust among nations.

Montenegro's commitment to its relations with Jordan was further demonstrated by the opening of the Consulate of Montenegro in Jordan in 2011, headed by Honorary Consul Ibrahim Nauri.

In recent years, important high-level political contacts have taken place, including meetings on the margins of international gatherings and direct communication between our foreign ministers on current regional and international issues. Our aim is to further strengthen these ties through more regular and institutionalised dialogue between the



Deputy Prime Minister of Montenegro and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ervin Ibrahimovic

two ministries, including bilateral political consultations.

As for economic cooperation, I believe there is considerable untapped potential for further development. Business forums held in Jordan in 2013 and in Montenegro in 2016 provided an important platform for exchanging views and identifying opportunities for cooperation.

Further momentum was generated in May 2025, when representatives of the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro and the Jordanian Businessmen Association discussed ways to strengthen trade and investment ties, foster closer links between the business communities, and facilitate exchanges of business delegations, with a particular focus on tourism. On that occasion, they also agreed to establish more direct communication between the business associations of the two countries.

We see particular opportunities for cooperation in tourism, agriculture and the food industry, energy, healthcare and the digital economy. Our priority is to translate existing contacts and identified opportunities into concrete business initiatives, investment projects and joint ventures.

I am confident that, by further strengthening our institutional ties and fostering closer connections between our business communities, we can develop more dynamic, substantive and diversified cooperation, building on the solid foundation of friendship and mutual trust between our countries. This is in the shared interest of Montenegro and Jordan and will help further advance our bilateral relations for the benefit of our citizens.

2. Cooperation between the two countries has seen considerable push over the past period, what is the current standing of the bilateral relations?

Relations between Montenegro and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan are characterised by friendship, mutual trust, open dialogue, and a shared commitment to further strengthening our ties.

Political dialogue has gained momentum in recent years, reflecting the importance both countries attach to their partnership. I believe we are at an important stage in our relationship, with an oppor-

tunity to build on our traditionally good political relations and advance towards more intensive, institutionalised and substantive cooperation.

In this regard, we particularly value the first official visit of His Majesty King Abdullah II to Montenegro, which provided further impetus to the development of our relations and opened up opportunities for more concrete forms of cooperation. At the same time, discussions are ongoing regarding an official visit by the President of Montenegro Jakov Milatovic to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which would provide a further opportunity to strengthen ties at the highest level.

It is a particular honour for me to pay an official visit to your esteemed country. One of our key priorities is to strengthen the legal framework underpinning our bilateral relations. In this context, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro and the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy, together with an agreement on the waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and official passports, represents an important step forward. These are the first bilateral agreements to be concluded between our countries since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2010, creating a stronger foundation for closer cooperation between our diplomatic services and enhanced institutional ties.

Furthermore, we aim to establish a framework for regular political consultations and develop new forms of cooperation in areas of mutual interest. We see particular potential in tourism, air connectivity, investment, healthcare and security, as well as in fostering closer links between the relevant institutions and business communities of our two countries. Our goal is to identify concrete opportunities through open dialogue and joint efforts and translate them into sustainable projects and measurable results, taking into account the priorities and capacities of both countries.

I am confident that this visit marks a new chapter in relations between Montenegro and Jordan. Our commitment is clear: To further strengthen the bonds of friendship

and political understanding between our countries and translate them into tangible results that will deliver visible and lasting benefits for both countries and their citizens.

3. His Majesty King Abdullah and Montenegro President Jakov Milatovic met in May last year and discussed bilateral relations and ways to expand cooperation in the fields of health, technology, energy, trade, tourism, agriculture, transportation, investment and digital economy. This indicates a strong will on the high political level to enhance cooperation. Has there been any mechanism put in place, meetings, joint committees working towards institutionalising and bolstering Montenegro-Jordan relations.

We particularly value the meeting between His Majesty King Abdullah II and the President of Montenegro, Jakov Milatovic, in May 2025, which gave significant impetus to our bilateral relations and demonstrated the strong political will at the highest level to expand cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The meeting was important not only as an affirmation of the longstanding friendship and mutual respect between our countries, but also as an opportunity to identify concrete areas for cooperation and secure high-level support for their further development.

Our priority now is to translate this political commitment into effective institutional mechanisms that will enable the systematic planning and implementation of agreed priorities. In this regard, we welcome Jordan's initiative to hold the first round of political consultations between the two ministries of foreign affairs. We are considering holding these consultations in 2027 or early 2028. We also intend to propose a memorandum of cooperation between the two ministries, which would provide an additional framework for regular dialogue, coordination and follow-up on joint initiatives.

In recent months, the relevant institutions in both countries have established more direct channels of communication and initiated coordination, including the exchange of draft texts for several bilateral agreements. During my visit, two agreements within the remit of Montenegro's Ministry of Foreign Affairs are scheduled to be signed: One on the

waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and official passports, and another on cooperation in diplomatic training. These agreements represent an important step towards strengthening the legal framework underpinning our relations and creating the conditions for more practical cooperation.

Diplomatic training is a valuable example of sectoral cooperation already in place. Jordanian diplomats have participated on several occasions in Montenegro's Gavro Vukovic Summer School for Young Diplomats, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experience and fostering closer ties between our diplomatic services.

There is also considerable scope for strengthening economic cooperation. The business forums held in Jordan in 2013 and Montenegro in 2016 laid the groundwork for closer links between our business communities and provided opportunities to explore trade and investment prospects. We believe that reviving this format, with the participation of relevant institutions, chambers of commerce and business communities, would help identify new business opportunities and develop concrete joint projects.

Tourism is another area with significant potential, offering valuable opportunities to bring our peoples and cultures closer together. In this regard, we should explore the possibility of establishing seasonal air links between Montenegro and Jordan. Improved air connectivity would facilitate two-way tourism and enable citizens of both countries to discover each other's cultural and historical heritage, natural beauty and traditions more easily. Jordan, with its ancient city of Petra, the Dead Sea, and the spectacular desert landscapes of Wadi Rum, has much to offer Montenegrin visitors, just as Montenegro is an attractive destination for Jordanian tourists.

Our approach is pragmatic: We want to align existing initiatives with clearly defined priorities, clearly assigned institutional responsibilities, and regular communication. We believe this will enable us to gradually build a stable, long-term framework for cooperation encompassing political dialogue, economic relations, tourism, and other areas of sectoral cooperation, delivering

tangible results for the benefit of both countries and their citizens.

4. Jordan and Montenegro coordinate counter-terrorism efforts, within the framework of the Aqaba Process initiative launched by Jordan. How would you evaluate that?

Montenegro attaches great importance to the Aqaba Process, launched by His Majesty King Abdullah in 2015, and highly values Jordan's role in international efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism. The initiative provides an important platform for strengthening international security cooperation, enhancing coordination, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise among states and relevant international partners. We particularly value its regional and thematic focus, which enables meaningful, practical cooperation in addressing shared security challenges.

Contemporary security threats are becoming increasingly complex and interconnected. Terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organised crime, radicalisation, and the misuse of digital technologies transcend national borders, making the timely exchange of information, stronger institutional capacities, and coordinated international action essential. An effective response must encompass not only security measures, but also the prevention of radicalisation and efforts to strengthen societies' resilience to extremist ideologies.

In this regard, we particularly value the Aqaba Process's comprehensive approach, which links security measures with the protection of human rights, the rule of law, education, social inclusion, and the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. We believe that sustainable security cannot be achieved through security measures alone; it also requires addressing the underlying conditions that create fertile ground for radicalisation and violent extremism.

For Montenegro, as a NATO member and a country that I see as the next EU Member State, participation in this initiative provides an important opportunity to further strengthen cooperation with Jordan and other international partners. We seek to align our efforts with broader regional and international initiatives while ensuring that they complement the activities of NATO and the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh. This is particularly important in light of the security challenges facing the Western Balkans, including radicalisation, extremism, and cross-border threats.

The importance of this cooperation was reaffirmed at the meeting between His Majesty King Abdullah and the President of Montenegro, Jakov Milatovic, in Tivat in May 2025, when they discussed continued coordination in the fight against terrorism within the framework of the Aqaba Process. Montenegro also participated in the Aqaba Process Leaders' Meeting dedicated to the Balkans, held in Sofia in April 2025. These engagements demon-

strate our commitment to strengthening cooperation and developing practical mechanisms to address shared threats.

