Published by the Jordan Press Foundation
www.jordantimes.com
500 Fils
Volume 51 | Number 15344

THE JORDAN TIMES



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Jordan condemns attack on Qatari LNG carrier in Arabian Gulf

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Sunday condemned an attack on the "Al Mayeda" liquefied natural gas (LNG) carrier, owned by Qatar Gas Transport Company (Nakilat), while sailing in the Arabian Gulf, describing it as a violation of international law and a threat to freedom of maritime navigation.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed the need to respect international law, safeguard freedom of navigation and ensure the safety of vessels and their crews.

The ministry warned that targeting energy tankers could have serious repercussions for regional security and stability, the global economy and the environment.

It also reaffirmed Jordan's solidarity with Qatar and its support for all measures taken by Doha to protect its security, interests and national assets.

For its part, Qatar strongly condemned the attack, describing it as a dangerous act that threatens maritime safety and the security of global energy supplies.

In a statement carried by the Qatar News Agency, the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the country reserves the right to take all necessary measures, in accordance with international law and the UN Charter, to protect its assets, vessels and crews.

The ministry added that the relevant authorities had launched investigations to establish the circumstances of the incident and identify those responsible.

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King to inaugurate third ordinary session of 20th Parliament on Monday



AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah will inaugurate the third ordinary session of the 20th Parliament on Monday, delivering the Speech from the Throne before a joint session of the Senate and House of Representatives.

Under Article 79 of the Constitution, the King inaugurates the ordinary session of the National Assembly with a Speech from the Throne addressed to a joint meeting of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

Following the Royal address, the Senate will convene to select members of the committee tasked with drafting its response to the Speech from the Throne.

A Royal Decree issued on September 30 postponed the ordinary session until November 2, 2026, with a subsequent decree summoning Parliament to convene on that date.

Article 78 of the Constitution stipulates that the King summons the National Assembly to an ordinary session on October 1 each year, or on the first working day thereafter if the date falls on an official holiday. The article also authorises the King, through a Royal Decree published in the Official Gazette, to postpone the session for up to two months.

The 20th House of Representatives was elected under the 2022 Election Law, which introduced closed party lists for the first time in Jordan's electoral history, allocating 41 of the House's 138 seats to political parties.

The tradition of the Speech from the Throne dates back to 1929, during the Emirate of Transjordan, while the first such address under the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was delivered in 1946.

His Majesty King Abdullah delivered his first Speech from the Throne in 1999, following his assumption of constitutional powers.

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Cabinet approves Social Security reforms, judicial amendments, $68 million water project



Prime Ministry photo

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan chairs a Cabinet on Sunday, during which a set of amendments to the Social Security Corporation's insurance coverage bylaw are approved

AMMAN (JT) — The Cabinet on Sunday approved amendments to the Social Security Corporation's insurance coverage bylaw, introducing new provisions aimed at expanding coverage, protecting workers' retirement entitlements and extending social security protection to workers operating through digital platforms.

The amendments, approved during a Cabinet session chaired by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan, introduce a new coverage mechanism allowing voluntary subscribers who move into employment covered by the Social Security Law at a lower salary to continue paying voluntary contributions on the difference between their previous insured salary and their new salary, according to a Prime Ministry statement.

The measure is designed to help subscribers maintain their insured salary levels and protect their future retirement benefits when moving to lower-paid jobs. It is also intended to encourage workers to take up new employment opportunities without compromising their social security entitlements, Petra said.

The amended bylaw also introduces two new contribution categories, set at 10 per cent and 25 per cent, for partial coverage under old-age Insurance for self-employed individuals working in freelance professions.

The new categories are intended to accommodate the financial circumstances of self-employed workers while providing them with basic insurance protection, particularly against occupational injuries, given their exposure to workplace risks.

The amendments also establish a mandatory framework for extending social security coverage to workers operating through digital platforms and smart applications.

Under the new mechanism, the Social Security Corporation will be able to register these workers through a flexible system that takes into account the volume of work they perform and the contributions paid on their behalf, ensuring access to the insurance protections provided under the law.

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JT file

The Jaber crossing on the northern border with Syria

AND foils attempt to smuggle 2 million drug pills through Jaber border crossing

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — The authorities on Sunday aborted the alleged smuggling of 2 million Captagon pills via a cargo truck that was entering Jaber border crossing with Syria earlier in the day, official sources said.

The Anti-Narcotic Department (AND), in cooperation with the Customs Department and other security agencies, received a tip regarding a truck that was entering the Kingdom and referred it to the inspection area, according to Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi.

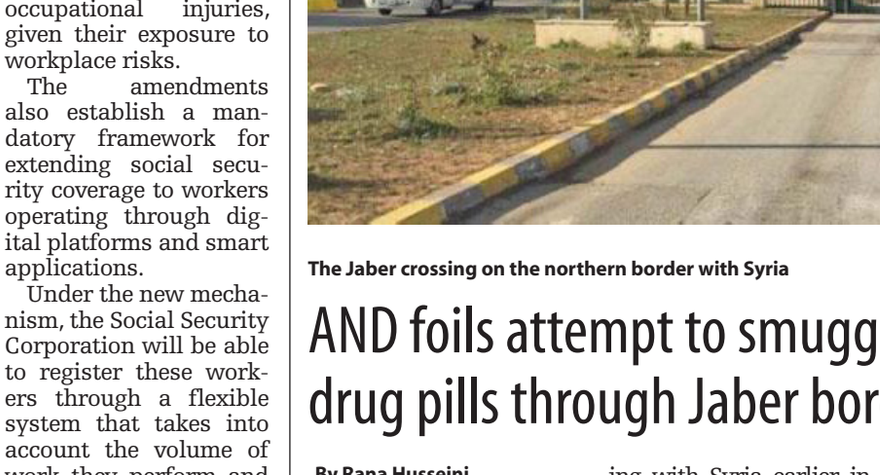
Continued on page 5

Israeli attack damages two TUA educational units in Gaza

AMMAN (JT) — Two educational units run by Tkiyet Um Ali (TUA) in northern Gaza sustained "significant damage" in an Israeli attack on Friday, disrupting facilities providing education and psychosocial support to children under the Gaza Children's Recovery Programme, according to TUA.

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Jordan's exports to EU rise 11.4% as Kingdom prepares to host investment conference



AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's exports to European Union countries rose by 11.4 per cent during the first eight months of this year, reaching JD411 million, as the Kingdom prepares to host a major Jordan-EU Investment Conference aimed at attracting European investment and strengthening economic ties.

The conference, scheduled for November 19, is expected to showcase investment opportunities worth nearly $15 billion across a range of key economic sectors.

According to figures released by the Department of Statistics (DoS), Jordan's exports to the EU increased from JD369 million during the first eight months of 2025 to JD411 million during the same period this year, marking a rise of JD42 million.

Exports to The Netherlands recorded particularly strong growth, climbing by 46.5 per cent to JD104 million, compared with JD71 million during the corresponding period last year.

Meanwhile, Jordan's imports from EU countries fell by 7 per cent to JD1.942 billion, down from JD2.088 billion during the first eight months of 2025.

Imports from Germany also declined, dropping by 12 per cent to JD397 million, compared with JD451 million during the same period last year, according to DoS.

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Princess Sumaya says future of AI will be shaped by those who turn technology into meaningful impact

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Princess Sumaya Bint El Hassan, president of the Royal Scientific Society, has called on Jordan and the region to move beyond consuming technology and become active contributors to its development, stressing the importance of digital sovereignty, skills and inclusive growth.

Speaking at the "AI: From Adoption to Impact – Sovereignty, Skills, and Inclusive Digital Growth Forum" in Amman on Sunday, Princess Sumaya said that the real measure of artificial intelligence (AI) is not how quickly countries adopt it, but how effectively they use it to transform their economies, address societal challenges and improve people's lives.



Photo Courtesy of Princess Sumaya University for Technology

HRH Princess Sumaya Bint El Hassan, President of the Royal Scientific Society on Sunday speaks at the 'AI: From Adoption to Impact – Sovereignty, Skills, and Inclusive Digital Growth Forum' in Amman

During a fireside conversation moderated by Jordan Payments and Clearing Company CEO Maha Bahou, the princess called for Jordan and the wider region to move beyond being consumers of technology and become active contributors to its development, according to a provided statement.

She stressed that the next phase of the AI revolution must be shaped by countries capable of developing their own solutions, nurturing talent, and ensuring that technological progress translates into tangible economic and social benefits.

She also emphasised that digital sovereignty should not be understood simply as ownership of infrastructure or data, but as the ability of nations to shape, govern and benefit from their own digital futures.

Jordan, she said, must build the capacity to participate meaningfully in the development of emerging technologies rather than depend entirely on solutions developed elsewhere.

Drawing on international experiences, Princess Sumaya referred to Estonia's advances in digital governance, India's digital public infrastructure, Finland's investment in education, Morocco's renewable energy ambitions and Costa Rica's approach to sustainable development.

These examples, she noted, demonstrate how countries can use technology and innovation to respond to their own priorities, and build distinctive development models.

She also emphasised the human dimension of AI, stressing that technology alone cannot deliver transformation. Education and skills development must therefore remain central, with greater attention given to critical thinking, creativity, adaptability and lifelong learning.

As AI reshapes professional roles and industries, people must be equipped not only to use new tools, but also to question, develop and apply them responsibly, she added.

Princess Sumaya also identified healthcare, education, energy security and climate change as areas in which AI could make a particularly meaningful contribution. She also underlined the need for responsible AI frameworks that address ethics, governance, data protection and the wider environmental and social consequences of technological development.

Achieving this, she said, requires capable institutions, evidence-based policymaking, appropriate regulation, and effective collaboration between the public and private sectors, all underpinned by trust.

Fadi Qutaishat, chairman of the board of directors of the Information and Communications Technology Association of Jordan (int@j), highlighted the opportunity for Jordan to develop a competitive AI industry capable of serving regional and international markets.

He pointed to the potential of building an Arabic-language layer on top of global AI models, including speech recognition across different Arabic dialects, language models adapted to local needs and advanced text-to-speech technologies.

Jordan's pool of highly skilled talent, he said, provides a strong foundation for developing such solutions. He also stressed the importance of government institutions adopting locally developed technologies, and creating opportunities for Jordanian companies and young professionals.

Nidal Bitar, chief executive officer of int@j, stressed that the success of AI adoption must ultimately be measured through its contribution to productivity, competitiveness and wider economic participation.

He highlighted the forum's three central themes, namely, digital sovereignty, skills and inclusive growth. Bitar also acknowledged Princess Sumaya's patronage of ShETechs since its establishment in 2018, recognising her long-standing commitment to advancing women's participation and economic empowerment in the ICT sector.

German Ambassador to Jordan Bertram von Moltke highlighted the growing integration of AI across Jordan's ICT sector, noting that more than 60 per cent of companies were incorporating AI into their products and services.

