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Jordan, Arab, Islamic nations condemn Israeli air strike on Gaza's Nasser Medical Complex

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan, Arab and Islamic countries on Saturday condemned the Israeli air strike on the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, which caused casualties among patients and medical personnel.

In a joint statement, foreign ministers of the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Oman, Palestine, Kuwait, Lebanon, Sudan, Algeria, Djibouti, Somalia, Libya, Mauritania, Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey said that attacks constitute a violation of international humanitarian law, which affords special protection to medical facilities and healthcare workers.

The ministers condemned continued Israeli attacks on Palestinian civilians, including strikes on tents and other sites sheltering displaced persons.

They also said that these attacks undermine the ceasefire and efforts to restore security and stability in Gaza and are inconsistent with President Trump's Comprehensive Plan, the statement said.

The ministers also expressed grave concern that continued Israeli restrictions on humanitarian aid, shelter materials, including tents, caravans and mobile homes, as well as medical supplies, are deepening Gaza's humanitarian catastrophe as winter approaches.

Inadequate shelter and deteriorating water, sanitation and healthcare services put civilian lives at grave risk, particularly those of children and infants, who could once again die from exposure to freezing temperatures, the statement said.

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Jordan to present 41 investment opportunities at Jordan-EU Conference — minister

- Conference reflects Jordan's position as safe investment gateway to region
- Jordan's strategic importance is growing amid global supply chain challenges
- Investor confidence in Jordan rises 21%, registered companies up 7%



AMMAN (JT) — Jordan recorded a 25 per cent increase in foreign direct investment in 2025 compared to the previous year, as the Kingdom continues to strengthen its position as a regional destination for investment and economic growth, Minister of Investment Tareq Abu Ghazaleh said.

In an interview with Al Arabiya Business on the Jordan-EU Investment Conference, scheduled on November 19, Abu Ghazaleh said that the high-profile gathering reflects Jordan's position as a safe and attractive gateway for investment in the region, adding that the Kingdom has maintained its standing despite regional and global challenges.

The minister said that 41 investment opportunities will be presented during the conference, covering key sectors including water, technology, energy, transport and logistics.

He also highlighted the government's efforts to improve the investment environment, revealing that amendments had been introduced to the Investment Environment Bylaw to strengthen incentives, attract foreign investment and support job creation and employment.

Abu Ghazaleh also said that Jordan's strategic importance is growing amid ongoing challenges affecting global supply chains, pointing to a 6 per cent increase in the Kingdom's exports.

He added that investor confidence in Jordan had risen by 21 per cent, while the number of registered companies increased by 7 per cent over the past nine months.

Jordan-EU investment conference to highlight water sector opportunities — ministry

AMMAN (JT) — Investment opportunities in the Kingdom's water sector, including reducing water losses, wastewater treatment, energy efficiency, infrastructure development and de-salination, will be a key focus of the Jordan-EU Investment Conference 2026, scheduled to be held under Royal Patronage at the Dead Sea on November 19.

The conference will bring together officials, investors, business leaders and representatives of Jordanian, European and international companies and financial institutions to strengthen investment cooperation between Jordan and the European Union, and advance strategic projects towards financing and implementation.



JT file

A photo of the King Talal Dam, located in Jerash Governorate in the Tal Rumman Heights area, 50 kilometres north of Amman

The opportunities form part of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the Water Authority's efforts to expand private sector participation in the development, management and operation of water facilities, attract investment and modern technologies, and address water scarcity while strengthening water security and the sector's sustainability, according to a statement by the Ministry of Investment.

Investment opportunities aimed at reducing water losses include rehabilitating water networks, upgrading distribution systems and introducing modern technologies to detect leaks.

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AVIATION



Three RJ planes were in US airspace when flight suspension was announced — CEO

AMMAN (JT) — Three Royal Jordanian aircraft flying in US airspace when authorities announced a temporary suspension of flights landed safely at their destinations, the national carrier's CEO, Samer Majali, said on Saturday.

Speaking to Al Mamlaka TV, Majali said that the aircraft, which were bound for New York, Chicago and Detroit, completed their journeys without any problems.

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AFP photo

People visit stalls set up in the midst of the rubble and damaged buildings on Al Asma'i Street during the opening of the Jobar Bazaar in the Jobar suburb northeast of Damascus on Friday

Syria car bomb kills two people in Damascus

DAMASCUS (AFP) — A car bomb killed two people including a child in a suburb of the Syrian capital on Saturday, state media reported, as authorities struggle to restore full security to the country.

The SANA news agency said the explosion in the city of Jaramana also wounded one person.

Authorities had "established a security perimeter at the scene and opened an investigation", it cited security forces as saying.

Syria has frequently been hit by explosions or attacks against civilians or security forces since the fall of former president Bashar Assad in December 2024.

Continued on page 5

Jordan's olive oil production expected to reach 35,000 tonnes this season — Najdawi

AMMAN (JT) — The Kingdom's olive oil production is expected to reach between 32,000 and 35,000 tonnes this season, exceeding earlier estimates of 30,000 tonnes, Olive Press Owners Association President Taysir Najdawi said on Saturday.

Speaking to Al Mamlaka, Najdawi said that domestic consumption is estimated at between 25,000 and 26,000 tonnes, leaving an anticipated surplus of 6,000 to 7,000 tonnes.

"Most of the surplus is expected to be exported, while part will be retained as a strategic reserve."

"The olive harvesting season officially began over the past three days after being delayed by two to three weeks to allow the fruit to ripen," Najdawi said, adding that demand for olive presses had increased in recent days, with olives recording high oil yields.

Prices for regular extra virgin olive oil are expected to range between JD95 and JD100, while higher-quality oil is likely to sell for between JD110 and JD120, he said.

"Olive pressing fees have also increased by around 10 piastres per kilogramme. However, most olive presses have yet to implement the increase this season, with current fees ranging between 65 and 70 piastres per kilogramme."

He stressed that exports would not be allowed until domestic demand is fully met, adding that shipments are expected to begin on November 20.

"The expected start of exports comes ahead of the National Olive Oil Festival, scheduled to run from November 26 to December 5."

Najdawi also highlighted the rising production costs facing farmers in recent years, citing higher expenses for harvesting, transportation, olive pressing, labour, ploughing, pruning and pesticide spraying.

The cost of harvesting 100 kilogrammes of olives has risen to approximately JD30–JD35, he added.



Photo by Baraka Destinations

In this undated photo, a man is seen harvesting olives on a farm in Um Qais, Irbid



Jordan remembers King Hussein

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Saturday marked the 91st anniversary of the birth of His Majesty the late King Hussein, who reigned for nearly five decades.

A direct descendant of Prophet Mohammad, King Hussein was born on November 14, 1935 as the eldest son of King Talal and Queen Zein Al Sharaf.

Hussein was proclaimed King of Jordan on August 11, 1952 and a Regency Council was appointed until his formal accession to the Throne on May 2, 1953, when he assumed his constitutional powers after reaching the age of 18, according to the Islamic calendar.

The King studied at the Islamic Scientific College and then enrolled at Victoria College in Alexandria. In 1951, he entered Harrow College in England before receiving his military education at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in England, which he graduated from in 1953.

Throughout his 47-year reign, King Hussein worked hard to enhance his country and raise citizens' living standards. He also focussed on building an economic and industrial infrastructure that advanced the quality of life of the Jordanian people.

During his era, primary education became mandatory and schools were established across the Kingdom's cities, villages and rural areas, allowing Jordan to become one of the leading countries in the Arab world in terms of literacy.

King Hussein also focussed on improving higher education, and dozens of public and private universities and colleges were built under his rule.

He also struggled throughout his reign to promote peace in the Middle East.

After the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, he was instrumental in drafting UN Security Council Resolution 242, which called on Israel to withdraw from all Arab lands occupied in the 1967 War in exchange for peace. The resolution has served as the benchmark for all subsequent peace negotiations.

In 1991, King Hussein played a pivotal role in convening the Madrid Peace Conference, providing an "umbrella" for Palestinians to negotiate their future as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

The 1994 Peace Treaty between Jordan and Israel was a major step towards achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The late King's commitment to democracy, civil liberties and human rights has also helped pave the way for Jordan to become a model state in the region.

At the time of his death on February 7, 1999, King Hussein was the longest-serving executive head of state in the world.

His Majesty the late King Hussein had five sons and six daughters.

MAIDEN VISIT

Russian cruise ship, Bulgarian charter flight boost tourism activity in Aqaba

AMMAN (JT) — The Aqaba Cruise Terminal on Saturday received the cruise ship Astoria Grande on its maiden visit to the coastal city, carrying around 670 tourists, mostly Russian nationals, alongside 354 crew members on a visit lasting until Sunday evening.

Commissioner for Tourism and Youth Affairs at the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) Thabet Nabulsi stressed that the ship's arrival boosts inbound maritime tourism to Aqaba and offers an opportunity to attract visitors to the Kingdom's prominent tourist destinations while benefitting from the diverse tourism offerings in Aqaba and surrounding sites.

Nabulsi added that cruise ship visits serve as an important driver for tourism and commercial activity in Aqaba by enabling tourism establishments, markets, and service providers to benefit from visitor flows and expanding local community gains from tourism, according to an ASEZA statement.

Nabulsi said that reception arrangements include providing tourist buses to transport passengers from the cruise terminal to downtown Aqaba to explore local markets and commercial facilities, alongside organising excursions to Petra and Wadi Rum so visitors can experience the historical and natural attractions of the Golden Triangle.



ASEZA photo

The Aqaba Cruise Terminal on Saturday receives the cruise ship Astoria Grande on its maiden visit to the coastal city, carrying around 670 tourists, mostly Russian nationals

Also on Saturday, King Hussein International Airport received its first charter flight from the Bulgarian capital Sofia since the recent regional developments, carrying 154 tourists.

The arrival of the flight marks the resumption of organised tourist flights from the Bulgarian market to Aqaba, according to another ASEZA statement.

