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Photo courtesy of Royal Court

His Majesty King Abdullah chairs a meeting to review the progress of energy sector infrastructure projects, accompanied by HRH Crown Prince Hussein

## King chairs meeting to review energy infrastructure projects

AMMAN (JT) — His Majesty King Abdullah chaired a meeting on Wednesday to review the progress of energy sector infrastructure projects, particularly electricity generation and storage, as well as energy port operations projects.

During the meeting, held at Basman Palace and attended by HRH Crown Prince Hussein, His Majesty emphasised the need to accelerate the implementation of priority energy projects in order to meet rising demand, reinforce supply security and strengthen the stability and efficiency of the power system, according to a Royal Court statement.

The King underscored the importance of fostering an attractive investment environment to expand renewable energy generation and storage projects, in order to diversify energy sources and increase reliance on clean, local energy.

His Majesty also highlighted the need to continue upgrading the electricity grid to integrate more renewable energy, and directed officials to develop the network of energy-sector ports and enhance their operational efficiency.

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## King listens to Parliament's response to Speech from the Throne

AMMAN (JT) — Parliament presented on Wednesday its response to the Speech from the Throne, which His Majesty King Abdullah delivered on November 2, to inaugurate the 20th Parliament's third ordinary session, according to a Royal Court statement.

The Senate's response, attended by HRH Crown Prince Hussein, was delivered at Raghadan Palace by Senate President Faisal Fayez, who emphasised that when words are spoken by a leader who embodies the nation's history, they constitute a pledge and a responsibility, adding that the Senate serves as a voice for the nation, a guardian of public interest, a bulwark safeguarding state institutions, and a partner in nation-building and modernisation.

Fayez stressed that terrorism cannot be combated by force of arms alone, but rather through social cohesion and the strengthening of national consciousness, and praised the efforts of the brave men and women of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army and security agencies in protecting the Kingdom.



Photo courtesy of Royal Court

His Majesty King Abdullah listens to Parliament's response to the Speech from the Throne at Raghadan Palace, in the presence of HRH Crown Prince Hussein

He underscored that it is the Senate's duty is to support every effort that accelerates the completion of major projects, removes obstacles and ensures that outcomes are reflected in the national economy, and that their benefits reach all citizens.

Fayez also emphasised that the Senate would prioritise legislation and policies relating to water, and support efforts to protect water resources, develop water infrastructure, and ensure its sustainability for future generations.

House Speaker Ibrahim Tarawneh, delivering the House of Representatives' response, stated that the insidious hand of terror has never broken the resolve of Jordanians, who rally closer to their nation and its leader.

Continued on page 5

## PM directs construction of multipurpose hall in Madaba's Umm Ar-Rasas

AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan has directed the construction of a multipurpose hall in Umm Ar-Rasas District, Madaba, to serve young people in the area and neighbouring communities, as part of government efforts to address local needs and improve public services.

The decision follows field assessments by a government team tasked with monitoring the needs of areas visited by the prime minister during his periodic inspection tours, according to a post by the relevant ministry on X.

During a visit to the Umm Ar-Rasas subdistrict in 2025, Hassan directed targeted interventions at the archaeological site and support for the Umm Ar-Rasas Women's Association to expand its community programmes, develop handicraft products and improve marketing opportunities.



JT file

Prime Minister Jafar Hassan during a field visit to Umm Ar-Rasas in Madaba in September, 2025

Hassan also directed the second expansion of the free school transport project to cover areas in the Southern Central Badia, including Umm Ar-Rasas, Northern Mushairfeh and neighbouring communities, starting with the second academic semester in February.

The expansion is part of the government's commitment to gradually extending the project to areas across the central and northern Kingdom, following positive results from its initial phase in the Southern Badia, which helped address student transportation challenges and ease the financial burden on families, according to the ministry.

The first expansion, previously directed by Hassan, increased the number of beneficiaries from 9,000 to 12,500 male and female students, in addition to around 900 teachers.

Implemented in partnership with the private sector, the upcoming phase will also introduce a smart school transport application, allowing parents to track students' journeys through integration with electronic bus-tracking systems and onboard cameras.

## Jordan-EU Conference to highlight major investment opportunities in energy sector

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan will present a range of investment opportunities in renewable energy, electricity storage, natural gas and green hydrogen at the Jordanian-European Investment Conference, scheduled on November 19 at the Dead Sea.

The conference will be held under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah, with the participation of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

More than 700 officials, investors and business leaders are expected to attend the event, which the government said aims to strengthen economic and investment ties between Jordan and the European Union and help move proposed projects from the planning stage towards financing and implementation.

Jordan's investment offering draws



on the Kingdom's abundant solar and wind resources, as well as its strategic infrastructure, according to a statement from the Ministry of Energy.

The projects will be presented under various investment models tailored to their individual requirements, with the broader aim of strengthening energy security and enhancing the competitiveness of the national economy.

Among the key projects on offer is the Al Mujib pumped-storage hydropower project, which will have a capacity of 450 megawatts (MW) and provide seven hours of electricity storage. The project is being developed under a public-private partnership (PPP) model, the statement said.

The facility is expected to store surplus electricity generated from renewable sources and release it during periods of peak demand, helping improve the flexibility and stability of Jordan's electricity grid.

Continued on page 5



AFP photo

People and security forces gather outside the Greek Orthodox Church in the village of Hmoud in Karak after a shooting killed nine worshippers

## Verdict expected Sunday in trial over deadly Karak church attack — lawyer

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — The State Security Court (SSC) is expected to issue its verdict on Sunday in the trial of five suspects in the October 23 terrorist attack on St George Church in Hmoud, Karak Governorate, that killed nine people.

Continued on page 5

## SSC prosecutor wraps up investigation into 'terrorist' attack against police officers

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — The State Security Court (SSC) prosecutor on Wednesday levelled two charges against a suspect who killed a police officer and injured another in Amman earlier this month.

The suspect allegedly stabbed and killed Corp. Jawad Ali Salayteh, who was on duty in front of a diplomatic mission on November 5.

A second officer, Capt. Firas Ananzeh, was injured after attacking and controlling the suspect.




SSC General Prosecutor Brig. Gen. Judge Ahmad Talat Shahaltough said in a statement that the prosecution concluded its investigation in the case.

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 defendant suspected of carrying out the deadly attack in Amman, according to Shahaltough.

The prosecutor filed two charges against the defendant, including committing terrorist acts resulting in death, in violation of Articles 2 and 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Law and Article 76 of the Penal Code.

The defendant was also charged with committing terrorist acts using weapons 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.

Shahaltough referred the case to the SSC to proceed with the trial as stipulated by the law.

# Bulgaria seeks to deepen ties with Jordan through trade, tourism and education — ambassador

By Saeb Rawashdeh



Bulgarian Ambassador to Jordan Metin Kazak

AMMAN — Jordanian-Bulgarian relations, established in 1964, are rooted in decades of mutual trust, diplomatic cooperation and shared strategic interests, with both countries seeking to expand their partnership in an increasingly complex regional and international environment.

Over the years, ties between Amman and Sofia have developed through high-level visits, parliamentary exchanges, educational cooperation and growing cultural engagement.

Bulgaria views Jordan as an important partner in the Middle East, while Jordan sees Bulgaria as a valuable gateway to the European Union and its single market.

In an interview with The Jordan Times, Bulgarian Ambassador to Jordan Metin Kazak discussed the prospects for strengthening bilateral relations, highlighting opportunities in trade, investment, tourism, education and cultural diplomacy, as well as the two countries' shared commitment to regional stability.

Since assuming his diplomatic duties in October 2023, Kazak said his priority has been to build on the longstanding friendship between the two countries and translate it into practical cooperation that delivers tangible benefits for both peoples.

He described Bulgaria-Jordan relations as a longstanding friendship based on mutual trust and respect that has gradually evolved into a partnership with considerable potential for further growth.

An important milestone during his tenure was His Majesty King Abdullah's visit to Bulgaria in April 2025 within the framework of the Aqaba Process initiative, which, according to the ambassador, created new opportunities to deepen cooperation.

The visit underscored the importance both countries attach to maintaining active political dialogue and strengthening cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Kazak said that closer engagement between the two business communities was another priority, noting that Jordan's strategic geographical location and network of trade agreements complement Bulgaria's membership of the European Union and access to the European single market.

He also identified tourism as a promising area for cooperation, pointing to the historical, cultural and natural attractions offered by both countries.

Establishing a direct air connection between Sofia and Amman would facilitate travel, encourage business contacts and bring the two peoples closer together, he said.

The ambassador also highlighted the human dimension of bilateral relations, noting that more than 1,500 Jordanians have graduated from Bulgarian universities over the years.

Many of these graduates have established successful careers as doctors, engineers, economists and professionals in other fields, serving as important bridges between the two societies.

The embassy works with the Association of Bulgarian University Alumni in Jordan and supports the Bulgarian Sunday School "Sts Cyril and Methodius" in Amman, alongside cultural initiatives aimed at maintaining these connections and creating new opportunities for educational exchange.

Kazak said that cultural diplomacy was an important component of his mission, citing Bulgarian cinema, cultural celebrations, and initiatives bringing together Bulgarian and Jordanian communities.

He stressed that lasting relations between countries depend not only on official contacts but also on personal connections, shared experiences and a genuine appreciation of each other's cultures.

### Economic cooperation and investment

Despite the strong political and diplomatic foundations, the ambassador believes that economic relations have considerable room for expansion.

A significant development in this regard was the reestablishment of the Commercial and Economic Affairs Office at the Bulgarian embassy in Amman at the beginning of 2026.

Kazak described the move as a tangible expression of Bulgaria's commitment to strengthening economic relations with Jordan.

The office assists Bulgarian manufacturers seeking export opportunities in Jordan and Jordanian companies interested in entering the Bulgarian market, establishing trade partnerships or exploring investment opportunities.