He referred to practical applications in manufacturing and retail, where AI can improve quality, reduce waste and strengthen demand and inventory forecasting.

The ambassador also acknowledged Princess Sumaya's longstanding contribution to scientific and technological development in Jordan.

He referred to the establishment of Princess Sumaya University for Technology in 1991 and the role of the Royal Scientific Society in connecting research, innovation and business. He also highlighted the Society's incubator, which has supported the launch of more than 250 start-ups, as an example of the ecosystem needed to turn knowledge and research into economic opportunity.

The forum's keynote address, "The State of AI Impact", was delivered by Hamza Al Sarhan, founder and chief executive officer of OpsHaven Technologies.

He examined the gap between adopting AI tools and achieving meaningful organisational impact, emphasising that moving beyond pilot projects to operational solutions requires sound data preparation, effective integration, robust security and a clear understanding of return on investment.

A further focus of the forum was the role of young people in shaping Jordan's technological future. The university competition, "A Leap Towards 2033", attracted 64 submissions from 73 students representing 17 Jordanian universities, with 11 projects selected for presentation.

The breadth of participation was particularly notable, bringing together students from nursing, pharmacy, business, media, film, applied arts and education, demonstrating that the future of AI is not confined to traditional technology disciplines. Three winning entries were recognised during the forum.

Discussions throughout the day explored the practical returns on investment in AI, Jordanian success stories, the skills required for the changing labour market, the emergence of the AI-augmented professional, digital sovereignty and infrastructure, and the question of who is best placed to deliver meaningful impact.

Organised by int@j through its ShETechs Unit, the forum was supported by the second phase of the Innovative Private Sector Development Project, implemented by the German Agency for International Cooperation and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply.

The forum's central message was that Jordan's opportunity lies not simply in keeping pace with the global AI revolution, but in helping shape it. That will require investment in people, research and home-grown innovation, alongside the policies, partnerships and institutions needed to ensure that technological progress delivers lasting and inclusive benefits.

Shoman Foundation honours winners of 2026 Arab Researcher and Children's Literature awards

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — Under the patronage of HRH Princess Ghida Talal, the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation honoured the winners of its 44th Abdul Hameed Shoman Award for Arab Researchers and 20th Abdul Hameed Shoman Award for Children's Literature for 2026.

The ceremony, held last week, saw Princess Ghida present the awards and commemorative plaques to the winners.

In her keynote address, Princess Ghida stressed the importance of creating an environment that supports scientific research and enables researchers to realise their potential.

"Scientists need an environment that believes in their potential, provides the resources they need, and gives them the time and space to pursue research. They also need strong partnerships across the region and around the world. Institutions such as Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation have an important role to play in making this possible," she said.

She noted that the Foundation had invested in Arab scientific talent for more than four decades, at a time when scientific research was not a priority for many institutions in the region.



Photo courtesy of AbdulHameed Shoman Foundation

HRH Princess Ghida Talal (centre) with awardees at the event organised last week by Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Amman

"Forty-four years ago, when scientific research was not a priority for many in our region, this foundation believed that Arab talent was worth investing in and began honouring generations of Arab researchers. Our ambition is for the success of Arab scientists to no longer be an exception we celebrate, but the norm," Princess Ghida said.

Also addressing the ceremony, foundation Chief Executive Officer Valentina Kassisieh highlighted the role of curiosity, research and institutional support in advancing human progress.

"Many achievements that have changed people's lives began with a question asked by someone who refused to settle for a ready-made answer. It is this spirit of curiosity and discovery that has driven so much of human progress," Kassisieh said.

She stressed, however, that curiosity alone was not enough, noting that researchers and creative professionals also needed opportunities and institutional support to experiment, persevere and develop their ideas.

"Arab scientists, researchers and writers have demonstrated their ability to contribute to human knowledge, both within our region and beyond. Yet, this contribution has not, so far, closed the gap between the talent we possess and the opportunities we provide," she said.

Bridging this gap, Kassisieh added, was a shared responsibility that began with education systems fostering curiosity and critical thinking. It also required universities and research centres to provide supportive environments for inquiry, alongside institutions willing to invest in ideas and help translate them into achievements that improve people's lives.

The foundation also honoured Lebanese-born scientist Huda Zoghbi, an internationally renowned researcher in neuroscience and genetics.

Zoghbi's scientific discoveries, particularly her identification of the genetic cause of Rett syndrome, have transformed understanding of neurological disorders and opened new avenues for research into their causes and potential treatments.

Chairman of the Scientific Committee Labib Khadra said honouring Zoghbi recognised both her exceptional scientific achievements and the international impact of her research career.

"Honouring Dr Huda Zoghbi today is a celebration of an exceptional scientific achievement and recognition of a research career whose impact has reached scientists and researchers around the world," Khadra said.

He added that the award was intended to inspire Arab researchers and highlight the global significance of scientific discovery.

"We want this award to send a message to every Arab researcher: Science knows no geographical boundaries, and a discovery that begins with a question in a laboratory can change humanity's understanding of the world," Khadra said.





JTB photos

The weeklong event attracted large crowds and featured international celebrities, including former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson, Brazilian football legend Ronaldinho, Turkish actor Engin Altan Düzyatan and social media personality Hasbulla Magomedov

Int'l MMA event puts Jordan's tourism attractions on global stage — JTB

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Mixed Martial Arts Week concluded in the capital, Amman, at the iconic Roman Theatre, drawing large crowds and featuring international stars.

The weeklong event attracted large crowds and featured international celebrities, including former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson, Brazilian football legend Ronaldinho, Turkish actor Engin Altan Düzyatan and social media personality Hasbulla Magomedov.

Organised as part of a broader initiative by the Ministry of Tourism and the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB), the event aimed to promote sports tourism, diversify the country's tourism products, reach new international markets and reduce seasonal fluctuations in visitor numbers.

Activities were held at several prominent historical and tourist sites across the Kingdom.

The programme opened at the Odeon Theatre in downtown Amman, followed by open training sessions along the Dead Sea Corniche and official weigh-ins at the Amman Citadel.

The week culminated in the final bouts at the Roman Theatre, according to a JTB statement.

Tyson and Turkish actor Düzyatan also visited the ancient city of Petra, including its famous Treasury monument, highlighting efforts to combine international sporting events with Jordan's cultural and archaeological heritage.

According to the statement, the event's impact was amplified by extensive international media and digital coverage, reaching key target markets and converting sporting momentum into opportunities to boost tourist arrivals, stimulate spending and extend stays.

The initiative served as a model for blending cultural heritage with sports and entertainment, enriched by traditional artistic performances. It reinforces Jordan's status as a comprehensive destination for international events while transforming its landmark sites into global promotional platforms with sustainable economic impact, the statement said.

Hand in Hand Association takes part in Bee-Friendly Farming Day in Cairo

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's Hand in Hand for Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Association took part in Bee-Friendly Farming Day at Rahaya Farm in Cairo.

The event was organised as part of the Promoting Local Apiary Networks and Bee Entrepreneurial Excellence (PLANBEE) project, which aims to strengthen local beekeeping networks and promote entrepreneurship in the sector, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the association said the event included planting bee-friendly flowers and herbs to attract pollinators. The initiative aims to enhance biodiversity, provide sustainable food sources for bees and help protect them from environmental threats.



JT file

Jordan's Hand in Hand for Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Association takes part in Bee-Friendly Farming Day at Rahaya Farm in Cairo

The association said its participation reflects its commitment to strengthening Jordan's presence in regional environmental initiatives and exchanging expertise with partners across the Mediterranean region.

It added that the initiative supports the development of the bee economy and raises awareness among local communities about the importance of protecting natural pollinators.

The association noted that beekeeping and natural pollinators play a vital role in sustaining food systems and preserving natural resources, while also supporting rural livelihoods and local economic development.

PLANBEE seeks to stimulate local economic growth by developing the beekeeping sector and promoting sustainability, innovation and entrepreneurship. The project is implemented by an alliance of seven partners from six countries: Cyprus, Egypt, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.

The European Union funds 89 per cent of the project through the Interreg NEXT MED programme. The project has a total budget of around 2.8 million euro, including a direct EU contribution of nearly 2.5 million euro.

Army chief, Libyan military delegation discuss cooperation

AMMAN (JT) — Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj Gen Majdi Harasis on Sunday met with a Libyan military delegation led by Lt Gen Khairi Khalifa Al Tamimi, chairman of the Jordanian-Libyan Joint Cooperation Committee.

The meeting, held at the General Command of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF), focused on strengthening military cooperation and coordination, exchanging expertise in military and training fields and enhancing defence capabilities and readiness, according to a JAF statement.

Harasis highlighted the strategic ties between Jordan and Libya, while Al Tamimi praised the capabilities of the JAF and its progress in training, qualification and modernisation. He also stressed the importance of expanding military cooperation to support regional security and stability.



JAF photo

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj Gen Majdi Harasis on Sunday meets with a Libyan military delegation led by Lt. Gen. Khairi Khalifa Al Tamimi

Separately, the Jordanian-Libyan Joint Military Cooperation Committee held a meeting at the JAF General Command, attended by the Assistant Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for Operations and Training and senior Jordanian and Libyan military officers.

The meeting addressed prospects for cooperation in military, training and technical fields in light of regional developments. The two sides also reviewed joint programmes and initiatives aimed at enhancing the efficiency and readiness of their armed forces.

Also on Sunday, Harasis held talks with Italian Ambassador to Jordan Pierluigi Zampolini on bilateral military cooperation and ways to expand collaboration in training and qualification.

The two sides reiterated the strong ties between Jordan and Italy and stressed the importance of expanding military cooperation to enhance the efficiency and readiness of their armed forces.

Zampolini commended the JAF's role in supporting regional security and stability and expressed Italy's keenness to further develop military cooperation and expand joint efforts.

The meeting was attended by senior JAF officers and the Italian defence attaché in Amman.

Royal decree appoints Smadi as Chief Islamic Justice

AMMAN (JT) — A Royal Decree was issued on Sunday appointing Sheikh Kamal Ali Saleh Smadi as Chief Islamic Justice, effective November 1, 2026.

A separate Royal Decree accepted Smadi's resignation as president of the Sharia Judicial Council, effective the same date.

A third Royal Decree accepted Sheikh Abdul Hafez Al Rabta's resignation as Chief Islamic Justice, also effective November 1, 2026.

Ministers highlight green skills, community initiatives, economic opportunities at national youth conference

Conference focuses on translating environmental awareness into action, addressing pressure on natural resources

By Hanan Abuzaid

AMMAN — Youth Minister Raed Adwan and Environment Minister Ayman Sulaiman on Sunday launched the proceedings of the Jordan Local Youth Climate Change Conference 2026, bringing together young people, policymakers and international organisations to discuss climate challenges and youth-led solutions.

Held under the banner "From Scarcity to Resilience: Youth Lead Climate Solutions in Jordan", the conference focused on translating environmental awareness into practical initiatives and creating economic and social opportunities for young people.

