Published by the Jordan Press Foundation

www.jordantimes.com

500 Fils

Volume 51 | Number 15345

THE JORDAN TIMES



King opens **20th** Parliament's third **ordinary** session, pays tribute to **Karak** martyrs, highlights sacrifices of **army** in defending **homeland**



2

SPEECH

'Water, water, water'... King places **water** security above all **else**

3



PROFITS

$902m profits for **Arab Bank** Group in **Q3 2026**

7



FOOTBALL

Jordanian clubs aim to **remain** in **contention** in **ACL 2**

8



Tuesday, November 3, 2026 | Jumada I 23, 1448 Hijri

King inaugurates 20th Parliament's third ordinary session, delivers Speech from the Throne

- His Majesty reaffirms Jordan's firm stance against terrorism, any threats to its national security, sovereignty, unity
- King praises sacrifices, unwavering commitment of Jordan Armed Forces – Arab Army, security agencies in protecting homeland
- King reiterates that regional security, stability cannot be achieved without safeguarding legitimate rights of Palestinian people, addressing humanitarian crisis in Gaza
- King emphasises Parliament's role as cornerstone of political life, representing citizens, safeguarding public interests, overseeing government performance
- His Majesty stresses that interests, well-being of Jordanians must remain at heart of all government decisions
- His Majesty calls for accelerating implementation of strategic mega-projects to strengthen national economy, enhance resilience, reinforce Jordan's regional role



Photo courtesy of Royal Court

His Majesty King Abdullah on Monday inaugurates the third ordinary session of the 20th Parliament and delivered the Speech from the Throne

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Monday inaugurated the third ordinary session of the 20th Parliament and delivered the Speech from the Throne.

At the beginning of his address, His Majesty paid tribute to the martyrs of the terrorist attack in Karak and called on those in attendance to observe a moment of silence in their honur. ***(See full speech on page 2).***

"A few days ago, the treacherous hand of terror sought to test our state's resilience and our people's resolve. But we will not back down. We will not allow the terrorists, the khawarej, to undermine the security and unity of this nation. They have no place among us. They have no place in our great Jordanian family. They betrayed it. They have no place in our midst... not now, not ever."

The King underlined Jordan's resolve to stand firm against any attempt to threaten its security or undermine its sovereignty, highlighting the sacrifices of the Jordan Armed Forces–Arab Army in protecting the homeland and defending its security and stability.

Continued on page 5

Crown Prince meets with Saudi crown prince in Riyadh

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein on Monday met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the prime minister of Saudi Arabia.

During the meeting, held in Riyadh, His Royal Highness conveyed His Majesty King Abdullah's regards to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, as well as his greetings to the Saudi crown prince, and his best wishes for the continued progress and prosperity of the Saudi people, according to a Royal Court statement.

The Saudi crown prince also conveyed his regards to His Majesty King Abdullah.



Photo courtesy of Royal Court

HRH Crown Prince Hussein on Monday meets in Riyadh with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the prime minister of Saudi Arabia

His Royal Highness affirmed Jordan's full solidarity with Saudi Arabia, and its support for all measures taken to counter attacks targeting its security, sovereignty, and the safety of its citizens and residents, emphasising that Saudi Arabia's security is inseparable from Jordan's, and that the security of the Gulf states is vital to the stability of the region.

The two sides expressed their pride in the strong historical ties between the two countries and their peoples, and their commitment to broadening the scope of cooperation across all fields.

The meeting also underscored the importance of sustained coordination and consultation in advancing mutual interests and championing Arab and Muslim causes.

The Saudi crown prince hosted a dinner banquet in honour of His Royal Highness and the accompanying Jordanian delegation.

Continued on page 5

Fayez: Jordan's security, stability, national unity are red lines

AMMAN (JT) — Senate President Faisal Fayez on Monday reaffirmed that Jordan's security, stability and national unity are red lines, saying the Speech from the Throne delivered by His Majesty King Abdullah at the opening of the third ordinary session of the 20th Parliament carried clear messages underscoring these principles.

Addressing the Senate's first meeting of the session, chaired by Fayez and attended by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan and members of the Cabinet, Fayez said the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army and security agencies constitute a strong shield protecting the Kingdom and its citizens.

He said that Jordan's strength lies in its people, whose unity and wisdom grow stronger in the face of challenges, stressing that the Kingdom, under its Hashemite leadership, remains steadfast in its principles and positions on Arab issues, foremost among them the Palestinian cause.

Fayez reiterated Jordan's rejection of oppression and attempts to impose realities by force, emphasising that regional security and stability can only be achieved by ensuring that the Palestinian people obtain their legitimate rights, and establish an independent state on their national soil.



Senate President Faisal Fayez

Continued on page 5

Hassan reaffirms government commitment to Royal directives, modernisation agenda

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Monday reaffirmed the government's commitment to implementing the Royal directives outlined in the Speech from the Throne, delivered by His Majesty King Abdullah to inaugurate the third ordinary session of Parliament.

Addressing a Senate session, the prime minister said the Speech set out key national priorities and provided clear guidance on advancing the country's political and economic modernisation pathways.

Hassan stressed the government's commitment to translating the Royal directives into action in cooperation with the Senate and the Lower House.

He also reaffirmed the government's determination to continue implementing its policy statement, noting that two years of work had been devoted to fulfilling its pledges and that efforts would continue to deliver on the remaining commitments.



Prime Minister Jafar Hassan

Continued on page 5

Tarawneh elected Lower House speaker for third ordinary session

AMMAN (JT) — MP Ibrahim Tarawneh was elected speaker of the Lower House on Monday for the third ordinary session of the 20th Parliament, securing 70 votes.

MP MajhemSaqour received 38 votes, while MP Suleiman Zaben garnered 23 votes. Seven ballot papers were declared invalid.

Tarawneh's election took place during the Lower House's first meeting of the third ordinary session, chaired by MP Musa Wahsh, after Saqour, the House's longest-serving member, apologised for presiding over the opening session as he intended to run for the speakership.

The House also formed a three-member committee to supervise the voting process, in accordance with its bylaws.

Tarawneh's victory followed an agreement reached on October 29 among the Mithaq, Mubadara and Azm parliamentary blocs, the Centrist Parties and the Reform parliamentary bloc on the distribution of permanent bureau positions. Under the agreement, the Mithaq bloc was allocated the speakership and nominated Tarawneh for the position, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

His election marks the first time in Jordan's parliamentary history that two brothers have served as speakers of the Lower House. His brother, Atef Tarawneh, held the position from 2013 to 2020, serving seven consecutive ordinary sessions.

Ibrahim Tarawneh previously served as president of the Jordanian Dental Association and is serving his first parliamentary term as a member of the 20th Lower House.

Wahsh was assisted in chairing the opening session by MPs Rand Khuzouz and Hamza-Toubasi, the youngest members present. He previously served in the 14th and 18th Lower Houses before returning as a member of the 20th Parliament.

According to Article 3(a) of the Lower House's bylaw, the opening session is chaired by the MP with the longest parliamentary service. In cases where two or more MPs have equal seniority, priority is given to the member who has served in the greatest number of parliamentary terms. If the tie persists, the oldest member presides over the session.

Article 3 stipulates that the MP chairing the opening session may not run for the speakership during that same session.



Lower House Speaker Ibrahim Tarawneh

Continued on page 5

King opens 20th Parliament's third ordinary session, pays tribute to Karak martyrs, highlights sacrifices of army in defending homeland

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Monday inaugurated the third ordinary session of the 20th Parliament and delivered the Speech from the Throne.



Following is the full English translation of the Speech from the Throne:

"In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Prayers and peace be upon our Prophet Mohammad,

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Representatives,
Peace, God's mercy and blessings be upon you.

In the name of God, and with His blessings, we inaugurate the third ordinary session of the Twentieth Parliament.

A few days ago, the treacherous hand of terror sought to test our state's resilience and our people's resolve. But we will not back down. We will not allow the terrorists, the khawarej, to undermine the security and unity of this nation. They have no place among us. They have no place in our great Jordanian family. They betrayed it. They have no place in our midst… not now, not ever.

The blood of the Karak martyrs is a solemn pledge we will carry, and I ask you to observe a moment of silence in memory of the martyrs.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Representatives,

Jordan has stood and will forever stand firm against those who seek to threaten its security or undermine its sovereignty; and it remains a force to be reckoned with against any who dare to dismiss the great history and legacy of this nation.

This blessed land is defended by formidable soldiers whose unwavering vigilance, day and night, ensures that Jordanians rest secure in the certainty that they are always protected. Our brave Arab Army and security agencies put their lives on the line, vowing to ensure that Jordan's defences remain impenetrable and its flag flies high and proud.

Jordan's strength lies in its people — the more severe the trials, the greater their unity, insight, and wisdom.

I continue to place my faith in Jordanians, in their awareness during times of uncertainty, their wisdom when emotions run high, and their devotion and dedication when adversity strikes.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Representatives,
Distinguished guests,

We remain unshakeable in our convictions, holding fast to our Arab identity and to the defence of its causes — as my father did before me, and my son will after me — so that a united Arab voice remains our aspiration and goal, however distant it may seem.

We reiterate, time and again, that there can be no security or stability in our region without upholding the Palestinian people's right to their homeland. Despite international calls for an end to Israel's violations, the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza continues, as do the relentless attacks in the West Bank and Jerusalem, whilst Israel's expansionist ambitions remain the greatest threat to the region's future and hopes.

But the people will not forget.

Whoever believes that tyranny will confer legitimacy is mistaken.

Whoever believes that time will distort the truth is mistaken.

And whoever believes that Jordanians will compromise their principles is also mistaken.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Representatives,

Your esteemed Parliament stands as the cornerstone of our political life, as the nation is the source of all powers and the bedrock of its strength. By upholding this principle, our national front remains secure and resilient. For a strong Jordan can defend its interests, champion Arab causes, fulfil its responsibilities, and remain a steadfast pillar of support to those in need.

Your Parliament should be the voice of the nation, the guardian of public interest, and the oversight power over government performance, always placing the interests of Jordanians first. Your differences of opinion are a source of strength, as long as the national interest remains your shared goal.

Jordanians judge this body not only by the laws it passes, but by the conduct and rhetoric under this dome.

Distinguished guests,

I address you from this platform to reaffirm, as I have always done, that the interests of every Jordanian must lie at the heart of every decision — never an afterthought. True development manifests in the lived experiences of citizens, in the impact they feel in their daily lives and opportunities, their education and healthcare, and the future of their children.