Its work includes providing market information, identifying potential business partners, facilitating direct contacts and coordinating with relevant institutions.

The embassy has already been involved in business inquiries and matchmaking activities in several sectors, including agriculture, grain trade, food processing, dairy products, vegetable oils and cosmetics.

Kazak said that the embassy introduces Bulgarian producers to potential Jordanian importers and distributors while also assisting Jordanian entrepreneurs interested in investing in Bulgaria.

The objective, he added, is to turn initial contacts into sustainable and mutually beneficial business partnerships.

Tourism is another sector offering considerable potential. Bulgaria has developed a diverse tourism industry encompassing seaside resorts, winter tourism, cultural attractions and spa destinations, while Jordan is internationally recognised for its historical and religious heritage.

The embassy is working with Jordanian tourism institutions, and holding discussions with the Royal Jordanian Airlines to promote tourism exchange and explore possibilities for restoring a direct air connection between the two capitals.

The ambassador also pointed to cooperation with Jordanian Chambers of Commerce and business organisations, noting that preparations were under way to organise a business forum in Bulgaria in 2027.

The proposed forum would bring together representatives of the Jordanian business community and Bulgarian companies to showcase products and services, hold business-to-business meetings and explore opportunities in trade, investment, industrial cooperation and technology.

Kazak said that he hoped the meetings would lead to concrete partnerships and joint projects.

### Religious and cultural ties

Beyond politics and economics, religious and cultural relations have also played an important role in bringing the two countries closer.

Kazak recalled the historic visit of His Holiness Bulgarian Patriarch Daniil to the Holy Land, including Jerusalem and Jordan, in April 2025, at the invitation of HRH Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammad.

During the visit, Patriarch Daniil and Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

In Jordan, the Bulgarian Patriarch visited several important Christian sites, most notably the Baptism Site at Al Maghtas on the Jordan River.

During the visit, Prince Ghazi offered the Bulgarian Orthodox Church a plot of land for the construction of a religious centre, which is expected to include a chapel built in the traditional Bulgarian architectural style.

Patriarch Daniil also met King Abdullah in Amman. During the audience, the King invited the Bulgarian Patriarch to participate in the celebrations marking the 2,000th anniversary of Christ's Baptism at Al Maghtas in 2030.

The ambassador said that such initiatives reflect the importance of Jordan's Christian heritage and its role in promoting religious coexistence and interfaith dialogue.

### Regional stability and shared interests

Kazak also highlighted the regional dimension of Jordanian-Bulgarian relations, praising Jordan's constructive role under the leadership of King Abdullah in promoting stability, dialogue and humanitarian action.

Against the backdrop of continuing crises in the Middle East, he said that the two countries share an interest in peace, security, respect for international law and a just and lasting resolution of the Palestinian question based on the two-state solution.

As a member of the European Union, Bulgaria also attaches importance to strengthening dialogue between Jordan and the bloc and supporting closer cooperation in areas of common interest.

The ambassador believes that Bulgaria's EU membership, combined with Jordan's strategic position in the Middle East, creates opportunities extending beyond bilateral trade.

Jordanian companies could benefit from stronger links with European markets, while Bulgarian expertise could contribute to development projects in Jordan and the wider region.

> Bulgaria could offer competitive products and expertise in grain production, seeds, dairy products, agricultural machinery, food processing and pharmaceuticals...

He identified digital technologies, innovation, infrastructure and renewable energy as promising areas for future cooperation, alongside established sectors such as agriculture and food production.

Asked about the future of bilateral relations, Kazak said that there was considerable potential to move beyond the traditional foundations of friendship and achieve more ambitious results.

He identified economic cooperation, trade, investment, agriculture, education, tourism, technology, defence and security as priority areas.

Bulgaria could offer competitive products and expertise in grain production, seeds, dairy products, agricultural machinery, food processing and pharmaceuticals, while Jordan could provide an attractive business environment, a skilled workforce and access to regional markets.

He emphasised the need to encourage more direct contacts between companies, facilitate business delegations and identify specific investment projects.

Education and cultural exchange should also remain central to the relationship, he said, calling for more academic exchanges, scholarships, joint research and opportunities for Jordanian and Bulgarian students to study in each other's countries.

The embassy's support for the Bulgarian Sunday School in Amman and its participation in cultural events, including the European Film Festival, are part of broader efforts to promote Bulgarian culture and strengthen people-to-people relations.

Kazak also praised the role of Jordanians who studied in Bulgaria, describing their experience and professional achievements as an important foundation for continued friendship between the two nations.

Reflecting on his diplomatic mission, the ambassador said that strengthening bilateral relations required persistence, continuity and the ability to transform promising discussions into practical outcomes.

"I am confident that, with sustained political commitment and closer engagement between our public and private sectors, we can take our bilateral relations to a more ambitious and productive level," he said.



File photo

The results of the Demographic Dividend Analysis study, launched on Wednesday, show that the labour force participation rate reached 38.9 per cent in 2025, while youth unemployment among those aged 20–24 stood at 41.5 per cent

# Working-age Jordanians account for 65.1% of population — study

AMMAN (JT) — A total of 65.1 per cent of Jordan's population is of working age, 30.2 per cent of the population is under 15 years old, and 4.8 per cent is aged 65 and above, according to the results of the Demographic Dividend Analysis study launched on Wednesday.

Using National Transfer Accounts, the study presents an economic analysis of demographic shifts to support planning under the Economic Modernisation Vision, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The study was launched by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in partnership with the Higher Population Council (HPC) and the Department of Statistics under the patronage of Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Zeina Toukan, who chairs the council's board of trustees.

UNFPA Representative in Jordan Himyar Abdulmoghni stressed that a favourable demographic structure creates an opportunity for growth, emphasising the need to translate it into broader economic participation, productive employment, and better income rates.

HPC Secretary General Issa Masarweh highlighted the strategic step of using demographic evidence in decision-making to address unemployment, increase youth and women's labour participation, invest in vocational training and protect human capital against health risks.

Data showed that the labour force participation rate reached 38.9 per cent in 2025, while youth unemployment among those aged 20–24 stood at 41.5 per cent.

A 10 per cent increase in wages for workers under 35 could raise the average annual demographic dividend from 0.09 to 0.26 per cent during the 2026–2040 period.

Female labour participation stood at 16.3 per cent in 2025, compared with 58.9 per cent for men. Reducing the gender wage gap by 25 per cent could elevate the annual demographic dividend to 0.45 per cent, according to the study.

The elderly population aged 65 and above is projected to exceed 10 per cent by the early 2040s and 20 per cent by the mid-2070s.

# Zaha Cultural Centre, IRC sign strategic partnership to support early childhood development

AMMAN (JT) — The Zaha Cultural Centre and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) on Wednesday signed a strategic partnership Memorandum to promote early childhood development, engage parents and caregivers, and support children's social and emotional learning in Jordan by expanding programmes and services for children and families across the governorates.

Zaha Cultural Centre Executive Director Rania Sbeih and IRC Country Director in Jordan Ika Gvania signed the Memorandum, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Sbeih said that the centre believes that investing in early childhood is fundamental to building generations capable of learning, growing and actively participating in society.

Supporting children, she added, begins with providing safe and stimulating environments and strengthening the role of families and caregivers during the early stages of a child's life.

She noted that cooperation with IRC over the past years had been an important experience that helped develop the centre's programmes, expand its services and reach thousands of children across the governorates.

"We look forward to continuing our joint work to provide children with better opportunities to learn through play, develop their social and emotional skills, and strengthen the role of families and caregivers in supporting their development during their early years," Sbeih added.

Gvania said that the IRC believes that investing in the early years of a child's life lays the foundation for their future and development, noting that supporting families and caregivers and strengthening the capacities of national institutions are essential to achieving this goal.

"Our partnership with the centre builds on years of fruitful cooperation and reflects our shared commitment to enhancing early childhood development services," she said, adding that the partnership seeks to unify efforts, exchange expertise and invest in building the capacities of local staff to ensure programme continuity and expand their impact.

The partnership builds on cooperation between the two organisations that began in 2019 and included several programmes and projects supporting children and families, starting with the "Ahlan Simsim" programme, followed by the "Asas" project and the "Learning through Play" programme.

Through Zaha Cultural Centre branches, the "Learning through Play" programme reached 12,557 children in 11 governorates over three months, from June to August.

Under the partnership, the two organisations will work to expand access to high-quality early childhood development services through Zaha centres, implement joint programmes targeting parents and caregivers, and strengthen the capacities of centre staff in learning through play and social and emotional learning.

The IRC has trained 50 facilitators at Zaha Cultural Centre, strengthening their skills and capabilities in delivering activities and programmes to improve the quality and sustainability of services provided to children and families.



Petra photo

The Zaha Cultural Centre and the International Rescue Committee on Wednesday sign a strategic partnership memorandum to promote early childhood development, engage parents and caregivers, and support children's social and emotional learning in Jordan

# Prince El Hassan attends Yarmouk University's 50th anniversary celebration



Petra photo

HRH Prince El Hassan on Wednesday attends via video link a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of Yarmouk University

AMMAN (JT) — HRH Prince El Hassan, alongside HRH Princess Sumaya Bint El Hassan, on Wednesday attended via video link a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of Yarmouk University at Al Kindi Auditorium at the university's Faculty of Arts.

Prince El Hassan said that the golden jubilee marked five decades of achievements and provided an opportunity to revisit the university's founding vision and shape its future, stressing the importance of knowledge in improving people's lives.

Recalling the university's establishment in 1976 under the patronage of the late King Hussein, Prince El Hassan said that Yarmouk University was founded to bring knowledge closer to the public and enable northern Jordan to play an active role in shaping its future, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He also recalled the university's first graduation ceremony in 1980, at which he received an honorary doctorate alongside Nobel Prize-winning physicist Mohammad Abdus Salam.