Sulaiman highlighted the government's efforts to promote green growth under the Economic Modernisation Vision for 2026–2029, pointing to opportunities in renewable energy, sustainable transport, eco-tourism and climate-smart agriculture.



Photo courtesy of Youth Ministry

Youth Minister Raed Adwan and Environment Minister Ayman Sulaiman on Sunday launches the proceedings of the Jordan Local Youth Climate Change Conference 2026

He said that young people's skills and innovative capacities were essential to advancing the Kingdom's environmental priorities, adding

"Environmental stewardship is no longer just about conservation, it is a critical economic pillar".

The minister also highlighted national training programmes that have equipped hundreds of young people with practical green skills, including renewable energy systems, greywater treatment and circular economy practices.

Adwan highlighted the role of the Kingdom's network of youth centres in supporting young people and providing platforms for climate action.

He said that tens of thousands of young volunteers participated in environmental awareness activities, tree-planting campaigns and solid waste reduction initiatives in 2025.

Adwan also called on young people to register their environmental initiatives for national recognition, including through the Hussein Bin Abdullah II Award for Voluntary Work, to expand their reach and impact.

During a panel discussion, representatives of UNICEF, UNFPA, Generations for Peace, Plan International and UNESCO noted that pressure on natural resources, particularly water scarcity, could heighten tensions within communities.

UNESCO Representative in Jordan Noha Bawazir highlighted the organisation's support for a whole-school sustainability pilot programme in six Jordanian schools, aimed at linking classroom learning with environmental practices, green skills and future employment opportunities.

CEO of Generations for Peace Lama Khatib stressed that young innovators must prioritise genuine community needs over administrative processes.

She called on young people to focus on solving environmental problems that directly affect their local communities rather than seeking funding before identifying a real need, noting that when an initiative addresses a clear community priority, support naturally follows.



Petra photo

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabsheh on Sunday reviews progress in implementing the Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) priorities for the energy and mining sectors

Kharabsheh reviews progress on energy, mining EMV priorities

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabsheh on Sunday reviewed progress in implementing the Economic Modernisation Vision (EMV) priorities for the energy and mining sectors during October.

Kharabsheh chaired a meeting with the ministry's vision liaison officers to review follow-up reports, assess progress on listed projects and check compliance with established timelines, according to a ministry statement.

The minister stressed the importance of achieving the vision's targets and coordinating with relevant entities to implement priorities within set timeframes, noting that the energy sector is a key pillar of the national economy.

He also highlighted the private sector's role in implementing vision projects, attracting investment and supporting economic growth.

The liaison officers presented progress reports, confirming that projects in both sectors were proceeding according to schedule.

Energy sector initiatives include expanding electricity grid access through the Fils Al Reef programme, conducting energy audits, advancing oil and gas projects, improving energy efficiency and developing power generation capacity.

Mining sector priorities include gold exploration at Jabal Mubarak, the national mineral resources exploration programme and the investor single-window initiative.

CRIF Jordan, Middle East Insurance partner to strengthen risk assessment

AMMAN (JT) — CRIF Jordan and the Middle East Insurance Company signed an agreement on Sunday to integrate credit bureau inquiry services into the insurance sector, aiming to improve underwriting efficiency, risk assessment and data-driven decision-making.

The agreement was signed by CRIF Jordan General Manager Ahmad Amoudi and Middle East Insurance Company General Manager Majid Smeirat, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Under the agreement, Middle East Insurance will join CRIF Jordan's network and use credit reports to assess policyholders' financial behaviour and outstanding obligations, helping improve risk classification and making decisions.

The insurance company will also provide CRIF Jordan with data on instalment-based insurance policies, in line with applicable legal and technical frameworks.



Petra photo

CRIF Jordan and the Middle East Insurance Company sign an agreement on Sunday to integrate credit bureau inquiry services into the insurance sector

This will help improve the accuracy of national credit records while ensuring compliance with data protection and information security standards.

Amoudi said the agreement marks a step forward in expanding the use of credit bureau services in the insurance sector, helping establish a more comprehensive picture of customers' credit profiles and supporting the development of risk assessment models.

He stressed that digital data exchange would comply with technical and regulatory requirements to safeguard confidentiality and data integrity.

Smeirat said the partnership aligns with the company's strategy to digitise its core operations and adopt data-driven risk management models.

He added that access to verified credit data and advanced analytics would help the company improve underwriting decisions, refine pricing mechanisms and offer flexible insurance solutions that respond to changing market conditions.

The agreement reflects the two companies' commitment to integrating digital financial infrastructure into insurance operations, strengthening risk management and supporting financial stability across the Kingdom's financial services sector.

KHBP, JEF sign cooperation agreement

AMMAN (JT) — King Hussein Business Park (KHBP) and the Jordan Esports Federation (JEF) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation and support the growth of Jordan's esports sector.

The agreement was signed in the presence of HRH Prince Omar bin Faisal, president of the JEF, and aims to promote KHBP as a destination for business, innovation, technology and esports, according to a provided statement.

Under the MoU, the two sides will cooperate in hosting and organising specialised tournaments and events at KHBP, as well as receiving international delegations and official guests.

The agreement also provides for cooperation in media and marketing, exploring joint educational, training and community initiatives, and exchanging knowledge and expertise.



Provided photo

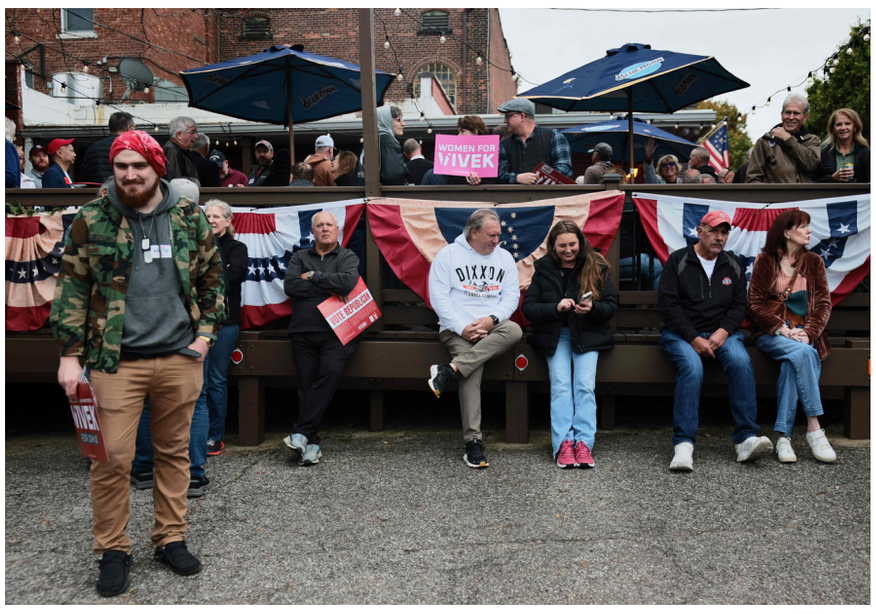
The agreement aims to promote KHBP as a destination for business, innovation, technology and esports

KHBP CEO Ammar Ezzeddin said that the agreement builds on the business park's efforts to provide an enabling environment for institutions and emerging sectors and strengthen its position as a hub for innovation and technology.

He said the partnership would support the development of the esports sector and provide opportunities to host tournaments and events showcasing Jordanian talent and raising the Kingdom's profile in the field.

JEF Vice President Hazem Bawab said the agreement marked a step towards developing the esports sector in Jordan and raising the standards of local, regional and international competitions and activities.

He said the federation would seek to benefit from KHBP's facilities and capabilities to expand its activities, support young talent and launch joint programmes to promote the sector and encourage wider participation.



AFP photo

Supporters attend an Ohio Republican Bus Tour campaign stop at PJ Marley's on Saturday in Medina, Ohio

Trump's Republicans scramble to stop Democratic midterms wave

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Republicans made a final push on Sunday to prevent a predicted thumping in US midterm elections where Democrats are gunning to win Congress and impose a first political check on President Donald Trump's unprecedented pursuit of power.

Polls show Democrats are all but certain to take the majority from Republicans in the House of Representatives and — against all previous expectations — with a shot at winning the Senate.

But after a decade of Trump defying political gravity and two years of a second presidency in which he has ridden roughshod over every norm, Democrats remain nervous.

"Nauseously optimistic," Democratic Senator Raphael Warnock told CNN to describe the mood.

Trump headlined the Republicans' last-ditch charge, holding rallies for candidates in Iowa and Kansas — states where ordinarily his party should be confident of victory and not require presidential boosts.

Along with making lurid claims that Democrats will turn the country communist, Trump is dangling the promise of $5,000 payments to everyone in the country if his party wins.

"I feel good," Trump told reporters at his luxury golf club in Florida late Saturday. "The country has never done better."

Polls, however, show the Republican is the most unpopular US president in decades and while his efforts may galvanise a hardcore base of right-wing supporters, a growing majority has turned on him.

An NBC News poll released Sunday showed 60 per cent of Americans disapprove of Trump's performance, particularly over high prices exacerbated by his now eight-month, sputtering war against Iran.

> Only a third of the Senate's 100 seats are being contested in these midterms and few of the races were seen as favourable to Democrats

While Tuesday is election day and results will start landing that night, early voting has already seen a record 53 million people cast ballots around the country.

A Democratic House would impose the first real political constraints on Trump since he swept back into office in 2025.

The Republican's second term has featured a relentless expansion of presidential power.

He has torn down part of the White House to build a ballroom, put his image on money and official buildings, disrupted the global economy with sweeping economic tariffs, and threatened to invade or annex allies like Canada and Greenland.

Winning the House would give Democrats serious power.

They'd be in charge of the budget and take control of committees set to probe allegations of mass corruption, Trump's links to infamous sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, and other explosive topics.

The biggest election question mark is over who will win the Senate, where Republicans have a slender majority.

Only a third of the Senate's 100 seats are being contested in these midterms and few of the races were seen as favourable to Democrats. However, with surprisingly strong challenges mounted in deeply Republican states like Texas and Kansas, pollsters now say the odds of a Democratic flip are at minimum even.

A Democratic Senate would be able to shut down Trump's appointments to courts — especially the Supreme Court.

Reflecting the high stakes, these midterms have seen about $11 billion spent on advertising, with large chunks coming from individual mega-donors.

Elon Musk, a close Trump ally who led the so-called DOGE in dismantling entire government departments, has given a staggering nearly half-billion dollars to help get Republican candidates elected.

The campaigns have also been marked by blistering language and insults, such as Trump's repeated false claims that Michigan's Democratic Senate candidate Abdul El Sayed is a "jihadist".

Hanging over everything is concern that Republicans will refuse to accept a loss, leading to a constitutional crisis similar to Trump's attempt to overturn his 2020 presidential election defeat.