We particularly value Jordan's contribution to regional stability and its longstanding cooperation with NATO. Under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, Jordan has made a significant contribution to international efforts to promote peace and stability in the Middle East and beyond through the Aqaba Process. We believe that initiatives of this kind strengthen trust among partners and enable a more effective collective response to transnational threats, in full respect of international law and state sovereignty.

Montenegro remains firmly committed to contributing to these joint efforts and further developing its partnership with Jordan. We are convinced that international solidarity, the exchange of experience, and the integration of security measures with preventive approaches are essential to preserving peace and stability.

5. What is Montenegro's stance on the region's issues, including primarily Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Iran war?

Montenegro is following developments in the Middle East with deep concern, recognising that protracted conflicts and continued military escalation have serious humanitarian, political and security consequences, not only for the populations directly affected but also for the stability of the wider region, the global economy, energy markets and international trade. We do not view the current situation as a distant threat; rather, we recognise its implications for long-term regional and international stability. As a NATO member and an EU candidate country, Montenegro bases its foreign policy on respect for international law, multilateral cooperation and coordination with its allies and partners, while remaining firmly committed to diplomacy as the principal means of resolving conflicts.

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, our position is principled and consistent. We support a negotiated two-state solution, under which Israel and an independent, sovereign and viable State of Palestine live side by side in peace and security, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. We believe this remains the only viable path towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

We are particularly concerned about the deteriorating situation in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including the expansion of settlements, increasing settler violence and the growing number of forcibly displaced persons. We are also concerned about the risks posed by the E1 settlement project, which represents a serious threat to the viability of the two-state solution. In this context, we continue to support the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2803.

The protection of civilians must remain an absolute priority. It is essential to ensure

safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access, protect humanitarian personnel and infrastructure, and fully respect international humanitarian law. Any sustainable solution must be grounded in political dialogue and diplomacy, while taking into account the legitimate rights and security needs of all parties.

Regarding the conflict involving Iran, Montenegro supports de-escalation, restraint and a return to diplomacy. We strongly condemn Iran's unprovoked attacks against neighbouring Gulf states, which further undermine regional stability and endanger civilian lives. We are also concerned about Tehran's destabilising activities in the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf. We believe that Iran must comply with its nuclear safeguards obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and must not acquire nuclear weapons.

At the same time, diplomatic efforts must be intensified to prevent the conflict from spreading further and to create the conditions for a sustainable political settlement. Montenegro supports calls to safeguard freedom of navigation and ensure the uninterrupted passage of international shipping, without the imposition of transit fees and in full accordance with international law, including through the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab Al Mandeb Strait. We have also condemned the recent unacceptable Houthi attacks on Riyadh International Airport, which further underscore the urgent need to halt escalation and protect civilian infrastructure.

The United Nations, NATO and the European Union provide important platforms for coordination with international partners, the exchange of information and assessments, and support for initiatives aimed at easing tensions. Montenegro will continue to support all credible international efforts that contribute to de-escalation, dialogue and the preservation of peace and stability, in full respect of the United Nations Charter and international law.

I would particularly like to highlight Jordan's constructive and significant role in mitigating the consequences of the crisis, providing humanitarian assistance and preserving the prospects for a just and lasting peace. We regard Jordan as an important bridge between peoples and a strong advocate of dialogue, mutual understanding and regional cooperation. We highly value its efforts to contribute to a more peaceful and stable Middle East and believe that, in such complex circumstances, cooperation with partners that consistently advocate diplomatic solutions is particularly important.

Montenegro remains committed to supporting all serious and credible diplomatic initiatives that can help ease tensions and create the conditions for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. Protecting human lives, preserving regional stability and upholding the rules-based international order are in the interests of us all.



The Jordan Design and Development Bureau says on Wednesday that it has introduced more than 49 new products in 2026

JODDB unveils over 49 products in AI, cybersecurity, drone technologies

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Design and Development Bureau (JODDB) said on Wednesday that it has introduced more than 49 new products in 2026, focusing on counterdrone systems, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

JODDB Spokesperson Moataz Atein said the new products include 10 drone platforms and 18 artificial intelligence and cybersecurity solutions designed to address national and regional security challenges, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Among the new developments is Digital Spider, an artificial intelligence (AI) application that collects and analyses data from open sources, social media platforms and news websites to support decision-making.

The bureau is also developing Aoun and Moeen, two AI-driven systems based on specialised defence references to support military and logistical analysis.

Other products include Al Barq, an armoured mobile platform equipped with jamming, camouflage and drone detection systems, as well as integrated command and control systems for responding to aerial threats.

JODDB has also signed cooperation agreements with international entities, including Orange and UAE-based EDGE Group

JODDB is also producing low-cost offensive drones using

three-dimensional printing technology to speed up production and enable large-scale deployment, he added.

Atein said the bureau works with Jordanian universities and the King Abdullah II Fund for Development to turn academic research into practical defence applications.

On the Special Operations Forces Exhibition, Atein said the event brings together more than 400 delegations from 75 countries and 350 exhibiting companies from 38 countries. Norway, Slovakia and Italy are participating for the first time, he added.

JODDB has also signed cooperation agreements with international entities, including Orange and UAE-based EDGE Group.

The bureau's testing and evaluation centre has more than 450 accredited testing procedures issued by a British accreditation body to ensure equipment meets international quality standards.

Safadi, Qatari prime minister discuss regional developments

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Wednesday met with Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

During the meeting, the two ministers reiterated the deep-rooted strategic ties between Jordan and Qatar and the continued progress in cooperation across various fields, according to a ministry statement.

They discussed efforts to end the escalation in the region and establish lasting security and stability based on respect for state sovereignty, international law, good neighbourliness and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

Safadi commended Qatar's key role in these efforts and its commitment to promoting regional security and stability.

The two ministers also discussed the dangerous deteriora-



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ayman Safadi on Wednesday meets with Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani

tion in the occupied West Bank, stressing the need for Israel to stop its illegal measures that fuel conflict and undermine efforts to achieve the two-

state solution, the only way to realise a just and lasting peace.

They also stressed the need to implement all provisions of US President Donald

Trump's plan to achieve stability in Gaza and remove all obstacles to the adequate delivery of humanitarian aid to the Strip.

Sheikh Mohammed

renewed Qatar's condolences over the victims of the terrorist attack on a church in Karak Governorate and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

JD8.9b infrastructure projects offer opportunities for Jordan's engineering industries

AMMAN (JT) — The Amra City project and major national infrastructure schemes valued at JD8.9 billion offer opportunities to expand the role of Jordanian engineering industries in meeting domestic demand, according to the National Strategy for Engineering Industries (2026-2029).

Prepared by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply in partnership with the Jordan Chamber of Industry and other stakeholders, the strategy identifies these projects as a

source of procurement opportunities for local manufacturers, Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The strategy says local factories can increase production and expand their customer base by meeting technical specifications, quality standards and delivery requirements.

It also seeks to strengthen links between manufacturers, suppliers and project developers to direct a larger share of procurement towards domestic

production and retain more added value in the national economy.

The strategy notes that these opportunities are time-bound, making it essential to establish mechanisms that enable Jordanian companies to compete for contracts and tenders.

To this end, it proposes a programme to increase local content in major national projects, in line with broader industrial policy objectives to strengthen integration between engi-

neering industries and other economic sectors.

Jordan's engineering sector comprises around 4,800 facilities employing nearly 35,200 people. Its value added reached approximately JD620 million in 2024, while total output approached JD2 billion, according to the strategy.

Proposed initiatives include establishing an engineering innovation complex in Zarqa, housing the Jordan Centre for Metal Forming Technology, an engi-

neering training centre and a joint industrial research and development fund to strengthen technical capabilities.

The strategy also seeks to diversify export markets by leveraging free trade agreements and Jordan's geographical proximity to regional markets.

Jordanian engineering exports to Syria rose by 282 per cent in 2025 to around JD37 million, up from JD9.7 million before Syria's political transition in December 2024.

DISRUPTION

'Nassib border crossing closure raises concerns over delays, transport costs'

AMMAN (JT) — The closure of the Nassib border crossing on the Syrian side is disrupting freight movement between Jordan and Syria, raising concerns over delays, higher transport costs and potential losses for traders, President of the Association of Owners of Clearance and Transport Companies Daifallah Abu Aqoula said on Wednesday.