Addressing advances in artificial intelligence, Prince El Hassan highlighted the growing influence of algorithms on how people access and interpret information.

He stressed the role of universities in equipping students with the ability to understand AI's limitations and distinguish between machine-generated content and human judgement.

He said that the university's achievements over the past five decades should serve as a foundation for the next 50 years, with a focus on promoting critical thinking, linking scientific research to practical applications and preparing generations capable of innovation and giving.

"The giving human being is our most valuable asset," he said.

Yarmouk University President Malek Sharairi said that the institution's 50-year journey had been shaped by successive generations who believed in its mission and contributed to its progress.

He commended the efforts of the Royal Founding Committee, governing councils and former university presidents in establishing the institution and advancing its academic mission.

Sharairi also outlined the university's 2026–2030 strategic plan, saying its implementation requires the combined efforts of academic and administrative staff, students, graduates, the local community and national and international partners from the public and private sectors.

During the ceremony, the university announced the establishment of a Deanship of Future Readiness and Economic Engagement to strengthen links between academic programmes and local and international labour market needs, while connecting students' projects and innovations with practical and productive opportunities.

The university also announced the establishment of an endowment to support its financial sustainability and diversify its funding sources.

The celebration featured a short film documenting the university's establishment and development, alongside an exhibition showcasing work by students and staff in art, design, architecture, technology, artificial intelligence and robotics.

A golden jubilee operetta highlighted the university's history, achievements and future vision, as well as the success story of Yazan Shannik, a graduate of the Faculty of Information Technology and Computer Sciences who has received several international, Arab and local awards.

Operetta supervisor Yara Nimri said more than 150 students from various faculties took part in the performance, alongside the Jordan Armed Forces Orchestra.

She added that the performance celebrated the university's cultural diversity, with more than 60 international students presenting their traditional costumes, folk arts, national flags, songs and dialects. It concluded with a musical piece commemorating the university's 50-year journey.

The ceremony also honoured former prime minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, the university's first secretary-general, and former university presidents with the Golden Jubilee Medal in recognition of their contributions over the past five decades.

The Hisham Adib Hajjawi Scientific Foundation, the late Samir Shamma and Malaysia's Pahang Foundation were also honoured for supporting the university's academic and research activities and contributing to education, scientific research and innovation.

# Princess Basma calls for comprehensive approach to strengthening food security

By Ilham Darwazeh



Petra photo

Under the patronage of HRH Princess Basma bint Talal, a dialogue session on Wednesday is organised by the National Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition to review Jordan's food security and nutrition indicators in the global and regional context

AMMAN — Under the patronage of HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal, a dialogue session on Wednesday was organised by the National Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition (NAJMA), to review Jordan's food security and nutrition indicators in the global and regional context.

The session was in light of the findings of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026 (SOFI) report.

HRH Princess Basma bint Talal stressed that food security goes beyond food availability or reducing hunger, requiring access to diverse, nutritious and healthy food, particularly for children during early stages of life.

Speaking at the session, HRH Princess Basma said food security requires a comprehensive approach that protects children from all forms of malnutrition.

Comprehensive approach needed to address food insecurity

Princess Basma said food insecurity could not be addressed through food interventions alone, stressing the need to tackle water scarcity and climate change, improve livelihoods and social protection, and strengthen women's economic participation.

In the presence of Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) Executive Director Farah Daghestani, she highlighted the role of rural women, families and young people in villages, remote areas and refugee camps as partners in strengthening food security.

She said Jordan had turned scarcity into an incentive to seek more effective solutions and could apply the same approach to food security.

Princess Basma also underscored the importance of raising public awareness, correcting misconceptions about nutrition, encouraging healthy food choices and building food systems capable of providing safe, sufficient and nutritious food for all.

Agriculture Minister and Higher Council for Food Security Vice President Saeb Khreisat, said the positive indicators highlighted in the report presented a responsibility to take more proactive measures to maintain progress and prepare for future challenges, ensuring everyone's right to safe, sufficient and nutritious food.

Jordan is considered food-secure in terms of food availability, safety and accessibility, he said, attributing the results to coordinated efforts by national public and private institutions, international partners, agricultural workers and exporters.

Khreisat also highlighted the contribution of rural women to food security, noting Jordan's participation in specialised international forums, including the recent World Food Forum held at the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) headquarters in Rome.

He said 2026 had been designated the Year of Women Farmers in Jordan, in recognition of the role of rural women in strengthening food security.

The agricultural sector recorded the highest growth rate among economic sectors in the second quarter of this year, expanding by 7.8 per cent and contributing 4.5 per cent to gross domestic product, Khreisat said.

He attributed the performance to continued Royal directives to the government to strengthen and sustain supply chains and ensure food security under all circumstances.

Khreisat also pointed to the potential of Jordan's date sector, noting that national date exports generate around $90 million annually.

The sector provides approximately 12,000 jobs, including around 5,000 held by women, he said, referring to the ongoing Jordanian Dates Festival.

World Food Programme (WFP) Representative and Country Director in Jordan Antonella D'Aprile, commended Jordan's food security policies and efforts to ensure that individuals and families have access to food.

However, geopolitical challenges facing the world and the region continue to pose a serious threat to food security in many countries, she said.

FAO Representative in Jordan Thaer Yassin, said the report showed that the world remained off track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2, which aims to end hunger by 2030.

Rising food prices remain among the main factors affecting individuals' and families' ability to access healthy, nutritious and affordable diets, he said.

Yassin said Jordan had made notable progress in several food security and nutrition indicators, with the prevalence of undernourishment declining to 12.2 per cent from 17.9 per cent in previous years.

Jordan had also maintained a low child wasting rate of 2.3 per cent, while the share of the population unable to afford a healthy diet had fallen to 2.2 per cent, he added.

These results reflected sustained national efforts to strengthen food security and improve dietary and health outcomes, Yassin said, reaffirming the FAO's support for the government's national priorities, particularly the Economic Modernisation Vision.

The vision recognises agriculture's central role in driving economic growth, creating jobs, strengthening food security and promoting innovation and sustainability, he said.

NAJMA Secretary General Fadel Zoubi, said the report highlighted positive developments reflecting accumulated national policies, institutional coordination and continued support.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World is a major international reference providing global food security indicators. It is jointly produced by several international organisations, including the FAO, WFP, World Health Organisation, UNICEF and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

The report serves as a key reference for governments, multilateral institutions and researchers in monitoring progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 2 and related targets.

# Police arrest 172 suspects in 108 crystal meth cases

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — The Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) announced on Wednesday the arrest of 172 suspects in 108 cases related to Crystal meth trafficking and dealing in various parts of the Kingdom, according to official sources.

The arrests came during the fifteenth 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 58 suspects in 40 cases related to trafficking, smuggling, promotion, and the use of Crystal meth," Police Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Amer Sartawi said.

Meanwhile, 114 suspects were arrested in 68 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 the illicit substance.

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

Sartawi stressed in a press statement 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 Public Security Directorate (PSD) statement added.

# 'Non-Jordanian property purchases reach JD186.6m by October'

AMMAN (JT) — The value of real estate purchases by non-Jordanians reached JD186.6 million during the first 10 months of 2026, covering 1,952 transactions, according to the Department of Lands and Survey.



JT file

The Department of Lands and Survey says that the value of real estate purchases by non-Jordanians reached JD186.6 million during the first 10 months of 2026

The transactions included 1,232 apartments worth JD108.5 million, accounting for 58 per cent of the total value, and 720 plots of land valued at JD78.1 million, representing the remaining 42 per cent, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

Iraqi nationals topped the list with 463 properties, followed by Saudis with 252, Syrians with 228, Palestinians with 181 and Americans with 162.

In terms of value, Iraqi buyers ranked first with JD75.7 million, accounting for 41 per cent of total purchases by non-Jordanians. Americans came second with JD14.9 million, or 8 per cent, followed by Palestinians with JD12.8 million (6.86 per cent), Syrians with JD12.77 million (6.84 per cent), British nationals with JD10.3 million (5.5 per cent) and Saudis with JD9.5 million (5 per cent).

In October, non-Jordanians purchased 216 properties worth JD18.3 million. These included 127 apartments valued at JD12 million, accounting for 66 per cent of the total, and 89 plots of land worth JD6.2 million, or 34 per cent.

Iraqi nationals again topped the monthly figures, purchasing 47 properties worth JD5.5 million, or 30 per cent of the total value. Saudis followed with 33 properties worth JD1.7 million (9 per cent), Syrians with 18 properties worth JD1.09 million (6 per cent), Palestinians with 18 properties worth JD1.06 million (5.6 per cent) and Americans with 15 properties worth JD2.3 million (13 per cent).

The value of non-Jordanian property purchases increased by 9.1 per cent compared with JD171 million during the same period in 2025, despite the number of transactions declining by 2.7 per cent from 2,006.

In October, the value of purchases by non-Jordanians fell by 32.7 per cent year-on-year from JD27.1 million, while the number of transactions dropped by 16 per cent from 257.

Total real estate trading volume across the Kingdom reached JD5.712 billion during the first 10 months of 2026, including JD601.8 million in October. Department revenues amounted to JD234.3 million during the 10-month period, including JD23.5 million in October.

The number of properties sold across the Kingdom reached 118,235 during the first 10 months of the year, including 12,768 in October, while corporate purchases totalled 9,123 properties.

# AT A GLANCE

## Hassan congratulates Zawahreh on historic Youth Olympic gold



AMMAN (JT) — Prime Minister Jafar Hassan on Wednesday congratulated Jordanian taekwondo player Abdullah Zawahreh on winning a gold medal at the Youth Olympic Games, becoming the first Jordanian athlete to claim gold at the competition. In an Instagram post, Hassan said Jordanian sport continues to achieve success at international sporting events and congratulated Zawahreh on his accomplishment. Zawahreh expressed pride in winning the gold medal and raising the Jordanian flag, saying the achievement would motivate him to continue training and pursue further success.