Iran warns new war could last longer after Trump threatens strikes

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran warned on Sunday that any renewed war with the United States could last longer than the previous round of fighting, after President Donald Trump said he still had to "take care" of more targets.

Diplomatic efforts to end the Middle East war have been punctuated by repeated threats from the United States and Israel to resume bombardments as they hold crucial elections.

"A potential future war could last longer than previous conflict and the American president would not be in a position to dictate the timing or the conditions of its conclusion," said army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia, according to Iranian state television.

In the most intense phase of the war, which began on February 28 with US-Israeli strikes on Iran, Tehran retaliated with missile and drone attacks across the region. Iran-aligned armed groups joined the fighting in Lebanon and Yemen.

Akraminia's remarks followed Trump's suggestion that the United States could swiftly strike its remaining targets in Iran.

"We still have to take care of, I would say one or two sites, but we can do that in 10 minutes," Trump told reporters at his Florida residence.

"You probably could look at Pickaxe Mountain and you have to take care of that. We can do that all very quickly," he added, referring to a suspected underground nuclear complex.



AFP photo

Mockups of domestically-made Iranian missiles are displayed at an exhibition outside the Defence Museum in Tehran on March 31

Top military and political officials in Iran have warned against any new attack.

Revolutionary Guard spokesman Hossein Mohebbi on Sunday echoed a warning issued a day earlier in a written message by Iran's new supreme leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei.

"In a conflict with America, there are no geographical limitations; a vast theatre has been defined for inflicting damage upon the enemy," Mohebbi said, according to state television.

The warnings came as Iran's security chief Mohsen Rezaei disclosed on Saturday that he had received a letter from US Vice President JD Vance seeking to revive talks.

Rezaei noted what he described as a positive change in "tone" from the US side but said he had yet to respond.

He said Tehran had previously told Washington that unless its conditions were met, "neither would the Strait of Hormuz be reopened nor would there be any negotiations".

Those conditions include unfreezing Iranian assets abroad, ending the months-long US naval blockade of Iranian ports, lifting longstanding sanctions and ending the war on all fronts.

Since the war began, Iran has claimed control over the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global energy conduit, and repeatedly targeted vessels attempting to cross without its authorisation.

The United States has imposed a naval counterblockade on Iranian ports.

Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to the Emirati president, said on Sunday that the United Arab Emirates hoped the exchanges would yield a breakthrough but was preparing for the worst.

"We're hoping that there is a diplomatic breakthrough," he told a conference in Manama.

"It is not the interest of the region to go through another round... But I think we're also, as we've shown before, braced for the worst."

In Tehran, some residents described a sense of helplessness as threats of renewed fighting mount.

"The news coming in is truly worrying. However, no matter how much I, as an ordinary citizen, immerse myself in these reports, there is nothing I can actually do about it," Mohadese, a 27-year-old health inspector, told AFP.

Others including 48-year-old vendor Ebrahim saw no reason to be concerned.

"We do not fear another war; we have been at war for 48 years now — we are always at war," he said in downtown Tehran.

Rubio says he spoke to Lavrov about potential Trump-Putin interaction at APEC

ATLANTA (AFP) — US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Saturday that he spoke to Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on the sidelines of G20 talks and discussed a possible interaction between both countries' leaders next month.

"We spoke just briefly about the opportunity for our leaders to potentially interact at APEC next month," Rubio said, referring to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group's summit in the Chinese city of Shenzhen in mid-November.

But Rubio stressed at a press conference that he did not have a formal meeting with Lavrov during the two-day gathering of G20 foreign ministers in Atlanta, Georgia.



AFP photo

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio gestures as he speaks at a news conference during the G20 foreign ministers' meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, on Saturday

The talks among the G20 major economies, which includes the United States, Russia, China, India, France and Germany, wrapped up on Saturday.

Rubio's remarks came a day after the Russian foreign minister told reporters that both men had a "decent talk".

Lavrov's presence in Atlanta had sparked tensions among European countries. Russia has been shunned by most of the West after its 2022 invasion of neighboring Ukraine.

The foreign ministers' meeting was intended to set the stage for a December G20 leaders' summit in Miami at President Donald Trump's Doral resort, where those diplomatic tensions could become more acute as Trump has invited Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The US president told reporters on Saturday that he would have "no problem" with inviting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as well.

On Friday, plans for a traditional family photo of G20 ministers were cancelled as some European officials objected to appearing alongside Lavrov.

But the Russian minister's appearance also underscored warmer US-Russia ties.

"It is always important that the United States and Russia have communications at some level because of the danger of escalation in the future," Rubio told reporters on Saturday.

He pointed to both the Russia-Ukraine conflict and Moscow's nuclear weapons.

On the Ukraine war, Rubio said: "If we can play a role in mediating an end to that conflict, the United States is prepared to play that role."

"And to play that role, we have to have the ability to communicate with both sides," he said.

German rioters loot shops as 'Gen Z' demos turn ugly

FRANKFURT (AFP) — Masked rioters looted shops in the German city of Frankfurt on Saturday as massive demonstrations turned violent across the country, with police also firing water cannons at youths hurling Molotov cocktails.

Several police officers were injured in the violence after tens of thousands joined youth-led protests across the country organised by the group "GenZ regelt!" (Gen Z has got this!).

The demonstrations, inspired by similar movements in France and Italy calling for political elites to heed the concerns of the younger generation, were largely peaceful during the day.

But tensions peaked in the evening as some groups of young people refused to disperse, with violence breaking out in major cities including Berlin, Cologne and Hamburg.



AFP photo

Riot Police bloct the street in front of protesters after a demonstration organised by 'GenZ regelt!' (Gen Z has got this!) in Frankfurt am Mian on Saturday

It was especially bad in the financial hub of Frankfurt, where police faced protesters hurling stones, fireworks and petrol bombs, and responded with water cannon and pepper spray.

"Violent riots" were taking place, police said in a statement. "Windows have been smashed at several shops. Molotov cocktails are also being thrown at emergency personnel."

A gun store was among the shops looted, with its windows smashed. Police said they arrested a suspect and seized two weapons.

A trainer shop and a perfume store were also targeted, the Bild daily reported.

A large section of Frankfurt's main shopping street was closed off as authorities sought to quell the unrest, with police vans and riot police stopping anyone from entering, according to an AFP journalist.

A police helicopter hovered overhead as sporadic blasts were heard on the street.

At least one police officer was injured there and was receiving medical treatment.

Roman Poseck, interior minister of Hesse state, said that "around 100 clearly identified left-wing extremists" had infiltrated the protest in Frankfurt.

"It is shameful how this event here in Frankfurt has ended."

Police also used water cannon in the cities of Hamburg and Cologne after they said demonstrators targeted emergency service workers with fireworks, stones and bottles.

In Berlin, a protest not organised by the "GenZ regelt!" movement took place in the evening, with police reporting they were pelted with eggs and bottles.

A police officer in Bonn suffered minor injuries during a confrontation with a group.

Police were reported to have arrested large numbers of rioters.

The youth-led protests earlier in the day took place in a mostly peaceful and festive atmosphere.

Some people were dressed in outfits ranging from dinosaurs to Batman as the demonstrations coincided with Halloween.

They waved signs that read "Time for resistance", and "Merz must go", in reference to conservative Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

"I think it's really important to show solidarity with all the other protests currently happening across Europe, including in France," Milla, a 20-year-old student who only gave her first name, told AFP in Berlin.

"I've been waiting for a long time for something to finally really happen and for people to tackle this with a bit more force. I believe that today here is the first step."

The movement's complaints range from the high cost of living to poorly maintained schools and government spending cuts.

More broadly it objects to what it sees as politicians making decisions with apparently little regard for the younger generation.

They are also unhappy with sharply increased military spending and a new voluntary service model aimed at boosting troop numbers, fearing it is a step towards bringing back conscription.

"GenZ regelt!" said some 120,000 people took part in the demonstrations, below around 180,000 they had been expecting.

Protests also took place in France Saturday for a third straight weekend, with clashes erupting in Paris and elsewhere.

Nationwide demonstrations there on October 17 degenerated into some of the country's worst rioting in years.

Berlin has been in contact with officials in France and Italy amid fears that radicals from overseas could seek to join the German protests.

The "GenZ regelt!" movement explicitly rejected violence.

"Extremist groups, anti-constitutional symbols, racism and hate speech have no place with us, no matter from which side," it said.

Several dead in Venezuelan army attack on Colombian leftist rebel camp — NGO

Caracas (AFP) — Venezuela's army attacked Colombian leftist rebels camped on its side of the border, leaving several people dead, an NGO told AFP on Saturday.

Friday's attack marked the first time that Venezuela, ruled by socialists for decades until Nicolas Maduro was ousted by US forces in January, has attacked National Liberation Army (ELN) forces camped inside Venezuela, said Javier Tarazona, director of an NGO called Fundaredes.

The NGO shared a video which showed bodies lying on the ground, trees knocked down and the ruins of what appeared to be a camp site in a rural area of Venezuela's Apure state.

A Fundaredes staff member counted at least nine bodies, Tarazona said.



AFP photo

A vendor shakes hands with a Colombian soldier patrolling the streets of Cucuta, Norte de Santander Department, Colombia, on Friday

The Venezuelan government did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment.

The ELN has been the most powerful rebel group in Latin America since the FARC guerrilla army signed a peace accord with the Bogota government in 2016.

Colombia and Venezuela share a more than 2,000-kilometre border where other rebel groups also operate, such as FARC holdout factions that rejected the peace accord and are now fighting each other to control cocaine trafficking and illegal mining operations.

For many years the Bogota government accused leftist Venezuela of granting safe haven to Colombian rebels.

But now Venezuela is governed under the close watch and control of the Trump administration after the ouster of Maduro, as the United States seeks to cash in on Venezuela's vast oil wealth and other natural resources.

Local people in Apure reported Friday's army attack and said there could be another 10 ELN fighters dead, said Rocio San Miguel, a human rights activist who specialises in military affairs.



AFP photo

People gather in front of the Portuguese parliament during a protest over the housing shortage, soaring rents and low wages in Lisbon

Portuguese police clash with housing protesters, arrest 13

LISBON (AFP) — Riot police with dogs stormed protest camps in Lisbon and Porto early Sunday, charging demonstrators with batons, arresting 13 people and leaving dozens injured in the latest confrontation over Portugal's housing crisis.

Clashes quickly broke out as dozens of officers moved in on an encampment in Lisbon's Rossio Square and a smaller camp in Porto's Dom Joao I Square at around 4:30 am.

Protesters shouted "smells like a dictatorship", while police said some hurled bottles and paint at officers as they tried to take down the tents.

Police said in a statement that six people were arrested in Lisbon and seven in Porto for refusing orders to disperse. It said 13 police were injured in the process, with eight taken to hospital.

In Porto, police said three plain-clothes officers monitoring the protesters were assaulted after being spotted by a group.

