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Crown Prince to begin three-day working visit to Estonia

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Crown Prince Hussein will begin a three-day working visit to Estonia's capital, Tallinn, on Wednesday, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

During the visit, the Crown Prince is expected to meet with Estonian President Alar Karis, Prime Minister Kristen Michal, Parliament Speaker Lauri Hussar and several senior officials.

At the invitation of the Estonian prime minister, the Crown Prince will also attend the launch of the Tallinn Digital Summit, which brings together government officials and leaders of technology institutions to discuss opportunities and challenges associated with artificial intelligence tools, Petra said.

SSC prosecutor completes investigation into Karak church attack, files charges

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — The State Security Court (SSC) public prosecutor has completed the investigation into the October 23 terrorist attack on St George Church in Hmoud, Karak Governorate, and filed multiple terrorism-related charges against the defendants, including nine counts of committing terrorist acts resulting in death.

SSC Prosecutor Brig. Gen. Ahmad Shahltough said in a statement on Tuesday that the investigation had covered all necessary procedures, including hearing prosecution witnesses, collecting evidence from the crime scene, documenting the weapons and ammunition used in the attack, and questioning the defendants suspected of carrying out or participating in it.

The prosecutor filed seven categories of charges against the defendants under the Anti-Terrorism Law of 2006 and the Penal Code of 1960.

The charges include nine counts of jointly committing terrorist acts resulting in death, in violation of article 2 and 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Law and Article 76 of the Penal Code.



JT/File

The State Security Court

The defendants also face two counts of jointly committing terrorist acts using weapons and ammunition, under Article 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Law, with reference to Articles 2 and 7 of the same law and Article 76 of the Penal Code.

Other charges include jointly possessing weapons and ammunition with the intent to use them in terrorist acts, under Articles 3 and 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Law, with reference to Article 7 of the same law and Article 76 of the Penal Code.

Continued on page 5

IMF says it reaches staff-level agreement with Jordan on $294m in new financing

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan has reached a staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the sixth review of its economic reform programme and the third review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), paving the way for approximately $294 million in additional financing, subject to approval by the IMF's management and Executive Board.

The agreement followed an IMF mission to Amman, led by César Serra, which held discussions with Jordanian officials from October 21 to November 3, 2026.

Upon completion of the reviews, Jordan would receive SDR 97.784 million, equivalent to approximately $133 million, under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF), and SDR 118.764 million, or around $161 million, under the RSF, the IMF said in a statement on its website.



GAM photo

A general view of Amman

The EFF, approved by the IMF Executive Board on January 10, 2024, has a total programme size of SDR 926.370 million (approximately $1.2 billion), while the RSF arrangement, approved on June 25, 2025, amounts to SDR 514.650 million (approximately $700 million).

In a statement issued at the conclusion of the mission, Serra said that Jordan's economic reform programme had maintained strong performance despite regional tensions and heightened uncertainty resulting from the prolonged war in the Middle East.

Serra said that all quantitative performance criteria and most structural benchmarks under the sixth EFF review had been met, while all three reform measures scheduled for the third RSF review were on track for completion.

Continued on page 5



JSSGC photo

Jordan Silos and Supply General Company

JD1.06 billion allocated to support food security, stabilise prices — ministry

AMMAN (JT) — The government has allocated JD1.06 billion to subsidise strategic and essential food commodities between 2023 and 2026, as part of efforts to strengthen food security and maintain stable prices for basic necessities, including bread, wheat, barley and household cooking gas.

According to Ministry of Finance figures, cited by Al Mamlaka, total subsidies amounted to approximately JD277 million in 2023, of which JD228 million was allocated to wheat and animal feed.

Continued on page 5

Government signs $4.2m World Bank grant to advance AI in public services

AMMAN (JT) — The government has signed a $4.2 million grant agreement with the World Bank to support the development and testing of artificial intelligence applications in public institutions and prepare for the expansion of the Sanad digital platform to include the business sector.

The grant forms part of additional financing arrangements for the Youth, Technology and Jobs Project, Al Mamlaka reported, citing World Bank documents.

It will fund preparatory activities for the project's additional financing, including the development of practical AI solutions for selected government sectors, studies to identify project components and priorities, and efforts to strengthen the capacity of relevant institutions to design and implement digital solutions.

The initiative will focus on developing and testing AI applications to streamline government operations and improve the delivery of public services, according to Al Mamlaka.

The applications will include tools capable of carrying out multiple tasks and processes, as well as AI-powered solutions integrated into the Sanad platform.

The agreement also provides for the development of a phased plan to expand Sanad's services to business-sector users. This will involve redesigning and simplifying procedures for selected services, testing new digital solutions and preparing the technical specifications required for their implementation.

Continued on page 5

US midterm elections put Trump's congressional control to test

By Mai Anati

AMMAN — US President Donald Trump said on Monday that this week's midterm elections were the most crucial in living memory, as he delivered a speech marking the reopening of the troubled Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool in Washington.

"This is the last day before the midterm elections, the most important midterm I believe in our lifetime," Trump said, 26 minutes into a speech that largely focused on his project to renovate monuments in the US capital.

Tuesday's vote will determine control of Congress and test Trump's ability to advance his agenda during the final two years of his term.



AFP photo

The US Capitol is seen at sunrise on the day of the US midterm elections in Washington, DC, on Tuesday

The elections cover all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 35 of the Senate's 100 seats. More than 52 million Americans have already voted early, marking a record for a midterm election.

Democrats are seeking to overturn narrow Republican majorities. Opinion polls point to a strong chance of capturing the House, while the Senate race remains more competitive.

The campaign has unfolded amid growing dissatisfaction with the economy, rising living costs and the impact of the war with Iran. A recent NBC News poll found that 60 per cent of respondents disapproved of Trump's performance.

Hassan Barari, a professor of international relations in Jordan, said the elections reflected deep polarisation within American society, with immigration, border security and economic concerns shaping voters' choices.

Continued on page 5

Princess Ghida named among world's 100 most influential women in oncology for 2026

AMMAN (JT) — The global platform "Onco-Daily" has once again named HRH Princess Ghida Talal, chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the King Hussein Cancer Foundation (KHCF) and Centre (KHCC), among the top 100 most influential women in oncology worldwide for 2026.

The selection recognises Princess Ghida's 25 year tenure dedicated to advancing cancer care across the region, supporting scientific research, and spearheading awareness efforts regionally and internationally, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported on Tuesday.

Under her leadership, KHCC has developed into a globally leading, internationally accredited institution providing comprehensive and advanced medical care to more than 85,000 patients.

KHCF expressed immense pride in Princess Ghida's continued inclusion on the global list, highlighting her international leadership and tireless commitment to providing thousands of cancer patients from the Arab world a real chance at healing.



Petra photo

The global platform 'OncoDaily' names HRH Princess Ghida Talal, chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the King Hussein Cancer Foundation and Centre, among the top 100 most influential women in oncology worldwide for 2026

Princess Ghida established the King Hussein Award for Cancer Research in 2020 to foster scientific research across the Arab region by supporting Arab researchers and encouraging studies that enhance the understanding and treatment of cancer.

Princess Ghida also prioritizes psychological care for cancer patients as an integral component of comprehensive treatment plans.

JVA plans first underground dam in Wadi Rayyan to recharge groundwater

AMMAN (JT) — Secretary General of the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Hisham Hiesa on Tuesday stressed the authority's commitment to advancing economic and social development in the Jordan Valley while maximising water resource management across agricultural, domestic, municipal, industrial, and power generation sectors.

Speaking during a Government Communication Forum panel alongside Secretary General of the Ministry of Government Communication Zaid Nawayseh, Hiesa highlighted that the Royal directives in the Speech from the Throne serve as a roadmap for national water security, particularly regarding water harvesting projects across Jordan's 16 main dams, which hold a combined storage capacity of 365 million cubic metres.



File photo

Speaking during a Government Communication Forum panel, Secretary-General of the Jordan Valley Authority Hisham Hiesa says that 650 water harvesting sites, with a storage capacity of 150 million cubic metres, support livestock breeders in desert areas

Hiesa said that 650 water harvesting sites, including earthen dams and agricultural ponds, with a storage capacity of 150 million cubic metres, support livestock breeders in desert areas, adding that 40 water harvesting sites were established in 2025, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

JVA is advancing construction on the Nukheila Dam and conducting feasibility studies for the Tilal Al Dahab Dam, he said.

The secretary-general added that JVA is also developing underground dam projects, exploring locations across Wadi Heidan, Wadi Hasa, and Wadi Rayyan, with feasibility studies confirming the viability of constructing the Kingdom's first underground dam in Wadi Rayyan to recharge groundwater reserves.

Hiesa noted that artificial intelligence has been integrated into managing agricultural lands in Northern Shouna, allowing farmers to analyse data regarding crop water needs and evaporation rates.

The authority established an investment window in the Wadi Araba region, expanding agricultural land by 7,000 dunums in partnership with the private sector.

Nawayseh emphasised that His Majesty King Abdullah designated water as a top national priority in the Speech from the Throne, framing Royal guidance as a national framework to secure water sustainability for future generations.

He added that Jordan seeks to enhance the management of water resources and boost their use efficiency, stressing the importance of implementing innovative projects that can contribute to relying on more untraditional resources.

Queen Rania Teacher Academy receives international accreditation for institutional excellence

AMMAN (JT) — The Queen Rania Teacher Academy (QRTA) has become the first institution to receive the Organisation of Excellence Accreditation from the UK-based CPD Standards Office, marking a significant milestone in its efforts to strengthen institutional performance and enhance the quality of services it provides to teachers, educational leaders and partners.