## JAF recovers body of Jordanian swept away by Dead Sea flash floods



AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF) on Wednesday evacuated the body of 40-year-old Jordanian citizen Hammad Khalil Balawi from the western bank of the Dead Sea, following a two-week search. Balawi went missing after being swept away by flash floods in the Sweimeh area of the Southern Shouneh District around two weeks ago, according to a JAF statement. A military source said DNA testing confirmed the body's identity, adding that the evacuation was carried out in coordination with the relevant authorities and in accordance with established procedures.

## Jordan, Canada hold second round of political consultations



AMMAN (JT) — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday held the second round of political consultations with Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, co-chaired by Ministry Secretary-General Ambassador Dhaifallah Fayez and Canadian Assistant Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Middle East, Maghreb, Europe and Arctic Alexandre Lévêque. Held at the ministry's headquarters, the consultations focused on strengthening bilateral relations and expanding cooperation across sectors, as well as on regional and international developments and issues of mutual concern, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

## 4.7-magnitude earthquake recorded in Gulf of Aqaba — JSO

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Seismological Observatory (JSO) on Wednesday recorded a 4.7-magnitude earthquake in the Gulf of Aqaba, which was felt by residents of Aqaba. The earthquake struck at 12:24pm local time, with its epicentre in the sea south of Aqaba, at a depth of 10 kilometres, the observatory told Al Mamlaka TV. The epicentre was approximately 38 kilometres south of Aqaba, the JSO added.




AFP photo

**UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres delivers a speech during the High-Level Segment for Heads of States and Government at the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference at the Antalya Expo Center in Antalya on Wednesday**

# UN chief urges world leaders to tackle fossil fuels at COP31

ANTALYA, Turkey (AFP) — UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres railed against the oil and gas lobby on Wednesday, telling world leaders fossil fuels "must go the way of the dinosaurs" at a climate summit missing several prominent figures.

The two-week COP31 talks kicked off in Turkey this week with governments under pressure to tackle climate change after a year of searing heatwaves and wildfires in Europe, and deadly floods in Nepal.

"The brutal truth is that the climate crisis is outrunning us," Guterres told dozens of world leaders assembled in the Mediterranean city of Antalya for two days of speeches by heads of state and government.

But few major breakthroughs are anticipated at the COP31 negotiations, which run until November 20, as countries grapple with an oil price shock and geopolitical tensions fuelled by the US war with Iran and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Since agreeing in 2023 for the first time to transition away from fossil fuels — the main driver of climate change — nations have struggled to advance that goal at the annual UN conferences.

"Fossil fuels must go the way of the dinosaurs, but that won't happen on its own. The dinosaurs did not have a lobby, but fossil fuels do," Guterres said, urging governments to tax the windfall profits of oil companies.

"Their strategy is simple: Distort the science. Delay the policy. Delay the action. Delay the accountability. It's time to kick the habit — and end the fossil fuel addiction," he said to sustained applause.

### Leaders missing

Guterres, who has made the climate change fight a central issue since taking office in 2017, is attending his last COP before his term ends in December.

Some big names are missing at COP31, with British Prime Minister Andy Burnham the only leader from a G7 country scheduled to address the summit.

"Since the start of this year, climate change has disappeared from speeches and documents from our global leadership," recently reelected Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva told fellow leaders.

"We've turned to talking more about arms and tariffs than the survival of future generations," he said.

Climate campaigners breathed a huge sigh of relief when Lula, who has overseen a dramatic drop in de-forestation in the Amazon, defeated right-wing rival Flavio Bolsonaro in last month's presidential election.

"Brazil is back to defend the continuity of a healthy planet," Lula said.

While European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen is coming to Antalya, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni are staying away. COP31 coincides with an EU leaders' summit in Ireland on Thursday.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Japanese counterpart Sanae Takaichi are also absent from the most recent list.

Unsurprisingly, President Donald Trump, who pulled the United States out of the Paris Agreement and has not sent officials to climate talks since his reelection in 2024, is not attending the summit.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, who rarely attends COPs, will be represented by Vice President Han Zheng. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also absent.

The United States and China are the world's top economies and biggest emitters of planet-heating emissions.

### Low expectations

"It is a shame that some of the bigger European leaders aren't coming. We need Europe to be showing up strongly at this COP," Cosima Cassel, a climate diplomacy expert at think-tank E3G, told AFP.

Wopke Hoekstra, the EU's top climate official, said the absences were "not completely atypical" as leaders may have "practical" reasons for not being able to attend a summit.

But he also told reporters in Brussels that "expectations are not necessarily high" for this climate conference.

COP31 host Turkey is championing a voluntary initiative to accelerate the electrification of transport, buildings and industry, with a target of raising electricity's share of global energy consumption to 35 per cent by 2035.

The EU has stressed that electrification must be "clean", which could spark debate over the role of oil, gas and coal in the Turkish proposal.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the world needs a "fair" energy transition that "takes into account the energy security and different development needs of different countries".

# More than one million in Lebanon face acute food insecurity, UN says



AFP photo

**Displaced people in Lebanon face shrinking access to shelter, protection and the possibility of return**

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AFP) — More than one million people in Lebanon face acute food insecurity, the United Nations warned on Wednesday, following years of war and economic crisis.

Lebanon has endured two successive wars with neighbouring Israel since 2023 and remains mired in an unprecedented economic collapse triggered seven years ago.

Nearly a quarter of the population face crisis levels of acute food insecurity or worse, said a joint statement by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, the World Food Programme and the Lebanese agriculture ministry.

They called for "urgent action" to alleviate the situation.

The number is expected to rise to 1.15 million by the middle of next year, they added.

"Employment opportunities remain limited, savings have been depleted and debt remains high, while the cost of food, fuel and other essentials continues to strain household budgets," the UN bodies said.

The UN defines such levels of food insecurity as households facing malnutrition, or only being able to meet minimum needs through emergency measures such as selling assets.

Of most concern are conditions in conflict-affected areas of south Lebanon, as well as in impoverished regions in the north and east, they said.

Lebanon's authorities estimate that the cost of two wars between Israel and Lebanese militant group Hizbollah since October 2023 amounts to around $27 billion.

The last war, launched in March in support of Hizbollah's patron Iran, displaced more than one million people in Lebanon. That number has fallen to around 300,000 since violence subsided in June.

The fighting broke out as Lebanon struggled to recover from its worst ever economic crisis, which began in 2019.

Beirut has been seeking a bailout from the International Monetary Fund but has yet to implement reforms demanded by the institution to release the aid.

# General strike over housing hits Spain ahead of election



AFP photo

**Police stand in the Gran Via during a nationwide general strike over the country's housing crisis, with workers also demanding greater purchasing power ahead of a snap general election at the end of the month, in Madrid on Wednesday**

MADRID (AFP) — Protesters disrupted the morning commute for hundreds of thousands of Spaniards on Wednesday as a general strike centred on the country's chronic housing crisis began weeks before a snap election.

Unions reported a "massive" early uptake in Spain's first nationwide 24-hour stoppage since 2012, which also aims to raise pressure on wages and public services, but business leaders played down the participation.

The size of demonstrations planned in Madrid and Barcelona will be seen as an indicator of public discontent before the November 29 vote, which the right-wing opposition is predicted to win.

The impact on industry and services in the European Union's fourth-largest economy will also be scrutinised, as pickets were organised at logistics centres, industrial estates and on motorways across the country.

In Madrid, dozens of protesters braved the rain and blocked a main road leading into the centre of the Spanish capital, causing tailbacks, but many shops opened as normal.

Public transport suffered disruption even with the implementation of minimum service requirements for commuter trains, metros and buses.

In Barcelona, the metro and bus networks were out of action until the late afternoon after offering minimum services during the morning rush hour.

In contrast, Madrid's metro reported that 93 per cent of its trains ran in the early morning, although passenger numbers were down by around half.

UGT union leader Pepe Alvarez told public broadcaster RTVE that the participation was "massive", with a "total" stoppage in some regions making the strike "a huge success".

But UGT spokesman Rafael Espartero acknowledged participation was "uneven", with large mobilisation in the car manufacturing, petrochemicals and meat sectors and in coastal regions, where he said housing difficulties were acute.

The CEOE organisation, which represents business leaders, said in a statement that the impact varied by region and area of work, with a "low participation" in most sectors.

### Politicians 'must listen'

The main UGT and CCOO unions called the strike following a wave of nationwide protests over access to housing, sparked by the eviction in September of an 87-year-old Madrid pensioner.

The demonstrations included a five-week occupation of Madrid's central Puerta del Sol square, where hundreds of tents were pitched, sparking imitations in other cities.

Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez called the election, initially scheduled for 2027, after his minority government failed to secure parliamentary approval for a package of housing measures proposed in response to the protests.

Sanchez, who has governed since 2018 but trails in most polls, has urged voters to defend hard-won rights including public healthcare, the eight-hour working day and pensions amid warnings from his Socialists that the right could roll them back.

# US envoys to meet Putin, Zelensky after war talks in Abu Dhabi



AFP photo

**People gather on a beach witha view of the Abu Dhabi skyline, on Tuesday. A first day of US-led talks between Ukraine and Russia in Abu Dhabi ended on Tuesday**

ABU DHABI (AFP) — US envoys will meet separately with Russia's Vladimir Putin and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky on Thursday as they seek to seize "openings" from two days of talks in Abu Dhabi on ending the Ukraine war.

Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner will travel first to Moscow to meet the Russian president, before flying to Dublin — where Zelensky will attend European meetings — to debrief the Ukrainian leader.

The countries agreed in Abu Dhabi to a major prisoner exchange — the "biggest" ever, according to Kushner — though no side gave any figures.

