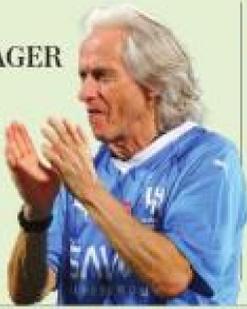


SPORT

AL-HILAL MANAGER 'VERY PROUD' AS EQUALIZER PRESERVES DOMESTIC SEASON

Page 15



SAUDI ARABIA
TEARS OF JOY AS AMERICAN REUNITES WITH SAUDI FAMILY AFTER 40 YEARS

OPINION

OIL THEFT THE UNTOLD DRIVER OF SYRIA'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

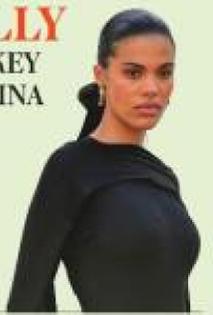
By Sir Alan Duncan
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& FINALLY

TINA KUNAKEY FRONTS AMINA MUADDI'S LATEST CAMPAIGN

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SUNDAY, May 19, 2024
Dul Qada II, 1445
www.arabnews.com

ARAB NEWS

The Voice of a Changing Region

SINCE 1975

MIDDLE EAST WAR

50 killed in Israeli attacks as 800,000 'forced to flee' Rafah

Gantz threatens to quit Netanyahu Cabinet unless Gaza plan is approved

Arab News Jeddah

Heavy clashes and bombardment rocked Rafah on Saturday, as Israel pressed an assault against Hamas fighters.

The Israeli military said its air forces hit more than 70 targets while ground troops conducted "targeted raids" in eastern Rafah, killing 50 militants and locating dozens of tunnel shafts.

Hamas's armed wing, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, said it fired a barrage of rockets toward the Israeli city of Ashkelon and targeted an Israeli command center at the Jabalia refugee camp in the north of the Gaza Strip.

The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees said that 800,000 people had been "forced to flee" Rafah since Israel began military operations there this month.

"Nearly half of the population of Rafah or 800,000 people are on the road having been forced to flee since the Israeli forces started the military operation in the area on 6 May," UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini said on X.

Following the evacuation orders, Gazans have fled to "the middle areas and Khan Younis including to destroyed buildings," he said. "Every time, they are forced to leave behind the few belongings they have Every time, they have to start from scratch, all over again."

Hamas slammed what it called Israel's "intensified brutal raids" on Jabalia, saying they had killed



Palestinian supporters prepare to march through London on Saturday to call for an end to arms sales to Israel and demand an end to Gaza's siege. AFP

NUMBER

35,386

Palestinians have been killed in Israel's offensive on Gaza.

dozens of civilians and wounded hundreds more while targeting schools and shelters.

"The escalating crimes of the occupation will not succeed in breaking the will of our brave resistance or in deterring our proud people from their decision to stand firm on their land," it

said. Israeli war Cabinet minister Benny Gantz demanded that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu commit to an agreed vision for the conflict that would include stipulating who might rule Gaza after the war with Hamas.

Gantz said he wanted the war Cabinet to form a six-point plan

by June 8. If his expectations are not met, Gantz said, he would withdraw his centrist party from the conservative premier's emergency government.

• **Spotlight** Page 3
• **Related reports** 7
• **Opinion:** Yossi Mekelberg Page 9

PEACE EVASIVE

Houthi ballistic missile hits oil tanker

Saeed Al-Batati Al-Mukalla

Yemen's Houthi militia launched an anti-ship ballistic missile into the Red Sea on Saturday morning, striking an oil tanker traveling from Russia to China, according to US Central Command, the latest in a series of Houthi maritime strikes.

CENTCOM said that at 1 a.m., a Houthi anti-ship ballistic missile struck a Panamanian-flagged, Greek-owned and operated oil tanker named M/T Wind, which had just visited Russia and was on its way to China, causing "flooding which resulted in the loss of propulsion and steering."

The US military said: "The crew of M/T Wind was able to restore propulsion and steering, and no casualties were reported. M/T Wind resumed its course under its power. This continued malign and reckless behavior by the Iranian-backed Houthis threatens regional stability and endangers the lives of mariners across the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden."

On Friday, the Houthis claimed to have shot down an American drone, hours after footage circulated online of what appeared to be the wreckage of an MQ-9 Reaper drone.

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree described the drone as "carrying out hostile actions" in Yemen's Marib province, which remains held by allies of Yemen's internationally recognized government.

The Brief

KSA'S NEW ROLE

Saudi Arabia has assumed the presidency of the Executive Council of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization until 2026. **P4**

INDIA HEAT WAVE

Parts of northwest India sweltered under scorching temperatures, with New Delhi under a severe weather alert. **P8**

CEMENT SECTOR

The Saudi cement sector is poised to maintain its position as a key player by harnessing circular economy principles. **P11**

GROWTH

KSA's venture capital sector expanding exponentially

Global companies are capitalizing on Saudi Arabia's expansive strategy

Nour El-Shaerli Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's venture capital landscape continues to grow with its reverberations reaching far continents.

Global venture capital firms are capitalizing on the Kingdom's expansive strategy, as evidenced by the state-owned Saudi Venture Capital Co's \$30 million investment in a US-based investment firm.

SVC has pledged this injection to a private equity fund managed



Saudi human resources tech company Qsality has partnered with Itqan Capital to launch an \$80 million investment fund.

by the renowned US-based investment firm General Atlantic. Saudi logistics startup WheeKeep raised \$8 million in a series A round led by Fintech Collective, with participation from local and international investors.

WheeKeep provides mobile self-storage units for individuals and businesses.

The new capital will be used to fuel WheeKeep's expansion plans in Saudi Arabia and beyond.

Saudi human resources tech

company Qsality has partnered with Itqan Capital to launch an \$80 million investment fund.

Detailed report Page 13

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No. 165 • 16 pages



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We are proud of the renomination of the Kingdom's presidency of the Executive Council of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, for the third time in a row.
Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan
 Saudi culture minister



Radar

KSA today



AIUla Safari trip

Visit the Sharaan Nature Reserve and witness the breathtaking landscape of the region. If you are lucky, you may even glimpse the rare Arabian ibex. Book through experienceaulla.com.



