

SPORT

WITH SAUDI CLUBS' STARS, A NEW ERA IN ASIAN FOOTBALL BEGINS

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SAUDI ARABIA

RIYADH FESTIVAL PAYS TRIBUTE TO 'FATHER OF CHEMISTRY'

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OPINION

A DOMINANT WIN FOR PRESIDENT TEBBOUNE, BUT WHAT'S NEXT?

By Hafed Al-Ghwell
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& FINALLY

CAMILLE RAZAT STEPS OUT IN AMINA MUADDI HEELS

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SUNDAY, September 15, 2024
Rabi Al-Awwal 12, 1446
www.arabnews.com

ARAB NEWS

The Voice of a Changing Region

SINCE 1975

MIDDLE EAST WAR

Israel kills 14 in fresh strikes

- Hezbollah attacks military sites with drones, rockets, says all-out war will displace more Israelis
- Teachers, UN staff in Gaza fear they are now targets after airstrike hit school-turned-shelter
- UAE won't support post-war plan without establishment of Palestinian state: Foreign minister

Arab News Riyadh

Israeli airstrikes hit central and southern Gaza on Saturday, killing at least 14 people as friends and family members of a Turkish American activist killed by an Israeli soldier honored her in a funeral.

The airstrikes in Gaza City hit one home housing 11 people, including three women and four children, and another strike hit a tent in Khan Younis with Palestinians displaced by the war.

There will be no normalization of ties between Saudi Arabia and Israel until an independent Palestinian state is established, Prince Turki Al-Faisal, the former head of the Kingdom's intelligence services, warned during a talk at London-based think tank Chatham House.

The UAE is not prepared to support a post-war plan for Gaza without the establishment of a Palestinian state, Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan said on X.

A senior UN official said that teachers and other UN staff working in Gaza fear they are now targets after an Israeli air strike hit a school-turned-shelter in the territory this week.

"One colleague said that they're not wearing the UNRWA vest anymore because they feel that that turns them into a target," UNRWA senior deputy director Sam Rose said after visiting the shelter in Nuseirat.



A Palestinian woman on Saturday walks toward a mosque, heavily destroyed by Israel's nonstop bombing, in Belt Lahia, northern Gaza Strip. AFP

NUMBER

41,182

Palestinians have been killed in Israel's Gaza onslaught.

Hezbollah's second-in-command Naim Qassem warned that an all-out war by Israel aimed at returning 100,000 displaced people to their homes in areas near the Lebanon border would displace "hundreds of thousands" more.

Qassem said: If Israel does

unleash a war, we will face up to it — and there will be large losses on both sides," he said.

Hezbollah said it launched an assault drone attack on the headquarters of the 810th Hermon Brigade at the Ma'ale Golan barracks, and struck the 282nd Artillery and Precision

Missile Brigade headquarters in Yiftah Elifleet, northwest of Lake Tiberias, with Katyusha rockets.

Sirens sounded in Avivim in the Western Galilee.

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● **Opinion:** Yossi Mekelberg Page 9

APPREHENSIONS

Iran launches satellite amid tensions with West

AP, Reuters Tehran

Iran launched a satellite into space on Saturday with a rocket built by the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, the latest for a program the West fears helps Tehran advance its ballistic missile program.

Iran described the launch as a success, which would be the second such launch to put a satellite into orbit with the rocket.

Footage released by Iranian media showed the rocket blast off from a mobile launcher.

The launch likely happened at the Guard's launch pad on the outskirts of the city of Shahrood, 350 km east of Tehran.

Iran identified the satellite-carrying rocket as the Qaem-100, which the Guard used in January for another successful launch. Qaem means "upright" in Iran's Farsi language.

The solid-fuel, three-stage rocket put the Chamran-1 satellite, weighing 60 kg, into a 550-km orbit.

Meanwhile, Iran's foreign minister said that Tehran was open to diplomacy to solve disputes but not "threats and pressure," after the US and three European powers imposed sanctions against the country's aviation sector.

Abbas Araqchi's comments come a day after the EU's chief diplomat said the bloc was considering new sanctions against Iran's aviation sector, in reaction to reports Tehran supplied Russia with ballistic missiles in its war against Ukraine.

The Brief

ASIR BIRDS

Asir is home to a wide range of avian life, including endemic species like the Asir magpie, a rare bird found only there. **P5**

KASHMIR VOTE

Residents of Indian Kashmir are gearing up for the first election in a decade, which will let them have their local assembly. **P8**

EMAAR STRATEGY

Saudi master developer Emaar's \$2.32 billion capital optimization plan is a 'strategic response' to its current financial challenges, says its CEO. **P11**

CREATIVITY

Artist combines Saudi symbolism with French art movements

Cubism and fauvism were both inspirations for Mohammed Al-Aameri's works on show in 'Red Line'

Rahaf Jambri Riyadh

In "Red Line," which runs at Riyadh's Kenz Gallery until Sept. 20, Saudi artist Mohammed Al-Aameri presents his take on 20th-century art movements that began in France and gives them a Saudi twist.

"My exhibition focuses on expressing feelings and emotions as an alternative to realistic photography, while mixing my own style with techniques inspired by fauvism and cubism,"



'It's a form of rebellion against the past.'

Al-Aameri told Arab News.

"Although fauvism was short-lived, it laid the groundwork for many modern-art movements.

"Through my research, travel, and interaction with many (international) artists, I aim to revive the innovative spirit of these schools in my own style, presenting it in a new and distinctive way in Saudi Arabia,"

the 55-year-old artist continued.

"Red Line" consists of 20 works, including paintings that feature figures in traditional Saudi attire rendered in a vibrant palette that contrasts sharply with the muted colors typically associated with historical representations of the region.

"It's a form of rebellion against the past, where we were often limited to dull landscapes of brown and green," Al-Aameri said.

"I aim to elevate the concept

of art in Saudi Arabia, as many artists are still confined to traditional approaches."

Detailed report Page 5

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Radar



The Muslim World League calls for immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted aid to Palestinians by opening all crossings and supporting UNRWA and other UN agencies.
Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa
 Secretary-general, Muslim World League

KSA today



Riyadh Heritage Village

Learn about the culture of ancient tribes and communities at the Heritage Village in Al-Shuara. The environment is stunning, the antiques are a delight, and you can even stay overnight. Check the Hala Yalla app.



Taif Rural getaway

Nestled high in the Shafa Mountains, Mishaal Farm offers a variety of attractions. Spend the day in the cottages, ride the horses, and feed the animals. Check the Hala Yalla app.



Abha Grape farm

Explore a farm featuring fruit trees, olive groves, dining options, entertainment, an organic farm store, and historical landmarks such as a circular fort, a well, a stone-and-mud house, and an ancient mosque. For more details, check the Saudi Events app.



Jeddah Paintball

Challenge your family, friends, or work colleagues to a paintball game at Midan X in Jeddah. Book via the Hala Yalla app.

The Register

THE PICTURES THAT MARK THE DAY



Saudi Space Agency Vice Chairman and CEO Mohammed Al-Tamimi led the Saudi delegation at the fifth G20 Space Economy Leaders Meeting in Foz do Iguacu, Brazil, from Sept. 11 to 13. Al-Tamimi highlighted Saudi Arabia's

advances in its space sector and the Kingdom's commitment to using space technology for sustainable development and climate change mitigation. He engaged in discussions on innovation, entrepreneurship and climate change, showcasing the agency's

efforts to improve infrastructure, attract investment and apply space technology for sustainable development. Saudi Arabia signed a strategic cooperation agreement with the Brazilian Space Agency to enhance peaceful space exploration collaboration.

Today's Number

\$186k

The national Saudi fundraising campaign to provide aid for Gaza has so far raised about SR697 million (\$186 million).

Who's Who



Haneen Al-Saleh

Haneen Al-Saleh is the managing director of Bosch's regional headquarters in Saudi Arabia. She spearheads the company's commitment to the country by driving innovation and collaboration across key sectors, including mobility, consumer goods, and energy. She has more than 10 years of experience, including roles as a global project intervention and operations leader, project manager, and strategic marketing analyst.

She began her career as a mechanical design engineer in the UK. After returning to the Kingdom, she took on various roles including strategic marketing manager and global execution and intervention leader at General Electric.

Her previous positions also include project mechanical engineer at Acumen Project in Nottingham, England, building services adviser at Ideal Design in Jeddah, and part-time sales at 3mobile in Edinburgh.

Al-Saleh was reportedly the first Saudi woman to work on a construction site while leading a team and completing the delivery of Waad Al-Shamal, the first integrated solar combined cycle power plant of the MENAT region, driving innovation and change in the energy landscape.

Al-Saleh holds a bachelor's degree in engineering and a master's degree in energy engineering and carbon management from the UK.

What's Trending Today's hot topics explained by Afshan Aziz



'MY LIFE CHANGED' Hugh Jackman

G Australian actor Hugh Jackman has talked about how meditation has played a crucial role in maintaining balance and order in his life.

In an exclusive interview with People magazine at the David Lynch Foundation's Meditate America Gala, the 55-year-old actor discussed his 31-year practice of meditation.

"I thought it would really help me with my acting. That's why I sort of went and it did," Jackman told the outlet. "It helps you be more present, more creative, more energized, more able to connect to people."

The practice, which involves sitting comfortably with eyes closed and practicing silently, has been a transformative force in his life.

'40-YEAR-OLD ISSUE' Kate Hudson

X US actor Kate Hudson recently revealed fascinating stories about her father, Bill Hudson, as recounted by Elton John.

At a special event held at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles, the 45-year-old actress and singer discussed her burgeoning career as a songwriter and reflected on her relationship with her father, who was notorious for his extravagant 1970s lifestyle.

In a conversation with journalist David Wise, Hudson recounted how Elton John, who had a close connection with her father, would often share colorful stories about her father's party days.

"Every time I would see Elton John, especially after 'Almost Famous,' he would tell me these stories about how crazy my father was, and wild and naked all the time,

apparently," she said. "(He) liked to be naked. The stories I heard of my dad from Elton."

In a recent People magazine cover story, Hudson opened up about her complex relationship with Bill, saying: "There's nothing new there but love. I love him ... I just don't overthink it.

It's a 40-year-old issue."

During the discussion with Wise, she discussed how she used music to bridge the gap between them. "I wanted him in my life, but for complications of life and people and what have you, we had a very, very tough relationship," she said. "So, for me, music was like, Hudson, you know? The Hudsons, we're just ... it's just all music. And so, when I was little I wanted to feel that connection with him, but I never got it."



TheRegion

The Middle East Roundup

Arab News Jeddah

- A seven-week beekeeping course in Abu Dhabi includes a hands-on program that covers bee biology, behavior, and ecology, along with practical skills, equipment use, and safety protocols. The course runs every Sunday until Oct. 13 at Jubail Mangrove Park.

- Explore clay work using the coiling technique in this hands-on workshop. Participants will start with basic forms, progressing to more detailed creations. Led by Noor Qussini, the workshop takes place at the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., and is open to adults. The course is free, but

registration is required. For details, visit visitqatar.com.

- With the latest virtual reality technology and exciting multiplayer action, EVA in Jidhafs, Bahrain, offers an unparalleled esports experience that allows gamers, both veterans and novices, to face off against other players in epic battles.

Prayer Times in Saudi Arabia

	Sept. 15	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghreb	Isha
Makkah	4:52	6:07	12:17	3:42	6:25	7:55	
Madinah	4:50	6:07	12:17	3:45	6:27	7:57	
Riyadh	4:21	5:39	11:49	3:17	5:58	7:28	
Abha	4:44	5:57	12:06	3:28	6:13	7:43	
Dammam	4:08	5:24	11:36	3:04	5:45	7:16	

The Abrahamic Family House is a timely reminder of the need for tolerance and mutual understanding.

Charles Michel
President of the European Council



Spotlight



ANALYSIS

Do Abraham Accords need a reboot?

Regional integration of Israel through normalization has been on hold since Middle East conflict's re-emergence

RESEARCH & STUDIES
THE MIDDLE EAST, BETTER EXPLAINED

Jonathan Gornall London

It is exactly four years since Donald Trump stood on the South Lawn of the White House, flanked by a beaming Benjamin Netanyahu and the foreign ministers of Bahrain and the UAE, each holding a copy of the Abraham Accords Declaration.

The signing of the agreements on Sept. 15, 2020, a process driven by the Trump administration, appeared to be the most significant development in the Arab-Israeli peace process for years.

Both Bahrain and the UAE recognized Israel's sovereignty and agreed to normalize diplomatic relations — the only Arab states to have done so since Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

In so doing, as the one-page declaration signed by all four parties affirmed, they recognized "the importance of maintaining and strengthening peace in the Middle East ... based on mutual understanding and coexistence," and vowed to "seek to end radicalization and conflict and to provide all children a better future."

The region's major player was missing from the White House photo op that day in 2020, but speculation that Saudi Arabia would soon follow suit and normalize relations with Israel was rife.

Three years later, in a wide-ranging interview with Fox News, broadcast on Sept. 20, 2023, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman gave the biggest hint yet that such a historic breakthrough might be afoot.

However, just over two weeks later, on Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas and its allies attacked Israel. All bets were off, and the Abraham Accords seemed doomed to go the way of every previous initiative in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

But, say some commentators, it would be wrong to write off the accords completely.

"I'm not sure I would describe the accords as being on life support," said Sanam Vakil, director of the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House.

"They are actually weathering this very difficult storm of the Gaza war. That is certainly putting the leadership and the decision-making in the UAE and Bahrain under a microscope, and of course that poses difficult domestic dynamics for these leaders to navigate.