Today, as we move ahead on the path towards economic modernisation, work has started on a number of ambitious mega projects aimed at bolstering the foundations of our national economy, enhancing its resilience, and advancing Jordan's pivotal role in the region. And I call upon the government to expedite progress in these strategic initiatives.

Water, water, water!

Water security is a pillar of our national sovereignty, and under no circumstances will we allow the Jordanian people's unassailable right to access water to be held hostage. On this matter, there is no room for compromise or appeasement.

I therefore direct the government to continue with its water security projects and to work on developing proactive plans to protect the nation's resources, in order to ensure their sustainability and safeguard the rights of future generations.

Honourable Senators,
Honourable Representatives,
Distinguished guests,

There is no place in our nation for anyone who treats public office as a badge of prestige rather than a duty of service.

Nor shall there be immunity for anyone who abuses their position, whoever they may be. The authority of the state and the rule of law must prevail above all else.

The law recognises neither name, nor position, nor influence.

My fellow Jordanians,
My people,
My enduring source of strength,

It is your legitimate right to engage in public debate, a right enshrined in the Constitution. This nation, and its leadership, have always welcomed every sincere and responsible opinion. And those who love Jordan acknowledge how much it has given them, and honour it through the dignity of their words, and the civility with which they express their differences.

I place my trust in you, my people and my tribe, and your welfare and the honour of this nation are a sacred trust I bear. After God, I rely on you, and your devotion to this land, so that Jordan may always remain strong, distinguished, and held in the highest regard.

Peace, God's mercy and blessings be upon you."

Earlier, an official ceremony was held upon His Majesty's arrival at Parliament, accompanied by HRH Crown Prince Hussein.

The King was received by the heads of the three branches of government, and several senior officials and officers.

Her Majesty Queen Rania, HRH Prince Hashem bin Abdullah, a number of Royal Family members, senior officials and officers, as well as members of the Arab and foreign diplomatic corps in Jordan attended the speech.









Photos courtesy of Royal Court

'Water, water, water'... King places water security above all else



File photo

A general view of King Talal Dam in Jerash, some 40 kilometres north of Amman

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah placed water security at the forefront of national priorities on Monday in his Speech from the Throne, delivered at the opening of the third ordinary session of the 20th Parliament.

In his speech, His Majesty said, "Water security is a pillar of our national sovereignty and under no circumstances will we allow the Jordanian people's unassailable right to access water to be held hostage. On this matter, there is no room for compromise or appeasement."

In remarks to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, analysts said that the Royal directive went beyond emphasising the importance of the issue. It also included a direct mandate to the government to continue implementing water security projects and develop proactive plans to protect the country's resources, ensuring their sustainability and safeguarding the rights of future generations.

Former minister of water and irrigation Hazem Nasser said that His Majesty had emphasised that water security is a national priority.

He added that His Majesty had previously emphasised the importance of Jordan's water security along its northern borders during his address to the United Nations last month. Today, in his Speech from the Throne, the King once again stressed the importance of water security, implementing national projects and preserving the sustainability of the country's available water resources.

Nasser stressed that His Majesty fully understands that water security is an essential component of national security and that Jordan's water security is interconnected with that of neighbouring countries, adding that this issue is fundamentally a security and strategic matter, and there can be no tolerance towards anyone attempting to undermine it.

The former minister added that Jordan is capable of preserving and protecting its water rights, regardless of the cost and that water security will be achieved whatever the financial implications. He cited the National Water Carrier Project as evidence, noting that work on the project is expected to begin soon and will provide water security for many years to come.

Nasser also pointed out that His Majesty's emphasis on water security as a national priority reflects its role as a fundamental pillar of sustainable economic and social development.

Achieving water security is not simply a matter of securing additional water sources. It requires an integrated management approach that combines reliable water supply, efficient consumption and the protection of available resources. This approach must meet the needs of society and productive sectors while safeguarding the rights of future generations, Nasser said.

For her part, water expert Maysoun Zou'bi said that King Abdullah's emphasis on water in his Speech from the Throne before the Parliament was not merely a reference to one of the service-related and development challenges facing Jordan.

Rather, it conveyed a profound political and strategic message reflecting the scale of the Kingdom's water challenges and placing water security at the forefront of national priorities as an integral part of the country's security, sovereignty, stability, and the future of its generations, she added.

The water expert added that when His Majesty said that "water security is a pillar of our national sovereignty," it was clear that the discussion went beyond providing citizens with their daily water needs. It was instead an affirmation that protecting water resources and Jordan's water rights is a national and sovereign responsibility that cannot be postponed or neglected.

Zou'bi noted that the significance of the Royal message lies not only in reaffirming the priority of water security but also in elevating the discussion to a deeper level.

This goes beyond addressing supply shortages or searching for additional water sources to establishing a comprehensive concept of water security linked to national sovereignty, independent decision-making and the ability to respond to political, climatic and economic changes, the expert added.

She said that His Majesty's assertion that there is no room for compromise or leniency regarding water security clearly indicates that Jordanians' right to water is not negotiable and cannot be sacrificed at the expense of national interests.

Protecting this right requires continuous efforts at the political, diplomatic and technical levels, alongside developing a domestic system capable of strengthening self-reliance and diversifying water supply sources.

Meanwhile, water, environmental and climate change expert Ghaida Abu Rumman emphasised that the Speech from the Throne conveyed clear strategic messages regarding water security, reflecting the King's awareness of the scale of the challenges facing Jordan and placing water at the heart of the country's national security, sovereignty and stability framework.

She said that His Majesty's repetition of the phrase "Water, water, water!" three times, along with his affirmation that "Water security is a pillar of our national sovereignty", demonstrates the strategic importance of water as a national issue that cannot be postponed or subjected to compromise.

She added that the speech conveyed three main messages.

The first was a message of national sovereignty, both domestically and internationally, affirming that securing water supplies is inseparable from independent national decision-making. Jordan must strengthen its ability to meet its water needs independently of changing political and regional circumstances by diversifying its water sources and developing a more self-reliant system, she said.

The second message, according to Abu Rumman, involved transforming water from a service-related and sectoral issue into an existential matter linked to state security and stability, as well as food, economic and social security, which requires placing water at the forefront of government planning and decision-making.

She added that the third message had an implementation-focused dimension, reflected in His Majesty's directive to the government to continue implementing water security projects and develop proactive plans to protect resources, ensure their sustainability, and safeguard the rights of future generations.

She stressed that translating these directives into action requires accelerating the implementation of the National Water Carrier Project, which aims to desalinate Red Sea water in Aqaba, reducing water losses and illegal encroachments on water sources and networks, expanding wastewater treatment and reuse, and enhancing rainwater harvesting initiatives.

It also requires making greater use of technology and artificial intelligence in water resource management, the expert said.

Abu Rumman stressed that addressing water challenges amid the consequences of climate change, declining rainfall, and increasingly prolonged droughts requires a shift from crisis management to proactive planning. This must be accompanied by greater integration of water, environmental and agricultural policies, stronger partnerships with the private sector and improved efficiency in resource management.

JAF evacuates 36th group of sick Gaza children for treatment in Jordan



JAF photo

The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army on Monday evacuates the 36th group of sick children from the Gaza Strip through the 'Jordanian Medical Corridor' initiative

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) on Monday evacuated the 36th group of sick children from the Gaza Strip under the "Jordanian Medical Corridor" initiative launched under Royal directives.

The latest group comprised 26 sick children accompanied by 26 family members, according to a JAF statement.

They were transferred to Jordan to receive treatment and medical care at several hospitals across the Kingdom, as part of Jordan's ongoing humanitarian and medical efforts to support Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The evacuation operations, which began in March 2025, are being carried out in cooperation and coordination with JAF, the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation, in accordance with approved health procedures and standards to ensure that the sick children receive the necessary medical care.

The initiative reflects Jordan's humanitarian and medical role in supporting Palestinians and alleviating their suffering amid the difficult humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip, while providing essential healthcare to those most in need.

Jordan also operates two military field hospitals in Gaza, one in the northern part of the Strip, established in 2009 following the 2008 war, and another in Khan Younis in the south, established in November 2023 following the outbreak of the Israeli war on Gaza.

Other Jordanian humanitarian initiatives include a mobile bakery and the "Restoring Hope" programme, which provides prosthetic limbs for amputees.

Through the continuation of these efforts, Jordan reaffirms its commitment to supporting Palestinians and enhancing the humanitarian and medical response under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, helping ease the suffering of patients and the injured and ensuring they receive treatment and care.



Ayman Safadi



Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani



Badr Abdelatty

Safadi, Arab counterparts discuss regional developments, coordination

AMMAN (JT) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi on Monday held separate phone calls with his Saudi, Egyptian and Qatari counterparts to discuss regional developments and ways to enhance coordination.

During his call with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud, the two ministers discussed the latest regional developments and issues of mutual interest, according to a ministry statement.

In a separate call, Safadi and Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani discussed developments in the region and continued consultations between the two countries.

Safadi also discussed the regional situation with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, focusing on coordination between the two countries.

SOLIDARITY

Palestinian church delegation offers condolences over Karak attack



JAF photo

A delegation representing Palestinian churches on Sunday visits the Jordanian field hospital in Nablus to offer condolences to the Kingdom over the victims of the deadly Karak incident

AMMAN (JT) — A delegation representing Palestinian churches on Sunday visited the Jordanian field hospital in Nablus to offer condolences to the Kingdom over the victims of the deadly Karak incident.

The delegation expressed sorrow over the tragic event, extending heartfelt sympathies to the families of the victims and the Jordanian people, while reiterating complete solidarity with the Kingdom, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army statement.

Delegation members highlighted the historical ties, shared brotherhood, and enduring solidarity uniting the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples.

Hospital management conveyed its appreciation for the visit, reaffirming Jordan's commitment to supporting the Palestinian people in line with the directives of His Majesty King Abdullah.

The attack took place on October 23, as people attended a funeral service at St George's Greek Orthodox Church in Hmoud village, leaving nine people dead and 34 injured.

Security forces arrested three suspects on October 26, after locating them inside an abandoned house.

Energy minister, Uzbek delegation discuss expanding mining cooperation



Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabsheh on Monday meets with Uzbek Vice Minister of Mining and Geology Rustam Yusupov and an accompanying delegation to discuss enhancing cooperation in the mining sector

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabsheh met on Monday with Uzbek Vice Minister of Mining and Geology Rustam Yusupov and an accompanying delegation to discuss enhancing cooperation in the mining sector.