But the talks — the first since February, when the US war in Iran halted diplomacy — also revealed deep splits over the role Europe should play in future talks.

All sides talked up progress and said talks would continue, though Ukraine's top negotiator Rustem Umerov said "significant differences remain".

Kushner said the meeting with Putin would "go over what was discussed today and try to make more progress on some of the issues that we discussed because we see some openings and some opportunities".

With Zelensky, the pair will "further explore some of the ideas that we came up with here today".

Umerov said that there was "still a lot of difficult work ahead, but there are opportunities to continue the negotiation process".

Russia's delegation chief Vladimir Medinsky told reporters the "discussion will certainly continue".

But he questioned including Europe in the talks.

"We don't really understand what there is to talk about with them. We have not received a single peace initiative, not one concrete proposal from the European countries," he said.

Ukraine wants more involvement from its key European backers.

Kushner said seeking ways to "get the Europeans added to the format" would be on the agenda with Putin.

Officials from Britain, France, Germany and Italy, as well as NATO and the European Union travelled to Abu Dhabi for meetings on the sidelines.

### Five years of war

Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed since Russia invaded in February 2022, in what has become Europe's worst conflict since World War II.

Millions more have fled the fighting in eastern and southern Ukraine, large swathes of which have been destroyed by relentless aerial bombardments.

Russia is demanding Ukraine withdraw from parts of eastern Ukraine it still controls, and wants a sweeping deal on "Europe's security architecture" as part of any agreement to halt the war.

That is widely seen as a reference to Moscow's long-standing demands to push back the NATO military alliance in eastern Europe, and end Western military support to Kyiv.

Kyiv says a ceasefire must come before any discussions on territory and has called for a direct meeting between Zelensky and Putin to discuss the biggest issues.

Putin has ruled that out. The Kremlin has flippantly invited Zelensky to Moscow if he wants to meet the ex-KGB spy.

### European security

Kushner said the talks had helped, but declined to say on what areas the two sides may be able to agree.

"Some areas we see places where we can find compromises, others we need to have more discussions, but I think this was a good first step," he told reporters.

He also urged Europe to "identify one person to speak on their behalf" in the negotiations.

Europe has been rattled by US President Donald Trump's proposal for a deal with Russia on rewriting European post-war security, worrying that Washington will force Kyiv to accept a peace that heavily rewards Moscow.



AFP photo

US Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) speaks during a press conference after House Republicans elected new leadership for the upcoming session of Congress at the US Capitol on Monday

# US Republicans derail bid to impeach Pentagon chief

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — Republicans in the US House of Representatives on Tuesday blocked an effort to impeach Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth over the Iran war, handing President Donald Trump a victory days after his party's crushing midterm election defeat.

The House voted 211 to 204 to send the impeachment resolution to the Judiciary Committee, effectively derailing a planned vote on Wednesday on whether to bring formal charges against the embattled Pentagon chief.

The resolution was introduced by Republican Thomas Massie, a Trump critic who was the only member of his party to oppose the procedural manoeuvre, according to US media.

The impeachment drive had threatened to deepen Trump's troubles after Democrats swept last week's midterms, with anger at the sputtering Iran war and soaring fuel prices helping drive voters to a historic rejection of Republicans.

Republicans still hold a narrow House majority until January, when Democrats take control of both chambers of Congress. And 11 Democrats missed the vote.

Trump hailed the procedural defeat as an "EXONERATION of a Great American Patriot", in a post on Truth Social, while Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell, in a post on X, called the vote as a "TOTAL VICTORY!"

"We look forward to ending this sham impeachment in the committee room, where facts will continue to prevail and this distraction can be put to rest," Parnell added.

Hegseth earlier Tuesday dismissed the impeachment effort as a "farce" and defended his record leading the Iran war and other military operations under Trump.

"It's a farce, and it's a stunt, and everybody knows it," he said at a Pentagon press conference, branding the accusations "slander" and "sabotage".

Moments after Hegseth's televised appearance, Trump signalled his support.

"Pete Hegseth gets an 'A' PLUS, PLUS, PLUS," the 80-year-old president wrote on his Truth Social platform.

Vice President JD Vance also backed the defense secretary, saying he had "obviously not" committed impeachable offences.

**'Would do it again'**

Massie's eight articles of impeachment accused Hegseth of illegally waging war without congressional authorisation and abusing his powers as Pentagon chief.

Several related to the eight-month Iran war, accusing him of violating the War Powers Resolution, which places limits on US military interventions without congressional authorisation.

Other allegations involved the 2025 conflict with Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis and strikes on alleged drug-smuggling boats in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific, which Massie branded "extrajudicial killings".

# Iran says tanker struck mine, caught fire in Hormuz

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's army said on Wednesday that an oil tanker had struck a mine and caught fire in the Strait of Hormuz, where the country has been targeting ships that transit without its authorisation.

Since the outbreak of the Middle East war in late February, Tehran has heavily restricted traffic through the strategic waterway, insisting vessels use routes authorised by the Islamic republic.

The United States has in response imposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports and helped tankers travel the strait, which normally carries about one-fifth of global oil.

The American military recently claimed all mines had been cleared from the strait.

"Early this morning, a violating oil tanker caught fire after striking a naval mine in an unsafe, prohibited area in the east of the Strait of Hormuz," the naval forces of Iran's army said in a statement carried by state TV.

In recent weeks Tehran has made multiple announcements saying ships had caught fire in the strait, often claiming they struck mines.

US Central Command, which oversees US military operations in the region, has been escorting ships through the waterway and said last month that it had helped Gulf countries export 1.5 billion barrels of oil via Hormuz since the summer.

On Tuesday, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said three oil tankers had caught fire in Hormuz.

India's shipping minister later said a Liberia-flagged tanker carrying Indian seafarers had been hit by a projectile in the Gulf.

"Four crew members were injured in the attack, including one Indian national, who suffered minor injuries and was safely taken ashore for further medical examination," Sarbananda Sonowal said in a post on X.

The remaining 18 crew members, including five Indians, were safe, he added.

It was not clear if the tanker was among those the Revolutionary Guards said had been hit.



AFP photo

An Iranian woman takes part in a military course for volunteers at 'Janfada' (Sacrifice for the Homeland) training camp set up for women at the Azadi Square in Tehran on Monday

# Drone attack sparks fire at major Russian oil port- governor

MOSCOW (AFP) — A drone attack sparked a fire at Russia's Ust-Luga, a key Baltic port for oil exports, the regional governor said on Wednesday.

"A UAV attack hit the port area of Ust-Luga, causing a fire," Leningrad regional Governor Aleksandr Drozdenko posted on Telegram, referring to one of Russia's most important western oil hubs that has been repeatedly attacked by Ukraine.

Teams were working to extinguish the fire, he added.

Fighting has continued while the warring sides are meeting in the Emirati capital this week for US-mediated talks aimed at progressing towards the end of Europe's worst conflict since World War II.

Russian air defences downed 146 drones during "continuing" combat operations in Leningrad overnight, Drozdenko said in a separate post.

Around 18 flights were cancelled or delayed at the region's main Pulkovo Airport near Saint Petersburg, according to state news agency TASS.

Ukraine has intensified its drone attacks on Russia's energy industry over the past 18 months, seeking to cut the Kremlin's revenues and undermine its ability to finance the war.

Ukraine says Russia is targeting its own energy grid with aerial barrages, leaving residents across the country without power as temperatures plunge ahead of winter.



AFP photo

A photograph shows the wreckage of a car following an overnight attack in central Donetskwhich local Russian-installed officials called a Ukrainian drone strike, on Monday

# Jordan-EU Conference to highlight major investment opportunities in energy sector

Continued from page 1

Other investment opportunities include a 200 MW solar power project integrated with a battery energy storage system capable of providing 100 MW for four hours, as well as a proposed 100 MW wind power project.

In the natural gas sector, opportunities include developing infrastructure to process and transport locally produced gas in the Risha area, alongside expanding natural gas services through a city gas project targeting households and businesses in Amman and Zarqa.

The initiative forms part of broader efforts to strengthen Jordan's energy infrastructure and expand access to cleaner energy sources.

Meanwhile, Aqaba is seeking to position itself as a regional gateway for green hydrogen and green ammonia, linking Jordan's renewable energy resources with international export markets, the ministry said, adding that the initiative is expected to create investment opportunities in clean fuel production and the development of supporting infrastructure.

The conference will bring together project developers, investors and financial institutions to discuss available opportunities, assess technical and financial requirements, and explore partnerships that draw on European expertise in advanced energy technologies.

The range of projects reflects Jordan's broader ambition to establish itself as a regional hub for clean energy while attracting investment to modernise its energy sector, facilitate technology transfer, create employment opportunities and strengthen the skills and capabilities of Jordanian professionals, according to the statement.

> The projects include gas, hydropower, wind energy, green hydrogen, battery energy storage and solar power...

The government has recently said that a portfolio of investment opportunities worth nearly $15 billion has been prepared for the upcoming Jordanian-European Investment Conference, as the Kingdom seeks to turn its partnership with the European Union into concrete projects, attract foreign capital and support job creation and the priorities of its Economic Modernisation Vision.

The portfolio, covering 15 sectors and subsectors, will be presented to European investors at the conference at the King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre at the Dead Sea.

The largest share of the proposed investment opportunities is concentrated in energy and mining, with 10 projects valued at about $7.1 billion (6.2 billion euro), Al Mamlaka said, citing estimates from the Ministry of Investment.

The projects include gas, hydropower, wind energy, green hydrogen, battery energy storage and solar power, as well as opportunities involving rare earth elements, silica sand and basalt.

Transport projects account for another $3.56 billion (3.1 billion euros), covering light rail and the national railway.

Four logistics projects are valued at approximately $1.61 billion (1.4 billion euros). They include the Jaber Border Centre, Al Madouna Logistics Centre, Maan Dry Port and Mafraq Development Zone.