Jaber border crossing with Syria

Around 1,500 shipments pass through the Jaber customs centre daily...

Abu Aqoula said the Jaber border customs centre remained operational, with no decision to

close it announced so far. He warned that a prolonged closure of Nassib, particularly beyond two or three days, could further disrupt cargo movement.

Freight transport between the two countries had been operating under a "back-to-back" system at Nassib, requiring representatives and specialists to oversee the unloading and transfer of goods. Syrian authorities have removed customs clearance agents

and workers from the centre, leaving only government agencies, he said.

Large numbers of lorries remain at the Nassib and Jaber customs centres, while others are waiting at Jaber's gates. Goods unloaded at Aqaba Port are also awaiting customs clearance and onward transport to Syria, raising concerns over further delays if the closure continues.

Around 1,500 shipments pass through the Jaber customs

centre daily, including incoming and outgoing lorries, both loaded and empty, Abu Aqoula said.

He warned that a prolonged closure could affect perishable goods and increase transport costs, although refrigerated shipments could be stored for several weeks.

The disruption could also affect goods at ports and other border crossings, as well as cargo arriving by air, including refrigerated

and perishable shipments, he added.

Abu Aqoula expressed hope that the Nassib crossing would reopen on Wednesday, allowing freight movement to return to normal and preventing further disruption to shipments bound for Syria.

He said the relevant Syrian authorities were capable of assessing the security situation, and taking the necessary measures to ensure the movement of goods and passengers.

He also highlighted the presence of large numbers of Jordanians in Damascus and other Syrian governorates, as well as the trade and social ties between the two countries.

Abu Aqoula called for the crossing to reopen as soon as possible to limit the impact on transport operators, traders and bilateral trade.

The closure followed Royal Jordanian Air Force strikes on sites in southern Syria, amid unverified reports of attacks on Jordanian vehicles near the Nassib crossing.

AND arrests 145 suspects in 104 crystal meth cases

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) announced on Monday the arrest of 145 suspects in 104 cases related to Crystal meth trafficking and dealing in various parts of the Kingdom, according to official sources.

The arrests came during the thirteenth week of a "strict" security campaign and an awareness campaign that was initiated by AND in collaboration with the Media and Community Policing Directorate to combat the use of Crystal meth in Jordanian society.

The campaign resulted in the arrest of 63 suspects in 43 cases related to trafficking, smuggling, promotion, and the use of Crystal meth," Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

Meanwhile, 82 suspects were arrested for using the deadly substance, Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

The campaigns aimed at warning the public about the use of this deadly substance and pursuing individuals who deal with the illicit substance.

Crystal meth is the common name for crystal methamphetamine, a strong and highly addictive drug that affects the central



nervous system, according to WebMD.

Sartawi recently said that Crystal meth "is one of the most dangerous chemical substances that affects people's mental and physical health".

"This dangerous substance causes rapid addiction, severe disturbances in perception and behaviour, and affects bodily functions, especially causing damage to the brain and lungs, in addition to aggression, loss of control and perception, and causing many heinous crimes," Sartawi added.

He stressed that the "campaign is ongoing until it reaches its goals of spreading awareness and pursuing individuals who deal with this deadly substance".

All the detained suspects were referred to the State Security Prosecutor for further questioning and indictment, he added.

Citizens are urged to report any person who deals with Crystal meth by contact-

ing 911, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate (PSD).

All information will be treated with utmost discretion, seriousness, firmness, verification and confidentiality, the PSD statement added.



According to PSD 2025 statistics, there were 22,031 drug crimes in the Kingdom.

The number of drug and possession cases was 15,720, while the number of drug trafficking cases was 6,311, according to the PSD statistics.

Arab parties hold key as Netanyahu falls short of majority

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Results from Israel's hard-fought election pointed on Wednesday to no clear winner as a leader of the Arab minority appealed to a hesitant opposition to join forces to end the divisive reign of prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

With more than three quarters of the vote counted, Netanyahu's right-wing bloc was slightly ahead but still short of a majority in Tuesday's election, the first since the October 7, 2023 surprise attack which has led Israel to wage war in Gaza and across the region.

Both Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister who is allied with far-right and ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties, and Gadi Eisenkot, a former military chief leading a broad opposition bloc, vowed that they would seek to form the next government.

But neither looks set to reach the 61-seat threshold for a majority. With 77 per cent of ballots counted, Netanyahu's bloc had 54 of the 120 seats in parliament and Eisenkot's opposition had 49.

The final results could still change but one place of clear gains was among Israeli Arab lists which were set to



A Palestinian boy looks at an Israeli outpost on a hill overlooking the village of Umm Safa, northwest of Ramallah in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, on Tuesday

jump to 17 seats.

Voters from the community, descendants of Palestinians who stayed after Israel's creation and who make up around 20 per cent of the population, have been enraged by the Netanyahu government's ultra-nationalist Jewish vision for the country and the Palestinian territories.

Yousef Jabareen, head of the leftist Arab-majority Joint List,

said the Israeli public had voted for new leadership, and "anyone who wants to offer a substantive and genuine alternative to Netanyahu's blood-soaked government will have to talk to us".

"It's either the continuation of racism, the continuation of exclusion and the continuation of supremacy, or a genuine Jewish-Arab partnership," he said.

Eisenkot has resisted allying with Arab parties. Netanyahu during the campaign relentlessly attacked the opposition by saying it would put Arabs in power, running on the slogan: "Either the Right or Palestine".

Yair Golan, the head of Israel's main left-wing party and a member of Eisenkot's camp, became the first member of the opposition camp to call for an alliance with Arab parties.

Arab lawmakers could also give Eisenkot support in parliamentary votes on an ad hoc basis, enabling him to maintain a minority government without joining a coalition, although few observers believe such an arrangement would survive for long.

Iran conflict

A lack of a clear majority for either camp could mean weeks spent trying to cobble together coalitions, with possible new elections on the horizon if negotiations fail.

"Maybe everybody lost in these elections but the Arab parties. And for the Arab parties, it's unclear that they can make use of their huge success," Hebrew University of Jerusalem political scientist Gideon Rahat said.

A stalemate could in the immediate term benefit Netanyahu, who would remain caretaker prime minister until a new government is formed.

Both Netanyahu and Eisenkot appeared to indicate another factor was on the horizon — a Israeli attack alongside the United States on Iran.

Netanyahu ordered bombing campaigns

against Iran both last year and earlier this year, reluctantly stopping only after President Donald Trump reached a now-moribund ceasefire.

In the days leading up to the election, Netanyahu repeatedly called for the overthrow of Iran's government. News reports, which Netanyahu denied, said military top brass pushed back on his plans for pre-election action.

Trump has said that the United States is no longer negotiating with Iran but will not attack until after next Tuesday's US midterm elections, in which his Republican Party is forecast to lose ground.

Speaking to supporters at a rally, Netanyahu said that Israel had a "unique opportunity" with Trump to "forever eliminate the existential threat of Iran".

Eisenkot in his own post-election appearance warned Israel's security chiefs that they must serve the national interests and not the political needs of Netanyahu, who is a caretaker prime minister "without a mandate".

"Netanyahu, don't you dare use Israel's security for your political needs," Eisenkot said.

President's role

All eyes will be on President Isaac Herzog, who usually keeps a low-key ceremonial role but who must decide whom to task with the first chance to form a government.

Herzog has reportedly supported a unity government, which could take on more urgency if Netanyahu attacks Iran, although Eisenkot has publicly ruled out serving with him.

Netanyahu, who has served as prime minister on and off for more than 19 years, has divided Israeli society.

Facing criminal charges over corruption that he denies, Netanyahu has sought to revamp the judiciary.

He has also allied with far-right champions of extremist settlers who attack Palestinians in the West Bank with virtual impunity.

Netanyahu is also wanted by the International Criminal Court over Israel's devastating war in Gaza, where residents expressed uncertainty Wednesday as to what the outcome might mean for them.

"Our fear is that these elections might result in the emergence of an even worse leader and those who are more violent and bloodthirsty," displaced Gazan Huda Al Houli told AFP.

Serbian police kill attacker outside Israeli embassy

BELGRADE (AFP) — Serbian police killed an attacker outside the Israeli embassy in Belgrade on Wednesday after an officer was targeted in a "terrorist attack", outgoing Interior Minister Ivica Dacic said.