Nabulsi said that the resumption of charter flights was a positive indicator for inbound tourism, highlighting the importance of maintaining air links with European markets and enhancing Aqaba's position as an international tourist destination.

"ASEZA, in cooperation with stakeholders and the tourism sector, continues to work to attract more flights and tourism programmes, increase visitor numbers and stimulate economic activity in the city," he added.

The flight was operated by Bulgaria Air, with another charter flight from Sofia expected to arrive on November 21.

JMD installs new Aqaba weather station to improve forecasts, early warnings

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan Meteorological Department (JMD) has installed a modern electronic weather monitoring station on the southern beach of the Gulf of Aqaba to improve forecasting accuracy, expand national network coverage, and support climate studies and early warning services.

JMD Director Raed Khattab said on Saturday that the new station constitutes a qualitative addition to the Kingdom's meteorological infrastructure, featuring electronic sensors that measure air temperature, relative humidity, atmospheric pressure, rainfall amounts, and wind speed and direction, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Linked to an automated system that regularly transmits data to the department's main headquarters in Amman for monitoring and forecasting analysis, the coastal station captures local wind patterns and temperature variations shaped by surrounding mountains, and thermal contrasts between land and sea.



Petra photo

The Jordan Meteorological Department installs a modern electronic weather monitoring station on the southern beach of the Gulf of Aqaba to improve forecasting accuracy

Khattab said that comparing readings from the new site with data recorded at the Aqaba Airport station will allow specialists to study spatial weather variations and gain detailed insights into local climate characteristics.

Data collected from the station will enrich JMD's climate bank and national climate database to support scientific research, long term trend analysis, and understanding of geographical and environmental impacts on local weather.

Khattab added that tracking wind speed, direction and local weather shifts will bolster the tourism, maritime, and environmental sectors by enhancing navigation safety for tourist boats and beachgoers while supporting informed decision making across varying weather conditions.

Developing the national meteorological network combines modern technology with enhanced scientific and analytical capabilities in line with World Meteorological Organisation technical standards to boost early warning systems, protect lives and property, and advance sustainable development, Khattab said.

CARC asks EASA to lift conflict zone advisory on Jordanian airspace

AMMAN (JT) — The Civil Aviation Regulatory Commission (CARC) on Saturday addressed the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) requesting the lifting of its Conflict Zone Information Bulletin regarding Jordanian airspace ahead of the agency's scheduled periodic review on Monday.

CARC Chief Commissioner Daifallah Farajat said that the move falls within intensive diplomatic and technical efforts to reinforce international confidence in the safety and stability of Jordan's airspace, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

He noted that EASA's latest recommendations impose no ban on operations to Jordanian airports or overflights, leaving decisions to airlines based on individual risk assessments and contingency plans.

Farajat added that the Amman Flight Information Region is already witnessing a rapid and notable return of major European carriers resuming flights and overflights, including British Airways, Austrian Airlines, Swiss, Edelweiss, Condor, and Eurowings, alongside major global cargo operators such as AeroLogic and DHL.

The chief commissioner stressed that the resumption of operations by these major carriers serves as an international vote of confidence in Jordan's aviation safety and air navigation procedures, reflecting steady improvements in the operational environment.

Farajat expressed hope that the upcoming EASA review will result in completely lifting the current advisory, encouraging additional foreign airlines to resume direct flights to Jordanian airports, stimulating tourism, supporting the national economy, and consolidating Jordan's position as a safe and vital regional aviation hub.

EVENTS

Jordan cultural, arts, sports agenda: November 15–22

ONGOING

"Antarctica: Continent of Peace" | Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Building 1, Amman

The photography exhibition presented with the embassy of Chile runs through November 23. It is open daily except Fridays.

Jordan Trail Thru-Hike | Um Qais to Aqaba

The official calendar lists November 18 as the end date of the guided hike.

Wednesday, November 18

Takht Ensemble (التخت الشرقي) | Terra Santa Theatre, Amman, 7:30pm

The ACO Takht Ensemble performs an evening of classical and contemporary works, with Ihab Jamal on violin and Laith Suleiman on nay. Tickets are listed on Sajilni.

Thursday, November 19

Jordan vs. Lebanon, Friendly Match | Arena Hall, Amman, 8:00pm

Finland, UN Women seek to advance women's leadership in peacebuilding

AMMAN (JT) — The government of Finland and UN Women reaffirmed their "longstanding" partnership to advance the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in the Arab states during an event hosted by the embassy of Finland in Cairo.

The event commemorated the 26 years of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and marked a new chapter in the cooperation of Finland and UN Women through a 150,000 euro initiative aimed at strengthening women's leadership and participation in mediation and peace processes across the region.

The Finland-funded project, titled "Advancing Women's Leadership in Mediation in the Arab States Region through the Arab Women Mediators Network [AWMN]", supports the network's institutional development, strengthens its regional role and expands opportunities for women mediators to engage in peace and security processes.

The initiative builds on a decade of cooperation between UN Women and Finland to advance the WPS agenda in the Arab states, according to a statement by UN Women Arab States office.

Through direct support to UN Women's regional projects on WPS, this partnership has contributed to the establishment of the AWMN, supported the adoption and implementation of National Action Plans on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia, and expanded opportunities for women's participation in conflict prevention, peace building and mediation.

Strengthening women's participation and leadership in formal mediation and negotiation processes remains a priority across the Arab states, said the statement.

Regional networks are crucial in ensuring women mediators are connected to decision makers, and in creating opportunities for women's expertise to inform and influence peace and mediation processes.

UN Women Regional Director for the Arab States across the Arab States Moez Doraid said, "Women are already playing critical roles in preventing conflict, mediating disputes and building peace in their communities. Yet their expertise and leadership remain largely underrepresented in formal peace processes."

"Through our longstanding partnership with Finland and the League of Arab States, we are strengthening the Arab Women Mediators Network to expand opportunities for women to participate in and influence mediation efforts. Sustainable peace requires women's leadership and meaningful participation at every stage of the process," he added.

Ambassador of Finland to Egypt Riikka Eela said, "Finland's national Women, peace and security plan has a strong international dimension. We have focused on Arab region for many years and UN Women is our close partner in this work."

"This project is a logical complement and continuation of our other activities in the region. Globally, women's participation in formal peace processes continues to decline. This means we must work harder. Sustainable peace is only reached through inclusive processes," she added.

Established jointly by the Arab League and UN Women in 2020, the AWMN serves as a regional platform connecting qualified women mediators and supporting their engagement in conflict prevention, negotiation, mediation and post-conflict recovery processes.

The network also facilitates knowledge exchange, cooperation and collective advocacy to strengthen women's influence in peace and security processes.

Running from June 2026 to June 2027, the Finland-supported initiative will support the implementation of the AWMN's annual workplan through facilitating Network members' participation and knowledge exchange in regional and international forums.

It will also contribute to strengthening practical learning through engagement with active mediation contexts in the region, and promoting exchanges and dialogue on mediation among women mediators and peacebuilders, including young women peacebuilders.

Through this initiative, Finland, UN Women and the Arab League seek to strengthen the Arab Women Mediators Network as a regional platform for mediation expertise, cooperation and knowledge exchange, while expanding opportunities for women to contribute to and influence peace and security processes across the Arab states.

Jordan-EU conference to showcase railway, logistics investment opportunities

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan will present investment opportunities in railway networks, dry ports, logistics centres and public transport projects at the Jordan-Europe Investment Conference 2026 on November 19, seeking to attract European and international investment to upgrade transport infrastructure and strengthen the Kingdom's regional trade links.

The portfolio includes the National Railway Network, the Aqaba-Ma'an Dry Port and Development Zone, Al Madouna Logistics Centre and Dry Port, a logistics and commercial centre in Mafraq Development Zone, the expansion of Jaber Border Crossing and a proposed light rail link between Amman and Queen Alia International Airport, according to a Ministry of Investment statement.

The projects aim to improve freight and passenger transport, facilitate trade, reduce logistics costs, strengthen connections with regional markets and create jobs across the Kingdom's governorates.

The National Railway Network is designed to establish a freight rail system linking logistics and industrial centres with regional trade corridors, improving transport efficiency and the competitiveness of Jordanian exports.

In Ma'an Governorate, the Aqaba-Ma'an Dry Port and Development Zone project offers an opportunity to establish an integrated facility for container handling, warehousing and customs services, strengthening links between the Port of Aqaba and local and regional markets and supporting economic activity in southern Jordan.



Ministry of Investment photo

The Ministry of Investment says that the Jordan-Europe Investment Conference 2026 will present investment opportunities in railway networks, dry ports, logistics centres and public transport projects

The portfolio also includes the Al Madouna Logistics Centre and Dry Port, south-east of Amman, which is strategically located near highways connecting the Port of Aqaba with the borders of Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Syria, as well as the Amman Ring Road.

The project envisages an integrated logistics facility offering warehousing, inventory management, distribution, customs services and value-added activities. It is also expected to facilitate cargo consolidation and redistribution and reduce truck traffic inside Amman.

Another opportunity involves developing a logistics and commercial centre covering approximately 5.5 square kilometres in Mafraq Development Zone, capitalising on existing infrastructure and proximity to regional markets to support warehousing, distribution and commercial services.

The Jaber Border Crossing rehabilitation and expansion project aims to increase capacity for freight and passenger traffic and modernise facilities and support services.

It will be implemented under a public-private partnership model covering non-sovereign services, while security, customs and immigration functions will remain under government jurisdiction.

In public transport, the proposed 37-kilometre light rail line would connect Al Mahatta in Amman with Queen Alia International Airport through five stations, providing an additional transport option and supporting integration with the wider public transport network.

The projects are expected to generate direct and indirect employment in construction, transport, warehousing, operations, maintenance and support services, while stimulating commercial and industrial activity and improving supply chain efficiency.

Held under Royal Patronage, the November 19 conference at the Dead Sea will bring together officials, investors, business leaders and representatives of Jordanian, European and international companies and financial institutions.

The conference aims to strengthen Jordan-EU investment ties and advance proposed projects towards financing and implementation by connecting investors and financial institutions with project stakeholders and drawing on European expertise in infrastructure and logistics development.