"But at the same time, they remain committed to the Abraham Accords and haven't shown any willingness to walk back from them or to break diplomatic ties. They in fact are arguing that by having diplomatic ties



The Abraham Accords, main, ushered in an era of understanding that saw the opening of Abu Dhabi's Abrahamic Family House, bottom. The Gaza war, right, hit the pause button. AFP/WAM



with Israel, they have a better avenue to support Palestinians and work behind the scenes with the Israelis."

As for the Israelis, "normalization with Saudi Arabia is not on the cards for now, partly because obviously the Israeli leadership has different priorities right now, and after Oct. 7, the price of normalization became higher.

"And I think the Israeli leadership is calculating that if they wait this out — and perhaps over-anticipating that the Saudis will still be there, which could be a miscalculation — the price that they have to pay for normalization will go down again.

"I think that they're assuming that the conditions in the region might change, or perhaps if the outcome of the US election leads

to a Trump victory, that might alter what they need to do, what commitments they need to make toward the Palestinians that would satisfy the Saudis."

But for Brian Katulis, senior fellow for US foreign policy at the Middle East Institute in Washington, "it's a coin toss" whether a Trump or Kamala Harris administration would be most likely to reinvigorate the Abraham Accords.

"As we saw in the candidates' debate on Tuesday evening, these issues don't really matter to either of the leaders or the political discourse in America right now," he said.

Although, as the father of the Abraham Accords, Trump might be assumed to be keen to re-engage with an initiative he



offered normalization first.

"The premise they presented was that it was through these channels of communication that have now been established that we can try to address the thorny issues in the Palestinian-Israeli arena.

"But we all know that the reality on the ground was very different, that settlements and outposts have expanded and with the emergence of the most right-wing government in Israel's history, all of that has been accelerated.

"I've spoken to officials and thought leaders in the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco, and there's consensus that the Abraham Accords are, at best, on pause. Someone even said the accords are in a coma and they will need to be resuscitated after the war ends in Gaza."

Harris, Joe Biden's vice president, is likely to follow in his administration's footsteps to some extent when it comes to the Abraham Accords.

"The Biden administration was a bit slow to embrace the model of the accords when they came into office, really, because, you know, they saw it as Trump's legacy, and they were very partisan in their approach," said Vakil.

"But they did come around, and they did begin to embrace this idea of integration through normalization. The reality, though — and this is what we've seen born out since Oct. 7 — is that without providing a mechanism and commitment to restart a peace process, and one that allows Palestinians to have self-determination, the accords, on their own, cannot deliver Israel's security or provide the region with that integration, that economic and security integration that they're seeking."

A reboot of the agreements in the wake of the cessation of the current hostilities would be an opportunity — if not a precondition — to reconfigure them and put Palestinian demands at the top of the agenda.

"The Abraham Accords was a well-intentioned initiative led by countries in the region that wanted to prioritize their national security and economic interests," said Khurma.

"No one can say taking the path of peace is a bad idea. But the heavy criticism from the region and the Arab public in general, which you can see in the polling from 2021 until today, is that in doing so they basically sidelined the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and flipped the formula that was the essence of the Arab Peace Initiative led by Saudi Arabia in 2002."

To move forward successfully, said Katulis, whoever becomes America's next president must "prioritize Palestine and make it a big item on the agenda."

To do this, they should "go back to good old-fashioned collective diplomacy and form a regional coalition with a new international framework to create the state of Palestine. It's ripe for the picking, and I would lean into it."

IN NUMBERS

18%

Decline in Israel's overall trade with outside world since eruption of Gaza war in October 2023.

4%

Decline in trade between Israel and 7 Arab countries that have normalized ties with it during the same period.

14%

Drop in Israel-UAE trade in the last quarter of 2023 following the conflict.

Source: Abraham Accords Peace Institute

once saw as a foundation stone of his legacy, "he's just so erratic as a leader, and I don't know that he'll be focused on it," said Katulis.

"Harris may actually put more time and thought into it. In the debate, she was the only candidate who talked about a two-state solution, and that's music to the ears of anyone in places like Saudi Arabia, which have been calling for a state of Palestine forever."

But Saudi Arabia is unlikely to shift far from the position it took in 2002, when it was the author of the Arab Peace Initiative, which was adopted by the Council of Arab States.

This offered Israel peace and normalization of relations with all 22 Arab states, in exchange for "full Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967, in implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, reaffirmed by the Madrid Conference of 1991 and the land-for-peace principle, and Israel's acceptance of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital."

Merissa Khurma, program director of the Middle East Program at the Wilson Center, said: "And of course, the Abraham Accords agreements completely flipped that formula because they



Under the theme 'Fun Chemistry,' the festival offers educational, informative, and entertaining experiences. SPA

'THE SCIENCE OF JABIR'

Riyadh festival pays tribute to 'father of chemistry'

STEAM Festival at King Salman Science Oasis in Riyadh highlights the early scientist's life and legacy

Arab News Riyadh

Jabir ibn Hayyan, a renowned Muslim scientist, is known as the "father of chemistry" for his pioneering contributions.

Born in 721, Ibn Hayyan discovered key chemical compounds still used today.

The 2024 STEAM Festival at King Salman Science Oasis in Riyadh is highlighting the early scientist's life and legacy, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Saturday.

Running until Sept. 30 under the theme "Fun Chemistry," the festival offers educational, informative, and entertaining experiences.

Ibn Hayyan's innovations, such as distillation, greatly

advanced chemistry in both the Islamic world and the West. His works, translated into Latin, spread knowledge widely.

Notable discoveries include hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, gold water, and silver nitrate.

HIGHLIGHT

Muslim scientist Jabir ibn Hayyan's innovations, such as distillation, greatly advanced chemistry in both the Islamic world and the West. His works, translated into Latin, spread knowledge widely.

He also explored practical uses, such as steel production, waterproofing, and creating artificial pearls.

Scholar Ibn Khaldun praised

him as "the imam of chemistry writers," and chemistry was sometimes called "the science of Jabir."

The festival aims to instill pride in Saudi Arabia's scientific heritage and align with future goals.

It features 100 workshops, panel discussions, live shows, and interactive exhibits across STEAM fields, exploring past, present, and future science and technology.

The event showcases local innovations, sustainable practices, and modern technologies, reflecting the Kingdom's dedication to scientific progress.

With over 25 pavilions, the festival covers the history of chemistry, petrochemical innovations, environmental challenges, and sustainable solutions tied to Vision 2030.

HEALTHCARE

Saudi Fund for Development aids St. Lucia hospital reconstruction

Arab News Riyadh

The Saudi Fund for Development and the government of Saint Lucia signed contracts with two Saint Lucian and two Saudi Arabian firms to complete the reconstruction of St. Jude Hospital in Augier, Vieux-Port.

This step will enable the transfer of health services from the George Odum National Stadium, which has been retrofitted since St. Jude Hospital was damaged by fire in 2009.

Funded by a \$75 million concessional loan from the SFD, the hospital's reconstruction will include 100 beds, maternity wards, emergency rooms, and surgical suites, and will serve around 50,000 patients annually.

The agreements were signed in the presence of SFD chief executive Sultan Al-Marshad and Saint Lucia Prime Minister Philip Joseph Pierre.

Pierre expressed his gratitude to the Saudi government, the

FASTFACT

The hospital will include 100 beds, maternity wards, emergency rooms, and surgical suites, and will serve around 50,000 patients annually.

SFD, and all contributors.

Al-Marshad said that the reconstruction will "empower local communities, strengthen the healthcare sector, and foster economic and social growth."

TheSpace

Tax compliance brings justice and fairness to markets

TALAT ZAKI HAFIZ



Hamoud Al-Harbi, spokesman for the Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority, confirmed that the authority is keen to provide an attractive environment in the Kingdom for traders and investors in various business sectors by ensuring fair competition in the markets through enhancing the commitment of taxpayers to all zakat, tax, and customs systems and regulations.

Al-Harbi explained that taxpayers' compliance with tax payments encourages investors, businessmen, and entrepreneurs to expand their businesses in the Kingdom, which would lead to a diverse economy in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030. It will also contribute to the sustainability and development of the national economy.

Al-Harbi has sent a strong message to taxpayers to comply with tax payments and take advantage of the services and guidelines provided by the authority's website, which offers more than 130 guidelines to educate taxpayers about the procedures and services provided by the authority.

These guidelines and services aim to enhance taxpayers' compliance with tax payments, especially since the guidelines include a detailed explanation of zakat, tax, and customs

concepts and their requirements. In addition, the guidelines provide several explanations and clarifications that are of interest to taxpayers.

It is important to note that the authority daily checks and monitors tax operations and confronts any cases of tax evasion by applying regulatory procedures against evaders.

The authority also imposes penalties on tax evaders as stipulated in the value added tax and selective tax systems.

Tax evasion is a serious crime in Saudi Arabia, and the authority is actively engaged in combating such behavior by enforcing compliance and implementing strict penalties for those who attempt to evade taxes.

The most prominent forms of tax evasion include submitting incorrect data, such as fabricating purchase invoices or modifying invoice data to reduce the tax amount. Another form of tax evasion is submitting incorrect and unreliable declarations to reduce the tax amount.

Violators who submit false documents to evade tax payment or reduce VAT due, or unlawfully obtain refunds

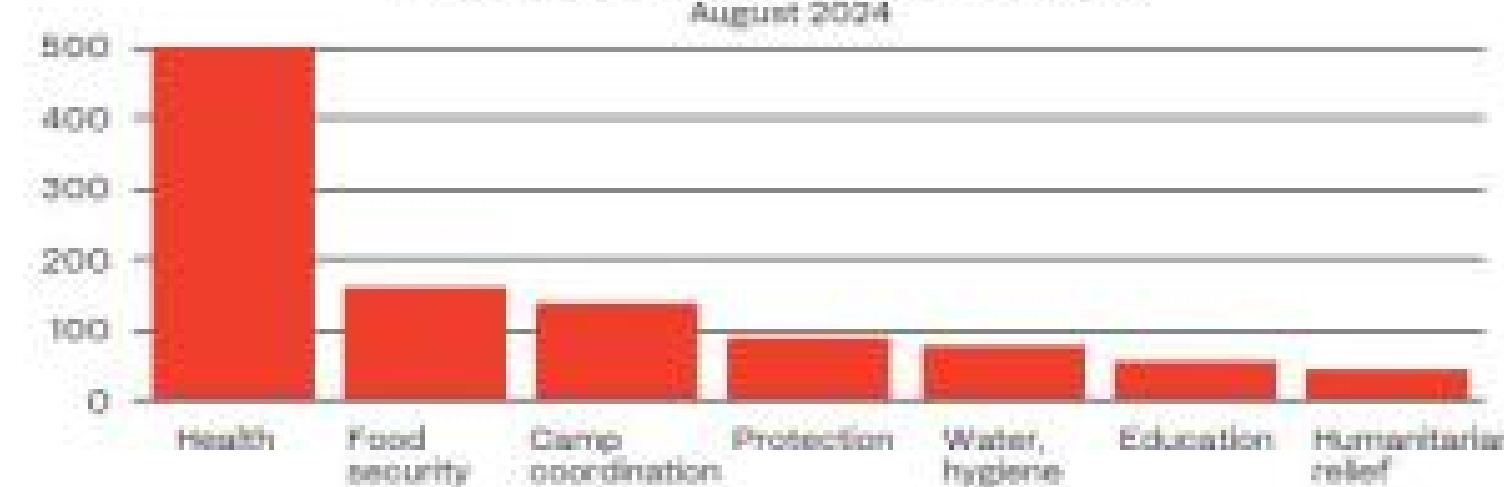
for tax, are subject to penalties of at least the amount of the VAT due, up to three times the value of the goods or services subject to the evaded tax. If the same violation is repeated within three years from the date of the violation, the penalty can be doubled.

Talat Zaki Hafiz is an economist and financial analyst. X: @TalatHafiz
For full version, log on to www.arabnews.com/theSpace

The Day's FIGURES

KSRELIEF PROJECTS IN YEMEN

August 2024



Source: ksrelief.org

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Rich heritage AlUla Dates Festival boosts local agriculture

The AlUla Dates Festival, organized by the Royal Commission for AlUla, began this week with a strong turnout from farmers and investors.

On its first day, the festival received 110 tonnes of dates, highlighting the region's rich agricultural heritage and growth potential.

The event supports local farmers and promotes sustainable agriculture. Workshops and training programs aim to enhance the quality and competitiveness of AlUla dates in both local and global markets.

The festival runs through to Nov. 9, held every Friday and Saturday in AlUla.

It showcases the diversity and quality of AlUla's date varieties. SPA Riyadh

Humanitarian efforts KSrelief provides food aid in Yemen, Lebanon, Sudan

Saudi Arabia's aid agency KSrelief continues to help vulnerable communities in Yemen, Lebanon and Sudan as part of its food security project.

In Yemen, the aid agency distributed 4,158 food baskets in Shabwah governorate, benefiting 30,562 people, and 1,129 baskets in Al-Mahra governorate, reaching 7,903 people.

In Lebanon, KSrelief's Al-Amal Charitable Bakery in Akkar and Al-Minieh distributed 25,000 bags of bread daily to 125,000 Syrians, Palestinians and locals in northern Lebanon.

In Sudan, 700 food boxes were distributed in Kassala State, benefiting 4,172 people during the second phase of the project. SPA Riyadh

Border control Kingdom arrests 22,373 illegals in one week

Saudi authorities arrested 22,373 people in one week for breaching residency, work and border security regulations.

A total of 14,216 people were arrested for violations of residency laws, while 4,943 were held over illegal border crossing attempts, and a further 3,214 for labor-related issues.