Jeddah Al-Balad tour

An educational tour of Jeddah's Al-Balad district takes visitors on a journey through history, from the origins of Bayt Nassif to the Al-Sham neighborhood and other historic sites. Book through experiences.suplift.com.



Dhahran Material world

The Material Library Experience at Ithra Center is a family-friendly activity that allows participants to explore an extensive library of material and to access advanced technologies. Find more details on the Ithra app.



Jeddah Candle session

Learn how to make a candle, all the way from coloring it to making its scent. The workshop is being held in Jeddah, and to book the session go to experiences.suplift.com.

The Register

THE PICTURES THAT MARK THE DAY



The President of Mauritania Mohamed Ould Ghazouani left Jeddah on Saturday. He was seen off at King Abdulaziz International Airport by

Makkah Deputy Gov. Prince Saud bin Mishaal bin Abdulaziz and several other officials, according to a report by Saudi Press Agency. Ghazouani arrived in the Kingdom

recently with an accompanying delegation to perform Umrah. He also visited the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah and performed prayers there.

Today's Number

11m

Saudi aid agency KSrelief's sanitation project has provided in one week more than 11 million liters of drinking and useable water for residents in Hajjah and Saada governorates of Yemen. These projects are a part of the Kingdom's humanitarian and aid efforts to assist people in need across the world.

Review

'The Things You Can See Only When You Slow Down'

HAIFA ALSHAMMARI

"The Things You Can See Only When You Slow Down: How to be Calm in a Busy World" offers advice on how to find inner peace in today's busy world.

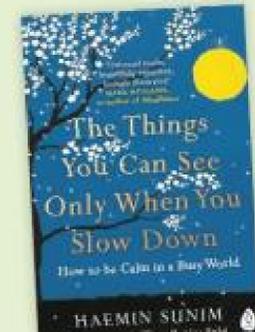
The 300-page book, published in 2017, was written by Haemin Sunim, a Korean Buddhist monk, and has sold more than 3 million copies.

The author underwent monastic training in South Korea before spending seven years teaching Asian religions at Hampshire College in the US. The book elaborates on the wisdom he gained from personal experiences as a Buddhist monk.

One of the book's strengths is its simplicity. The author's writing style is easy to understand as he presents his ideas in bite-sized chapters, each focusing on a different aspect of mindfulness.

Whether he is writing about the meaning of silence or of gratitude, Sunim's words resonate with a quiet authority which prompts the reader to pause and reflect on their own lives.

In addition, the book is filled with amazing imagery that complements the stories. The beautiful drawings contribute to Sunim's narrative and create a sense of serenity and peace.



What's Trending Today's hot topics explained by Ameera Abid



IN RECOVERY Giada De Laurentiis

X Italian-American chef of Food Network fame Giada De Laurentiis has revealed she underwent minor sinus surgery.

She shared a picture of herself on social media, laying in bed next to her boyfriend with her pet dog on the floor.

The caption read: "Blissful recovery. Had a minor sinus surgery this morning — all is well, but going to spend the weekend right here recovering with the fam." She added that she was missing her daughter Jade.

Laurentiis, who is also a writer and entrepreneur, became famous for her cooking show on Food Network, "Giada at Home," where she shared recipes that have been tried and loved by many.

LONG-ANTICIPATED SEQUEL

Will Smith

X American actor and film producer Will Smith has confirmed that a sequel to the post-apocalyptic hit movie "I Am Legend" is in the works with Michael B. Jordan joining the cast.

The first film is set in New York City after a virus, originally created to cure cancer, has wiped out most of mankind, leaving lead character Dr. Robert Neville (Smith) as the last human in the city, along with his dog and fighting nocturnal mutants.

"I Am Legend" was loosely based on the 1954 novel of the same name written by Richard Matheson.

Speculation over the possible sequel and its new cast member first surfaced in 2022 when Smith shared an Instagram post image of a desolated city with Jordan tagged in the center.

That same

month, Smith told Entertainment Tonight that he was set on making a second film due to the "really, really cool concept" that he and Jordan helped create. "It was one of those ones I was gonna leave alone, and then I heard the idea," he told the outlet at the time.

In a recent interview, Smith told Entertainment Tonight's Kevin Prazier: "We had a couple weeks together about a month ago, I think it's looking good.

We have some really solid ideas ... I think we are going to make it on screen together."

On Jordan, he said: "That dude is the truth, so I would love to do that."

On the topic of getting back with Martin Lawrence for the fourth film in the "Bad Boys" franchise, Smith told ET that his standard for making a follow-up film is that it has to "stand on its own right."



TheRegion

The Middle East Roundup

Arab News Jeddah

- Dubai World Trade Centre will host two exhibitions until May 19. "Decobuild," held at Za'abeel Hall 5, explores the potential of the UAE's decorations, interior design and building materials markets. "Acres Real Estate Exhibition," held at Za'abeel Hall 6, showcases leading property projects and emerging

trends within the real estate market.

- "Physics and Honey," a Lebanese play, follows an extraordinary love story that goes beyond the reality we think we are living in, challenging our understanding of time and place. The play will make audiences laugh and cry, feel nostalgic, and will talk to their hearts and minds. Held at Al-Madina Theater, Beirut,

the show runs from Thursday to Sunday until May 19.

- Enjoy the ultimate virtual reality gaming experience at Eva Bahrain, Manama, and get transported to massive arenas where you will face off against other players in epic battles. The experience will run until July 31. For tickets and more details, visit calendar.bh.

Prayer Times in Saudi Arabia

May 19	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghreb	Isha
Makkah	4:20	5:43	12:18	3:35	6:52	8:22
Madinah	4:12	5:38	12:18	3:44	6:58	8:28
Riyadh	3:44	5:10	11:50	3:16	6:30	8:00
Abha	4:16	5:37	12:07	3:18	6:36	8:06
Dammam	3:25	4:53	11:36	3:06	6:19	7:49

Women and girls in Rafah, as in the rest of Gaza, are in a state of constant despair and fear.