Jordan is also presenting three tourism projects worth around $1.08 billion (940 million euros), including Amrah Entertainment City, the Abdali Conference Centre and the Aqaba Youth Camp, according to Al Mamlaka.

The portfolio includes a further $442 million (385 million euros) in water-sector opportunities and nine projects worth about $265 million (231 million euros) in industry and the circular economy. These include manufacturing, electric vehicle assembly, phosphate chemicals, agriculture and clean technology.

# King listens to Parliament's response to Speech from the Throne

Continued from page 1

Tarawneh affirmed that the House would begin reviewing legislation relating to community security and examining the necessary amendments to help strengthen the capacity of state institutions to combat terrorism and extremism, and to consolidate a framework of intellectual and moral immunity.

He added that they will work on legislation to expand employment and production opportunities and empower young people and women, so that its impact is felt throughout the country.

Tarawneh emphasised the House of Representatives' commitment to safeguarding public freedoms and protecting the constitutional right to freedom of expression, and to reviewing any legislation relating to this right in a way that strikes a balance between citizens' freedoms, the protection of society, and the rule of law.

Their Royal Highnesses Prince Feisal, Prince Hashim, and Prince Rashid, HH Prince Mired, chief royal councillor at the Royal Hashemite Court, Prime Minister Jafar Hassan, and senior officials attended Parliament's response to the Speech from the Throne.

# King chairs meeting to review energy infrastructure projects

Continued from page 1

The King called for strengthening private sector partnerships to drive investment, speed up energy project implementation, and spur economic growth.

HRH Prince Feisal, Prime Minister Jafar Hassan, Director of the Office of His Majesty Alaa Batayneh, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Saleh Kharabsheh, and Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh attended the meeting.

# Verdict expected Sunday in trial over deadly Karak church attack — lawyer

Continued from page 1

On Wednesday, the SSC prosecutor rested its case during a court hearing, the victims' lawyer Amer Halaseh told The Jordan Times.

The court also heard several witnesses, including security personnel, who testified for the prosecution, Halaseh said.

"The defendants did not present any witnesses, and, therefore, the SSC judges decided to adjourn the session until Sunday, when the tribunal is expected to issue a verdict in the case," Halaseh added.

Earlier this month, the five suspects were informed of the charges and were assigned lawyers as stipulated by law during their first court hearing, according to Halaseh.

"The court hearings since the start of the trial went smoothly and in accordance with the law," Halaseh said.

Three of the five suspects who are standing trial for terror-related charges are being tried via video communication technology.

Meanwhile, the two remaining defendants are standing trial for allegedly selling the weapons the defendants used in the attack.

The trial commenced following the conclusion of the investigations by SSC Prosecutor Brig. Gen. Ahmad Shahltough.

The prosecutor had said in a statement earlier this month 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 charges against the defendants under the Anti-Terrorism Law of 2006 and the Penal Code of 1960.

The charges include nine counts of complicity in committing terrorist acts resulting in death, complicity in committing terrorist acts using weapons and ammunition, and complicity in possessing weapons and ammunition with the intent to use them in terrorist acts.

The prosecutor also charged the defendants with conspiracy to commit terrorist acts using weapons, promoting the ideology of a terrorist group and committing acts likely to disrupt public order and endanger public safety and security.

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# Amman Stock Exchange: Growth and the road ahead

**By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal**

The performance of companies listed on the Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) during the first nine months of 2026 reflects an improvement in market activity, corporate profitability and market capitalisation. However, a closer economic assessment requires looking beyond the headline figures to examine the sustainability of this growth and its relationship with the underlying performance of companies and the wider economy.

After-tax profits attributable to shareholders increased by 4.8 per cent, reaching JD1.776 billion, compared with JD1.695 billion during the same period in 2025. Meanwhile, pre-tax profits rose by 5 per cent to JD2.474 billion. These figures indicate an improvement in corporate profitability, although the growth rate remains relatively moderate and should be assessed against economic growth, inflation, financing costs and developments in domestic demand.

One of the most notable findings is the variation in profitability across economic sectors. After-tax profits in the services sector increased by 66 per cent, while the financial sector recorded growth of 4.7 per cent. In contrast, industrial sector profits declined by 9.6 per cent. This divergence deserves particular attention. The industrial sector plays a central role in domestic production, exports, employment and economic competitiveness. Therefore, understanding the reasons behind this decline is important, particularly in relation to production costs, domestic demand, financing conditions and external competition.

Market indicators, meanwhile, recorded stronger performance. The ASE General Index increased by 14 per cent since the beginning of the year, reaching 4,117.3 points. The ASE20 Index rose by 12.3 per cent, while the Total Return Index increased by 18.2 per cent. Trading activity also strengthened considerably, with total trading volume increasing by 55.8 per cent. Average daily trading value reached JD13.4 million, compared with JD8.8 million during the corresponding period of 2025. Market capitalisation also increased by 9.1 per cent to JD28.9 billion.

These developments point to improving investor interest and greater market activity. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish between rising share prices and improvements in the underlying financial performance of listed companies. The difference between the growth in corporate profits and the stronger performance of market indices raises questions about market valuations, investor expectations and the sustainability of current price movements.

Another positive development is the 99 per cent compliance rate among listed companies in submitting their reviewed interim financial statements through the electronic disclosure system. This represents an important institutional achievement in strengthening transparency, corporate governance and investor confidence. Timely and reliable financial disclosure is essential for improving market efficiency and supporting informed investment decisions.

These results are particularly significant in the context of Jordan's ambition to upgrade the ASE from frontier market status to emerging market status. Achieving this objective, however, requires more than improvements in market indices and corporate profitability. It demands deeper market liquidity, a larger investable market capitalisation, higher free-float ratios, a broader base of listed companies, greater participation by foreign institutional investors and more efficient trading, clearing and settlement systems.

The improvement in ASE performance provides a positive foundation for further market development. The real challenge is to transform this momentum into sustainable growth and stronger market fundamentals. A well-developed stock market should not merely reflect economic performance; it should also contribute to economic growth by mobilising savings, attracting investment and directing financial resources towards productive activities.

# The $1 million question: How to turn depreciated humanitarian assets into opportunities?

For decades, Jordan has generously provided refuge to people fleeing conflict and insecurity.

To respond to the influx of Syrian refugees after the dramatic events of 2011, Jordan established camps to provide families with safety and shelter.

In Zaatari Camp, established in 2012, after living in tents, shelter transformed into prefabricated shelters or what we like to call it "caravans" which became the primary form of shelter, while in Azraq, established in 2014, families were accommodated in shelters constructed largely from metal sheets.

Over the years, these shelters became more than physical structures: They became homes, communities and a significant part of the infrastructure of prolonged displacement.

For many years, shelters in Jordan's refugee camps served their primary purpose: Providing families with a degree of stability during displacement.

As refugee returns to Syria increased after the fall of Asad government in December 2024, a new question emerged: What should happen to these assets when families no longer need them?



Ziad Ayoubi

In this case, it was not about creating a new programme, but about making a policy shift that ultimately transformed people's lives. It took coordination, practical problem-solving and a willingness to put refugees' needs at the centre of the solution

This question led to an initiative that has now reached an important milestone: $1 million in revenues generated for refugees directly through the sale of shelters in Zaatari and Azraq camps.

The significance of this milestone goes beyond the financial value.

It demonstrates how operational challenges can be transformed into an opportunity through innovation, systems thinking, partnership and a people-centred approach.

### From an operational challenge to a structured solution

As returns increased, caravan dismantling was done by humanitarian actors, but informal sale became increasingly common.

In Zaatari, caravans were being dismantled and sold through informal channels, while in Azraq, where shelter structures differ, dismantling mainly was done by UNHCR and other humanitarian actors.

Refugees wanted to make use of assets that had been part of their lives for many years.

Companies saw potential commercial value in caravans and their components.

The Government of Jordan needed to ensure that camp regulations and asset management requirements were respected.

UNHCR, meanwhile, needed to consider protection, accountability, voluntary returns and responsible asset management. All this was not possible and the situation looked complex.

The informal market was not providing an adequate solution. It created risks of exploitation, conflict with the law and unfavorable prices for refugees.

The response of simply to try to prevent the practice of informal sale proved to be insufficient, and there was a need to think how the existing market could be structured in a way that was more transparent, predictable and protective. UNHCR and the Government of Jordan managed to do that.

This marked an important shift from managing a problem to redesigning the system around it.

The initiative was laun-ched in Zaatari as a controlled pilot. UNHCR initially engaged five companies and established a dialogue involving relevant stakeholders, including the Ministry of Interior and the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate (SRAD), participating companies and refugees. The initial model, however, did not immediately produce results.

During the first month, no formal sales took place. The prices offered by the initial companies did not meet refugees' expectations, while companies raised concerns regarding the condition of some caravans, access permits and transportation costs.

Rather than treating this as a failure of the initiative, UNHCR examined the market dynamics and adjusted the approach. Among other corrective measures taken, one important measure was bringing additional companies into the process to increase competition.

Companies with stronger market engagement and closer proximity to the camps were identified. The formal market subsequently became more functional and competitive and formal sales ceased.

The lesson is broader than the caravan sale itself. Innovation does not always mean introducing a new technology or creating something entirely new.

Sometimes it means understanding how a system behaves, identifying where it is not working, and changing the incentives and relationships within that system.

### Putting refugees at the centre

At the core of the initiative was a straightforward principle: Refugees should be able to get a fair value from an asset that has been part of their lives, particularly when they are preparing to return. For a family returning to Syria after years of displacement, a caravan is more than a humanitarian asset.

It has been a home and part of their daily lives. Taking the decision to handover the ownership of the caravans to refugees wasn't easy for UNHCR given the lack of precedents.

