

NBB honoured with volunteer service award at INJAZ Bahrain's 20th Anniversary Celebration



Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) was recently honoured during INJAZ Bahrain's 20th Anniversary event

for its ongoing support as a Longstanding Board Company and Partner. Having supported INJAZ Bahrain's mission for over eight years, NBB secured 3rd place among the top five

organisations in the Kingdom with the prestigious Volunteer Service Award, in recognition of its exceptional contributions during 2024-2025.

This accolade also celebrates

the 1,062 volunteering hours recorded collectively by NBB employees, reflecting the Bank's ethos of volunteerism and giving back to the community. As a proud supporter of INJAZ Bah-

rain's youth empowerment initiatives, NBB continues to play a vital role in upskilling young Bahrainis through active engagement in educational and entrepreneurial programmes.

The Bank remains focused on its commitment in supporting youth in Bahrain and its aspirations, while contributing further to the development of an empowered generation.

German economy in 'deepest crisis' of post-war era: industry group

Home to more than 100,000 manufacturing firms of varying sizes

● Merz has defended his government's actions

● German factory output will fall two percent in 2025

AFP | Frankfurt, Germany

Germany's economy is suffering its "deepest crisis" since the aftermath of World War II, an industry group warned Tuesday, calling on Chancellor Friedrich Merz's government to take urgent action to spark a revival.

Europe's biggest economy "is in free fall, but the federal government is not responding decisively enough," said Peter Leibinger, president of the Federation of German Industries (BDI).

Germany is facing a perfect storm: high energy costs burdening manufacturers, weak demand for its exports in key



A container ship is moored at a terminal of Europe's second largest container port in Hamburg, northern Germany

markets, the emergence of China as an industrial rival and the US tariff onslaught.

It has suffered two years of recession and is forecast to eke out only meagre growth in 2025.

The conservative Merz, who took power in May, has pledged to revive the eurozone's traditional powerhouse, including through a public spending blitz on defence and infrastructure.

But industry leaders are increasingly voicing frustration that the efforts are moving too slowly and are insufficient to tackle a host of deep-rooted problems, from chronic labour shortages to heavy bureaucratic burdens.

"The economy is experiencing its deepest crisis since the founding of the federal republic, yet the federal government is not responding with sufficient determination," said Leibinger.

"Germany now needs an economic policy turnaround with clear priorities for competitiveness and growth," he added.

Heavy regulation, little innovation

Brian Fuerderer, head and founder of German high-tech surgical equipment maker Microcore Medical, agreed with the BDI's assessment, saying the economy was being held back by overregulation and a lack of innovation.

"In Germany, entrepreneurship as such no longer really exists," he told AFP.

"The car manufacturers are no longer leaders... And I think that's where the first problem starts, that the spirit of innovation is no longer encouraged or desired."

In its latest report released Tuesday, the BDI -- an umbrella association for many industry federations -- forecast that German factory output will fall two percent in 2025, which would mark its fourth consecutive year of contraction.

Heavy industry, from car-making to producing facto-

ry equipment and steel, remains crucial to the German economy. The country is home to more than 100,000 manufacturing firms of varying sizes, employing over eight million people, according to the BDI.

But there has been a steady drumbeat of layoff announcements in recent times, particularly in the crisis-stricken auto sector, including carmaker Volkswagen and parts supplier Bosch.

Merz has defended his government's actions, saying it will take time to get the economy back on track and pointing to reforms that have been enacted, including on lowering corporate income tax and reducing industry power costs.

There is some light on the horizon. The economy is expected to start picking up speed next year, driven by the spending ramp-up, with the government forecasting 1.3 percent growth.

Some hope that the thousands of jobs being axed in the auto and other industrial sectors could be replaced by new roles in defence companies, which are hiring rapidly as European countries rearm to face the growing Russian threat.

But Hans Christoph Atzpödien, head of the BDSV defence industry association, warned that the sector's growth could only partially offset the losses at carmakers.

"Of course, the quantities involved and the ways of working are different," he told a press conference Tuesday, at an event organised by the economy and defence ministries.

"There are opportunities but it helps to be cautious about them."

Saudi powers forward with deficit spending to fund reforms

Deficit amounts to 3.3% of GDP



Guests stand at the booth of Saudi artificial intelligence company Humain during the Future Investment Initiative (FII) conference in Riyadh (file)

● Total expenditures projected at 1.313 trillion riyals

● Crude oil prices have hovered in the \$60 to \$70 per-barrel range

AFP | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia greenlit its 2026 budget yesterday, projecting a deficit of 165 billion riyals (\$44 billion) as the kingdom presses on with an ambitious spending drive to diversify its oil-dependent economy.

The Arab world's largest economy is overseeing a major push to slash its dependence on oil revenues, with officials pouring billions into projects to attract investment and tourism.

To help meet that goal in the coming year, the ministry said the state's general budget for 2026 would have total expenditures of 1.313 trillion riyals (350.1 billion dollars) and total revenues 1.147 trillion riyals (305.8 billion dollars).

The projected deficit amounts to 3.3% of GDP, which is lower than the deficit of 245 billion riyals estimated for

2025, which is equivalent to 5.3% of GDP, according to the finance ministry.

Ahead of the budget, the kingdom's finance minister Mohammed al-Jadaan defended the government's latest fiscal plan.

"The current level of deficit is a policy choice," the minister said in response to a question from AFP, during a briefing before the publication of the budget.

"We need to invest in our economy and so long as the return from these investments is higher than the cost of the debt, we will continue that drive."

The budget figures will be keenly watched by energy industry experts, with the hopes of gleaning insights into where Saudi Arabia expects oil revenues to head in the near future.

The kingdom's revenues are still heavily dependent on its petroleum exports.

Continued global economic uncertainty and a glut in supply has weighed on the market throughout most of the year, resulting in lower oil prices.

Crude oil prices have hovered in the \$60 to \$70 per-barrel range in the US and international markets, down by about \$10 from the 2024 period.



Germany is the largest economy in Europe and the third-largest in the world (by nominal GDP), driven by high-value industries such as automobiles, engineering, chemicals, and advanced manufacturing.