"A minor whose identity has yet to be established... attacked a member of the police with two knives while shouting 'Allahu Akbar'," Dacic said, also raising the terrorism threat to its highest level.

The interior ministry said in a statement the officer killed the attacker in self-defence but suffered a minor knife wound to the face in the incident just after midnight early Wednesday morning.

Outside the embassy, AFP journalists saw heavily armed special police guarding its entrance and patrolling the street.

Dacic said security services had been monitoring the attacker, who was "known to be a supporter of the Daesh and was believed to be



A member of Serbia's Gendarmerie stands guard at the entrance to the Israeli embassy in Belgrade on Wednesday

from the western city of Sabac".

"His Instagram profile featured a black flag and the Islamic State emblem," he added.

Dacic said the terrorism threat level had been raised to its highest, or "red alert".

"This means tighter security checks and an increased police presence at sensitive sites, including infrastructure facilities and places where large crowds gather," he said.

Israel's foreign ministry confirmed in a post on X that no embassy personnel were injured

Cuba wins UN vote against US embargo with weakest backing in 30 years

UNITED NATIONS, United States (AFP) — The UN General Assembly on Wednesday adopted a new resolution calling for an end to the US embargo against Cuba, although support for the communist-ruled island fell to its lowest level in three decades.

Nearly every year since 1992 similar resolutions have been put to a vote and passed, but support for the measure this year was markedly lower.

The resolution, which has called for lifting the economic, trade and financial embargo against the island, received 130 votes in favour, with 17 against and 25 abstentions. It was the lowest level of support since 1995.

The debate this year, however, is taking place amid a major new pressure campaign by Washington against Cuba, including an oil blockade and broad sanctions that have severely crippled Cuba's economy.

'Gangster coercion'

In recent weeks, Havana accused Washington of mounting a diplomatic



The vote came a day after a dramatic shouting match on the floor of the UN General Assembly

offensive to pressure countries into withdrawing their support for the Cuban resolution.

"The world has once again spoken out overwhelmingly against the blockade, even despite the most blatant pressure and blackmail from the US to change the course of this vote," Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said in a celebratory post on X Wednesday, later adding that the US engages in "gangster-like coercion".

Speaking in New York, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez accused Washington of seeking to "determine the nation's destiny" and "seize" its wealth.

In the minutes before the vote, US ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz denied that Cuba was under a blockade and said "the plight of the Cuban people is exclusively the fault of this corrupt communist regime".

"The reality is, to-

day as we speak, there is no ring of US Navy warships around Cuba. Their ports are open. In recent months, data shows that shipments have arrived," from around the world, he added.

Shouting match

The vote came a day after a dramatic shouting match on the floor of the UN General Assembly that at one point saw Rodriguez approach Waltz and shout, "You are a liar!" as Waltz shouted for him to back away.

Amid the interruptions, the chair briefly suspended the session and instructed both countries' representatives to return to their places.

In his speech arguing against the resolution on Tuesday, Waltz held up pictures of Cuban leaders past and present, including Diaz-Canel, wearing luxury watches, prompting the Cuban delegation to repeatedly smack their desk in protest and interrupt.

Waltz later held up a satellite images and detailed luxury estates, boats and vacations that he claimed the Castro family and Cuban officials enjoy.

"The regime can never find enough fuel for Cuban ambulances. They can never find enough fuel for Cuban busses. But when the Castro family, the elites that are sitting at that table, want to go yachting, suddenly, it's no problem," Waltz said.

Speaking on Fox News on Wednesday after the vote, Waltz said that the previous day's debate, "got a little spicy".

Turkey hosted Libya east-west reunification talks last week

ISTANBUL (AFP) — Turkey hosted talks between Libya's eastern and western administrations last week with the goal of reunifying them, a senior Turkish official familiar with the talks told AFP on Wednesday.

Ankara is one of the rare countries that maintains ties with both sides in Libya, which has been divided between rival leaderships since 2014 following the 2011 downfall of Muammar Qadhafi.

"Discussions have so far focused primarily on military unification, while political unity is expected to be addressed at a later

stage," the official said.

The talks, which took place in the capital Ankara, were attended by military officials from Libya's eastern and western administrations as well as diplomats, the source said, adding that Turkey was acting as a mediator between the two sides.

Beset by instability since the overthrow of Qadhafi in a NATO-backed uprising, Libya is divided between a UN-recognised government in Tripoli and a rival administration in the east backed by military commander Khalifa Haftar.

Turkey strongly backed the Tripoli-based government during

years of conflict in Libya, but ties with eastern authorities have warmed significantly in recent years.

On Friday, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said the time had come to reunify the eastern and western administrations, hinting that an announcement could come soon.

"We have now reached a stage where the conditions are ripe to permanently secure the reunification of the east and the west," Fidan said after hosting a meeting of top European diplomats and regional powers in Istanbul.

"One of the most im-

portant pillars of national unification is how the military units currently controlled separately by both sides will be brought together under a single umbrella," he added.

US 'backing'

The Turkish official who spoke to AFP on Wednesday said that no agreement had yet been reached, but the parties had agreed to continue the talks.

"Turkey is the priority to host the talks but they could also take place in Libya," he said.

"Given that Ankara now enjoys close ties with both Libya's eastern and western ad-

ministrations, it is undoubtedly in a stronger position than any other external actor to negotiate a compromise on military and political reunification," Hamish Kinnear, an analyst at UK-based consulting group Verisk Maplecroft, told AFP.

Turkish mediation comes as Washington and the United Nations are also pushing for the reunification of the oil-rich country.

Asked whether Turkish and US plans conflicted, a foreign observer told AFP that Ankara and Washington's positions "are, in fact, aligned".

"If there is any significant friction, it is

primarily with the Europeans, who are deeply divided on this issue, notably France and Italy, as well as Russia, which would see its influence diminish," the observer commented.

Kinnear agreed that Turkey's push for what he described as an "elite bargain" to reunify Libya "likely has the tacit backing of Washington".

Competition for power

Under the proposed US plan for Libya's reunification, Abdulhamid Dheibah, who heads the Tripoli-based government, would remain prime minister, while Saddam Haftar, the

eastern commander's son, would become head of the Presidential Council.

Kinnear suggested that the Turkish initiative might be "enough to secure a temporary reunification of Libya's governments", but warned that, in the longer term, de-stabilising competition for greater power and influence "is likely".

He said it was unlikely that these key figures would relinquish their direct influence over militias loyal to them and remain satisfied with their formal positions alone.

Last week, Libya's eastern-based parliament approved a maritime demarcation deal with Turkey, years after rejecting it when it was first signed.

The agreement has drawn anger from the European Union, Greece, Israel and Egypt, who denounced it as an infringement of their sovereign rights and a violation of international law.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lashed out at the criticism, saying it had "no legitimate basis", speaking after a cabinet meeting on Monday.

Analysts say Libya's approval gives Turkey stronger political backing for offshore surveys and negotiations over exploration.

Iran says discussing plan with mediators to end war, reopen Hormuz

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Wednesday that Tehran was discussing with mediators ways to implement a seven-day plan to end the Middle East war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

"While our Brave Armed Forces are fully prepared to defend the Homeland, Iran continues to give diplomacy a chance to succeed," he said in a post on X.

"We remain in close and ongoing contact with intermediaries to review ideas that can ensure implementation of our 7-Day Plan in even less than a week."

The remarks come amid mounting US and Israeli threats of renewed attacks against Iran following their launch of the war in February.

In September, Iran proposed a seven-day plan that it conveyed to the United States through Qatar.

Araghchi said at the time that under the plan, Hormuz would reopen



Pedestrians walk past a large anti-Israeli billboard displayed in Enghelab Square in Tehran on Monday

within seven days if "necessary conditions", including a ceasefire across the Middle East, were met.

Iran has also demanded the unfreezing of its assets abroad, the lifting of sanctions on its oil sector, and an end to the US naval blockade.

US news website Axios reported on Wednesday that regional mediators led by Qatar were pushing for "a diplomatic deal"

World Bank warns of worsening food insecurity as commodity prices soar

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The World Bank on Wednesday warned that global commodity prices were set to increase by 23 per cent by the end of 2026, with energy prices at four-year highs due to the war on Iran and food prices driven up by global conflicts and El Nino.

"Commodity markets are being hit by several major shocks at once," said Ayhan Kose, the World Bank's deputy chief economist, in a statement accompanying the release of the organisation's Commodity Markets Outlook report.

