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ARAB NEWS

The Voice of a Changing Region

SINCE 1975

MIDDLE EAST WAR

Houthi missile hits central Israel

- Militia claim to have attacked Tel Aviv with 'new hypersonic' ballistic missile
- Israel 'will not enjoy security unless it ceases its aggression against people in Gaza'

Saeed Al-Batati Al-Mukalla
A missile launched by Houthis hit central Israel on Sunday, a rare incident that caused no casualties but added to regional tensions nearly a year into the Gaza war.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the Houthis would pay a "heavy price" for the attack that started a fire and caused some damage near Tel Aviv.

Hamas praised the missile launch, vowing that Israel "will not enjoy security unless it ceases its brutal aggression against our people in the Gaza Strip."

Israeli medics said several people were slightly injured while "on their way to shelters" as sirens sounded, and police said a fragment of an air-defense interceptor had come down east of Tel Aviv.

In a televised statement, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said that Houthi forces fired a hypersonic missile at a military location in Tel Aviv, which traveled 2,040 km in just 11 1/2 minutes and evaded US and Israeli air defenses.

Israel "should expect more strikes and qualitative operations to come," Sarea said, adding that the attack on Tel Aviv was also retaliation for Israel's airstrikes on Yemen's western



Family and friends comfort Palestinian physician Najwa Alborno as the bodies of five members of her family were brought to a hospital in Gaza City. They were killed in the Israeli bombardment of Zeltoun neighborhood. AFP

city of Hodeidah on July 20.

Thousands of Israelis rushed to shelters in Tel Aviv, and explosions rocked the city as Israeli defenses tried to intercept a missile that landed in the city center.

After the Houthi rocket attack, Netanyahu threatened to launch a new wave of strikes on Yemen, similar to the attacks on Hodeidah.

"The Houthis should have known by now that we are charging a heavy price for any

attempt to harm us. Those who need a reminder — are welcome to visit Hodeidah Port," Netanyahu said at his Cabinet meeting.

Speaking to large crowds of followers in areas under his control, Houthi leader Abdul Malik Al-Houthi also vowed on Sunday to continue the campaign

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 • **Opinion: Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib** Page 9

against international ships in the Red Sea and other waters, as well as firing missiles at Israel until it ends its war in Gaza.

"Our forces continue their successful and highly effective sea operations against ships linked to the Israeli, American, and British adversaries," Al-Houthi said.

In Israel's northern flank, Lebanon's Hezbollah movement has traded regular cross-border fire with Israel in exchanges that threaten to spiral into all-out war.

Early on Sunday, some 40 projectiles were fired from Lebanon toward northern Israel and the annexed Golan Heights, the military said.

Israel dropped leaflets over the Lebanese border village of Wazzani urging residents to leave "until the end of the war" against Hezbollah, but Israel's military said a brigade had taken the initiative without approval.

REFORMS ON TRACK

Jordan king appoints Jafar Hassan as new PM

Reuters Amman

Jordan's King Abdullah has appointed Jafar Hassan, a key palace aide, as the country's new prime minister following the resignation of the government on Sunday, days after a parliamentary election that saw some gains for the opposition.

Hassan, who currently heads King Abdullah's office and previously served as a planning minister, replaces Bisher Khasawneh, who had been prime minister for nearly four years.

Khasawneh, a seasoned diplomat and palace adviser, will continue in a caretaker role until the formation of a new Cabinet.

Hassan, a Harvard-educated technocrat respected for his expertise, faces the pressing challenge of managing the economic fallout from the ongoing Gaza conflict.

The Brief

SAUDI FUNDING

The Saudi Fund for Development signed a loan agreement with Dominica to finance the \$41 million Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project in Roseau. **P4**

DISASTER RISK

The Philippines is the country most at risk from natural disasters, the 2024 World Risk Report shows. **P8**

HOUSING COSTS

Saudi Arabia's inflation rate reached 1.6% in August compared to the same month last year, driven by higher housing costs. **P12**

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TRADITION

The happy history of 'ships of the desert'

Arab News Staff

Saudi Arabia and its people have a long, fond history of coexistence with the camel.

Fondly known as "ships of the desert," the relationship between animal and owner is characterized by loyalty, love, and a deep connection that transcends language.

Camels have provided transportation, food, and companionship across the harsh Arabian Peninsula for centuries.

Camel owner Bandar Al-Adwani described his relationship with his animals as based on trust, companionship, and mutual understanding.

"Every morning and evening, I feel compelled to visit my camels in their pastures. I want to be close to them, monitor their health, and ensure that

they have enough food and water. I have a deep, affectionate bond with them, a connection that feels almost instinctive," he told SPA in an interview.

He added that he uses a herding technique called Alheda'a, a UNESCO-recognized oral tradition, that combines sounds, gestures, and sometimes music, to communicate with camels.

"When we hear stories of loyalty among humans, we are reminded of the unwavering loyalty that camels show to their owners," Al-Adwani said.

"They are incredibly beautiful creatures. Their graceful movements, their thirst for water, their kneeling posture, and the experience of riding on their backs are truly captivating.

Detailed report Page 5

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The agreement between the Saudi Space Agency and the Brazilian Space Agency will enhance collaboration in peaceful space exploration and leverage Brazil's pioneering experience in space sector technologies.

Mohammed Al-Tamimi
Saudi Space Agency CEO

KSA today



AIUla Music festival

Enjoy a lineup of international and local DJs, art, and culture at the electronic music festival at AZIMUTH from Sept. 19-21. Visit experiencealula.com for tickets and more details.



Riyadh Circus

Watch awe-inspiring dancers, musical fountains, gravity-defying aerialists, and incredible circus performers until Sept. 28. Visit riyadh.platinumlist.net for tickets and more details.



Dhahran Garden experiment

This messy experiment will help children answer the question, "Can physics make us better artists?" The Sept. 17 workshop can be joined through the Ithra app.



Jeddah Art therapy

Artist Shiekhah is conducting a therapy workshop on Sept. 19 for women looking to release some stress and express their emotions through art. Sign up through [@upgrade.sa](https://www.instagram.com/upgrade.sa) on Instagram.

The Register

THE PICTURES THAT MARK THE DAY



Saudi Shoura Council Speaker Abdullah bin Mohammed Al-Sheikh met with the newly appointed Saudi ambassadors of several countries in Riyadh on Sunday, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

The ambassadors in attendance included Ibrahim Bishan, ambassador to Oman; Mishaal Al-Sulami, ambassador to Mauritania; Mohammed Al-Barakah, ambassador to Ukraine; Fawaz Al-Shabli, ambassador to Cyprus; and Abdullah Sabr,

ambassador to Mali. Al-Sheikh wished the ambassadors success in performing their diplomatic duties in a way that contributes to strengthening relations between the Kingdom and the countries to which they were appointed.

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



WEDDING BELLS? Tom Holland

G Tom Holland and Zendaya, one of Hollywood's favorite couples, are reportedly in the early stages of planning their wedding, with hopes of tying the knot next year, according to a report by Life & Style. The beloved "Spider-Man: No Way Home" co-stars have won over fans with their journey from best friends to romantic partners, and now, according to reports, they could be married by this time next year.

"Tom and Zendaya are in a very positive place, and they've been exclusive now for more than five years," a source shared, adding, "They are part of each other's families at this point and marriage has been part of the conversation for a while."

"He's never going to have a clearer path to formally propose and, much more importantly, to plan for his and Zendaya's wedding," the source said.

BOY MOM Britney Spears

X Pop icon Britney Spears celebrated her two sons, Sean Preston and Jayden James Federline, with a heartfelt Instagram post, sharing throwback photos to mark their milestone birthdays.

Sean Preston turned 19 on Sept. 14, while Jayden James turned 18 on Sept. 12. The pop star, who shares both sons with her ex-husband Kevin Federline, expressed her love and wishes for them in the emotional post.

"This month is my boys' birthdays!" the 42-year-old singer wrote in the caption. "Happy Birthday babies and I hope you get all your wishes and more!"

She also added: "Does anyone have any clue why we're all looking up?" in reference to the first photo she shared.

Spears is reportedly set to continue paying child support to Federline, despite Jayden turning 18.



According to Federline's attorney Mark Vincent Kaplan, under California law, a parent must continue paying child support until their child has graduated high school, even if they turn 18.

"The child support in this case for Jayden is being paid consistent with that law. His graduation for high school will be in November," Kaplan told People.

A source told the magazine that Spears is happy to continue supporting her sons in any way she can.

"Britney has plans for the boys' future and will do whatever she can and will always continue to love and support them," says the source.

Spears has often spoken about how motherhood transformed her life. Ahead of the release of her highly anticipated memoir "The Woman in Me" published last year, she told People that one of her greatest achievements is becoming a mother.

Today's Number

2.1k

At an altitude of over 1,800 meters that reaches 2,100 meters in some areas, and stretching for 20 kilometers, the Mohammediyah Mountain Pass amidst the Sarawat Mountains is a vital economic artery for Taif, Saudi Press Agency reported on Sunday.

Review

'The Bamboo Stalk'

RAHAF JAMBI

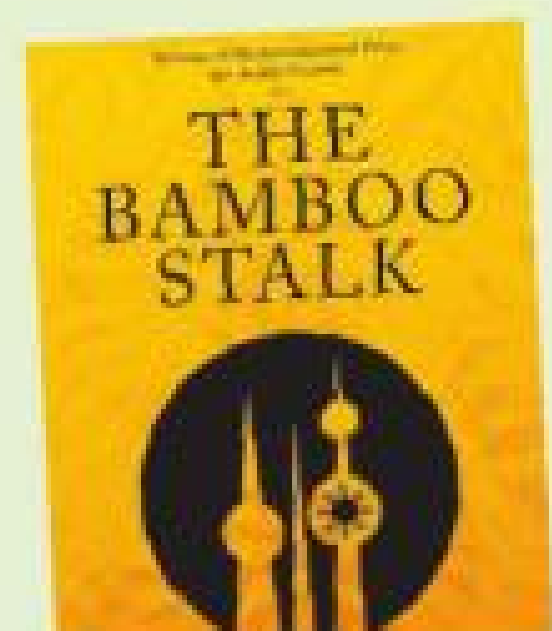
"The Bamboo Stalk" by Saud Alsanousi, translated by Jonathan Wright and published in 2012, is a profound exploration of identity, belonging, and the complexities of cultural heritage.

Through the life of its protagonist, a young man named Kadhim, the winner of the 2013 International Prize for Arabic Fiction intricately weaves themes of race, nationality, and the search for self in a world that often feels divided.

Kadhim, born to a Filipino mother and a Kuwaiti father, embodies the challenges of living between two cultures. His journey is marked by the struggle for acceptance in a society that often views him as an outsider.

Alsanousi captures Kadhim's internal conflict beautifully, presenting a character who is torn between his Filipino roots and the expectations of Kuwaiti society. This duality resonates deeply, especially for readers who have experienced the complexities of multicultural backgrounds.

The narrative is rich with vivid descriptions that transport the reader to the streets of Kuwait and the Philippines. Alsanousi's prose is both lyrical and poignant, allowing readers to feel the weight of Kadhim's experiences.



TheRegion

The Middle East Roundup

Arab News Jeddah

- Dubai World Trade Centre is holding two events this week. "The Elevator Show" takes place from Sept. 16-18 and features elevator manufacturers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. The Dubai ITS World Congress takes place from Sept. 16-20 and focuses

on the future of transportation. For more details, check dwtc.com.

- City Center Doha Mall in Qatar is hosting an array of activities — including crafting, coloring and balloon-twisting — for children of all ages to enjoy the start of the new school year on a high, while mingling with

friends and peers. This event will run until Sept. 28.

- Enjoy a family-friendly atmosphere every Sunday at Badaro Farmers Market at College Saint Sauveur, Beirut. Share a coffee with friends, have a bite, or relax and enjoy the city. The market will run until Dec. 29.

Prayer Times in Saudi Arabia

	Sept. 16	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghreb	Isha
Makkah	4:52	6:07	12:16	3:42	6:24	7:54	
Madinah	4:50	6:07	12:17	3:44	6:26	7:56	
Riyadh	4:22	5:39	11:49	3:16	5:57	7:27	
Abha	4:44	5:57	12:06	3:28	6:12	7:42	
Dammam	4:07	5:25	11:35	3:04	5:44	7:14	

The Lebanese government should ensure all children, regardless of nationality or status, can register for school.

Michelle Randhawa
Human Rights Watch



Spotlight

RESEARCH & STUDIES
THE MIDDLE EAST, BETTER EXPLAINED

ARAB NEWS

LEBANON

Endangered right to education

Unable to obtain residency papers, thousands of Syrian children could be barred from attending school

Nadia Al-Faour Dubai

Authorities in Lebanon are imposing new restrictions that could deny thousands of displaced children access to an education. The measures come against a backdrop of mounting hostility toward war-displaced Syrians who currently reside in Lebanon.

The development comes as hostilities on the Lebanon-Israel border show no sign of abating, deepening sectarian divides and compounding the economic and political crises that have kept the country on hold.

This summer, at least two municipalities in Lebanon have announced that Syrian children wishing to enroll at schools in their districts must have a valid residency permit prior to registering for the new academic year.