One of the officers displayed his firearm as a deterrent, police said.

An unspecified number of civilians were also injured during the operation, which was carried out "with rigour, balance and respect for citizens' rights", the statement read.

Activist group Acampada Lisboa said more than 30 protesters were injured, including 10 who required hospital treatment, and called a fresh rally in the capital on Sunday afternoon to protest against the police operation.

"We will not be silenced," it said in a statement posted on social media, alongside photographs of protesters with bruises or bleeding from injuries it blamed on "police violence".

Some protesters carried red carnations, a symbol of Portugal's 1974 revolution, evoking the peaceful military-led uprising that ended nearly five decades of dictatorship.

Police said they seized 69 tents in Lisbon and 30 in Porto.

The camps had been set up late Saturday after peaceful marches through the two cities against soaring housing costs.

Officers have repeatedly dismantled encampments that have sprung up across Lisbon and Porto in recent weeks.

After police cleared protest camps in the two cities last weekend, Amnesty International said it was "deeply concerned by the excessive and disproportionate use of force by police".

A lawyer representing protesters at Lisbon's housing camps, Ricardo Sa Fernandes, said Sunday he would file a criminal complaint against the interior minister and the national police chief for abuse of power.

"This is a dark night in the history of Portuguese democracy. This is absolutely intolerable and has crossed all limits," he told reporters outside a police station in Lisbon where some of those detained were taken.

Protesters want the minority centre-right government to abandon plans to ease evictions and remove rent caps on new leases, warning the measures would push up housing costs and leave tenants more vulnerable.

Prime Minister Luis Montenegro has acknowledged that property prices have doubled in a decade, but blames the crisis on previous left-wing governments for failing to build enough homes and pursuing what he calls an overly permissive migration policy.

Portuguese protesters have taken inspiration from a similar movement in neighbouring Spain, where tents have stood in central Madrid and other cities for weeks.

King to inaugurate third ordinary session of 20th Parliament on Monday

Continued from page 1

The late King Abdullah I, the founding king, assigned the prime minister to deliver the speech on six occasions between 1929 and 1947. Since then, Jordan's kings have maintained the tradition of personally delivering the address at the opening of parliamentary sessions.

The Speech from the Throne is a key constitutional occasion during which the country's national priorities and policy directions are outlined. It addresses political, economic and social issues, as well as regional and international developments, while highlighting reform and modernisation efforts, improving parliamentary and government performance, and strengthening coordination among the three branches of government.

Over the years, successive speeches have addressed a wide range of national priorities, including strengthening national unity, advancing political and economic reforms, developing the education sector, improving living standards and expanding political participation.

They have also highlighted Jordan's efforts to combat terrorism and extremism, as well as the Kingdom's role in addressing regional challenges.

The Palestinian cause and the defence of Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, under the Hashemite Custodianship, have remained central themes in successive Speeches from the Throne, reflecting Jordan's longstanding position on the Palestinian issue and its commitment to safeguarding the holy sites.

Cabinet approves Social Security reforms, judicial amendments, $68 million water project

Continued from page 1

The blaw further introduces new criteria for determining the maximum annual increase in salaries subject to voluntary social security contributions. The ceiling will be based on objective standards linked to the annual growth rate of average wages among Social Security subscribers during the preceding year.

The Cabinet approved the 2026 amendments to the Administrative Judiciary Law of 2026, paving the way for its referral to the Legislative and Opinion Bureau before proceeding with the constitutional enactment process.

The proposed amendments seek to modernise administrative justice by making the automation of judicial procedures a fundamental legislative principle rather than merely an alternative option, the statement said.

The draft law addresses legislative restrictions that have limited the use of digital technologies in court proceedings, aiming to facilitate access to justice, improve judicial procedures and reduce litigation periods.

Under the proposed amendments, administrative court hearings may be conducted remotely through audio-visual communication systems, a facility that was previously unavailable in the administrative judiciary. The changes also pave the way for a unified electronic judicial file, in line with Jordan's national digital transformation objectives.

The reforms are intended to strengthen the administrative judiciary's role in overseeing administrative decisions, protecting individual rights and addressing abuses of authority or violations of the law, according to the statement.

The Cabinet also approved the validating reasons for the 2026 amendments to the Associations Law.

The proposed amendments align with the objectives of the Economic Modernisation Vision and National Social Protection Strategy, seeking to strengthen governance and transparency in the civil society sector and introduce a more institutionalised system for evaluating and classifying associations based on their development impact, the statement said.

The draft law provides a legislative framework for comprehensive digital transformation and prohibits individuals from serving on the boards of more than one association affiliated with the same ministry.

It also seeks to reduce the financial and administrative burdens on associations by raising the threshold for exemption from appointing a certified auditor.

Under the proposed changes, associations with annual budgets of JOD 5,000 or more would be required to appoint a certified auditor, compared with the current threshold of JOD 2,000. Associations with budgets below JOD 5,000 would instead be audited by the Ministry of Social Development.

The draft law provides for the temporary registration of voluntary initiatives established to carry out specific community activities, while regulating their bank accounts and fundraising activities.

It also introduces a separate regulatory framework for registering branches of foreign associations, strengthening oversight of their operations and determining the legal disposition of their funds.

The Cabinet approved the 2026 Public Safety Regulation for the Aqaba Special Economic Zone, aimed at strengthening safety standards across economic establishments and public facilities.

The regulation covers economic facilities, public spaces, complexes, buildings, parks and schools throughout the zone, bringing safety requirements in line with technological developments and modern standards.

It is also intended to reinforce Aqaba's position as a safe and attractive destination for investment and business.

The new framework complements the regulations governing the relevant authorities, Civil Defence and the Public Security Directorate, while strengthening coordination, institutional cooperation and information exchange.

It establishes unified public safety requirements across different sectors and activities, with the aim of protecting people, property and the environment, improving emergency preparedness and ensuring the continuity of economic, tourism and service activities.

The regulation places particular emphasis on prevention, requiring establishments to identify and assess occupational risks regularly, introduce appropriate mitigation measures, and document and monitor their implementation.

The decision comes as Aqaba continues to experience growing economic and tourism activity, increasing the need for stronger safety standards across investment, commercial, tourism and social facilities, according to the statement.

The Cabinet also approved an agreement worth $68 million for the expansion and rehabilitation of the Wadi Al Shallala Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is scheduled to be signed during the Jordanian-European Investment Conference.

The project will more than double the plant's daily treatment capacity, increasing it from approximately 13,700 cubic metres to 30,500 cubic metres.

The expansion is expected to increase the volume of treated wastewater and improve treatment efficiency, supporting the Ministry of Water and Irrigation's efforts to strengthen the wastewater sector and expand the use of non-conventional water resources.

Jordan condemns attack on Qatari LNG carrier in Arabian Gulf

Continued from page 1

It also warned that such actions could have serious consequences for regional security and stability and the global economy, particularly given the potential environmental damage caused by attacks on energy carriers.

The statement highlighted the risks to the marine environment and water security in countries across the region.

AND foils attempt to smuggle 2 million drug pills through Jaber border crossing

Continued from page 1

Upon searching the vehicle thoroughly, Sartawi told The Jordan Times, "agents found the pills hidden in secret compartments that were set for smuggling purposes".

"Initial investigations indicated that the illicit pills were destined for a neighbouring country," Sartawi added.

All suspects were referred to the State Security Court prosecution office for further questioning and indictment, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate.

According to Public Security Directorate (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.

Israeli attack damages two TUA educational units in Gaza

Continued from page 1

TUA Director General Samer Balkar said that the attack took place during the weekly holiday, with no injuries reported among children or staff, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Balkar said the charity, in coordination with its partner, the Palestine Tomorrow Association, was assessing the damage and carrying out maintenance and rehabilitation work at both sites to resume educational and psychosocial support services as soon as possible.

She reiterated the charity's commitment to supporting children in Gaza and those affected by the Israeli war, as well as expanding the programme to reach more children amid the Strip's difficult humanitarian, educational and psychological conditions.

The programme currently serves around 3,100 students aged between five and 16 through 14 educational units across Gaza.

Launched in May in partnership with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO), the programme provides children with a safe learning environment, helps them make up for lost learning, and offers school meals, psychosocial support and recreational activities.

The initiative is part of Jordan's ongoing humanitarian efforts, under the directives of His Majesty King Abdullah, to support Palestinians, strengthen the resilience of Gaza's population and meet the basic needs of children and families affected by the war.

Jordan's exports to EU rise 11.4% as Kingdom prepares to host investment conference

Continued from page 1

The combined increase in exports and decline in imports helped narrow Jordan's trade deficit with the EU by 10.9 per cent, bringing it down to JD1.531 billion, compared with JD1.719 billion during the corresponding period last year. The deficit therefore decreased by JD188 million.

Jordan-EU Investment Conference

The trade figures come ahead of the Jordan-EU Investment Conference, scheduled to take place in the Dead Sea region on November 19 under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is expected to attend, alongside senior officials and representatives of European companies, financial institutions and investment organisations.

Jordan plans to present a portfolio of investment opportunities valued at nearly $15 billion, equivalent to approximately 13 billion euros. The opportunities span 15 sectors and subsectors, including energy, mining, transport, logistics, tourism, water, industry and the digital economy.

The conference aims to translate the strategic and comprehensive partnership between Jordan and the EU into concrete investment projects by connecting European investors with opportunities in the Kingdom and exploring financing mechanisms and potential cooperation with Jordan's private sector.

As part of the preparations, the government has scheduled closed-door dialogue sessions with private-sector representatives for November 18, a day before the official conference, according to Al Mamlaka.

The sessions are intended to give investors and companies an opportunity to discuss potential projects, explore investment opportunities and establish direct business partnerships.

THE JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975

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Editorial and advertising offices
Jordan Press Foundation

The Jordan Times is published daily except Saturdays

Published by the Jordan Press Foundation
Queen Rania Al Abdullah Street
P.O. Box 6710
Amman 11118

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National Library registration number:
D/1998/2062
Telephone: **5600800 ext. 2392**
Facsimile: **5696183**
Advertising facsimile: **5696183**
Circulation Department:
5600800 ext: **2383**

The next battle against terrorism begins at home



Amer Al Sabaileh

With the United States threatening a return to war with Iran and the possibility of further regional escalation, another danger is emerging that may not be receiving sufficient attention, the potential return of terrorist organisations, but through methods very different from those that Daesh previously used. The current regional landscape, with its instability, tensions and security challenges, could provide these organisations with an environment conducive to rebuilding themselves, not necessarily through territorial expansion and control, but through a return to clandestine and de-centralised operations.

The issue today is not simply the return of existing organisations, but also the possibility of new formations adopting methods closer to Al Qaeda than to the Daesh model. This means moving away from public visibility, territorial expansion and the ambition to control cities or establish geographical influence. Instead, the emerging model could be more clandestine, focused on preserving networks and maintaining the ability to operate and inflict damage without the need to control territory or declare an identifiable organisational presence.

