

Unemployment rate for total population of the Kingdom decreases to 3.1% in Q1 of 2026

According to estimates from the Labor Force Survey of the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT), the overall unemployment rate (for Saudis and non-Saudis) recorded 3.1% in Q1 of 2026. This represents a decrease of 0.4 percentage points compared to Q4 of 2025, while increasing by 0.3 percentage points year-on-year compared to Q1 of 2025. The overall labor force participation rate (for Saudis and non-Saudis) reached 67.2%, decreasing by 0.2 percentage points compared to the previous quarter and by 1.0 percentage points year-on-year compared to the corresponding quarter of 2025. The unemployment rate among Saudis stood at 6.4% in Q1 of 2026, decreasing by 0.8 percentage points compared to the previous quarter while increasing by 0.1 percentage points year-on-year compared to Q1 of 2025. Meanwhile, the employment-to-population ratio among Saudis reached 45.8%, recording a slight decrease of 0.1 percentage point compared to the previous quarter and a decline of 2.2 percentage points compared to the same quarter of 2025. The labor force participation rate among Saudis recorded 49.0%, decreasing by 0.5 percentage points compared to the previous quarter and by 2.3 percentage points compared to the corresponding quarter of 2025.

Quarterly changes of labor market indicators for Saudis

The labor market indicators in Q1 of 2026 for Saudi Arabia showed that the unemployment rate among Saudi females decreased by 1.3 percentage points to 9.0%. The labor force participation rate among Saudi females also declined by 0.6 percentage points to 33.9%, while the employment-to-population ratio decreased by 0.2 percentage points to 30.8%, compared to the previous quarter of 2025. Among Saudi males, the unemployment rate decreased by 0.7 percentage points to 4.9%. The labor force participation rate also declined by 0.5 percentage points to 64.2%, while the employment-to-population ratio recorded a slight decrease of 0.1 percentage points to 61.0%, compared to the previous quarter of 2025.

Unemployment rate decreases among Saudi Youth

The labor market indicators for Q1 of 2026 showed that the unemployment rate among young Saudi females aged 15-24 years decreased by 2.0 percentage points to 20.4%. The employment-to-population ratio among young Saudi females also declined slightly by 0.1 percentage point to 13.4%, while the labor force participation rate decreased by 0.6 percentage points to 16.8%, compared to the previous quarter of 2025.

Among young Saudi males aged 15-24 years, the unemployment rate decreased by 1.2 percentage points to 13.8% compared to the previous quarter of 2025. The employment-to-population ratio also declined by 0.6 percentage point to 27.4%, while the labor force participation rate decreased by 1.2 percentage points to 31.7%.

For the core working-age Saudi population aged 25-54 years, the unemployment rate declined to 5.1% compared to the previous quarter of 2025. The employment-to-population ratio decreased by 0.3 percentage point to 63.3%, while the labor force participation rate declined by 0.8 percentage point to 66.7%.

For Saudis aged 55 years and above, labor market indicators in Q1 of 2026 showed a decline in the unemployment rate and increases in both the labor force participation rate and the employment-to-population ratio compared to the previous quarter of 2025.

Active methods of job search for unemployed Saudis

Saudi unemployed jobseekers used a variety of active job search methods, averaging 3 active search methods per jobseeker. Direct application to employers was the most commonly used job search method, accounting for 74.6%, followed by the Unified National Employment Platform (Jadarat) at 55.2%. Meanwhile, 48.5% reported updating or posting their CVs on professional social media platforms.

Additional indicators on unemployed Saudis

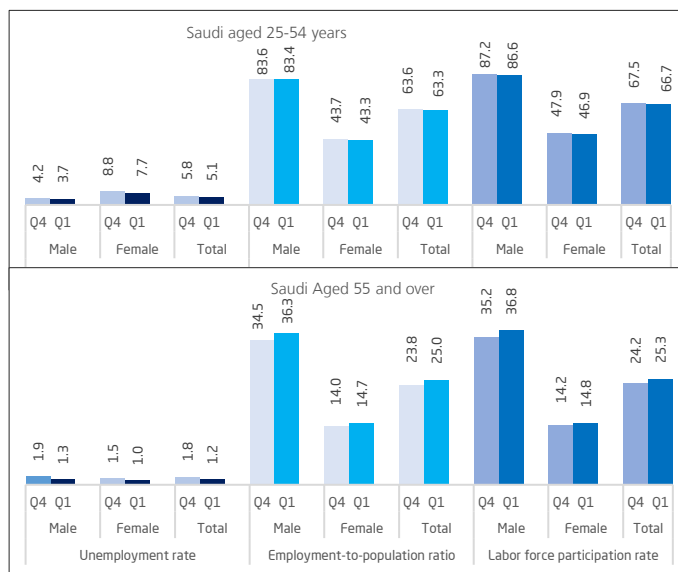
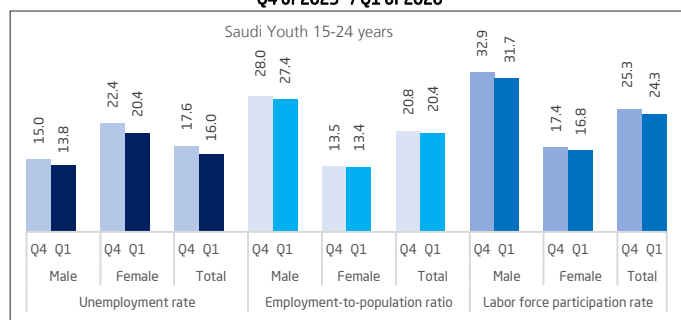
The results showed that 95.8% of unemployed Saudis would accept a job offer in the private sector. In addition, 60.4% of unemployed Saudi females and 45.3% of unemployed Saudi males indicated that they would accept a commute of up to one hour to work. Furthermore, 68.2% of unemployed Saudi females and 82.8% of unemployed Saudi males reported that they would accept working eight hours or more per day.