The accreditation was granted following a comprehensive assessment under the Organisation of Excellence Standard #41000, covering seven key areas including, organisational context, leadership, planning, support, operations, improvement and educational performance, according to a QRTA statement.

Through this assessment, QRTA demonstrated its commitment to quality management, effective institutional practices and continuous improvement.

The accreditation provides a structured approach for assessing institutional performance, identifying areas for improvement, and strengthening the systems used to plan, deliver, and evaluate professional development programmes.

By building on these practices, QRTA aims to improve operational efficiency, strengthen coordination across its teams, and ensure greater consistency and responsiveness in the services it delivers.

Commenting on the achievement, QRTA CEO Abdelmajeed Shamlawi said, "Receiving this accreditation is an important step in our aspiration to become a more effective and responsive institution. It gives us a framework to continuously improve how we plan, operate, and deliver our professional development programmes."

"Ultimately, our goal is toimplementstrong institutional practices that create better experiences for teachers, educational leaders, and partners," he added.

Co-Founder of the CPD Standards Office Amanda Rosewarne noted,

> 'Ultimately, our goal is toimplementstrong institutional practices that create better experiences for teachers, educational leaders, and partners'

"We are delighted to recognise Queen Rania Teacher Academy as the first organisation in Jordan to achieve our Organisation of Excellence Accreditation. It is an honour to work with QRTA and to support an organisation that demonstrates such a strong commitment to organisational excellence, quality management and continuous improvement for the teaching community.

"At the CPD Standards Office, we believe that excellence in professional development starts with excellence within the organisation itself. Having robust systems, effective leadership and a culture of continuous improvement creates the foundations for delivering high-quality professional learning and, ultimately, better outcomes for the professionals and communities an organisation serves," Rosewarne added.

"QRTA has demonstrated a real commitment to these principles, and we hope its achievement will inspire other organisations across Jordan and the wider region to pursue similar standards of institutional excellence," she noted.

Based in the UK, The CPD Standards Office establishes standards for continuing professional development and assesses institutions against recognised criteria, including, quality, professional practices and institutional performance.

Its Organisation of Excellence Accreditation recognises institutions that meet the requirements of its assessment framework across key management and operations areas, according to the statement.

The accreditation will serve as a reference point for QRTA's ongoing institutional development, helping align internal practices with the needs of those it serves. Through this accreditation, QRTA seeks to strengthen its contribution to improving teaching practices and enriching students' learning experiences.

JNC showcases nursing workforce reforms at Asia-Pacific health conference

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Nursing Council (JNC) on Tuesday participated in the 14th Conference of the Asia-Pacific Action Alliance on Human Resources for Health (AAAH), held in Indonesia under the theme: "Building Tomorrow's Health Workforce: Bridging Governance, Education, and Digital Transformation for Sustainable Health Systems".

During a specialised panel on health workforce migration and mobility, JNC Secretary General Hani Nawafleh highlighted that expanding international opportunities for Jordanian talent must be matched by strengthening career development within the Kingdom and retaining expert staff required to sustain health services and care quality, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Nawafleh said that the council, presided over by HRH Princess Muna, seeks to link the quality of education and qualification with employment pathways, specialisation, and professional advancement.

He noted that the 2026 Speciality and Technical Classification Bylaw for Nursing and Midwifery provides a framework to regulate specialised tracks and maximise the utilisation of competencies across health institutions.

Nawafleh noted that managing mobility requires tracking the movement of personnel between sectors and institutions within Jordan, alongside departures and returns, grounded in precise data on vacancies, specialisations, and geographical distribution.

He stressed that graduate numbers alone are insufficient to indicate a surplus available for overseas employment.

Nawafleh also pointed to the formation of a specialised national committee dedicated to nursing migration to enhance coordination among relevant entities and balance domestic labour market demands with international career opportunities.

He noted that the Pearson VUE Centre at JNC headquarters in Amman enables registered nurses to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination, facilitating access for qualified candidates within the Kingdom in line with regulatory requirements.

On international partnerships, Nawafleh cited JNC collaboration with Cleveland Clinic London to facilitate the assessment and recruitment of Jordanian nurses meeting UK professional registration requirements, emphasising the importance of expanding partnerships to encompass training, knowledge exchange and specialised skills development.

Nawafleh underscored the necessity of shared responsibility between source and destination countries through ethical recruitment, protecting workers' rights, joint investment in training and facilitating the return of expertise to contribute to education, training, and healthcare delivery, thereby transforming mobility into an opportunity to strengthen health system capacity.

The conference, which continues until Thursday, brings together experts and decision-makers in health workforce management.

Ain Ghazal excavations reveal evolution of homes, food storage practices — archaeologist

By Saeb Rawashdeh

AMMAN — The Neolithic witnessed one of the most significant transformations in human history: The beginning and spread of agriculture and the establishment of permanent settlements with solid structures, cultic buildings, production of human and anthropomorphic figures and development of burial customs.

These changes took place over a span of some 4,000 years, and provide numerous opportunities for studying some of the less substantial aspects of human life in this period.

Professor Emeritus Zeidan Kafafi from Yarmouk University examined the domestic activities associated with these changes, and their distribution among indoor and outdoor spaces, at the Neolithic site of Ain Ghazal in Jordan.

The site served as a central place for more than 2,500 years and its excavated material culture reflects many human activities and practices.

"The excavated Middle PPNB levels at Ain Ghazal show that most, if not all, domestic activities were carried out indoors. Each house consisted of a single room that measured about 5 m x 5 m, suggests very small coresidential groups."

"It also appears that people did not feel secure to leave their property outside their houses. The MPPNB houses were erected next to one another on terraces and there were no courtyard walls separating one family's property or domestic area from that of its neighbours," Kafafi added.

There was a shift over time towards conducting more and more activities outdoors.

To construct their houses, the Yarmoukians of Ain Ghazal maintained the terrace system originally started in the Middle PPNB. On each terrace there were open areas in which several activities were practiced. There were also walls and courtyards that appear to have separated the activities of different households.



Photo courtesy of The Jordan Museum

An Ain Ghazal plaster figure exhibited at The Jordan Museum in Amman

Domestic tasks

During the earliest period of occupation at Ain Ghazal — the Middle PPNB (ca. 8000 to 7500 cal BC) — its inhabitants occupied single room houses and storage facilities were limited.

Archaeological excavations in the MPPNB levels did not expose any exterior storage pits.

However, a storage pit was excavated in the corner of one of the rooms and large quantities lentil, peas and barley were found, the professor said.

"During the late PPNB, [7,500-7,000] the exposed architectural remains showed that houses were two-storey buildings, constructed on terraces," Kafafi said.

Rooms with lots of lentil and barley remains could be storage rooms as well as curved rooms, elliptical in its shape.

People who lived in two-storey buildings may have turned a ground floor into a storage area, Kafafi speculated, adding that the huge jar that was found there was probably used for storage.

"Processing of cereals was an important segment of the food preparation," Kafafi underscored, noting that grinding implements provide additional evidence that food was prepared there.



Al Mamlaka TV photo

The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation says on Tuesday that foreign funding for non-profit entities, civil society organisations and cooperative associations in Jordan reached nearly JD57.85 million in 2025

Foreign funding for Jordanian non-profits reaches JD57.85m in 2025 — ministry

AMMAN (JT) — Foreign funding for non-profit entities, civil society organisations and cooperative associations in Jordan reached nearly JD57.85 million in 2025, covering 422 government-approved projects, according to a Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation report.

Foreign funding remained within normal annual levels, with the EU ranking as the largest donor, contributing JD14.18 million, or 24.5 per cent of the total, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The US ranked second with JD10.1 million (17.5 per cent), followed by international organisations and institutions with JD6.81 million (11.8 per cent) and Italy with JD3.35 million (5.8 per cent).

Other contributors included Switzerland with JD2.7 million, the United Arab Emirates with JD2.58 million, Germany with JD2.48 million, Austria with JD1.96 million, the UK with JD1.94 million, The Netherlands with JD1.82 million, Belgium with JD1.35 million, France with JD1.29 million, Spain with JD1.19 million, and private companies and individual donors with JD1.1 million.

Societies registered with the Societies Registry Department received 54.5 per cent of the total, with 246 societies securing JD31.5 million for 288 projects, averaging JD109,000 per project.

> Economic development was the largest beneficiary sector, receiving JD10.34 million...

Meanwhile, 73 nonprofit companies received JD26.3 million, or 45.4 per cent, for 130 projects, averaging JD202,000 per project. Three cooperative associations received JD62,200, accounting for 0.1 per cent of the total, for four projects.

Economic development was the largest beneficiary sector, receiving JD10.34 million, or 17.9 per cent, for 22 projects. Training and capacity building ranked second with JD8.91 million (15.4 per cent) across 51 projects, followed by social protection with JD7.56 million (13.1 per cent) across 70 projects.

Other sectors included youth, which received JD4.93 million (8.5 per cent) for 22 projects, energy with JD3.73 million (6.4 per cent) for five projects, and women's empowerment with JD3.47 million (6 per cent) across 47 projects.

Institutional support received JD2.35 million, healthcare JD2.16 million, culture and media JD2.12 million, information technology JD2.08 million and education JD2.06 million.

Political development received JD1.96 million, agriculture JD1.81 million, environment JD1.55 million, tourism JD1.44 million and justice and governance JD1.14 million.