The meeting explored utilising Uzbek corporate and institutional expertise to execute mineral resources, geology, and mining projects in the Kingdom through Memoranda of Understanding detailing cooperation mechanisms, according to a ministry statement.

Kharabsheh highlighted the importance of establishing joint mining projects, noting that the ministry aims to transition from initial discussions into technical work programmes to evaluate target locations and determine mineral potential.

The minister said that proposed cooperation encompasses geological exploration for minerals, primarily copper, gold and rare earth elements, alongside leveraging Uzbek technical capabilities in surveying, sampling and laboratory analysis to evaluate project feasibility.

Kharabsheh emphasised agreeing on a joint technical programme under which specialised teams from both sides will define priority cooperation areas.

Yusupov affirmed Uzbekistan's interest in strengthening ties with Jordan, confirming the readiness of Uzbek enterprises to evaluate projects proposed by the ministry, provide technical expertise and conduct mining studies in the Kingdom.

Yusupov highlighted the necessity of ongoing coordination and geological data exchange to assess prospects, adding that cooperation areas include research and development, technology transfer, mineral extraction technology, capacity building, and academic exchanges between universities and geological institutions.

The Uzbek delegation reviewed mining activities and existing cooperation with Jordanian entities, including the Arab Mining Company, the Jordan Uranium Mining Company, and the National Arab Company for Mining and Manufacturing Industries.

Both sides agreed to continue technical consultations to identify priority projects and finalise preparations to sign a Memorandum of Understanding during an upcoming high level visit.

Army thwarts infiltration attempt along northern border

AMMAN (JT) — The Northern Military Region on Monday thwarted an infiltration attempt by an individual across one of its border fronts.

Border Guard forces detected the suspect attempting to cross the border illegally and applied the rules of engagement, arresting the individual before transferring him to competent authorities for legal action, according to a Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) statement.

The operation falls within the ongoing efforts of JAF to protect borders and curb illegal crossing attempts through high readiness and continuous surveillance.

Border Guard forces continue performing their duties to safeguard the Kingdom's security and sovereignty, countering any illegal activities that threaten national security.



AFP photo

Arvin Mayor Olivia Calderon (centre) prepares volunteers before they canvass for Democrats including California Democratic Congressional candidate Randy Villegas on Sunday in Arvin, California

Democrats, Trump hold final rallies before midterm elections

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — Democrats teed up final get-out-the-vote rallies on Monday on the eve of midterm elections where they expect to win at least partial control of Congress and impose political constraints on President Donald Trump for the first time in two years.

Rallies, including by star Democratic Senate candidates James Talarico in Texas and Adam Hamilton in Kansas, were capping a campaign of breathtaking tension and bitterness.

For his closing argument, Trump chose a speech in Washington at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, a landmark that has become synonymous with the 80-year-old president's obsessive, controversial drive to redevelop the US capital.

"We're going to win," he said on Sunday.

Polls, however, show that Democrats are near certain to take the majority from Republicans in the House of Representatives and have a real shot at winning the currently Republican Senate.

Even winning just the House would mean Democrats have voting power over the federal budget and would lead powerful committees able to investigate alleged corruption under Trump, the Epstein files and other explosive issues.

The loss of total Republican dominance would push Trump into unfamiliar and uncomfortable territory: A lame-duck period beset with high inflation at home, the sputtering war against Iran and hostile Democratic investigations into his activities in Washington.

But a decade into the Trump era, Democrats remain wary about predictions of victory.

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

Scorched earth

Democrats are facing late internal divisions, with left-wing candidates clashing at times with the party's establishment.

In a startling display of infighting on Sunday, Democratic congresswoman Haley Stevens in Michigan endorsed Republican candidate Mike Rogers against left-wing progressive candidate Abdul El Sayed in her state's key Senate race.

Trump was quick to praise Stevens for her "bravery", posting on his Truth Social platform that "Haley said what few people are willing to say".

> Trump's Republicans have fought a political scorched-earth campaign...

Stevens, who lost a bruising primary to Sayed in August despite being backed by the Democratic establishment, struggled to explain her decision in an interview with CNN.

"It's just where I was at the end of the night and earlier this morning," she said.

Trump's Republicans have fought a political scorched-earth campaign, painting Democrats as communists and openly branding Sayed, who is Muslim, as a terrorist.

Addressing a crowd in Iowa on Sunday, Trump said Democrats are "extreme and dangerous radicals" who will "steal your wealth" and let in migrants to "ransack, rape and plunder".

But polls show Americans heavily souring on Trump's wrecking-ball act.

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

While the House seems highly likely to turn Democratic, the battle for the Senate is up in the air.

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 in deeply Republican states, pollsters now say the odds of a Democratic flip are at minimum even.

The final New York Times/Siena poll released on Sunday evening showed Democratic candidates leading in all seven seats viewed as most competitive, though five remained within the margin of error.

A Democratic Senate would be able to shut down Trump's lifetime appointments to courts, including the Supreme Court.

While Tuesday is election day, early voting has already seen a record 54 million people cast ballots around the country.

The 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 effort in dismantling entire government departments, has given a staggering nearly half-billion dollars to help get Republicans elected.

Iran says in 'intensive' negotiations with US to avert war



AFP photo

Iranians walk past a large anti-US wall mural in Tehran on Sunday

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran on Monday said "intensive" exchanges were under way with Washington and offered to reopen the Strait of Hormuz under strict conditions, as efforts escalated to avert a return to war.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said indirect talks were taking place via mediators. China also urged a return to negotiations, while Iran's security chief discussed the conflict with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Oil prices, sent rocketing by Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz energy corridor, dropped more than 6 per cent on Monday on optimism over the eight-month-old conflict.

"Given the sensitivity and gravity of the current situation, consultations and deliberations are very intensive," Araghchi said in a video interview with the official IRNA news agency.

"Qatar and Pakistan are playing a very active mediating role in these negotiations."

The Axios news outlet reported that US Vice President JD Vance had sent a letter to Iranian national security chief Mohsen Rezaei about possible new talks, marking the highest-level move in months.

The redoubled diplomatic push comes ahead of Tuesday's US midterm elections, where dissatisfaction over the war and higher fuel prices are weighing on US President Donald Trump's Republicans.

Democrats expect to win at least partial control of Congress and impose political constraints on Trump for the first time in two years.

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said the messages received from the US were "an acknowledgement of our victory".

But Trump kept up his threats against Iran, telling a campaign rally that at "some point we're going to have to give them the hammer".

'Good-faith approach'

A senior Iranian official said Tehran was ready to open Hormuz, the export highway for the energy-rich Gulf, within two days — as long as Washington agrees to its list of demands.

In September, Iran proposed a seven-day plan to reopen the strait if the US agreed to demands including ending the war on all fronts, unfreezing Iranian assets, lifting oil sanctions and ending its counter-blockade of Iranian ports.

"The possibility of implementing this plan in two days is another indication of Iran's good-faith approach," foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei told reporters at a briefing.

"We have stated that, if Iran's demands are met, it would be possible to restore security to the Strait of Hormuz and resume the negotiating process within a short period."

Baqaei said "everything depends" on the US side accepting the Iranian demands. "Only then can we discuss the subsequent stages," he added.

Chinese President Xi Jinping discussed the war with Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq in Beijing on Monday — the first visit to China by the Gulf nation's head of state since diplomatic ties were established.

"The two sides called for resolving disputes through political and diplomatic means, urging the United States and Iran to pursue a peaceful path, achieve a ceasefire (and) prevent war entirely," an Omani statement said.

China also held meetings with Iranian and Saudi officials in Beijing on Monday.

Beijing supports Tehran in "safeguarding its own sovereignty and security", Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Ali Bagheri, deputy secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, according to a Chinese statement.

Bagheri told Wang that "Tehran's stance on defending its national security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity remains unchanged, and that Iran will make no compromises in this regard", according to state TV.

Russian President Putin also spoke with Iran's security chief Mohsen Rezaei about the war by telephone, Iranian state media said.

'Powerful response'

In an interview with Al Jazeera released on Sunday, Araghchi said Washington must accept a new route agreed between Iran and Oman for transiting the strait.

He said the US must also remove sanctions imposed in recent months and reduce American troop numbers in the region.

Washington has since August rolled out a fresh raft of sanctions, part of what it called "economic asphyxiation" of Iran.

American and Israeli threats to Iran rose in the run-up to the midterms and last week's elections in Israel, where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to secure a majority.

On Saturday, Trump said he still had to "take care" of one or two targets including Pickaxe mountain in central Iran, a suspected nuclear site which Tehran denies is such a facility.

"Any act of aggression against Iran, any military attack against Iran, by whatever means, will be met with a powerful, immediate and comprehensive response from us," Baqaei said.

Taliban government voices 'serious concern' over US Afghan deportation plans

KABUL (AFP) — Afghanistan's Taliban authorities voiced concern on Monday over reported plans by Washington to deport scores of Afghan immigrants to Pakistan with the aim of their eventual return to their home country.

More than 150 Afghans in the United States would be deported via Pakistan to Afghanistan, including relatives of those who assisted US forces before their 2021 withdrawal, according to US media reports and an advocacy group.



AFP photo

Taliban security personnel stand guard near the Torkham border crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan in the Nangarhar province on February 27

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan expresses its serious concern over reports that the United States intends to deport some Afghan refugees to Pakistan who have not yet been able to obtain legal residency documents in that country," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abdul Qahar Balkhi said in a statement.

Advocacy groups have warned that the removal of former allies and their families could endanger their lives.

After regaining power, Taliban authorities announced a general amnesty for Afghans who worked with Western-backed forces and governments and have repeated promises this year that their former foes could safely return home.

However, the United Nations has recorded reports of extrajudicial killings, detentions and abuses.

At least 19 dead in Venezuela army attack on Colombian rebel camp

CARACAS (AFP) — At least 19 people were killed in the Venezuelan army's recent attack on a Colombian guerrilla group's camp inside Venezuela, an NGO and source close to the operation said on Sunday.

The FundaRedes NGO , which monitors rights violations in Venezuela's border states , initially reported nine deaths in the attack early Friday morning in the western state of Apure.

Juan Francisco Garcia, a coordinator with the group, told AFP on Sunday that "another 10 bodies" had been transported to the state capital San Fernando the day after the attack.

The attack targeted a camp of the National Liberation Army, a Colombian guerrilla group known by its Spanish initials, ELN.