Al-Qaa municipality in the Baalbek-Hermel governorate issued a statement declaring Syrian students were not eligible to register unless they and their families had legal residency permits issued by the Lebanese General Security.

In a recent interview with Alhurra news agency, Nabil Kahala, the mayor of Sin El-Fil, a suburb east of Beirut, said the measures prohibit Syrians from registering in schools unless they have legal residency.

"It is not enough for a displaced Syrian to have a document proving his registration with the UN," said Kahala. "We require a residency issued by the Lebanese General Security in order to be able to rent a home, work, and enroll his children in schools."

Any school that violates this decision "will be reported to the relevant authorities," he said, stressing that "this measure is not racist, but rather is an implementation of Lebanese laws."

Due to the red tape and stringent criteria for the renewal of Lebanese residency permits, only around 20 percent of displaced Syrians have valid residency status in Lebanon.

As some 80 percent are unable to obtain these documents, the measures have effectively barred Syrian children in these areas from attending school, depriving them of their right to an education.

Under international law, all children have the right to an education, free from discrimination, irrespective of their immigration or refugee status.

In December 2023, foreign



Syrian children, main and bottom, must now have a valid residency permit to enroll at schools in two Lebanese municipalities, below. Getty Images/AFP



It is not just displaced Syrians who are struggling to access basic services in Lebanon. In the throes of myriad crises and without a functioning government, many Lebanese citizens are unable to obtain a decent education.

Since 2019 Lebanese have suffered from a financial meltdown. To make matters worse, cross-border skirmishes between Israel and Lebanon-based militant groups have killed at least 88 people in Lebanon, since the eruption of war in Gaza in October last year.

With more than 80 percent of the population pushed below the poverty line, initial sympathy for the thousands of migrants and refugees who fled violence, persecution, and poverty in Syria has since waned.

The forcible deportation of Syrians has now become commonplace, in defiance of aid agencies who say Lebanese authorities have a duty not to endanger the safety of refugees — a principle known as non-refoulement.

Besides the new set of regulations issued by Lebanese authorities, the increasingly hostile rhetoric of some politicians has also fanned the

flames of anti-Syrian sentiment, leading to outbreaks of inter-communal violence.

In July, Samir Geagea, leader of the Lebanese Forces political party, called on the Ministry of Education to make schools ask students to provide the appropriate identification papers to register for the new academic year.

Geagea said all foreign students, especially Syrians, should have valid residency permits in order to register.

Dubbing the Syrian children an "existential threat," the Free Patriotic Movement also issued a statement, saying: "We call on the Ministry of Education and owners of private schools and institutes to immediately stop the



registration of any Syrian student in the country illegally."

Faisal, a Syrian living in Lebanon without a residency permit, has been trying to find a way to enroll his 8-year-old son in school. Back in 2014, when he first arrived in Lebanon, he said services were readily available and the atmosphere more welcoming.

"It was a little easier back then," Faisal, who did not give his full name to avoid legal repercussions, told Arab News. "There was no hostility as you encounter nowadays. It's a struggle and I am under constant stress of being found out, then getting deported."

Faisal says he is able to scrape a meager living by working multiple jobs with Lebanese employers who are willing to defy the law and pay cheap Syrian laborers "under the table."

He added: "I don't want my son to grow up without an education and have to end up living like me. I want him to speak languages; I want him to know how to read and write properly; I want him to be able to have a chance at a good life."

There are around 1.5 million Syrians in Lebanon, according to Lebanese government figures. Of these, the UNHCR has registered just 800,000.

Every year, local and international humanitarian organizations attempt to put pressure on the Ministry of Education to pass some laws to allow more undocumented Syrian children to obtain an education.

Lebanese law, however, is not the only barrier.

According to the 2023 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, conducted by the UNHCR, the UN Children's Fund, and the World Food Programme, some of the biggest obstacles to Syrian children gaining an education in Lebanon include the cost of transport, fees and entry requirements, and the impact of poverty on school attendance.

Indeed, many Syrian children are forced to drop out of school in order to work to support their families, while daughters are frequently married off at a young age so that households have fewer mouths to feed.

Those lucky enough to find a school place and who have the means to attend can face discrimination, taunting and bullying from their classmates.

"My son was a joyful, bubbly child growing up, but I noticed he started becoming withdrawn after attending the private school I scrounged to get him enrolled in," said Faisal. His son was being bullied by his classmates who called him a "lowly Syrian," he said.

"Syrian has become a slur now."

IN NUMBERS

47,000

School-aged Syrian refugees in Lebanon registered by the UN.

20%

Proportion of Syrians living in Lebanon with valid residency status.



The Saudi fund's CEO, Sultan Al-Marshad, meets Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit in Roseau. SPA

SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROWTH

Saudi fund backs \$41m revamp of Dominica's capital

Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project to boost growth, connectivity and job creation in Roseau

Arab News Riyadh

The Saudi Fund for Development signed a loan agreement on Sunday with Dominica to finance the \$41 million Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project in Roseau, the capital city.

The project is expected to drive socio-economic growth and improve the quality of life, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

The agreement was signed by the fund's CEO Sultan Al-Marshad and Dominican Minister of Finance Irving McIntyre.

Dominica's Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit delivered a keynote address at the ceremony, expressing gratitude

for Saudi Arabia's support and acknowledging the fund's role in the project.

The project involves rehabilitating seven main streets, improving road connectivity,

FASTFACT

The Saudi fund, celebrating its 50th anniversary, has financed over 800 projects in 100 countries. Since 2023, it has extended development loans to 10 new Small Island Developing States.

and enhancing safety and access to basic services.

It will also contribute to commercial and residential development and create jobs, SPA reported.

The project aligns with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and demonstrates the fund's commitment to supporting development in Dominica and other Small Island Developing States.

Al-Marshad said: "We wish Dominica continued growth and prosperity. May this project drive positive change and sustainable development."

McIntyre said: "The project is a critical step in addressing the challenges facing Roseau. It is expected to increase social and economic productivity."

The Saudi fund, celebrating its 50th anniversary, has financed over 800 projects in 100 countries. Since 2023, it has extended development loans to 10 new Small Island Developing States.

SKILL ENHANCEMENT

New diploma in data science, AI to empower future tech leaders

Arab News Jeddah

Turwaiq Academy in Riyadh, in partnership with Meta, has launched the first diploma in data science and artificial intelligence.

The program will equip students with the skills needed to excel in these growing fields, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Sunday.

Accredited by the Technical and Vocational Training Corp, the diploma will start in December 2024 and run for nine months. It offers practical skills in a competitive learning environment tailored to market needs.

Participants will study machine learning, data analysis with Python and Tableau, AI system development, and big data management. These skills will help students create innovative tech solutions for various societal needs.

Jouelle Awad, head of public policy programs for Africa, the Middle East and Türkiye at Meta, praised the partnership with the academy. The collaboration will enhance the skills of Saudi youth and foster innovation and creativity across sectors.

In August, the academy announced the launch of a

BACKGROUND

Established in 2019, Tuwaiq Academy works with more than 1,000 in-person trainees daily and offers professional certifications in collaboration with global organizations such as Apple, Meta, Amazon, Alibaba, Dell, CompTIA, OffSec, IBM and Microsoft.

machine-learning boot camp in partnership with Stanford University, starting on Sept. 30 and running for two and a half months.

TheSpace

Opportunities, potential for sustainable health tourism in Saudi Arabia

SAAD MAJDY BASLOM



Saudi Arabia is on the verge of a major transformation in its tourism sector, aligned with Vision 2030. With strong healthcare infrastructure, cultural heritage, and strategic initiatives, it has the potential to become a leading destination for health and wellness tourism. The growing health tourism market offers the Kingdom an opportunity to leverage its investments and strategic location for sustainable development in this sector.

Saudi Arabia's potential in health tourism stems from its advanced healthcare infrastructure, supported by significant government investments. The Kingdom has developed medical cities, hospitals, research centers, and specialized complexes, such as King Fahd Medical City and King Faisal Specialist Hospital, to attract health tourists.

By 2023, over 111 organizations had Joint Commission International accreditation. This high-standard healthcare system enhances service quality and instills confidence in international patients seeking top-tier care and a unique healing experience.

Saudi Arabia's commitment to excellence in medical services and pharmaceutical care strengthens its position as a potential leader in health tourism. The Kingdom has achieved specialized medical standards comparable to those in the US and Canada. The successful Saudi Conjoined Twins Separation Program, with over 50 surgeries, showcases its

capability in complex procedures. Moreover, Saudi Arabia's strict pharmaceutical standards, akin to those of the US Food and Drug Administration, ensure patients receive safe, high-quality treatments.

Beyond healthcare, Saudi Arabia's rich historic heritage adds a unique dimension to its medical and wellness tourism sector. Tourists can combine treatments with cultural exploration, such as visiting the historic site of AlUla. This holistic approach enhances the

visitor experience and appeals to those seeking both medical care and cultural enrichment. The blend of cultural landmarks with wellness tourism makes Saudi Arabia an attractive destination, offering authentic charm while catering to health and wellness needs.

Saudi Arabia's strategic geographic location at the crossroads of Asia, Europe, and Africa enhances its

potential in the health tourism sector. Its proximity to major health tourism markets in Europe and Africa, with six to eight-hour flight times, reduces travel costs and time for patients seeking high-quality medical services at lower prices, with shorter wait times. The country's modern airports and robust transportation infrastructure further support seamless connectivity for international patients, boosting its appeal as a health tourism destination.

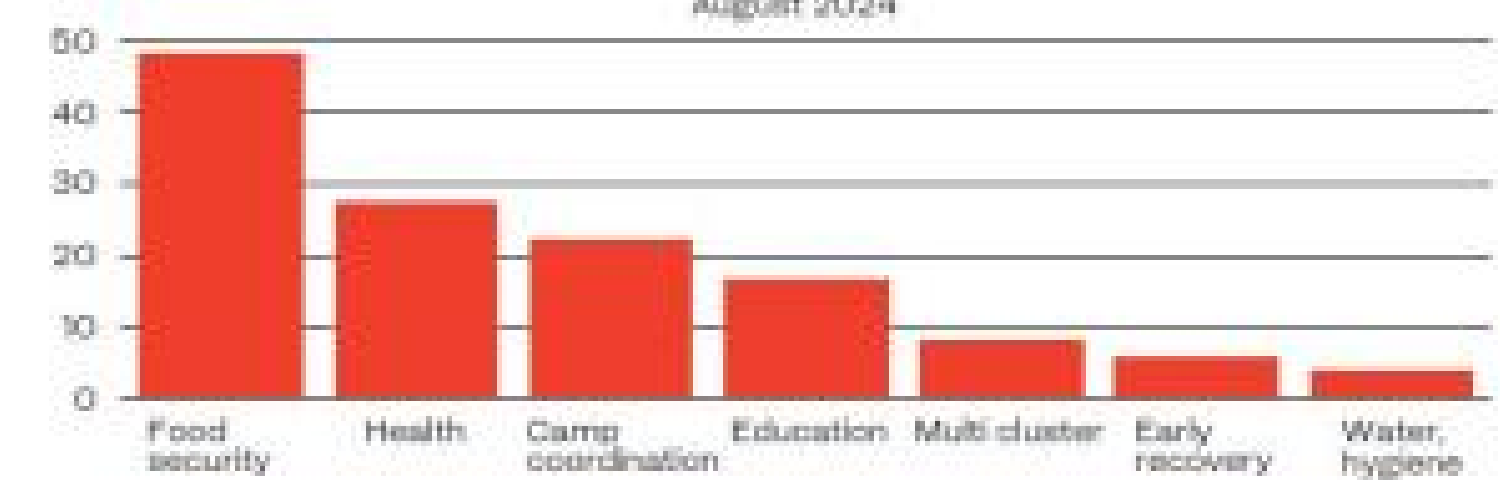
Saad Majdy Baslom has more than 10 years of experience in health tourism, wellness services, management, regulation, and policy as a technical affairs director in complementary medicine practices. For full version, log on to www.arabnews.com/thespace

Saudi Arabia's prospects for a sustainable health and wellness tourism sector are bolstered by its advanced healthcare infrastructure, high medical standards, rich cultural heritage, and strategic location.

The Day's FIGURES

KSRELIEF PROJECTS IN PALESTINE

August 2024



Source: ksrelief.org

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Quality of life
Diriyah exhibition focuses on Saudi countryside

Diriyah governorate, under the patronage of Environment Minister Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli, is to host the Reef Valley Exhibition at the Diriyah Biennale on Sept. 25-26 to highlight the economic, cultural, and tourism significance of Saudi Arabia's countryside.

Organized by the Sustainable Agricultural Rural Development Program, the exhibition aims to challenge stereotypes about rural life and showcase experiences that demonstrate a deep passion for agriculture. **SPA Riyadh**

Tourism destination
Campaign to boost hospitality standards in KSA

The Ministry of Tourism has launched the "Our Guests Are Our Priority" campaign, which aims to reinforce hospitality facilities' adherence to licensing and classification standards, ensuring compliance with all requirements and regulations.