Water projects received JD179,000, or 0.3 per cent of the total, across three projects, while infrastructure received JD45,300, or 0.1 per cent, across three projects.

Iraq introduces visas on arrival for Jordanian citizens



JT photo

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian citizens can obtain visas on arrival at all Iraqi air and land border crossings under a new decision by the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, the Iraqi embassy in Amman said on Tuesday.

The embassy said the measure followed the outcomes of Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Zaidi's visit to Jordan on October 26 and aims to simplify entry procedures for Jordanian nationals, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Effective November 1, the ministerial order authorises directors of residency and passport departments at border crossings to issue entry visas to Jordanian citizens upon arrival, subject to the applicable legal fees.

The embassy said that the decision reflects the Iraqi government's commitment to strengthening its historical and brotherly relations with Jordan, expanding bilateral cooperation and facilitating travel between the two countries.

It also stressed the importance of continued coordination between the two governments to introduce further reciprocal facilities that facilitate travel and strengthen cooperation across various sectors.

Jordan University Hospital receives three children from Gaza

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan University (JU) Hospital on Monday received three children from the Gaza Strip with heart conditions for specialised medical treatment.

The hospital said that their arrival is part of the "Jordanian Medical Corridor" initiative, launched under the directives of His Majesty King Abdullah to ease the suffering of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

On Monday, the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) evacuated the 36th group of paediatric patients, comprising 26 children and 26 companions, to receive treatment at hospitals across the Kingdom.

Jordan University Hospital Director General Nader Bsool said the hospital had mobilised its medical facilities and specialist staff to provide the children with the necessary care.

He said the hospital had received more than 60 children from Gaza since August, treating complex conditions including congenital heart defects, blood disorders and liver diseases.

Some patients have completed their treatment and returned to the Gaza Strip, while others continue to receive medical follow-up at the hospital, Bsool added.

The hospital also provides healthcare services to accompanying family members to ensure comprehensive medical and humanitarian support throughout their stay.



Al Mamlaka TV photo

The Jordan University Hospital on Monday receives three children from the Gaza Strip with heart conditions for specialised medical treatment

Hmoud church in Karak renamed 'The Church of the Martyrs'

AMMAN (JT) — St George's Greek Orthodox Church in Hmoud village, Karak Governorate, has been renamed "The Church of the Martyrs" in tribute to the nine people killed in an October 23 attack during a funeral service, the Melkite Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Petra, Philadelphia and All Transjordan said on Tuesday.

General Vicar Father Nabil Haddad said the new name honours the nine victims and commemorates their faith and sacrifice, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He said the name carries spiritual and national significance, reflecting the victims' faith and connection to Jordanian identity.

Haddad said the renaming would preserve their memory and serve as a message of resilience and hope. He added that the Christian presence in Jordan, which dates back to the fourth century, remains an integral part of the country's national fabric.

On Monday, local and international Evangelical leaders visited Hmoud village to honour those killed in the attack, which also left 34 people injured.

The delegation laid a wreath at the Martyrs' Cemetery and offered prayers for the victims' families, the injured and Jordan's security and stability, Petra reported.

The delegation included President of the Baptist Denomination in Jordan Pastor Nabeeh Abbassi, Bethlehem Bible College President Pastor Jack Sara, who also heads the Evangelical Alliance in the Middle East and North Africa, and several pastors representing Jordanian churches.

Mansour said the attack had shocked the global Evangelical community, adding that his visit was an expression of solidarity on behalf of approximately 650 million Evangelicals worldwide.

He described Jordan as an oasis of tolerance and inclusive citizenship, saying the incident had affected all Jordanians and should be met with greater national cohesion, solidarity and rejection of hatred.

Abbassi said terrorism would not prevail and hatred would not overcome love. He stressed the importance of honouring those killed, praying for the recovery of the injured and supporting Jordan, its leadership and security agencies.



Petra photo

Local and international Evangelical leaders visit Hmoud village to honour those killed in the attack

Amman hosts 38th Arab Fertiliser Association conference

AMMAN (JT) — The Arab fertiliser industry needs to move beyond raw material exports towards developing its own technologies, expanding scientific research and producing higher-value goods to strengthen its global competitiveness, Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) Chairman Mohammad Thneibat said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the opening of the 38th Arab Fertiliser Association (AFA) International Technical Conference and Exhibition in Amman, Thneibat called for establishing an Arab centre for fertiliser research and technology to advance industrial innovation and strengthen regional cooperation.

He expressed JPMC's readiness to support the proposed centre through partnerships between companies, universities and research institutions, enabling scientific findings to be translated into commercially viable industrial applications, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The three-day event, hosted by JPMC under the theme "Beyond Production: The Summit of Transformation in the Fertiliser Industry", brings together experts from 30 Arab and foreign countries and more than 30 companies specialising in fertiliser technology and industrial solutions.

Thneibat said that Arab countries possess substantial phosphate, potash, natural gas and sulphur reserves, alongside industrial expertise and established markets, giving them the potential to play a leading role in the global fertiliser industry, adding that access to resources and production facilities alone was insufficient without investment in technology, research and innovation.

He identified three research priorities, including using marine resources, algae and biomass to develop sustainable organic and bio-fertilisers, applying artificial intelligence to optimise manufacturing processes and employing nanotechnology to develop specialised fertilisers.

He also highlighted opportunities to improve production efficiency, reduce energy and resource consumption, predict equipment failures and develop smart fertilisers that minimise environmental impacts.

AFA Chairman Abdel Wahed Rowwad said the industry faced major challenges from geopolitical tensions, volatile energy markets, supply chain disruptions, climate change and stricter environmental regulations.

He said the industry's success was no longer measured solely by production volumes and exports, but also by innovation, economic value and environmental performance.

Rowwad noted that the Arab fertiliser industry accounts for nearly one-third of global fertiliser trade, highlighting the need for continued investment to improve efficiency, strengthen competitiveness, stabilise supply chains and support global food security.



Petra photo

Jordan Phosphate Mines Company Chairman Mohammad Thneibat on Tuesday opens the 38th Arab Fertiliser Association International Technical Conference and Exhibition in Amman

Police arrest 133 suspects in 84 crystal meth cases

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — The Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) announced on Monday the arrest of 133 suspects in 84 cases related to Crystal meth trafficking and dealing in various parts of the Kingdom, according to official sources.

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

The campaign resulted in the arrest of 33 suspects in 22 cases related to trafficking, smuggling, promotion, and the use of Crystal meth," Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

Meanwhile, 62 suspects were arrested in 100 cases for using the deadly substance, Sartawi told The Jordan Times.

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

Crystal meth is the common name for crystal methamphetamine, a strong and highly addictive drug that affects the central nervous system, according to WebMD.

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

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

Citizens are urged to report any person who deals with Crystal meth by contacting 911, according to a statement by the Public Security Directorate (PSD).

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

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

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



AFP photo

US President Donald Trump gestures towards reporters after stepping off Air Force One upon return to Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, June 21, 2025

Trump says US cutting $3.8 billion annual security assistance to Israel

WASHINGTON (AFP) — US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that Washington is ending a 10-year security assistance deal with Israel that allowed $3.8 billion in annual assistance to its ally until 2028.

Trump said Israel was "fine" with him ending the assistance, which began in 2019 and was signed under his predecessor, Barack Obama, three years earlier.

"We'll help Israel if they need it," he added in an interview on US current affairs show Fox and Friends, saying that he had agreed with Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to cut the assistance.

"Israel's our number one; we give them more than anybody else, and they no longer need it ... If they did need it, I would say keep it going," Trump added.

Under the deal, Israel receives financial assistance for the purchase of around $3.8 billion of weapons a year.

'We'll help Israel if they need it'

Since its creation in 1948, Israel has received more than $300 billion, adjusted for inflation, in US economic and military assistance, according to figures from the Council on Foreign Relations, far more than any other country has received since 1946.

The Israeli premier has previously said he wanted to end Israel's reliance on US support.

In June, Netanyahu called for his country to increase its military autonomy and reduce its reliance on Washington.

In January he told The Economist that he hoped to do so within a decade, while in May he told US broadcaster CBS that he wanted support to reach "zero".

On Tuesday, Trump cited attacks by leftist Democrat Abdul El-Sayed, who is running for the US Senate in Tuesday's midterm elections after harnessing popular discontent and anti-Israel sentiment, as part of the reasoning behind the decision.

"Why should we suffer the slings from lunatics like an El-Sayed when they don't need it?" he said on Fox, referring to Israel and the aid.

Israeli opposition leaders vow to remove Netanyahu quickly but path unclear

HERZLIYA, Israel (AFP) — The Israeli opposition bloc led by Gadi Eisenkot pledged on Tuesday to form a government quickly to oust prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu but remained unclear on how, with divisions over whether to ally with Arab lawmakers.

Meeting for the first time since an election a week ago brought an inconclusive result, the five opposition party heads consulted on strategy at a hotel in Herzliya, the tech industry hub north of Tel Aviv where former military chief Eisenkot lives.

In a joint statement, the party leaders said their goal was forming a government "as quickly as possible and preventing Israel from being dragged into another election".

They stood by four benchmarks set out by Eisenkot including that any parties in the government recognise Israel as a Jewish state and denounce Hamas as a terrorist group — conditions that could exclude some Arab lawmakers.

The leaders "agreed on the need to form a Zionist government at the earliest opportunity, based on the four principles set out by Eisenkot", it said.

Unsourced Israeli media reports said the leaders put more emphasis on forming an alliance with Orthodox Jewish parties, traditional backers of Netanyahu, than with Arab parties.