The Ministry of Interior said that anyone found to be facilitating illegal entry to the Kingdom could face imprisonment for a maximum of 15 years, a fine of up to SR1 million (\$260,000), as well as confiscation of vehicles and property. Suspected violations can be reported on the toll-free number 911 in the Makkah and Riyadh regions, and 999 or 996 in other regions of the Kingdom. SPA Riyadh

News Saudi Arabia

BIODIVERSITY

Avian paradise: the vibrant feathers in Asir's cap

Arab News Riyadh

Asir, a region renowned for its natural beauty, is also a sanctuary for a range of migratory birds.

These feathered visitors, some of which have inhabited the region for millennia, contribute significantly to the area's rich biodiversity. The region's diverse habitats, from highlands to plains, provide ideal conditions for a variety of bird species to thrive, the Saudi Press Agency reports.

In the spring, the forests of Asir come alive with the vibrant colors and songs of these avian guests. The region's blend of climate and topography attracts birds from around the world, including species from Africa, Europe and Asia.

The SPA team, accompanied by bird enthusiast Ahmed Niazi, recently embarked on a journey to witness the natural spectacle of gathered birds.

According to Niazi in an interview with SPA, Asir appeals to migratory birds through its

diverse tree species and varying temperatures. The acacia, juniper and natural flowers provide suitable habitats for different bird species.

Asir is home to a wide range of avian life, including endemic species such as the Asir magpie, a rare bird found only in this region of the Kingdom.

The fall and spring seasons are peak migration periods in Saudi Arabia, as birds traverse the region on their journeys between the northern and



Asir region's diverse habitats, from highlands to plains, provide ideal conditions for a variety of bird species to thrive. SPA



HIGH LIGHTS

- Asir's blend of climate and topography attracts birds from around the world, including species from Africa, Europe and Asia.

- The endemic species such as the Asir magpie is a rare bird found only in this region of the Kingdom.

- European species such as the European bee-eater also visit the region during the spring and summer.



southern hemispheres.

Migratory birds from Africa, such as the African paradise flycatcher, pied cuckoo and gray-headed kingfisher, find suitable breeding grounds in Asir's humid southwestern highlands. European species such as the European bee-eater also visit the region during the spring and summer.

The book, "Birds of Saudi Arabia," published by Aramco in 2020, highlights the Kingdom's rich avian diversity; 499 species are recorded, including 401 resident or migratory birds and 11 rare species.

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Saudi artist adds local twist to French art movements

Vibrant artworks are a 'rebellion against dull landscapes of the past,' says Mohammed Al-Aameri

Rahaf Jambi Riyadh

In his latest exhibition, Saudi artist Mohammed Al-Aameri is presenting his own take on cubism and fauvism — with a Saudi twist.

"Red Line" at Kenz Gallery in the Al-Mousa Center, Riyadh, is on show until Sept. 20. The works on display draw particular inspiration from fauvism, an early 20th-century art movement known for its bold colors and expressive brushwork, favoring emotional expression through color over strict adherence to realism.

Al-Aameri told Arab News, "My exhibition focuses on expressing feelings and emotions as an alternative to realistic photography, while mixing my own style with techniques inspired by fauvism and cubism. Although fauvism was short-lived, it laid the groundwork for many modern-art movements."

"Red Line" is the result of an artistic journey that spans decades. Al-Aameri's paintings



By tapping into modern art movements that push boundaries Mohammed Al-Aameri's goal is to challenge the status quo and inspire emerging artists to think beyond conventional methods. AN photos



encapsulate stories, emotions, and cultural heritage.

"Through my research, travel, and interaction with many (international) artists, I aim to revive the innovative spirit of

these schools in my own style, presenting it in a new and distinctive way in Saudi Arabia," the 55-year-old artist said.

"Red Line" consists of 20 works, including paintings that

Through my research, travel, and interaction with many (international) artists, I aim to revive the innovative spirit of these schools in my own style, presenting it in a new and distinctive way in Saudi Arabia.

Mohammed Al-Aameri
Saudi artist

feature figures in traditional Saudi attire rendered in a vibrant palette that contrasts sharply with the muted colors typically associated with historical representations of the region.

"I love colors, and aim to express a spectrum in my paintings," he said. "It's a form of rebellion against

the past, where we were often limited to dull landscapes of brown and green."

Al-Aameri's work is also deeply inspired by his childhood memories. These recollections provide a backdrop to his artistic expression, allowing him to weave personal history into his works.

At 19, Al-Aameri became enamored with Picasso's art after seeing it in a magazine. "His work touched me and encouraged me to explore

cubism," he said. "I had been drawing in a classical style, but Picasso's art showed me the potential to break boundaries. Cubism requires a deep understanding of geometry, which fascinated me."

This newfound passion led to opportunities for training with international artists in France and Florence, enriching his artistic perspective.

Al-Aameri's goal is

to challenge the status quo and inspire emerging artists to think beyond conventional methods. "I aim to elevate the concept of art in Saudi Arabia, as many artists are still confined to traditional approaches," he said.

His own artistic journey began at a young age. "I discovered my love for drawing at eight, inspired by my mother ... my first portrait was of King Khaled, which amazed everyone and ignited my passion for art," he said.

At 16, Al-Aameri sold his first painting—a watercolor depicting a Bedouin woman spinning wool. "The piece was filled with warm colors representing the Saudi environment," he recalls. This artwork caught the attention of a British collector and was sold for SR3,500 (\$933).

"Red Line" marks a pivotal moment in Al-Aameri's artistic journey, showcasing not only his skill but also his vision for the future of art in Saudi Arabia.

"The exhibition is a celebration of art's power to transcend limitations and connect with deeper truths," he said.



46% TURNOUT

Algeria president re-elected with 84.3% of votes

Opposition challenges Tebboune's 'fraud' win

AFP Algiers

Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune has won a second term with 84.3 percent of the vote in last week's election, final results showed on Saturday, down from an initial count contested by his challengers.

The preliminary results issued by the North African country's electoral authority ANIE on Sunday gave Tebboune nearly 95 percent support, prompting other candidates to challenge the results in appeals to the Constitutional Court.

The court's president, Omar Belhadj, announced on Saturday the official count, with Tebboune far ahead of his two little-known challengers.

The 78-year-old incumbent had been widely expected to win

comfortably and was focused instead on securing a high turnout, which according to Belhadj stood at 46.1 percent in the September 7 ballot.

Tebboune was elected in December 2019 with 58 percent of the vote, despite a record abstention rate above 60

HIGHLIGHT

More than 24 million Algerians were registered to vote in this election, out of a population of 45 million.

percent, amid the mass Hirak pro-democracy protests.

He has since drawn criticism over his human rights record.

According to Amnesty International, Algerian authorities under Tebboune "have maintained their repression of civic space" and "a

zero-tolerance approach to dissenting opinions."

Challenger Abdelaali Hassani, who heads the moderate Islamist party the Movement of Society for Peace, submitted his challenge to the vote count after denouncing the results as "fraud."

Youcef Aouchiche, head of the center-left Socialist Forces Front, later followed suit, accusing the electoral authority ANIE of "forging" the result.

In an unprecedented move, all three campaigns — including Tebboune's — also issued a joint statement alleging "irregularities" in ANIE's results, adding they wanted to make the public aware of "vagueness and contradictions in the participation figures."

According to the figures released by the court, 11.2 million of them turned out on September 7, with 9.4 million valid ballots.



Tebboune, 78, had been expected to win comfortably and was focused on securing a high turnout. X

MILITIA MENACE

New attempt launched to tow Houthi-hit oil tanker

AP Dubai

A new attempt has begun to try to salvage an oil tanker burning in the Red Sea after attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels, an EU naval mission said on Saturday.

The EU's Operation Aspidos published images dated of its vessels escorting three ships heading to the Greek-flagged oil tanker Sounion.

The mission has "been actively involved in this complex endeavor, by creating a secure environment, which is necessary for the tugboats to conduct the towing operation," the EU said.

Satellite images taken by Planet Labs PBC showed what appeared to be the three salvage vessels close to the Sounion. A warship could be seen nearby.

The Sounion came under attack from the Houthis beginning Aug. 21. The vessel had been staffed by a crew of 25 Filipinos and Russians, as well as four private security personnel, who were taken by a French



The Sounion came under Houthi attack beginning Aug. 21. X

destroyer to nearby Djibouti.

The Houthis later planted explosives aboard the ship and detonated them. That's led to fears the ship's 1 million barrels of crude oil could spill into the Red Sea.

The Houthis have targeted more than 80 vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October. They seized one vessel and sank two

in the campaign that also killed four sailors. One of the sunken vessels, the Tutor, went down after the Houthis planted explosives aboard it and after its crew abandoned it due to an earlier attack, the rebel group later acknowledged.

Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a US-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets.

CENTCOM

4 Daesh leaders killed in August Iraq raid

AFP Washington D.C.

Four Daesh group leaders were killed in a joint US-Iraqi raid in western Iraq last month, including the head of the group's operations in the country, the US military has revealed.

"This operation targeted Daesh leaders and served to disrupt and degrade Daesh' ability to plan, organize, and conduct attacks against Iraqi civilians," the US

Central Command said about the Aug. 29 raid. A total of 14 Daesh operatives were killed. Five US troops were wounded.

The four were identified as Ahmad Al-Ithawi, the operations leader for Daesh in Iraq; Abu Hammam, who oversaw operations in western Iraq; Abu Ali Al-Tunisi, who managed technical development; and Shakir Al-Issawi, who led military operations in western Iraq.



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News Middle East

GRAVE RISKS

US envoy set for Tel Aviv talks in push to avoid deeper conflict

Lebanese minister backs journalist in condemning Israel's 'psychological warfare'

Najla Houssari Beirut

US presidential envoy Amos Hochstein is expected to arrive in Tel Aviv on Monday as the US pushes to stop violence along Israel's border with Lebanon spiralling into a deeper conflict.

Hochstein is believed to be carrying a message from the US urging restraint, and calling on Israel to avoid any large-scale military action.

The Israeli government is due to meet on Sunday to discuss its response to the escalating conflict with Hezbollah, either through diplomatic efforts or a large-scale military operation.

The meeting comes amid growing internal pressure to facilitate the return of settlers who were forced to flee their homes in northern Israel about a year ago.

Hostilities continued as caretaker Information Minister Ziad Makari expressed his support for Lebanese journalist Amal Al-Khallil in condemning Israel's "intellectual terrorism and psychological warfare."

The minister called Al-Khallil, a correspondent for the pro-Hezbollah Al-Akhbar newspaper, after she received death threats from Israeli sources via her phone.

Hezbollah on Saturday rained dozens of rockets on northern Israel, mainly in the areas of Rosh Pinna and north of Lake Tiberias, and carried out attacks with assault drones.

The strikes were in response to attacks by the Israeli military on residential buildings in southern villages, especially Al-Ahmediyya in Western Bekaa and Kafr



Several buildings were heavily damaged in Israeli strikes in Kfar Rumman near the southern Lebanese town of Nabatieh on Friday night. AFP

Rumman in the Nabatieh area.

In successive statements, Hezbollah said it launched an assault drone attack on the headquarters of the 810th Hermon Brigade at the Ma'ale Golan barracks, and struck the 282nd Artillery and Precision Missile Brigade headquarters in Yiftah Elifleet, northwest of Lake Tiberias, with Katyusha rockets.

Sirens sounded in Avivim in the Western Galilee.

An Israeli army spokesperson said that 55 rockets were fired from Lebanon toward the Upper Galilee since early morning.

Israeli media reported that

Hezbollah was expanding its range of fire, focusing on Safed, the Tiberias area, and Rosh Pinna.

Sirens were also heard in Safed, Ami'ad, and Dovev in Western Galilee, and Yiftah.

Large explosions rocked the Upper Galilee, and rockets were reported to have landed in the Kahal area, south of Safed.

Explosions were heard in the artillery bunkers in Zaoura in the Golan Heights after a rocket salvo was launched from Lebanon. Sirens sounded in several nearby settlements.

Hezbollah said that it hit the Northern Corps reserve headquarters, the Galilee Division reserve base, and its logistical depots in Ami'ad with dozens of Katyusha rockets.

The militant group also claimed to have destroyed an Israeli Merkava tank on the Roueissat Al-Alam-Zebdine road with a guided missile.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said that an Israeli airstrike on a building in Kfar Rumman, in the Nabatieh region, on Friday left 13 people injured, with one person requiring hospital treatment.

Hezbollah mourned the loss

of one of its members, Abbas Hamada, 34, from the town of Qammatiyah in Mount Lebanon.

The Israeli army carried out a series of airstrikes and artillery attacks on several border towns in the southern region.

A spokesperson for the Israeli army, Avichay Adraee, claimed that security forces targeted rocket launch sites that were used to stage attacks on Galilee in the morning and toward Upper Galilee late on Friday.

Adraee said that warplanes targeted a military building in Kfar Rumman, while Israeli artillery shelled areas in southern Lebanon.

CONFLICT

Sudan's Al-Fasher city hit by heavy fighting

AFP Khartoum

Heavy fighting on Saturday shook a Sudanese city besieged by Rapid Support Forces, witnesses said, as US researchers reported unprecedented and escalating combat in the North Darfur state capital.

Al-Fasher is one of five state capitals in Sudan's western Darfur region and the only one not in the hands of the Rapid Support Forces, who have been battling the regular army since April 2023.

The UN says the war across much of Sudan has created the world's largest displacement crisis, with millions uprooted, and has led to famine at a displacement camp near Al-Fasher.

Darfur has seen some of the war's worst atrocities, and the RSF has besieged Al-Fasher since May.

"Neighborhoods are completely deserted, and all you can hear are explosions and missiles," said Ibrahim Ishaq, 52.