AFP photo

Colombian soldiers patrol the streets of Cucuta, Norte de Santander Department, Colombia, onFriday

Video shared by FundaRedes showed bodies lying on the ground, trees knocked down and the ruins of what appeared to be a camp site.

A Venezuelan military source close to the operation, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the attack had been supported by US intelligence.

"We had help from the CIA and the FBI. This was an order from the United States," the source said.

Requests for comment from the US State Department and Venezuelan government were not immediately answered.

The strikes were carried out by drones and attack helicopters targeting the camp, which was located in a rural, forested area in the southwest of Apure, the military source said.

The attack took the guerrillas by surprise , they had no time to react, the source said, noting that most of the people killed were Venezuelan nationals.

'More camps'

After the attack, bodies were initially transported to the town of Puerto Paez, which lies across a river from Colombia.

"Several of the bodies were completely mangled. Even as they were being taken to San Fernando, they still smelled of burnt flesh," a resident of Puerto Paez told AFP.

Several armed groups engage in drug trafficking, illegal mining and smuggling along Venezuela and Colombia's porous 2,200-kilometre border, including dissident members of the now-defunct FARC and the ELN.

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

The military operation along the border may represent the latest shift in Venezuelan policy since the US ouster of Nicolas Maduro in January.

Venezuela's government has since been led by Delcy Rodriguez, Maduro's former deputy who has won vocal support from US President Donald Trump for bending to his administration's demands.

Colombia has for years accused Venezuela's leftist government of turning a blind eye to Colombian rebel groups in border areas.

Human rights advocate and military affairs expert Rocio San Miguel said the Friday attack reflects a "change in doctrine" within the Venezuelan military.

The military source told AFP that Venezuelan forces were "going to continue combing through the area because we believe there are more camps".

The operation also comes as Colombia's newly elected hard-right president, Abelardo de la Espriella, ramps up a violent crackdown on the ELN and drug trafficking groups in his country.

Colombia has joined over a dozen other Latin American and Caribbean nations in a US-led regional effort to combat drug trafficking and organised crime across the region.



Photo courtesy of ASEZA

Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority Environment and Public Safety Commissioner Nidal Ouran opens the Blue Economy Incubator at the Jordan River Foundation's Queen Rania Centre for Community Empowerment in Aqaba

ASEZA opens incubator to promote entrepreneurship in Aqaba's blue economy

AMMAN (JT) — Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) Environment and Public Safety Commissioner Nidal Ouran has opened the Blue Economy Incubator at the Jordan River Foundation's Queen Rania Centre for Community Empowerment in Aqaba, ASEZA announced on Sunday.

The incubator initiative, attended by Ahmad Ghneimat, director of the centre, aims to support entrepreneurial projects and expand opportunities to leverage marine potential for sustainable economic activity, according to an ASEZA statement.

During the visit, Ouran reviewed the centre's blue economy initiatives, project incubation schemes, and a workshop focused on establishing professional occupational health and safety standards tailored to marine sector operations.

Ouran highlighted the importance of fostering innovation in the blue economy to create sustainable economic growth while protecting marine environments and safeguarding worker welfare across maritime activities.

The visit comes as part of ongoing cooperation between ASEZA and the Jordan River Foundation to foster entrepreneurship, improve maritime standards and advance sustainable development in Aqaba.

Wasel expands 'Shabbek Wa Bader' initiative to 200 public schools

AMMAN (JT) — Wasel for Awareness and Education, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, is expanding its "Shabbek Wa Bader" programme to 200 public schools across Jordan, with the aim of reaching around 8,000 students.

The expansion follows the programme's previous implementation in 40 public schools, and marks a new phase in efforts to extend its reach to more students and communities across the Kingdom, according to a Wasel statement.

As part of the expansion, Wasel organised a five-day training of trainers programme for 200 teachers representing the participating schools. Held from October 18 to October 22, the training brought together 40 teachers each day.

The training aimed to equip teachers with the knowledge, tools and facilitation skills required to deliver the "Shabbek Wa Bader" curriculum throughout the academic year.



Photo courtesy of Wasel for Awareness and Education

Wasel for Awareness and Education, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, is expanding its 'Shabbek Wa Bader' programme to 200 public schools across Jordan, with the aim of reaching around 8,000 students

Through interactive sessions, participants explored the programme's approach and prepared to guide students through a learning journey centred on civic engagement, leadership and community participation.

A key component of the programme is the "Walk in My Shoes" initiative, which introduces students to the experiences and challenges faced by persons with disabilities through interactive, play-based activities.

The initiative seeks to foster empathy, challenge stereotypes, and raise awareness of the importance of inclusion and accessibility within communities.

Throughout the academic year, students will also be encouraged to identify challenges in their communities, develop solutions, and design and implement their own community initiatives.

The programme seeks to strengthen essential skills, including critical thinking, teamwork, communication, problem-solving and leadership, while encouraging students to take an active role in addressing local challenges and contributing to their communities.

Founded in 2018, Wasel for Awareness and Education, is an NGO based in Jordan that helps individuals break the cycle of circumstances through education, entrepreneurship and employment programme.

King inaugurates 20th Parliament's third ordinary session, delivers Speech from the Throne

Continued from page 1

"This blessed land is defended by formidable soldiers whose unwavering vigilance, day and night, ensures that Jordanians rest secure in the certainty that they are always protected. Our brave Arab Army and security agencies put their lives on the line, vowing to ensure that Jordan's defences remain impenetrable and its flag flies high and proud."

The King reiterated the centrality of the Palestinian cause, noting that the region will never enjoy security or stability without realising the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people's to their homeland.

"We reiterate, time and again, that there can be no security or stability in our region without upholding the Palestinian people's right to their homeland. Despite international calls for an end to Israel's violations, the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza continues, as do the relentless attacks in the West Bank and Jerusalem, whilst Israel's expansionist ambitions remain the greatest threat to the region's future and hopes."

Hi Majesty underlined the key role of Parliament as the "cornerstone of our political life" and as representing the nation "the source of all powers and the bedrock of its strength".

"By upholding this principle, our national front remains secure and resilient. For a strong Jordan can defend its interests, champion Arab causes, fulfil its responsibilities and remain a steadfast pillar of support to those in need."

"Your Parliament should be the voice of the nation, the guardian of public interest and the oversight power over government performance, always placing the interests of Jordanians first. Your differences of opinion are a source of strength, as long as the national interest remains your shared goal."

Addressing lawmakers, the King noted that the "interests of every Jordanian must lie at the heart of every decision", saying, "True development manifests in the lived experiences of citizens, in the impact they feel in their daily lives and opportunities, their education and healthcare, and the future of their children.

Today, as we move ahead on the path towards economic modernisation, work has started on a number of ambitious mega projects aimed at bolstering the foundations of our national economy, enhancing its resilience and advancing Jordan's pivotal role in the region. And I call upon the government to expedite progress in these strategic initiatives."

"Water, water, water", His Majesty said, adding, "Water security is a pillar of our national sovereignty, and under no circumstances will we allow the Jordanian people's unassailable right to access water to be held hostage. On this matter, there is no room for compromise or appeasement."

The King directed the government to continue with water security projects and to work on developing proactive plans to protect the Kingdom's resources, "in order to ensure their sustainability and safeguard the rights of future generations".

The King stressed that public office is a duty of service and not a badge of prestige, underlying that nor shall there "be immunity for anyone who abuses their position, whoever they may be. The authority of the state and the rule of law must prevail above all else".

Earlier, an official ceremony was held upon His Majesty's arrival at Parliament, accompanied by HRH Crown Prince Hussein.

The King was received by the heads of the three branches of government, and several senior officials and officers.

Her Majesty Queen Rania, HRH Prince Hashem, a number of Royal Family members, senior officials and officers, as well as members of the Arab and foreign diplomatic corps in Jordan attended the speech.

Top Arab-Israeli leader tells AFP opposition must join to oust Netanyahu

NAZARETH (AFP) — The leader of the largest Arab-majority party in the incoming Israeli parliament told AFP on Monday that it was time for reluctant opposition members to accept "political reality" and join forces to unseat prime inister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Yousef Jabareen, head of the Joint List, pointed to the inconclusive results of last week's election, in which the pro-Netanyahu bloc won 53 seats and the opposition camp won 48 — both well short of a 61-seat majority.

But the Joint List and its fellow Arab-led party Raam bagged 11 and eight seats, respectively, enough to push the opposition over the finish line should it choose to accept their support.

The Arab parties' performance "is what is stopping Netanyahu from celebrating the continuation of his government", he said, calling it "a far-right government with all the dangers it represents".

He criticised holdouts in the opposition camp who have publicly voiced opposition to a coalition that includes Arab parties, including Avigdor Liberman's secular-right Yisrael Beiteinu.

"Like everyone else in the political arena, Lieberman must deal with the political reality and the numbers in the Knesset," or parliament, Jabareen said.

"Given the current parliamentary arithmetic, Netanyahu's government... cannot be replaced without coordination with the Joint List," he said in an interview in Nazareth, an Arab stronghold and the boyhood home of Jesus Christ.

Arabs, who make up around 20 per cent of the population, are descendants of Palestinians who stayed after Israel's creation in 1948.

Israeli president Isaac Herzog will begin meeting this week with representatives of parties that won seats in the October 27 vote, to determine to which leader to give the first shot at forming a government.

Opposition camp leader Gadi Eisenkot has expressed misgivings about a coalition government including Arab parties, but has not ruled it out publicly.

Netanyahu, meanwhile, spent the campaign painting the parties as a threat to the country.

Jabareen said he had met with Raam leader Mansour Abbas on Monday, and would the following day with The Democrats' Yair Golan, the veteran left-winger who is the only member of the opposition bloc publicly to urge a governing partnership with the Arab-led parties.

Crown Prince meets with Saudi crown prince in Riyadh

Continued from page 1

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maj. Gen. Majdi Al Harasis, and Director of the Office of the Crown Prince Zaid Baqain attended the meeting.

From the Saudi side, Deputy Governor of Riyadh Region Prince Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Bin Abdulaziz, Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah, and Minister of State and Council of Ministers of Saudi Arabia member Khalid Bin Abdulrahman Al Issa attended the meeting.

Hassan reaffirms government commitment to Royal directives, modernisation agenda

Continued from page 1

Hassan underscored the importance of sustained cooperation and communication with senators, within the constitutional framework, to address key legislative and national issues.

He also commended the Senate's efforts over the past year in reviewing and passing national legislation.