The first phase of the campaign, which began in early September, focuses on media and awareness activities that engage all stakeholders in the tourism sector. The initiative seeks to enhance the quality of services offered to both local and international tourists across the Kingdom. **SPA Riyadh**

Humanitarian efforts
KSrelief provides aid in Sudan, Yemen, Lebanon

Saudi Arabia's aid agency, KSrelief, continues to provide humanitarian assistance to needy communities in Sudan, Yemen and Lebanon.

In Sudan, KSrelief distributed 500 food baskets in the Dongola region of Northern State, benefiting 5,105 individuals.

In Yemen, KSrelief provided 158 shelter bags and 92 tents to 948 individuals in Marib governorate.

In northern Lebanon, KSrelief funded 59 ambulance missions in the Miniyeh district through the Subul Al-Salam Social Association. **SPA Riyadh**

News Saudi Arabia

SOME LIKE IT HOT

In Saudi Arabia it's never just coffee

We take a look at Saudi cafes keeping it fresh with creative marketing campaigns

Waad Hussain Riyadh

In a market saturated with options, standing out is key, and some Saudi coffee shops have turned to quirky, attention-grabbing marketing strategies to attract customers.

From asking patrons to dance for their coffee to surprising communities with clever stunts, these marketing ideas are as creative as they are crazy. Here's a look at some of the most intriguing promotions that have stirred up a buzz in the Kingdom.

Dance for your coffee

At Daily Cup, a Riyadh coffee spot known for its lively atmosphere, customers are not just greeted with the aroma of freshly brewed coffee but with an unusual challenge: dance for your coffee. The concept is simple yet effective. Anyone willing to bust a move in the front of store can earn themselves a free cup of coffee.

This lighthearted promotion quickly became a hit with younger customers, who relished the chance to show off their moves in exchange for a free drink.

"Honestly, it's a lot of fun," Deemah Mohammed, a local customer, told Arab News. "At first it was a bit embarrassing, but once you see others doing it, you realize



it's all about having a good time. Plus, who doesn't love free coffee?"

Neighbor with a twist

When Nass in Dammam prepared to open a new branch in a quiet residential neighborhood, they decided to introduce themselves in an unexpected way. Residents found a polite note in their mailboxes that appeared to be from a new family moving into the area.

The message, written with

warmth and sincerity, apologized for any noise or disruption caused by the "housewarming party" preparations and assured neighbors that they were doing their best to minimize any disturbance.

What made this marketing strategy even more effective was its effect on social media. A post featuring the message quickly went viral on X, gaining nearly 17,000 likes.



Clockwise from left: From asking patrons to dance for their coffee to surprising communities with clever stunts, these coffee shop marketing ideas are as creative as they are crazy. Supplied/Instagram

Namq launched a special promotion offering free coffee to anyone born in the 1990s. Instagram/namq_cafe

Half Million customers who bought a coffee could return later the same day with their invoice and receive a free refill. Instagram/halfmillion_sa

At first glance, the note seemed to be from a friendly new family. But as residents soon discovered, this was in fact a marketing tactic by Nass, cleverly designed to create a sense of community and goodwill before the coffee shop officially opened its doors.

This inventive approach not only generated buzz but also endeared Nass to the neighborhood, setting the stage for a welcome launch.

With this campaign, Nass demonstrated how a personal touch and a bit of creativity can go a long way in building customer loyalty, even before the first cup is served.

Free cuppa for '90s kids

Namq, a modern coffee concept with a knack for connecting with the youth, launched a special promotion offering free coffee to anyone born in the 1990s. The targeted campaign sparked excitement, with millennials flocking to Namq outlets throughout the Kingdom for their free drink.

The promotion became a trending topic on social media, but it also left younger customers asking: "What about us?"

The wave of demand from Gen Z

was so strong that another coffee shop in Riyadh, Bros, decided to follow suit with a similar offer, this time for customers born in the 2000s. The friendly competition between the two shops added a layer of excitement as coffee lovers compared which generation had the better deal.

Invoice for a refill

Half Million, another popular coffee chain in the Kingdom, introduced a clever promotion that encouraged repeat visits. Customers who bought a coffee could return later the same day with their invoice and receive a free refill. This strategy not only incentivized customers to come back, but also subtly boosted the shop's sales and customer loyalty.

"It's a smart way to keep customers engaged," said customer Nada Al-Harbi, who frequents Half Million. "You're more likely to return if you know you can get another cup for free. Plus, it gives you an excuse to take a break in the middle of a busy day."

Drive-thru surprises

When Cosmo opened a new branch in Dammam, they decided to treat their customers with unexpected gifts when they ring up the bill at their drive-through. Anyone who drove by could receive a free gift.



LOYALTY

Saudi man reflects on unbreakable bond between camels and owners

Arab News Taif

Camels, fondly referred to as "ships of the desert," have long held a special place in the hearts of their owners.

Their relationship is characterized by loyalty, love, and a deep connection that transcends language.

Stories abound of camels shedding tears when separated from their beloved companions, waiting patiently for their return, Saudi Press Agency noted in a recent report.

In Saudi Arabia, the relationship between humans and camels is deeply rooted in history and culture. Camels have served as essential companions in the harsh desert environment, providing transportation, food, and companionship, the report added.

Bandar Al-Adwani, a camel owner, expressed his deep fondness for his beloved she-camel, Al-Na'amah. He described their relationship as one of trust, companionship, and mutual understanding.

Al-Adwani often spends time with his camels, tending to their needs, which forms a strong emotional connection.

"Every morning and evening, I feel compelled to visit my camels in their pastures. I want to be close to them, monitor

their health, and ensure that they have enough food and water. I have a deep, affectionate bond with them, a connection that feels almost instinctive," he told SPA in an interview.

His love for camels runs deep; he spends countless hours in their company and never approaches them with a stick.

"Our interactions are based on

Our kings and wise leadership have always valued and cared for camels, recognizing their economic importance and their role in preserving our national identity.

Bandar Al-Adwani
Camel owner

mutual respect and understanding. Al-Na'amah, in particular, responds to my voice and touch," he said, adding that he uses a herding technique called Alhedra, a UNESCO-recognized oral tradition that combines sounds, gestures, and sometimes music, to communicate with camels.

The Bedouins of the Arabian



Camels serve as essential companions in the harsh desert environment, providing transportation, food, and companionship. SPA

Peninsula seem to have a profound understanding of their camels' needs. They cannot imagine their lives without these loyal companions and this deep-rooted love is passed down from generation to generation.

"When we hear stories of loyalty among humans, we are reminded of the unwavering loyalty that camels show to their owners," Al-Adwani said.

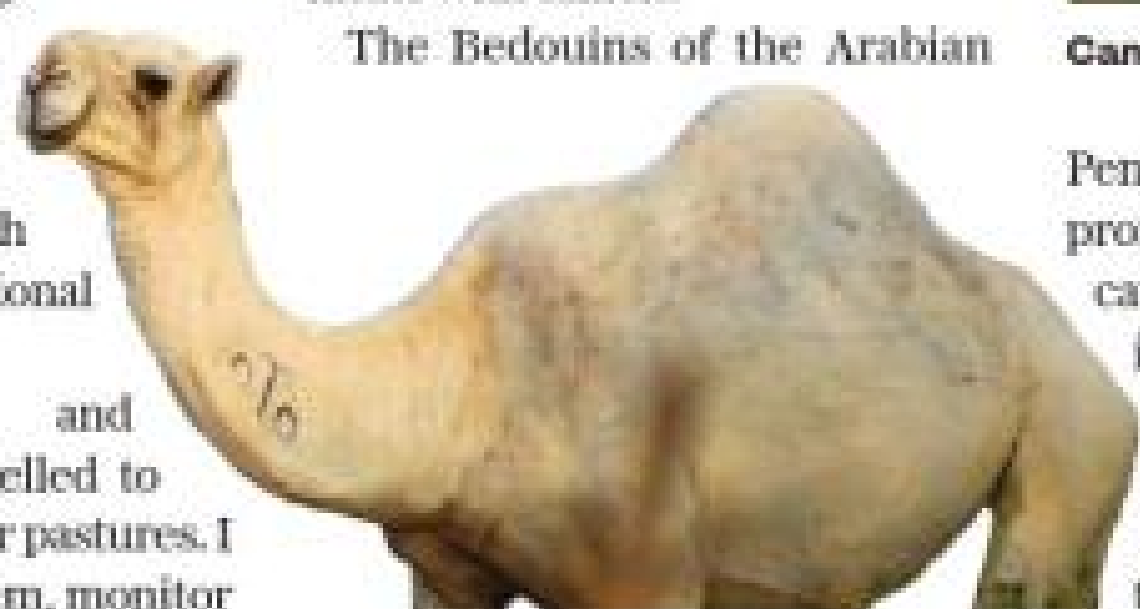
"They are incredibly beautiful creatures. Their graceful movements, their thirst for

water, their kneeling posture, and the experience of riding on their backs are truly captivating.

"In Saudi Arabia, camels represent our history, culture, and heritage. Our kings and wise leadership have always valued and cared for camels,

recognizing their economic importance and their role in preserving our national identity."

The Camel Club, established by King Salman, has played a crucial role in promoting camel breeding, culture, and heritage.



DEADLY CONFLICT

Palestinians to 'jointly lead post-war Gaza'

US not putting enough pressure on Israel to stop the war, Hamas official says

AFP Istanbul

A senior Hamas official said on Sunday that the group wants "joint Palestinian rule" in Gaza once war ends in the besieged territory.

"Clearly, we said that the next day must be Palestinian ... the day after the battle is a Palestinian day," Osama Hamdan said during an interview in Istanbul.

He said that the Palestinian movement had ample resources to continue fighting Israel despite losses sustained over more than 11 months of war in Gaza.

"The resistance has a high ability to continue," Hamdan said.

"There were martyrs and sacrifices ... but in return, there was an accumulation of experiences and the recruitment of new generations into the resistance."

His comments came less than a week after Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant told journalists that Hamas, whose Oct. 7 attack triggered the war, "no longer exists" as a military formation in Gaza.



Palestinians walk amid the rubble of a building leveled by Israeli bombing in Gaza City amid the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas. AFP

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched retaliatory military operations to destroy Hamas after the group's surprise attack on southern Israel.

The Israeli military campaign has killed at least 41,206 people in Gaza, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which does not provide breakdowns of

civilian and militant deaths.

Netanyahu is facing mounting domestic pressure to seal a deal in which hostages would be released in exchange for

Palestinian prisoners.

Israel's announcement this month that the bodies of six hostages had been recovered from a tunnel in Gaza after

they were "executed" by Hamas spurred an outpouring of grief and anger, leading to a brief general strike and large-scale demonstrations that continued in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem on Saturday night.

But months of negotiations aimed at securing a truce have apparently stalled.

In the interview on Sunday, Hamdan said the US, Israel's most crucial military backer, was not doing enough to force concessions from Netanyahu that would end the bloodshed.

"The American administration does not exert sufficient or appropriate pressure on the Israeli side," Hamdan said.

"Rather, it is trying to justify the Israeli side's evasion of any commitment."

During two press conferences after officials announced the deaths of the six hostages earlier this month, Netanyahu said it was Hamas who refused to compromise and vowed "not to give in to pressure" on remaining sticking points.

He also said Israel's military campaign had killed "no less than 17,000" Hamas militants.

احصل على الحقائق



معلومات إحصائية مقدمة من مركز البحوث والدراسات

News Middle East

REFUGEE CRISIS

Eight migrants die in Channel crossing attempt

AFP Ambleteuse, France

Eight migrants died early Sunday when their overcrowded vessel capsized while trying to cross the Channel from France to England, French authorities said, less than two weeks after the deadliest such disaster this year.

The latest tragedy means 46 migrants have lost their lives attempting to reach England from France so far this year, a regional official said, up from 12 in 2023.

The French and British governments have sought for years to stop the flow of migrants, who pay smugglers thousands of euros per head for passage on overloaded inflatable dinghies.

A police source said the accident occurred shortly after the vessel embarked. Regional prefect Jacques Billant said the incident happened off the coast of the northern town of Ambleteuse.

"The toll was terrible, with eight

people reported dead," he told the press near the site of the accident.

Six survivors were hospitalized, including a 10-month-old baby with hypothermia, he added.

The boat had set off from the Slack River that flows into the sea between the towns of Wimereux and Ambleteuse.

It had 59 people on board from Eritrea, Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Egypt and Iran, Billant said.

"It quickly got into difficulty and ran aground ... The boat was torn apart on the rocks," he said.

Maritime authorities said Saturday that migrants had made numerous attempts to cross the Channel in recent days, with 200 people rescued in 24 hours over Friday and Saturday alone.

The latest incident comes a few weeks after at least 12 migrants, mostly from Eritrea, died off the northern French coast on Sept. 3, when their boat carrying dozens of people capsized. An Eritrean



Maritime authorities said Saturday that migrants had made numerous attempts to cross the Channel in recent days. Reuters/File

survivor, Biniam Semay, 34, said he had lost his 18-year-old sister in that accident.

Another Eritrean who was rescued, and gave his name only

as Amanuel, said "there were a lot of girls and young boys, and I saw them die."

More than 22,000 migrants have arrived in England by

crossing the Channel since the beginning of this year, according to British officials.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and France's President

Emmanuel Macron pledged this summer to strengthen "cooperation" in handling the surge in undocumented migrant numbers.