"The central market area has become unliveable because of the intensity of the explosions," said Ishaq, who fled westward from the city on Friday.

Witnesses reported army bombardment south and east of the city on Saturday and said they heard air-defense batteries firing.

The Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab said in a report on Friday that its analysis confirmed "unprecedented large-scale combat operations" in El-Fasher within the previous 10 days, "with significant escalation in the past 36 hours" involving both the army and the paramilitary forces.

It cited reports that describe "a major multidirectional RSF attack from the northern, eastern, and southern directions" on Thursday.

POLITICAL TENSION

Top court orders Tunisian's electoral commission to reinstate presidential candidates

Reuters Tunis

Tunisia's highest court ordered the electoral commission to reinstate two candidates for a presidential poll in October, warning that failure could jeopardize the election's legitimacy.

The move by the Administrative Court comes amid growing political tension in the country and fears from the opposition and civil society groups about a rigged election that would lead to President Kais Saied winning a second term.

Thousands of Tunisians took to the streets on Friday in the country's biggest march in two years, protesting against restrictions on freedoms and the undemocratic electoral climate.

Tensions mounted after the electoral commission rejected



Police block a road in front of a protest outside the Interior Ministry in Tunis ahead of the upcoming presidential elections. AFP

the court's decision to restore the candidacy of Abdellaif Mekki, Mondher Znaidi, and Imed Daimi ahead of the Oct.6 race, citing alleged irregularities in their candidacy filings.

Major parties and civil society groups said that the commission, whose members were appointed by the president himself, had

become a tool in the hands of the president against his rivals.

The head of the commission, Farouk Bouasker, has denied the accusations and said that "the commission is the only constitutional body entrusted with the integrity of the election."

But the court said on Saturday that the commission must

implement its decision and, if necessary, review the electoral calendar. It is unclear if this means postponing the election or extending the campaign time frame.

"Otherwise, it would lead to an illegal situation that conflicts with the electoral law and the transparency of the electoral process," it said.

The court asked Znaidi and Mekki to be included in the race after they filed a new complaint against the commission's decision.

The third candidate, Daimi, has not filed a second appeal yet.

Saied was democratically elected in 2019 but then tightened his grip on power and began ruling by decree in 2021 in a move the opposition has described as a coup.

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CONTINUOUS STRUGGLE

Banned by Taliban, Afghan women's voices dismissed abroad

Afghanistan's new 'vice and virtue' law bars women from raising their voice

Modasser Islami Kabul

With a new Taliban law banning women from raising their voice in public, female activists in Afghanistan claim they are also being silenced in the West, where their representation is increasingly dismissed.

Regulations issued last month by the Ministry of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice introduced stricter dress codes for all Afghans, but the restrictions stipulated that women not only cover themselves completely, including the face, but also

conceal their voices in public.

"The government has practically ignored the voice of women and is seeking to eliminate as much of the role of women in society as possible," Haida Akbari, a women rights activist in Kabul, told Arab News.

"The ban on women's voices is one of the steps toward the elimination of women's social role — neither the first nor the last."

The rights of Afghan women have been curtailed since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 2021, when US-led forces withdrew after two decades of war following the invasion of the country. Women and girls have been gradually barred from attending secondary school and

university, undertaking most forms of paid employment, and attending public spaces such as public parks or gyms.

Each of the restrictions has spurred condemnation and sparked debate in the West. But while these are aimed at defending the rights of women, they rarely include the voices of those facing the reality of life inside Afghanistan.

In recent discussions on the impact of the new "vice and virtue" law, a Canadian broadcaster sought a comment from a former Afghan minister, a former member of parliament, and a former government official — all living in exile.

Another international media

outlet focused its coverage on comments by a male activist, and while it also invited three Afghan women to comment, not one was living in Afghanistan.

For Akbari and other female activists, such practices further erode their representation and struggle for empowerment.

"There is no doubt that a woman living inside Afghanistan who wants to continue her life inside the country is very different from someone who is outside the country," Akbari said.

"Women inside the country want the problem to be solved, but that does not mean welcoming another war in the country ... These issues are not covered in the media."

Culture

People visit the Garden Expo Park during a lantern show as part of celebrations marking the Mid-Autumn Festival in Beijing on Saturday.

AFP



DEMOCRACY

Young Kashmiris set for first local elections in decade

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi

Nasir Khuehami and his family have never participated in a mainstream election in Jammu and Kashmir, but he is currently campaigning to mobilize others to take part in next week's vote — the first in a decade and taking place in a new political setting after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government stripped the region of its autonomy in 2019.

Polling will be held in stages between Sept. 18 and Oct. 1 to elect a local assembly — a truncated government with a chief minister, who will serve as the region's top official, and a council of ministers — instead of remaining under the direct

rule of New Delhi.

The result will be announced on Oct. 8.

"I don't care which regional party wins, what matters is that the people of Kashmir should have someone who is their own," Khuehami told Arab News.

The 26-year-old national convener of the Jammu and Kashmir Students' Association is visiting different districts of the valley to mobilize students ahead of the vote.

"For the last 10 years there have been no elections in Jammu and Kashmir. In the last five years, after the abrogation of special status, even democracy was suspended, and it is bureaucrats who run the region. There has

been no accountability," he said.

"When we compare these bureaucrats with our own elected leaders, we find that our representatives are accountable; they listen to us, and they understand us ... This accessibility we

FASTFACT

Kashmir has been without a local government since 2018.

miss now."

Kashmir has been without a local government since 2018 when Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party brought down a coalition government, forcing the assembly to dissolve. A year later,

Modi's government abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, which granted the region its semi-autonomy, and downgraded it to a federally controlled territory.

Indian officials have repeatedly said that the move was aimed at tackling separatism and bringing economic development to the region, but Khuehami said people on the ground have yet to witness it.

"All the development agenda has fallen flat," he said. "How many development activities took place, how many universities were created, how many exams were canceled? This is the reality." He added that he was hopeful that, after the election, "things might improve."

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Compulsory action

Serbian president to reinstate military service

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Saturday he had approved the reinstatement of compulsory military service.

"I hope you all understand how much we need a strong army, how much we need to purchase and manufacture more weapons," he told a ceremony at the Military Academy. Compulsory service would last 75 days, he told cadets being promoted at the ceremony to the rank of first officer.

"We don't want to attack anyone. Nor will we do so. But we want to deter those who relentlessly threaten us every day," he added. **AFP**

UAE-brokered deal

Russia and Ukraine swap 206 POWs

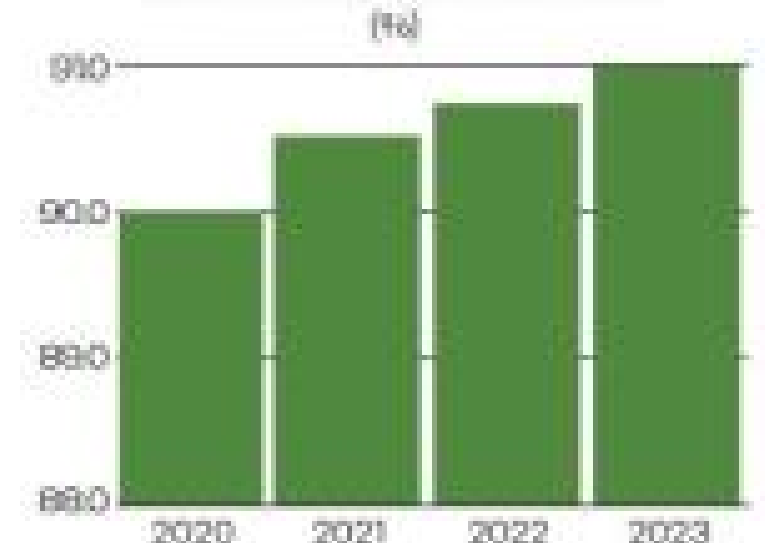
Russia said Saturday it swapped 103 Ukrainian soldiers held captive for an equal number of Russian POWs in an exchange deal brokered by the UAE.

The Russian troops freed in Saturday's swap were captured during Ukraine's incursion into the Kursk region, which began on Aug. 6, according to the Russian Defense Ministry. There was no immediate confirmation from the Ukrainian side.

"As a result of the negotiation process, 103 Russian servicemen captured in the Kursk region were returned from territory controlled by the Kyiv regime," the ministry said. **AFP**

The Day's FIGURES

GABON: URBANIZATION (%)



Source: Statista

What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

'Higher Admissions'

NICHOLAS LEMANN

In the 1930s, American colleges and universities began to screen applications using the SAT, a mass-administered, IQ-descended standardized test. The widespread adoption of the test accompanied the development of the world's

first mass higher education system—and served to promote the idea that the United States was

becoming a "meritocracy" in which admission to selective higher education institutions would be granted to those who most deserved it.

Higher Admissions

The Rise, Decline, and Return of Standardized Testing

Behavior issue

Norwegian royal held for violating restraining order

Norwegian police said on Saturday that the 27-year-old son of Crown Princess Mette-Marit had been arrested for violating a restraining order.

Marius Borg Hoiby was initially detained on Aug. 4 following a nighttime row at a woman's apartment in Oslo and accused of causing bodily harm to the resident, with whom he was having a relationship.

Norwegian media reports said police found a knife stuck into one of the walls of the woman's bedroom at the time. **AFP**

Wreaking havoc

Eastern Romania battered with torrential rain

Five people in eastern Romania have been found dead after torrential rainstorms left scores of people stranded in flooded areas, emergency authorities said Saturday.

Rescue services scrambled to save 95 people in the hard-hit eastern counties of Galati and Vaslui.

The storms battered 19 localities in eight counties in Romania, with strong winds downing dozens of trees that damaged cars and blocked roads and traffic. **AP**

YOUR DAILY ARABIC PROVERB
*The greatest wealth is satisfaction and
the worst poverty is subservience.*
Aws bin Haritha
(Pre-Islamic Arab notable from the Tay tribe)

Opinion

The Israeli-Palestinian battleground in the US election

YOSSI MEKELBERG

Inevitably, the horrific bloodshed of the war in Gaza has entered American political discourse. It was inevitable because the US is not a neutral force in the conflict but very much a main actor in every aspect. As such, it can make a difference — for better or for worse.

Sadly, over the past 11 months it has been for the worse and it remains to be seen how this is going to affect not only the presidential election but also congressional contests, especially in what is one of the most critical election years in American history for the future of the nation's democratic system and its relations with the world.

As a rule of thumb, domestic issues tend to define the voting patterns of the American electorate, not foreign affairs. Nevertheless, the Electoral College system through which presidents are elected means that swing states — those in which there is no clear majority for either Democrats or Republicans but there is a concentration of voters likely to vote based on a single issue — are particularly

consequential to the overall result.

For instance, in one key swing state, Michigan, official figures reveal that there are 211,405 Arab American residents (some suggest the true number is closer to twice that figure). Consequently, the votes of that community, should it mass in support of one candidate over the other in large numbers, could prove decisive, especially since the margin of victory for the winner in Michigan at the last election was relatively small.

Until President Joe Biden decided to withdraw from the race, the prospect of the Democrats winning the presidential election seemed to be slipping away toward a second term for Donald Trump, largely because of Biden's stance on the war in Gaza.

When he stepped aside and was replaced by Vice President Kamala Harris, it provided the Democrats' campaign with a new lease of life. But this was not necessarily because she distanced herself from Biden on Gaza — although she can, rightly, claim to have called for a ceasefire early in the war, and she can somewhat distance



Yossi Mekelberg is a professor of international relations and an associate fellow of the MENA Program at Chatham House.
X: @YMekelberg

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herself from Biden's one-sided policies because the role of the VP in foreign policy decisions is usually quite marginal.

Part of the debate on this issue in the US, as it is in some other countries, is too simplistic. It is presented simply as a choice between pro-Palestinians and pro-Israelis, rather than a choice between those on both sides who would like to bring the carnage to an end and move on toward a permanent and peaceful solution, and those who thrive on prolonging the conflict indefinitely until some elusive idea of "total victory" is achieved.

If the outpouring of sympathy for Israel and the losses it suffered on that horrific Oct. 7 day was understandable, the mood among many in the US has gradually tilted against Israel because of its disproportionate response.

It is the tens of thousands of Palestinians who have been killed in Gaza, many of them civilians and many of them children. It is the destruction of their homes, and it is the fact that Gazans have been displaced time and time again with no end in sight

that has led many Americans to question US support for Israel — even if in some cases the way in which their criticisms are expressed is troubling.

What many Americans could not understand was Biden's reluctance to ensure that the Israeli government followed the advice he gave at the very beginning of this war: Do not fight in vengeance but with a political aim in mind, and one that is within the rules of international humanitarian law.

Americans who would cast their vote primarily with the aim of ending both the war in Gaza and the wider conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians face a tough choice — but Donald Trump can hardly be considered the one most likely to achieve this.

It might actually be a Harris presidency, considering her care for human rights and her understanding of what it means to belong to a mistreated minority, that would offer some hope for change in US foreign policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Maybe she can become the honest broker that so many in the US, and elsewhere, are hoping for.

The mood among many in the US has gradually tilted against Israel because of its disproportionate response in Gaza



COURTESY: AMALAO RAHMI/ASHROU AL-AWQAT

The real test for the Tebboune administration lies in balancing a growing militarized ethos with genuine democratic engagement

Algeria after President Tebboune's overwhelming victory

HAFED AL-GHWELL

In an election marked by apathy and skepticism, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune secured an overwhelming victory, clinching 94 percent of the vote when Algerians went to the polls last week. Yet the landslide result raises as many questions as it answers.