This brings us to the potential transition from lone wolves to isolated cells. While the lone-wolf model has relied on individuals acting independently and unpredictably, the potential evolution could involve small, de-centralised cells with a degree of autonomy in decision-making and the ability to operate without a clear or direct operational connection to a central leadership. This could make the security challenge considerably more complex, particularly as traditional approaches become less effective in identifying patterns of activity that do not rely on visible organisational structures.

In this context, areas such as the Syrian desert, parts of Iraq and extending towards southern Syria represent geographical spaces with significant security challenges, particularly where state control is limited and local and regional dynamics overlap. Continued regional tensions could also divert security resources and attention, creating additional opportunities for these organisations to reorganise themselves and exploit existing vulnerabilities.

However, the most important challenge is not confined to geography. It lies within societies themselves. For many countries, the next phase of confrontation may not simply involve preventing the infiltration of individuals from abroad but also preventing the mobilisation of individuals already within their societies, some of whom have been exposed to extremist narratives for years, while others may have found in difficult economic and social conditions an environment conducive to embracing such ideas.

This shifts the confrontation beyond its immediate security dimension and into the political and societal sphere. Countering extremism cannot be limited to security institutions or religious discourse, because the problem is considerably broader. It is also connected to national discourse, media policies, cultural openness and the ability to address marginalisation, frustration and the absence of alternatives.

Urban planning, strengthening the presence of the state and its institutions, expanding opportunities for economic, social and cultural participation, and reinforcing people's sense of belonging and engagement in public life are all essential elements in building societal resilience against extremism.

Addressing the coming phase therefore requires a comprehensive vision that does not separate security from politics, economics, culture and planning. The religious dimension alone will not provide the solution. Equally, security measures, regardless of their effectiveness, will remain limited unless accompanied by policies capable of addressing the conditions that allow extremism to reproduce itself.

If Daesh experience was built around territorial control and the declaration of influence, the coming threat could take a different form, one that does not require controlling a city, declaring an emirate or raising a flag over a geographical area. It may be enough for an organisation to retain the ability to reach its targets, strike and disappear, while finding within societies an environment that allows it to rebuild its networks and maintain its presence.

Consequently, if the region moves towards further escalation, the coming confrontation will not simply be against organisations operating in specific geographical areas, but also against ideas and networks capable of reproducing themselves within societies. This is precisely where the strength of the state becomes dependent not only on its ability to pursue organisations after attacks have taken place, but also on its capacity to prevent the conditions that allow them to return.

The real danger may not lie in the organisation that appears before us, but in the one operating from within societies, seeking to remain invisible and relying on secrecy and surprise to reestablish its presence.

Beyond Daraa

By Mohammad Abu Rumman

Jordanian strikes in rural Daraa, which Amman said targeted Daesh sites, have triggered a serious crisis between Jordan and Syria, amid accounts from residents and eyewitnesses of civilian casualties, including women and children. The victims' families have every right to be angry and to demand truth and justice. They cannot be expected to put political calculations ahead of their grief, nor should the strength of bilateral relations be invoked to sidestep the painful questions the incident has raised.

That grief has placed the Syrian government under intense domestic pressure, amid accusations that it has not done enough to defend national sovereignty and protect its citizens. Alongside the summoning of the Jordanian ambassador and the delivery of a formal protest, a joint statement by the two foreign ministers offered a way to contain the crisis. It expressed Jordan's regret over the civilian casualties and confirmed an agreement on a joint security committee to establish the circumstances and improve coordination.

This process matters because the independent information currently available is insufficient to establish precisely what happened during the operation or what caused the tragedy. Targeting Daesh was Jordan's stated objective, while explaining the civilian casualties remains the responsibility of the investigation. That investigation offers a path to a credible account that respects the families' right to know, translating Jordan's stated commitment to Syrians' safety into clear answers about what happened and safeguards against a recurrence.

This commitment is consistent with the core of Jordan's policy towards the new Syria. Since the fall of Bashar Assad's regime, Jordan has been among the leading supporters of the new authorities. It has hosted Arab and international meetings to support the transition, welcomed President Ahmed Al Sharaa, and opened up prospects for cooperation with Damascus. These steps reflect a clear interest in a unified, stable Syrian state capable of exercising sovereignty throughout its territory. The continuing threats of terrorism and drug smuggling do not alter that interest; they underline the need for cooperation and for giving state institutions the opportunity to regain their capacity. This understanding has been reflected in the growing rapport between Foreign Ministers Ayman Safadi and Asaad Al Shaibani, culminating in their discussion, just days before the incident, of developing relations into a strategic partnership.

The danger to this partnership begins when the tragedy is exploited to settle scores with Syria's new government. We must distinguish between Daraa's legitimate anger and its use for political ends. In my view, the broader aim of some of the increasingly strident rhetoric against Jordan may be to embarrass Damascus and constrain its options. The interests of supporters of the former regime and hardliners opposed to the new leadership's policies may converge here, alongside those of Jordanian voices that have never reconciled themselves to the change in Syria.

Such a convergence, even without coordination, threatens to turn a tragic incident into hostility between two states and their peoples. Others then join the exchanges of insults, whether in good faith or in the heat of the moment, supplying those who advocate a rupture with the anger they need. The debate gradually drifts away from the truth and the victims' rights towards mutual accusations and abuse.

> Protecting this relationship is also a strategic imperative, because tensions between Amman and Damascus give Israel further opportunities to advance its policies in southern Syria

The relationship threatened by these exchanges is rooted in kinship, intermarriage, social and tribal ties, and shared memory. On both sides of the border are households that share joys and sorrows, and people who know one another by face and name. Jordan welcomed hundreds of thousands of Syrians during their ordeal and, with international support, provided access to education, healthcare and employment opportunities. This deepened a bond of brotherhood that people experienced in their homes and neighbourhoods, making it part of their personal and family memories. We owe it to that bond to protect it from the battles waged on social media.

Protecting this relationship is also a strategic imperative, because tensions between Amman and Damascus give Israel further opportunities to advance its policies in southern Syria. In his address to the United Nations, His Majesty King Abdullah linked Israeli expansion there to threats to Jordan's national security. Weakening coordination between the two countries therefore helps Israel impose facts on the ground and undermines their shared interest in protecting Syria's sovereignty and preventing its fragmentation.

What is needed now is to accelerate the committee's work, be candid with the public about its findings, support the victims' families and turn commitments into coordination that prevents another tragedy. Alongside this, people-to-people diplomacy must be strengthened, with space for trusted community and civic figures to repair the damage caused by these exchanges. The two foreign ministers have a central role in translating their shared understanding into concrete initiatives that people can see and feel, while countering incitement and accusations of betrayal. Moving beyond the tensions begins with justice for those harmed and the rebuilding of trust. The ties of blood, kinship and affection that unite Jordanians and Syrians are too strong to be left hostage to those who seek to deepen the wound.

Binance hack: The largest financial heist in human history



Hossam Haddad

The massive cyberattack recently targeting Binance, resulting in the theft of approximately $6.36 billion, represents a pivotal turning point in modern financial history, exposing deep structural vulnerabilities within the digital asset ecosystem. Despite the formidable technological infrastructure surrounding centralised exchanges, they remain susceptible to highly targeted attacks, where hackers exploited a vulnerability in authorisation standards governing hot wallet infrastructure across ten different blockchain networks, turning this breach into what is classified as the largest bank heist in human history.

> The repercussions of this sensational event were not confined to economic circles and retail investors; they swiftly escalated to the highest levels of global political decision-making...

This disaster was not merely a massive financial loss added to the record of digital thefts; it served as an electric shock reigniting major questions regarding the readiness of financial technology to safeguard the wealth of individual and institutional investors. Treating digital assets as the future of money inherently demands superior cybersecurity resilience a standard the recent incident failed to demonstrate. The breach revealed that the algorithms and programming protocols governing multisignature mechanisms and hot wallets require comprehensive revision and foundational redesign, as total reliance on code without genuine safety valves leaves the entire system vulnerable to a single coding error or undetected flaw waiting to be exploited.

The repercussions of this sensational event were not confined to economic circles and retail investors; they swiftly escalated to the highest levels of global political decision-making, underscored by US President Donald Trump commenting directly on the incident from the Oval Office to confirm that the US administration is closely monitoring developments. Trump's warning regarding transactions lacking paper checks and tangible settlements translates growing presidential and political anxiety over the loss of financial and regulatory sovereignty to invisible digital networks. This extraordinary political attention reflects an international realisation that cybercrime is no longer limited to amateurs; rather, it has become intertwined with state-sponsored cyber warfare. Accusations are repeatedly directed at state-backed hacking groups from North Korea, which utilise stolen funds to build a state shadow economy and bypass international sanctions. Consequently, digital trading platforms are transforming from mere investment environments into covert geopolitical battlegrounds that threaten global financial stability and compel major powers to reassess their strategy regarding comprehensive national security.

The most critical issue raised by this breach lies in the ongoing debate over the acute legislative gap afflicting cryptocurrencies compared to traditional banking systems. While banks operate under strict regulatory umbrellas and cross-border laws that guarantee fund traceability and deposit protection, the crypto market remains a gray zone lacking unified legal frameworks. There are urgent calls today to link these platforms to formal banking systems and enforce anti-money laundering and know-your-customer compliance with absolute transparency.

> This perpetual struggle between regulatory transparency and investor protection on one side, and financial evasion and absolute autonomy on the other, constitutes the primary obstacle to building a secure, stable digital ecosystem capable of enduring future shocks

However, this imperative collides with the desire of a broad segment of decision makers and financial elites to keep these markets outside regulatory reach, where the pseudonymous nature of blockchain is exploited as a safe haven to evade tax obligations, facilitate capital flight, and conceal wealth. This perpetual struggle between regulatory transparency and investor protection on one side, and financial evasion and absolute autonomy on the other, constitutes the primary obstacle to building a secure, stable digital ecosystem capable of enduring future shocks.

In contrast to this unprecedented cyber threat, a new dimension of regulatory interaction and real-time on-chain defense emerged between attackers and the modern financial ecosystem. Issuers of major stablecoins alongside core protocol security councils mobilised immediately to mitigate the breach, successfully freezing nearly $3 billion in stolen assets before they could be laundered or moved to unrecoverable destinations.

However, while crucial, this swift intervention introduces a profound philosophical dilemma that contradicts the founding ethos of digital currencies based on absolute decentralisation, revealing that corporate control over blacklisting addresses leaves financial sovereignty dependent on central actors. Simultaneously, the platform managed to contain panic and absorb the financial shock by activating its dedicated Secure Asset Fund for Users to cover losses entirely without impacting user balances, thereby preventing a wider market collapse and averting a systemic liquidity crisis reminiscent of past industry meltdowns.