Arab lawmakers could bring Eisenkot a majority which neither bloc now holds.

Arab-majority parties last week won 19 seats in the 120-member parliament on the back of anger over the hard-right Netanyahu government's rhetoric towards Arab citizens of Israel.



AFP photo

Palestinians gather as they protest against their displacement during Israeli military operation in Deir Baha area of the occupied West Bank city of Hebron on Sunday

Eisenkot's diverse opposition bloc won 48 seats while Netanyahu's camp secured 53, of which 27 are from his Likud party.

Despite their diverging views on various issues, including the role of Arab lawmakers, all opposition bloc leaders in Eisenkot's bloc have said they would back him to form the next government.

"We don't have time — we must act with great urgency," Naftali Bennett, a right-leaning former prime minister whose party came in third, told reporters as he promised to back Eisenkot.

'Political reality'

Public opinion polls conducted before the election showed that Jewish Israeli opposition supporters are divided over including Arab parties in government while right-wing Israelis are adamantly opposed.

Yousef Jabareen, the head of the largest Arab-majority party in the next parliament, told AFP that the opposition needed to accept "political reality" and team up to remove Netanyahu.

Arab-Israelis are descendants of Palestinians who remained after Israel's creation in 1948 and account for around 20 percent of the population today.

The only opposition leader to openly back an alliance with Arab parties is Yair Golan, head of the left-wing party the Democrats, who said it was racist to exclude the Arab minority.

Golan met with Israeli-Arab leaders before heading to the opposition talks. He promised his party would work to tackle high crime in Arab areas, a key concern of the community, and work to bring "prosperity and equality" for the minority.

But Avigdor Liberman, a right-wing member of Eisenkot's bloc, has adamantly opposed including Arab parties, although he also said he wants to avoid a new election.

Netanyahu spent the campaign painting Arab parties as untrustworthy and stoking fears of a Palestinian state.

On Monday, Netanyahu called for a "broad national government" and said he should lead it as his Likud, while losing ground, remained the single largest party.

No opposition leader has voiced openness to a unity government with Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister, pointing to his divisiveness, the corruption charges against him and his failure to prevent the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas.

Netanyahu ruled out a coalition with Arab-majority lists, alleging that the parties "support terrorism and deny the existence of the Jewish state".

Leaders of Arab-Israeli parties have unanimously condemned the October 7 attack without describing the Palestinian Islamist movement as a terror group.

Although the leader of the Raam party has recognised Israel as a "Jewish state", other leaders have rejected that definition.

Presenting a petition to opposition leaders, Merav Svirsky — whose parents were killed by Hamas fighters on October 7 and whose brother was kidnapped and then killed — said Eisenkot must not form a coalition with Netanyahu.

Qatar says remains 'hopeful' of a US-Iran deal

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar said on Tuesday it remained hopeful that an interim deal could be reached between the United States and Iran as both sides review proposals put forward by mediators including Doha.

In recent days, diplomatic efforts have been underway to prevent renewed fighting after the United States threatened major new strikes — though US President Donald Trump signalled diplomatic progress with Iran.

Early on Tuesday, US media reported that Washington had launched limited strikes on an Iranian island in the Strait of Hormuz as Iranian media reported five explosions in quick succession.



AFP photo

An Iranian woman wearing a traditional chador garment walks past men and women sitting at an uptown cafe in Tehran on October 7

"Both parties remain committed to the negotiation process; as we mentioned, we are facilitating the real-time exchange of proposals between them," foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al Ansari told reporters.

Both sides "are currently reviewing the ideas and proposals we have presented," he added.

"We remain hopeful that there is still a chance for a deal to take place," he said, adding Doha was working "towards an interim deal".

On Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said that "very intensive" talks were underway with the United States via mediators.

That same day Qatari negotiators returned to Doha after a meeting in Tehran that lasted more than three hours, Al Ansari said.

He warned that any escalation could complicate the talks.

The US and Israel increased their threats towards Iran in the run-up to the midterms and last week's general elections in Israel, where prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to secure a majority.



AFP photo

This handout photograph taken and released by the State Emergency Service of Ukraine on Tuesday, shows rescuers working in a damaged residential building at the site of an alleged Russian strike in Dnipro

Melania Trump to host Ukraine, Russia 'representatives' at White House — statement

WASHINGTON, BERLIN (AFP) — US First Lady Melania Trump will host "representatives" of Russia and Ukraine in Washington, the White House said on Tuesday, without giving a date or saying who may attend.

The meeting between parties from the two warring countries will take place at the White House and represents an "extraordinary moment in American history", the statement said.

On Thursday, the wife of US President Donald Trump will also make a statement on a recent four day-long truce in southern Kherson region, the White House said.

The truce, announced by Melania Trump on October 23 and which began on October 27, was the longest in the war and enabled civilians to leave the Russian-occupied city of Oleshky.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Tuesday he hoped that US-brokered talks between Kyiv and Moscow in Abu Dhabi next week would pave the way for him to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The United States and Russia earlier confirmed that the representatives of the warring countries and Washington will meet in Abu Dhabi on November 10-11.

"We are counting on the fact that work in this format and our other diplomatic steps will open the way to a trilateral format at the level of leaders," Zelensky told reporters in Berlin.

Ukraine has repeatedly insisted that a face-to-face meeting between Zelensky and Putin was key to making progress towards peace.

The Kremlin has said that a direct meeting would only be possible in Moscow.

But the Ukrainian leader ruled out such a trip — or hosting Putin in Kyiv.

The first step towards de-escalation, Zelensky said, was "a ceasefire. A ceasefire can, forgive me, even happen without meetings."

The dates of the latest round of talks — the first since February — were announced hours after multiple Russian strikes hit an aid distribution point in the southeastern Ukrainian village of Komyshuvakha, killing at least 33 people.

"We proposed to Russia to prolong and expand the ceasefire that made it possible to evacuate people from Oleshky," Zelensky said, referring to a southern town where a temporary truce was observed last week.

"But in response, we got this, this kind of attack. New shelling, new strikes, new killings."

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said he had so far seen no sign that Russia was willing to engage seriously in talks aimed at ending the war.

"It is important that Russia finally and seriously engages in negotiations about a ceasefire and a subsequent peace agreement," Merz said alongside Zelensky in Berlin, when asked about the US-brokered trilateral talks.

"I do not see that happening so far."

Europe entering winter with lowest gas reserves since 2013 — IEA

PARIS, France (AFP) — Europe is entering winter with its lowest level of natural gas reserves since 2013, which could extend pressure on the international market into 2027, the International Energy Agency (IEA) warned on Tuesday.

Europe's natural gas storage reservoirs were 75 per cent full at the end of October, well below the minimum target of 80 percent fixed by the European Union and at its lowest level in more than a decade, the IEA said.

Several factors explain the situation.

Natural gas liquifaction facilities in the Gulf have been damaged in US-Iran war, while transit through the Strait of Hormuz has been reduced.

Moreover European nations are filling their storage reservoirs from low levels at the end of the heating season in the spring.

Buyers had initially held off buying stocks in the hope prices would fall.

Deliveries stepped up in August, September and October, but not enough to make up for the delay, the IEA said.

The amount of gas injected into storage reservoirs this season was about 4 per cent below the average of the past five years, it added.

That makes European nations more dependent upon securing deliveries of additional supplies of LNG to meet peak demand.

It could also make more vulnerable if the winter is colder than usual, there are technical problems in the gas networi, or supply problems, said the IEA.

Germany insisted on Monday that it would have enough gas for the winter despite missing a storage target.

German gas storage facilities are on average 61 per cent full, according to the federal agency that oversees Germany's energy infrastructure and markets.

That is below a legally mandated target for 70 per cent by November 1. It also lags behind the European Union average of nearly 75 per cent, according to the storage tracking platform AGSI.



AFP photo

A boat of the Berlin Water Police (Wasserschutzpolizei) sails past a storage facility for oil products owned by oil logistics company Unitank at the BEHALA freight hub in Berlin on April 22

Iran president says return to war benefits 'no one', after reported US strikes

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Tuesday that a return to war would benefit "no one", hours after reported US strikes on an Iranian island in the Strait of Hormuz.

It came as US voters prepared to cast their ballots in midterm elections that threaten President Donald Trump's grip on power.

Iran's chief negotiator in talks with the US, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said the Islamic republic was "ready for battle with its finger on the trigger", while Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said Iran retained the right to "legitimate self-defence" after the strikes.

But Pezeshkian said his government was still trying to resolve the crisis "through dialogue", adding that "no one will benefit from this war" if it reignited, and emphasising that the country's supreme leader had recently granted the government new powers to negotiate issues previously "off-limits".

The US strikes, reported by The Wall Street Journal, CNN, The New York Times and other outlets, hit Qeshm Island in the Hormuz waterway, a key flashpoint of the Middle East war that has upended global markets.



AFP photo

This US Navy handout photo released by US Naval Forces Central Command shows an F-35C Lightning II preparing to land on the flight deck of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington on Friday

Unnamed US officials cited by the outlets described the attacks as defensive in nature. The Journal said it was just the latest of several undeclared strikes.

US Central Command did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment.

'Iran wants a settlement'

The US and Israel launched their war with Iran with a massive wave of strikes in late February. The conflict has been stalemated for months.

Asked if Israel was involved in the latest reported strikes, an Israeli military spokesperson told AFP, "No".