Facing a second term with the weight of public expectation and scrutiny on his shoulders, Tebboune must now navigate a path that not only bolsters his claims of legitimacy but also engenders tangible sociopolitical and economic progress.

Firstly, while the nation's hydrocarbon windfall can offer some temporary relief, long-term solutions must address systemic economic fragility. Tebboune's administration faces the monumental task of diversifying an economy in which hydrocarbons constitute 95 percent of export revenues and fund vital social programs.

Ramped-up foreign interest in Algeria's natural gas, particularly from Europe as an alternative to Russian supplies, underscores this urgency. However, meaningful

progress will demand structural reforms, from efforts to attract diversified sources of investment to plans for tackling unemployment, especially among the nation's youth. Without such actions, economic stability will remain shackled to the whims of volatile energy markets.

Secondly, the geopolitical challenges Algeria faces remain formidable. A growing military entente between Morocco and Israel, following the US recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, has strained Algeria's regional posture and escalated its military preparedness.

The presence of Russian mercenaries in Mali and the continuing political gridlock in Libya increase the burden on the security apparatus, further stretching Algeria's attention and focus. Meanwhile developments in the Sahel region's "coup belt," marked by military takeovers of countries, diminishes the region's stability, and exacerbates complex cross-border threats.

Moreover, while French and American military withdrawals have been



Hafed Al-Ghwel is a senior fellow and executive director of the North Africa Initiative at the Foreign Policy Institute of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC.
X: @HafedAlGhwel

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compensated for, in part, by Russian private military company Wagner Group, this represents a delicate balancing act for Algeria, which historically has opposed external interventions.

Tebboune's administration must navigate these external pressures while addressing internal expectations for democratic reforms that have been stifled by an omnipresent security discourse, creating a virtual tightrope for him to walk in a country that has a history of civil strife, combined with a heightened sense of vulnerability among the populace.

Thirdly, the enhanced prominence and visibility of military institutions exacerbates this fragility. Tebboune has frequently appeared alongside the army's chief of staff, Said Chengriha, and the increased public presence of the military signals a deviation from its traditional behind-the-scenes influence.

Although this overt association might solidify the regime's control in the short term, it risks alienating civilian support

and perpetuating distrust among the populace. Tebboune's second term will therefore have to navigate a complex political terrain in which a blurring of the lines between military and civilian governance might spur resistance.

A revised constitutional framework declaring the military to be the protector of the nation's "vital and strategic interests" portends a scenario in which ambiguous legal language empowers the army to intervene in civilian affairs under loosely defined terms.

Tebboune's second term therefore risks widening the chasm between government proclamations and grassroots realities, a dichotomy that could more deeply entrench national frustration if left unaddressed.

Navigating these issues will require more than governance by decree; it will demand genuine engagement with political pluralism and economic transformation — avenues hitherto blocked but which are imperative for any substantive progress toward Tebboune's purported vision for a "New Algeria."

Opinion

EU hit by double trouble, with Macron, Scholz on the ropes

ANDREW HAMMOND



Andrew Hammond is an Associate at LSE IDEAS at the London School of Economics.

For full version, log on to www.arabnews.com/opinion

For much of the postwar era, Germany and France have been the twin motors of European integration. Yet, as the continent faces one of its potentially most challenging periods, there are possible crises brewing in both nations.

To be sure, it is not uncommon for there to be big political problems in one or the other of these two traditional pillars of the EU. However, what makes September 2024 much more unusual is there have been significant crises in the eurozone's two largest economies at the same time.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is still reeling from regional election results in East Germany earlier this month that saw the Alternative for Deutschland gaining the most votes in Thuringia, the first time since the Nazi era that any far-right party has won in this way in any state. The AfD secured over 32 percent of the vote, almost 10 percentage points ahead of the second-placed Christian Democratic Union.

The results are disturbing, but the AfD is unlikely to win power nationally at the next national election, even though it is a growing political force. However, the unpopular three-party coalition headed by Scholz's Social Democratic Party, which includes

the Greens and the liberal Free Democratic Party, may not survive in power until the scheduled federal ballot in September 2025.

While it remains possible that Scholz could win power again, albeit potentially with a different coalition, a long-running political crisis continues to fester in France following the success of the far-right National Rally in June's European Parliament ballot when it won the most votes

in that country. This conundrum is potentially worse than in Germany, as there is a serious possibility that National Rally leader Marine Le Pen could become France's next president in 2027.

Immediately after the landmark European Parliament result, French President Emmanuel Macron called snap elections in late June and early July for the General Assembly that saw a stalemate, with no one party winning close to an overall majority. France still had a caretaker prime minister until the Sept. 5 appointment of technocrat Michel Barnier, who led the EU's Brexit negotiations with the UK. It remains to be seen if he can form a strong, sustainable government.

The political weakness of Scholz and Macron is made worse by their poor political relationship. It is noteworthy

that since the end of Angela Merkel's long chancellorship, Macron has sought to balance French ties with Germany with those of other key nations.

Most recently, for instance, he signed the Barcelona Treaty with Spain, stepping up cooperation on trade and energy. This includes building a massive underwater pipeline to carry hydrogen and other renewable gases between Barcelona and Marseille.

Moreover, in 2021, Macron signed the Quirinale Treaty with Italy. Under that pact, France and Italy committed to greater coordination in areas such as migration and AI.

This highlights that, while the Franco-German alliance has been the traditional motor of European integration, cooperation between the two powers ebbs and flows, depending in part on the personalities of the office holders in Berlin and Paris. Under Scholz and Macron, bilateral relations have generally been far from fruitful, despite the galvanizing impact of the Ukraine war.

This matters not just for bilateral relations, but also the future of the EU. It is now just over six decades since the landmark 1963 Elysee Treaty between France and Germany established a new foundation for

relations following centuries of rivalry. The European Economic Community at the time had six founding members: France, West Germany, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The EEC's initial aim was to bring about economic integration among its member states.

Six decades later, in a transformed European landscape, the Franco-German alliance remains important.

A stronger Macron-Scholz relationship could still help steer the EU toward a pathway of deepening cooperation in coming years. Yet, there is a significant risk, instead, of different futures, as neither leader may have the answers or the political capital to address the growing challenges ahead.

It should be remembered that Trump, in his first term, called for countries beyond the UK to leave the Brussels-based club. At best, the EU may only be able to muddle through from where it is today.

This is why the brewing crises in Berlin and Paris matter. With potentially limited time left in office, Macron and Scholz know the remainder of their terms could still have outsized impact in defining the bloc in the late 2020s, but they may be unable to seize the opportunity.

It remains unclear if Macron and Scholz can enhance their domestic political positions

Neither leader may have the answers or the political capital to address the growing challenges ahead

Exploitation of critical energy elements needs to be equitable

RANVIR S. NAYAR



Ranvir S. Nayar is the managing editor of Media India Group and founder-director of the Europe India Foundation for Excellence.

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As the world races toward energy transition, there has been a sharp rise in demand for critical elements, such as copper, cobalt, and lithium, which are essential to the production of renewable energy technologies. In the past 10 years, this has led to a mad rush of companies trying to gain control over the entire ecosystem of critical elements, from mining to refining, as well as use in renewable energy generation.

Many governments, especially those sitting on huge reserves of these relatively rare elements, have also seen the opportunity to make a quick buck, and are auctioning mining rights of these at ever-increasing rates, while some have seen the opportunity to help their own crony capitalists by imposing numerous conditions, especially over foreign companies involved in mining and refining.

These conditions involve a degree of localization, which could certainly help the local communities that live on or near the lands where the mines or the refining and manufacturing facilities for these materials are located.

However, for an overwhelming part, the entire process, from mining and refining to

manufacturing, is bypassing the communities, or even entire countries, where these key resources are tapped by the companies in renewable energy sector, most of which are from distant lands.

At a global level, there is intense competition between companies from the US, EU, and China, with Western countries trying to weaken the stranglehold that the latter has over the current global

supplies of critical energy elements and, indeed, the entire renewable energy sector, from automobiles to batteries and wind turbines. The race is set to get more complicated and competitive as other countries look to join in. The demand for these elements will likely triple within the next six years.

But in this race, the interests of the local communities and the poor are being ignored, and the world seems to be headed for a rerun of the colonial era when natural resources from the colonized countries were greedily over-exploited by the colonizers, with little regard to the environmental and social impact of their activities, and also totally excluded the people from the colonized nations, who simply watched their natural resources being looted by outsiders who garnered immense wealth, while leaving the locals not

just poorer but also with a destroyed land.

In this context, a recent decision by the UN to set up a panel to monitor the entire process is highly welcome and timely. According to the UN, the Secretary-General's Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals seeks to build trust between governments, local communities, and industry, by addressing issues relating to equity, transparency, investment, sustainability, and human rights.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has rightly said that for developing countries, critical minerals are a critical opportunity to create jobs, diversify economies, and dramatically boost revenues. He also cautioned that these natural resources must be managed properly, and the race to get these materials cannot trample over the poor. As most of these mines are located in remote and underdeveloped parts of the poorest countries, the world must ensure that the use of these resources ought to first and foremost benefit the communities that are the guardians of these elements.

In many ways, this race toward net zero represents both a huge opportunity and a major threat for the world as a whole, but especially for the developing countries endowed with these highly sought after

resources. The setting up of the panel is certainly a timely and right step, but it is also important that the message of equitable distribution reaches the various private companies and governments involved in the exploitation of these resources. Complex as it may sound, the world needs to develop a common standard operating procedure for the exploitation of these resources for

many reasons. First and foremost, as we are potentially looking at mining billions of tons of earth and using trillions of liters of water, the impact on the environment and the societies near the mining sites will be unprecedented.

If companies and governments can rapidly agree on a common approach toward critical elements, it could prove to be a boon to the communities and countries endowed with these elements, and also ensure that the collateral damage is minimized and managed properly.

However, if these measures are not agreed on and implemented rigorously, then one could be looking at a repeat of the past two centuries in which a few have benefited from nature's bounty, while ravaging the earth and leaving hundreds of millions of people mired in extreme poverty.

In the race for critical energy elements, the interests of the local communities and the poor are being ignored

The impact on the environment and the societies near the mining sites will be unprecedented

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Business



The company made very positive strides in business development during the first half of 2024.

Abdulaziz Al-Nowaiser
CEO of Emaar The Economic City

VISION 2030

EEC's capital optimization plan 'to sustain growth'

Initiative designed to address severe financial issues, says CEO of Emaar The Economic City

Syed Ameen Kader Riyadh

Saudi master developer Emaar The Economic City's SR8.7 billion (\$2.32 billion) capital optimization plan is a "strategic response" to its current financial challenges, according to its CEO.

Speaking to Arab News, Abdulaziz Al-Nowaiser said the initiative is designed to address severe financial issues, including a significant revenue drop and a substantial increase in net loss.

The plan will provide the company, 25 percent owned by PIF, with greater flexibility to invest in key projects and support its ongoing premium city operations.

Additionally, EEC will convert SR4 billion of debt into share capital. This move is designed to reduce leverage and interest expenses, enhancing financial stability.

EEC is the master developer of the King Abdullah Economic City, a 185-sq. km. development on the Red Sea coast, where over 100 multinational and Saudi companies have already established a home.

"The capital optimization plan is holistic — it is designed to shore up our financial position while allowing us to continue to invest in key growth projects that we believe will support our return to sustainable shareholder value creation," said Al-Nowaiser, who took charge of the company in May.

"Quarterly financial performance will be driven by our efforts to secure new contracts and attract businesses and project partners to KAEC, and this is what management is focused on," he told Arab News.

Al-Nowaiser said the company made very positive strides in business development during the first half of 2024 and expects to make further progress in the second half. He said the company looks forward to updating the market in the coming months. "The capital optimization plan will achieve its full positive impact in the mid- to long-term."

Strategic overhaul

The need for such a plan became evident after Saudi Exchange-listed EEC reported an 82 percent drop in revenue and a staggering 460 percent increase in net loss in the second quarter of 2024. This financial downturn has underscored the urgency for a strategic overhaul.



The plan is linked with our long-term strategy, which is in turn closely aligned with the objectives of Vision 2030.

Emaar The Economic City is the master developer of the King Abdullah Economic City, a 185-sq. km. development on the Red Sea coast. Supplied



Left: Representatives of BSF, alinma bank, KAEC, SAB, and SNB during the signing ceremony.

liquidity profile and balance sheet," Al-Nowaiser explained, adding that the principal objective of the syndicated loan restructuring is to "re-align the repayment schedules for our bank debt facilities with our own investment plan and operational turnaround and liquidity profile."

Regarding the conversion of SR4 billion of debt into share capital, the CEO said this represents a previous SR2.9 billion facility from the Ministry of Finance, along with a SR1.1 billion previously standing shareholder loan from PIF.

"The purpose of this debt conversion is to significantly de-leverage our balance sheet and reduce interest expense," he said.

The plan also features a SR1 billion new shareholder facility from PIF. "The convertible shareholder loan from PIF plays an important role in bolstering our liquidity position and providing the necessary short- and medium-term funding for us to invest in critical and transformative growth projects, which are what will make our turnaround possible," Al-Nowaiser said.

Another important aspect of the strategic financial restructuring is the planned capital

decrease, aimed at stabilizing EEC's balance sheet by eliminating accumulated losses.

"This is an important measure required for us to take in order to extinguish our accumulated losses and create a 'clean slate,'" Al-Nowaiser stated. "It is important to note that the capital decrease will have no adverse impact on the operations of our business, but simply cleans up our balance sheet."

Future prospects

Looking ahead, EEC is advancing

NUMBER

SR4bn

EEC will convert SR4 billion of debt into share capital.

several high-profile projects within KAEC. These include the King Abdullah Economic City Stadium, a 45,000-seat sports arena scheduled to open by 2032.