Sima Bahous
Executive director, UN Women



Spotlight

RESEARCH & STUDIES
THE MIDDLE EAST, BETTER EXPLAINED

ARAB NEWS

GAZA CONFLICT

State of despair and deprivation

Unhygienic conditions and a lack of clean water are spreading disease and depriving women and girls of dignity

Anan Tello London

Deprived of adequate access to water, sanitation, and hygiene services, Palestinian women and girls in Gaza are bearing the brunt of the prolonged and deepening humanitarian emergency caused by Israel's ongoing military offensive.

With no resolution to the conflict between Israel and Hamas in sight, more than a million displaced women and girls in the embattled Palestinian enclave continue to endure daily challenges in increasingly dire conditions.

UN Women has described the Israeli military operation in Gaza, which began in the wake of the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attack on southern Israel, as a "war on women," with at least 10,000 killed since the start of the conflict — among them more than 6,000 mothers.

Those figures, published in April, are now likely far higher as Israel expands its operation and bombing raids into eastern Rafah — Gaza's southernmost city, now home to some 1.4 million displaced Palestinians.

According to UN figures, this latest operation has forced an estimated 150,000 Palestinians to flee central and northern Rafah.

While the biggest risk to women and girls in Gaza is injury or death under Israeli bombardment, "the unhygienic conditions and lack of water in Gaza are also having a very negative impact on women and girls' health and dignity," Fikr Shalltoot, the Gaza programs director at Medical Aid for Palestinians, told Arab News.

Analysis of satellite imagery by BBC Verify found that the Israeli operation in Gaza has damaged or destroyed more than half (53 percent) of the territory's vital water and sanitation facilities.

The analysis, based on images acquired in March and April, also confirmed that four of the six wastewater treatment plants in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. These facilities were critical to preventing sewage buildup.

Fidaa Al-Araj, Oxfam's food security, cash, and protection coordinator in Gaza, said the water, sanitation, and hygiene situation facing women and girls in the enclave was "challenging," leaving them unable to access clean toilets or private shower spaces.

"Having been displaced into camps or even in a host community, the numbers of people, of internally displaced persons, are very, very high," Al-Araj told Arab News. "So, there is (overcrowding), there are many difficulties in having access to toilets, bathrooms, showers."



She added: "Even if you have the facilities, and even if by any stretch they are enough for the IDPs residing in any given space, there is the issue of lack of running water to supply those facilities and to have them up and running all the time.

"So, the hygiene conditions are



very compromised, to say the least. When it comes to women and girls, there are issues of privacy, which is completely lacking."

Where washrooms are present, people have "to wait in line with all sorts of people, even strangers, men and women, just to use the toilet. You have people banging on the door of the toilet while you're in there, asking you to hurry up because the line is still very long."

This also makes management of menstruation especially challenging, as women and girls "endure longer hours without changing a pad, without washing," Al-Araj added.

According to UN figures, there are more than 690,000 menstruating women and adolescent girls in the Gaza Strip. But aid agencies, which have had very limited access to the enclave due to the Israeli blockade, have been unable to meet the high demand for hygiene kits.

And since Israel took control of the Palestinian

With no end to the Israel-Hamas conflict in sight, main, right and bottom, more than a million displaced women and girls in Gaza have to endure daily challenges in increasingly dire conditions. AFP files

IN NUMBERS

700k

Women and girls now hosted in Rafah who have nowhere else to go.

93%

Women surveyed who feel unsafe in their own homes or in displacement.

6/10

Women who reported complications in pregnancy since Oct. 7.

SOURCE: UN WOMEN

Even the simple act of taking a shower has been almost impossible for women in Gaza for several months.

"It's very difficult to find a spot designated to take showers, and if it's there, it's very difficult to have water," Oxfam's Al-Araj said. "And if the water is there, it's very difficult to find time to take an adequate shower."

The aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres told the BBC that the destruction of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities has led to "disastrous health consequences for the population,"

Even the simple act of taking a shower has been almost impossible for women in Gaza since the start of the Israeli military assault last October.

notably a significant rise in gastric complaints in Rafah.

Contaminated water has also led to a spike in hepatitis A cases, with women and girls facing a heightened risk of exposure to the disease due to their traditional domestic responsibilities and caring for the sick, according to UN Women's April gender alert report.

The report, titled "Scarcity and Fear," highlighted that the lack of adequate and dignified facilities also exposes women and girls to reproductive and urinary tract infections.

"This situation could develop into dangerous or concerning health conditions for the women and girls, and I'm really sorry to

say that it's not given priority," said Al-Araj.

"The heightening demand on the time, resources, and capacity of the medical facilities and staff makes prioritizing women's issues or girls' issues very difficult."

Even if sufficient aid is permitted to enter Gaza, facilities need to be carefully planned to meet the necessary standards of privacy, cleanliness, and safety.

"It's not enough to build a shower or a toilet," said Al-Araj. "It's not enough to provide it with water and that's it. You have to think of the site ... Is it safe for women and girls, is it accessible at all times ... is it targeted maybe by different threats?"

Al-Araj also emphasized the need for "complementary services," including extending responses "to enhancing access to sexual and reproductive healthcare system."

"I can only wish that the after-effects of all of this wouldn't linger for long or have irreversible results."



side of the Rafah border crossing on May 7 and closed the nearby Kerem Shalom crossing, the already limited flow of commercial goods and humanitarian aid has been further strangled.

MAP's Shalltoot confirmed that women's sanitary products were "scarce in the local market," highlighting that this has had "a psychological and physical health impact on women and girls."

She said: "They resort to homemade, makeshift alternatives, which negatively impact their health by putting them at risk of reproductive and urinary tract infections and protection-related risks."

"This also negatively impacts their psychological well-being, anxiety and insecurity."



The 27th session of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization was held in Jeddah. SPA

BUILDING BRIDGES

Kingdom assumes presidency of Arab League science body

Saudi Arabia pledges regional cooperation, backs Palestinian cause and cultural heritage

Saleh Faraed Jeddah

Saudi Arabia has assumed the presidency of the Executive Council of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization until 2026.