"Higher energy costs and trade disruptions are driving up prices across a broad range of commodities, threatening to worsen inflation, food insecurity and economic growth."

Food prices were expected to rise by 10 per cent in 2026 and another 7 per cent next year, due to conflict-affected grain supply lines, the effects of an extreme El Nino phenomenon and high fuel and fertiliser prices.

El Nino is a naturally occurring weather phenomenon that is set to bring higher temperatures to much of the planet this year, with its impact compounding the effects of man-made climate change.

For food producers, it is expected to lead to more flooding, droughts and heat stress across multiple regions.

Energy prices are projected to see an increase of 32 per cent this year before moderating in 2027, the World Bank report said, assuming that conflicts in Iran and Ukraine do not intensify.

Global energy and fertiliser prices have skyrocketed since the United States and Israel launched a war against Iran in late February, plunging the Middle East into violence.

Iran responded with attacks on US allies in the region and virtually choked the Strait of Hormuz — a key oil, natural gas and fertiliser supply route.

Climate-threatened Fijian utopia rejects calls to relocate

By Ben Strang
Agence France-Presse

SERUA ISLAND, Fiji — As the sun sets over Fiji's tiny Serua Island, its climate-threatened inhabitants soak in one of the reasons they have rejected attempts to relocate their village — the "100 million views".

The island looks like a utopia from the mainland, two steep palm-covered knolls sandwiching its low-lying centre, flanked by coral reefs and rich fishing grounds.

But it is on the island itself that the risk from rising seas becomes clearer, with a concrete sea wall providing the only defence against waves that are already swamping homes.

"The stronger the air pressure, the higher the waves. So the waves wash through inside the village," Serua Island resident Avenai Ranuku told AFP.

Dozens of homes are in harm's way when cyclones hit Fiji, as are vegetable crops and graves.

Water laps at the feet of concrete piles where homes and a hospital once stood on the island's eastern end, and two homes were also moved from the western side where land has been washed away.

Despite the risks, most residents say they would rather strengthen the



This photo taken on October 9 shows a view of the ocean from Serua Island, Fiji, a low-lying community facing the growing threat of rising sea levels

island's defences than abandon their ancestral home.

Ranuku remembers when category five cyclone Winston hit as a child and the island's population moved up one of the island's peaks to take shelter.

"Terrifying," Ranuku said of that night.

"All of the villagers, when the chief mention it, we go up. No one left behind. We help everyone, carry everything from the house, food. This is our evacuation plan."

Safe on higher ground, Ranuku could hear "waves going around, and the roof of the houses being washed away".

From that same haven on the hill, Ranuku explained why the threat of cyclones and sea level rise doesn't deter people from living on the island.

"We love this island, you know. Fresh air, go out fishing every day, that's why they don't want to leave."

"Many people used to say, they go to that house on the hill to see the sunset, it's a \$100 million view."

Serua Village worked with Habitat for Humanity in 2025 to write a detailed disaster risk reduction plan, as most of the population rejected calls for it to relocate.

Instead residents wanted to protect their ancestral home and the culture

linked to it.

The report found nearly 20 per cent of homes on the island were in critical condition, and just three houses were strong enough to withstand a cyclone.

"Serua Island experiences more frequent sea-wall overtopping during high tides and king tides, saline intrusion affecting soil fertility, and standing water after rainfall, elevating health risks," the report said.

"The assessment shows there is a lack of natural form of wave breakers on Serua Island, and it is constantly threatened by sea level rise and cyclones."

"More than 50 per cent of houses have a combination of unstable foundations and roofs, and weak joints, walls, and bracing, making these homes most vulnerable to cyclones and severe weather events."

On receiving the report, the village wasted no time in working to strengthen its resilience.

During AFP's visit in October, dozens of workers were renovating homes along the northern coastline.

Flimsy walls and corrugated iron roofing were being removed and taken by boat to the mainland.

Some homes had already been raised to mitigate flood risk, and others would soon follow.

The report also recommended improving access to the island by building a more robust path.

During low tide, it is possible to walk the 750 metres to the island, guided by a string of power lines protruding from the sea floor.

But at high tide the only access is by boat, and even then the report said work is needed to make docking on the island safer and easier.

It is work Ranuku said his village is committed to.

"Why would we want to leave?", he said, looking across the water to Fiji's Coral Coast.

"We have \$100 million views."



The prime minister described the move as a significant milestone in Ethiopia's efforts to strengthen its national defence and security capabilities

Ethiopia receives 12 Russian fighter jets

ADDIS ABABA (AFP) — Ethiopia has taken delivery of 12 Russian fighter jets, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced on Wednesday on the sidelines of the third Russia-Africa summit, as tensions with neighbouring Eritrea remain high.

Ethiopian forces have pushed right up to the Eritrean border in recent weeks after repelling an advance by Eritrea-backed rebels in its northern Tigray state.

Ethiopia and Eritrea broke diplomatic ties this month, but Abiy and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki are both attending the Russia-Africa summit, held on Wednesday and Thursday in Moscow, which is hosting delegations from 48 African nations.

"We have today taken delivery of the first twelve Su-35 4++ Generation fighter jets," the Ethiopian leader stated on X, under a "prior agreement with the Russian government".

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Tuesday that the summit could be a forum for rapprochement between the fractious Horn of Africa neighbours.

"We are interested in Ethiopia and Eritrea normalising their relations," Lavrov said, adding Moscow would "provide every opportunity for arranging contact" during the summit.

Eritrea, ruled by Isaias since achieving independence in 1993, fears that landlocked Ethiopia will invade to seize access to the Red Sea.

He did not provide further details.

Ethiopia will also receive four "S-400 air defence system batteries", he added.

Abiy called it a "historic achievement" that would allow Ethiopia

Jordan, Syria reaffirm deep relations

Continued from page 1

The two ministers discussed the implications of air strikes carried out by the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army on Monday against sites belonging to the Daesh terror group. Safadi said the strikes were based on field intelligence and aimed at neutralising confirmed threats and imminent terrorist operations targeting Jordan's security.

Safadi expressed deep regret and sorrow over the deaths of innocent civilians during the operations targeting Daesh, which he described as a shared threat to both countries.

He extended his heartfelt condolences to the Syrian people and wished those injured a speedy recovery.

He stressed that Jordan is equally committed to protecting the safety of Syrian citizens and its own citizens.

The two ministers also emphasised the close cooperation between Jordan and Syria in addressing common challenges, particularly combating terrorism, and preventing the smuggling of drugs and weapons across their shared border through effective and sustainable institutional channels.

Recognising the importance of direct security and field-level coordination in their joint efforts to combat terrorism, protect civilians and ensure the highest standards of accuracy and transparency, the two ministers agreed to establish a joint security committee to examine all details and facts surrounding the recent operations, and follow up

on their implications.

The committee will also work to develop field-level and intelligence coordination mechanisms to address terrorist threats while safeguarding Syrian sovereignty and protecting the lives of innocent civilians, in a manner that reflects the strength and resilience of the fraternal relations between the two countries and their peoples.

Cabinet approves satellite investment incentives, circular economy roadmap

Continued from page 1

The draft regulation implements the Local Administration Law No. 16 of 2026 and enables the Independent Election Commission to proceed with preparations for municipal elections in the first half of 2027. It sets the number of council members and divides electoral districts across 104 municipalities in the Kingdom.

The draft also raises the quota for women on municipal councils to 30 per cent, up from 25 per cent under the 2021 Local Administration Law, and sets the number of council members in newly established municipalities, including Bani Obeid, Ghor Al Mazra'a, Jreineh and Rajm Al Shami.

The Cabinet also approved the validation of reasons for draft amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law of 2026, referring them to the Legislation and Opinion Bureau for further procedures.

The amendments aim to unify criminal procedures, strengthen fair trial guarantees and

the right to defence, improve arrest and detention procedures, and accommodate technological advances and digital transformation.

The proposed amendments also seek to modernise judicial appeals and allow defendants in criminal cases to ap-

point lawyers to attend trial sessions on their behalf instead of appearing in person. They also address the management of seized and confiscated assets and funds.

The Cabinet further approved the reasons for draft amendments

to the Execution Law of 2026, aimed at digitising enforcement procedures, accelerating debt recovery and reducing pressure on courts.