Petra photo

Aerial view of the Mujib Dam

450MW Mujib project among key energy opportunities at Jordan-EU conference

AMMAN (JT) — The 450-megawatt Mujib Dam pumped storage hydropower project will be among key energy investment opportunities presented at Thursday's Jordan-Europe Investment Conference at the Dead Sea.

The project, to be developed under a public-private partnership on a build-own-operate-transfer basis, will have a storage duration of seven hours, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Located near the existing Mujib Dam, the project will use a closed-loop pumped storage system that moves water between two reservoirs through pressure pipelines and two reversible pumping and generating units, each with a capacity of 225 megawatts.

> The Mujib project is expected to improve power system efficiency...

The system will store surplus electricity generated from renewable sources during the day and feed it back into the national grid during evening peak demand hours, improving grid stability and flexibility and reducing reliance on imported fuels.

Other investment opportunities to be presented at the conference include a 200-megawatt solar power project coupled with a 100-megawatt battery storage system with a four-hour capacity, as well as a proposed 100-megawatt wind power project.

The Mujib project is expected to improve power system efficiency, reduce electricity costs, support local economic development and facilitate the transfer of advanced technologies and expertise.

Health Ministry performs 1,350 after hours cardiac procedures, saves JD1m

AMMAN (JT) — Ministry of Health hospitals performed around 1,350 emergency cardiac catheterisation procedures to treat acute heart attacks between 4pm and 8am from February 1 to November 1, 2026, under a treatment protocol introduced in early February, Minister of Health Ibrahim Bdour said on Saturday.

Bdour said the protocol introduced immediate emergency catheterisation during evening and overnight hours, replacing the previous approach of administering blood-thinning injections before performing catheterisation one or two days later, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

He added that improved hospital readiness and round-the-clock on-call technical teams had enabled faster intervention, increasing survival rates, preserving heart muscle function and reducing complications, including heart failure and cardiac arrhythmias.



The procedures were performed at Al Bashir, Prince Hamzah, Zarqa, New Al Hussein Salt, Karak, Tafileh and Princess Basma hospitals, while patients at other ministry hospitals were covered through a direct referral mechanism to ensure timely access to critical care.

Bdour said the protocol had also generated significant savings by reducing reliance on blood-thinning medication, particularly Tenecteplase, which costs around JD780 per dose.

"Savings exceeded JD1 million during the first nine months of implementation, in addition to reducing long-term costs associated with heart failure complications," he said.

He commended the medical, nursing, technical and administrative teams at the participating hospitals, saying the protocol reflects government efforts, guided by Prime Minister Jafar Hassan, to improve healthcare quality, modernise clinical practices and adopt international best practices.

Jordan sets 31% emissions reduction, 40% renewable electricity targets under NDC 3.0

AMMAN (JT) — Jordan on Thursday launched its third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0), committing to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 31 per cent by 2035 through measures targeting five key sectors.

Minister of Environment Ayman Suleiman attended the launch, held on the sidelines of COP31 in Antalya, Turkey, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and with funding from the Green Climate Fund, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Grounded in the Economic Modernisation Vision and the National Climate Change Policy for 2022–2050, the plan outlines 41 technically assessed mitigation measures covering energy, transport, industry, waste and agriculture.



Petra photo

Minister of Environment Ayman Suleiman on Thursday launches the third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) on the sidelines of COP31 in Antalya, Turkey

Suleiman said the energy sector aims to increase the share of renewable energy in electricity generation from 27 per cent in 2024 to 40 per cent by 2035.

Other priorities include improving energy efficiency, promoting cleaner transport, reducing industrial and methane emissions and upgrading waste management.

The plan also identifies adaptation priorities across six sectors: water, agriculture and food security, health, biodiversity and ecosystems, human settlements and infrastructure, and cultural heritage and tourism. It incorporates the Global Goal on Adaptation, Belém indicators and gender action plans to support a just transition.

Suleiman called on international partners and financing institutions to align funding with national systems, develop bankable projects, expand private sector investment instruments and improve transparency in climate finance.

Suleiman also took part in a high-level dialogue on urban resilience, adaptation and climate action hosted by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme on Thursday on the sidelines of COP31.

He stressed that strengthening climate resilience requires coordinated action by national institutions and local authorities rather than isolated interventions.

He highlighted the importance of institutional coordination, integration of economic, social and environmental policies, capacity building, data-driven decision-making and sustainable financing to translate plans into action.

Aqaba receives 658,000 hotel guests in first nine months of 2026 — ASEZA

AMMAN (JT) — Aqaba's hotels received around 658,000 guests during the first nine months of 2026, down 7.5 per cent from the same period last year, with occupancy rates averaging 45.2 per cent, according to the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA).

ASEZA Head of the Data and Tourism Services Department Murad Shehadeh said that the average length of stay increased to 2.2 nights during January–September, compared with 2.1 nights in the same period of 2025, marking a 4.8 per cent rise.

Shehadeh said longer stays would help increase visitor spending and boost economic returns from tourism, Al Mamlaka TV reported.

He added that Aqaba recently received the Astoria Grande cruise ship, carrying around 670 tourists, most of them Russian, with the vessel scheduled to stay overnight in the city.



Petra photo

Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority Head of the Data and Tourism Services Department Murad Shehadeh said that the average length of stay at Aqaba's hotels increased to 2.2 nights during January–September

The overnight stay provides local tourism and commercial businesses with greater opportunities to benefit from visitor spending, particularly restaurants, tour guides, transport operators and tourist attractions, he said.

Shehadeh also noted that Aqaba received the Aroya cruise ship in 2026, carrying around 3,400 tourists.

He said ASEZA is working to reduce seasonality in the tourism sector by strengthening air connectivity and diversifying the city's tourism offering.

Flights on the Riyadh and Abu Dhabi routes have been launched, while efforts are under way to introduce a direct route between Moscow and Aqaba, with flights expected to begin on December 20 in cooperation with the Jordan Tourism Board and Royal Jordanian.

The authority is also working to promote conference tourism, sports and medical events, specialised tourism and adventure tourism, while capitalising on Aqaba's strategic location and proximity to Wadi Rum and Petra, Shehadeh added.

He said these efforts, alongside increased cruise ship arrivals, are expected to boost visitor numbers, hotel occupancy rates and average length of stay, supporting recovery in Aqaba's tourism sector.

Army foils drug smuggling, infiltration attempts

AMMAN (JT) — The Eastern Military Region on Friday foiled an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics into Jordan using guided balloons, according to the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army (JAF).

Border Guard units detected the balloons heading towards Jordanian territory and intercepted and brought them down inside the Kingdom. The narcotics were seized in coordination with military security agencies and the Anti-Narcotics Department before being referred to the relevant authorities for legal action, according to a JAF statement.

Also on Friday, the Southern Military Region foiled an infiltration attempt by two individuals who tried to cross one of the border fronts illegally.

Border Guard forces detected the individuals and apprehended them in accordance with established rules of engagement before referring them to the competent authorities for legal proceedings, the JAF said in a separate statement.

The JAF reaffirmed their continued efforts to protect the Kingdom's borders and sovereignty and prevent illegal activities that threaten national security.



AFP photo

Workers walk as they clear debris at a thermal power plant of the largest Ukrainian private energy company DTEK, heavily damaged following Russian missile and drone strikes, in an undisclosed location in Ukraine on Wednesday

US proposes Ukraine cede territory in exchange for joining NATO — Zelensky

KYIV, Ukraine (AFP) — The United States suggested for the first time that Ukraine cede land to Russia in exchange for joining NATO, President Volodymyr Zelensky said in comments released on Saturday, adding that Russia had rejected an energy target ceasefire at talks this week.

Zelensky said Russia was "betting everything" on this winter's campaign in its war with Ukraine, while warning that the Kremlin's demands to redraw Europe's security architecture are "dangerous" and could lead to more wars.

Zelensky spoke to the media on Friday after visits to Denmark and Ireland, where he met with European leaders following two days of US-brokered Ukraine-Russia talks in Abu Dhabi.

The talks ended with no breakthrough in Europe's worst war since World War II, but all sides agreed that European officials should be included in future negotiations.

"The Americans raised a question: 'What if Ukraine joins NATO? Would Ukraine withdraw from Donbas?' This was the first time this had been raised," Zelensky said in the comments kept under embargo until Saturday.

He said Ukraine was discussing "specific security guarantees from NATO and the EU" and that if Western countries confirmed them "then I will ask our Ukrainian society what it thinks: do we accept it or not? I have no right to make that decision on my own".

> 'On the proposal for an energy ceasefire: the Russians don't want it'

US envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff attended the Abu Dhabi talks and then met after with Putin and Zelensky separately.

Moscow turned down a proposal for a ceasefire in attacks on energy targets at the Abu Dhabi talks, Zelensky said.

"On the proposal for an energy ceasefire: the Russians don't want it," Zelensky said.

Putin's proposal for a "humanitarian mission" to Kostyantynivka, Zelensky said, was a ploy to get Kyiv to withdraw from the embattled city and open the road to more settlements in the Donetsk region.

Russia said this year that it had seized the town but Ukraine has said fighting is ongoing.

"Putin simply wants us to leave Kostiantynivka so that they can move in and occupy the entire city that way," Zelensky said.

Moscow's troops have inched westwards since launching the invasion in February 2022, but have been unable to seize the whole of the Donetsk region.

Zelensky said the EU and NATO are Europe's "only real security" and that Moscow's bid to review the continent's security was "dangerous because... it is precisely things like this that lead to wars or escalations".

Iran Guards say two oil tankers hit by mines in Hormuz



AFP photo

In this picture obtained from Iran's ISNA news agency on June 18, vessels are seen anchored in Bandar Abbas along the Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Saturday that explosions rang out on two oil tankers after they struck mines in the Strait of Hormuz, where Tehran has restricted navigation.

Since war erupted with the United States in February, Tehran has insisted that vessels obtain its authorisation to cross the strait and has attacked ships that do not comply.