CHALLENGE

Egypt lauds UN's decision to establish position of special envoy on water

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi to assume post in November

Gobran Mohammed Cairo

Egypt has welcomed the decision of OUN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to establish the position of a UN special envoy on water, and the announcement that Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi will assume the high-ranking post in November.

In a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cairo



This initiative successfully garnered the support of 151 countries. Reuters/File

said Egypt, in collaboration with Germany, had led an extensive initiative in preparation for the 2023 UN Water Conference.

This initiative, which successfully garnered the support of 151 countries, aimed at establishing the position of UN special envoy on water to support member states, particularly water-scarce countries, to help address the challenge of achieving the sixth Sustainable Development Goal regarding everyone having access to water.

Guterres' decision to create the position is a culmination of Egypt's efforts to enhance multilateral action in response to emerging challenges.

Egypt looked forward to enhancing cooperation with the new UN special envoy to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda in addressing water scarcity, the statement added.

The news comes in light of the significant efforts made by Egypt for the rational management of water resources and the

promotion of transboundary cooperation, in accordance with international law.

Meanwhile, Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs Badr Abdelatty received a phone call on Friday from the UN secretary-general. The call addressed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip and the dangerous escalation of conflict in the West Bank.

Tamim Khallaf, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the call stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire.

UKRAINE WAR

Iran's president to attend BRICS summit in Russia

Reuters, AP Dubai

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian will attend the upcoming BRICS summit in Russia, state media cited Tehran's ambassador in Moscow as saying on Sunday, amid tensions with the West over military cooperation between the two countries.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Tuesday that Russia had received ballistic missiles from Iran and was likely to use them in Ukraine within weeks. Cooperation between Moscow and Tehran threatened

wider European security, he said.

On Tuesday, the US, Germany, Britain and France imposed new sanctions on Iran, including measures against its national airline Iran Air.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Wednesday that Tehran did not deliver any ballistic missiles to Russia and that sanctions imposed by the US and the three European countries against Iran were not a solution.

Iran's ambassador in Russia Kazem Jalali confirmed on Sunday that Pezeshkian will

BACKGROUND

● The US said that Russia had received ballistic missiles from Iran and was likely to use them in Ukraine within weeks.

● The US secretary of state said that cooperation between Moscow and Tehran threatened wider European security.

attend the summit of the BRICS group of major emerging economies, scheduled to be held in Kazan, Russia from Oct. 22 to 24, according to Iran's state media. Pezeshkian will meet his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin there, Jalali said.

Iran and Russia are set to sign a bilateral comprehensive cooperation agreement.

Meanwhile, Iran on Saturday launched a satellite into space with a rocket built by the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, state-run media reported.

URGENTLY REQUIRED

TECHNICIAN:

Minimum Three Years Experience in Water Quality Monitoring Analyzers

ENGINEER:

Minimum Three Years Experience in Water Quality Monitoring Analyzers

TECHNICIAN:

Minimum Three Years Experience in Gas Monitoring Analyzers

ENGINEER:

Minimum Three Years Experience in Gas Monitoring Analyzers

SALES AND PROPOSAL ENGINEERS:

Minimum Three Years Experience in Sales and Proposal Preparations

Contact number: 0560271730
Email : client@greentechmiddleeastgroup.com

SLUGGISH CLIMATE ACTION

Why Philippines tops ranking of disaster risk countries

Archipelago nation of 120 million people has faced five typhoons since May

Elle Aben Manila

The Philippines is the country most at risk from natural disasters, the 2024 World Risk Report shows, with environmentalists highlighting sluggish climate action amid worsening and extreme weather conditions.

The archipelago nation of nearly 120 million people is no stranger to natural disasters, with millions of people often displaced during annual storms and typhoons, which have been made more unpredictable and extreme by the changing climate.

For the third year in a row, the Philippines tops the report's World Risk Index, which breaks down the disaster risk of 193 countries.

Published by Germany-based research institute IPHV and the alliance of development organizations Bundnis Entwicklung Hilft, this year's top five most at-risk countries include Indonesia, India, Colombia and Mexico.

"It is definitely a worsening and concerning trend. There are noticeable extreme weather conditions, heat during the summers have been record-breaking, seasons have been unpredictable, there have been high intensity and (high) frequency typhoons," Ann Dumaliang, a Filipino conservationist and managing trustee of Masungi Georeserve, told Arab News.

"In the Philippines, it is no longer vulnerable communities that are affected. It's now



felt widely across the nation — schools need to be canceled, heatstroke patients overwhelm emergency rooms, in addition to devastating floods."

This month, more than a dozen people were killed when Typhoon Yagi, known locally as Enteng, passed central and northern Philippines, before it wreaked havoc in southern China and parts of Vietnam and Thailand.

For Filipinos, it is the fifth tropical storm to hit their country since May.

It is more accurate to describe natural disasters as geographical realities, Dumaliang said, which for the Philippines are multifold due to its archipelagic nature and

location in the "Ring of Fire," the arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin.

Those aspects intersect with "man-made causes that lead to continuous environment degradation and poor infrastructure," and are further "exacerbated by lack of political willpower to make the necessary interventions at the right time," she added.

John Leo Algo, national coordinator of Aksiyon Klima Pilipinas, a leading civil society network for climate action, said the country's vulnerability to natural disasters

has got worse over time.

"The Philippines' vulnerability to the climate crisis is worsening because of a combination of more extreme impacts and the lack of capacity to address them. There really is no such thing as a 'natural disaster'; disasters, by definition, occur when stakeholders do not properly prepare against an impending hazard," Algo said.

The country's vulnerability can be traced to insufficient local understanding of the climate crisis and its effects, delays and incoherence in climate policy development, as well as issues with funding and support to implement climate solutions, he added.

POLITICS

New Delhi's chief minister announces resignation after release on bail

AP New Delhi

One of India's main opposition figures and New Delhi's chief minister said he would resign from office Sunday, two days after he was granted bail in a bribery case.

Arvind Kejriwal, a fierce critic of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was arrested nearly six months ago ahead of national elections on charges of receiving bribes from a liquor distributor. India's top court released him on bail Friday.

Kejriwal has consistently denied the accusations and called them a political conspiracy.

"Today I have come to ask the public whether you consider



Arvind Kejriwal, chief minister of Delhi and leader of the Aam Aadmi Party, greets his supporters after Supreme Court granted him bail in New Delhi on Saturday. AFP

Kejriwal honest or a criminal," he said in a public address Sunday at the headquarters of his Aam Aadmi Party, which governs New Delhi. "I will resign from the post of chief minister two days from today."

Kejriwal said his party — a part of a broad alliance of opposition

parties called INDIA and was the main challenger to Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party in June's elections — will hold a meeting later to decide who will take over his position.

He also demanded the New Delhi elections, scheduled for February next year, be held

in November instead.

Opposition parties widely condemned Kejriwal's arrest. They accused Modi's government of misusing federal investigation agencies to harass and weaken its political opponents. They pointed to several raids, arrests, and corruption investigations of key opposition figures in the months before the elections.

Kejriwal's supporters celebrated his release by lighting firecrackers and dancing in the rain outside his New Delhi residence, with many carrying placards with photos of the popular politician.

Some leaders from Modi's party warned that he was released on bail and not acquitted.

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Tense situation

Top UK official plays down Putin threats

UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of "bluster" Sunday over his warning that letting Ukraine use long-range weapons to strike inside Russia would put NATO "at war" with Moscow.

Tensions between Russia and the West over the conflict reached dire levels this week as US President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer met at the White House to discuss whether to ease rules on Kyiv's use of Western-supplied weaponry. **AFP**

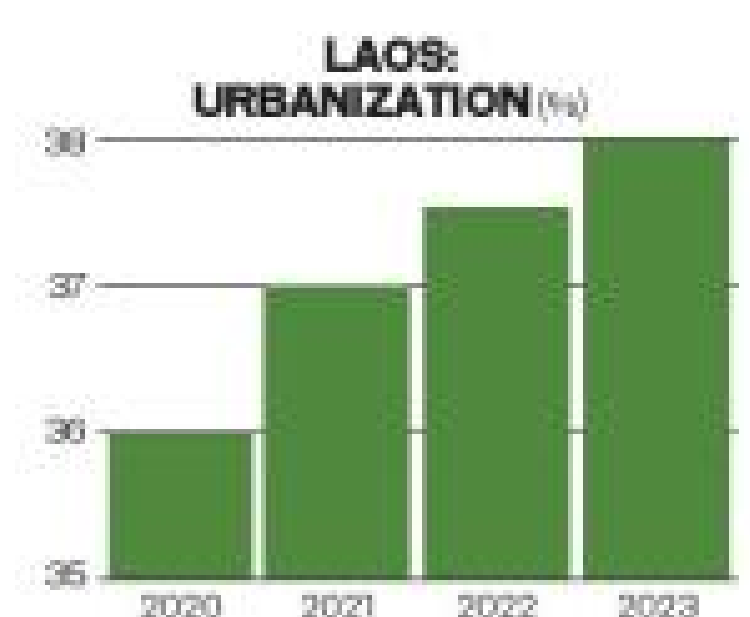
Private spacewalk

Tech billionaire, crew safely return to Earth

A billionaire spacewalker returned to Earth with his crew on Sunday, ending a five-day trip that lifted them higher than anyone has traveled since NASA's moonwalkers. SpaceX's capsule splashed down in the Gulf of Mexico near Florida's Dry Tortugas in the predawn darkness, carrying tech entrepreneur Jared Isaacman, two SpaceX engineers and a former Air Force Thunderbird pilot.

Isaacman became only the 264th person to perform a spacewalk. Until now, all spacewalks were done by professional astronauts. **AP**

The Day's FIGURES



Source: Statista

What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

'Treepedia'

JOAN MALOOF

"Treepedia" is an entertaining and fact-filled illustrated compendium of tree lore.

Featuring nearly 100 entries—on topics ranging from tree ecology and conservation to the role of trees in religion, literature, art, and movies—

this enticing collection is a celebration of all things arboreal.

In this charming book,

Joan Maloof explains the difference between a cedar and a cypress, and reveals where to find the most remarkable trees on the planet.



Torrential rains

Flood triggers evacuation in Czech Republic

Another night of torrential rains pounding Central Europe forced massive evacuations in the hardest hit areas in the Czech Republic, where floods reached extreme levels on Sunday.

Meteorologists have warned the situation still might get worse as waters in most rivers are rising, the flood wave made its way through the country and more heavy rains could return overnight. Authorities declared the highest flood warnings in almost 90 places across the country. **AP**

Digital fame

Endangered pygmy hippo goes viral from Thai zoo

The morning sunlight bouncing off her sleek hide, Moo Deng the pygmy hippo plops to the ground in her enclosure, seemingly unfazed by her rapid rise to social media stardom.

The two-month-old pint-sized creature went viral this week after her handlers posted videos of her on TikTok and Instagram from her home at a zoo in Chon Buri, Thailand. Her cheeky expressions and playful frolicking racked up millions of views and have lured thousands of visitors. **AFP**

وكلُّ مُسافرٍ يزدادُ شوقاً
إذا ذنبتَ الدَّيارُ مِنَ الدَّيارِ
(اسحق الموصلي)

YOUR DAILY ARABIC PROVERB

A traveler's longing increases as they get closer to home.

Ishaq Al-Mawalli
(Medieval Arab-Persian musician and poet)

Opinion

UK, GCC are far more than mere trading partners

JONATHAN REYNOLDS

The new UK government's top priority is economic growth, and this is central to what I want to achieve as business and trade secretary. My department sits at the heart of our new approach to growth and is responsible for championing UK business, inward investment, trade policy and export finance toward the UK's prosperity.

We cannot do this alone. Nor do we want to. As an outward-facing nation, the UK's international partnerships endure thanks to the strength of our political, commercial and people-to-people ties. These ties are particularly close in Saudi Arabia and throughout the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Our two kingdoms share a commitment to economic prosperity, delivered through increased investment and trade, and underpinned by priority sectors including education, healthcare, clean energy, technology and infrastructure. Our bilateral trade figures are testament to this,

reaching an all-time high of £17.3 billion (\$22.7 billion) in 2023.

Behind the statistics are real companies that are finding success in the Kingdom, from the largest multinationals to the smallest enterprises. These companies are contributing to the success of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

I am here to take the UK-Saudi trade and investment partnership to the next level. Everyone I have spoken to in Riyadh — from ministers to businesspeople — has told me about the strength of the relationship. Indeed, our support for mutual economic growth includes significant investment in each other's markets.

It is an exciting time to visit Saudi Arabia and I have seen for myself the Kingdom's energy and ambition in the drive toward its Vision 2030.

Next month, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Chancellor Rachel Reeves and I will host an international investment summit to outline the UK's long-term plans and to hear from global industry leaders about their priorities and invite them to share in



Jonathan Reynolds MP is the UK's Secretary of State for Business and Trade.

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

our vision. I look forward to meeting with business leaders and investors from Saudi Arabia and across the GCC. Our message to the world is that the UK is not only open to business, it is the place to do business.

The UK's trade program will deliver deals that will benefit the UK economy and those of our partners by boosting trade with some of the most dynamic economies in the world. This is why I announced in July our intention to restart trade talks with the GCC toward a free trade agreement.