The premier congratulated the Senate on the start of the new parliamentary session and extended his congratulations to Senate President Faisal Fayez on the renewal of Royal confidence in his appointment as Senate president.

Hassan also congratulated MP Ibrahim Tarawneh on his election as speaker of the Lower House for the current session.

Hassan thanked former Lower House speaker Mazen Qadi for his efforts during the past year.

He said that the government would continue consultations with parliamentary blocs and MPs on various issues and legislation, in support of the country's interests and the Political Modernisation Vision.

Hassan also thanked MPs for their role in supporting the government's work and the implementation of the Royal Letter of Designation and the modernisation visions.

He added that the government would continue working to serve citizens and promote development across the Kingdom, while safeguarding Jordan's security and stability.

Fayez: Jordan's security, stability, national unity are red lines

Continued from page 1

Referring to the terrorist attack in the village of Hmoud in Karak Governorate, which claimed the lives of nine citizens, Fayez said the incident would not undermine national unity or the cohesion of Jordanian society.

The attack, carried out by criminals linked to extremist takfiri groups, targeted the values of coexistence, he said, adding that Jordanians' solidarity and widespread condemnation of the incident reflected their unity behind their country and Hashemite leadership.

At the beginning of the meeting, senators observed a minute of silence in tribute to the Karak martyrs.

Fayez said the Senate would continue to fulfil its constitutional responsibilities and work closely with the Lower House and the government to strengthen cooperation among the three authorities, advance political, economic and administrative modernisation, and accelerate the implementation of major national projects.

These projects aim to stimulate economic growth, create job opportunities and improve citizens' living standards, he said.

He stressed that citizens' interests would remain at the centre of the Senate's legislative and oversight work, highlighting the King's emphasis on ensuring that development delivers tangible improvements to people's daily lives.

Fayez also underscored the importance of water security as a national priority, calling for the protection of water resources and their sustainable management for future generations.

He commended King Abdullah's continued efforts at international forums to defend Jordan's interests, safeguard its security and stability, and uphold its pivotal role in addressing regional issues and challenges.

Fayez affirmed the Senate's commitment to the King's directives, saying the Speech from the Throne would serve as a key reference in carrying out its constitutional duties and serving the nation and its citizens.

During the meeting, senators elected the members of the Senate's permanent bureau, with Abdullah Ensour elected first deputy president, Hani Mulki second deputy president, and Zuhair Abu Faris and Suhair Al Ali assistants to the president.

The Senate also formed a committee to draft its response to the Speech from the Throne, in accordance with Article 5 of its bylaws.

The committee comprises senators Abdullah Ensour, Tawfiq Kreishan, Zuhair Abu Faris, Reem Abu Dalbouh and Omar Ayesh.

Senate Secretary General Abdul Rahim Wakeed read out the Royal decrees proroguing the extraordinary session, postponing the Senate's ordinary session and summoning it to convene as of Monday.

The decrees also included the acceptance of Mohammad Assas' resignation from Senate membership, effective September 6, the appointment of Fayez as Senate president, effective October 25, and the appointment of Yassin Khayyat as a senator, effective October 8.

Khayyat subsequently took the constitutional oath before the Senate, in accordance with Article 80 of the Constitution and Article 4 of the Senate's bylaws.

Tarawneh elected Lower House speaker for third ordinary session

Continued from page 1

Under Article 14, a candidate must secure an absolute majority of votes cast by MPs present to be elected speaker when there are more than two candidates. If only two candidates are contesting the position, the candidate receiving the higher number of votes is elected. In the event of a tie, the winner is determined by drawing lots.

Article 69 of the Constitution stipulates that the Lower House elects a speaker at the beginning of each ordinary session for a one-year term, with the possibility of reelection.

Also on Monday, lawmakers elected MP Ayatullah Freihat as first deputy speaker for the third ordinary session of the Parliament, during the opening meeting chaired by Tarawneh.

The election took place during an evening session presided over by Tarawneh, with 138 lawmakers casting their ballots.

THE JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily, established in 1975

Chairman of the Board
Samih Maaitah

Director General
Hasan Jazzazi

Editor-in-Chief
Raed Omari

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

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

Follow us on X Platform: **@jordantimes.com**
Like our facebook page: **thejordantimes**
Youtube: **thejordantimes**

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

The King's economic messages

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

"True development manifests in the lived experiences of citizens, in the impact they feel in their daily lives and opportunities, their education and healthcare, and the future of their children." This powerful message lies at the heart of His Majesty King Abdullah's Speech from the Throne at the opening of the third ordinary session of the Twentieth National Assembly. Beyond reaffirming Jordan's commitment to economic modernisation, the speech sets out a clear set of priorities for the government and public institutions, placing citizens' well-being at the centre of economic policymaking. It also raises a fundamental question: how should the success of Jordan's economic development be measured?

The first economic message is the need to redefine development in terms of its impact on citizens. His Majesty stressed that "the interests of Jordanians must be at the heart of every decision, not on its margins". This carries a significant economic implication. Economic performance cannot be judged solely by GDP growth rates; it must also be assessed by the extent to which growth translates into higher real incomes, productive employment, improved productivity and better living standards. Growth that fails to generate sufficient employment opportunities or improve household welfare remains limited in its contribution to inclusive development. The real challenge, therefore, is not simply to achieve higher growth rates, but to ensure that growth creates tangible and widely shared economic benefits.

The second message concerns the implementation of major strategic projects. His Majesty called on the government to accelerate the delivery of these projects, recognising their potential to strengthen the national economy and enhance its resilience. However, the economic value of such projects should not be measured by the speed of implementation or the volume of capital expenditure alone. Their real contribution lies in expanding productive capacity, generating domestic value added, creating sustainable employment and stimulating economic activity across related sectors. This requires evaluating projects according to their economic and social returns, rather than focusing exclusively on financial allocations or completion rates. Ultimately, a successful strategic project is not merely one that is completed, but one that creates lasting productive capacity and generates sustainable economic returns.

The third message places water security firmly within the framework of national economic security. His Majesty's emphatic statement, "Water, water, water!", reflects the strategic importance of this resource for Jordan's economic future. In a country facing severe water scarcity, water security is not simply a public service or environmental concern; it is a fundamental determinant of productive capacity, investment and long-term growth. Limited water resources constrain agricultural and industrial expansion, increase production costs and weaken the competitiveness of economic sectors. Investment in water infrastructure, improving efficiency, reducing losses and adopting sustainable resource management practices must therefore be treated as a strategic economic investment. Securing water resources is essential not only for current development needs, but also for protecting the economic rights and opportunities of future generations.

The fourth message concerns accountability and the rule of law as foundations of effective economic governance. His Majesty emphasised the National Assembly's responsibility to oversee government performance and safeguard the public interest, while firmly stating that no one should be immune from accountability for abusing public office. This message has important economic implications. Institutional integrity, administrative efficiency, and the consistent application of the law are essential for building public confidence and creating a predictable environment for investment. Equally important is the need to shift the focus of government oversight from monitoring expenditure and administrative procedures towards measuring actual outcomes and economic impact. This requires clear performance indicators, defined implementation timelines, and explicit institutional responsibilities, allowing policymakers and oversight bodies to assess whether public policies and strategic projects are delivering their intended economic and social returns.

The King's economic messages establish a clear benchmark for the next phase of Jordan's development. Success should be measured not merely by the number of projects announced, the volume of public spending, or the growth rate achieved, but by the productive value created, the employment opportunities generated, and the improvements citizens experience in their daily lives. The central challenge is to transform policy commitments into measurable outcomes, investment into productive capacity, and economic growth into sustained improvements in social and economic welfare.

'Water, water, water': King puts water security at heart of national sovereignty



Hana Namrouqa

When His Majesty King Abdullah began addressing Jordan's water challenges in his Speech from the Throne on Monday, he emphasised one word three times: "Water, water, water."

The emphasis carried a clear message. In one of the world's most water-scarce countries, securing reliable water supply is vital to national security, economic stability and the Kingdom's ability to shape its own future.

The King was firm in linking water security to national sovereignty, stressing that "under no circumstances will we allow the Jordanian people's unassailable right to access water to be held hostage". He also made clear that "there is no room for compromise or appeasement" on this matter.

The statement sends a strong message both domestically and internationally: Jordan must strengthen its capacity to secure its water needs and reduce its vulnerability to external circumstances.

At the centre of this ambition is the National Water Carrier, one of Jordan's most significant strategic projects. The initiative has received the King's sustained attention and close follow-up, reflecting its importance in addressing the country's water shortage and securing reliable supply for future generations.

The King's directives are also closely linked to Jordan's economic modernisation agenda. In his Speech from the Throne, His Majesty the King called on the government to expedite progress on major projects aimed at strengthening the national economy and enhancing its resilience; and water security is fundamental to this ambition.

The government must, therefore, accelerate the implementation of strategic water projects, particularly the National Water Carrier, while developing plans to protect national resources and ensure their sustainability. The King's emphasis on safeguarding the rights of future generations also places long-term resource management firmly on the national agenda.

Reliable water supply is fundamental to economic growth, improving living standards and attracting investment. However, the regional dimension adds further urgency.

> The King's emphasis on the word 'water' was a forceful reminder of the urgency of this national priority

In a region where water resources are scarce and shared across borders, availability is influenced by political relations, while climate change and population growth are intensifying these challenges.

Against such backdrop, Jordan's investment in strategic water infrastructure reflects its commitment to strengthening its ability to meet national water needs and reduce exposure to external uncertainties or rely on water from outside its borders. The message to the international community is that the Kingdom eyes greater control over its water future and sovereignty.

Water sovereignty means developing the infrastructure and capacity to secure reliable supply and also means ensuring that political or economic developments beyond Jordan's borders do not impact the country's ability to meet its essential water needs.

The King's emphasis on the word "water" was a forceful reminder of the urgency of this national priority. Ultimately, Jordan's pursuit of water self-sufficiency is about safeguarding its ability to make independent decisions, protect its development priorities and secure the rights of future generations.

In a region where water increasingly shapes economic and political realities, strengthening water sovereignty is an essential component of Jordan's national security.