"A short while ago, two oil tankers that had switched off their radar and positioning systems and were secretly attempting to transit the Strait of Hormuz through an unauthorised route exploded and caught fire after striking a naval mine," the Guards' navy said in a statement carried by the Iranian state broadcaster early on Saturday.

The statement did not provide the names or origins of the vessels but said one was a supertanker.

The United States, in response to Tehran's choking of the strategic trade route, has imposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports and provides military support to tankers using the waterway.

In recent weeks, Iran's armed forces have reported several fires or explosions on board ships in the strait, often saying the vessels had struck mines.

On Friday, the Guards released footage of a large plume of smoke rising from a vessel it said was carrying liquefied gas and hit a mine in the south of the strait.

The US military, however, says it has cleared the main routes through the waterway of mines.

Turkey, Qatar sign mutual defence agreement



Photo of Turkish Presidential Press

Turkish President Erdogan meets with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (AFP) — Turkey and Qatar announced on Friday that they signed a mutual defence agreement, which they said was aimed at adopting a "unified position" in the face of an external attack.

The announcement came after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani in Istanbul.

Erdogan had said the agreement would further strengthen ties between the regional allies, according to his office.

Qatar's ruler travelled to Istanbul after attending the United Nations COP31 climate summit in southern Turkey.

"The two parties hailed the signing of the mutual defence agreement between Qatar and Turkey," according to a joint statement carried by Qatar's state news agency.

The agreement was "aimed at bolstering collective defence and achieving regional security and stability, as well as adopting a unified position in the face of any external armed attack targeting either or both parties", the statement said.

"The two parties agreed to hold consultations on threats to their security... and to strengthen cooperation through joint military exercises, collaboration in the field of defence industries, and the exchange of personnel training."

Erdogan's office had earlier announced the agreement, without going into the details of its contents.

"A mutual defence agreement signed by Turkey and Qatar today will add a new dimension to the brotherly ties between the two countries," Erdogan said during the meeting, according to the statement from his office.

Erdogan also said Turkey and Qatar would expand cooperation in the defence industry.

Iran war backdrop

In August, Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a regional defence pact under which the three countries would come to each other's aid if one of them came under attack.

Ratified by the Turkish parliament last week, the pact links NATO member Turkey, which has the alliance's second-largest military, with Pakistan, the Muslim world's only nuclear-armed state, and Saudi Arabia, the Gulf's leading power.

Turkey has said the agreement is not aimed at any other country and remains open to other states, including Egypt.

In October, Qatar, Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey signed a multilateral memorandum of understanding on defence cooperation in Doha.

The agreement, known as "Badr", aims to bolster cooperation between the participating countries.

Erdogan and the Qatari emir also discussed the Iran war.

Turkey and Qatar would continue working together "to prevent a renewed outbreak of war in the Gulf region and to promote dialogue and peace", Erdogan said.

The leaders discussed Israel's attacks on Gaza and the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territory, efforts towards normalisation in Syria and the latest developments in Libya, the statement added.

French protesters chant against inflation and police



AFP photo

A man stands in front of a burning barricade during riots after a demonstration as part of a nationwide protest over the rising cost of living and inequality organised by the Yellow Vest movement in Lyon on Saturday

PARIS, France (AFP) — Tens of thousands of protesters paraded in the streets of France on Saturday, some clambering up statues with French flags as they vented on issues ranging from the rising cost of living to a proposal to give police greater legal protection.

The European Union's second largest economy has been gripped by high-school blockades and mass demonstrations for more than a month, with the far right leading in the polls to win presidential elections next year to replace Emmanuel Macron.

Around 106,000 people took to the streets nationwide, including 24,000 in Paris, the interior ministry said, in the lowest turnout in recent weeks.

Student unions put the number of demonstrators at 200,000, including almost 100,000 in the capital.

"No justice, no peace," a protester shouted into a megaphone in Paris as people including students, unions and Yellow Vest activists demonstrated for the fifth Saturday in a row.

Others called for the president to resign, or cried "Everybody hates the police", as a group carried a giant puppet whose hat read "Lord Macron".

Some of the largely peaceful rallies in recent weeks have seen fringe violence, as well as accusations of police brutality, including against young teenagers.

'Giving us hope'

Adrien, a 20-year-old cello player in a volunteer orchestra at the Paris rally, said the focus of the day was a new bill in parliament to give police who use their weapons further protection.

"We're scared when we come to a protest, and this will only make us even more afraid if their impunity is strengthened," he said, after tear gas fell on protesting musicians last month.

Backers of the new police bill — including the far-right party of leading presidential hopeful Marine Le Pen — say a new law presuming police acted in self-defence is necessary to avoid officers being automatically suspected of using disproportionate force.

Activists argue it would amount to a "licence to kill", as it would hamper the opening of investigations and make holding security forces accountable even harder in a country where alleged police brutality cases rarely reach a criminal court.

Others nationwide demanded better learning conditions, more children's rights or simply sang for a better France.

In the south-western city of Bordeaux, 72-year-old Josette belted out protest song "I have two passions: brass bands and revolution".

"My children didn't want me to come," she told AFP. "But I'm so grateful to the youth for starting this movement."

Europe can't afford falling behind at AI 'turning point', warns EU chief

DUBLIN (AFP) — EU chief Ursula von der Leyen warned on Friday the bloc "must get it right" on the generational "turning point" of AI, as European leaders vowed to catch up in the race with China and the United States — and tame the technology's risks.

"Every generation faces a technological turning point that shapes the decades ahead. For ours, it is artificial intelligence, and Europe must get it right," von der Leyen told a press conference in Dublin where the bloc held its first summit-level talks on AI.

"We need to maximise the opportunities offered by AI, and we need to control all the risks of AI," European Council head Antonio Costa said.

French AI darling Mistral's Chief Executive Arthur Mensch and Nobel-prize winner Geoffrey Hinton, widely known as one of the "godfathers" of the technology joined the leaders' discussions on AI opportunities and dangers.

"Europe has all the technology and the talent to lead the AI race," Mensch, whose company is considered Europe's leading AI model developer, told the leaders, according to comments shared with AFP.

"What it needs now is speed, financing and a strong coordination between member states."

He said the decisions taken over the next two years would shape the industry for the next decade. "That is why we call on European leaders to act now."

"We have no time to lose," French President Emmanuel Macron echoed in a post on social media, adding he would host a meeting in Paris on December 2 with the Dutch prime minister alongside "tech creators".

EU chief von der Leyen said Europe's push for tech sovereignty would need "massive investment" of at least 500 billion euros ($550 billion), and vowed to present an "ambitious" proposal the next time leaders meet later this month.

She also said an expert she tasked with driving AI adoption across industry would deliver the first recommendations within two weeks.

Despite the desire to exploit the potential of AI, the EU says it wants to protect citizens and businesses from the technology's growing risks.

Former Google researcher Hinton "described very clearly the enormous risks he sees in AI", von der Leyen told reporters afterwards.

"He had a strong call on Europe to be the one who initiates a global governance around AI," she added. The EU has sweeping rules regulating the technology.

Hinton and fellow computer scientist Yoshua Bengio warned of AI's threats in the months after the release of OpenAI's ChatGPT in 2022, which kickstarted the latest AI frenzy. The summit came against the backdrop of a scandal roiling Nvidia, a central player in the AI industry and a huge investor in the EU, after revelations CEO Jensen Huang had extramarital affairs — including with a woman accused of spying for China.



AFP photo

Protesters hold a slogan banner during a demonstration of climate activists on the sidelines of the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) in Antalya on Saturday

Thousands rally against COP31 as climate talks hit midpoint

ANTALYA, Turkey (AFP) — Thousands of protesters took to the streets Saturday in the Turkish city hosting COP31 to accuse the climate summit of failing those bearing the brunt of environmental destruction.

The show of dissent comes as negotiators approach the crunch final week of global climate talks in Antalya, with nearly 200 nations scrambling to strike a deal by Friday.

The summit is not expected to produce a major breakthrough, frustrating activists demanding tougher curbs on planet-warming fossil fuels and fresh pledges to help poorer countries adapt to climate impacts.

In downtown Antalya, under rainy skies, thousands of protesters dressed in costumes and shouting slogans marched under close police supervision in the largest demonstration since COP31 began on Monday.

"We are suffering the consequences of climate injustice, yet our voices are never heard at the COP," said Halime Saman from the People's Climate Summit platform, one of the groups behind the rally.

"Turkey is the co-chair of COP31 but still has no roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels. New power stations and coal mines are being opened," she told AFP.

Yasar Gokoglu, a 78-year-old demonstrator, travelled nearly 600 kilometres from Adana in southern Turkey to denounce what he called "a masquerade sponsored by monopolies".

Police estimated that more than 7,000 people attended the protest, which was organised by environmental groups, trade unions and rights organisations, and proceeded without any major incident.

Demonstrators were only allowed to join the rally after being searched by police.

'No quick fix'

Much smaller demonstrations inside the COP31 venue this week, including one attended by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, have been mounting pressure on political leaders to act faster on the climate crisis.

The negotiations hit the halfway point Saturday but countries remain far apart on contentious issues including financing adaptation measures in developing nations, defending climate science, and shifting from fossil fuels to clean energy.

Australia's climate minister, Chris Bowen, who is chairing the formal negotiations, said there had been "really good and positive conversations" but some issues required more time.

Outside the negotiations, Turkey is urging countries to join a voluntary pledge to raise the share of global final energy demand met by electricity.

The summit, which closes on November 20, takes place against a difficult backdrop, with a conflict-driven energy crisis and geopolitical tensions tempering expectations.

"There's no climate quick fix. No single COP can magic this crisis away, but each must drive progress," UN climate chief Simon Stiell told reporters on Saturday.

Netanyahu says only unity government can guarantee Israel's security



AFP photo

This photo shows a general view of the Israeli settlement of Har Homa (top) overlooking the city of Bethlehem in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Friday

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel's caretaker prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday reiterated his calls for a national unity government with his opponent Gadi Eisenkot, as well as his vow to eliminate the threat from Iran.