The reported Qeshm attack came just hours after Trump signalled a deal with Iran "could happen", as US voters prepared to cast their ballots in midterms dominated by public dissatisfaction with the war and the inflation it has brought.

"Iran wants a settlement, as soon as possible," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform.

Iranian state news agency IRNA reported five explosions in rapid succession on Qeshm island, and that some residents reported seeing two aircraft flying in its skies.

Ghalibaf said the ball was in Washington's court.

"The countries of the region should know that, just as the Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready for battle with its finger on the trigger, it has also given the American side a powerful and rational response," he said in a televised speech. "The ball is now in America's court to prevent war."

'Committed'

Qatar, a mediator in protracted indirect negotiations between the US and Iran, said it remained hopeful of an interim deal in the war.

"Both parties remain committed to the negotiation process; as we mentioned, we are facilitating the real-time exchange of proposals between them," Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed Al Ansari told reporters.

Both sides "are currently reviewing the ideas and proposals we have presented", he added.

"We remain hopeful that there is still a chance for a deal to take place," he said, adding Doha was working "towards an interim deal".

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Monday confirmed indirect negotiations were taking place.

"Given the sensitivity and gravity of the current situation, consultations and deliberations are very intensive," Araghchi told state media.

Reopen the strait

US Vice President JD Vance said both he and Trump were optimistic about securing an agreement.

"We've certainly made some progress. We'll see if we can make some more," Vance told reporters on Monday.

A senior Iranian official said that Tehran was ready to reopen Hormuz, a key route for global oil and gas supplies, within two days but only if Washington agreed to its long-standing list of demands.

In September, Iran proposed a seven-day plan to reopen the strait, with 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," Tehran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei told reporters at a briefing.

In the leadup to Tuesday's vote, Trump kept up his threats against Tehran, saying on Sunday that the United States may have to give Iran "the hammer" at some unspecified time.

On Saturday, the US leader said he still had to "take care" of one or two targets including so-called Pickaxe Mountain in central Iran, a suspected nuclear site which Tehran denies is such a facility.

Iranian officials have repeatedly warned of wide-ranging retaliation if the US resumes the war.

SSC prosecutor completes investigation into Karak church attack, files charges

Continued from page 1

The prosecutor also charged the defendants with conspiracy to commit terrorist acts using weapons, under the Anti-Terrorism Law. The remaining charges involve promoting the ideology of a terrorist group and committing acts likely to disrupt public order and endanger public safety and security, under articles 2, 3 and 7 of the said law.

Shahltough said that the case had been referred to SSC, which is authorised to begin trial proceedings in accordance with the law.

JD1.06 billion allocated to support food security, stabilise prices — ministry

Continued from page 1

This included JD139 million to support bread prices, JD70 million for barley and JD19 million for bran.

In 2024, total subsidies for strategic commodities rose to JD289 million, including JD63 million allocated to household cooking gas. Support for wheat, barley and bran accounted for JD226 million, comprising JD143 million for wheat, JD66 million for barley and JD17 million for bran.

Subsidy allocations fell to JD242.5 million in 2025, a decrease of 6.2 per cent compared with the previous year. Of this amount, JD180 million was allocated to wheat, barley and bran, while JD62.5 million went towards subsidising household cooking gas.

In 2026, total subsidy allocations increased to JD251 million, up 3.5 per cent from the previous year's revised estimate. Support for wheat and barley amounted to JD171 million, while JD80 million was allocated to household cooking gas subsidies.

Government signs $4.2m World Bank grant to advance AI in public services

Continued from page 1

The grant will also support efforts to establish a National Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence, drawing on lessons learnt from AI pilot projects and partnerships developed during their implementation.

The proposed centre is expected to bring together expertise, data, research and development to accelerate innovation and strengthen Jordan's technological capabilities.

The grant-funded activities are also expected to identify government AI applications with the potential for wider implementation, prepare technical plans for scaling them up and strengthen public institutions' capacity to integrate AI into service delivery.

In June, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship said the Sanad application had continued to record rapid growth, with digital identity activations exceeding 2.7 million citizens and nearly 400,000 daily active users.

The ministry said the figures reflected the application's growing role in citizens' daily lives and their increasing reliance on it to access government services digitally, quickly and conveniently.

IMF says it reaches staff-level agreement with Jordan on $294m in new financing

Continued from page 1

"We are pleased to announce that the IMF team and the Jordanian authorities have reached a staff-level agreement on the sixth review of the economic reform program supported by the EFF arrangement and the third review under the RSF arrangement. Programme performance has remained strong despite ongoing headwinds and elevated uncertainty stemming from the protracted war in the Middle East. All quantitative performance criteria and most structural benchmarks for the sixth review were met, and steady progress is being made toward achieving the programme's overall objectives."

Economic resilience

Serra said that Jordan's economy had demonstrated resilience, supported by prudent macroeconomic policies, government measures to mitigate the impact of the regional conflict and continued support from international partners.

He noted that the regional war had affected the Kingdom through weaker tourism inflows, higher trade and transport costs, lower foreign direct investment and volatility in energy prices.

However, these pressures had been largely offset by stronger manufacturing activity, increased logistics services linked to the growing role of the Port of Aqaba as a regional trade and transport hub, a favourable agricultural season, and stronger-than-expected remittance inflows and regional tourism, he said.

Jordan's real gross domestic product grew by 3 per cent year-on-year during the first half of 2026, while inflation remained contained despite volatility in international commodity markets, according to the IMF statement.

The current account deficit also narrowed, supported by strong export performance, subdued non-energy imports and resilient remittances and regional tourism, which helped offset the higher energy import bill.

The Central Bank of Jordan continued to strengthen the Kingdom's external reserves, maintaining coverage above programme targets. The IMF said that prudent monetary and financial policies had helped sustain confidence in the Jordanian dinar and its peg to the US dollar, while dollarisation continued to decline.

"The banking sector remained sound, with strong capital buffers and ample liquidity," the global lender said.

Nevertheless, the IMF cautioned that the economic outlook remained highly dependent on the duration and intensity of the regional conflict and the extent to which its effects continued to spill over into Jordan.

On the fiscal front, the IMF said the government had comfortably met its central government primary deficit target for the end of June 2026.

> 'The banking sector remained sound, with strong capital buffers and ample liquidity'

Prudent expenditure management helped offset a revenue shortfall equivalent to approximately 0.8 per cent of GDP during the first half of the year, as the impact of regional tensions weighed on tax collections.

The recovery in revenues during the third quarter, alongside continued efforts to contain losses at public utilities, is expected to support the achievement of the programme's fiscal targets by the end of the year.

The IMF said that the government also reaffirmed its commitment to putting public debt on a sustained downward trajectory through gradual fiscal consolidation, while safeguarding priority social and development spending.

According to the IMF, the draft 2027 budget targets a central government primary deficit, excluding grants, of 0.9 per cent of GDP.

The target will be supported by measures to strengthen revenue collection, improve tax compliance and enhance public spending efficiency.

Further measures to improve the financial sustainability of public utilities are also expected to contribute to the government's objective of reducing public debt to around 80 per cent of GDP by 2028.

The IMF said that Jordan had continued to advance its structural reform agenda, particularly in improving the business environment and developing major infrastructure projects.

Progress includes the adoption of unified sectoral licensing rules, aimed at simplifying regulatory procedures and improving the investment climate.

The Aqaba-Amman Water Desalination and Conveyance Project and the Aqaba-Shidiya-Maan Railway are also advancing. "Once completed, the projects are expected to strengthen economic resilience, improve connectivity and attract private investment."

The IMF stressed that further reforms to enhance competition, increase labour market flexibility and encourage formal employment would be essential to achieving stronger economic growth and generating more jobs.

Climate and health resilience

Progress has also continued under the RSF arrangement, with all three reform measures scheduled for the third review on track for completion.

The measures include establishing a centralised register of infrastructure assets owned by state-owned enterprises in the construction and energy sectors, issuing instructions for an emergency-ready health benefits package, and formalising procedures for financing public health emergencies.

According to the IMF, the reforms are intended to strengthen Jordan's ability to withstand climate- and health-related shocks while supporting long-term economic and external stability.

US midterm elections put Trump's congressional control to test

Continued from page 1

He said Trump's populist rhetoric had sought to mobilise voters by appealing to fears over immigration and border control. However, Barari said the economy was likely to carry greater weight, particularly among independent voters who shift their support between the two parties.

"These voters will pay close attention to economic conditions before deciding which party should control Congress," he said.

A Democratic victory in either chamber would complicate Trump's legislative agenda and give the opposition greater power to scrutinise his administration through congressional investigations and control of key committees. It could also affect federal spending and future judicial appointments.

Trump has acknowledged the possibility of a Republican defeat, saying he could use his veto power against legislation proposed by Democrats before seeking possible compromises.

Jordanian-American Jeffrey N. Sayegh, founder of Sayegh Advisory Group, said the election outcome would have significant implications for the administration's ability to implement its priorities.

"If Republicans maintain control of Congress, the administration will have greater flexibility to advance its agenda on the economy, immigration, national security and foreign policy. However, if Democrats gain control of one or both chambers, the president could face increased congressional oversight, legislative gridlock and greater pressure to negotiate bipartisan agreements," Sayegh said.

"Ultimately, these elections will shape not only the remainder of President Trump's term but also his political legacy and America's direction heading into 2028," he added.

The results, expected to begin emerging on Tuesday evening, will shape the balance of power in Washington and determine how much room Trump has to pursue his domestic and foreign policy priorities.