The Speech from the Throne: A King's vision, a nation's strength, a future of promise

By Hasan Dajah

The Speech from the Throne, delivered today-November 2, 2026-by His Majesty King Abdullah before the Parliament at the opening of the third ordinary session of the 20th Parliament, embodied a national vision that combines a firm stance, a profound sense of responsibility, and a warm bond with the Jordanian people. The address reaffirmed confidence in Jordan's ability to continue its journey, anchored by wise leadership, a loyal citizenry and robust institutions. Its messages reflect a state that is clear about its priorities, steadfast in protecting its core principles, and moving forward with confident resolve toward a future where the citizen remains the primary focus and the ultimate objective of all achievements.

> His Majesty reaffirmed Jordan's steadfast commitment to defending the causes of the Arab nation

The speech further exemplified the spirit of the Hashemite leadership-a leadership that draws its strength from its proximity to the people, transforming their aspirations into a concrete agenda for action and contribution. This, in turn, strengthens national unity and fosters hope for a future that is more prosperous, resilient, and just for generations of Jordanians to come.

The speech began by honoring the martyrs of Karak and addressing the fight against terrorism-a testament to the leadership's deep appreciation for the sacrifices made by its people, and its unwavering resolve to safeguard the nation's security and unity. This was accompanied by the King's profound recognition of the Armed Forces and security agencies, as well as his trust in the awareness, wisdom, and cohesion of the Jordanian people during times of adversity. In this light, the Royal message serves to bolster national reassurance: the state derives added strength from the solidarity of its people, while society finds in its leadership and institutions a pillar that preserves its security and dignity. This relationship grants Jordan a renewed capacity to transform difficult challenges into opportunities for unity and the strengthening of national belonging.

The trust that the King places in the Jordanian people carries profound educational and national significance; it positions every citizen as a partner in safeguarding stability and shaping the future. Public awareness is a precious asset, responsible discourse contributes to the preservation of society and solidarity among the nation's people serves as a practical expression of the authentic Jordanian identity. In my view, the most beautiful aspect of this trust is the realisation that every Jordanian has a role to play-that serving the nation encompasses the efforts of teachers, labourers, doctors, farmers, and students alike, as well as any sincere initiative that brings good to the people.

Regarding Arab affairs, His Majesty reaffirmed Jordan's steadfast commitment to defending the causes of the Arab nation. He linked the region's security and stability to the fulfillment of the Palestinian people's rights to their land, while highlighting the gravity of the ongoing humanitarian tragedy in Gaza and the acts of aggression in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

This stance reflects the integrity of Jordanian policy and its moral strength, lending clarity to the nation's diplomacy and bolstering its credibility. Standing firm on fundamental rights provides a solid foundation for building peace; it underscores that Jordan carries its Arab mission with both confidence and a sense of responsibility, maintaining its position as a voice for reason, justice, and the preservation of human dignity. This vision embodies the wisdom of the Hashemite leadership-a wisdom that balances unwavering adherence to principles with a tireless pursuit of a just peace, the strengthening of Arab solidarity and the forging of a unified position that protects the interests of the people. It opens broader horizons for the region-fostering security, stability, cooperation and development, while paving the way toward a better future.

At the institutional level, the speech highlighted the status of the National Assembly and its role in safeguarding the public interest and overseeing government performance. It underscored the value of diverse opinions, if those who hold them are united in their commitment to serving Jordan. This vision opens broad horizons for productive parliamentary practice-one where debate rises to address the needs of the people, and where diversity becomes a source of ideas and solutions. Embracing this perspective would foster inter-institutional cooperation, deepen respect for public responsibility, and ensure that political action remains closely aligned with the aspirations of citizens and their legitimate hopes for progress.

> Perhaps the most resonant message in the speech-one that struck a deep chord with the public-was His Majesty the King's emphasis that the interests of the Jordanian people must take precedence in decision-making...

Perhaps the most resonant message in the speech-one that struck a deep chord with the public-was His Majesty the King's emphasis that the interests of the Jordanian people must take precedence in decision-making, and that development should be measured by its tangible impact on their daily lives, education, healthcare and opportunities. This approach imbues development with a clear human dimension and provides institutions with a practical benchmark for success. Such a spirit can be translated into higher-quality services, expanded opportunities for youth, and productive initiatives across the governorates, and sustained support for families. Every bit of progress that citizens experience in their daily lives strengthens their confidence in the future and reinforces their sense of being partners in the fruits of national development.

The directive to accelerate major projects-with a focus on water security, resource sustainability, and the rights of future generations-underscores the depth of the King's vision regarding the requirements of the future. Water is the foundation of life, production, and societal stability; investing in it is an investment in the nation's capacity for growth. From a strategic perspective, integrating economic projects with resource conservation fosters more sustainable development, encourages proactive planning, and promotes the synergy of efforts. It also provides institutions with a clear operational direction, rendering continuous achievement a collective responsibility-one that concerns both the present lives of Jordanians and the future of their children.

By emphasising the rule of law, service to the public, and a firm rejection of the abuse of office, the address establishes a solid foundation for strengthening justice and public trust in institutions. The significance of this message lies in its direct impact on the citizen's sense of fairness, as well as its support for dedicated employees and competent officials. An administration guided by these values can transform every interaction into an opportunity to demonstrate respect for the individual, and every decision into a means of safeguarding the public interest. In this way, a culture of achievement and integrity is cultivated, and adherence to the law becomes a driving force for development, stability, and equal opportunity.

A comprehensive reading of the Speech from the Throne reveals a leadership that balances firmness with wisdom, links national security to the dignity of its citizens, and connects the strength of institutions to the trust placed in them by the people. This is a vision that deserves to be translated into actionable energy in every sector-reflected through initiative, excellence, and cooperation.

Under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, Jordan possesses a profound reservoir of determination, a deep sense of belonging, and a wealth of experience. An asset is renewed whenever a clear vision meets sincere effort. In this way, the address conveys an enduring message of hope: that Jordan's future is built upon the confidence of its people, and that the nation's dignity and its path towards prosperity are a responsibility to be shouldered by all-with love and pride.

Hasan Dajah — Professor of Strategic Studies, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University



Photo Courtesy of ACT

Aqaba Container Terminal handles 109,341 TEUs, a new operational milestone in October 2026

ACT sets new all-time record of 109,341 TEUs in October

Terminal reaches above 100,000 TEUs for 4th consecutive month

AMMAN (JT) — Aqaba Container Terminal (ACT), the "preferred" gateway to Jordan, the Levant and beyond, announced on Monday a new operational milestone; in October 2026, the terminal handled 109,341 TEUs, the highest monthly throughput in its history.

October marks the fourth consecutive month in which ACT has exceeded 100,000 TEUs, following new records in July (101,900 TEUs), August (over 104,000 TEUs) and September (107,803 TEUs). Over the past five months, the terminal has handled more than 500,000 TEUs, reflecting sustained momentum and the growing confidence of local and regional customers.

During October, ACT efficiently served 59 vessels and handled 15,268 TEUs of transit cargo, reinforcing Aqaba's role as a key logistics route for regional markets, according to a statement by ACT.

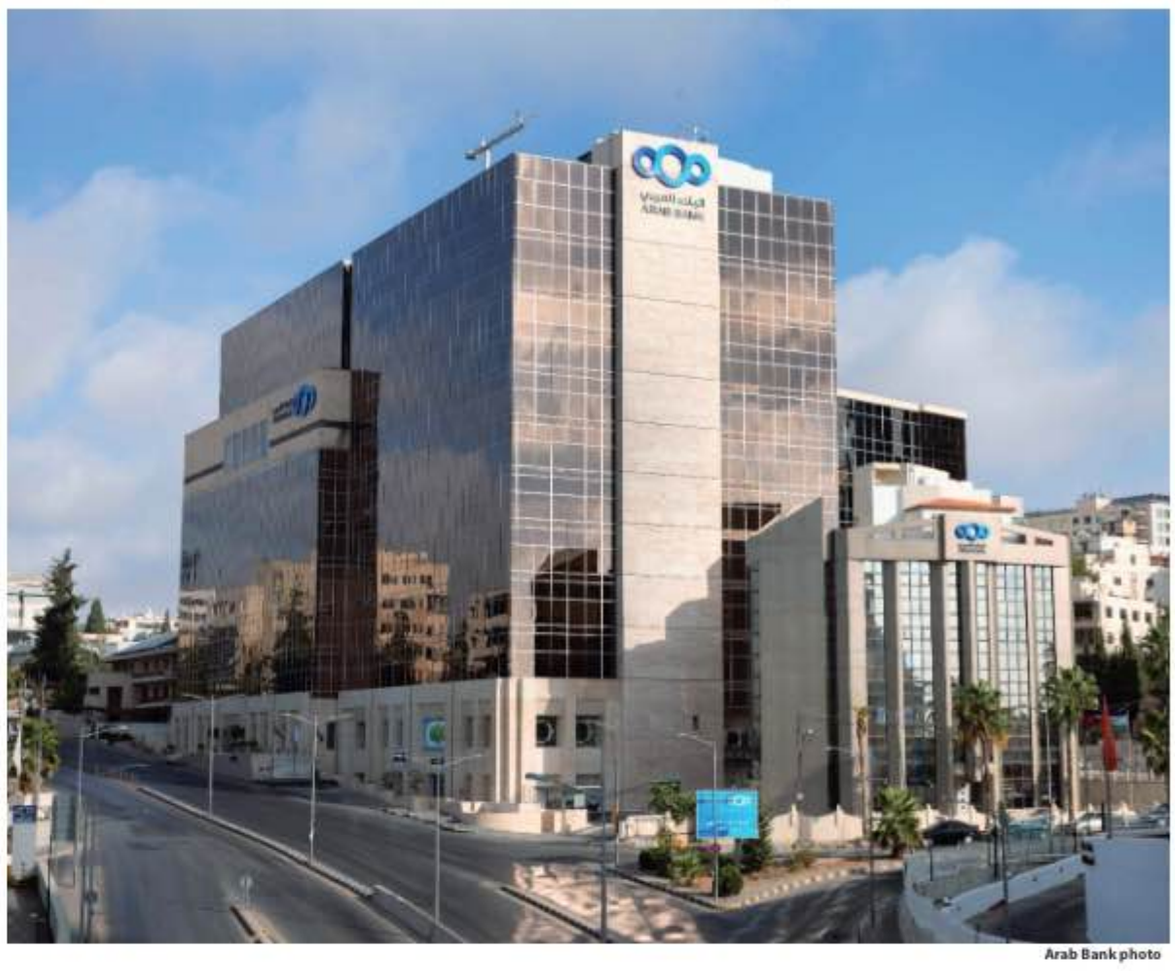
On the landside, the terminal processed 47,814 truck transactions, an average of more than 1,500 trucks per day, supporting the smooth flow of goods to importers and exporters across the Kingdom.