A meeting with Eisenkot on Thursday "only strengthened the conviction that it is essential to form a national unity government" to guarantee Israel's security, Netanyahu said in a video statement, adding that such a government could "eliminate the Iranian threat once and for all".

He said this government would be made up of parties that recognise Israel "as a state for the Jewish people".

It would address security challenges, he added, most notably Iran which he claimed would "not hesitate to use nuclear weapons against us".

With backing from 67 lawmakers following last month's election, Eisenkot was tapped on Sunday to form a new government within 28 days, with a possible 14-day extension.

Negotiations are expected to be difficult, especially as Netanyahu has waged a campaign to discredit Arab-Israeli parties, which gained a record number of seats in the election.

Netanyahu's proposed unity government would be made up of key Jewish parties ranging from the centre to the right, while excluding the Arab parties.

Eisenkot has indicated he would be open to forming a government with members of Netanyahu's Likud party, as well as outgoing finance minister Bezalel Smotrich's Religious Zionism, provided their commitment to unity is "sincere".

But a unity government with Netanyahu himself remains unlikely, particularly after Eisenkot denounced his "racist" campaign against Arab parties on Friday.

Jordan, Arab, Islamic nations condemn Israeli air strike on Gaza's Nasser Medical Complex

Continued from page 1

Israeli fire killed 10 people in Gaza Thursday, six of whom died in the bombing of Nasser hospital in south Gaza early in the day, health officials said, the deadliest single strike since Israel's elections last month, according to AFP.

Nasser Hospital, located in Khan Yunis, confirmed the six deaths in a statement, while a doctor there said that nearly 30 were wounded.

Gaza's civil defence agency said the bodies from the strike had been recovered from the targeted building, which a medical source said was the surgery ward of Nasser Hospital, a sprawling medical complex in the southern city of Khan Yunis.

Israel has struck Nasser Hospital on numerous occasions since the start October 7, 2023.

In August 2025, Israeli strikes on the hospital killed 20 people including five journalists in one day, according to the civil defence.

While the 2025 ceasefire has largely subdued the fighting, Israel has kept up a steady rate of strikes in the territory.

More than 1,600 Palestinians have been killed since the start of the ceasefire, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health.

Jordan-EU investment conference to highlight water sector opportunities — ministry

Continued from page 1

A key project in this area involves reducing water losses in southern and southeastern Amman through the development and management of water networks in 17 distribution areas serving around 1.4 million people.

In the wastewater sector, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the Water Authority are implementing and upgrading treatment plant projects valued at around $900 million, while seeking to increase private sector participation in their financing and operation, the statement said.

Jordan reuses more than 90 per cent of its treated wastewater for agricultural irrigation, it said.

Other investment opportunities focus on improving energy efficiency at water facilities, with the aim of reducing the sector's energy bill by at least 30 per cent through greater reliance on renewable energy and energy-saving technologies. These measures are expected to lower operating costs and improve the sector's financial sustainability.

Projects also include upgrading existing dams, constructing new ones and expanding water harvesting initiatives to increase storage capacity and make better use of rainfall. The initiatives include projects in industrial cities in Zarqa, Salt, Tafileh and Madaba.

To strengthen water security, the National Water Carrier Project aims to supply around 300 million cubic metres of desalinated water annually.

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the Water Authority are also working on 11 projects to rehabilitate water infrastructure and upgrade networks and facilities to ensure the efficient conveyance and distribution of desalinated water, according to the ministry.

Additional investment opportunities include upgrading the facilities and networks of Yarmouk Water Company to improve water and wastewater services and enhance supply efficiency in Irbid, Ajloun, Jerash and Mafraq.

The projects are expected to attract investment and modern technologies, increase private sector participation, create jobs, improve services and reduce operating costs.

The conference will provide a platform for connecting strategic water projects with European investors and financing institutions to explore partnership, financing and technology transfer opportunities, supporting Jordan's efforts to address water scarcity and achieve sustainable development, the Ministry of Investment said.

Syria car bomb kills two people in Damascus

Continued from page 1

In August another blast struck Jaramana, with the attack on a bus wounding 14 people, according to SANA.

In the capital Damascus, two devices exploded near a hotel where French President Emmanuel Macron was staying during a landmark visit in July.

That blast left one person dead and 36 wounded.

Authorities blamed an organisation affiliated with the Daesh terror group, which has previously claimed several attacks targeting Syrian security forces.

In 2014, Daesh seized vast swathes of territory in Syria, but was largely defeated in 2019.

The group still maintains sleeper cells in the country while calling on its members to fight the authorities.

Three RJ planes were in US airspace when flight suspension was announced — CEO

Continued from page 1

He explained that the planes were already approaching their destinations when the suspension was announced, but experienced landing delays of between one and two hours.

US authorities prioritised international flights over domestic services, limiting the impact on international arrivals, he added.

Majali said that passengers travelling on domestic flights within the United States, as well as those scheduled to depart from the country, were also affected by delays.

He added that passengers who were travelling domestically within the US before connecting to a Royal Jordanian flight to Jordan, and consequently missed their connections, would have their journeys rescheduled for Saturday or Sunday at no additional cost.

Flights in the United States were resuming on Saturday after being grounded for several hours due to a major communications outage, though authorities said returning to normal operations would take time, AFP reported.

The nationwide stop on Friday sparked widespread chaos and left hundreds of thousands of passengers in limbo, with some pulled off planes moments before departure by airline staff who appeared in the dark about unfolding events.

The incident marked only the second time such an alert had been issued in US airspace — which is among the busiest in the world — since the 9/11 attacks.

The ground stop lasted around four hours and was lifted at 8:15 pm Eastern Time (01:15 GMT Saturday).

Federal Aviation Administration officials reopened the airspace on Friday night "after restoring full functionality" at air traffic control facilities, according to Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy.

"It will take us time [to] resume normal operations... Our top priority is the safety of you and your family when you fly," Duffy said.

Administration officials blamed the incident on telecommunications issues with decades-old equipment, adding there was no evidence of foul play.

"This is a legacy system problem," Duffy said. "We have old, old switches, old routers.

"We use 1980s little copper lines. It's an old system that went down, and went down everywhere. It got overloaded."

Duffy had formally asked Congress on Thursday for $30.1 billion in funds to upgrade and modernize the air traffic control System.

As the ground stop was lifted, he repeated his plea.

"I'm going to say it a million times: the Congress has to give the resources to the president so he can finish this bill," he said.

6,000 flights canceled

There were almost 6,000 flights cancelled, including some international routes, according to FlightAware, a tracking platform.

Footage from airports around the country showed gates full, with planes waiting on taxiways.

Passengers thronged concourses, desperate for information about an outage that had thrown their plans into chaos.

"We're trying to debate whether or not we need to reschedule or drive or what, but if the whole country is stopped, that means the highways are going to be jammed too," said Joseph Anderson, 72, who was trying to fly from Las Vegas to Oakland, California.

A nationwide ground stop is highly unusual.

There was one such stop in January 2023 when a pilot notification system failed, but the only other national stop happened in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in September 2001, when no aircraft took to the skies for days.

Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin stressed there was no evidence of any hostile action on Friday.

"We've seen zero evidence that this was a cyberattack or [AI] attack," he told a news conference.

He also ruled out any connection with the outage that affected Microsoft this week, knocking email systems offline for millions of users, public services and businesses worldwide.

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Jordan's place on Europe's investment map

By Raad Mahmoud Al-Tal

The Jordanian economy is at a stage where it needs high-quality investments that go beyond their traditional role of stimulating economic activity and become a key instrument for expanding the productive base, creating jobs and strengthening competitiveness. In this regard, the Jordanian-European Investment Conference provides an important opportunity to translate the strategic and comprehensive partnership between Jordan and the European Union into investment projects and long-term economic partnerships built on mutual interests, thereby strengthening Jordan's position on the global investment map.

This opportunity is particularly significant given the regional instability and crises witnessed in recent years and their impact on trade, investment and tourism flows. The conference offers an opportunity to reposition Jordan as an investment destination characterised by relative stability, a strategic geographical location, qualified human resources, and access to multiple regional and international markets. Moreover, holding a conference of this scale, with high-level European and international participation, sends an important message to investors about confidence in the Jordanian economy and its ability to provide a suitable environment for long-term investment.

The conference is expected to showcase more than 40 investment opportunities with a combined value exceeding $15 billion, with the anticipated participation of more than 700 investors, business leaders and decision makers. These opportunities are distributed across five main areas: Technology and the digital economy, the future of energy, high-value-added industries, logistics and infrastructure, and water security. These sectors are aligned with Jordan's economic needs and Economic Modernisation Vision priorities, and offer genuine potential for increasing domestic value added.

The importance of these sectors lies in their interconnected nature. Investment in technology, artificial intelligence, and digital services can strengthen service exports and create high-quality employment opportunities for young people. Similarly, investment in renewable energy and energy storage can reduce production costs and enhance energy security, thereby improving the competitiveness of productive sectors. High-value-added industries can provide a pathway to expanding the industrial base and increasing exports, while developing transport and logistics services offers an opportunity to strengthen Jordan's position as a regional trade and connectivity hub. Investment in water security is also of strategic importance, given the country's limited water resources and their direct link to the sustainability of economic activity.

From a macroeconomic perspective, one of the key challenges facing Jordan is the need to diversify its sources of economic growth and reduce excessive reliance on consumption and expenditure. This makes attracting high-value-added investment essential for strengthening exports and supporting sustainable growth. The benefits of foreign direct investment extend beyond providing financing and increasing capital formation. They also include transferring technology and knowledge, improving factor productivity, developing skills and integrating local companies into global value chains. These benefits can contribute to expanding productive capacity, improving export performance and creating more sustainable employment opportunities.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that investment decisions are not determined solely by the availability of opportunities. They depend primarily on the investor's ability to achieve an attractive economic return commensurate with the risks undertaken. European investors seek markets with growth potential, a stable regulatory environment, competitive operating costs, adequate infrastructure and access to broader markets. Accordingly, Jordan's success in attracting investment depends on establishing a balance of mutual interests, whereby investors find genuine opportunities to generate profits

Gaza's shrinking space and rising displacement

By Najla M. Shahwam


Najla M. Shahwan

The escalation of conflict in the Gaza Strip has led to widespread displacement, extensive damage to social, physical and productive infrastructure, and plunged the Strip into a catastrophic humanitarian crisis.