The UK's bilateral trade with the GCC stood at £57.4 billion last year, with plenty of headroom to grow into.

A trade agreement with the GCC would unlock new investment both in the UK and here in the Gulf. It would simplify procedures, making it easier for our companies to do business with each other. Because our economies have strengths that complement each other, an agreement would remove barriers to trade and, in doing so, create mutual economic growth.

While the UK and the GCC are trading partners, we are much more than that.

To more than 150,000 British people, the GCC is also home. Tourism figures in both directions remain very strong. The global introduction of the UK's electronic travel authorization began with a rollout in the GCC for good reason. More than a million UK visitors travel to the GCC's vibrant cities and tourist spots each year. Similarly, in 2023, the UK welcomed more than a million visitors from the GCC, including a record 286,000 visitors from Saudi Arabia.

All of this is possible thanks to the deep and enduring foundation of friendship built over generations between the UK and Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

As long-term strategic partners, we appreciate what the other has to offer. We prioritize the policies, programs and strategies that benefit our home economies, while recognizing the importance of mutual economic growth. I am confident that an ambitious and modern free trade deal would further strengthen our bonds, supporting our businesses to create lasting economic stability and prosperity for all our people.

Our message to the world is that the UK is not only open to business, it is the place to do business

COURTESY: AMJAD RASMI/ASHRAQ AL-AWQAT



Though the church does not like to get involved in politics, this is a humanitarian issue that needs to be addressed

How can Christians help Palestine?

DR. DANIA KOLEILAT KHATIB

Lebanon's Maronite patriarchate, in its monthly statement, expressed solidarity with the people of Palestine. The statement mentioned the atrocities that the people in Palestine and in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa are being subjected to and called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The Maronite patriarchate has a very special position. It is an institution independent from any political body, yet it is very influential on the Lebanese political scene. Because the Lebanese patriarchate is a very important church in the East, it, along with other Christian churches in the East and the Arab world, can play an important role in resolving this conflict.

The West and its average citizens have a generally negative image of the Arab world. However, the Western world feels a lot of compassion with Christians in the East, who are viewed as the early Christians in the birthplace of the faith. Hence, their voice will be amplified in the Western world.

The church and the Christians can help Palestine by engaging with the Western world. However, by doing so, the Christians will be taking a prominent place in public affairs in the region. We need to remember that Christians were among the pioneers of the Arab renaissance. They have had an enlightening role in our region. The various liberation movements of the 20th century had Christian thinkers behind them. Unfortunately, the role of Christians has been in decline in recent years. Continuous wars and conflict have led to an exodus of Christians from the region.

The Christian exodus has been bad news for the Middle East, as their previous role contributed to the region's cultural wealth and diversity. Their presence is needed today more than ever. It is needed both in the region and as a bridge to the Western world.

Last year's Christmas sermon by the Rev. Munther Isaac, a Palestinian pastor and theologian, about Jesus being born under the rubble of Bethlehem had a strong echo in the Western world. The average



Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib is a specialist in US-Arab relations with a focus on lobbying. She is co-founder of the Research Center for Cooperation and Peace Building, a Lebanese nongovernmental organization focused on Track II.

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

Westerner tends to listen more to pastors and other clergymen like him than the average Arab or Palestinian. Despite the support the church has shown to the people of Gaza, there has been no organized effort to influence US public opinion.

The church could send clergymen to visit churches in the US to discuss the plight of people in Palestine and, more specifically, the plight of Christians in Palestine.

Christians in the East can play an important role in changing the American perspective toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, pushing the US to take a more balanced approach. When the average person sees the suffering of the Palestinian Christians, their view of Israel will change significantly.

But who will take the initiative? How can it be done? The starting point is the church. Churches should start a conference to take a formal position on Palestine. The second step would be for each church to designate a number of clergymen to be sent to the US. Those churches should

communicate with churches in the US and organize visits. They should engage with American congregations. This would create a grassroots movement in support of a balanced solution to the problem. This would be relatively easy to fund. One hurdle facing Palestinian activism in the past has been the funding. People are worried about being accused of financing terrorism if they fund any activity related to Palestine. However, no one will attack people for donating to a church.

Once the Christian movement proves itself and makes a difference in American policy, it will automatically gain influence at home. It will also create a platform for Christians to have an increased role in the region. Though the church does not like to get involved in politics, this is a humanitarian issue that needs to be addressed. The results might not be immediate, because changing perceptions and creating grassroots movements are long-term processes, but the potential benefits are definitely worth the effort.

Opinion

A deeper Harris-Trump discussion is needed

DALIA AL-AQIDI



The presidential debate between former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris last week marked a pivotal moment in the 2024 election cycle. With more than 67 million viewers tuning in, it was clear that the stakes were high and both candidates had something to prove. For Trump, it was a chance to reaffirm his leadership credentials after a turbulent presidency and bid for a second term. For Harris, it was an opportunity to assert herself as a worthy successor to Joe Biden and a viable leader in her own right.

The debate at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia served as a litmus test for the candidates' ability to engage voters in a highly polarized political environment. The discussion was marked by sharp exchanges, heated rhetoric and strategic maneuvering, particularly on Harris' part. Her calculated jabs, like calling Trump "weak and wrong," played into the broader Democratic narrative that Trump's leadership had faltered on multiple fronts — from his handling of the economy to his foreign policy decisions.

Yet, while the vice president demonstrated

a commanding presence on stage, the question that loomed large was whether this performance would translate into tangible electoral gains. Polls conducted immediately after the debate showed Harris outperformed Trump by a significant margin, with 63 percent of viewers declaring her the winner. But despite her strong showing, the polls also revealed a crucial reality: the debate had little effect on shifting voters' loyalties. Only 4 percent of viewers indicated that they had changed their mind about who to vote for as a result of the debate, underscoring how entrenched partisanship has become.

This debate also highlighted a key issue: the role of the moderators and their selective fact-checking. Trump was repeatedly fact-checked during the debate, while Harris' statements — some of which were equally questionable — were left unchecked. This discrepancy did not go unnoticed by Trump supporters.

These omissions raise concerns about the media's role in shaping public perception, especially in an environment where trust in institutions is already low. For Trump supporters, this perceived bias only reinforced the idea that their candidate is battling not just Harris but an entire

political and media establishment.

In contrast to Harris' more polished, prepared approach, Trump opted for a more unorthodox style, as he has in past debates. Instead of meticulously rehearsing responses, he focused on broader themes that resonate with his base, such as immigration, national security and economic recovery. In these areas, polls consistently show that voters trust Trump more than Harris, especially in key swing states like Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

The dynamic between the two candidates was also reflected in the issues they chose to highlight — or avoid. Harris focused primarily on Trump's character, attacking his business record and his handling of the presidency. The former president, in turn, questioned Harris' competence and leadership, emphasizing her lack of experience on the national stage compared to his own. What was notably absent from the debate were discussions on significant recent events, such as the assassination attempt on Trump or Harris' position on the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020.

The omission of these topics points to a broader issue with the debate format itself: it often favors style over substance. Candidates

are rewarded for delivering sharp soundbites and emotional appeals rather than engaging in substantive discussions on policy. This trend is concerning because it leaves voters with little information about the candidates' positions or future plans. Instead, the debate becomes a spectacle designed to entertain rather than inform.

The race remains tight as the election draws closer, particularly in battleground states, where polling shows a near-even split between the candidates. Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin will likely be decisive in determining the election's outcome, much as they were in 2016 and 2020. Despite Harris' strong debate performance, both candidates' path to victory remains uncertain.

As the nation reflects on last week's debate, it becomes clear that a second debate is necessary, even though Trump has apparently ruled out that possibility. Voters deserve an in-depth conversation on policy beyond rhetoric, from the economy to healthcare and foreign affairs. A more focused and respectful debate would allow both candidates to clarify their positions and offer real solutions, ensuring the electorate can make an informed choice in this pivotal election.

The debate served as a litmus test for the candidates' ability to engage voters in a highly polarized political environment

The omission of certain topics points to a broader issue with the debate format itself: it often favors style over substance

Critical thinking vital for career success

ARNAB NEIL SENGUPTA



It may seem impractical, even insensitive, to urge idealistic young men and women in the Middle East and the broader Arab diaspora to prioritize their own futures over those of others. However, if they follow this advice, they may end up advancing not only their own futures but everyone else's too. In an interconnected world, where goods, services, capital, people, data and ideas flow across borders, a rising tide can lift even distant boats.

But how can one plan for a secure future in such a rapidly evolving job market? Gone are the days when careers in engineering, medicine, the military or law guaranteed financial stability and fulfillment. The future of work demands flexibility, adaptability and continuous learning just to stay abreast of new technologies and practices. The alternatives, for individuals as well as entire communities, are falling behind, becoming dependent on social welfare programs or, worse, both.

The future can seem so daunting at times that some young people justifiably wonder if opting out of the rat race altogether might be the wisest choice. Indeed, the concept of "lying flat," a trend among some young professionals in China, appeals to

many of their peers globally, including students who spend months cramming for competitive exams just to gain admission to an engineering college.

But alas, there is no turning back the clock to a more relaxed era, just as there is no halting the wheel of social and civilizational progress. If new job opportunities are not emerging in familiar fields or are becoming ever more specialized, the next

generation has no choice but to adapt.

There is no magic solution to problems like post-interview rejection, career stagnation or redundancy. But one can certainly try to stay informed, be adaptable and recognize the need for some essential skills, namely critical thinking and problem-solving; creativity and innovation; data analysis and interpretation; digital literacy; communication and collaboration; and emotional intelligence and empathy.

Not everyone is cut out for a career in science, technology, engineering and math, but it is undeniable that STEM graduates are more likely to quickly secure jobs and earn a good livelihood.

In both advanced and emerging economies, skills in data analysis, machine learning and big data are highly sought

after in industries like finance, healthcare and retail. Similarly, opportunities in cloud computing are limitless for those with the right training.

As with data science and analytics, the growing potential of artificial intelligence and machine learning is evident in the exploding demand for AI-related jobs, spanning sectors from healthcare to entertainment. While AI may eliminate about 83 million jobs globally, it is expected to create about 69 million new, high-paying, in-demand roles.

Cybersecurity professionals are also in high demand, particularly in the affluent Gulf countries, notably Saudi Arabia and the UAE, where oil and gas companies are prime targets for hackers.

Beyond the tech sector, specializing in software for industries like automotive, aerospace or manufacturing can open many career opportunities. The classic engineering disciplines — electrical, mechanical and civil — remain essential, especially with the rise of green energy, smart cities and infrastructure development.

Even for those interested in STEM but unsure about mastering it, plenty of career options remain: digital marketing, content creation, logistics and supply

chain management, STEM education and training, corporate training and development, technology law, international law and diplomacy, and AI ethics and philosophy. As AI continues to transform industries, economics and governance, it is crucial to develop skills that complement automation and AI technologies. No matter how challenging it seems, embracing lifelong learning and skills

aligned with AI may equip young people for long and fulfilling careers.

However, choosing a lucrative career path should not be the sole aim in life. In fact, research from the UAE-based Sawab Center, a think tank focused on countering extremist ideology, suggests that even students enrolled in technical or STEM courses should study social sciences or humanities. These subjects help to cultivate "logic and critical thinking, which discourages closed-mindedness and excessive certainty."

While pursuing low-risk, high-reward educational paths is undoubtedly key to career success, the humanities and social sciences have a vital role to play in fostering the critical thinking and open-mindedness essential for navigating an ever-evolving, tech-driven world of work.

The future of work demands flexibility, adaptability and continuous learning just to stay abreast of new technologies and practices

Embracing lifelong learning and skills aligned with AI may equip young people for long and fulfilling careers

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Business



Our new strategy focuses on attracting increased investments to the Saudi economy.
Mohammed El-Kuwailz
 Capital Market Authority chairman



The Capital Market Authority plans to introduce special purpose acquisition companies on the parallel market.

Saudi Arabia aims to double the number of companies licensed to engage in fintech activities and increasing the volume of managed assets. File

STOCKS

Saudi main index edges up to close at 11,900.30

Reem Walid Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's Tadawul All Share Index rose by 57.75 points, or 0.49 percent, closing at 11,900.30 on Sunday.

The total trading turnover for the benchmark index was SR4.14 billion (\$1.1 billion), with 138 stocks advancing and 80 retreating.

In contrast, Nomu, the parallel market, fell by 164.65 points, or 0.63 percent, ending the day at 25,769.95. The market saw 19 stocks advance while 46 retreated. Meanwhile, the MSCI Tadawul Index increased by 7.12 points, or 0.48 percent, to close at 1,478.60.

The top performer of the day was Saudi Fisheries Co., whose share price surged by 8.93 percent to SR25.35. Other notable performers included Amlak International Finance Co. and Saudi

HIGHLIGHT

The total trading turnover for the benchmark index was SR4.14 billion (\$1.1 billion), with 138 stocks advancing and 80 retreating.

Arabian Cooperative Insurance Co. On the downside, Al-Baha Investment and Development Co. experienced the largest decline, with its share price dropping by 5.56 percent to SR0.17.

In corporate announcements, Riyadh Capital, acting as the sole financial adviser, lead manager, book-runner, and underwriter for Fourth Milling Co.'s initial public offering, has announced the offering price range and the commencement of the institutional book-building period. The price range has been set between SR5 and SR5.3 per share, with the book-building period running from Sept. 15 to Sept. 19.