The official announcement was made on Friday during the 27th session of the ALECSO, which was held in Jeddah under the presidency of Saudi Arabia. During the session, Iraq handed over the presidency to the Kingdom.

In a speech delivered on behalf of Minister of Culture Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan, Minister of Education Yousef Al-Benyam welcomed the ministers and heads of national committees for education and science participating in the session.

Al-Benyam stressed the Kingdom's humanitarian and fraternal support for the Gaza Strip within the framework of Arab cooperation and solidarity.

He affirmed Saudi Arabia's support for Khalid Anan, the only Egyptian and Arab candidate for the position of director-general of the organization.

Al-Benyam concluded the speech by praising the efforts of Arab countries in supporting ALECSO, and building bridges of communication to achieve common regional goals.

Saudi Deputy Minister of Education Mohammed Al-Sudairi confirmed that holding the ALECSO meetings in Jeddah coincides with an increase in the role of Saudi national institutions to support the work of the organization.

Iraqi Minister of Education Ibrahim Al-Jabouri, head of the 26th session, pointed out achievements made in the previous session, and various programs aimed at building bridges of cooperation between Arab culture and the rest of the world.

Director General of ALECSO Mohammed Ould Omar thanked

HIGHLIGHT

At the end of the 27th session, ministers and heads of the Arab delegations agreed on the importance of supporting the Palestinian cause, condemning and denouncing the displacement of the Palestinian people, as well as the destruction of Palestinian antiquities.

King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for hosting the event in Jeddah.

At the end of the 27th session, ministers and heads of the Arab delegations agreed on the importance of supporting the Palestinian cause, condemning and denouncing the displacement of the Palestinian people, as well as the destruction of Palestinian antiquities. They also addressed the importance of supporting culture, education, innovation, and science in the Arab world.

HAJJ

Indonesian pilgrims praise Makkah Route Initiative's 'seamless service'

Arab News Riyadh

Haji pilgrims departing from Juanda International Airport in Surabaya, Indonesia have praised the services of the Makkah Route Initiative, which include assistance with check-in procedures at 12 dedicated counters in the airport, ensuring that all health requirements are met, and organizing delivery of their luggage to their accommodation in the Kingdom, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

Pilgrims expressed their gratitude for the help they received from authorities for the swift completion of their departure procedures on their journey to the Kingdom to perform Hajj, the SPA stated.

Indonesian couple Dewa Rosetta and Fatiha Munir told the SPA of their "extreme satisfaction" with the initiative, emphasizing its facilitation of travel procedures and time-saving benefits.

They also noted the

Kingdom's commitment to serving pilgrims from their home countries and its generosity in supporting Islamic countries and those in need.

The couple extended well wishes to all involved in the initiative, and said it was a "memorable experience."

The first Makkah Route Initiative flight from Indonesia departed from Juanda International Airport on May 12, carrying approximately 300 pilgrims.

TheSpace

Why Saudi Arabia was chosen to host WEF Special Meeting

TALAT ZAKI HAFIZ



Under the patronage of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the World Economic Forum Special Meeting on Global Collaboration, Growth, and Energy for Development took place in Riyadh on April 28 and 29, in cooperation with the Saudi Ministry of Economic and Planning.

The meeting was intended to bridge the widening North-South gap, exacerbated by issues including emerging economic policies, energy transition, and geopolitical shocks.

More than 1,000 global leaders from various sectors and industries gathered to facilitate dialogue between countries, leveraging international cooperation for economic development and promoting global energy transition and a more equitable and resilient global economy.

One might question why the meeting was held in Saudi Arabia. The answer is very simple. It was part of a landmark agreement between Saudi Arabia and the WEF to cooperate as strategic partners in addressing common issues, as well as challenges facing the global economy — such as high interest rates and inflation, and energy supply and transition — and fostering international cooperation to address these challenges.

Saudi Arabia is an essential player in the global economy when it comes to collaborating with both developed and developing markets to help them achieve their long-term commercial, energy, and financing goals. Riyadh is the

capital of the largest economy in the Middle East and a world-leading hub of trade and innovation, connecting three continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe. It marks the midway point between the Global South and Global North.

Saudi Arabia has attracted the world's attention with its successful economic and financial reforms in line with Vision 2030, from which the world can benefit. This is evidenced by the World Bank unveiling plans to establish a knowledge center within the

Kingdom — in collaboration with Saudi Arabia's National Competitiveness Center — with the aim of boosting global economic reforms by sharing Saudi Arabia's successful experiences and collaborating with international stakeholders.

Speaking during a dialogue session at the meeting, the crown prince said that cohesion and cooperation with regional and global partners are the keys to achieving security and prosperity.

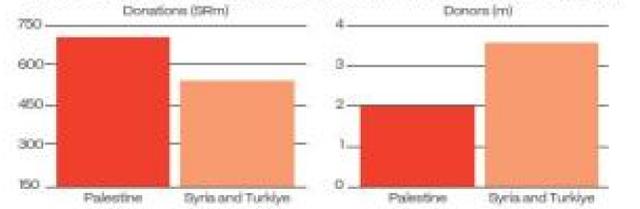
I believe that Saudi Arabia

being chosen to host the WEF Special Meeting in Riyadh is well deserved, because the Kingdom has acted in good faith for several decades to stabilize the global economy by ensuring consistent energy supply without any disruption. Also, I believe that the Kingdom's economic achievements under Saudi Vision 2030 can serve as lessons to stimulate the growth of the world economy.

Talat Zaki Hafiz is an economist and financial analyst. X: @TalatHafiz

The Day's FIGURES

SAUDI FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS ON KSRELIEF'S SAHEM PLATFORM



Source: ksrelief.org

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Best services
Pakistan praises Saudi efforts for Hajj pilgrims

Pakistani Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhry Salik Hussain expressed his appreciation to Saudi Arabia for the exceptional services and facilities provided to Pakistani pilgrims who will be taking part in Hajj this year.