Table 1: Key Indicators of Saudi Labor Market by Quarter

Indicators	First Quarter 2025			Fourth Quarter 2025			First Quarter 2026		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Unemployment rate	1.6	8.1	2.8	2.5	8.2	3.5	2.2	7.2	3.1
Saudi	4.0	10.5	6.3	5.6	10.3	7.2	4.9	9.0	6.4
Non-Saudi	0.6	3.0	0.8	1.5	3.9	1.7	1.2	3.8	1.5
Employment-to-working-age population ratio	83.4	33.5	66.3	81.9	32.1	65	82.2	31.8	65.1
Saudi	63.8	32.5	48.0	61.1	31.0	45.9	61	30.8	45.8
Non-Saudi	94.0	35.6	82.0	92.5	34.5	80.7	93	33.7	80.7
Labor force participation rate	84.7	36.5	68.2	84.0	35.0	67.4	84.0	34.3	67.2
Saudi	66.4	36.3	51.3	64.7	34.5	49.5	64.2	33.9	49.0
Non-Saudi	94.6	36.7	82.7	93.9	36.0	82.1	94.1	35.1	81.9

Source: Estimated data from the Labor Force Survey according to population estimates for Q1 of 2026- General Authority for Statistics

Figure1. Key labor market indicators for Saudis by age group, Q4 of 2025 / Q1 of 2026



Source: Estimated data from the Labor Force Survey - General Authority for Statistics

Notes for users Comparison between Labor Force Survey Estimates and Employment Statistics from Administrative Records

The General Authority for Statistics publishes the "Labor Market Statistics" publication, which includes the key indicators of Labor Market Statistics based on the results of the Labor Force Survey. It also publishes the "Administrative Labor Market Statistics" publication, which includes statistics on the number of individuals subject to labor regulations based on administrative records issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, the General Organization for Social Insurance, and the National Information Center. There are differences between statistics based on administrative records and Labor Force Survey estimates in terms of concepts, methodology, and coverage. Regarding coverage, Labor Force Survey estimates cover all households and settled residents with usual residence within the Kingdom, while administrative records cover only individuals registered with those entities. Reference periods also differ between the Labor Force Survey and administrative records. Therefore, absolute figures from the two sources are not identical, and variations exist between them. Labor market statistics based on administrative records can be accessed through the following link:

Methodology and quality

The Labor Force Survey sample for the quarter is designed based on the 2022 Census dwelling frame (see the Labor Market Statistics Methodology Report for more details).

The Labor Force Survey is a sample household survey with a sample size of about 96,000 dwellings per quarter.

Data is collected continuously throughout the quarter using both telephone and field interviews, ensuring comprehensive temporal coverage and measurement accuracy.

The survey provides estimates for the population within and outside the labor force. Some of the key indicators for the labor market include:

Unemployment rate: the number of unemployed individuals as a percentage of the labor force (unemployed and employed) in the working-age (15 years and above).

Labor force participation rate: individuals in the labor force as a percentage of the population of working age (15 years and above).

Employment-to-population ratio: employed individuals as a percentage of the population of working age (15 years and above).

Core definitions used in the survey according to International Labor Organization (ILO) Standards:

These indicators are based on internationally approved definitions, where the primary categories are defined as follows:

Employed: individuals (15 years and above) who, during the reference period (the reference week):

- Worked for at least one hour for pay or profit (cash or in-kind) as regular employees, temporary employees, employers, or self-employed individuals.
- Assisted a family member for at least one hour, with or without compensation, in any type of business or on a family farm.
- Were temporarily absent from work during the reference week due to vacation, illness, or any other reason and will return to work.
- Seasonal workers during the off-season if they continue to perform some job duties and responsibilities.

Unemployed: individuals (15 years and above) who were:

- Without work during the reference week.
- Actively looking for work during the four reference weeks prior to the interview.
- Available to start work or join the workforce in the reference week or the following two weeks.

Labor force: Represents the labor force (total number of employed and unemployed). In addition to applying ILO standards, the General Authority for Statistics uses Labor Market Policy Committee standards to validate Labor Force Survey data using administrative records data. [Methodology and quality, table](#)