The offering includes the sale of 162 million ordinary shares, representing 30 percent of Fourth Milling's current share capital. The minimum number of shares that can be applied for is 300,000, while the maximum is 26.99 million shares.

FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE

KSA unveils plan to boost debt market, transparency

Strategy includes over 40 initiatives aimed at enhancing growth, efficiency

Manal Al-Barakatli Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's Capital Market Authority has unveiled a plan for 2024-2026 to develop a robust debt market and enhance the international competitiveness of its asset management industry.

The strategy emphasizes safeguarding investors' rights by increasing transparency and ensuring market integrity. It revolves around three main pillars and includes over 40 initiatives aimed at boosting market growth and efficiency. A key aspect of this approach is enhancing the stock market's role in capital raising.

To achieve this, the authority plans to introduce special purpose acquisition companies on the parallel market and facilitate the issuance of Saudi

depository receipts. These measures are designed to offer more diverse investment opportunities and make the market more attractive to both domestic and international investors.

Highlighting the plan's bold objectives, CMA Chairman Mohammed El-Kuwailz said: "Our new strategy emphasizes the creation of a robust debt market, the enhancement of the asset management industry, and the attraction of increased investments to the national economy."

The top official made these remarks during the Debt Markets and Derivatives Forum held in Riyadh last week.

The plan focuses on increasing transparency, spurring innovation in financial technology, and expanding financing options.

Additionally, the CMA is focusing on developing the sukuk and debt instruments

FASTFACTS

- To stimulate market activity and support Saudi Arabia's broader financial sector development goals, the CMA is simplifying the regulatory processes for offering, listing, and registering debt instruments.

- The new plan aims to enhance the market's appeal to foreign investors, with the goal of establishing the Saudi financial market as a regional and international leader by the end of 2026.

market by creating regulatory frameworks for green, social, and sustainable debt instruments. This aligns with the global push toward environmental, social, and governance criteria.

To stimulate market activity

and support Saudi Arabia's broader financial sector development goals, the CMA is simplifying the regulatory processes for offering, listing, and registering debt instruments. The objectives include increasing the stock market's value to 80.8 percent of gross domestic product by 2025, up from 66.5 percent in 2019, and expanding the debt instruments market to 24.1 percent of GDP by the same year.

In response to recent increases in penalties and compensation for market violations, El-Kuwailz highlighted the importance of protecting investor interests. "Trust is vital for a successful market," he said, underscoring the CMA's commitment to developing class action compensation procedures and improving the resolution process for complaints between financial institutions and their clients. These efforts are aimed at

creating a transparent, accountable market environment that strengthens investor confidence.

Building on the successes of the CMA's 2021-2023 agenda, which saw a significant 52 percent increase in the number of listed companies—from 204 in 2019 to over 310 by the end of 2023—the new strategic plan seeks to further advance the market. These achievements have laid a solid foundation for the current strategy, highlighting the global recognition of the Saudi financial market's expanding prominence.

The new plan aims to enhance the market's appeal to foreign investors, with the goal of establishing the Saudi financial market as a regional and international leader by the end of 2026. This includes doubling the number of companies licensed to engage in fintech activities and increasing the volume of managed assets.

GROWTH

Islamic banking assets in Oman record 18% surge

Miguel Hadchity Riyadh

The combined assets of Oman's Islamic banks and windows reached around 7.8 billion Omani rials (\$20.2 billion) by June, an 18.1 percent increase from the same period in 2023.

According to data from the central bank, the combined total represented 11.4 percent of the

sultanate's banking sector assets.

The analysis showed that total financing provided by the Islamic banking sector rose by 10.4 percent, amounting to around 6.4 billion rials.

Deposits in Islamic financial institutions and windows also grew by 14.7 percent, reaching nearly 6 billion rials by the end of June.

The growth in Oman aligns

with a broader regional trend. A report by Moody's Investors Service predicts that Islamic financing across the Gulf Cooperation Council will outpace conventional banking, driven by increasing demand for Shariah-compliant financial products and the stability of Islamic banks' net profit margins.

Unlike conventional banks,



The growth in Islamic banking in Oman aligns with a broader regional trend. File

Islamic institutions benefit from fixed-rate retail financing, insulating them from US Federal Reserve monetary policy shifts.

As a result, GCC Islamic banks are expected to maintain superior returns on assets and a stronger net profit margin compared to conventional counterparts.

Moody's said that the profitability of Islamic financial

institutions in the GCC will remain strong over the next 12 to 18 months, fueled by stable oil prices, ambitious economic diversification efforts, and strong business confidence.

Globally, the sukuk market is also set to expand, with Moody's projecting issuance to reach \$200 to \$210 billion in 2024, up from under \$200 billion in 2023.

STATISTICS

Housing costs drive August inflation in Saudi Arabia to 1.6%

Wholesale Price Index rose by 3.2 percent in August compared to the same month last year: data

Nirmal Narayanan Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's annual inflation rate reached 1.6 percent in August compared to the same month last year, driven by higher housing costs, official data showed.

According to the General Authority for Statistics, actual housing rents surged by 10.7 percent year on year in August, with apartment rents rising by 10.8 percent.

Saudi Arabia's inflation rate remains among the lowest in the Middle East and North Africa, reflecting the Kingdom's proactive measures to stabilize the economy and mitigate the effects of global price pressures.

"The increase in this category (housing) had a significant impact on maintaining the annual inflation rate for August 2024, given the weight this group represents 21 percent," said GASTAT.

The latest report showed that food and beverage prices in the Kingdom saw a slight increase of 0.9 percent in August, while restaurant and hotel expenses rose by 1.6 percent during the same period.

In the education sector, costs increased by 1.6 percent in August, driven by a 3.8 percent rise in fees for intermediate and secondary education.

Prices for furnishing and home equipment dropped by 3.5 percent, driven by a 6.2 percent decline in the costs of furniture, carpets, and flooring.

Clothing and footwear prices fell by 3.2 percent, and transportation expenses decreased by 3.4 percent compared to August last year.

On a month-to-month basis, Saudi Arabia's consumer price index edged up by 0.1 percent in August.

The report said that the monthly inflation was influenced by a 0.4 percent rise in housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuel costs.

GASTAT also noted a 0.4 percent month-on-month increase in food and beverage prices, while restaurant and hotel expenses grew by 0.2 percent.

Prices for education, personal goods and services, health, communications, and tobacco remained relatively stable compared to July.

Ayman Al-Sayari, governor of the Saudi Central Bank, highlighted the Kingdom's success in maintaining stable inflation levels, attributing it to the strong support of its exchange rate policy.

Speaking at the 83rd meeting of the Central Bank Governors Committee of the Gulf Cooperation Council in Doha on Sept. 12, he said that the average inflation



The average inflation rate in Saudi Arabia stood at 2 percent from 2000 to 2023. Ayman Al-Sayari SAMA governor

Saudi Arabia's inflation rate remains among the lowest in MENA, reflecting the Kingdom's proactive measures to stabilize the economy. Reuters/File

SAUDI ARABIA'S CPI INCREASED BY 1.6% IN AUGUST 2024

CPI annual change by category



Source: GASTAT

ARAB NEWS

reducing price pressures.

Jadwa Investment said that housing costs continue to be a major driver of inflation in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the "rentals for housing" segment. Prices in this category have remained high due to strong demand and a tight rental market, further strained by high interest rates that are leading more Saudis to rent rather than purchase homes.

Wholesale Price Index

In a separate report, GASTAT revealed that Saudi Arabia's Wholesale Price Index rose by 3.2 percent in August compared to the same month last year.

The authority attributed the increase in WPI to a rise in the prices of other transportable goods, which climbed by 8.1 percent. This was primarily driven by higher expenses for basic chemicals and refined

petroleum products, which surged by 13.9 percent and 12 percent, respectively.

The report also noted a 0.4 percent year-on-year increase in the prices of agricultural and fishery products in August.

The costs of ores and minerals fell by 3.7 percent in August compared to the same period in 2023, while prices for metal products, machinery, and equipment saw a slight decline of 0.1 percent.

Prices of food products, beverages, tobacco, and textiles remained largely unchanged during the month.

Saudi Arabia's WPI saw a slight monthly increase of 0.2 percent, driven by a 0.2 percent rise in the prices of other transportable goods.

"Prices of metal products, machinery, and equipment increased by 0.3 percent month-on-month in August, as a result of a 0.9 percent increase in the prices of transport equipment," said GASTAT.

The report also said that expenses for food products, beverages, tobacco, and textiles fell by 0.2 percent in August compared to July, driven by a 0.6 percent drop in the prices of meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, oils, and fats, as well as a 0.2 percent

decline in dairy product prices.

The prices of agricultural and fishing products decreased by 0.1 percent, due to a 1.1 percent drop in the cost of live animals and animal products.

Average prices

In a separate report, GASTAT highlighted notable shifts in the average prices of goods and services across Saudi Arabia in August.

The authority reported that prices of local tomatoes surged by 19.54 percent compared to the previous month, while imported tomatoes saw a 9.83 percent increase during the same period.

Local children's diapers experienced a month-on-month price rise of 4.94 percent in August, followed by medium local potatoes and Pakistani mangoes, with prices climbing 4.25 percent and 4.08 percent, respectively.

On the other hand, the price of dates dropped by 10.66 percent in August compared to July, and local figs saw an 8.27 percent decline.

These reports from GASTAT offer a comprehensive view of the various factors influencing inflation and the cost of living in the Kingdom.

Business News



Investor interest remained concentrated on fintech, which continued to be the most funded sector, raising \$54 million across eight deals. File

STARTUP WRAP

Investment in MENA region eases in August

Saudi Arabia records nine deals worth \$16 million, says report

Nour El-Shaerl Riyadh

Investment in the Middle East and North Africa eased in August with total funding reaching \$83 million across 30 rounds.

This reflects a 76 percent drop from July's \$355 million and a 24 percent year-on-year decrease, according to Wamda and Digital Digest's monthly report.

Unlike previous months, August did not see any megadeals, with the largest round being UAE-based Yuze's \$30 million deal. Debt financing played a minimal role, accounting for only 3 percent of the total raised capital.

The UAE once again led the region in startup investments, as 13 UAE-based startups raised \$55.7 million.

Saudi Arabia followed with \$16 million secured across nine deals. Egypt, which had been a top performer in July, saw a sharp decline, raising just \$7.6 million from four deals, while Kuwait made it to the top four with a single deal — Ken's \$3 million raise.

Investor interest remained concentrated on fintech, which continued to be the most funded sector for the third consecutive month, raising \$54 million across eight deals. Web3 also regained momentum, securing \$13.5 million in three rounds, while food tech reappeared on the scene, raising \$9 million through four deals.

The month was dominated by early-stage funding, with two startups raising a total of \$19 million in Series A rounds, and five startups raising \$15.6 million in seed rounds. Seven

startups did not disclose their funding stages, accounting for \$35.4 million of the total investment.

Business-to-business models remained highly attractive to investors, with 13 startups raising \$46 million. Business-to-consumer models attracted \$15 million across five rounds, while the remaining funds went to startups operating in both sectors.

Female-led startups continued to face challenges in raising capital, securing just 0.3 percent of the total investment in August. Only one female-founded startup, Powder Beauty, raised an undisclosed pre-series A round, and another female co-founded startup received a \$150,000 accelerator grant.

The MENA entrepreneurial ecosystem also saw other notable developments in August, including the formation of the Waad Investment firm, a coalition of Gulf-based family offices targeting a \$200 million fund, and a \$100 million fund launched by Singapore-based Gate Ventures and the Blockchain Center in Abu Dhabi to promote Web3 innovation.

In Egypt, T-Vencubator launched the "Where's the

Problem?" initiative to support the local startup ecosystem.

On the mergers and acquisitions front, August saw the UAE-based property crowdfunding platform Maisour acquired by Meteora Developers, while Kuwait-based proptech Sakan acquired Qatari company Hapondo.

NUMBER

\$55.7m

The UAE led the region in startup investments, as 13 startups raised \$55.7 million.

FlapKap raises \$34m

UAE-based fintech FlapKap raised \$34 million in a pre-series A round consisting of both debt and equity financing. The round was led by BECO Capital, with additional participation from Pact VC, AI5, Nclude, QED Investors, and debt financing from Channel Capital.

Founded in Egypt in 2022 by Ahmad Coucha, Khaled Nassef, Sherif Bichara, and Kunal Harisinghani, FlapKap offers revenue-based and embedded finance solutions to help small and medium-sized enterprises scale up their inventory and digital ad spending with fast access to capital and the flexibility to pay later.

The new capital will enable FlapKap to expand its SME financing services across the Gulf and the broader Middle East region. The company previously raised \$3.6 million in a seed round, bringing its total funding to \$37.6 million.

Paymob secures \$22m

Egypt-based fintech Paymob secured an additional \$22 million in a series B extension round, bringing the company's total Series B funding to \$72 million.

The round was led by EBRD Venture Capital, with participation from Endeavor Catalyst, as well as existing investors including PayPal Ventures, BII, FMO, AI5, Nclude, and Helios Digital Ventures.