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Beyond the Speech from the Throne: Turning Royal directives into tangible results



Ahmad Abdelbaset Rjoub

The Speech from the Throne delivered by His Majesty King Abdullah before the Jordanian Parliament on Monday reaffirmed that Jordan's strength lies not only in confronting challenges, but also in the resilience of its institutions, national unity and ability to translate priorities into tangible achievements. Beyond its political, security, economic and institutional messages, the address raises a fundamental question: How can Royal directives become policies, decisions and results that citizens can genuinely experience?

His Majesty emphasised Jordan's security and unity, honoured the martyrs of Karak and reaffirmed confidence in the Armed Forces, security agencies and the wisdom of Jordanians. This message underscores that national stability is not merely about resisting threats; it provides the foundation for development and safeguarding achievements. The strategic challenge is to transform resilience into sustained progress, ensuring that crises never become excuses for postponing reform.

Politically, the address reaffirmed Jordan's unwavering Arab commitments and its principled position on Palestine amid the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza and continuing violations in the West Bank and Jerusalem. It highlighted the relationship between domestic cohesion, and Jordan's ability to defend its national interests and uphold its regional responsibilities. Strong institutions and national solidarity remain indispensable to an effective foreign policy.

Institutionally, His Majesty placed Parliament before responsibilities extending beyond legislation to effective government oversight, protecting the public interest, and elevating parliamentary conduct and discourse. This calls for political performance measured by meaningful accountability rather than declarations. Differences of opinion strengthen the nation when the national interest remains the shared objective.

On development, the address reinforced a central principle: Citizens' interests must guide every decision. Genuine development should be measured by improvements in living standards, employment opportunities, education, healthcare and future prospects. Consequently, institutional achievement must be evaluated not simply through expenditure or completed projects, but through their actual impact on people's lives, equitable opportunities and public service quality.

His Majesty's emphasis on accelerating major strategic projects and advancing water security initiatives established clear implementation priorities. Water, as an essential component of national sovereignty, demands long-term planning, sustainable investment and accountability. The same applies to economic modernisation, where strategies must translate into achievements supported by realistic timelines and measurable performance indicators.

Regarding the rule of law, the address reinforced the rejection of exploiting public office or seeking protection through position and influence. Public office is a responsibility to serve citizens, not a personal privilege. Integrity, accountability and equal opportunity must therefore become practical foundations of public trust rather than administrative slogans.

The Royal emphasis on the constitutional right to discuss public affairs and respect responsible expression also reinforces the importance of civic participation in improving public policies and strengthening relationships between citizens and state institutions.

Yet the strategic value of these messages cannot be realised through understanding alone. Every Royal priority must become a defined institutional commitment, supported by clear responsibilities, realistic budgets, implementation schedules and measurable indicators. Regular evaluations should identify achievements, obstacles, causes of delay and necessary corrective measures.

The real challenge following the Speech from the Throne is not how many institutions declare their understanding of the Royal vision, but how effectively they demonstrate that understanding through action and results.

The Jordan envisioned by His Majesty does not merely withstand crises; it advances despite them. It is a state where citizens are the ultimate purpose of development, the rule of law guarantees justice, and achievement defines responsibility.

This is where the decisive test begins: What has changed since the address? What has been accomplished? And how have citizens benefitted?

The Royal Address is not the conclusion of national reflection, but the beginning of accountability for implementation.

SOFEX and defence economics: Three decades of Royal vision and national value creation

By Mutaz Alotein

More than three decades ago, the launch of SOFEX was never merely a response to a military need or an occasion to highlight defence equipment and systems. It grew out of an early Royal vision that saw the defence industry as part of a broader effort to build national capabilities, drive development, advance technology and create sustainable economic value. Since then, SOFEX has evolved into an international platform where defence industries, technology, investment and partnerships converge, reflecting a Jordanian approach that links national security requirements with economic development opportunities.

This vision is even more relevant today, as the global economy undergoes profound transformation. The defence industry is no longer a traditional sector built solely on manufacturing military equipment and systems. It has become one of the sectors most closely tied to advanced technology, research and development, artificial intelligence, robotics, cybersecurity, advanced materials and digital manufacturing. Any discussion of the defence industry is now a discussion of the knowledge economy, industrial capability and national competitiveness.

This is where the concept of defence economics comes to the fore. It goes beyond the traditional question of how much is spent on defence and poses a more important one: How can defence resources and investments be turned into national capabilities that generate added value, advance technology, create jobs, support local industry and open new markets?

In this context, the SOFEX experience over the past three decades can be read as part of a wider shift in how Jordan views its defence industry. The goal is no longer simply to acquire equipment, but to build the capacity to design, develop, engineer, manufacture, maintain and integrate, and to accumulate the knowledge and expertise that allow the national economy to move gradually from being a consumer of technology to playing a more active role in developing and producing it.

The true economic value of the defence industry lies in this accumulation. When we invest in an engineer, a laboratory, an R&D centre, a production line or an advanced manufacturing technology, the return does not necessarily end with defence applications. The ability and technologies developed in this sector can transfer to the civilian economy, supporting industries such as aviation, automotive, energy, telecommunications, artificial intelligence, robotics and advanced manufacturing.

> The modern defence industry increasingly relies on a broad ecosystem of suppliers and developers specialising in software, electronics, artificial intelligence, digital manufacturing, cybersecurity, simulation and advanced materials

SOFEX thus becomes as much an economic and technological platform as a defence one. Bringing together global companies, manufacturers, developers, decision makers and investors creates an opportunity to build partnerships that go beyond buying and selling into deeper areas such as technology transfer, co-production, localisation, research and development, and the building of local supply chains.

This point marks one of the most significant shifts in modern defence economics. Nations no longer measure success only by their ability to buy the latest systems, but by their ability to get the knowledge behind them. The most valuable economic partnership, therefore, is not necessarily one that ends with a supply contract, but one that creates a new national capability: A factory, a development centre, an engineering team, a local supplier or a start-up able to enter a global value chain.

From this perspective, Jordan has an important opportunity to leverage SOFEX to strengthen its position within the regional and international defence-industrial ecosystem. Competitive advantage does not rest solely on the size of the domestic market, but on qualified human capital, engineering ability, R&D capabilities, industrial infrastructure, and an environment able to attract partnerships and investments of high technological value.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups can also play a significant role in this equation. The modern defence industry increasingly relies on a broad ecosystem of suppliers and developers specialising in software, electronics, artificial intelligence, digital manufacturing, cybersecurity, simulation and advanced materials. Developing a modern defence economy can therefore open new space for Jordan's private sector to take part in high-value-added industries.

Most importantly, the opportunities SOFEX offers must translate into measurable economic outcomes. The success of international exhibitions should not be judged only by the number of participants or agreements signed, but by what they produce: Investment, technology transfer, joint ventures, growth in local content, quality jobs, stronger industrial capabilities, and higher exports.

This is where the significance of the vision that gave rise to SOFEX more than thirty years ago becomes clear. Viewing the defence industry as part of the national development project means that investing in it is not only about enhancing defence readiness but about building a system of economic and technological capabilities whose impact can extend across every sector of the economy.

Security and the economy are no longer the separate domains they were traditionally considered to be. In a world where nations compete for technology, supply chains, human capital and markets, industrial and technological capability has become part of what national power means. Those who have knowledge and technology, and the ability to turn them into products, services and industries, also have a greater ability to protect their economic and security interests.

More than three decades after its launch, SOFEX can therefore be seen as more than a specialised defence exhibition. It is a platform that reflects a journey from vision to capability, from capability to industry and from industry to economy.

On this journey, the Royal vision that foresaw early on the importance of building a national defence-industrial base takes on growing economic and developmental significance. The challenge today is not only to keep developing the defence industry, but to maximise its impact on the national economy: Linking it with universities, R&D centres and SMEs, fostering innovation and technology transfer, and positioning Jordan as a productive partner in global value chains.

Defence economics is not about how much we spend on defence, but about what we build with that spending. Are we building only the capacity to buy, or are we building knowledge, industry, technology, talent and new markets?

Herein lies the strategic value of SOFEX: A place where defence industries do not merely meet, but where Royal vision meets technology, industry meets investment, security meets development and national capability meets the global economy.

When the world came to the Roman Theatre in Amman

A person tuning in for a fight could also discover a city. On Friday, October 30, 2026, Amman's Roman Theatre hosted Desert Force: Uncaged, the closing event of Jordan Mixed Martial Arts Week. For Jordan, the occasion offered a chance to introduce the country to people whose interest began with sport.

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan attended the evening, which also welcomed boxing legend Mike Tyson, Brazilian football star Ronaldinho, Turkish actor Engin Altan Düzyatan, known for his role in Resurrection: Ertu rul, and social media personality Hasbulla Magomedov. Their appeal reaches across sport, television and digital culture, giving the event the potential to attract attention well beyond the usual audience for mixed martial arts.

That is a valuable opening. Someone following Ronaldinho may pause over a photograph from Amman without having previously considered visiting Jordan. A familiar face can make an unfamiliar destination feel a little closer. The work of tourism marketing begins in that moment of curiosity, then continues through the practical task of helping someone plan a journey.

As an architect and landscape architect, I find the choice of setting especially significant. The Roman Theatre gives an event a sense of place that stays in the memory. Its stone tiers belong to the story of Amman and its position downtown connects it to a city of shops, cafés and everyday encounters. The venue can become the beginning of a visitor's relationship with the capital.