Providing a structured mechanism through which families can sell their caravans gave them greater agency over what happens to that asset. It also reduced their reliance on informal intermediaries and markets where they may have limited bargaining power.

This required more than establishing a list of companies. UNHCR maintained regular monitoring and communication with refugees, companies, SRAD and humanitarian actors.

There was a need to convince other partners to adopt the same handover approach to make sure that latrines provided by actors working on water and sanitation can also be included in the sale.

Additional communication was introduced when refugees indicated that they needed greater clarity on how the process of selling their shelters works.

The experience illustrates an important dimension of a people-centred approach: It is not only about providing assistance; it is also about enabling people to make informed choices and exercise greater control over decisions affecting their own assets and future.

In this case, it was not about creating a new programme, but about making a policy shift that ultimately transformed people's lives.

It took coordination, practical problem-solving and a willingness to put refugees' needs at the centre of the solution. When we do that, even small changes can have a profound impact.

Not only did this solution improve outcomes for refugees, it came at virtually no additional cost. In fact, it reduced operational expenses.

Had the caravans remained unused, UNHCR would have needed to allocate space to store them and cover the associated logistics and storage costs.

Instead, a simple policy change turned an idle asset into an opportunity for refugees while generating savings for the operation.

### Supporting voluntary return

The initiative also demonstrates how asset management can contribute directly to solutions.

For returning families, the sale of a shelter provides an additional source of financial value at a significant moment of transition.

For those who are not planning to return immediately, we have also observed greater investment in the care and maintenance of their caravans, as families seek to preserve their value and secure a better price when they eventually decide to sell

It allows families to monetise an asset before leaving the camp and potentially use those resources to finance their return journey or as they reestablish their lives following return.

In this sense, the initiative connects two areas that are often considered separately: The management of humanitarian assets and support for voluntary return.

The shelter does not simply become an obsolete humanitarian asset when a family leaves.

Its remaining value can become part of that family's transition to the next stage of their life.

For those who are not planning to return immediately, we have also observed greater investment in the care and maintenance of their caravans, as families seek to preserve their value and secure a better price when they eventually decide to sell.

This represents an additional, unintended positive outcome of the initiative, encouraging better preservation of the assets even among those who choose to remain for the time being.

### A more responsible approach to the environment

There is also an important environmental dimension. After years of use, large numbers of caravans and their components represent a substantial stock of materials.

Without a structured mechanism, these materials can be dismantled informally, sold through unregulated channels or treated simply as scrap.

A functioning market creates incentives to recover and retain value.

Companies can assess caravans and their components according to their potential for reuse, refurbishment and material recovery.

The experience showed that once market conditions and competition improved, companies were willing to assign greater value to the caravans.

This offers a different way of thinking about humanitarian assets.

The end of an asset's primary humanitarian use does not necessarily have to mean the end of its useful life.

A responsible asset lifecycle can include reuse, recovery, recycling and value creation, while reducing the incentives for unmanaged dismantling and informal disposal.

### From Zaatari to Azraq

The initiative was designed as a pilot in Zaatari, allowing UNHCR and its partners to test the approach, identify challenges and adapt the model.

The experience subsequently informed the expansion to Azraq, where the physical characteristics of the shelters and the market dynamics are different.

Preparatory work included engagement with SRAD and potential companies, with the intention of establishing a similar structured mechanism adapted to the Azraq context.

The objective was not simply to replicate a process. It was to apply a methodology that proved its success in Zaatari: Understand the problem, engage the people affected, test the market, monitor results, adapt the approach and scale what works.

It was obvious that the model is relevant to Azraq as well, with a lot of differences, which is normal.

One of the main differences was the lower market value of the shelter.

### The $1 million

The $1 million milestone is significant.

It represents real financial value generated for refugees and demonstrates that a structured approach can produce tangible results.

But the more important question is what the initiative represents.It represents refugee agency: Families having an opportunity to determine what happens to an asset that has been part of their lives.

It represents protection: Reducing dependence on informal markets and limiting opportunities for exploitation.

It represents systems thinking: Bringing together refugees, government authorities, humanitarian actors and the private sector around a shared solution. It represents innovation: Testing an approach, recognising when it was not working, and changing the model rather than accepting the initial outcome.

It represents support for solutions: Enabling returning families to derive financial value from an asset as they transition from displacement to return.

And it represents more responsible environmental management: Creating incentives for the reuse, recovery and productive end-of-life management of materials.

The $1 million is therefore not the end of the story. It is evidence of what can happen when a humanitarian asset is viewed as part of a wider system involving people, markets, protection, solutions, and the environment.

The real question was never simply what a caravan was worth.

It was what could be achieved by putting the decision back into the hands of the people.

The writer is UNHCR deputy representative for operations

## Gov't lists 128 investment opportunities, advances green industrial zone plans — report



Petra photo

**The Zarqa Industrial Estate, the Kingdom's largest and first green industrial city, covers 2,475 dunams, with an initial investment of JD35 million for its first phase**

AMMAN (JT) — The government has updated and listed 128 investment opportunities across various sectors and governorates on the "Invest in Jordan" platform and advanced plans to establish a green economic industrial zone under the Economic Modernisation Vision executive programme 2026–2029, according to a Prime Ministry report covering the first three quarters of 2026.

The investment promotion measures came ahead of the Jordan-Europe Investment Conference, scheduled for November 19 at the Dead Sea under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah and with the participation of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

The Ministry of Investment said the conference will showcase more than 40 investment opportunities worth over $15 billion across technology, energy, high-value industries, logistics, infrastructure and water, aiming to attract new capital and strengthen Jordan-EU investment ties.

Meanwhile, the government began assessing site readiness, conducting institutional analyses and developing governance frameworks for the proposed green economic industrial zone.

It also approved investment incentives for the Rawdah Industrial Zone in Ma'an, including three years of wage support under the Productive Branches Programme.

Land purchase price reductions in the industrial cities of Madaba, Tafileh and Salt were also extended for another three years.

The government completed the request for proposals for the South Amman water loss project, the economic feasibility study for the Mujib Dam pumped-storage energy project and bankable investment packages for the construction of 41 public schools under the Public-Private Partnership programme.

Ministry figures showed that 2,032 incentive transactions were completed, 1,438 investor cards were issued, investment exemptions were granted to 216 companies and Jordanian citizenship was awarded to 35 investors.

Other developments included drafting the Investment Funds Law, issuing instructions governing economic activity licensing in development zones, amending residency and citizenship requirements for investors and implementing plans to improve Jordan's rankings in the Foreign Direct Investment Regulatory Restrictiveness and Business Readiness (B-READY) indices.

## Gov't reports progress in implementing Economic Modernisation Vision projects

- Implementation is proceeding according to established plans and timelines
- Of the 395 projects included in 2026–2029 Executive Programme, 332 (84%) were under implementation by Q3 2026, while 34 (9%) had been completed




AMMAN — Implementation of the second executive programme of the Economic Modernisation Vision is progressing according to schedule, with 84 per cent of its projects under implementation and 9 per cent completed by the end of the third quarter of 2026, a government official said.

In remarks to The Jordan Times, Rafat Dasan, head of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit, said implementation was proceeding in line with established plans and timelines, with progress recorded across the Vision's various growth drivers.

"These results reflect continued efforts to translate the Economic Modernisation Vision into tangible outcomes. Our focus remains on monitoring implementation, addressing challenges and ensuring that projects deliver measurable economic and social impact," Dasan said.

Of the 395 projects included in the 2026-2029 Executive Programme, 332 were under implementation by the end of the third quarter, while 34 had been completed, he said.

During the quarter, the government also made 33 economic decisions, including measures to support financing for the National Water Conveyance Project, tourism businesses in Petra and investment across the governorates.

Under the Smart Jordan growth driver, Dasan said that 33 school construction projects were completed, comprising 22 newly built schools and 11 extensions to existing facilities. "Siraj, the smart learning assistant linked to data from 5,790 schools, recorded 1.349 million users, while 5,240 trainees took part in employment-oriented training programmes."

Under Future Services, the government digitised an additional 120 services, bringing the total number of digitised government services to 2,180, or 90.8 per cent of all government services. The number of digital identities activated through the SANAD application reached 3.3 million, he added.

"In the healthcare sector, an extension to Maan Public Hospital was inaugurated at a cost of nearly JD5 million, providing additional outpatient clinics and a blood bank."

In transport and logistics, seven routes were launched under the second phase of the scheduled public transport programme, connecting Amman with governorate centres and district towns. A tripartite agreement was also signed as part of the Aqaba Port Railway Project, Dasan said.

"Wholesale and retail trade contributed JD756 million to gross domestic product [GDP] in the second quarter of 2026."

He also said that the Click Business Programme, which supports e-commerce and digital marketing, signed agreements to support 18 projects, helping micro and small enterprises strengthen their marketing capabilities and reach customers in local and international markets.

"Under High Value Industries, the government adopted the National Export Strategy for 2026-2029 to help Jordanian companies expand exports, diversify their products and access new markets."

The Kingdom received 5.66 million visitors during the first nine months of 2026, generating tourism receipts of JD4.50 billion, under the Destination Jordan growth driver, Dasan said.

"Tourism sites recorded 1.93 million visits, while domestic tourism continued to expand, with approximately 202,000 people participating in the Urdonna Jannah programme."

Under Sustainable Resources, he said that progress included the launch of a one-stop platform for the National Water Conveyance Project and continued efforts to reach financial close.

"Additionally, an agreement worth $28 million was signed to improve the operational efficiency of the As-Samra Wastewater Treatment Plant and increase its treatment capacity by 45,000 cubic metres per day."

Under Green Jordan, the Kingdom advanced 23 places in the 2026 Environmental Performance Index, ranking 54th among 177 countries.