Hussain's remarks came in a statement delivered in Madinah, where he is currently visiting to oversee Hajj arrangements for Pakistani pilgrims. He praised the Saudi leadership for launching the Makkah Route Initiative at Karachi International Airport, mirroring the program already established at Islamabad airport. **AN Riyadh**

Empowerment
Jeddah university opens maritime studies to women

Jeddah's King Abdulaziz University will enroll women in its maritime studies programs for the first time.

Faisal Al-Thobiani, dean of the faculty of maritime studies, said the move will harness women's potential in the sector, increasing overall efficiency and sustainability.

The faculty will provide internationally recognized education and training in marine surveying and transport.

Al-Thobiani said that increasing women's participation will address workforce gaps in the Kingdom's maritime industry. **AN Riyadh**

Aid efforts
KSrelief projects help Sudan, Yemen, Greece

Saudi aid agency KSrelief implemented a medical volunteer project for neurosurgery and spine surgery in Sudan. In one week, about 15 volunteer specialists from various medical fields assisted in performing 26 surgeries.

In Yemen, KSrelief provided a convoy of 330 relief trucks, which delivered over 5,752 tonnes of critical supplies to people across 14 Yemeni governorates. The aid included food, medical supplies and shelter materials.

Additionally, KSrelief donated 10 tonnes of dates to Greece. **AN Riyadh**



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News Saudi Arabia

HEARTWARMING

Tears of joy as American reunites with Saudi family after 40 years

Relatives in Saudi Arabia say they 'never lost hope' and always felt they would one day find Eid Alsumani

Saleh Fareed Jeddah

A four-decade long search has finally led to the heartwarming reunion of a US citizen with his Saudi family, putting an end to a painful era full of longing and searches that had long promised to end in disappointment.

Two-year-old Eid Alsumani, now 42, and his older brother's American mother cut ties with the family for reasons that have not been revealed to the public.

She had met Saud Alsumani when he was a student in the US, after which they married and had two sons.

Following her return to Alabama with the boys, Eid's mother cut all communication between them and their father, who returned to Saudi Arabia.

"Throughout that period of time, which lasted 40 years, members of the family were searching for their sons through the American Embassy ... (they) tried to search for the family several times, but no leads helped," said Bander Alsumani, Eid's cousin.

An English teacher at Abdullah Al-Thagafi High School in Jeddah, Bander told Arab News that his family did not lose hope in finding the lost brothers. "We just hoped they were alive."

After decades of searches that yielded no results, their father died, never having reconnected with his sons. Their uncle, Khalid Alsumani, went to the US, determined to find his estranged nephews.

According to Bander, while the uncle sought the help of the Saudi Embassy in Washington, the perseverance of another member of the family paid off as they found Eid on Instagram.



HIGH LIGHTS

• A video of Eid Alsumani's reunion with his family at King Abdulaziz International Airport after 40 years of separation went viral on social media.

• For decades, the family had tried everything including seeking the help of the Saudi Embassy in Washington.

"It was the happiest day for the family ... we all were in joy and happiness when we heard Eid is alive and coming back home with his uncle," said Bander. The joy also came with the sad news that Eid's older brother had already died.

Eid and his family were finally reunited on May 9, with many of them meeting their 42-year old relative for the first time.

"It was the most wonderful feeling in the world ... just couldn't believe that the family had been reunited with (their) son after so many years," said Bander.

A heartwarming video of Eid's reunion with his family at King Abdulaziz International Airport after 40 years of separation went viral on social media.

When Eid appeared from passport control with his uncle,



Eid Alsumani and his family were finally reunited on May 9, with many of them meeting their 42-year old relative for the first time. Supplied

his cousins and relatives hugged him one after another tightly, shedding tears of joy.

The family hosted a gathering with various members of the family who came from all corners to meet the long lost son and celebrate the joyous occasion.

During the emotional reunion,



●● I believe I will visit again in maybe six months. Inshallah, I will continue to learn more about my religion, Arabic, and my family.
Eid Alsumani
Found after 40 years

Eid, dressed in traditional Saudi attire, expressed his immense happiness and relief at being reunited with his extended family.

A US citizen, Eid was raised in Alabama and currently resides in Florida having graduated with bachelor's of science degree in history and nuclear engineering technology.

Speaking to Arab News after performing Umrah in Makkah, Eid described the scene at the airport as "unbelievable."

He said: "It was surreal. It was the first time I had been in my fatherland."

"I was extremely excited about the blessings of seeing four family members who greeted me with the legendary hospitality of Saudi fame. It felt like a scene from a movie."

NATURAL HERITAGE HOTSPOTS

Wildlife center to explore caves in Kingdom's north

Arab News Riyadh

Teams from Saudi Arabia's National Center for Wildlife will begin examining various caves in the Northern Borders region as part of the Caves Exploration Program, which began in 2022.

It comes as part of a larger program that monitors ecosystems and biodiversity throughout the Kingdom.

These sites will be added to an international map of biodiversity and natural heritage hotspots as historical ecosystems and natural biological museums.

Dr. Mohammed Ali Qurban, CEO of the center, explained that the discoveries in the caves hold significant historical environmental value for Saudi Arabia.

"The cave ecosystems serve as a historical museum, providing evidence of the biological



The National Center for Wildlife's program to explore biodiversity in caves was launched due to its positive impact on wildlife. SPA

diversity that has existed in the Kingdom throughout various historical eras, as well as the spatial, environmental, and climatic changes in the Arabian Peninsula," he explained.

Qurban added that these unique

ecosystems provide a suitable environment for a wide range of organisms, as evidenced by the discovery of numerous skeletons of different types of mammals.

The program to explore biodiversity in caves was launched

"due to its environmental significance and positive impact on wildlife."

The center is currently completing studies on the targeted cave sites and documenting their importance within an integrated program.

According to Qurban, the center's earlier discovery of several Arabian cheetah mummies in a cave in the northern part of the Kingdom — with some skeletons estimated to be over 4,000 years old — provided the first evidence of the species' presence in the Kingdom.

Consequently, the center plans to develop a program for the resettlement of the Arabian cheetah in the Kingdom, enabling it to play a crucial role in maintaining environmental balance.

The cave ecosystems serve as a historical museum, providing evidence of the biological diversity that has existed in the Kingdom throughout various historical eras.