As of November 2026, roughly 1.7 million to 1.8 million people remain displaced in the Gaza Strip (with UN and humanitarian agencies reporting that over 90 per cent of the population — around 1.9 million to 2 million people — have been displaced at least once during the conflict).

For Gazans, displacement has become an ongoing reality rather than a single event, reshaping every aspect of daily life.

Each displacement means starting over from scratch and every new shelter brings new hardships, while the simple comforts of privacy, stability and routine became increasingly difficult to find.

'Those displaced before the announcement of a ceasefire have little to no prospect of return to the areas they fled...'

Around 1.7 million to 1.8 million displaced individuals are living across hundreds of overcrowded and vulnerable displacement sites, makeshift camps or damaged structures.

More than 370,000 housing units have been destroyed or damaged across the enclave, leaving families reliant or dilapidated tents and compromised buildings that offer little protection.

Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip continue to push Palestinians into an ever-smaller fraction of the territory, causing recurrent displacement while destroying the remaining civilian infrastructure and attacking displacement sites.

The Israeli army is further encroaching on areas past its deployment line, also known as the " Yellow line", and "Israeli forces appear to treat the yellow line as a kill zone," preventing Palestinians from returning to what is left of their homes on the other side.

Continuing its stated aim of increasing its military deployment area to 70 per cent of Gaza's territory, the Israeli military have been laying to waste the remaining infrastructure needed to support civilian life, and damaged or destroyed over 80 per cent of all buildings and structures according to the United Nations Satellite Centre.

In early November 2026, Israeli military attacks have hit multiple displacement sites and areas housing displaced Palestinians across the Gaza Strip .

Gunfire hit and damaged multiple tents at a displacement site in northern Rafah on November 3, causing injuries and forcing humanitarian agencies working on flood control to leave the area.

An Israeli strike hit Al Thawra Street west of Gaza City on November 1, killing at least three people (including a child) and injuring others at a displacement/populated area.

Over the past few weeks, the westward expansion of Israeli military deployment areas triggered new displacement of Palestinians in Al Shujaiyeh, Gaza City and in eastern Al Bureij, eastern Deir Al Balah and eastern Al Maghazi, Middle Gaza.

In Al Shujaiyeh, Israeli forces' westward push came with at least two Israeli attacks on displacement encampments and detonations of the few buildings left standing in the area with the use of explosive robots.

Besides on October 25, an Israeli drone dropped munitions on tents sheltering displaced families at Al Shujaiyeh junction near the so-called yellow line, setting tents on fire which resulted in the displacement of 200 families comprising 800 people.

Ajith Sunghay, head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in occupied Palestine, said the "nightmare of displacement" in Gaza was both "acute and chronic".

At least 294,250 families in Gaza need winter shelter assistance, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

"Those displaced before the announcement of a ceasefire have little to no prospect of return to the areas they fled, most of which are inaccessible because they fall beyond the so-called Yellow Line. And they continue to be displaced again and again."

Furthermore, the displacement crisis is worsened by the restrictions Israel has imposed on the entry of shelter–related humanitarian assistance .

The scale of the need in Gaza remains vast and nearly 2 million people require shelter assistance and half of Gaza's tents and makeshift shelters need replacing.

Israeli attacks on Gaza are ongoing with at least 1,602 Palestinians killed since the "ceasefire" began, and 5,794 others wounded according to Gaza's health ministry.

Overall, Israel's genocidal war on Gaza since October 7, 2023 has killed at least 74,620 Palestinians and wounded 175,925 others.

Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip are displacing more and more Palestinians and their actions continue to raise concerns of ethnic cleansing, OHCHR has warned.

Additionally Israeli strikes did not spare police personnel especially who protect the displacement spaces.

On November 1, an Israeli drone strike killed five Palestinian officers while performing their duties to maintain order and security patrolling Al Mawasi, west of Khan Younis, in southern Gaza.

Israeli forces had targeted a number of police officers while they were "performing their routine duties",

at least 75 police officers and security personnel have been killed by Israel since the so–called "ceasefire" came into effect in October last year, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Interior and National Security.

Gaza's impending winter is likely to lead to further devastation for Palestinians.

Displaced families brace for a fourth winter of wind, rain and floods in Gaza's camps.

At least 294,250 families in Gaza need winter shelter assistance, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

About 1.5 million of Gaza's 2.3 million people are living in tents or makeshift shelters that offer little protection against the impending winter weather when temperatures can drop to 7°C but can feel much colder due to strong coastal winds and rain.

Preparing for winter means thinking about what to do when water enters their tents and soaks bedding and belongings. When this happens, they often have nowhere dry to sit, sleep or eat.

"There must be an end to this suffering. This is the fourth year of displacement for most Palestinians in Gaza, the fourth winter in tents too flimsy to withstand the rain and they are still under fire through it all," said Sunghay. "Let this be the last."

Digital bureaucracy: Rethinking government in Jordan?

Hamza Alakalik

The achievement is not simply making a government transaction available online. It is making it shorter, reducing steps, speeding up services and ensuring decisions follow clear standards rather than varying administrative judgement. Jordan should ask not how many services have moved online, but how many steps and approvals have been removed, and how much time has been saved.

Consider a citizen applying for a government service. The application moves from an employee through several managers before reaching the director general. Every stage may take place electronically, and the applicant may track progress online. But what has changed? The chain of approvals remains, responsibilities are divided and the decision waits as the application moves between levels. The paper file has disappeared, but bureaucracy has simply moved from offices to screens.

This is not a technology problem; it is one of administrative design and governance. Genuine digital transformation begins before a system is purchased or an application developed. It asks why each step is necessary, what purpose each approval serves and what value it adds. Could stages be combined, removed or handled in parallel? Process reengineering reviews transactions end to end, identifies delays and duplication, redistributes authority and responsibility, and digitises the redesigned process rather than automating the old one.

Artificial intelligence could take this work further. It can analyses transaction flows, identify bottlenecks forecast demand and help allocate resources

This does not mean abolishing oversight or bypassing procedures required by law. Some approvals protect public funds and ensure legality. Each administrative level should have a clear legal, supervisory or technical purpose, within documented limits and subject to accountability.

Jordan's experience offers a foundation. According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Jordan's score in the Government Electronic and Mobile Services Maturity Index rose from 63 per cent in 2024 to 71 per cent in 2025. The next stage should measure not simply whether services are online, but how much they simplify lives. Digital service numbers indicate reach, not necessarily efficiency. We should measure eliminated steps and signatures, time saved and applications completed correctly the first time.

Jordan's Digital Transformation Strategy and Executive Plan for 2026–2028 provide an important framework, emphasising service redesign, process reengineering and stronger integration among government institutions.

Data governance is essential. Citizens should not have to provide a document that another government institution already holds and can verify lawfully and securely through data exchange. But sharing data must not mean unrestricted access. It requires a defined purpose and legal basis, clear access permissions, accountability for accuracy and effective protection. Easier procedures must not compromise citizens' privacy or rights.

Artificial intelligence could take this work further. It can analyse transaction flows, identify bottlenecks, forecast demand and help allocate resources. It can check applications, classify requests and support employees in applying service standards. But an algorithm must not reject applications or determine eligibility as an opaque authority, without a legal basis, human oversight, an explainable decision and a right to review and appeal. The aim is smarter administration, not transferring unchecked discretion from an employee to a system.

Jordan does not need to transfer bureaucracy into cyberspace; it needs to use technology to reform bureaucracy itself. Citizens do not care whether applications travel between offices or screens. They care about receiving their entitlements without needless complexity, delay or discrimination. The real test is not watching an application move electronically between officials. It is having the institutional and legal courage to ask why it needs so many stops — and remove those serving no necessary purpose. Digital transformation does not begin when administration appears on a screen; it begins when we redesign it to work better for everyone.



Petra photo

Food security indicators improve, but nutrition challenges persist, experts say

By Ilham Darwazeh

AMMAN — Jordan has made progress in several food security and nutrition indicators, including reducing undernourishment, child wasting and the proportion of people unable to afford a healthy diet, but challenges related to obesity, dietary quality and maternal and child nutrition require further attention, officials and experts said on Wednesday.

The remarks came during a dialogue session 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, in light of the findings of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026 (SOFI) report.

In an interview with The Jordan Times, NAJMA Secretary General Fadel Zoubi said the dialogue aimed to assess Jordan's position against global food security indicators and identify areas where further improvements are needed.

He noted positive developments in indicators related to undernourishment, child stunting and the affordability of a healthy diet.

However, Zoubi highlighted obesity and excess weight as persistent concerns, linking them partly to the affordability of nutritious food.

"When people cannot afford nutritious food, they tend to rely on starchy foods rather than diets rich in micronutrients and protein," he said.

He also stressed the need to address maternal and child health issues, including breastfeeding practices and vitamin B12 levels among pregnant women, noting that these areas require continued attention and improvement.

Progress in key indicators

Presenting an overview of the SOFI report, Tamas Vattati, Nutrition and Food Systems Officer at the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, said Jordan had recorded notable progress across several food security and nutrition indicators despite mounting global challenges, including rising food prices, climate change and supply chain disruptions.

The prevalence of undernourishment declined to 12.2 per cent, down from 17.9 per cent several years ago, while child wasting remained low at 2.3 per cent, he said.

The proportion of the population unable to afford a healthy diet also decreased to 2.2 per cent, equivalent to around 300,000 people in 2025, significantly below the regional average.

However, the cost of a healthy diet in Jordan increased from 3.0 purchasing power parity (PPP) dollars per person per day in 2021 to 3.5 PPP dollars in 2025, according to the report. Despite this increase, Jordan's cost remained below the Arab States average of 4.95 PPP dollars.