On the economic front, the ramifications will not end at the operational losses of the exchange or compensating victims from private reserves; they extend to cast a shadow over both the global economy and emerging nations. Shaking investor confidence in the FinTech sector leads to substantial liquidity withdrawals and market instability, directly impacting digital transformation agendas pursued by numerous countries to modernise their economic infrastructure. For nations like Jordan, where a vibrant youth and business community strives to adopt modern financial innovations, such incidents impose compounded challenges regarding how to balance innovation encouragement with safeguarding the domestic economy against external contagion. Insufficient financial literacy combined with inadequate cyber-regulatory oversight can leave retail investors vulnerable to losing their savings instantly, adversely affecting domestic consumption and placing fresh burdens on national regulatory authorities tasked with crafting protective legislation without stifling promising digital growth. In my view, the world must unite to combine technological flexibility with legal discipline, rebuilding market trust through decisive governance.



JT file

Jordan's Industrial Producer Price Index rises by 2.61 per cent during the first nine months of 2026 according to Department of Statistics

Industrial producer prices rise 2.61% in first nine months of 2026

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan's Industrial Producer Price Index (IPPI) rose by 2.61 per cent during the first nine months of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025, according to a monthly report released by the Department of Statistics (DoS) on Sunday.

The index reached 109.42 points during the January-September period of 2026, up from 106.63 points recorded during the corresponding period in 2025, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

On a monthly basis, the IPPI increased by 0.92 per cent in September 2026, reaching 111.28 points compared with 110.26 points in August. It also rose by 5.41 per cent compared with 105.56 points recorded in September 2025.

A sectoral breakdown for the first nine months of 2026 showed that manufacturing prices, which account for 88.74 per cent of the index's relative weight, increased by 2.52 per cent.

Prices in the mining and quarrying sector rose by 5.68 per cent, while electricity prices increased by 1.22 per cent during the same period.

On a year-on-year basis, manufacturing prices rose by 5.6 per cent in September 2026, while prices in the mining and quarrying sector increased by 6.46 per cent and electricity prices by 1.78 per cent compared with September 2025.

The monthly increase in September was driven by a 0.98 per cent rise in manufacturing prices, a 0.59 per cent increase in mining and quarrying prices, and a 0.21 per cent rise in electricity prices compared with August.

The IPPI measures average changes in the prices received by industrial producers at the factory gate, before goods reach wholesale, retail or consumer markets. It serves as a key indicator of production costs and potential inflationary pressures.

ASE-listed companies' nine-month profits rise 4.8% to JD1.78b

AMMAN (JT) — ASE Chief Executive Officer Mazen Wathaifi, announced on Sunday that companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) recorded a 99 per cent compliance rate in submitting their reviewed interim financial statements for the period ending September 30, within the deadline through the electronic disclosure system (XBRL).

After-tax profits attributable to shareholders of reporting companies rose by 4.8 per cent during the first nine months of 2026, reaching JD1,776.2 million, compared with JD1,694.8 million during the same period in 2025, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Pre-tax profits increased by 5 per cent to JD2,473.7 million, up from JD2,356 million in the corresponding period of 2025.

A sectoral breakdown showed that after-tax profits in the services sector increased by 66 per cent, while those in the financial sector rose by 4.7 per cent. Industrial sector profits, however, declined by 9.6 per cent.



JT file

ASE Chief Executive Officer Mazen Wathaifi, announces on Sunday that companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange recorded a 99 per cent compliance rate in submitting their reviewed interim financial statements for the period ending September 30

Market performance indicators also recorded gains since the beginning of 2026. The ASE General Index (ASEGI) rose by 14 per cent to 4,117.3 points compared with the end of 2025.

The ASE20 Index increased by 12.3 per cent, while the Total Return Index (ASETR) rose by 18.2 per cent.

Total trading volume surged by 55.8 per cent compared with the same period in 2025, pushing the average daily trading volume to JD13.4 million, up from JD8.8 million.

Market capitalisation increased by 9.1 per cent to JD28.9 billion, supported by economic indicators including GDP growth of 2.9 per cent in the first half of 2026, a 6.2 per cent increase in national exports during the same period, and 14.1 per cent growth in worker remittances during the first seven months of the year. Foreign reserves at the Central Bank of Jordan exceeded $28.5 billion.

The ASE maintained trading restrictions on Tihama for Financial Investments (THMA) over its failure to submit financial statements for the periods ending June 30 and September 30.

JSMO participates in meetings of Standards, Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries in Kazan

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Standards and Metrology Organisation (JSMO) participated in the 21st General Assembly Meeting and the 31st Board of Directors Meeting of the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), held in Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russia, from 26 to 28 October 2026.

The meetings witnessed broad participation from SMIIC member states, alongside representatives of several international and regional organisations concerned with accreditation, standardisation and metrology, according to a statement by JSMO.

The Jordanian delegation was headed by Acting Director General of the Jordan Standards and Metrology Organisation, Wafa Momani, who reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to maintaining an active role in international and regional organisations concerned with standardisation and metrology.

She highlighted Jordan's efforts to strengthen its national quality infrastructure and promote the alignment of Jordanian standards with internationally and regionally recognised standards, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of national products and expanding their access to foreign markets.

Momani explained that Jordan's participation in these meetings provides an important opportunity to contribute to shaping the Institute's strategic directions, decisions, policies, and future work programmes, while ensuring that Jordan's national interests and priorities are taken into consideration.



Petra photo

The Jordan Standards and Metrology Organisation participates in the 21st General Assembly Meeting and the 31st Board of Directors Meeting of the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries held in Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russia

She also emphasised the importance of supporting the development of technical requirements related to Halal products and services, facilitating the access of Jordanian products to the markets of SMIIC Member States, reducing technical barriers to trade, and strengthening the competitiveness and presence of Jordanian products in regional and international markets.

Jordan's participation is particularly significant in light of the growing role played by SMIIC in developing the Halal industry and product ecosystem, as well as promoting the adoption of relevant standards and technical requirements.

These efforts encompass several sectors, including food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and Halal tourism, all of which are witnessing accelerated growth at both regional and international levels.

During the meetings, participants reviewed the Institute's achievements and followed up on the implementation of its strategic plans. They also approved SMIIC's Implementation Plan for the period (2027–2028), which aims to strengthen intra-Islamic trade and facilitate the smooth flow of goods and products across the markets of Islamic countries.

> Jordan has consistently earned the confidence of member states, having been elected to the Board for successive terms

In addition, progress reports from the Institute's three permanent councils were reviewed: The Standardisation Management Council, the Accreditation Council and the Metrology Council. The Jordanian delegation also participated in the meetings of the Strategic Committee and the Governance Committee.

Discussions focused on the Institute's future strategic directions and their alignment with global developments and emerging trends, in addition to exploring mechanisms for developing its regulatory and legislative frameworks, adopting best governance practices and reinforcing the principles of transparency and institutional accountability.

It is worth noting that Jordan has been an active member of the SMIIC Board of Directors since the Institute's establishment in 2010.

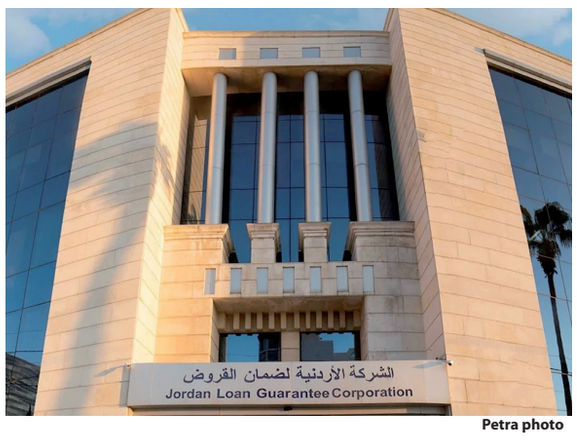
Jordan has consistently earned the confidence of member states, having been elected to the Board for successive terms. This reflects Jordan's standing and its role in supporting joint Islamic cooperation and strengthening collaboration among member states in the fields of standardisation, accreditation and metrology.

JLGC boosts SME and export financing guarantees to JD463m in Q3 2026

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Loan Guarantee Corporation (JLGC) increased the total value of its guarantees to JD463 million by the end of the third quarter of 2026, up from JD340.7 million in the same period of 2025, expanding access to credit for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and national exporters.

Financial disclosures as of September 30 showed that the corporation's net profit after tax reached JD2.8 million, compared with JD2.5 million a year earlier. Total assets rose to JD827.2 million, while shareholders' equity stood at JD48.3 million.

Under its core loan guarantee programme, the corporation supported 1,286 credit facilities worth JD247.6 million during the first nine months of 2026, compared with 1,389 facilities valued at JD169.4 million during the same period in 2025, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.



Petra photo

The Jordan Loan Guarantee Corporation increases the total value of its guarantees to JD463 million by the end of the third quarter of 2026, up from JD340.7 million in the same period of 2025

The total included JD15.1 million in guaranteed financing extended to 152 start-ups.

The corporation's microfinance programme supported 2,342 micro-enterprises, bringing the cumulative value of guaranteed financing under the programme to JD18 million since its launch.

JLGC also continued to provide guarantees through its "specialised" Guarantee for Employment and Green Finance Guarantee programmes, which aim to support job creation and environmentally friendly investment.

Under its Export Credit and Domestic Sales Guarantee programme, the corporation covered JD215.3 million in 3,901 export shipments and domestic commercial transactions, helping protect national businesses against credit default risks as they expand in local and international markets.

Chairman of Board of Directors at JLGC, Adel Sharkas, said the growth recorded in the third quarter underscores the corporation's role in promoting financial inclusion and mobilising private-sector credit in line with national economic priorities.

JLGC Director General Adnan Naji said the corporation was accelerating its digital transformation and strengthening its risk management frameworks to expand its beneficiary base and support long-term economic growth.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

بورصة عمان
Amman Stock Exchange

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Sunday amounted to JD12.6 million spread over 4.4 million shares that traded through 4,496 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 1.15 per cent, closing at 4069.86 points.

Out of 104 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 19 companies rose while the share price of another 64 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Assas for Concrete Products Company Ltd by 5.79 per cent, Al Nisr Al Arabi Insurance by 4.33 per cent, Rumm Financial Brokerage by 3.38 per cent, Al Manara Islamic Insurance Company by 3.23 per cent, and First Jordan Investment Company Plc. by 2.78 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Darat Jordan Holdings by 7.32 per cent, Jerusalem Insurance by 7.22 per cent, Amad Investment and Real Estate Development by 6.52 per cent, Cairo Amman Bank by 5.59 per cent, and Philadelphia International Educational Investment Company by 5.00 per cent.