Founded in 2015 by Islam Shawky, Alain El-Hajj, and Mostafa El-Menessy, Paymob provides digital payment solutions to both online and offline merchants.

HissaTech raises \$666k

Saudi Arabia-based proptech HissaTech raised SR2.5 million (\$666,164) in a pre-seed round led by undisclosed angel investors.

Founded in 2024 by All Al-Shareef, HissaTech provides a platform that allows individuals to co-own properties, offering rental income and potential capital gains, making property investment more accessible to smaller investors.

The company plans to use the funding to expand its customer base, enhance its digital platform, and build strategic partnerships within the property tech sector.

Oyster reaches \$1.2bn valuation

Lebanese-founded Oyster raised \$59 million in its latest series D funding round, reaching a valuation of \$1.2 billion.

Founded by Lebanese entrepreneur Tony Jamous, the company offers a payroll and human resources platform that specializes in distributed workforces or global employment.

BizBriefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Growth

China's industrial output up 4.5% year on year

China's industrial output growth in August expanded 4.5 percent year on year, slowing from the 5.1 percent pace in July and marking the slowest growth since March, official data showed on Saturday.

Retail sales, a key gauge of consumption, rose only 2.1 percent in August despite the summer travel peak, decelerating from a 2.7 percent increase in July. Analysts had expected retail sales, which have been anaemic this year, to grow 2.5 percent.

China's oil refinery output fell for a fifth month. **Reuters**

Laws

UK firms fear tougher job regulation

British businesses are worried that greater protections for employees planned by the newly elected government will make it more risky to hire new staff, the Confederation of British Industry said on Sunday.

Labour pledged in its election campaign to require employers to offer all staff parental leave, guaranteed minimum hours, sick pay and protection from unfair dismissal.

Under current law, staff employed for less than two years can be dismissed without an employer needing to prove misconduct or poor performance. **Reuters**

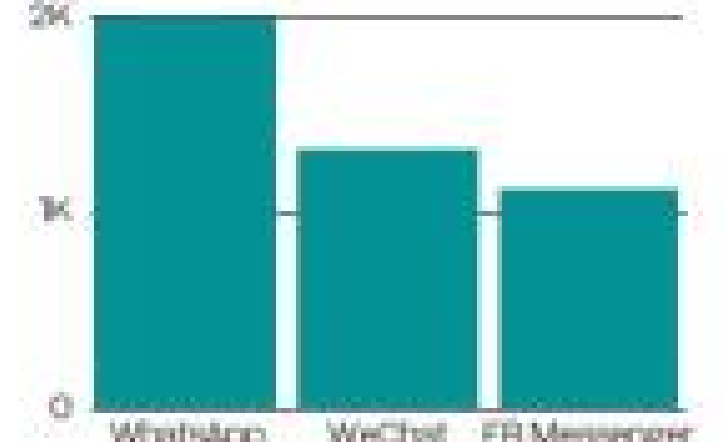
Chart of THE DAY

As of April 2024, 2 billion users were accessing the WhatsApp messenger on a monthly basis.

Source: Statista

POPULAR MESSAGING APPS

As of April 2024 (in millions)



What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

Better Places

ROBERT RASMUSSEN

Explore the transformative journey of embracing compassion and authenticity in the workplace with "Better Places."

Robert Rasmussen, founder and CEO of Agile Six, brings his vision of what a business community can aspire to become.

Rooted in the timeless wisdom of Ahimsa, or nonviolence, this heartfelt narrative moves beyond the zero-sum game of winners

and losers to reveal the profound impact of our words and actions on the world around us, says a review published on goodreads.com.



Policy

US Fed likely to announce cut in interest rate

The Federal Reserve is gearing up to announce its first interest rate cut for more than four years on Wednesday, with policymakers expected to debate how big a move to make less than two months before the US presidential election.

Senior officials at the US central bank including Fed chair Jerome Powell have in recent weeks indicated that a rate cut is coming this month, as inflation eases toward the bank's long-term target of 2 percent, and the labor market continues to cool. The Fed has repeatedly stressed it will make its decision on rate cuts based solely on the economic data. **Reuters**

Digital

Switzerland unveils supercomputer

Switzerland inaugurated its new supercomputer called Alps — one of the world's fastest — which it hopes will help place the country first for trustworthy artificial intelligence solutions. The ETH Zurich university officially inaugurated Alps at the Swiss National Supercomputing Centre in Lugano, southern Switzerland.

"Alps is an expression of our vision of a future characterized by knowledge and progress," Economy, Education and Research Minister Guy Parmelin said in a speech at the CSCS site. In June, Alps was ranked as the world's sixth most powerful supercomputer. **AFP**



Egypt-based fintech Paymob secured an additional \$22 million in a series B extension round. Supplied

We're excited to unlock unbeatable fares for our customers on the newly announced route to London.

Andras Rado
Head of Communications and Government Affairs, Wizz Air



PRESS RELEASES FROM THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

AFFORDABLE TRAVEL

Wizz Air announces new London Gatwick-Jeddah route

Wizz Air, Europe's fastest-growing and most environmentally sustainable airline, has launched a new direct route between London Gatwick and Jeddah, starting on March 31, 2025. This new route underscores Wizz Air's dedication to expanding its presence in Saudi Arabia, offering travelers more options and affordable fares. Tickets are now available on wizzair.com and the Wizz Air app, with prices starting from \$116.99.

Wizz Air's new London Gatwick to Jeddah route will operate daily all year round, connecting two vibrant cities. This strategic addition to Wizz Air's network highlights the airline's commitment to providing affordable and accessible travel options while strengthening ties between Saudi Arabia and the UK.

Over the past three years, Wizz Air has significantly increased its capacity in Saudi Arabia, introducing numerous new routes and enhancing travel options, while contributing to the country's connectivity in line with Vision 2030 and following a partnership agreement with Saudi Tourism Authority to increase connectivity to Europe and boost inbound visitors.

This route is one of many offerings that will leverage the Airbus A321XLR's extended range and efficiency, revolutionizing intercontinental travel and making it more accessible than ever before.

"The Airbus A321XLR is the



HIGH LIGHT

Over the past three years, Wizz Air has significantly increased its capacity in Saudi Arabia, introducing numerous new routes and enhancing travel options.

Andras Rado, head of communications and government affairs, Wizz Air, and Kimmo Ruotsalainen, general manager of aviation business development, Jeddah Airports Company.

most cost-efficient aircraft of its class and, given the enhanced range capability, it enables Wizz Air to connect the furthest destinations in its network and further expand it, connecting cultures and continents. We're excited to unlock unbeatable fares for our customers on the newly announced route to London,

while offering the most sustainable option for flying," said Andras Rado, head of communications and government affairs, Wizz Air, during a press conference in Jeddah. "We are already flying several 5-6 hour long ultra-low-cost routes with great satisfaction to our customers, and the XLR (extra-long range) will extend our

outstanding value proposition to 7-8-hour long flights."

The new aircraft type, a first in the region, is the most cost-effective in its class, more sustainable due to less fuel burn and designed to operate intercontinental flights of up to 7-8 hours, revolutionizing the long-haul travel market.

"We as an airport are delighted to offer affordable fares for our customers on the newly announced route to London Gatwick while providing the Wizz Air's new route as an option for traveling to the UK," said Kimmo Ruotsalainen, general manager of aviation business development, Jeddah Airports Company.

SEAMLESS CONNECTIVITY

Gulf Air expands European network with SKY express

Gulf Air, the national carrier of Bahrain, announced a new special prorate agreement with SKY express, the multi-awarded Greek airline. This one-way SPA allows Gulf Air passengers to seamlessly connect onto SKY express flights, opening up new travel opportunities to Greece and beyond.

Specifically, Gulf Air passengers can fly and connect through Athens to 32 destinations across Greece. Under this agreement, passengers traveling from Europe — via key hubs like Rome, Milan, Paris, Munich, Frankfurt, and London — can enjoy seamless connections with a single ticket from their city of departure through Athens to Bahrain, and onward to Gulf Air's extensive network.

This partnership significantly expands Gulf Air's network and strengthens its presence in Greece and Europe, providing passengers with even more travel options and convenience.

A Gulf Air spokesperson said: "This partnership with SKY

express signifies a key step in Gulf Air's network expansion strategy, broadening our reach and strengthening our market presence in Europe. By connecting our network to SKY express, we're offering our passengers enhanced travel experiences to Greek destinations with seamless connectivity, and more travel options to choose from."

Gerasimos Skaltsas, chief commercial officer of SKY express, said: "Our partnership with Gulf Air marks a significant milestone in SKY express's international expansion, enhancing connectivity for passengers across Greece and global destinations via Bahrain. By offering seamless travel with a single ticket, we are providing a more convenient and comprehensive travel experience. This collaboration brings mutual benefits to both airlines and our passengers."

This agreement marks another milestone in Gulf Air's commitment to expanding its network and offering passengers greater flexibility and convenience.

Siemens Mobility, a provider of rail transport solutions, has appointed Frank Hagemeler as the new CEO for Saudi Arabia. Previously serving as the CEO of Siemens Mobility Division in the Netherlands and China, Hagemeler brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his new role.

As CEO, Hagemeler will be responsible for the strategic planning and business development of Siemens Mobility's products and services in Saudi Arabia. His leadership and strategic vision will be crucial in enhancing the company's growth and strengthening its position as a key player in the region.

Léon Soulier, CEO of Siemens Mobility Middle East Africa, said: "We are delighted to appoint Frank Hagemeler as

Frank Hagemeler.



TRANSPORT LEADERSHIP

Siemens Mobility names CEO for Saudi Arabia

the new CEO of Siemens Mobility for Saudi Arabia. Frank's extensive operational expertise and strong leadership abilities will be instrumental in delivering advanced and sustainable transportation solutions for Saudi Arabia. The country is developing at a remarkable pace, and Frank's experience in international mobility projects, along with his long-term experience at Siemens, will be invaluable in supporting Saudi Arabia's ambitious goals."

Following his university graduation, Hagemeler began his transportation career in the aviation industry with Fokker Aircraft. He subsequently worked in various management positions for different traffic- and transportation-related companies. In 2012, he joined Siemens as Mobility CEO for the Netherlands and further

expanded his global experience while serving as CEO of the Siemens Mobility Division in China from 2016 to 2018. While there, his main responsibility was to strengthen Siemens' positions in the huge Chinese high-speed and metro markets. Following his term in China, he relocated to Germany and held a number of management positions at the Siemens Mobility headquarters.

Siemens Mobility has established a significant footprint in Saudi Arabia since 2006 with 18 years of transformative contributions to the region's transportation infrastructure. Among other projects, the company implemented the first European Train Control System project in the GCC for the East-West Rail Line providing passenger and freight transport between Riyadh and Dammam. Furthermore, the company's involvement in the Haramain High-Speed Rail project underscores its commitment to pioneering high-speed rail solutions in the region.

Corporate Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Art & Culture

American Express partners with Dubai Opera

American Express Middle East has announced a new partnership with Dubai Opera as "Official Payments" partner. This partnership reflects both organizations' dedication to promoting arts and culture, offering American Express card members in the region exclusive access and unique opportunities to engage with world-class performances throughout the upcoming seasons from September to May 2026. American Express Middle East will be sponsoring four productions annually, each carefully selected to immerse its card members in enchanting narratives of wonder, romance, and cultural celebration.

Data Theft

Backdoor targets users of WeChat, DingTalk

Kaspersky researchers have identified a macOS variant of the HZ Rat backdoor targeting users of WeChat and DingTalk, two popular Chinese messaging platforms. The malware, first detected on Windows systems, now threatens macOS, potentially enabling lateral network movement and data theft.

"Kaspersky expert analysis shows the macOS backdoor gathers information such as the victim's username, work email address and phone number from DingTalk and WeChat's unprotected data files," said Sergey Puzan, malware analyst at Kaspersky.

Education

3 schools open in Abu Dhabi's Zayed City

The Abu Dhabi Investment Office, in collaboration with the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge and a multinational consortium led by Plenary Group and BESIX Group, inaugurated three state-of-the-art schools in Abu Dhabi's Zayed City. The new educational facilities represent the first time that school infrastructure has been developed in the UAE under a public-private partnership model.

Completed on schedule and within budget, the project has significantly enhanced Abu Dhabi's educational landscape by ensuring additional capacity for 5,360 students, from kindergarten to Grade 12, for the 2024-2025 academic year and beyond.

Nicknamed 'The Reaper,' Saudi fighter Abdullah Al-Qahtani is undefeated in his PFL career and has been impressive so far.



Sport News

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Jordan's Al-Hayassat not fazed by partisan Al-Qahtani crowd in Riyadh

The two featherweight contenders will meet in next Friday's semifinal main event

Arab News Riyadh

Jordan's Abdelrahman Al-Hayassat won't just be facing title favorite Abdullah Al-Qahtani from Saudi Arabia, but he'll also be going against a partisan hometown crowd at the PFL MENA 3 in Riyadh on Sept. 20.

The two featherweight contenders will meet in next Friday's semifinal main event with a chance at moving on to

the PFL MENA 3 Championships on the line.

The Saudi fighter, nicknamed "The Reaper," is undefeated in his PFL career and has been impressive in PFL MENA so far. Facing him in his hometown makes it an even bigger challenge for his opponent.