At the regional level, the cost of a healthy diet rose by around 35 per cent between 2021 and 2025, reaching 4.95 PPP dollars per person per day, 15.7 per cent above the global average.

The report also found that 169.1 million people, representing 33.7 per cent of the regional population, could not afford a healthy diet in 2025.

Vattati said maintaining Jordan's progress and making further improvements, particularly in reducing overweight and lowering the cost of healthy diets, would require sustained investment in more efficient, sustainable and resilient agrifood systems.

He pointed to water scarcity, climate change and the need to improve food supply chain efficiency as key challenges facing Jordan.

Building resilient food systems

Vattati stressed that continued cooperation among the government, development partners, the private sector and local communities was essential to ensuring access to affordable, healthy, nutritious and sustainable food for all.

He said the dialogue aimed to move beyond presenting statistics towards discussing policies and practical solutions that could strengthen the resilience of food systems and help them withstand future challenges.

The regional SOFI report also outlines pathways to reducing the cost of healthy diets and strengthening supply chain resilience, including through the development of well-functioning regional food corridors.

Jordanian exports to EU countries rise by 11.4% till August, reaching JD41m — ACC

AMMAN (JT) — The Jordan-EU Investment Conference represents a strategic opportunity to strengthen the economic partnership between Jordan and the EU and translate it into productive and service-sector investments that stimulate growth, create jobs and boost exports, Amman Chamber of Commerce Management Committee Chairman Mohammed Abu Odeh.

Speaking to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, on Saturday, Abu Odeh said the conference aims to shift bilateral economic ties from traditional trade towards long-term investment and production and service-sector partnerships.

He noted that the conference offers more than 40 investment opportunities worth over $15 billion, with more than 700 investors, business leaders and decision-makers expected to participate.



JT file

Jordanian exports to EU countries rise by 11.4 per cent during the first eight months of 2026, reaching JD411 million, says Amman Chamber of Commerce Management Committee Chairman Mohammed Abu Odeh

Jordanian exports to EU countries rose by 11.4 per cent during the first eight months of 2026, reaching JD411 million, compared with JD369 million in the same period of 2025.

Meanwhile, imports fell by 7 per cent to JD1.942 billion, narrowing the trade deficit to JD1.531 billion.

Abu Odeh called on European companies to establish manufacturing, assembly, packaging, distribution and support-service partnerships with the Jordanian private sector rather than relying solely on exports of finished goods.

He noted that the EU's 3 billion euro financial and investment package for 2025-2027 supports economic projects and improvements to the business environment.

Highlighting Jordan's strategic location and network of trade agreements, Abu Odeh said the Kingdom is well positioned to serve as a regional hub for warehousing, supply chains, information technology, digital services, e-commerce, tourism, logistics and finance.

He added that bilateral trade in services reached 1.8 billion euro in 2024, comprising 700 million euro in Jordanian service exports and 1.1 billion euro in European service imports.

Abu Odeh affirmed the chamber's commitment to expanding cooperation with European chambers of commerce, organising business meetings and trade missions, and addressing challenges facing the private sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises.

Audit Bureau signs cooperation agreement under 3rd of Sharaka Programme

AMMAN (JT) — The Audit Bureau participated last week in a regional conference in Tunis marking the conclusion of the second phase of the Sharaka Programme (2022-2026) and the launch of its third phase (2027-2031).

The conference was organised by The Netherlands Court of Audit (NCA), in cooperation with supreme audit institutions from nine Arab countries, according to an Audit Bureau statement.

Participants reviewed the key achievements of the programme's second phase, including specialised audit missions across service and economic sectors, developments in performance auditing, institutional capacity building and auditing related to the Sustainable Development Goals. They also assessed challenges facing public financial management.

Discussions focused on strengthening the institutional impact of audit work, developing audit methodologies, adopting modern techniques, enhancing data analysis and improving follow-up mechanisms for audit recommendations to boost government performance and the management of public resources.



Photo Courtesy of Audit Bureau

The Audit Bureau participates last week in a regional conference in Tunis marking the conclusion of the second phase of the Sharaka Programme (2022-2026) and the launch of its third phase

Participants also discussed priorities for the programme's third phase (2027-2031), which aims to deepen professional cooperation, move beyond knowledge exchange towards sustainable audit practices and link outcomes to measurable results. These objectives are in line with the Audit Bureau's priorities of promoting value for money and improving the efficiency of public spending.

The bureau's participation reflects its strategic commitment to strengthening international cooperation in auditing and safeguarding public funds, in line with its 2024-2027 strategic plan, the Economic Modernisation Vision and the Public Sector Modernisation Roadmap.

On the sidelines of the conference, Audit Bureau President Radhi Al Hamadeen and Netherlands Court of Audit Vice President Ewout Irrgang signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on institutional cooperation under the third phase of the Sharaka Programme (2027-2031).

Al Hamadeen said the partnership would support the expansion of performance auditing, shifting the focus from procedural compliance towards assessing spending efficiency and the achievement of intended results.

Irrgang described the cooperation as a model of sustainable partnership based on mutual trust and knowledge transfer.

The MoU covers seven strategic areas: enhancing the impact of performance audits, building data analysis capacity, digitalising audit processes, improving stakeholder communication, strengthening quality management, exchanging expertise and providing training, and developing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

The Sharaka Programme is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by the NCA to support governance and public financial management across the Middle East and North Africa. Syria and Yemen will join Jordan and Libya in the programme's third phase.

Stocks recover after Nvidia scandal roils tech sector

LONDON (AFP) — Stock markets recovered on Friday as traders looked past the shock downfall of Nvidia's chief Jensen Huang, though shares in the AI chip behemoth continued their descent.

The latest inflation reading in the United States also helped investors turn their attention to the prospect of further interest rate hikes in the world's biggest economy.

"After a tumultuous week for the Nvidia boss and some dramatic headlines... The focus has switched to US inflation concerns, Treasury yields and the oil price, while, believe it or not, the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq are both on track to register their best weekly gains since August," said Kathleen Brooks, research director at XTB.

But technology woes remained front of mind at the end of the week, with Microsoft struggling to fix an issue that left users around the world without its Outlook e-mail app.

Microsoft's shares fell 1.5 per cent at the start of trading.

Wall Street's main indices opened higher however, after eagerly awaited data showed that the Producer Price Index came in largely as expected.

The index, which measures the prices that farms, factories and other makers of goods receive, rose by 0.3 per cent in October from the previous month, in line with analyst estimates.

The report comes on the heels of a hot consumer prices reading earlier in the week that also highlighted the impact of increased energy costs due to the US-Iran war.

Following the report US stock futures popped higher, while expectations of a 0.5 percentage point hike in US interest rates next month receded.

Investors still expect the US Federal Reserve to lift interest rates by at least a quarter per centage point next month to try to rein in stubborn inflation.

Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare said that the US wholesale inflation data may have been better than some analysts had expected, but was "not necessarily as comforting as it appeared when taking into account the upward revisions for September".

The September monthly gain was revised up to 1.4 per cent from 1.3 per cent, and the annual reading for October hit 6.5 per cent, the highest since November 2022.

"The key take away from the report is that inflation at the wholesale level is still a big problem," O'Hare said.

Shares in Nvidia fell 2.7 per cent at the start of trading in New York.

The chip titan has been at the centre of a storm after reports emerged that Huang — a pivotal figure in the AI explosion in recent years — had had extramarital affairs, including with a woman accused of spying for China.

Huang stepped down as chief executive on Thursday in the face of a boardroom revolt, initially sending shares in the company down 14 per cent before paring losses to end the day around four per cent lower.

Asian stocks traded mixed, while European indices were largely unchanged.

Oil prices were mixed after the International Energy Agency said global oil supplies were expected to exceed demand in the fourth quarter, as more tankers transit the Strait of Hormuz despite the ongoing conflict with Iran.

Global oil supply to surpass demand in Q4 — IEA

PARIS, Nov 13, 2026 (AFP) — Global oil supplies are expected to exceed demand in the fourth quarter, after increased Gulf exports led to a market surplus in October for the first time since the Iran war, the International Energy Agency said on Friday.

Even though attacks on tankers trying to transit the Strait of Hormuz have continued, Gulf shipments reached 18.4 million barrels per day (mb/d) — though that was still 26 percent below pre-war levels, the Paris-based agency said in its monthly report.

"The oil market is showing tentative signs of rebalancing, with global oil supplies surpassing demand for the first time since the outbreak of the war in Iran," the IEA said.

Prices have fallen sharply in recent weeks as more vessels prove willing to make the risky transit through the Strait of Hormuz under US escort.

Iran effectively closed the crucial strait in the early months of the war launched by the United States and Israel in late February.

That helped overall oil supply to rise by three million barrels per day in September and a further 2.3 million barrels in October, the IEA said.

But global demand is set to fall by 2.7 mb/d overall this year as oil prices remain well above pre-war levels and "accelerate electrification and fuel efficiencies across the global car fleet".

Diesel prices in particular stood at $180 per barrel in October, around 77 per cent higher than before the war, as Iran struck refineries in neighbouring Gulf countries accused of aiding US attacks.

Ukrainian strikes on Russian refineries and other energy installations are also disrupting diesel supplies to the global market.

"The severe tightness in product supply, especially for diesel, remains the overriding concern of the broader market and consumers," the IEA said.

SPORTS AT A GLANCE

TENNIS

Svitolina stuns Sabalenka to reach WTA Finals last four

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Ukrainian veteran Elina Svitolina beat world number two Aryna Sabalenka in a rollercoaster three sets on Friday to punch her ticket to the WTA Finals last four, where she'll face Wimbledon champion Linda Noskova. Broken to start the third set, sixth-ranked Svitolina stormed home, winning six straight games to triumph 6-3, 3-6, 6-1. She claimed just her second career victory in eight meetings with the Belarusian star, whose first-serve struggles and 35 unforced errors proved too much to overcome. The match concluded round robin play in the elite season-ending event. Earlier on Friday, French Open champion Mirra Andreeva capped an unbeaten run through the group stage with a 6-2, 6-1 victory over Diana Shnaider. It was a lackluster end to a disappointing season for Sabalenka.