"As you will probably be aware, we've been growing our sports, entertainment, tourism and hospitality offerings extensively," Al-Nowaiser said.

The stadium will be a multi-functional hub, including hotels, mixed-use areas, and sports clinics. It will host major events like the FIFA World Cup 2034

and contribute significantly to KAEC's potential as a world-class sports, entertainment, and tourism destination.

"This builds on our track record for sporting venues; for example, the city has been host to the Royal Greens international golf course since 2017, which has gained prominence and won multiple awards to become one of the most important golf courses, not just in the region, but rather globally," he added.

EEC is also progressing with notable hospitality projects, including a waterfront resort in partnership with Vivienda, a luxury eco-friendly resort with Envi, and the Rixos at Emerald Shores project with FTG Development.

These projects will play a key role in enhancing KAEC's profile and supporting its long-term growth objectives.

Strategic priorities

EEC's strategic priorities also include real estate development and asset management. The company aims to attract and retain reputable developers and investors, execute an efficient master plan for KAEC, and improve the performance of its assets.

The developer will also be focusing on selective execution of signature projects, upgrading and monetizing current real estate inventory, and partnering with top operators to enhance asset performance.

Al-Nowaiser, who holds a master's degree in accounting from Case Western Reserve University in the US, said the plan is intended to support a turnaround in EEC's financial performance through targeted initiatives.

"High/growing debt levels and elevated interest expense exacerbated some of the challenges EEC faced in the last few years resulting in growing accumulated losses," Al-Nowaiser explained. "The need for a comprehensive capital restructuring and optimization plan became evident to ensure long-term sustainability and create a strong platform for future growth."

Vision 2030

The plan aligns with Saudi Vision 2030, which seeks to diversify the economy and stimulate growth across various sectors. Al-Nowaiser said EEC's strategy supports Vision 2030's objectives by focusing on transforming KAEC into a major industrial, logistics, and tourism hub.

"The plan is meticulously linked with our long-term strategy, which is in turn closely aligned with the objectives of Vision 2030," said Al-Nowaiser, who has around 22 years of experience in executive and advisory roles at other companies.

He said EEC is making its efforts to develop residential communities with diverse housing options and high-quality social infrastructure.

Additionally, the CEO said they are working on building a city that "we believe will become a premier tourism and entertainment destination by enhancing visitor services and hosting international events."

Financial stability

A significant component of the plan is the SR3.8 billion debt restructuring, which involves syndication with banks. This restructuring aims to align repayment schedules with EEC's investment and operational needs.

"This is very positive for our

SUSTAINABILITY

Saudi Arabia's bold recycling plan to see it become world leader

Beyond its environmental benefits, recycling bolsters long-term economic stability, experts believe

Reem Wajid Riyadh

In an era marked by growing environmental concerns and the pursuit of sustainable development, recycling has emerged as a crucial driver of economic prosperity for countries worldwide.

Beyond its environmental benefits, recycling holds significant economic advantages, fostering job creation, stimulating local industries, and bolstering long-term economic stability.

Saudi Arabia is seeking to make the most of this industry, and in January the Kingdom's Ministry of Environment announced a comprehensive plan to recycle a significant portion — up to 95 percent — of the country's waste.

This initiative is anticipated to contribute approximately SR120 billion (\$31.99 billion) to Saudi Arabia's gross domestic product, and aims to generate over 100,000 employment opportunities for the Kingdom's nationals.

When fully implemented, the plan will see the recycling of around 100 million tonnes of waste annually, showcasing the nation's commitment to sustainability.

The program aligns with Saudi Arabia's broader sustainable development goals, emphasizing the implementation of well-designed strategies and processes across various sectors, including the National Environment Strategy.

Thinking behind the plan

According to Julien Vermersch, partner at Bain and Co. Middle East, the Kingdom's ambition to divert 90 percent of its waste away from landfills by 2040 is not only going to be achieved via recycling.

"While increasing circularity and materials recovery will certainly be a very significant lever — in particular, because today only about 5 percent of the waste is recycled — this cannot be the only lever," Vermersch told Arab News.

"Some waste streams, e.g. specific hazardous waste, cannot easily be recycled and in some cases incineration with heat recovery, i.e. waste-to-energy, will remain a better option," he added.

There are more than economic factors at play in this plan, Vermersch explained, pointing to the rapid urbanization and population growth in the Kingdom putting existing infrastructure under significant pressure.

"All key urban centers are struggling with landfill saturation and while it is possible to open new sites or expand existing ones, this trend will rapidly



In January, the Saudi Ministry of Environment announced a comprehensive plan to recycle a significant portion of the country's waste. SPA

become unsustainable as urban developments continue. Then landfills pose a real environmental threat," he said.

The Bain and Co. partner shed light on the fact that despite some advancements in this area, the effective management of leachate remains a persistent challenge in urban and industrial areas, as evidenced by numerous reported instances of soil and groundwater contamination over time.

"Additionally, in the absence of gas capture systems, the decomposition of organic wastes in landfills is a major source of methane emissions — estimated to be around 30-50 Mtpa (million tonnes per annum) of CO2 equivalent emissions, which is 5-7 percent of the total greenhouse emissions of the Kingdom," Vermersch said.

He said the Kingdom's landfill diversion target is consistent with what is already achieved in a number of European countries or select advanced Asian countries.

"The ambition to get there by 2040 however is quite bold. For these countries that have made the transition, getting to 90 percent landfill diversion has been a 25-plus years journey requiring stringent regulations, public engagement to build awareness and support and massive capital investments in new waste management infrastructure," the partner clarified.

Yves Takchi, principal and

global co-lead for the Arthur D. Little Waste, Water and Circularity Competence Center, told Arab News that according to the National Center for Waste Management the overall ambition is similar across all waste streams, with the combined landfill diversion targets close to 90 percent for all types.

"To achieve this diversion rate, Saudi Arabia has put a great emphasis on recycling, but is also aiming to deploy a variety of other techniques such as waste-to-energy to complement it. The landfill diversion targets that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has embraced are rooted in an ambitious and yet scientific approach to transform the waste management sector in the country," Takchi said.

He said that at a strategic level, countries have three high-level options to manage the waste that is generated by its economy.

"Firstly, most economies with a nascent waste management sector treat waste management as a sanitation service and focus on reducing expenditures while safeguarding public health. This often means that they heavily rely on sanitary landfilling as a cheap and effective method to dispose of waste. The second approach is adopted by countries that want to

HIGHLIGHTS

- The program aligns with Saudi Arabia's broader goals, emphasizing the implementation of well-designed strategies.
- This initiative is anticipated to contribute approximately SR120 billion to Saudi Arabia's gross domestic product.
- It also aims to generate over 100,000 employment opportunities for the Kingdom's nationals.
- When fully implemented, the plan will see the recycling of around 100 million tonnes of waste annually.

minimize the waste that goes to landfills while still maintaining convenience and ease of implementation," said Takchi.

He said the usual objectives in this scenario are to avoid landfilling in recognition of its environmental damage and unnecessary space usage, as well as to leverage waste to fuel the increasingly energy-demanding economies.

The Arthur D. Little official also said that countries in this situation usually end up relying heavily on recovery technologies such as waste-to-energy and refuse-derived fuel, which although have a higher cost and only marginal improvements in environmental performance, are much easier to put in place and rely much less on citizen participation and behavioral change.

Takchi said that world leaders in waste management follow the third approach.

"These countries have managed to put in place systems that strive toward a circular economy approach — as opposed to the linear use-throw-dump model. Their waste systems follow the waste hierarchy, which maximizes first the reduction and reuse of waste materials, then the usage of recycling as the next best alternative, with waste

to energy and energy recovery transitional and residual treatments before landfilling," he said.

With regards to the Kingdom, Takchi believes that Saudi Arabia has "rightly understood" that it is in a unique position to leapfrog from its current model to the more advanced, ambitious model.

"The country as a whole is embarking on a massive transformation journey embodied by Vision 2030, which has paved the way for massive investments in infrastructure across sectors and has demonstrated that the Saudi people are remarkably adaptable and embracing of positive change," he said.

The benefits of this model include environmental protection of land, air and water, a growth in local socio-economic value by increasing investments in infrastructure and creating jobs, and enabling self-sufficiency in materials by keeping scarce resources — like rare metals and minerals — flowing within the economy, which improves the trade balance.

Recycling goals

According to Takchi, the Kingdom has galvanized the sector through the creation of two separate entities — Saudi Investment Recycling Co., and the National Center for Waste Management, also known as MWAN.

The former was established by the Public Investment Fund to act as a sector champion, unlocking access to capital and investing in sector-building investments in partnership with local and world leading companies.

MWAN created a unified sector regulator that consolidated the previously fragmented regulatory ecosystem and took the lead in putting in place the ambitious public-sector led efforts to enable the sector's transformation.

"We have already seen developments from both entities, with SIRC having put in place recycling initiatives and multiple massive investments announced — including mega scale infrastructure for Riyadh City. On the other hand, MWAN has already put in place the unified Waste Management Law and its Implementing Regulations, the new regulatory framework for the sector that has finally resolved fragmentation of regulation challenges," Takchi added.

The Global Co-Lead for Arthur D. Little Waste said that MWAN has also begun to improve the compliance environment, having embarked on a large-scale master-planning exercise across the different regions in Saudi Arabia.

It has also announced multiple sector-enabling initiatives aimed at preventing waste at the source, incentivizing resource recovery and maximizing diversion from landfills and including the launch of hundreds of investment opportunities.





Skill enablement will be a pillar of the partnership, achieved through structured training programs to foster expertise in AI engineering, the official said. Supplied

STARTUP OF THE WEEK

US-based SambaNova sets sights on Saudi market

AI solutions provider to deliver advanced infrastructure to support Saudi Arabia's economic growth

Nour El-Shaerli Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's potential as a global leader in artificial intelligence is drawing attention from major industry players, with SambaNova Systems being one of the latest to invest in the region.

The US-based, multibillion-dollar AI solutions provider plans to deliver advanced infrastructure to support Saudi Arabia's economic growth, aiming to position the Kingdom as a key hub for innovation and development.

The company specializes in providing advanced machine learning and AI solutions to enterprises.

SambaNova's technology helps businesses accelerate adoption of the technology, improve decision-making, and drive operational efficiency across industries.

Marshall Choy, senior vice president of product at SambaNova Systems, highlighted the company's intent to provide durable AI facilities that will fuel economic growth in the region, positioning Saudi Arabia as a key player in the industry.

"We are making a strategic investment in Saudi Arabia because the region — like the US — believes AI is a strategic imperative to fuel its economic growth and become a global hub for knowledge-based innovation," Choy told Arab News.

He stated that AI is reshaping global dynamics and enabling businesses to gain a competitive edge by improving decision-making, reducing costs, and

allowing companies to operate on-premise with enhanced data privacy.

A prosperous future

"Our goal is to provide durable AI infrastructure to promote the prosperous future of the Kingdom by deploying SambaNova Systems," Choy added.

He also noted that collaboration with local Saudi organizations will be key in developing AI expertise in the region, stating that SambaNova aims to "help enable, through collaboration, durable model leadership to help establish the Kingdom's leadership in the Middle East and North Africa."

Choy also explained that the company's expansion into Saudi Arabia will enable it to reach other Gulf countries.

Skill enablement, he said, will be another pillar of the partnership, achieved through structured training programs to foster deep expertise in AI engineering.

This expansion aligns with SambaNova's broader strategic vision, which focuses on forming partnerships that support digital transformation for both government institutions and corporations. Choy noted that AI is increasingly essential for nearly every organization.

"Nearly every company needs to be an AI company. We believe AI is an asset, not a tool, and SambaNova delivers enterprise customers secure ownership of their models, as well as the ability to train them on their data, maximizing the

value of their AI investment," Choy said.

The senior vice president sees AI as an accelerant for productivity that will not only drive technology and business but societal and economic advancement.

Choy further emphasized the critical role of the Saudi government in the region's AI expansion.

With the government's \$40-billion investment plan in the technology, there is strong support for the industry's development.

We are making a strategic investment in Saudi Arabia because the region — like the US — believes AI is a strategic imperative to fuel its economic growth and become a global hub for knowledge-based innovation.

Marshall Choy
Senior vice president of product at SambaNova Systems

"Having native sovereign AI capabilities in the Kingdom will enable that fast transition and acceleration from a technology and infrastructure perspective," he added.

The company is also working with the Kingdom to build a strong infrastructure that will position the nation as a regional leader for the technology, Choy explained.

He highlighted that partnerships between government ministries, private enterprises,

and providers like SambaNova will be fundamental to success, both at the national and corporate levels.

The company wants to be the No. 1 AI provider in the Saudi market. Accordingly, SambaNova has partnered with the Kingdom's largest company, Aramco.

The partnership saw SambaNova deploy systems on site for the energy giant, serving up AI capabilities for its internal intelligence system called Metabrain.

"Metabrain was a project where we co-developed an AI model trained on 90 years of Aramco historical data, this is a model that was completely built on SambaNova infrastructure," Choy stated.

This model of collaboration has proven effective in other markets, and SambaNova expects the same success in Saudi Arabia.

Boosting the startup ecosystem

Beyond technological advancements, Choy stressed that AI would have a significant impact on the Kingdom's growing startup ecosystem, fostering innovation and enabling businesses to scale.

"We see this as having a very profound impact on how the growing Saudi startup ecosystem is able to foster innovation and properly grow their businesses using state-of-the-art AI capabilities like SambaNova Suite," Choy said.