Under Vibrant Jordan, a total of 7,042 women received training through economic empowerment programmes during the quarter, bringing the number of beneficiaries in the first nine months of the year to 28,800.

The governorates hosted 462 cultural and artistic events and activities, while 36,125 people participated in activities organised by local youth centres. The 40th Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts attracted 200,000 visitors, Dasan said.

He also highlighted Jordan's improvement by five places in the 2026 Global Innovation Index, where the Kingdom ranked 60th among 139 economies, three places ahead of the position targeted for 2033 under the Economic Modernisation Vision.

Dasan reaffirmed the government's commitment to publishing regular progress reports to strengthen transparency and allow citizens and stakeholders to follow the implementation of the Vision.

"Transparency and accountability are central to our work. We are committed not only to tracking project completion but also to assessing the projects' impact on public services and economic growth, ensuring that progress under the Economic Modernisation Vision translates into tangible results for Jordan and its citizens," he said.

**ENERGY**

## JEPCO overdue receivables rise 28.5%, net profit up 8.3%

AMMAN (JT) — JEPCO's receivables from subscribers with payments overdue by more than a year rose by 28.5 per cent to JD156.1 million by the end of September 2026, compared with JD121.5 million at the end of 2025.

The company said in its financial statements that receivables overdue by more than one year accounted for 27.5 per cent of total subscriber receivables, which stood at JD567 million before deducting expected credit losses, compared with JD522.4 million in 2025, an increase of 8.5 per cent, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

Receivables overdue for between 180 and 365 days reached JD75.4 million, up from JD58.2 million, while provisions for expected credit losses rose to JD65.2 million, bringing net subscriber receivables to JD501.8 million.

Operating cash flows fell by 33.4 per cent to JD92.9 million, with changes in receivables resulting in a JD44.6 million cash outflow.

Residential subscribers accounted for JD211.3 million, or 45.4 per cent of total billed receivables of JD465.1 million.

Commercial receivables rose to JD62.6 million, while amounts owed by the armed forces increased by 60.3 per cent to JD52.7 million. Government department receivables surged by 80.2 per cent to JD42.2 million.

Receivables from electric vehicle charging services stood at JD2.03 million, while debts related to renewable energy transit reached JD785,000.

JEPCO also said that it expanded its digital transformation efforts through the integration of fibre-optic technology with smart meters. The company recorded JD3.84 million as its share of profits from a joint venture and held JD5.6 million in electronic systems under development.

Infrastructure additions amounted to JD46.4 million, bringing total assets to JD1.187 billion and liabilities to JD1.011 billion. The company also reported a working capital deficit of JD223 million, supported by credit facilities totalling JD350 million.

Net profit increased by 8.3 per cent to JD20.04 million, supported by JD13.11 million in profits from non-core activities, despite a 7.3 per cent decline in core business profits to JD14.99 million.

The decline was attributed to higher wholesale electricity purchase costs, which reached JD735.8 million.

شركة الكهرباء الأردنية المساهمة العامة المحدودة
Jordan Electric Power Company

## Tech bounce puts spring in stock markets

LONDON (AFP) — Stock markets rose on Wednesday as renewed optimism over the AI trade overshadowed forecast-topping US inflation data and the prospect of a bumper interest rate hike next month.

Wall Street's main indices opened higher with the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite climbing 1.6 per cent.

"The primary catalyst for the upside action is, ironically, one of the primary catalysts for the downside action that had been seen in the AI trade," said Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare.

"That would be CoreWeave, which posted better-than-feared third quarter results and issued a reassuring outlook that has quieted some of the debt financing concerns surrounding its AI buildout plans," he added.

The data centre operator said sales would come in at $13-$13.3 billion this year, beating estimates.

The outlook soothed worries about its ability to finance its heavy debt burden, which had fuelled a sharp sell-off last month.

Shares in CoreWeave rose more than seven per cent at the start of trading in New York.

"This relief trade is carrying across the AI trade complex to include hardware, software, and semiconductor stocks," said O'Hare.

The Philadelphia Semiconductor Index, which tracks the main players in the AI chipmaking sector, rose more than 4 per cent.

Also lifting confidence was Anthropic's filing showing it planned to raise up to $64 billion in its upcoming initial public offering, valuing it at as much as $1.4 trillion.

Its stock market debut is being seen as a gauge of how long the AI spending boom can last.

After last week's rout fuelled by fears that Democrats would ramp up regulation of AI, tech stocks have bounced this week on bargain-buying and hopes that fears may have been overdone.

Chip giant Nvidia, however, also remained in focus following the bombshell revelation of an affair between CEO Jensen Huang and a woman reportedly suspected of being a Chinese spy. The firm is now the subject of an FBI investigation.

Nvidia shares gained three per cent at the start of trading but as of Tuesday had lost more than 30 per cent from the record high set last month.

London, Paris and Frankfurt stock markets all advanced after a largely positive day in Asia.

Tokyo, Seoul and Taipei — where most of Asia's leading AI-linked firms are listed — enjoyed big gains, with Shanghai also up.

## AMMAN STOCK EXCHANGE

بورصة عمان
Amman Stock Exchange

AMMAN (JT) — Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) trading value for Wednesday amounted to JD7.0 million spread over 3.2 million shares that traded through 3,249 transactions.

The ASE share price index shed 0.03 per cent, closing at 4066.72 points.

Out of 107 companies whose shares were traded, the share price of 31 companies rose while the share price of another 30 declined.

Topping the list of the companies whose shares gained the most were Al Dawliyah for Hotels and Malls by 5 per cent, Shira Real Estate Development and Investments by 4.17 per cent, Comprehensive Land Development and Investment by 4.17 per cent, National Steel Industry by 2.7 per cent, and Shareco Brokerage Company by 2.63 per cent.

The companies whose shares dropped the most were Jordan Poultry Processing and Marketing by 4.35 per cent, Jordan Investment and Transport Company by 4.04 per cent, Specialised Jordanian Investment by 3.23 per cent, Jordan Investment Trust by 3.23 per cent, and Al-Tahdith for Real Estate Investments Company by 2.94 per cent.






**By Hadeel El Bis**

After a poor previous season, early indications for this year's olive harvest are more encouraging. Output of about 30,000 tonnes of olive oil is expected, above domestic demand of 24,000 to 25,000 tonnes a year.

With a bumper crop and a possible exportable surplus, attention is turning to prices, whether greater output will reach consumers, and the position of farmers, production costs and the sector's wider challenges.

Fayyad Al Zyoud, president of the Jordanian Association of Olive Producers and Exporters, says the season looks promising. He expects about 220,000 tonnes of olives, yielding 30,000 to 31,000 tonnes of oil against domestic needs of 24,000 to 25,000, which would leave a surplus of 4,000 to 5,000 tonnes.

That, he said, gives the local market some breathing space, reduces the need for imports and offers a chance of stable prices as the season progresses and supply grows.

By his estimate, a tin of oil, weighing 16 kilogrammes, cost JD115 to JD125 at the start of the season. He blamed late ripening and low extraction rates in the first pressings, caused by the weather and delayed fruit set. He expects yields to improve and prices to ease and settle at about JD110.

Osama Qattan, director of the olive directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture, says the ministry also expects about 30,000 tonnes against domestic demand of about 25,000. Tin prices range from JD90 to JD110, according to the olive press owners' union, and are set by supply and demand. The ministry said imports were not under consideration given the expected abundance, while exports were still being studied.

### Picking later for better oil and higher yields

Mr Zyoud attributes the low early yields to fruit that was not yet ripe enough. Some presses recorded low extraction rates at the start, against the usual 10 to 13 per cent, which varies with variety, growing conditions and ripeness.

The best time to pick depends on the aim: high-quality oil or larger quantities. A balance is struck when 60 to 70 per cent of the fruit begins turning black or purple. Green olives yield oil rich in antioxidants, but less of it, and he urged farmers not to rush. The ministry, the union and the association have all called for care over timing.

With living costs high and purchasing power weak, he advised consumers to buy what they need rather than a full year's supply at the start of the season. He expects more oil and steadier prices as picking and pressing advance.

He also called for more small containers of three, four and five litres alongside the traditional tin, so that families can buy gradually and monthly rather than bear the cost of one large purchase. Offering a wider range of sizes, he said, would let producers cater for different budgets and widen the market for local oil.

On exports, Mr Zyoud says the Gulf was the strategic backbone of Jordanian olive oil sales, with demand in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman, where its quality is trusted. Modern technology in the presses has improved quality and competitiveness, he says.

The ministry is backing domestic marketing. It has signed an agreement with the General Union of Jordanian Farmers and the Jordanian olive press owners' and producers' union to launch the 14th national olive oil marketing campaign, for 2026/27. The campaign aims to help farmers sell their produce and make Jordanian oil easier for individuals and institutions to buy, with payment in cash or by instalments over eight months, containers of 16 and eight kilogrammes, and chemical and sensory testing of all oil on sale.

### Tackling fraud and protecting consumers

Mr Zyoud pointed to tighter controls on the olive oil trade, including regulation of metal container manufacture. Containers must carry clear details, including the product or press name, its address and the registered trademark, to curb their use in fraud. Transport of oil must be covered by official invoices stating its source and recipient, and the regulatory and security authorities are monitoring social media adverts promoting adulterated oil.

He urged people to buy from known presses and producers, to be wary of offers far below market prices and to check container labels. Colour alone is no guide to quality, he warned: genuine oil can be golden or pale, and a deep green is not proof of authenticity.

The Jordan Food and Drug Administration, working with the union, has told presses to stop customers dipping bread into storage tanks, receiving vessels or containers meant for sale. A separate tasting dish should be used, with the oil poured using a clean utensil.

The circular aims to protect people with coeliac disease. Pure olive oil is naturally gluten-free, the administration said, but contact with bread or crumbs can cause cross-contamination. It is also monitoring promotional videos that show the practice and working to correct them.