FOOTBALL

Silva says Portugal ready for spotlight without Ronaldo

BRAGA, Portugal (AFP) — Portugal midfielder Bernardo Silva said his team could cope with any extra pressure on them following Cristiano Ronaldo's international retirement, ahead of their first match without the superstar forward. Jorge Jesus's side hosts Denmark in Braga on Saturday in the Nations League, with a tribute planned for their all-time leading goalscorer. Real Madrid's Silva, who inherits the captain's armband from Ronaldo, admitted that the striker had been the main focus for much of the past two decades but backed the team to cope with the pressure in the 41-year-old's absence. "Everyone knows the weight Cristiano carries. Most people went to the stadium to see Cristiano, many went just for him and that's not going to happen now," Silva told reporters. "The national team players are used to the spotlight, the pressure and the responsibility, as well as being pointed at when things don't go well — so that's not an issue." Whether Ronaldo will be present is unknown, after he fell out with veteran coach Jorge Jesus in September. Last week Ronaldo said he was bringing down the curtain on his storied international career. Ronaldo made his debut for Portugal in 2003 and went on to play a world record 234 times for his country, scoring 146 goals.

Jordan's Abdelwahab Jarrah wins individual gold at Tent Pegging World Cup



Petra photo

Held under the patronage of HRH Princess Alia, president of the Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation, the second day of the 2026 Tent Pegging World Cup concludes on Friday

AMMAN (JT) — Held under the patronage of HRH Princess Alia, President of the Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation, the second day of the 2026 Tent Pegging World Cup concluded on Friday, with Jordanian national team rider Abdelwahab Jarrah winning the individual gold medal in the sword category.

The competitions were attended by HRH Princess Najla Bint Asem, Assistant Director of Public Security for Administration and Manpower Brig. Gen. Mohannad Batayneh, and President of the International Tent Pegging Federation Sheikh Mohammed Fairuz, the Jordon News Agency, Petra, reported.

Day two events featured close technical levels and strong competition across individual and team rounds.

In the individual sword standings, Pakistan's Mohammed Abbas finished second, while Sudan's Alam Ahmed secured third place.

In the team competitions, Saudi Arabia claimed the gold medal, followed by the Jordanian national team in second place and Yemen in third place.

At the conclusion of the day's events, Jarrah also received the Best Rider award for the second day in recognition of his standout performance and advanced technical level.

Jordan-Australia friendly moved to Doha at Australia's request to reduce travel fatigue

By Osama Alkafri



JFA photo

JFA Acting General Secretary Farah Badarneh (left) receives Football Australia CEO Martin Kugeler (centre) at the JFA headquarters in Amman on Thursday

AMMAN — The Jordan Football Association (JFA) on Friday announced that the national team's friendly against Australia will be played in Doha,Qatar, on Tuesday, following a request from Football Australia to relocate the match from Amman.

In a statement, the JFA said it had completed all arrangements to host the match in Amman in coordination with the relevant authorities, but agreed to the Australian federation's request after a meeting between JFA Acting General Secretary Farah Badarneh and Football Australia CEO Martin Kugeler at the JFA headquarters in Amman.

The JFA said the decision was made following a recommendation by the national team's technical staff to proceed with the match, citing the importance of every international fixture in the team's preparation programme, particularly after the Asian Cup was postponed until the end of next year.

The match would be hosted by Football Australia in Doha, which had also invited the Jordanian national team to play another friendly in Australia at a later date, the statement added.

Football Australia CEO Martin Kugeler thanked the JFA for accepting the relocation request, acknowledging that the Jordanian team and supporters had been looking forward to hosting the Socceroos(Australian Football National Team) in Amman.

"We are very grateful to the Jordan Football Association for accepting to relocate the match. We know how much the Jordan team and fans were looking forward to welcoming the CommBank Socceroosto Amman," Kugeler said in a statement.

He described discussions between the two federations as open, respectful and collaborative, thanking the JFA for its professionalism and flexibility, as well as the Australian embassies in Jordan and Qatar and the Qatar Football Association for facilitating the change.

Australian national team captain Harry Souttar also thanked the JFA for its understanding and flexibility, saying that remaining in one location would reduce the team's travel commitments, and support player recovery and preparation, according to a statement published by Football Australia official website on Saturday.

The JFA stressed that the arrangement applied exclusively to this friendly and would not affect official matches, whose venues are determined under the regulations of the Asian Football Confederation and FIFA.

It added that these regulations guarantee the national team the right to play its home fixtures on Jordanian soil in various competitions.

The JFA also called on members of the Jordanian community in Qatar to support the Nashama during Tuesday's match, adding that ticketing details would be announced soon.

Remains of Guatemalan Nobel laureate Asturias return home from France

GUATEMALA CITY (AFP) — The ashes of Nobel laureate Miguel Angel Asturias returned to his homeland Guatemala from France on Thursday, half-a-century after his death.

The lawyer, writer and diplomat known for denouncing dictators and defending the Indigenous received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1967.

He lived in Paris before he died in Spain aged 74 in 1974, during the last years of the Franco dictatorship.

The urn with the novelist's remains arrived in the hands of his son, Miguel Angel Asturias Amado, at the capital's international airport, where President Bernardo Arevalo led a tribute.

A guard of honour made up of people dressed in dark suits and holding white roses greeted the procession in an airport terminal hall while musicians played ceremonial Indigenous Mayan instruments: The tum (drum) and chirimia (flute).

"Guatemala proudly welcomes one of its most illustrious sons," Arevalo wrote on X.

The ashes were later transferred to another urn made of dark green stone in the shape of a corn kernel, a nod to his 1949 work "Men of Maize".

They will be interred on Sunday in a cultural center that bears his name.



AFP photo

Miguel Angel Asturias Amado walks in front of the urn of the ashes of his father, Nobel Prize-winning Guatemalan writer Miguel Angel Asturias, during a ceremony at La Aurora airport in Guatemala City on Thursday

His son Asturias Amado, 85, told AFP the family had decided that his father should come home after Arevalo, a social democrat, became president in 2024.

"It was very difficult for me, as a son, to take the decision for my father to return to his homeland," he said, as it meant leaving France, "a country he loved so much".

"He might be a unifying factor for Guatemala," he added.

Lived in exile

In 1954, a US-backed coup cut short a decade of democratic reforms in the Central American country.

Asturias went into exile after the authoritarian government stripped him of his nationality and banned his books, and apart from a brief trip in 1959, he never went back.

His best-known works include the 1946 novel "The President", inspired by the dictatorship of Manuel Estrada Cabrera from 1898 to 1920.

Fascinated by his country's Indigenous mythology, he retold some of its stories in his 1930 book "Legends of Guatemala".

Asturias was a "social scientist", said Guatemalan historian Artemis Torres.

"The political denunciation through his novels above all [against] the coffee-plantation and oligarchic dictatorships in that period in which he lived is one of his greatest contributions, not only to the social sciences, but to literature itself," Torres said.

SpaceX's Starship enters Earth's orbit, but booster catch aborted

By Anita Chang Beattie and Charlotte Causit
Agence France-Presse



AFP photo

SpaceX's Starship Flight 15 launches from Orbital Launch Pad 2 at Starbase in Boca Chica, Texas, on Friday

STARBASE, United States (AFP) — Elon Musk's SpaceX on Friday aborted the recovery of the booster for the world's biggest and most powerful rocket, the Starship, but insisted it could yet "catch" the spaceship, which would be a first.

The 124 metre rocket roared into the sky from Starbase in southern Texas for its 15th test flight, but minutes later, the planned landmark nature of the mission went awry.

After lift-off and the mid-air separation of the two stages, a technical problem forced the company to abandon plans to recover the booster, dubbed Super Heavy, allowing it to instead splash down in the Gulf of Mexico.

The spacecraft itself entered its orbit of the Earth, and SpaceX will attempt to recover it on Saturday after 22 hours of spaceflight.

Successful recoveries of both Starship components would have marked a significant milestone in the space industry's decades-long pursuit of fully reusable rocket systems that can drastically reduce mission costs and make frequent launches possible.

The company had caught the booster on three previous occasions, with the first stage descending vertically back to the launch site shortly after blastoff and nestling into mechanical "chopstick" arms.

If SpaceX can capture the spacecraft that gives the rocket system its name, it will be a groundbreaking moment in the development of the vessel, some versions of which are designed to launch Internet satellites and data centres into orbit.

Other iterations will be made to ferry people to the Moon and Mars.

A spacecraft that can be fully reused is the "Holy Grail" of the space industry, said Clayton Swope, an aerospace expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"No one's really been able to do that so far," he said. "People have been trying to do that since the [NASA] space shuttle. But the space shuttle ended up being kind of a compromise because a lot of the vehicle wasn't reusable."

Recovering an upper stage involves an extraordinary amount of precision, said Kathleen Curlee, a senior analyst at Georgetown University's Centre for Security and Emerging Technology.

"Getting Starship off the ground is an engineering achievement in and of itself; catching the upper stage involves millions of moving parts that all have to go right for a successful capture," she said.

The spaceship will be falling much faster and from a much higher altitude than the booster, with the vessel forced to withstand the extreme heat of reentering Earth's atmosphere.

Refueling challenge

Musk, the world's richest person, has already revolutionised the space sector with the partially reusable Falcon rockets, which are regularly employed to launch satellites and carry astronauts to the International Space Station.

But the Starship project has been plagued by years-long delays as SpaceX grapples with novel engineering challenges — even as NASA is counting on the spaceship to serve as a lunar lander for its Artemis programme.

Other technical challenges include transferring fuel to Starship in orbit — a requirement for any journey to the Moon or Mars.

Following SpaceX's high-profile stock market debut in June that raised about $85.7 billion, the company carried out the first orbital flight of Starship in September, though the mission was cut short due to an engine issue.

Complex capture

While in Earth's orbit, Starship will deploy 26 satellites into Musk's Starlink satellite internet constellation that has become a major revenue stream for SpaceX.