Chief Executive Officer of Aqaba Container Terminal, José Rueda said."Achieving this milestone month after month reflects a culture of operational excellence and a constant focus on our customers."

"Every day, our teams work to make sure that cargo owners, shipping lines and transport partners can rely on Aqaba. The trust they continue to place in our work is what drives us, and we will keep earning it by raising our standards, investing in our future, and serving as a dependable gateway for Jordan and the region." he added.

Aqaba Container Terminal extends its sincere appreciation to its customers, shipping lines, government partners and the entire trade ecosystem for their continued support, and remains committed to operational excellence, safety and sustainable growth.

$902m profits for Arab Bank Group in Q3 2026



Arab Bank photo

AMMAN (JT) — Arab Bank Group announced its financial results for the first nine months of 2026, reaffirming its solid performance despite a rapidly changing regional and international operating environment.

The Group successfully leveraged its diverse capabilities and wide geographic footprint to enhance both its financial and operational performance, according to a statement by the Arab

It reported net profit after tax for the first nine months of 2026 of $902 million, compared to $818 million for the same period last year, an increase of 10 per cent.

The Group's balance sheet showed steady and well-balanced growth, with total assets rising by 5 per cent to reach $81 billion, supported by growth in lending activities and an expanding customer base.

The loan portfolio increased by 4 per cent to $42.5 billion, while customer deposits increased by 6 per cent to $59.3 billion, highlighting the Group's solid financial position and its ability to maintain balanced and sustainable growth.

Commenting on the results, Chairman of Arab Bank, Sabih Masri, stated that "Arab Bank Group's financial performance demonstrates our continued ability to achieve positive results across all key business areas."

He added "This performance is driven by a balanced approach that combines sustainable growth with prudent risk management, built on robust strategic pillars; a wide geographic presence, diversified sources of revenue, disciplined risk management and commitment to digital transformation and innovation".

Masri noted that the Group's results were achieved against a backdrop of geopolitical challenges in the region and the world, compounded by ongoing uncertainty that has affected the business environment at both regional and global levels.

He affirmed the Group's commitment to investing in talent and advanced technologies, while upholding sound governance practices to ensure sustainable growth and ongoing value creation for shareholders, customers and the communities in which the Group operates.

Chief Executive Officer of Arab Bank, Randa Sadik, highlighted that the financial performance in the first nine months of 2026 confirms the Bank's ability to grow and achieve sustainable results across all business lines.

This growth was led by 11 per cent increase in non-interest income, reflecting the success of the Bank's strategy in building diverse revenue sources and reducing reliance on traditional interest margins.

Sadik emphasised asset quality and financial strength, noting that the bank maintained a stable non-performing loan ratios and achieved high provision coverage levels exceeding 100 per cent.

The Group's capital adequacy ratio, according to Basel III guidelines, reached 17.4 per cent, surpassing the minimum requirement set by the Central Bank of Jordan.

Additionally, high liquidity levels were maintained, with a loans-to-deposits ratio of 72 per cent, providing the bank with significant flexibility to pursue growth and capitalise on promising investment opportunities across its markets.

Sadik also pointed out that the bank's digital and AI transformation strategy is progressing steadily, with notable expansion in the adoption of advanced technologies integrated into core banking operations.

This includes redesigning the digital customer experience, automating internal processes and enhancing analytical capabilities for risk management, in addition to launching a range of innovative digital services that add value for customers.

Stocks mixed as tech sector struggles to rebound from selloff



AFP file photo

People walk past an electronic quotation board displaying the Nikkei Stock Average on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo on October 28

HONG KONG (AFP) — Stocks were mixed on Monday as investors struggled to recover from last week's tough run fuelled by disappointing earnings from tech titans, while eyes were also turning to the United States ahead of crucial midterm elections.

Traders did get some support from a drop in oil prices following a report that US President Donald Trump wanted negotiations with Iran to play out rather than resume his war after the polls.

AI-linked firms were hit by another wave of selling as Wall Street giants including Amazon, Alphabet and Microsoft signalled they would keep pouring money into data centres and chips even as investors grow impatient for returns.

The firms, along with Meta, are on track to spend more than $700 billion on capital investment this year, much of it on AI infrastructure, according to analyst estimates.

The reports added to concerns that the vast sum poured into the sector might have been overdone, with Bloomberg saying 90 per cent of software companies in the S&P 500 had beaten earnings expectations this season, while just 70 per cent topped revenue.

That compared with all companies beating profits in the previous three months, and more than 80 per cent topping on sales.

Apple, Advanced Micro Devices and software titan Palantir are due to report this week.

Steep losses in New York saw the Nasdaq end almost three per cent down and Asian tech also struggled at the start of this week.

Japanese chipmaker Kioxia plunged nearly 16 per cent after giving a cautious outlook that fell short of forecasts.

The firm has plunged around 70 per cent from its record high set in June, although it is still up more than 200 per cent since the start of the year.

Taiwan's TSMC added nearly two per cent, though South Korea's Samsung added 1.8 per cent and SK hynix jumped 3.8 per cent.

The mixed performance in tech was reflected in broader markets, with Tokyo, Sydney, Singapore, Wellington, Bangkok and Taipei all down while Seoul, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Mumbai and Jakarta rose.

London, Paris and Frankfurt dropped at the open.

'Unresolved issues'

Oil prices sank more than 3 per cent on hopes for a negotiated end to the Iran crisis, with Tehran's foreign ministry saying it was considering a two-day plan to reopen the Strait of Hormuz if Washington agrees to its conditions, having previously proposed a one-week timeline.

"The possibility of implementing this plan in two days is another indication of Iran's good-faith approach," foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said, adding that the "exchange of messages is still ongoing" via mediators.

Axios reported earlier that Trump wanted talks to continue, to the disappointment of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The news outlet also said Vice President JD Vance had sent a letter to Iranian national security chief Mohsen Rezaei about possible new talks, marking the highest-level move in months.

"Despite the stalemate outcome following the Israeli elections, the chances of a diplomatic breakthrough may be improving following intensified mediation efforts by Qatar and regional allies," said FOREX.com's Razan Hilal.

"Reports point to discussions about sanctions relief and reopening the Strait of Hormuz, while nuclear restrictions and inspections remain major unresolved issues."

Investors were keeping tabs on the US midterms, where Democrats are predicted to see thumping wins as they look to take back control of Congress and impose a first political check on Trump's unprecedented pursuit of power.

Polls show Democrats are all but certain to take the majority from Republicans in the House of Representatives in Tuesday's vote and have a shot at winning the Senate.

Oil prices plunge on US-Iran detente hopes ahead of midterms

LONDON (AFP) — Oil prices sank around seven per cent on Monday, the eve of crucial midterm elections in the United States, as signals that Tehran and Washington were renewing dialogue boosted hopes of ending the Middle East war.

Iran on Monday said "intensive" exchanges were underway with Washington and offered to reopen the Strait of Hormuz under strict conditions, as efforts escalated to avert a return to conflict.

Earlier, the Axios news outlet reported that US Vice President JD Vance had sent a letter to Iranian national security chief Mohsen Rezaei about possible new talks.

That was the highest-level move from the administration of US President Donald Trump in months.

"We believe the [Trump] signals may be tactical ahead of tomorrow's US midterm elections," noted Arne Lohmann Rasmussen, chief analyst at Global Risk Management.

"Meanwhile, attacks on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz continue [and] we maintain our higher-for-longer outlook for energy prices."

Nevertheless, share prices of energy majors dropped, while many other sectors were boosted by the cooling fuel costs.

Traders were also focused on Tuesday's midterms, with Democrats expecting to win at least partial control of Congress that would impose political constraints on Trump for the first time in two years.

The loss of total Republican dominance would push the president into unfamiliar and uncomfortable territory: A lame duck period beset with high inflation at home, the sputtering war against Iran and hostile Democratic investigations into his activities in Washington.

"Investors are bracing for a fresh round of turbulence ahead of US midterm election fireworks while they assess the extent that companies are burning through cash to keep the AI bonfires burning," said Susannah Streeter, chief investment strategist at Wealth Club.

Technology firms' share prices recovered modestly on Wall Street after Friday's sell-off, as more poorly received earnings from US titans fanned deepening concerns about the investment boom for artificial intelligence.

Results updates from Apple, which reports after the close of trading on Monday, as well as Advanced Micro Devices and software titan Palantir will be closely watched this week.

"With Apple starting things off, the earnings cadence will start with a bang, only we won't know until after the close if that 'bang' is a celebratory bang or a take-cover kind of bang," said analyst Patrick O'Hare at Briefing.com.

Shares in Apple were down one per cent in late morning trading.

Concerns about the profitability of AI-related firms did not disappear altogether.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Monday amounted to JD9.1 million spread over 3.3 million shares that traded through 3,751 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.59 per cent, closing at 4046.05 points.

Out of 109 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 24 companies rose while the share price of another 51 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were High Performance Real Estate Investments by 4.76 per cent, Noor Capital Markets for Diversified Investments by 4.09 per cent, Jordan French Insurance by 4 per cent, Philadelphia International Educational Investment Company by 3.51 per cent, and Jordan Investment Trust by 3.45 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jerusalem Insurance by 7.38 per cent, Arab International for Education and Investment by 5.24 per cent, Assas for Concrete Products Company Ltd by 4.69 per cent, Ubour Logistic Services Plc. by 4.17 per cent, and Shira Real Estate Development and Investments by 3.95 per cent.



SPORTS AT A GLANCE

TENNIS

US great Venus Williams suffers 17th loss in a row

HONG KONG (AFP) — Venus Williams suffered her 17th loss in a row in singles tennis with a straight-sets defeat to a player half her age at the Hong Kong Open on Monday. The 46-year-old former world number one went down 6-2, 6-3 to fellow American Mary Stoiana in the opening round. Williams, now ranked 597, let out a yell and stumbled when chasing a return in the first set, just about managing to stay on her feet but going down 5-2. Stoiana, who is ranked 113, faced a crowd heavily in her opponent's favour but refused to relent in the second set to condemn Williams to another early exit. Williams, a seven-time Grand Slam singles champion, last won a singles match on the WTA Tour in July 2025. She lost in straight sets at the Guangzhou Open to Austrian teenager Lilli Tagger last week. Before that, Williams last played at the US Open in August-September, when she lost in the first round to Sofia Kenin, again without winning a set. Williams reached the semi-finals of the Guangzhou doubles with Indonesia's Janice Tjen. She is also in doubles action in Hong Kong. The 23-year-old Stoiana faces top seed Sorana Cirstea of Romania or Russian-born Uzbek Maria Timofeeva in the last 16.