The business environment in Saudi Arabia is also well-suited to SambaNova's growth and innovation goals, according to the official.

BizBriefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Automotive

Ford sales in KSA expected to double

According to a press release, Ford has carried its sales momentum forward from 2023 into the first half of 2024, delivering 15 percent year-on-year growth in the Kingdom.

Ford is on track to achieve even greater success, with sales for 2024 expected to double compared to 2022. Ford is the fifth largest original equipment manufacturer in the Kingdom, and a leader in the Saudi automotive sector.

Ravi Ravichandran, president of Ford Middle East, said: "The Saudi growth story over the past couple of years has been nothing short of spectacular." **AN**

Economy

China continues to grapple with lagging demand

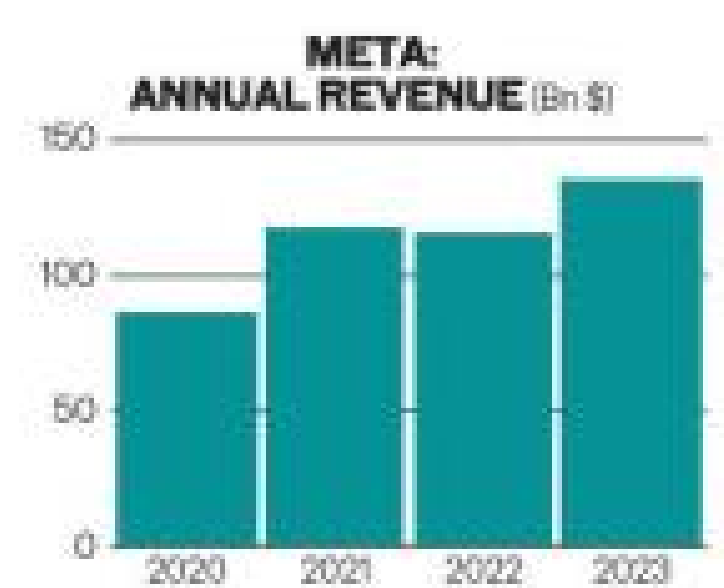
China's economy softened in August, extending a slowdown in industrial activity and real estate prices as Beijing faces pressure to ramp up spending to stimulate demand.

Data published by the National Bureau of Statistics Saturday showed weakening activity across industrial production, retail sales and real estate this month compared to July.

"We should be aware that the adverse impacts arising from the changes in the external environment are increasing," said Liu Aihua, the bureau's chief economist in a news conference. **AP**

Chart of THE DAY

In 2023, Meta's revenue stood at \$134 billion.



Source: Statista

What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

The Startup Owner's Manual

STEVE BLANK, BOB DORF

This book is a reference guide for startup founders, entrepreneurs, investors and educators, offering instructions on how to build a successful and scalable business.

It incorporates the "Business Model Canvas" as the

organizing principle for startup hypotheses.

The book offers detailed instructions on how to get, keep, and grow customers through web and physical channels, according to a review on goodreads.com.



Financial crisis

Maldives says no need for IMF bailout

The Maldives says its financial troubles are "temporary" and the luxury tourist destination has no plans to seek an International Monetary Fund bailout after warnings of a possible sovereign default.

Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer said the Indian Ocean archipelago was pressing ahead with tax hikes to meet its debt servicing obligations.

"We have bilateral partners who are very sensitive to our needs and our situation," Zameer said.

"I seriously don't think it is a time where we will be right now engaging with the IMF." **AFP**

Aviation

Boeing and striking workers to resume talks

Talks between Boeing and striking US factory workers are due to resume early next week under a federal mediator, the government said, after workers voted overwhelmingly to reject an earlier proposal from the embattled aviation giant.

Thousands of Boeing factory workers in the US walked off the job Friday over the pay dispute, its first strike in 16 years.

Union leaders called for the strike to start just after midnight, shortly after hourly workers in the Seattle region in the Pacific Northwest spurned the tentative contract with 94.6 percent of the vote, and to strike with 96 percent. **AFP**

New Murabba represents a major national initiative, and we are deeply committed to supporting it by providing the latest digital technologies.

Olayan Alwetaid
CEO of stc Group



Corporate

PRESS RELEASES FROM THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE



Michael Dyke, CEO of New Murabba, and Olayan Alwetaid, CEO of stc Group, at the signing ceremony, along with other officials from both sides. The partnership will leverage a wide range of innovative digital solutions.

SMART CITY DEVELOPMENT

stc's digital solutions to power New Murabba downtown

stc Group, a leading enabler of digital transformation, has signed a strategic partnership agreement with New Murabba, a Public Investment Fund company, to enhance and facilitate the implementation of advanced communications and information technology at the upcoming New Murabba mixed-use development in Riyadh. The partnership will leverage a wide range of innovative digital solutions provided by stc Group.

Through agreements such as this one, stc Group aims to drive digital and technical transformation across major projects in the Kingdom, enhancing infrastructure and digital services within the real estate sector, by leveraging the most advanced solutions.

Olayan Alwetaid, CEO of stc Group, said: "This strategic partnership reflects stc Group's excellent digital ecosystem and its ongoing commitment to driving digital transformation and being a key enabler of national development. New Murabba represents a major national initiative, and we are deeply committed to supporting it by providing the latest digital technologies."

Michael Dyke, CEO of New Murabba, said: "Our strategic partnership with stc Group will position New Murabba as a pioneering urban development that enhances quality of life and serves as a global example of innovation and sustainability. This collaboration will further establish New Murabba as one of

HIGHLIGHT

The partnership between stc Group and New Murabba will boost innovation and improve the quality of life, in alignment with the Kingdom's objectives.

the world's most transformative, modern downtowns."

The partnership between stc Group and New Murabba will boost innovation and improve the quality of life, in alignment with the Kingdom's objectives. It will also enable New Murabba to benefit from the most advanced technological solutions, enabling it to offer a truly unique experience for residents, workers, and visitors alike.

This strategic alliance covers

the potential implementation of all projects related to communications and information technology infrastructure. It also includes the utilization of stc Group's diverse and innovative digital solutions, supported by their expertise in smart city development. These solutions will encompass key elements such as the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, cloud services, and cybersecurity.

New Murabba is shaping new standards for urban development in the Kingdom, and championing Riyadh's transformation into a global, modern metropolis. The destination will seamlessly integrate technology with nature and sustainability, driving the capital's evolution and improving living standards.

At the heart of New Murabba is the Mukaab, an architectural icon measuring 400 meters in height, width, and length, making it one of the largest urban structures in the world.

This partnership underscores stc Group's commitment to advancing the real estate and tourism sectors in the Kingdom by providing cutting-edge communications and information technologies to beneficiaries and visitors. It will elevate smart technology services in new urban developments, fostering the growth and expansion of the national economy. Ultimately, this partnership aligns with the Kingdom's sustainable development goals, and will play a key role in enhancing the well-being of Saudi society.

CLAIMS ASSESSMENT

Najm reveals new indicators for detecting insurance fraud in accidents

In line with its ongoing efforts to enhance insurance fraud prevention, Najm for Insurance Services has announced new indicators for assessing the legitimacy of traffic accidents and detecting fraud. This announcement was made during the Anti-Insurance Fraud Workshop organized by Najm last week at the King Abdulaziz Center for National Dialogue in Riyadh. The workshop was held under the patronage of the Insurance Authority, in collaboration with the General Department of Traffic, and was attended by leaders from insurance companies and Najm.

Najm's updated fraud detection indicators for traffic accidents stem from discussions and recommendations gathered during three workshops held in Alkhobar, Jeddah, and Riyadh. These were conducted in collaboration with Najm's strategic partners, and focused on

combating fraud in the vehicle insurance sector. As a result, seven key indicators were developed, covering factors such as the time of the accident, the driver, accident circumstances, accident documentation, damage discrepancies, pre-existing damage, and evidence at the accident scene. The updates also include records of parties and vehicles in Najm's database, which help in addressing the legitimacy of accidents.

The direct discussions among participants of the workshops were instrumental in developing these indicators.

A delegation from the Insurance Authority, led by Ahmed Al-Qusair, executive director of supervision, participated in the workshop. In his speech, Al-Qusair emphasized the authority's commitment to supporting efforts that promote fraud-free insurance practices.

Saudi Arabia is set to host two groundbreaking events, the MEP International Conference 2024 and the inaugural Building Envelope Design and Insulation Conference 2024, on Sept. 16-17, at Jeddah Hilton.

These co-located events, supported by the Ministry of Municipalities and Housing along with other key industry stakeholders, will revolutionize the region's construction landscape, emphasizing sustainable and innovative solutions in alignment with Vision 2030.

The MEP International Conference 2024, held with the tagline "Pioneering Sustainable Innovation," will convene leading experts to explore the future of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing sectors in Saudi Arabia. Backed by prominent organizations such as KAFD Development and Management Company, ROSHN, Red Sea

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Two upcoming events to lead future of KSA's built environment



The two co-located events will revolutionize the region's construction landscape.

Global, Rua Al-Madinah Holding, CIOB, and CIBSE, this conference will feature distinguished keynote speakers including Mohammed Asiri, chairman of the Saudi Council of Engineers, and Khalid Abdullah Al-Molhem, CEO of Saudi Electricity Company.

The agenda will cover a wide range of critical topics, from sustainable energy solutions and smart building technologies to digital transformation, driving discussions on best practices and groundbreaking innovations that will shape the future of the industry.

Co-located with the MEP International Conference, BEDIC 2024 focuses on "Advancing Building Envelope Design" and marks the region's first dedicated event on building envelope design and insulation.

With the support of the Ministry, the National Committee for the Saudi Building Code, and leading industry partners, the conference will address the increasing demand for sustainable and energy-efficient building solutions in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

Corporate Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Threat Detection ISG names Kaspersky 'Leader' for XDR

Kaspersky Extended Detection and Response has received "Leader" status from Information Services Group for the second year in a row, reaffirming its technological excellence and capabilities to combat new and complex threats.

The ISG Provider Lens Cybersecurity — Solutions and Services Quadrant report analyzes the cybersecurity market, comparing provider portfolio attractiveness and competitive strengths. This study aims to evaluate suppliers of extended detection and response products designed to provide workspace security, network security, and workload security.

Tournament Arab Ludo Cup ignites Egypt's esports scene

On Sept. 6, the AppGallery Gamers Cup and Yalla Ludo, the region's top mobile board game app, brought the excitement to a fever pitch at the Ludo Arab Cup, held at the Westin Cairo Golf Resort and Spa. Co-sponsored by the Egypt Tourism Authority and the Egyptian Esports Federation, this high-energy tournament saw 32 skilled competitors battle it out for a share of the \$20,000 prize pool.

The event drew a diverse group of players, including attendance from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, while Egypt's own female players lit up the competition, securing a well-deserved third place.

Milestone Etihad Airways marks 20 years in Bahrain

Bahrain Airport Company, the operator and managing body of Bahrain International Airport, celebrated the 20th anniversary of Etihad Airways' successful operations in Bahrain. To mark this milestone, BAC hosted a special ceremony at BIA, attended by key representatives from both organizations.

Since commencing operations at BIA in 2003, Etihad Airways has become a cornerstone partner, playing a vital role in connecting Bahrain to a vast network of destinations across the globe. The airline's three daily flights utilizing modern aircraft of its Airbus A320 family have transported millions of passengers, significantly boosting Bahrain's tourism and business sectors.



I feel ready to come back,
really eager to be on the pitch.

Juan Mata
Spanish football star

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ELITE

Saudi clubs aim for dominance as new era in Asian soccer begins

Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar, and Riyad Mahrez lead the charge in prestigious tournament

AP London

The first edition of the AFC Champions League Elite begins on Monday with stars such as Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar, and Riyad Mahrez looking to lead their Saudi Arabian clubs to success in Asia.

Al-Nassr, Al-Hilal, and Al-Ahli are among the favorites to win next May's final and reinforce the Saudi Pro League ambitions of becoming one of the best in the world.

In the summer transfer windows of 2023 and 2024, SPL clubs spent over \$1 billion on transfers to bring top-level players from the big European leagues.

Al-Hilal midfielder Ruben Neves joined Al-Hilal in 2023 from Wolverhampton Wanderers of the English Premier League for a fee of around \$60 million and does not doubt that the SPL has enough quality.

"I have said this a few times — if you compare my data from English football to Saudi football, I run even more, but with the difference that I run in 40 degrees (Celsius, 104 Fahrenheit)," Neves said after helping Portugal

to a 2-1 Nations League win over Scotland on Tuesday when Ronaldo scored the winning goal.

"I am in good shape physically. Both Cristiano and I proved today



BACKGROUND

Al-Nassr, Al-Hilal, and Al-Ahli are among the favorites to win next May's final and reinforce the Saudi Pro League = ambitions of becoming one of the best in the world.

that Saudi football has quality."

Al-Hilal is the most successful team in Asia, with four continental titles, and it has started its campaign against Al-Rayyan of Qatar. Ronaldo won five UEFA Champions Leagues but has yet to win a major trophy with Al-Nassr, and he will face Iraq's Al-Shorta while Mahrez and Al-Ahli host Persepolis of Iran in Jeddah.

As well as the big stars, reinforcing the chances of the giants from Jeddah and Riyadh is that from the quarterfinal stage on, all games will take place in Saudi Arabia.

There are bigger changes, however. The Elite version replaced the AFC Champions League as the continent's top tournament.

The number of teams participating has reduced from 40 to 24. Instead of 10 groups of four, there are two groups of 12, divided into east and west geographic zones, with teams playing eight games, with the top eight progressing to the second round.

In the east zone, China, South Korea, and Japan all have the maximum allocation of three teams, although Australia only has

the Central Coast Mariners.