Al-Hayassat, however, says that he isn't fazed by the hostile crowd.

"Even though the fight is on my opponent's turf and in front of his crowd, this won't affect my morale," he said. "The semifinal

Even though the fight is on my opponent's turf and in front of his crowd, this won't affect my morale. The semifinal match is very important to me.

Abdelrahman Al-Hayassat



match is very important to me. Winning it will take me to the final and bring me closer to achieving the title."

To prepare for the biggest fight of his life, Al-Hayassat took his training to another hotbed for combat sports: Thailand.

"I've prepared well for the fight with a 70-day training camp in Thailand, one of the best camps I've had. I focused on the strategy that will enable me to defeat Al-Qahtani," he shared.

When Al-Hayassat and Al-Qahtani step inside the SmartCage, the former plans on shocking the world and silencing the Saudi fans in attendance.

"I've worked hard on the necessary techniques for the fight. My Saudi opponent will be surprised by my level," Al-Hayassat said.

"He will face a different Abdullah than the one he knows. I'm confident that I'll win and make it to my first final because I've prepared everything necessary to achieve victory," he added.

Sport Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST



Viral infection Al-Nassr say Ronaldo to miss Iraq trip

Al-Nassr's captain Cristiano Ronaldo is unwell due to a viral infection, according to an official statement released by his club.

The team's doctor said that Ronaldo requires rest and will not accompany the side on their trip to Iraq for their Asian Champions League clash.

He will now miss the AFC Champions League match against Al-Shorta in Baghdad on Monday.

The club's statement confirmed that Ronaldo's condition is being closely monitored and that Al-Nassr extended their wishes for a speedy recovery. **AN**

Sweating heat Kuwait board quits after match chaos

The entire board of Kuwait's football governing body has resigned after fans were left in sweltering temperatures for hours during a World Cup qualifier against Iraq.

Board members quit after an inquiry into ticketing and logistical problems that marred the match at the 60,000-capacity Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, the Kuwait Football Association said in a statement. **AFP**

Impressive win Piastrri wins Azerbaijan Grand Prix

Oscar Piastrri claimed an impressive second victory of his burgeoning career on Sunday when he drove his McLaren to a well-judged triumph ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc in a tense Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

The 23-year-old Australian's victory enabled McLaren to replace Red Bull as leaders of the constructors' championship, ending the champions' two-year dominance, in a race of attrition that ended under a Virtual Safety Car following a spectacular late collision between Carlos Sainz of Ferrari and Red Bull's Sergio Perez as they battled for third. **AFP**

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Wolves remain without a win in the English Premier League this season as Newcastle United's greater quality proved decisive after the break on Sunday. **AFP**

PREMIER LEAGUE

Newcastle United strike back to win at Wolves

AFP Wolverhampton, UK

Harvey Barnes' stunning strike sent Newcastle third in the Premier League on Sunday after coming from behind to win 2-1 at Wolves.

Mario Lemina had swept the home side into a first-half lead at the end of a swift counter-attack.

However, Wolves remain without a win in the Premier League this season as Newcastle's greater quality proved decisive after the break.

The Magpies' performances have been far from convincing so far this season. Yet, Eddie Howe's men have still picked up 10 points from a possible 12.

Howe responded to another lackluster opening 45 minutes

with a triple half-time change with Alexander Isak among those to come off at the break.

Newcastle could have found themselves 2-0 down before the fightback started when Jorgen Strand Larsen smashed off the post.

Instead, fortune favored the visitors when Schar's speculative shot flicked off the head of Craig Dawson and flew beyond Sam Johnstone.

Barnes needed no such luck as he arrowed a rocket into the top corner 10 minutes from time to snatch all three points.

Newcastle still required a brilliant save from Nick Pope to deny Mathcus Cunha in stoppage time and leave Wolves in the bottom three.

HIGHLIGHT

The Magpies' performances have been far from convincing so far this season. Yet, Eddie Howe's men have still picked up 10 points from a possible 12.

However, they survived to move level with second-placed Arsenal, just two points behind Manchester City.

Elsewhere, Derrick Koehn's 69th minute goal lifted Werder Bremen to a 2-1 win at Mainz during their Bundesliga match on Sunday, despite having to play the final half an hour with 10 men.

Marvin Ducksch gave Bremen the lead from the spot after Justin Njinmah was fouled in the box,

with the injured player taken from the field as a result of the collision.

With former Mainz manager Jurgen Klopp watching on from the stands, the hosts hit back through Jae-sung Lee, who tapped in after goalkeeper Michael Zetterer spilled the ball at his feet.

Bremen's chances of taking all three points looked dim when Marco Friedl saw straight red for a last-man foul with 60 minutes remaining, but Koehn's goal just nine minutes later put them in the driver's seat.

Zetterer redeemed himself for his error with a string of late saves to keep Bremen on track for their first win of the season.

Four-time German champions

Bremen finish the round in eighth, ahead of Mainz who sit 15th.

Klopp took over as Mainz manager after retiring from the club as a player, before moving to coach Borussia Dortmund and then Liverpool.

Earlier on Sunday, goals from Marius Wolf, Phillip Tietz and Yusuf Kabadayi took Augsburg to a 3-1 Bundesliga home win over promoted St. Pauli.

One-time Germany defender Wolf, who moved from Dortmund to Augsburg in the summer, broke the deadlock with a superb curling strike three minutes into the second half.

Tietz doubled the home side's lead with a well-placed header on the 67-minute mark.

US rock band Jane's Addiction apologized to fans for an onstage altercation in Boston that saw singer Perry Farrell throw a punch at guitarist Dave Navarro. The band offered a 'heartfelt apology' and canceled its next concert.



& Finally

The Six

Guacamole Day

Try these Arabized dishes as the US marks National Guacamole Day.



Guacamole with molasses

Mash three avocados and add two tablespoons of lemon juice; half a white onion, chopped; a quarter cup of tahini; and one tablespoon of pomegranate molasses.



Lebanese-style guacamole

Add a roasted orange bell pepper to four mashed avocados. Add a tablespoon of lime juice; chickpeas; two cloves of garlic; cumin, sumac, coriander and Aleppo pepper.



Spicy guacamole

Mash three avocados and add two tablespoons of lemon juice; half a white onion, chopped; a quarter cup of tahini; jalapenos and za'atar.



Preserved lemon guacamole

The same recipe as above, this sour and tangy treat replaces the white onion with half a red onion (chopped) and a tablespoon of chopped preserved lemon.



Crunchy guacamole

Combine two avocados with pomegranate molasses, lemon juice, a diced red onion, and pumpkin seeds and pomegranate seeds.



Avocado muttabal

Switch out the traditional eggplant for an avocado and you get a smoky and sour dip.



CLOSE UP

Danielle Deadwyler shows off Elie Saab look in New York

Arab News Dubai

US actress Danielle Deadwyler showed off a bubblegum pink cocktail dress by Lebanese designer Elie Saab at a screening of "The Piano Lesson" in New York.

The outfit hailed from Saab's Spring/Summer 2024 Ready-to-Wear collection and featured a belted waist with a slightly flowing skirt.

Deadwyler stars in "The Piano Lesson," an American drama directed by Malcolm Washington, who co-wrote the screenplay with Virgil Williams.

Set to hit US theaters on Nov. 8, it will stream worldwide on Netflix on Nov. 22 and stars Samuel L. Jackson, John David Washington, Ray Fisher, Michael Potts, Erykah Badu, Skylar Aleece Smith,



From left: Katia Washington, Todd Black, John David Washington, Danielle Deadwyler, Malcolm Washington, and Doreen St. Félix attend Netflix's 'The Piano Lesson' screening in New York. AFP

and Corey Hawkins.

The film is based on August Wilson's 1987 Pulitzer Prize-winning play of the same name.

It is set in 1936 Pittsburgh during the aftermath of the Great Depression and follows the lives of the Charles family as they decide what to do with

an heirloom, the family piano, which is decorated with designs carved by an enslaved ancestor.

The director spoke to Deadline about the upcoming release, saying: "The Piano Lesson" is a story that centers on a brother and sister's disagreement on what to do with a

family heirloom, but underneath the surface is a story about ancestry, legacy, and how the decisions that our ancestors made affect the lives we lived today.

"When I first read the script, I was in a place in my life where I was digitizing a bunch of family photos, and I was looking at the faces of my ancestors, thinking about the lives that they lived and the connection to my own. So when I actually read the text itself, it really spoke to me in a way that forced me to engage with the material in a meaningful way," he added.

The film also played at the Toronto International Film Festival in September, with Deadwyler hitting the red carpet in a Dior Resort 2025 metallic embroidered dress that riffed on the current Joan of Arc-inspired trend with its armor-style aesthetic.

DEMENTIA

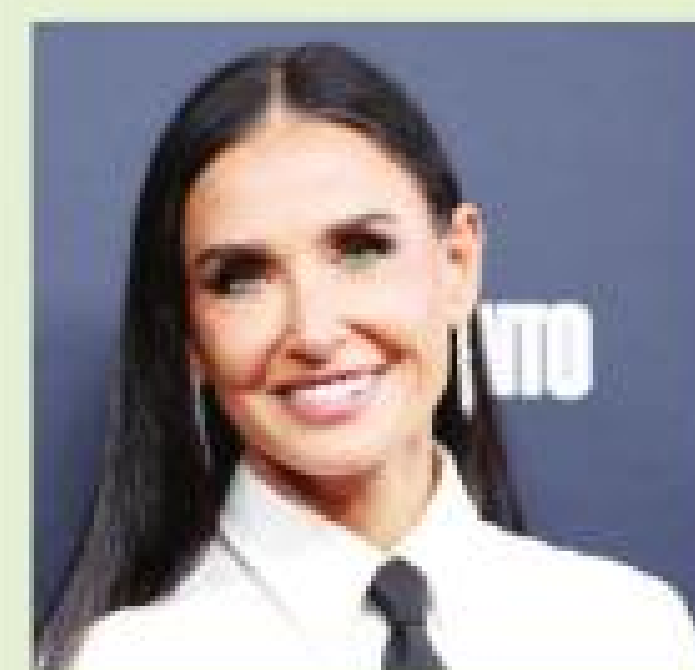
Demi Moore gives update on Bruce Willis' health

Arab News Dubai

US actress Demi Moore spoke about her ex-husband Bruce Willis' health, saying he is "in a stable place" after a previous frontotemporal dementia diagnosis.

Moore, who stars in upcoming body horror film "The Substance," appeared on an episode of "The Drew Barrymore Show" where the pair discussed their previous work on 2003's "Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle," in which Willis has a cameo role.

Moore was married to the actor from 1987 to 2000 and said: "Given the givens, he is in a stable place ... what I say to my kids is you meet them where they're at. You don't hold on to who they were or what you want them to be, but who they are in this moment." Moore



Demi Moore

and Willis share three children: Rumer Willis, Scout Willis and Tallulah Willis.

In 2022, Willis stepped away from acting following a diagnosis of aphasia, a condition that affects the way one communicates. In 2023, his family announced the condition had developed into frontotemporal dementia.

This year, Willis' wife, Emma Heming Willis, slammed rumors about her husband's condition in a statement on social media.

"I need society and whosoever is writing these stupid headlines to stop scaring people. Stop scaring people to think that once they get a diagnosis of some kind of neurocognitive disease that, 'That's it. It's over. Let's pack it up. Nothing else to see here, we're done! No. It is the complete opposite of that, OK?'"

INTERVIEW

Princess Nourah 'breathes new life' into Asprey collection

Rahaf Jambri Riyach

British luxury company Asprey is continuing its collaboration with Saudi Princess Nourah Al-Faisal, the founder of Nuun Jewels, with a reimagined version of Asprey's Feather Jewelry Collection.

The new collection, designed by Princess Nourah, comes after she collaborated with the label on a capsule collection of bags in July 2023.

"When I approached this collection, I saw an opportunity

to breathe new life into Asprey's iconic feather designs. I wanted to honor that legacy while infusing it with the playfulness and innovation that's become synonymous with the brand," she told Arab News of the new launch.

The original Feather collection draws inspiration from royal heraldry, featuring designs that echo the feathers adorning the Prince of Wales's heraldic



badge, where three white ostrich feathers emerge from a gold coronet. Now, Princess Noura has put her own spin on the collection with her signature aesthetic visible in the choice of materials.

Colored titanium is complemented by sparkling gemstones ranging from delicate hues to rich,

The collection currently consists of 13 pieces. Supplied

saturated tones, characteristic of Nuun Jewels' style. From pale pink sapphires and morganite to pastel yellow diamonds, the interplay of colors is something Princess Nourah is known for.

"By experimenting with unexpected colors and materials, I've tried to create pieces that feel both fresh and timeless. There's a subtle nod to Art Deco in there, which I've balanced with the contemporary aesthetic of my own brand, Nuun Jewels," she said.

The collection is a feather in the cap of Asprey, with its chairman telling Arab News he is keen to ensure the luxury goods house remains synonymous with "innovation" despite its more than 200-year history.

"This collection not only showcases (Princess Nourah's) visionary creativity but also exemplifies Asprey's relentless pursuit of excellence and beauty through innovation and tradition," John Rigas, chairman of Asprey, said.