There is an opportunity here for Amman to earn more time in a visitor's itinerary. A guest arriving for a sporting event might stay to explore downtown, visit the Citadel or spend an evening discovering Jordanian food. With thoughtful planning, the trip could continue to the Dead Sea, Petra and Wadi Rum, or extend to Aqaba. Each additional day creates opportunities for people whose livelihoods depend on welcoming visitors.



Yazan K. Mahadin

Consider what an extra night can mean. A hotel employs staff to prepare the room. A restaurant buys ingredients and serves another table. A driver gains a journey and a guide gains time to explain a place properly. These are the everyday transactions through which international attention can reach local households. Packages that connect an event with local experiences could help spread that benefit beyond the venue.

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Jordan Tourism Board deserve recognition for supporting this connection between sport and tourism. The week was organised by Makana 360 and Jordan Combat Consulting, under the oversight of the Jordan Mixed Martial Arts Federation. Prime Minister Hassan's presence was a welcome acknowledgement of an activity whose potential extends into the wider visitor economy.

The next step should be to make the journey from interest to booking easier. Event coverage and visiting personalities' content could direct audiences to useful itineraries, accommodation options and clear information about reaching the country. Tourism businesses should be involved early enough to prepare relevant offers. A striking image of Jordan becomes more useful when the person looking at it can readily find a way to come.

The quality of the visit then carries the marketing forward. People remember how they were welcomed, whether they could find their way and how comfortably they moved through the city. Around a major event, clear signs, accessible routes and well-managed transport help guests enjoy themselves. Those improvements can also make daily life easier for the residents who share the same streets.

This is where my profession has a responsibility. The route between a venue and a bus stop, the lighting along a pavement and a comfortable place to wait all influence the experience. Planning should include nearby businesses and residents, who understand how an area works. Their participation helps an international occasion sit comfortably within the life of the city.

> The championship featured 14 professional bouts, with an international field drawn from 16 countries

A historic venue also asks for particular care. Through my work in heritage management, I have come to see the visitor experience and the care of a place as closely connected. Temporary installations should respect historic fabric, while crowd movement, sound and lighting require careful planning. Responsible hosting allows people to enjoy a remarkable setting while ensuring that it remains in good condition for those who come afterwards.

Jordanian athletes must share in the opportunity. The championship featured 14 professional bouts, with an international field drawn from 16 countries. Jordan's participants included Abdullah Jawish, Zaki Kayali, Yazan Balawi and Freih Harahsheh. International guests may draw attention, but the development of our own competitors gives that attention a lasting purpose. Future editions could include coaching exchanges and opportunities for young athletes to learn from visiting professionals.

The cultural programme also mattered. Performances by the Jordanian Armed Forces Band, Ma'an's folk artists and Circassian performers introduced another part of the country to the occasion. Visitors encounter Jordan through the people who perform, organise and welcome them. Giving local talent a visible place in an international programme helps make that encounter more personal.

We should now examine what the event delivered. How many visitors travelled to Jordan because of it? How long did they stay, and which places did they visit? Did nearby businesses benefit? Did the coverage generate enquiries or bookings? Answers would help organisers and public institutions decide how to develop future editions and direct promotional spending more effectively.

A dependable calendar would give that work continuity. Visitors could plan ahead, businesses could prepare and local teams could build experience from one edition to the next. Jordan has an opportunity to develop a recognisable place in sports tourism by organising events well and connecting them thoughtfully to the country around them.

Friday's fight night gave people a reason to look towards Amman. What interests me now is the visit that could follow: Someone arriving because of an image from the Roman Theatre, spending time in the city and leaving with stories of people they met along the way. That is how a night of international attention can begin to mean something lasting for Jordan.

Food security, strategic reserves remain top government priorities — ministry



Photo Courtesy of Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply

Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah on Tuesday stresses that safeguarding national food security, ensuring the continuity of supply chains and maintaining adequate strategic reserves of basic food commodities

AMMAN (JT) — Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Yarub Qudah on Tuesday stressed that safeguarding national food security, ensuring the continuity of supply chains and maintaining adequate strategic reserves of basic food commodities remain top government priorities to meet citizens' needs under all circumstances.

During a meeting with representatives of the food trade sector at the ministry's headquarters, Qudah highlighted the importance of strengthening strategic food reserves and ensuring sufficient supplies in local markets ahead of the holy month of Ramadan to meet consumer demand and maintain price stability, according to a ministry's statement.

The meeting was attended by Chairman of the Interim Committee of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce (JCC) Wael Shuqairat, Chairman of the Interim Committee of the JCC Mohammad Abu Odah, as well as a number of traders and sector representatives.

Discussions focused on the state of supply chains, challenges facing the sector and measures to ensure the uninterrupted flow of goods into the domestic market.

Qudah underscored the importance of public-private partnerships in maintaining market stability and ensuring the availability of essential commodities at fair and reasonable prices.

He reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to continued coordination with commercial chambers and private sector representatives to monitor regional and international developments affecting imports and shipping logistics, and to address any obstacles that could disrupt supply chains.

For their part, Shuqairat and Abu Odah stressed the need for continued cooperation and coordination with the ministry to streamline import procedures and overcome challenges facing traders, thereby ensuring a steady flow of food commodities, market stability and the availability of goods to citizens.

Traders outlined the main challenges facing the sector, particularly rising import and freight costs.

They also commended the ministry's responsiveness to their feedback and its commitment to consultations aimed at identifying practical solutions to enhance the sector's competitiveness and support the national economy.

Garment, leather exports rise 3.4% to JD1.24b in first eight months of 2026



JT file

Exports of Jordan's leather and garment sector rises by 3.4 per cent during the first eight months of 2026, reaching JD1.236 billion

AMMAN (JT) — Exports from Jordan's garment and leather sector rose by 3.4 per cent during the first eight months of 2026, reaching JD1.236 billion, compared with JD1.196 billion during the same period in 2025, according to Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI) data.

The sector's representative at the JCI, Ihab Qadri, said that export growth continued despite challenges related to global competition, production costs, logistics and shifts in external demand, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The United States remained the main destination for the sector's exports, accounting for 77 per cent of the total, at JD957 million, down from JD965 million during the corresponding period in 2025.

Qadri highlighted growth in exports to several alternative markets, including Canada, which rose by 13 per cent to JD39 million, The Netherlands, which increased by 30 per cent to JD35 million, and Belgium, which grew by 4 per cent to JD26 million.

Exports to the United Kingdom rose by 4 per cent to JD25 million, while those to Germany increased by 17 per cent to JD20 million.

Other markets also recorded notable growth, with exports to Mexico rising by 40 per cent, Italy by 32 per cent and the United Arab Emirates by 11 per cent.

Knitted garments and accessories accounted for 95 per cent of total sector exports, increasing by 4.6 per cent to JD1.177 billion, compared with JD1.125 billion in 2025.

Exports of non-knitted garments fell by 41.3 per cent to JD20 million, down from JD34 million, while carpet exports declined by 0.5 per cent to JD28 million.

Meanwhile, exports of made-up textile articles increased by 79.4 per cent to JD5 million, while those of wadding, felt, nonwovens and cordage rose by 42.7 per cent to JD3 million.

Qadri said the sector provides 96,000 job opportunities and plays a key role in the Kingdom's economic modernisation plans.

Tamatem Games tops 2026 list of leading MENA game developers



Petra photo

Jordanian mobile game publisher Tamatem Games has ranked first in The Top 30 MENA Game Makers 2026

AMMAN (JT) — Jordanian mobile game publisher Tamatem Games has ranked first in The Top 30 MENA Game Makers 2026, a list published by international gaming industry platform PocketGamer.biz, placing the company at the top of the regional ranking.

According to a company statement issued on Tuesday, the recognition reflects Tamatem's continued efforts to develop the digital gaming sector and strengthen the presence of Arabic-language content in the global gaming industry, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Founded in Jordan in 2013, the company has established itself as one of the region's leading platforms for publishing and operating games targeting Arabic-speaking audiences. Its activities include localising international games, marketing them and developing entertainment experiences tailored to the interests of players across the region.

The report highlighted the company's strategic growth in recent years, particularly its expansion beyond game publishing and localisation into developing its own titles, investing in technology and entering new markets.

Key milestones in this development include the launch of Awad: Delivery King 2, the company's first internally developed game, and its acquisition of Turkish interactive advertising technology company Playable Factory.

Tamatem Games Founder and CEO Hussam Hammo, said the company was proud of the achievement, describing it as an important milestone reflecting years of hard work, determination and confidence in the ability of Arab talent to compete and excel in the global gaming industry.

He added that securing the top position in the Middle East and North Africa was not merely a company achievement, but also a milestone that adds to Jordan's and the region's record of success in technology and digital gaming.

Third phase of government building energy efficiency programme launched



Photo Courtesy of Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, in cooperation with the German Energy Academy in Jordan and the German Agency for International Cooperation, has launched the third phase of a programme to improve energy efficiency in government buildings

AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, in cooperation with the German Energy Academy in Jordan and the German Agency for International Cooperation, has launched the third phase of a programme to improve energy efficiency in government buildings, starting with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply.

The initiative builds on the findings of energy audit studies, the installation of measurement and verification equipment, and the monitoring of energy consumption to assess savings achieved through the implementation of energy efficiency measures, according to a statement by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

The third phase, supervised by experts and specialists from the ministry and its partner institutions, aims to install measurement and verification devices to monitor energy consumption, and assess actual savings in the ministries of industry, trade and supply, health, youth, finance and labour.

The phase will also verify the impact of the implemented measures against the savings estimates outlined in the energy audit studies.