Dr. Mohammed Ali Qurban
National Center for Wildlife CEO



Qurban noted that, among other significant discoveries, researchers from the center discovered rare bats and the remains of several extinct animals.

The center is currently working on classifying these finds and determining their ages. This effort will facilitate the resettlement of these extinct species or their closest genetic relatives, thereby restoring their role.

The cave ecosystem is one of the rarest and most important of its kind in the world, recognized as natural heritage by UNESCO.

There are 1,826 caves in the Kingdom, consisting of underground passages and tunnels formed by natural processes in dry limestone areas — evidence of a historical era that experienced prolonged rainy climatic conditions.

News Middle East

PALESTINE CRISIS

Arab American leaders meet with Blinken over Gaza

Demands include ceasefire, unimpeded humanitarian aid, halt to arms deliveries

Ray Hanania Chicago

A group of Arab American leaders met with Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington, DC on Friday night, demanding that the US "stop the genocide" in Gaza and define a clear path to "Palestinian liberation."

The group was led by Arab American Institute President James Zogby and included several key organizations such as the American Federation of Ramallah, the Arab American Chamber of Commerce, Arab America, and the US Palestinian Council.

In a statement sent to Arab News, organizers said they demanded that the administration of President Joe Biden endorse an "immediate ceasefire" in Gaza; call for the "return of all hostages," including Israelis taken on Oct. 7 and Palestinians being held without judicial process; support the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza; ensure "unimpeded" humanitarian assistance to its civilian population; and cease weapons deliveries to Israel.

Israel has received more than \$40 billion in aid from the Biden administration.

"When we met with Secretary Blinken in October of 2023, I noted that Israel's indiscriminate bombing of Gaza had killed 5,000 Palestinians. I urged an immediate ceasefire to save lives. I also noted that Israel and the US were operating under the mistaken belief that the war could be won, with the likely outcome being the emergence of



Displaced Palestinians arrive in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip to seek shelter on Saturday amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. AFP

Hamas 2.0," Zogby said.

"We come back seven months later with over 36,000 dead, most of Gaza's homes and infrastructure destroyed, millions of Palestinian lives shattered, and Gaza on the verge of starvation."

After the meeting, Zogby called US efforts to urge Israeli restraint "feeble," adding: "Once again, we are calling on the Biden administration to demand an immediate ceasefire to end the unfolding genocide, to save Palestinian lives, and salvage whatever remains of the United States'

BACKGROUND

Arab and Muslim leaders who met with US President Joe Biden last month in Washington D.C. left disappointed by his failure to enforce a ceasefire in Gaza.

tattered image across the Arab world."

Arab and Muslim leaders who met with US President Joe Biden last month in Washington, DC left disappointed by his failure to

enforce a ceasefire.

Several attendees walked out in disgust, including Dr. Thaeer Ahmad, who told reporters after the April 2 meeting that he was leaving "out of respect for my community."

After Friday's meeting, USPC President John Dabeet said attendees "asked Secretary Blinken and the administration to subject any military assistance to Israel to strict oversight to ensure that it is fully compliant with US law, international law and human rights conventions."

Bilal Hammoud, director of the AACC, said the Biden administration "has failed to act urgently and within its values to take meaningful measures that ensure the freedom, equality and prosperity of the Palestinian people, resulting in the loss of tens of thousands of innocent lives.

"There must be a full stop of US military funding that is threatening the security and stability of the whole region, including the cessation of attacks on sovereign Arab nations."

THEATER OF WAR

Hezbollah leader narrowly escapes Israeli drone strike

Najla Houssari Beirut

Israel widened its drone attacks on Hezbollah and Hamas fighters in Lebanon on Saturday, with strikes near the Lebanese-Syrian border in parallel with attacks in the south of the country.

An Israeli combat drone struck a car carrying two people on the road between the Lebanese General Security and Syrian General Security checkpoints.

The Syrian Observatory confirmed the attack, saying that "the target in the car was a Hezbollah leader and his companion."

Media reports said the driver and passenger survived the strike, but provided no further details.

Footage taken by passersby on the border road showed the vehicle on fire, with flames and smoke rising from surrounding areas, suggesting that more than one missile struck the target.

The attack came less than 18 hours after an Israeli drone struck a car on the Majdal Anjar road, killing a Hamas leader.

Izz El-Deen Al-Qassam Brigades identified the victim as Sharhabeel Ali Al-Sayyid, a mujahid leader.

Another person accompanying Ali Al-Sayyid was badly injured in the strike.

Early on Saturday, an Israeli drone struck a motorcycle on the road to Naqoura town on Lebanon's southern border, injuring the rider, a fisherman returning home from work. The injured man was taken to hospital in Tyre.

Hezbollah said in a statement that it targeted the Ras Naqoura naval site with artillery in response to the drone strike.

ANALYSIS

Israel eyes scrapping free trade deal with Turkiye

Menekse Tokyay Ankara

After Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich announced on Thursday that Israel intends to scrap its free trade agreement with Turkiye and impose a 100 percent tariff on other imports from the country in retaliation for Ankara's recent decision to halt exports to Israel, eyes are now turning to imminent implications for regional trade.

The plan, which aims to reduce Israel's dependence on Turkiye, has not been finalized yet and will have to be submitted to the Cabinet for approval. If approved, all reduced tariffs on goods imported from Turkiye under the current free trade agreement would be abolished, while a tariff of 100 percent of the value of the goods would be imposed on all imported products, in addition to the existing tariff.

Experts note that trade ties between the two countries had been mostly insulated from political disagreements in the past.

Trade continued when diplomatic relations hit rock bottom, especially between 2010 and 2020, a politically tense period during which parties chose not to burn "trade bridges."

But this time, Turkiye's continuation of trade relations with Israel while at the same time being vocal in denouncing its war in Gaza stirred public reaction significantly ahead of the March 31 local elections, when large crowds and some Islamist breakaway parties criticized the government for not taking a hardline stance against Israel and for not matching rhetoric with action. In late April, Turkiye, whose bilateral trade with Israel was worth about \$7 billion a year, announced it would impose trade restrictions on 54 products exported to Israel until a permanent ceasefire in Gaza was declared.