The proposals include expanding early seizure powers, requiring debtors to disclose their assets and in-

come, allowing debtors to sell seized assets under the supervision of the Execution Department and permitting seized vehicles to be kept at a location chosen by the debtor against a guarantee for their return when requested.

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When social cohesion becomes an economic asset

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

The strength of an economy is measured by more than the size of its gross domestic product, the volume of investment, or the natural resources and infrastructure a country possesses. Behind these visible indicators lie intangible assets that are equally important to economic prosperity. Mutual trust, social cohesion, a sense of security and a shared national identity may not appear directly in national accounts, but they play a fundamental role in protecting economic wealth, encouraging productive activity and sustaining long-term development.

The painful events that have recently taken place in Karak invite us to reflect on the relationship between social stability and economic well-being. This is not about reducing a human tragedy to its financial consequences. Rather, it is about recognising a fundamental economic truth: People and the communities they build are at the heart of every productive economy.

Economists capture this dimension through the concept of social capital, which refers to the networks of trust, cooperation, and shared values that enable individuals and institutions to work together effectively. When trust is strong, transactions become easier, partnerships are more likely to succeed, and the costs of monitoring and enforcing agreements can decline. Businesses can cooperate more confidently, institutions can function more effectively and individuals are better able to pursue shared economic objectives.

Conversely, when trust weakens, economic relationships become more difficult and costly. Businesses may face greater uncertainty, cooperation may diminish and investors may become more cautious. Social cohesion, therefore, is not simply a desirable social condition. It is an important foundation for economic stability and sustainable growth.

Investment decisions are shaped by more than tax rates, interest rates, labour costs and access to finance. Investors also consider the broader environment in which businesses operate, including public safety, social stability and confidence in institutions. A stable society provides the predictability that businesses need to make long-term commitments, create jobs and expand productive capacity.

The economic consequences of violence also extend beyond immediate physical damage and financial losses. They can include psychological distress, weakened community relationships, declining confidence and disruptions to everyday economic activity. Such costs may not be recorded under a single item in the national budget, but they can affect productivity, social welfare, and the capacity of communities to contribute to economic development.

In Karak, as in every governorate across Jordan, social solidarity remains an important part of the country's social fabric. Preserving this fabric against hatred, fear and division is not only a social responsibility. It is also essential to protecting the conditions in which people work, businesses invest and communities prosper.

One of the greatest risks following a crime is that its consequences may extend beyond the immediate victims and become a source of wider fear, generalisation and social division. Responsibility must remain with those who commit the crime. The actions of individuals must never be used to justify blaming an entire religious or social group. Collective blame undermines trust, weakens social bonds and threatens the very cohesion on which a stable society depends.

Jordan's strength lies in the bonds that unite its people: Brotherhood, mutual respect, solidarity and a shared sense of belonging to one nation. Under the Hashemite leadership, which has consistently emphasised national unity and human dignity, these values remain central to the country's identity. The Jordanian family, in its broadest sense, represents a shared commitment to standing together in times of hardship, supporting one another and safeguarding the common good.

Nations are built not only through natural resources, financial capital and physical infrastructure, but also through the trust their people place in one another and their ability to overcome adversity without surrendering to division. Social cohesion should therefore be recognised as more than a moral or cultural value. It is a strategic national asset that strengthens stability, supports investment, enhances productive capacity and creates a firmer foundation for sustainable development.

Jordan must act alone against terrorism when others fail to act



Raed Omari

No country has supported Syria as Jordan has, and no people have welcomed Syrians as warmly as the Jordanians have. Period.

Having stated this frankly, proudly and unequivocally, I can confidently point to further established facts about Jordanian-Syrian relations.

Relations between Amman and Damascus appeared to be on a sound footing following the fall of Bashar Assad's regime in December 2024. However, tensions appeared to surface after Jordan carried out an air strike against terrorist targets in southern Syria on Monday.

Behind those strikes lies a deeper story: Jordan's growing frustration with Syria's failure to curb the presence of radical groups operating in the country's south, close to Jordan's northern border.

According to information available to me, Amman has repeatedly urged Damascus to take decisive action against extremist organisations operating along the two countries' approximately 400-kilometre border. These groups, according to senior Jordanian security sources, have been involved in drug-smuggling operations targeting Jordan.

More troublingly, I have also learned that some of these groups have cooperated with Israel in activities aimed at destabilising Jordan.

History offers a reminder of how seemingly incompatible forces can find common ground when their interests converge.

In 2014, the Daesh extremist group and elements of former Baathist network cooperated in Iraq despite their ideological differences.

The question, then, is why Syria's new rulers have not done more to confront extremist organisations in the country's war-ravaged south.

According to Jordanian sources, the Syrian authorities are grappling with an array of problems and challenges as they attempt to rebuild state institutions and restore stability. These competing demands may have limited their capacity to address the threat effectively.

Syrian sources, however, offer another explanation. They suggest that the government's inaction may also reflect internal ideological divisions, arguing that some officials within the new administration continue to hold extremist views that complicate the authorities' efforts to establish a coherent governing approach.

There is much more to be said about these competing explanations. But the central issue remains clear: Jordan cannot afford to leave its national security dependent on another country's ability or willingness to act.

Jordan has shown extraordinary solidarity with the Syrian people. It is now asking Damascus to demonstrate that solidarity in return by taking meaningful action against the groups threatening their shared security

As such, the recent airstrikes were not intended to destabilise Syria or violate its sovereignty, as some critics have argued. Rather, they should be

understood, in Jordan's view, as a security measure directed at a common threat: Terrorism.

For more than 15 years, Jordan has faced repeated terrorist threats and attacks, including the Irbid cell, the Karak attack, the Rukban bombing and the Salt incident. More recently, the attack on Hmoud Church last Friday has added to those concerns. The official Jordan has repeatedly linked various security threats to Daesh and its networks in Syria.

These experiences have reinforced a fundamental lesson for Jordan: Threats originating beyond its borders can have direct and devastating consequences at home.

Cooperation with Damascus remains essential. A stable Syria is in Jordan's interest, and effective coordination between the two countries would serve both peoples. But cooperation cannot become an excuse for inaction when an immediate threat to Jordan's security persists.

Ultimately, every state has a duty to protect its citizens. When neighbouring authorities are unable or unwilling to address threats emanating from their territory, Jordan may conclude that it has no choice but to act on its own.

Jordan has shown extraordinary solidarity with the Syrian people. It is now asking Damascus to demonstrate that solidarity in return by taking meaningful action against the groups threatening their shared security.

Beyond Netanyahu: What Israel's election means for Palestinians

By Ramzy Baroud

In the past, many Palestinians and Arabs followed Israeli elections closely.

They did so not because they entertained illusions that a Zionist leader would deliver peace and justice, dismantle the occupation or remove illegal settlements. Rather, they feared that some Israeli leaders were worse than others. They hoped to avert the worst-case scenario.

Over time, however, that distinction gave way to the belief that all Israeli leaders were essentially the same. This is not pessimism. It is experience.

Consider, for example, the expansion of illegal Jewish settlements during the Oslo peace process under Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Between 1992 and 1995, the number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, increased from 111,673 to 140,235 — a rise of more than 25 per cent, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, drawing on Israeli statistical records.

The same pattern continued under the Labour government of Ehud Barak.

Within his first six months, Barak's government issued tenders for 3,196 settlement housing units, exceeding the annual average under his right-wing predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu.

When Naftali Bennett formed a coalition government in June 2021 that included the Arab party Ra'am, settlement expansion continued unabated.

According to Peace Now, the Bennett-Lapid government advanced plans for 7,292 settlement housing units during its first year, a 26-per cent increase over the annual average recorded under previous Netanyahu governments.

The settlements are themselves a driving force behind the occupation. They require land, and therefore land confiscation; protection, and therefore an expanded military presence; water, roads and infrastructure, and therefore the appropriation of Palestinian resources. Together, these elements deepen dispossession and generate further Israeli violence.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the West Bank contained 645

Israeli settlement sites, outposts and other occupation installations by the end of 2025, including 350 settlement outposts.

The Palestinian Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission reported that Israeli authorities targeted approximately 29,335 dunums of Palestinian land through declarations of so-called "state land" between October 2023 and August 2026 — one of the largest waves of such land appropriation since Oslo.

Israeli media have spent the past three years reporting on major disagreements between the government, military establishment, intelligence agencies and political opposition over what should happen in Gaza

Israeli forces and settlers against Palestinians and their property during 2025 alone. In the first seven months of 2026, settler attacks increased by 63 per cent compared with the corresponding period of the previous year.