The measures include optimising the operating hours of central cooling systems, replacing split air conditioning units with more energy-efficient models, adjusting operating temperatures in control systems at the Companies Control Department's data centre, replacing conventional lighting with LED units and raising staff awareness of energy conservation.

The energy audit study for the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply identified potential annual savings of around JD7,449 in energy costs, with a payback period of less than one year.

The expected reduction in energy consumption amounts to 4 per cent of the building's total energy bill.

The Cabinet recently approved the necessary measures to implement the energy efficiency project in public buildings as part of the government's strategy to improve energy efficiency and reduce overall energy consumption by 20 per cent.

The initiative is also in line with the ministry's priorities to expand the adoption of energy efficiency solutions across government buildings and infrastructure.

Non-Jordanian ownership in companies listed on ASE reaches 45.8%, of which 32.5% for institutional investors



JT file

Amman Stock Exchange statistics reveals that the value of shares bought by non-Jordanian investors at the ASE in October 2026 is JD36.6 million

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) statistics revealed that the value of shares bought by non-Jordanian investors at the ASE in October 2026 was JD36.6 million, representing 12.2 per cent of the overall trading value, while the value of shares sold by them amounted to JD31.9 million.

The value of shares bought by non-Jordanian investors since the beginning of the year until the end of October 2026 was JD348.0 million, representing 12.2 per cent of the overall trading value, while the value of shares sold by them amounted to JD398.8 million.

Arab investors' purchases during October 2026 were JD24.9 million, or 68.1 per cent of the overall purchases by non-Jordanians, while their sales amounted to JD20.8 million, or 65.1 per cent of non-Jordanians total sales, according to an ASE statement.

The value of non-Arab purchases amounted to JD11.7 million, constituting 31.9 per cent of the overall purchases by non-Jordanians, while their sales value amounted to JD11.1 million, representing 34.9 per cent of the total sales by non-Jordanians.

Hence, non-Jordanian investors' ownership in companies listed on ASE as of end of October 2026 represented 45.8 per cent of the total market value, of which 32.5 per cent for institutional investors including companies, institutions and funds.

Arab investors own 29.9 per cent and non-Arab investors own 15.9 per cent. At the sectoral level, the non-Jordanian ownership in the financial sector was 47.4 per cent, in the services sector was 22.4 per cent and 51.6 per cent in the industrial sector.

AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Tuesday amounted to JD8.3 million spread over 2.6 million shares that traded through 3,061 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.21 per cent, closing at 4037.64 points.

Out of 99 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 24 companies rose while the share price of another 41 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Jordan Decapolis Properties by 4.55 per cent, Amwaj Properties by 4.17 per cent, Premier Business and Projects Company Ltd. by 3.92 per cent, Jordan French Insurance by 3.85 per cent, and Petra Education Company by 3.33 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordan Insurance by 6.06 per cent, Jordan Hotels and Tourism by 4.76 per cent, Century Investment Group by 4.55 per cent, Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 4.35 per cent, and Euro Arab Insurance Group by 3.76 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 No.1 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.

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. The club also stuck by Fonseca after he was given a nine-month domestic ban last year for an angry altercation with a referee.Lyon are expected to appoint a permanent successor during the upcoming international break, with former Braga coach Carlos Vicens reportedly among the leading candidates.

AFC postpones 2027 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia amid regional developments

By Osama Alkafri

AMMAN — The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) on Tuesday announced the postponement of the 2027 AFC Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia, rescheduling the tournament from January 7-February 5, 2027, to December 23, 2027-January 21, 2028.

The decision followed extensive discussions and consultations with the Local Organising Committee of the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 and the Saudi Arabian Football Federation, the AFC said in a statement.

The confederation said the decision to reschedule the continental competition came in light of exceptional circumstances arising from developments in the region, including significant logistical challenges and travel disruptions.

The AFC Organising Committee approved the revised schedule, noting that the circumstances had made it difficult to organise and stage the tournament according to its original timetable.

The proposed new dates will be submitted to FIFA for approval, the AFC said.

The confederation also commended the Saudi Arabian Football Federation for their commitment to delivering a world-class tournament for players and fans across the continent.

The AFC added that it would continue working closely with the Saudi organisers, participating national associations, sponsors, broadcast partners and other stakeholders to ensure a successful tournament while minimising the impact of the postponement.

Jordan will enter the tournament seeking to build on its historic achievement in the 2023 AFC Asian Cup in Qatar, where the Nashama reached the final for the first time before finishing runners-up following a 3-1 loss to hosts Qatar.

Jordan has been drawn in Group B alongside Uzbekistan, DPR Korea and Bahrain for the 2027 edition. The Nashama secured automatic qualification after advancing to the third round of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Similar postponements and disruptions have affected other major sporting events across the region amid security concerns and logistical challenges.

The Six Kings Slam exhibition tennis tournament in Riyadh was postponed from late October to late December 2026, while the FIFAe Finals 2026, originally scheduled to take place in Jeddah, were postponed indefinitely.

In Formula One, the Bahrain Grand Prix was postponed and rescheduled, while the upcoming races in Qatar and Abu Dhabi remain on the calendar amid continued security monitoring and contingency planning.



AFP photo

Coaches of Asian national football teams pose in front of a screen showing the results of the final draw for the 2027 AFC Asian Cup during a ceremony in Diriyah, on the outskirts of Riyadh, on May 9

UK adventurer ends epic 28-year trek across jungles, frozen sea

By Helen Rowe
Agence France-Presse

KINGSTON UPON HULL, United Kingdom (AFP) — British adventurer Karl Bushby enjoyed an emotional reunion with his mother and family on Monday as he arrived back home after a 28-year, 50,000-kilometre trek from South America, crossing four continents on foot.

Cheers erupted as the 57-year-old former paratrooper was greeted in the street outside his mother's house in the northeastern UK port city of Hull.

Bushby, who set off on his odyssey from Chile in 1998, had two golden rules for his journey — avoid all forms of transport to advance and not return until he completed his challenge.

He was met in the centre of Hull by a crowd of up to 1,000 cheering people before being reunited with his mother, Angela, 36-year-old son Adam and a 12-year-old granddaughter he had never met.

Speaking after the reunion, Bushby paid tribute to the kindness of the strangers he had met, from hotel owners to the "poorest of the poor" who had given him bowls of rice and something to drink along the way.

"And that would happen throughout the world," he said adding that the world had been his "support network".



AFP photo

Surrounded by members of the media and well-wishers, British adventurer Karl Bushby embraces his mother, Angela outside her home, after Karl completes the final portion of his journey in his home city of Hull, north-eastern England, on Monday

'Indiana Jones' moments

The route back to his home city has seen him walk the length of the Americas, across the frozen Bering Strait from Alaska to Russia and then through parts of Central Asia and Europe covering jungles, mountains and deserts.

The journey had been full of logistical headaches and scary "Indiana Jones" and "I think I'm going to die moments", he told reporters.

Bushby had already been applauded on Sunday as he crossed the iconic Humber Bridge near Hull in thick mist, ahead of his final push into the city centre and then on to his mother's home where he grew up.

"So many people have followed Karl on his epic journey. We have all felt inspired by his spirit, tenacity and dogged determination," Hull Mayor Maria Coward said ahead of his arrival.

"It's quite emotional. I'm proud of him and what he's done. What an achievement," neighbour Laura Chaplin, 47, told AFP as he returned home.

British leader Andy Burnham's spokesman said it was "an extraordinary achievement and the prime minister welcomes him back to the UK".

Challenges met

Bushby began his adventure when he was 29, after his marriage broke down and his wife returned to Northern Ireland with their son.

He was forced to pause the journey several times, including when Moscow refused him a visa. The 2008 financial crisis and then the Covid-19 pandemic caused other hold-ups.

At those times, he stepped away from the journey, living notably at a base in Mexico, then once the situation had been resolved, he would resume from the exact spot where he had left off.

Erin Anderson, 28, a theatre marketing officer among the crowd in Hull, said she thought Bushby was "amazing".

"I've been following him for the last eight years. He's been walking for as long as I've been alive. It's brilliant".



AFP photo

Bhutan hopes Gelephu Mindfulness City will boost its economy and persuade more young people to stay

Thousands build Buddhist monuments for Bhutan's 'mindfulness' city

GELEPHU, Bhutan (AFP) — Tens of thousands of volunteers took part Sunday to build 108 Buddhist stupas in Bhutan, marking the Himalayan kingdom's ambitious plans for a "mindfulness" city aimed at driving economic growth.

The 15-metre tall solid towers — sacred Buddhist monuments found across the Himalayas — stretch along 12 kilometres of riverbank near the Indian border, at the site of the future Gelephu Mindfulness City.

Over 40,000 volunteers participated in building all 108 structures in a single day as "a physical form of prayer" after starting work post-midnight, officials said.

Landlocked Bhutan, with a population of just under 800,000 and wedged between China and India, is known for its policy of prioritising "Gross National Happiness" alongside economic growth.

Bhutan hopes the city will boost its economy and persuade more young people to stay, attracting investment in sustainable business, green technology, education, tourism and financial services.

King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck established the special zone by royal charter in 2024, saying its purpose was to "create a vibrant economic hub".

Bhutan faces a declining birthrate and an exodus of young people seeking opportunities abroad.

"This occasion will be recorded in our history for generations to come," said Nima Gyeltshen, 65, head of the Organisation for Youth Empowerment, which helps young Bhutanese find work.

The sleepy town has a population of less than 10,000, according to the last census in 2017.