Clubs from the A-League have struggled in the Champions League in recent years, but if the Mariners succeed, there may be more places for Australian teams.

"We know if we perform and carry out our game plan and play our way, we can compete," Central Coast head coach Mark Jackson said.

"We've shown that. Whether we can compete consistently on that front, again with the size of squads these teams have, how they can travel because I'm sure these teams travel differently to how we travel."

The Elite tournament has become more lucrative, with the winner receiving \$10 million in prize money, an increase from \$4 million last season.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Forest stun Liverpool to end Slot's honeymoon

AP Liverpool

Liverpool's perfect start under Arne Slot came to a stunning end as Nottingham Forest won 1-0 at Anfield on Saturday, while Erling Haaland's double sent Manchester City three points clear at the top of the Premier League in a 2-1 win over Brentford.

Earlier, Manchester United eased the pressure on Erik ten Hag with a comfortable 3-0 win at Southampton.

Forest had not won at Anfield in the top flight for 55 years, but the home faithful were stunned when Callum Hudson-Odoi fired the winner 18 minutes later.

Liverpool had won all three opening games under Slot without conceding, including a 3-0 win away at Manchester United two weeks ago.

But the Reds were sloppy and sluggish after the international break and made to pay.

Luis Diaz hit the post, and Diogo Jota wasted a big chance to put Liverpool ahead before half-time.

And they were punished when Hudson-Odoi latched onto Anthony Elanga's pass, cut inside, and unleashed an accurate strike low beyond Alisson Becker.

"The result frustrates us the most, and we cannot be happy about how the game went. It was a stop-start game, and we hardly created any chances," said Slot.

"We only have to look at ourselves. We have to be better. Far too many times, we lost the ball around the area. It was not good enough. We have to be better with the ball."

Victory lifts Forest into fourth with eight points from their opening four games.

"The players did it so well. We were against the ropes but stayed in the game and found our moment," said Forest boss Nuno Espirito Santo.

City took full advantage of Liverpool's defeat to move clear at the top by stretching their 100



The result frustrates us the most, and we cannot be happy about how the game went. It was a stop-start game, and we hardly created any chances.

Nottingham Forest's Morato in action with Liverpool's Mohamed Salah during Saturday's Premier League soccer match. Reuters

percent record to four games despite a disastrous start.

However, Haaland's form at the start of the season remains unstoppable, even if the Norwegian just missed a record third consecutive hat-trick in the Premier League.

The 24-year-old's powerful deflected effort brought City level before he showed a combination of strength and skill to shrug off Ethan Pinnoch and dink the ball over the onrushing Mark Flekken.

Only the post denied Haaland another hat-trick after half-time,

but he has a Premier League record of nine goals in the season's first four games.

United had been left to decay on their humbling by Liverpool for two weeks over the international break but bounced back after a slow start at Southampton.

The Red Devils needed a penalty save from Andre Onana to deny Cameron Archer before two goals in five minutes just before half-time swung the game decisively in the visitors' favor.

Matthijs de Ligt nodded in his first United goal before Marcus

Rashford ended his six-month drought by finding the bottom corner with a curling effort.

Southampton are yet to register a point in four games since their return to the top flight and inflicted more damage on themselves when captain Jack Stephens saw red for a wild lunge on Alejandro Garnacho.

The Argentine dusted himself off to round off the scoring with a thumping finish into the roof of the net in stoppage time.

"Once Andre stopped the penalty, we scored a goal with

Matthijs de Ligt. The game was all ours, and we dominated the game from that point," said Ten Hag.

Third-placed Brighton remain unbeaten but could not break down Ipswich in a 0-0 draw at the Amex.

Crystal Palace came from 2-0 down to salvage a 2-2 draw against Leicester thanks to Jean-Philippe Mateta's double.

West Ham struck late through Danny Ings to snatch a 1-1 draw at Fulham. Arsenal face Tottenham in the north London derby in the pick of Sunday's action.

Sport Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Tennis coach Osaka 'no longer working with Fissette'

Former world No. 1 Naomi Osaka has announced that she's no longer working with coach Wim Fissette.

Osaka had expressed frustration with her recent results after a second-round exit at the US Open just over two weeks ago.

The 26-year-old Osaka won two of her four Grand Slam titles while working with the Belgian coach. Those were the 2020 US Open and the 2021 Australian Open. **AP**

Court case Valencia suspend Mir for two matches

Valencia coach Ruben Baraja said striker Rafa Mir will be sidelined for two matches after he was accused of sexual assault last week.

The 27-year-old was arrested on Sept. 2 after a complaint from two women accusing Mir and another man of sexual assault, before a judge ordered Mir's conditional release during an investigation to establish if there is enough evidence for a trial.

Valencia said they had opened disciplinary proceedings against Mir while "respecting the legal presumption of innocence" and Baraja said of the club's decision on Friday. **AFP**

World Cup star Son Jun-ho leaves Korean club

South Korean World Cup midfielder Son Jun-ho had his contract with top-tier Suwon FC terminated Friday by mutual consent, three days after Chinese football banned him for life for alleged match-fixing. Son gave a tearful press conference, in which he proclaimed his innocence, having been among 43 people banned this week by the Chinese Football Association.

The 32-year-old, who previously played for Shandong Taishan in the Chinese Super League, returned to South Korea in March having spent 10 months in detention in China. **AFP**



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Megan Thee Stallion will be honored for her philanthropic work at the Golden Heart Awards on Oct. 21 in New York City, recognizing her Pete & Thomas Foundation's charitable efforts in Houston.



& Finally

The Six

Ladies' day out

Take a break from your daily routine and make a splash with your besties at these six beach resorts in Jeddah that have days reserved for ladies only.



La Playa

Enjoy a luscious breakfast and take a dip in the sea with all your female friends every Tuesday and Thursday at La Playa.



La Maison

Rejuvenate with the girls at La Maison's sandy beaches at any time during the week. They regularly offer multiple live entertainment options.



Le Pont de l'Amitie

Step away from your daily routine and enjoy a relaxing day at this women's wellness beach resort.



La Mer Beach Resort

Escape to the beachfront and enjoy stunning views with your favorite girls on ladies-only day every Tuesday.



Coco Beach

Experience scuba diving with a certified instructor or just chill in the pristine blue waters with the womenfolk at the resort every Saturday and Tuesday.



Mangrove Beach

Have a cool time chilling with the girls by the pristine clean beaches every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday.

CLOSE UP

Camille Razat steps out in Amina Muaddi heels in Paris

Arab News Dubai

French actress and model Camille Razat this week attended the "Emily in Paris" Season Four photocall in Paris, stepping out in a pair of heels by Romanian Jordanian designer, Amina Muaddi.

The star chose the footwear designer's "Charlotte Sling" heels that featured a black patent finish. These shoes are designed with a squared oblique toe and include a slingback strap secured with a silver buckle. The structure is supported by a block heel.

Completing her ensemble, Razat, who portrays Camille, one of Emily's friends in the series, wore a tailored black suit from the French luxury fashion house Celine. The outfit was complemented by a crisp white shirt and a black tie.

The photocall featured the series' lead, Lily Collins, who plays Emily. Accompanied by her husband, Charlie McDowell, Collins promoted the hit series in a sheer-net Christian Dior dress adorned with a long fringe, complemented by a black blazer and heels. Charlie matched her ensemble with a black suit.

Co-stars, Ashley Park and Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu, attended the event, along with series creator Darren Star, director and executive producer, Andrew Fleming, and costume designer, Marilyn Fitoussi.

Leroy-Beaulieu wore a full-length, white sequined Saint Laurent gown featuring a high neckline and a halter-style top with a backless detail. The ensemble was complemented by long, black satin gloves.

Meanwhile, Park wore a velvet dress from Alessandra



Rich featuring a contrasting white satin collar and a row of decorative gold buttons down the front. The dress had a fitted silhouette that ended just below the knee. She accessorized her look with a Judith Leiber bag and pointed black heels with golden accents.

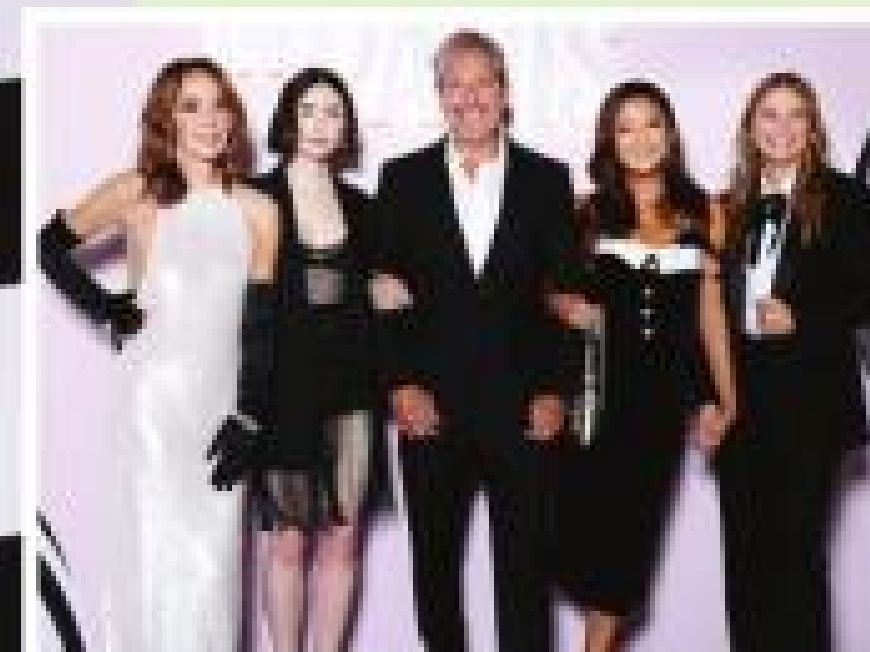
Since launching her eponymous footwear line in August 2018, Muaddi has attracted a loyal following of celebrities including Dua Lipa, Gigi Hadid, Kylie Jenner and Hailey Bieber. Her brand, known for its distinctive footwear, bags and jewelry, has quickly become a favorite among the fashion elite.

Following the launch, Muaddi has seen a series of successful events, notably her collaboration with Rihanna's Fenty collection. This partnership proved to be immensely successful, earning the Collaborator of the Year award at the 34th FN Achievement Awards in 2020.

A year after this accolade, Muaddi's influence and success were further recognized when she was named one of Women's Wear Daily and Footwear News' 50 Most Powerful Women.

The star chose the footwear designer's 'Charlotte Sling' heels that featured a black patent finish. Getty Images

Inset: From left: Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu, Lily Collins, Darren Star, Ashley Park and Camille Razat attended the 'Emily in Paris' photocall in Paris. Getty Images



ART RECOVERED

Stolen Banksy 'Girl with Balloon' painting found

Reuters London

One of British street artist Banksy's best-known paintings, "Girl with Balloon," has been found after its theft from a London gallery last week with two men charged, police said this week.

The work features a young girl reaching for a red heart-shaped balloon and there are several murals depicting the same image in London and elsewhere.

The painting was the only item stolen on Sept. 8, police said, adding it would be returned to the gallery.

The two men, aged 47 and 53, were charged with burglary on Thursday and remain in police custody.



Justin Timberlake

COURT CASE

Justin Timberlake pleads guilty to impaired driving

AP Sag Harbor

Justin Timberlake urged drivers not to get behind the wheel of a car after even a single alcoholic drink this week, shortly after pleading guilty to driving while impaired in New York's Hamptons earlier this year.

The public safety announcement in front of the Sag Harbor police department was part of the plea deal that knocked down the misdemeanor charge he had faced to a non-criminal traffic violation. The boy band singer-turned-solo star and actor was also sentenced to a \$500 fine with a \$260 surcharge, 25 hours of community service at the nonprofit of his choosing and a 90-day suspension of his license.

REVIEW

Colin Farrell is resplendent as Batman villain in 'The Penguin'

Shyama Krishna Kumar Dubai

Audiences will be forgiven for rolling their eyes at yet-another supervillain origin story. But thanks to Colin Farrell's "The Penguin," for the first time in a very long time, you won't walk away from your TV feeling mildly dissatisfied or pining for the long-gone golden age of superhero storytelling.

HBO's eight-episode limited series — written and created by Lauren LeFranc ("Agents

of S.H.I.E.L.D." and "Chuck") — tells the story of the rise of Oswald "the Penguin" Cobb, or just "Oz," from underworld criminal to mob kingpin — and does so in a richly realized manner that will earn comparisons to TV epics such as "The Sopranos."

The show picks up a week after "The Batman" (2022), as Gotham recovers from the Riddler's devastating floods. Oz (Farrell) seeks to exploit the chaos and fill the power vacuum



'The Penguin' is on HBO. YouTube

left by mob boss Carmine Falcone's death.

Helping him is Victor (Rhenzy Feliz), a young aspiring criminal who lost everything to the flood. Their father-son dynamic drives a tragic tale of corruption,

greed and violence, showing how society creates its own monsters.

Additionally stirring the pot is Cristin Milioti's Sofia Falcone, Carmine Falcone's daughter who is released from Arkham Asylum after a 10-year stint and is looking to take control of her father's empire.

"The Penguin" sings when Farrell is on screen. The Irish actor gives the role his all, and watching him go from impulsive and rage-filled violence to quiet

vulnerability to easy charm and then wounded puppy is a treat to behold.

And it is not always an easy watch, either. An episode dedicated to Sofia's backstory that examines her life before, during and immediately after her stint in Arkham Asylum makes for a riveting but incredibly grizzly and difficult sit. Milioti handles Sofia's justified anger and need for control and power with mesmerizing charm and deliciously dark humor.