Typically, this violence, carried out by the Israeli occupation army and armed illegal settlers, is contextualised within the ongoing genocide in Gaza. But violence in the West Bank also serves another purpose beyond collective punishment: The confiscation of Palestinian orchards, the annexation of land, the expansion of settlements and the crushing of Palestinian resistance, including nonviolent opposition to this colonial enterprise.

Any Israeli candidate in the October 27 elections who supports settlement expansion does so with full knowledge of its consequences: Further dispossession, military occupation, annexation and violence.

The difference between prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, finance minister Bezalel Smotrich and national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, and politicians presented as less extreme, is often one of language, strategy and timing.

Former Israeli military chief and Yashar Party leader Gadi Eisenkot, for example, openly supports the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, despite his reputation as a more 'moderate' alternative to Netanyahu.

What, then, about Gaza?

Who among Israel's leading political figures is promising to end the genocide, lift the siege, ensure unrestricted humanitarian aid, restrain the army or investigate violations of international law? None.

Israeli media have spent the past three years reporting on major disagreements between the government, military establishment, intelligence agencies and political opposition over what should happen in Gaza.

Yet, Eisenkot has pledged to end Hamas' rule in Gaza within 18 months of taking office, whether through the Trump framework or through continued war.

For his part, opposition leader and former Prime Min-

ister Yair Lapid has proposed placing Gaza under Egyptian administration for 15 years, effectively shifting responsibility for Israel's actions onto Arab states.

Former prime minister Naftali Bennett, meanwhile, supports continued Israeli military control until Palestinian groups are disarmed.

The disagreement, therefore, is often over how Israel should achieve its objectives, rather than whether those objectives should change.

Other major disagreements primarily concern Israeli society: the conscription of ultra-Orthodox Jews, judicial reform, accountability for the failures of October 7.

But these disputes should not be confused with the questions that matter most to Palestinians.

If Netanyahu succeeds in forming another right-wing coalition, the policies of occupation, settlement expansion and military confrontation will continue, potentially with renewed momentum.

If Israel produces a broader coalition, its members may reach compromises over judicial reform, conscription and other domestic disputes. The occupation, however, is unlikely to become the central point of disagreement.

More troubling still, even a government leaning toward the center-left might succeed in presenting Israel to the international community as a country ready to move beyond the image it acquired during three years of genocide, without fundamentally changing its conduct on the ground.

The international community must therefore remain vigilant. It cannot allow a future Israeli government to present itself as a peacemaker, or sell the illusion of a newly reformed Israel, while continuing to invest in settlements, occupation, war and genocide.

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Thursday, October 29, 2026

JPMC records net profit of JD315.1m in first 9 months 2026 — data

Company's data shows a 7.9 per cent increase in sales revenue

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) has recorded a net profit of JD315.1 million through the end of the third quarter of this year. This figure was achieved despite challenges posed by geopolitical developments in the region, sharp increases in the costs of essential production inputs, and disruptions to shipping and supply chains. The company's financial data shows a 7.9 per cent increase in sales revenue, reaching JD1.101 billion, up from JD1.020 billion during the same period last year, driven by an increase in sales volume. The sharp rise in raw material prices impacted production costs, mainly, the price of sulfur surged by 165.7 per cent and the



Jordan Phosphate Mines Company records a net profit of JD315.1 million through the end of the third quarter of 2026

cost of ammonia rose by 58.4 per cent, compared with the same period last year. Due to regional conditions, the company faced frequent interruptions in natural gas supplies during

this period. Consequently, the company had to harness available alternatives at an additional cost to ensure the continuity of its production lines and meet its obligations to clients

in global markets. As part of its efforts to slash expenditures, the company cut its administrative expenses by 8 per cent, compared to the same period last year. The company con-

tinues to implement "strategic" plans, aimed at enhancing productivity and rationalising costs, which would safeguard shareholder interests and support the national economy.

Chemicals giant BASF raises profit guidance after Iran war price hikes

FRANKFURT, Germany (AFP) — German chemicals giant BASF raised its 2026 profit outlook for the second time this year on Wednesday after increasing prices to clients following the outbreak of the Iran war.

The maker of products ranging from automotive paints to sunscreen ingredients now expects a core profit of 7.4 billion to 7.8 billion euros (\$8.2 to \$8.7 billion) this year, up from a previous forecast of 6.9 billion to 7.7 billion euros.

BASF's earnings have been boosted after it hiked prices for some goods in March by up to 30 per cent in response to surging costs for energy and other raw materials because of the US-Israeli war against Iran.

The company said Wednesday that its core profit in the third quarter rose 15 per cent from the period last year to 1.6 billion euros. Overall sales were up 14 per cent over the period at 16.4 billion



The logo of German chemical giant BASF is pictured at its headquarters in Ludwigshafen, western Germany

euros. "The increase was mainly driven by considerably higher prices [plus 12 per cent] and slightly higher volumes [plus 2 per cent]," the company said in a statement.

The results come as the European chemicals industry is under major pressure from high energy prices and increasingly intense competition from Asian rivals.

BASF is undertaking a major restructuring, cutting thousands of jobs at its historic German headquarters in Ludwigshafen after

opening earlier this year a major chemical complex in China to serve Asian markets.

The company is also exploring the multibillion-euro acquisition of its German rival Evonik, saying the combination could let it obtain feedstocks and precursor chemicals at lower cost.

"This is a serious attempt," Chief Executive Markus Kamieth told a press conference about the proposed merger.

"We're committed, this is certainly not something that is going to drag on for years," he said.

US Fed holds interest rates steady despite surging inflation

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The US Federal Reserve (Fed) on Wednesday held interest rates steady, in line with market expectations, days ahead of crucial midterm elections where surging inflation has been a key issue.

The 12-member Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) voted 10-2 to hold rates at a target range between 3.75 to 4 per cent, citing the need for more data in the fight against inflation, after having hiked for the first time in three years at its previous meeting in September.

"The accumulation of more information will help the Committee determine the policy stance appropriate to ensure a timely return of inflation to the Committee's 2 per cent goal," the Fed said in a statement announcing its decision.

Two members of the committee, Governor Lisa Cook and Cleveland Fed President Beth Hammack dissented, calling instead for an immediate 0.25 percentage-point rate hike.

The central bank has missed its long-term 2 per cent target for inflation for more than five years, with households and businesses battered by sustained price increases.

US President Donald Trump's war on Iran, launched in late February, has sent energy prices skyrocketing and fuelled domestic inflation, alongside his wide-ranging tariff policies.

Prices have also been driven by an investment boom in artificial intelligence (AI) technology and the build-out of huge data centers to support it.

The decision comes six days ahead of the November 3 midterm elections, in which the Democratic Party is seeking to wrest control of both houses of Congress from Trump's Republicans.

Trump's handling of the economy has been



A reporter rubs their face as Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh answers questions as he delivers remarks during a news conference following the Federal Open Market Committee meetings at Federal Reserve Headquarters on October 28, 2026 in Washington, DC

a key issue throughout the campaign, with working-class households across the country struggling to make ends meet despite largely stable overall economic growth.

US consumer inflation came in hotter than expected in September, clocking in at 3.7 per cent, edging back towards a three-year high established in May.

'In terms of the economics of it, I don't totally understand the logic'

Still, key policymakers at the Fed — including Warsh — have signalled that they did not see an urgency to raise rates again immediately.

Speaking in Bangkok earlier this month, Warsh said that US economic conditions had "broadly conformed" to policymakers' expectations, fueling speculation that the Fed may pause at the October meeting.

On Wednesday, the Fed said economic activity in the United States was expanding at a "strong" pace, upgrading its language

from the FOMC meeting six weeks prior.

'Don't understand the logic'

Wendy Edelberg, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, told AFP before the meeting that a decision to hold after raising rates in September was potentially contradictory, given the labour market — the Fed's other mandate — has been largely stable.

"In terms of the economics of it, I don't totally understand the logic," she said. "If there was a reason to raise interest rates at the last meeting, I think that there's just as compelling of an economic reason to raise interest rates at this meeting."

The Fed has a dual mandate to maintain maximum employment while keeping inflation to its long-term target.

It achieves this goal largely using one tool: The economy's key interest rate. Raising rates tends to cool inflation but can also dampen economic activity; lowering them can spur economic activity but also fuel inflation.