The product range was diverse, from cement to dry food, iron, steel, and electrical devices.

However, companies have three months to fulfill existing



People attend a solidarity rally to support Palestinians in Istanbul, Turkiye. File/Reuters

HIGHLIGHTS

• Israel mainly imported steel, iron, motor vehicles, electrical devices, machinery, plastics, and cement products, as well as textiles, olive oil, and fruits and vegetables from Turkiye.

• Turkiye buys chemicals, metals, and some other industrial products from the Middle Eastern country, with Turkiye's trade with Israel tilted in Ankara's favor.

orders via third countries.

In his statement, Smotrich described Turkiye's move as a serious violation of international trade agreements to which Ankara is a signatory.

He added that Israel's latest decision would last as long as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan remained in power.

Turkiye and Israel have had a free trade agreement since the mid-1990s, making Ankara a key commercial partner for Israeli importers. Relatively cheap imports were transited quite quickly, and Turkiye was Israel's fifth-largest

source of imported goods.

Israel mainly imported steel, iron, motor vehicles, electrical devices, machinery, plastics, and cement products, as well as textiles, olive oil, and fruits and vegetables from Turkiye, while Turkiye mostly bought chemicals, metals, and some other industrial products from the Middle Eastern country, with Turkiye's trade with Israel tilted in Ankara's favor.

"Since Erdogan announced that Turkiye would impose a trade ban on imports and exports from Israel, Israeli officials have been trying to determine how best to respond," Gabriel Mitchell, a policy fellow at the Mitvim Institute, told Arab News.

"The first was Foreign Minister Israel Katz, who criticized Turkiye's decision and later announced that Turkiye had lifted many of the restrictions. This put pressure — once again — on Erdogan to show the Turkish public that he is willing to 'put his money where his mouth is' with Israel and forced the Turkish government to deny these rumors,"

he said, adding that it also compelled "Erdogan to be even more vocal in his criticism of Israeli policy."

According to Mitchell, Smotrich — who is a minister but not a member of the Likud party — saw this as an opportunity to make his own headlines in proposing the move to cancel the free trade agreement.

As this move requires Cabinet approval, Mitchell said he would be very surprised if it were approved.

"It would be an escalatory step and undoubtedly have serious short-term economic consequences," he said.

"It is important to bear in mind the domestic situation in Israel. There is increasing pressure on Netanyahu, and as a result, the more radical voices feel that by pushing populist policies, they are in a win-win situation: Either their policy is adopted, and they get credit for the idea, or it is rejected by others in the government, and they can criticize them for being soft," Mitchell added.



Indonesian women take part in a fundraising event in Jakarta on Oct. 15, 2023 to support Palestinians in the wake of Israeli attacks on Gaza. AFP

HYPOCRISY

Asian activists call out Western feminists over Gaza

7 months into Israel's war on Gaza, feminists in the West have been silent

Natalia Laskoweka & Sheany Yasuko Lal Jakarta

When Western actresses and female politicians cut their hair to protest the death of Mahsa Amini or rallied against the Taliban ban on girls' education, they stood up to defend women's rights.

However, the zeal went missing when it came to Palestine, non-Western feminists say, denouncing their peers' silence on Israel's killing of women in Gaza.

At least 35,800 people in Gaza have been killed and 80,000 wounded by Israeli airstrikes and ground offensive that have destroyed most of the enclave's infrastructure and rendered it

uninhabitable.

The majority of the dead are women and children. Many have lost their lives as most of the hospitals have been flattened by Israeli troops and no medical assistance could reach them.

In the face of the widely documented atrocities, Haerin Shim, Korean activist and spokesperson of feminist group Haeil, told Arab News that Western feminists were exhibiting "selective empathy" and "double standards" with regard to Israel's onslaught, the criticism of which has regularly been labeled as "antisemitism" — not only by Israeli authorities but by Western leaders as well.

"I strongly believe these issues are interconnected with racism, imperialism, and colonialism,"

HIGHLIGHT

Non-Western feminists say white supremacy, imperialism are inherent to Western feminism.

Shim said.

While she believes it is not too late for "global feminist solidarity" with women in Gaza, Fadiyah Nadwa Fikri, Malaysian human rights lawyer and scholar focused on decolonization, sees an intrinsic flaw in Western feminism, which might prevent it.

"The function of Western feminism, which is inherently imperialist, is to reduce and dehumanize not only Palestinian women and children but also Palestinian men, who have been

subjected to decades of Israeli settler colonialism, with the full support of US imperialism and its allies in Europe," she said.

In the context of Israel and accusations of antisemitism fired against its critics, Asian feminists also cited the problem of white supremacy, which they closely linked with Zionism.

"Zionism is about white supremacy and colonization, and the destruction of Palestine is just another example of imperialist violence," said V., member of grassroots collective Chinese Feminism in Toronto.

"If we consider the sociopolitical context of North America, we know most Jews are also white people ... I guess that speaks a lot (as to) why white feminists tend to be hypocritical here."

EXTREME WEATHER

Parts of northern India scorched by extreme heat with New Delhi on high alert

AP New Delhi

Parts of northwest India sweltered under scorching temperatures on Saturday, with the capital New Delhi under a severe weather alert as extreme temperatures strike parts of the country.

India's weather department expects heat wave conditions to persist across the north for the next few days, and has put several states on high alert. On Friday, parts of New Delhi reported up to



A roadside vendor sells iced lemonade in New Delhi, India, Saturday. AP

47.1 degrees Celsius. The nearby states of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan also saw temperatures soar and are likely to stay high over the next few days, said Soma Sen Roy, a scientist at the India Meteorological Department.

Roy cautioned people against going outdoors under the afternoon sun, drink lots of water and wear loose-fitting clothes while those who are especially vulnerable like the elderly should stay indoors.

The extreme temperatures in northern India coincide with a six-week-long general election, with experts worried that the heat wave could increase health risks as people wait in long lines to cast their vote or candidates campaign aggressively in the outdoors. One minister fainted due to heat last month while addressing an

election rally in Maharashtra state.