SPORTS AT A GLANCE

TENNIS

Vacherot beats Lehecka to clinch Basel title

BASEL, Switzerland (AFP) — Valentin Vacherot won his first title of the season on Sunday when he beat Jiri Lehecka 2-6, 6-3, 6-3 in the final of the ATP event in Basel. After dropping serve three times as he lost the first set, the 27-year-old from Monaco gradually gained control of the match to claim his second title on the main tour, following his surprise victory at the Shanghai Masters in 2025. For Lehecka, 24, the loss extended his poor record in finals to seven defeats from nine appearances. He has lost each of the past five. The Czech had completely dominated Vacherot in a two-set victory in their last meeting in early October, in the semi-finals in Tokyo. The first set on Sunday suggested that result might be repeated. Lehecka conceded only one point on his first three service games and proved superior in every aspect of the game.

MOTOSPORT

Yamaha pulls out of Qatar MotoGP over 'Middle East situation'

SEPANG, Malaysia (AFP) — Yamaha said on Sunday it won't participate in next weekend's Qatar MotoGP, citing "the situation in the Middle East". "Yamaha has not identified sufficient grounds to change its existing company-wide travel restrictions," the Japanese manufacturer said. Among the racers on the MotoGP grid riding Yamaha bikes is France's Fabio Quartararo, the 2021 world champion. The MotoGP Group said it was "disappointed" by the decision and said that "Yamaha's non-participation also carries sporting implications". "While we recognise the team is subject to a broader corporate policy restricting travel to the Middle East, we do not believe this decision reflects the extensive assurances provided to all championship stakeholders," it said. MotoGP said talks with Qatari organisers and safety advisers had not flagged any reasons to change plans for the event. "We communicated that position, together with the latest available information, to all manufacturers and teams today and welcome the confirmation from the remainder of the grid that they will compete in Qatar, and we thank them for that commitment," the MotoGP Group said.

From first appearance to first podium: Houda Wshah makes Jordanian judo history with Dakar silver

Three victories carry the Jordanian teenager into the Olympic final as a historic medal ends taekwondo's exclusive hold on Jordan's Youth Olympic success

By Abdul Hamid Hassan Addasi



Provided photo

Houda Wshah on a podium, claiming silver in the women's under-44kg category on Sunday, at the fourth Summer Youth Olympic Games in Dakar

DAKAR — It took Houda Wshah just one day to transform Jordan's first appearance in Youth Olympic judo into a historic medal-winning campaign, claiming silver in the women's under-44kg category on Sunday, at the fourth Summer Youth Olympic Games in the Senegalese capital, Dakar.

At the Dakar Exhibition Centre, where different judo schools from across the continents came together, Wshah fought her way into the final with three consecutive victories before her golden ambitions were halted by Türkiye's Sema Nur Yuksel.

Yet the silver medal carried significance far beyond its colour, marking the first Olympic medal in Jordanian judo history.

From Greece to Venezuela:Three victories build the dream

Wshah began her campaign against Greece's Io Eirini Papatheodorou in the round of 16, surviving a marathon contest that lasted eight minutes and 51 seconds, including four minutes and 51 seconds of golden score.

The Jordanian eventually secured victory with an ippon, winning 100–0 in a demanding opening encounter that tested her patience, endurance and determination.

In the quarter-finals, Wshah faced Poland's Julia Blaszczyk, one of the leading contenders in the division, but the Jordanian continued her impressive progress by registering a waza-ari and a yuko to seal an 11–0 victory within the regulation four minutes and advance to the semi-finals.

Her third victory came against Venezuela's Rosalvick Aguilar in the semi-finals, where Wshah prevailed in a tightly contested encounter decided by a single yuko.

She protected that narrow advantage throughout the four-minute contest, winning 1–0 to secure a place in the final and guarantee Jordan a historic Olympic medal.

The toughest challenge awaited in the gold-medal contest against Türkiye's Sema Nur Yuksel, who had defeated Italy's Sara Coni in the semifinals.

Yuksel registered a waza-ari followed by an ippon to secure a 110–0 victory after two minutes and 26 seconds, claiming the gold medal, while Wshah settled for silver.

The two bronze medals went to Venezuela's Aguilar and Italy's Coni.

Wshah completed her Olympic campaign with three victories and one defeat, spending a combined 19 minutes and 17 seconds on the tatami across four contests.

Although her golden ambitions ended in the final, she left the Olympic stage with the greatest achievement of her career so far.

Silver medals in Tunis and Amman, bronze in Morocco paves the way

Wshah's silver medal in Dakar did not come out of nowhere.

Her International Judo Federation record reveals a steadily developing career through international cadet competitions over the past two years.

In February 2025, she claimed silver at the Tunis Cadet African Cup before returning to the podium in August of the same year with another silver medal at the Amman Cadet Asian Cup, competing in the under-48kg category.

She opened 2026 by adding a bronze medal at the Casablanca Cadet African Cup in January, before competing at the Asian Cadet Championships in July, where she finished seventh in the under-48kg division.

These performances reflected her gradual progression from continental competitions towards the Olympic stage, providing valuable experience against different judo styles ahead of her under-44kg campaign in Dakar.

Wshah travelled to Senegal accompanied by national team coach Bilal Al-Qleilat, who supervised her preparations.

She completed her first official training session at the Dakar Exhibition Centre on October 30, two days before the competition, familiarising herself with the venue that would soon become the setting for her historic achievement.

The fourth medal: The first beyond taekwondo

Wshah's silver medal takes on added historical significance when viewed against Jordan's record at the Youth Olympic Games.

Jordan arrived in Dakar with only three medals from previous editions, all won in taekwondo.

Dana Haidar opened the Kingdom's Youth Olympic medal account with silver at Singapore 2010, where Yazan Al-Sadeq also secured bronze.

Eight years later, Zaid Mustafa added another bronze medal at Buenos Aires 2018.

Wshah has therefore become the winner of Jordan's fourth Youth Olympic medal, its second silver, and the first achieved in a sport other than taekwondo.

The breakthrough comes at a time when Jordan is enjoying its most diverse Youth Olympic participation, with 13 athletes competing across eight sports at the first Olympic event ever staged on African soil.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Wshah's achievement is that she travelled to Dakar to open a new chapter for Jordanian judo at the Youth Olympic Games, yet did far more than simply take part, placing her country directly on the medal podium.

In Dakar, Houda Wshah may have missed out on gold, but she achieved something more enduring than the result of a single contest: The beginning of a new Olympic chapter for Jordanian judo.

Slave or not? US gallery shows early photos of African Americans

By Matthew Pennington
Agence France-Presse



AFP photo

Diane Waggoner speaks during an interview about a portrait of Elizabeth Pierce Banks, circa 1852, by an unidentified photographer, as part of the 'Remember Me: Picturing African Americans in Early Photography' at the National Gallery Art in Washington, DC, Wednesday

WASHINGTON — Is the person in that photo portrait a slave or not?

That's not always clear in pictures of African Americans that were taken in the early days of photography nearly two centuries ago.

An upcoming exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, previewed by AFP, examines the ambiguity.

The images date back as far as the 1840s when the Daguerrotype process that popularised photography and made images printed on silver-plated copper sheets common keepsakes.

"Throughout the 1840s through the 1860s, it's often very difficult to tell just by looking at a portrait of an African American sitter, whether they are enslaved individuals or are free," said Diane Waggoner, acting head and curator of photographs at the gallery.

Slavery persisted across a large swath of the US until the end of the Civil War in 1865, and photos of Blacks from that time — even from free, northern states — are relatively rare.

Even rarer are definitive answers to the context in which photos were taken.

"It's easy for us to kind of look at them and think we know what's going on, but we don't really," Waggoner said.

The exhibition, which opens on November 7, is titled "Remember Me".

Seventy black and white photos are displayed chronologically under dim lights to help preserve them.

The identities of two slave women featured in the exhibition have been established. Each is pictured with a white child they cared for.

One of the women, Patty Atavis, stares intently at the camera with a restless girl on her lap, Anna Whitridge, in a 1848 portrait.

Records show that Atavis was purchased by a doctor in Baltimore County, Maryland, at age 23 and stayed with the family after slavery ended and was buried in the family cemetery in 1874.

'Peculiar Institution'

Other images on display were likely used to advocate for the abolition of slavery.

A slip of paper with the phrase, "Peculiar Institution" — a euphemism for slavery — was found in the ornate display case of a tiny 1860 portrait of two wide-eyed girls with identical dresses.

The girls, whose names are unknown, may be sisters but have different skin tones, hinting that one of them may have had a white father.

Ross Kelbaugh, a researcher and collector of most of the photos in the exhibition, said perhaps it was circulated at abolitionist meetings to ask: "How could this 'institution' keep these little girls enslaved?"

Kelbaugh has since 1971 scoured antique shows and flea markets for images of Black Americans which in the early days few collectors were interested in.

"I recognised...that this was an important part of American history," Kelbaugh said.

The National Gallery of Art acquired some of his collection in 2023 and he has donated other images to the exhibition.

Blacks emerging from slavery

The first section of "Remember Me" focuses on three pioneering Black entrepreneurs — James Presley Ball, Glenalvin Goodridge, and Augustus Washington — who opened photo studios in the 1840s, mostly catering to white clients in elegant, hand-colour-tinted portraits.

"All three black photographers were excellent at what they did," said Waggoner, noting that they also put their names on their work.

"It was promotion of their business, but it was also you know claiming themselves as artists."

They championed the abolition of slavery. Washington would leave the US in the early 1850s, migrating to Liberia, where he photographed, with some grandeur, the leaders of the new free Black state there.



AFP photo

This image shows an altar set inside a house at the Santa Fe de la Laguna community in the shores of Lake Patzcuaro, state of Michoacan, Mexico, on Saturday

In Mexico City, Day of the Dead parade inspired by 007

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — While Day of the Dead is a centuries-old tradition in Mexico, its parade in the capital is a newer addition — with thanks to Bond, James Bond.

The Day of the Dead, when Mexico honors its deceased by blending pre-Columbian traditions with the Christian All Saints' Day, is historically a family affair.

Relatives visit cemeteries and set up altars with food and other items their loved ones enjoyed in life.

Then came 007.

The 2015 Bond film "Spectre" opens with the British spy walking through a crowd dressed as the dead in downtown Mexico City.

On Saturday, giant skeletons, floats and performers in feathered headdresses and masks filled the streets of Mexico City for the 10th anniversary of the Day of the Dead parade.

Musicians and acrobats joined the colorful floats, giving the downtown avenues a carnival atmosphere.

"Everyone started asking me, 'What about the parade? When's the parade?'" Miguel Angel Mancera, who organised the first parade while serving as Mexico City mayor from 2012 to 2018, told AFP. "It was an adventure."

City officials expect more than half a million visitors from Mexico and abroad to watch this year's parade, which falls on the same weekend as the city's Formula One Grand Prix race.

Some of the giant figures used in the film appeared in the first parade in 2016.

"It's a very, very big thing now," Mancera said. "It's something I'm really proud of."

An 11-story Catrina — an elegantly dressed female skeleton — stands in the Zocalo, the capital's main square, as part of this year's festivities.