The US unemployment rate has been largely stable around 4.2 per cent over the last year, with job growth mostly in positive territory — albeit driven by a few sectors. Other advanced

economies have also been grappling with high inflation, and on Wednesday Canada's central bank raised its key rate to 2.5 per cent, its first hike since July 2023.

Attacks on Fed

Loretta Mester, former head of the Cleveland Fed, took part in FOMC meetings during her tenure and insisted that the committee did not "take into account any kind of political issues" when it debated monetary policy. Still, Trump has loomed large over the Fed since he returned to power last year.

In his second term, he has led an unprecedented assault on the Fed's independence, pursuing criminal charges against Warsh's predecessor Jay Powell and attempting to fire Governor Cook as he demanded lower interest rates.

While the probe against Powell was dropped to smooth the way for Warsh's Senate confirmation, the White House has recently renewed its drive to fire Cook — despite a Supreme Court decision that battled back an earlier attempt.

"I don't think it's going to stop because I think it's in the nature of this administration to continue those attacks," said Mester.

ASEZA, Uzbek delegation explore industrial investment, trade opportunities

AMMAN (JT) — The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) held talks with a delegation from Uzbekistan on Wednesday to explore investment and trade opportunities and potential partnerships with industrial companies in Aqaba, on the sidelines of the Special Operations Forces Exhibition and Conference 2026.

ASEZA Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Investment Mohammad Abu Omar said Aqaba offers significant opportunities for industrial investment and export growth, supported by its competitive advantages and the production capacity of companies operating in the zone. These factors position Aqaba as a gateway to international markets.

Discussions focused on facilitating access for Uzbek products to the



The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority holds talks with a delegation from Uzbekistan on Wednesday to explore investment and trade opportunities

US market through Jordan and expanding the presence of Aqaba-made products in European markets, according to a statement by ASEZA.

ASEZA commissioner said the visit included meetings with major garment manufacturers in Aqaba to connect Uzbek investors with local companies and explore industrial coop-

eration and investment partnerships aimed at expanding production, increasing exports and accessing new markets.

The delegation was also briefed on the experience of garment manufacturers in Aqaba and their achievements in production and exports, highlighting the zone's ability to attract industrial investment, sup-

port business growth and foster international partnerships.

Abu Omar said ASEZA continues to attract high-quality investment and expand international partnerships to enhance the competitiveness of the industrial sector and strengthen Aqaba's position as a regional hub for production, trade and exports.

US stocks rise as AI boosts tech shares

NEWYORK (AFP) — Wall Street stocks rose early on Wednesday behind improved momentum for artificial intelligence (AI) shares, as markets awaited a Federal Reserve (Fed) decision.

After worries about financing for massive AI projects dogged tech

shares last week, the sector has benefited from upbeat developments in recent days, most recently strong results from South Korean chip giant SK hynix.

About 10 minutes into trading, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 0.1 per cent

at 52,444.92.

The broad-based S&P 500 gained 0.2 per cent to 7,735.55, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index advanced 0.2 per cent to 26,540.86.

Upcoming results from Microsoft, Amazon and Google parent Alphabet will test whether

the latest round of AI enthusiasm is extended or begins to wane.

The market is also set to weigh Wednesday's Fed decision. While inflation continues to exceed the central bank's limits, the Fed is expected to hold rates steady this time.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD15.8 million spread over 5.1 million shares that traded through 4,982 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.93 per cent, closing at 4114.89 points.

Out of 104 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 30 companies rose while the share price of another 39 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Philadelphia Pharmaceuticals by 6.12 per cent, Rumm Financial Brokerage by 4.32 per cent, Int'l Arabian Development and Jordanian Trading Company by 4.17 per cent, Investment Expatriates Investment Holding by 3.75 per cent and Jordan Dairy by 3.63 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordan Express Tourist Transport by 7.11 per cent, Jordan Phosphate Mines by 4.35 per cent, Amwaj Properties by 4.17 per cent, Deera Investment and Real Estate Development Company by 4 per cent, and Jordanian Real Estate Company for Development by 3.90 per cent.



Calls to revisit Social Security dependency supplements as women become key breadwinners

By Hadeel El Bis

The question of dependency supplements under Jordan's Social Security Law is back in the spotlight, with growing calls to review the relevant provisions in line with the principle of equality between men and women. Economic and social change has made women a central partner in supporting families and, in many cases, the main breadwinner.

The debate follows an article by Dr Sawsan Al Daajah of the Higher Population Council, which examined how women are treated equally with men in insurance obligations throughout their years of contribution, yet differently in some benefits at retirement. The sticking point is the requirement to prove dependency status in order to receive supplements to a retirement pension.

Daajah argues that the issue is not about securing extra privileges for women, but about fairness and consistency in the philosophy of the legislation. If men and women are subject to the same deductions and contributions, she says, it follows that basic retirement entitlements should rest on neutral insurance rules, and that any social supplements should be tied to actual dependency, need and family responsibilities rather than traditional assumptions about gender.

Fairness, she adds, cannot stop at equal financial deductions followed by a

return to traditional roles when benefits are distributed. Legislation must reflect a changing social reality in which women shoulder a growing share of economic responsibility within the family.

According to the Department of Statistics, women head around 18.2 per cent of Jordanian households. The figure points to the widening scope of women's responsibility for supporting families and making economic decisions, whether through widowhood, divorce or migration, or because they are the primary earner.

Dependency: proof of status, not discrimination

Moussa Al Subaihi, an expert in insurance and social protection and a legal specialist, says the Social Security Law, in essence and philosophy, does not discriminate between men and women in insurance rights. The exceptions, he notes, are provisions that amount to positive discrimination, reflecting the nature and circumstances of women's work.

He points to the retirement age for old-age pensions. Women may retire at 55 and can carry on working if they wish, while the age for men is 60. The contribution period required for a hazardous-occupation pension is also shorter for women, at 15 years against 18 for men.

On the most contentious point, dependency supplements, Subaihi says the law

makes no distinction between men and women in the underlying entitlement. Instead, it links the supplement to proof of dependency status as set out in the law.

He cites Article 89, which provides for an increase in the old-age or early-retirement pension of an insured man or woman in respect of the family members they support, subject to the conditions and controls laid down in the law.

The difference, he explains, lies in how dependency is proved, not in the right itself. A man is not usually asked to prove that he supports his children, since he is legally obliged to provide maintenance under existing legislation. A woman, by contrast, must present a certificate of dependency or other legal documents showing that she is the actual breadwin-

ner for the family or children, where she bears the cost of their upkeep.

A woman is entitled to a supplement for her children once it is established that she is their main provider, whether because her husband has died or is absent, because they are separated, or in other cases where she bears the cost of maintenance. She may also receive a supplement for her husband if the Social Security Corporation's medical committee has found him totally incapacitated and he has no income or work.

Subaihi adds that social security is founded on achieving social justice. For that reason, most systems do not allow a husband and wife both to receive a supplement for the same children, as that would give the family a double benefit for the same circumstance, contrary to the philosophy of social protection.

concepts around dependency, so that the benefit goes to the party who serves the family's interests best.

He gives the example of a husband with a pension of 200 dinars and a wife with a pension of 1,000 dinars. Granting the supplement to the wife in such a case could benefit the family more, he argues, and this could be regulated through legislative amendments or clear implementing regulations.

Any future review of the law, he stresses, must balance social justice with the financial sustainability of the Social Security fund. Justice, he says, begins with bringing all workers under the Social Security umbrella, Jordanian and non-Jordanian, men and women, and applying the law to everyone, including those in the informal sector.

For its part, the Social Security Corporation has said in earlier statements that the law rests on an insurance philosophy built on solidarity, social justice and financial sustainability. Insurance rights, it says, depend on the provisions of the law and the conditions for entitlement, not on gender.

The number of insured people covered by Social Security stands at about 1.584 million, of whom 462,882 are women. A further 35,594 women contribute voluntarily.

The figures also show 58,032 active female retirees drawing pensions in their own right, while 135,275 women are active beneficiaries receiving shares of various types of pension.

A changing reality calls for review

Al Subaihi nonetheless acknowledges that the economic and social reality of Jordanian families has changed fundamentally. Men are no longer the sole bearers of financial responsibility. In many households women are essential partners in meeting costs, and may earn more or be the family's de facto breadwinner.

These changes, he says, call for a fresh look at some legislative