FOOTBALL

Lyon coach Fonseca set for Sporting move — source

LYON (AFP) — Portuguese coach Paulo Fonseca has informed his Lyon players that he is leaving to join Portuguese giants Sporting, a source close to the Ligue 1 club told AFP on Monday. Neither club has officially confirmed the move, but Sporting said on Sunday it had opened negotiations to terminate the contract of current coach Rui Borges. Fonseca, 53, joined Lyon in January 2025 as a replacement for Pierre Sage. He is under contract until the end of this season. The former Porto, Shakhtar Donetsk, Lille and AC Milan coach guided Lyon to a fourth-place finish last term, but they missed out on this season's Champions League league phase after losing in the play-offs.Fonseca's spell at Lyon came during a turbulent financial period. In June 2025, French football's financial watchdog provisionally relegated the club to Ligue 2 before the decision was overturned on appeal, subject to a strict programme of cost-cutting measures and player sales.



AFC photo

Al Hussein Irbid team

Jordanian clubs aim to remain in contention in ACL 2

By Aline Bannayan

AMMAN — AFC Champions League Two leg 2 matches kick off with Round 4 return leg matches as of Tuesday.

Hussein who drew Iraq's Shorta 2-2 in a Group D match, host the Iraqi team with hopes of scoring a home win to consolidate their standing.

Jordan's reigning Pro League champs Hussein kicked off their matches with a disappointing 2-2 draw with East Bengal, before beating Oman's Al Seeb 3-0 in in the second-tier club competition organised by the Asian Football Confederation.

The Jordanian champs, who were struggling in the league before beating leaders Faisali regained their confidence as they remained second in the group behind Shorta who beat AlSeeb 1-0 and East Bengal 3-2 while East Bengal drew AlSeeb 0-0.

In Group C, Pro League runner-up Faisali play Saudi Arabia's Taawoun on Wednesday. Faisali last lost to group leaders Taawoun 2-0 to drop to third in the group after their opening 4-3 defeat to Qatar's Al Rayyan before beating Saudi Arabia's Nahda 2-0. In other results so far, Al Rayyan beat Nahda 4-1, Taawoun beat Al Rayyan 2-1 and Nahda held Taawoun 1-1.

UAE's Al Wahda lead Group A which includes Kuwait's SC,Uzbekistan's Nasaf and Bahrain's Khaldiya, while UAE's Jazira lead Group B which includes Turkmenistan's Arkadag, Bahrain's Muharraq and Iran's Gol Gohar Sirjan. After group-stage matches end December 3, the top two teams from each group will move to the Round of 16. The knockout stage begins on February 9, 2027, with the final scheduled for May 15, 2027.

Earlier in the season, Hussein played their preliminary round match in the top tier Asian competition — the ACL Elite — losing to Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor 3-0. The early elimination moved Hussein to playin the ACL Two alongside Faisali.

In the 2025/26 season, Hussein had an exceptional season winning their first-ever triple titles:The Jordan Cup, the Super Cup alongside their third consecutive Pro League crown while Faisali won the JFA Shield. This year, Hussein started competitions on a sour note, losing to Faisali in the Super Cup. Faisali currently lead the league and have a confident stride after their season opening Super Cup and league results. Faisali now lead the Jordan Pro League while holders Hussein are 5th after fluctuating results.

Jordan men step up Rugby Sevens training ahead of Asian title bid

By Abdul Hamid Hassan Addasi

AMMAN — Jordan's men's rugby sevens team is stepping up its fitness, skills and tactical training ahead of the 2026 Asia Rugby Emirates Sevens tournament, where it will compete for the West and Central Asia title on home soil in Aqaba.

Aqaba to host 14 teams from nine countries

The Jordan Rugby Federation will host the tournament at Ayla Oasis in Aqaba on Friday and Saturday.

Fourteen teams from nine countries will compete in the men's and women's events.

Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan will contest the men's title. The women's field comprises Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

Players trained 12 times a week for three months

Jordan head coach Ahmad Hamouqa said the players trained 12 times a week for three months.

He said the coaching staff had widened the pool of players considered for selection and that hosting the tournament placed added responsibility on the squad.

The training program combined skills and tactical work on the field with conditioning sessions on the streets of Amman and in the gym.

Just one session on natural grass

Hamouqa said limited access to natural grass was one of the coaching staff's biggest challenges.

The team held most of its sessions on artificial turf, which he said made injury prevention more difficult.

The squad trained on natural grass just once, at a field in Jawa.

Hamouqa thanked the venue's management for making the field available and said the session had been a valuable part of the team's preparations.



Photo provided

Dubai beyond the ordinary: Creative discoveries, culinary traditions and lifestyle experiences

AMMAN (JT) — From fashion runways and rooftop pools to jewellery-making workshops, handmade pasta and Levantine dining, Dubai is offering visitors new ways to experience the city.

Dubai is known for its skyline, luxury hotels and shopping malls. Beyond these familiar landmarks, however, the emirate is developing another side of its tourism offering, built around creativity, food, wellness and personal discovery.

Visitors can make a silver ring, learn the craft of Italian pasta, explore regional fashion or dedicate a day to movement and relaxation. These experiences offer a different way to understand a city.

Dubai's appeal is particularly strong during the cooler months, when outdoor dining, rooftop venues, beachfront walks and open-air activities become an integral part of the visitor experience. The season also brings a packed calendar of cultural, culinary, fashion and entertainment events, adding further reasons to explore the city beyond its familiar landmarks.

Rather than follow a sightseeing itinerary, travellers can shape a stay around their interests. The following destinations reveal a more personal side of Dubai.



Photo courtesy of SLS

Dubai Fashion Week: Regional creativity on an international stage

Co-founded by Dubai Design District (d3) and the Arab Fashion Council, Dubai Fashion Week has become an important platform for designers, buyers, media and fashion professionals. It reflects the emirate's ambition to strengthen its position as an international centre for fashion and design.

The Spring/Summer 2027 edition, held from October 22 to 26 at Dubai Design District, brought together designers and brands from markets including the UAE, Jordan, India, Colombia, South Korea, Vietnam, Azerbaijan and France. Jordanian designer Nafsika Skourti presented her Resort 2027 collection, adding a Jordanian voice to the programme.

Beyond runway shows, industry meetings and buyers' activities connect designers with international retail platforms. The surrounding district also invites visitors to explore studios, creative businesses, contemporary architecture and cultural spaces. For travellers interested in fashion, the event offers a window into the region's evolving design scene and the people shaping it.

In Business Bay, SLS Dubai combines accommodation, dining, wellness and panoramic views. Its rooftop destination, Privilege, occupies the 75th floor and features two infinity pools overlooking the skyline, including the Burj Khalifa.

The rooftop shifts from a daytime pool destination to an evening venue for drinks, dining and music. Wellness is another part of the experience: Ciel Spa offers treatments and facilities for relaxation and recovery, while the fitness centre caters to guests wishing to maintain their routines.

Dining options include Fi'lia, serving Italian cuisine and Carna, a steakhouse associated with butcher Dario Cecchini. SLS appeals to visitors who want to bring several elements of a holiday together: Breakfast, a spa visit, lunch, time by the pool and an evening overlooking the city.

Founded by Sophiya Faizal, Dubai-born Paus Club brings movement, food, recovery and community together. Its philosophy is that well-being should be part of everyday life rather than an occasional luxury.

Its programme includes Reformer Pilates, yoga, strength training, sound healing and padel, alongside spa treatments and recovery services. The concept is organised around the Paus Code, whose four pillars are love, health, work and play.

The Eatery adds a culinary dimension, serving breakfast and daytime dishes before becoming an evening destination with Italian-inspired food, handmade pasta and pizzas. Workshops and community gatherings are also part of the programme. For visitors, Paus offers a neighbourhood-focused alternative to conventional attractions, where several hours can be spent exercising, eating well and connecting with others.

At Ivy's Secret Garden Café in Al Quoz, Silver Soul invites visitors to make their own jewellery. Inspired by silversmithing traditions in Bali and the craftsmanship of Japan, the Dubai-based concept is built around the idea that jewellery becomes more meaningful when its owner helps create it.

Its signature Craft Your Ring workshop lasts about two hours. Participants choose a design and work with skilled craftspeople to shape a silver piece. Designed for beginners, the session can be enjoyed individually, with friends or as a couple. Silver Soul also offers custom ring design consultations.

The attraction lies as much in the process as in the finished object: visitors learn about the material, work with their hands and leave with a personal keepsake. At a time when travellers seek experiences rather than conventional souvenirs, the workshop offers a memory of Dubai made by the visitor.

At 560 Jumeirah Beach Road in Jumeirah 3, Sagra Italian Pastificio combines a 16-seat restaurant with a working pasta laboratory. Founded in Dubai in 2024 by Italian entrepreneur Federica Ranieri, it prepares fresh pasta from scratch using recipes and techniques from different Italian regions.

The menu includes Genovese pesto, Bolognese-style ragù, potato gnocchi and spaghetti alla chitarra. Its workshops invite participants to learn how to make pasta shapes such as tagliatelle, orecchiette, cavatelli and ravioli, turning a meal into a hands-on introduction to Italian culinary traditions.

Sagra's inclusion in 50 Best Discovery, a curated collection of recommended restaurants, bars, hotels and vineyards, has brought it international attention. For visitors, it offers a chance to discover the craft behind a familiar dish in a setting closer to a neighbourhood pasta workshop than a conventional restaurant.

At Sufret Maryam in Wasl 51, Jumeirah 1, chef-owner Salam Daqqaq draws on Levantine home cooking and the tradition of gathering around a family table. The restaurant's name means "Maryam's dining table" and reflects the personal story behind the concept.

The menu gives regional dishes a contemporary presentation while retaining their roots. It includes mezze, slow-cooked dishes and specialities such as romaneye, made with lentils, eggplant and pomegranate, and slow-cooked lamb shoulder prepared with the chef's spices. Desserts include labneh brûlée with sumac and traditional rice pudding.

Awarded a Michelin Bib Gourmand distinction in 2025, Sufret Maryam offers visitors from Jordan and elsewhere in the region familiar flavours in a setting. For international travellers, it provides an introduction to Levantine hospitality, where food is not simply served but shared.