Satish Kumar, a 57-year-old rickshaw driver in the capital, said his work was suffering because of the heat. "People are not coming outside, (markets) are nearly empty," he said.

Pravin Kamath, a 28-year-old who runs a cart selling cold drinks, complained that it was so hot he could hardly stand being outdoors. "But I must work. What can I do? I am poor so I have to do it."

The main summer months — April, May and June — are always hot in most parts of India before monsoon rains bring cooler temperatures. But the heat has become more intense in the past decade and is usually accompanied by severe water shortages, with tens of millions of India's 1.4 billion people lacking running water.

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Heinous act

3 Spanish, 3 Afghans killed in Afghanistan

The bodies of three Spanish tourists and three Afghans shot dead while on a tour in Afghanistan were transported to the capital along with multiple wounded, the Taliban government said Saturday.

The group were fired on while walking through a market in the mountainous city of Bamyan in central Afghanistan, around 180 kilometers from the capital Kabul, on Friday evening. "All dead bodies have been shifted to Kabul and are in the forensic department and the wounded are also in Kabul. Both dead and wounded include women," the government's Interior Ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani said. **AFP**

Unusual weather

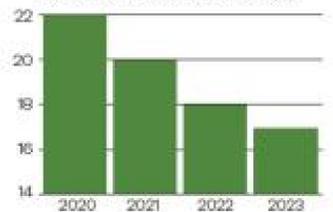
Floods in parts of Europe after heavy rains

Heavy rains caused flooding in parts of Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands overnight into Saturday, swamping streets and buildings and sparking evacuations. In the southwestern German state of Saarland, streets were deep underwater and images on social media showed emergency workers carrying local residents to safety in boats.

State capital Saarbruecken was hard hit while German daily Bild reported that a breach in a dyke in the town of Quierschied led to a power station in the area being shut down. No deaths were reported but at least one person was injured. **AFP**

The Day's FIGURES

BELIZE: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (%)



Source: Statista

What We're Reading

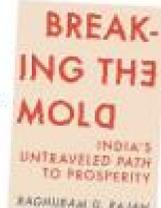
FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

'Breaking the Mold'

RAGHURAM G. RAJAN AND ROHIT LAMBA

India's economy has overtaken the United Kingdom's to become the fifth-largest in the world, but it is still only one-fifth the size of China's, and India's economic growth

is too slow to provide jobs for millions of its ambitious youth.



In "Breaking the Mold," Raghuram Rajan and Rohit Lamba show why and how India needs to blaze a new path if it's to succeed.

Airplanes pollute

Climate activists in Germany protest flying

German authorities closed down Munich airport temporarily on Saturday after six climate activists broke through a security fence and glued themselves to access routes leading to runways, officials and local media reported.

The activists from the group Last Generation were protesting flying, the most polluting form of transportation, said the German news agency dpa.

Police have detained the six. Incoming flights had to be diverted to other airports, an airport spokesperson said. After a couple of hours, the airport's two runways were reopened. **AP**

Serious concern

Cases of bird flu found in western China

Cases of bird flu have been confirmed among wild fowl in western China, the Agriculture Ministry said on Saturday, as concerns grow over a US outbreak infecting cattle herds. Two counties in Qinghai province confirmed 275 cases of H5 influenza among dead Pallas's gull and other wild birds, China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said in a notice on its website.

The ministry received a report on the cases from the China Animal Disease Control Center, and the national Avian Influenza Reference Laboratory confirmed the finding, the notice said. **Reuters**

الأوعي لا يكذب... كل حملات
العالم جاءت من الكذب باسم الوعي
(بد انتصار البنا)

YOUR DAILY ARABIC PROVERB

The unconscious never lies. All the world's idiosyncrasies have come from lies in the guise of consciousness.

Dr. Intissar Al-Banna
(Bahraini academic and writer)

Opinion

Clueless in Gaza

YOSSI MEKELBERG

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu avoids giving interviews to domestic media outlets, as accountability and transparency have never been his forte. He does not like the scrutiny that comes when facing probing journalists who might, in their audacity, ask him difficult questions. Why has he not taken responsibility for his failure to defend Israelis on Oct. 7? Why, more than seven months into a war to “destroy Hamas,” are the organization and its leaders still capable of fighting against a much larger and better-equipped army, and are now returning to places that were evacuated by Israel?

How can he justify the killing of so many noncombatants in Gaza? How can he explain the current state of international isolation that Israel finds itself in, especially considering the initial circumstances of this war? And then there is the question of all questions: What is his plan for the “day after?” All of these are legitimate concerns that Netanyahu avoids addressing either for the sake of convenience

or, in the case of what the future might hold for Gaza and Israel's relations with the Palestinians more generally, because he is devoid of an adequate answer.

Instead, he gives interviews to selected American media networks, preferably those that will give him as easy a ride as the situation allows. He then relies on the natural sympathy of the interviewer, and his own unparalleled manipulative prowess in twisting matters and concocting a reality in which he and Israel are always the victims, always moral, and eventually victorious.

It might therefore have been because of the relaxed nature of his interview with Dr. Phil McGraw, a clinical psychologist by trade on whose American TV show Netanyahu appeared this week, that he for the first time opened up a little and admitted some culpability for the failures of Oct. 7 — not personally, mind you, but he was prepared to claim collective responsibility and generously share the blame for the calamity with his Cabinet colleagues.



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Asked by Dr. Phil about “the day after” the war, his response reflected a foggy mind and wishful thinking, with no strategic clarity. After seven months of horrific bloodshed, it is not too much to expect some coherence when it comes to Gaza and not the vague answer he gave. He said: “We’ll probably have to have some kind of civilian administration by Gazans who are not committed to our destruction, possibly with the aid of the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and other countries that I think want to see stability and peace.”

From Day 1 of this conflict, the absence of any serious scenario-building within the Israeli government or the country's various security organizations regarding the short- and long-term political objectives of the war, beyond the mantra of “total victory,” was obvious. What we are witnessing instead is Israel entering into yet another never-ending war, with no exit strategy.

Netanyahu's US TV interview earned an instant rebuke from the UAE's Foreign

Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, who put him firmly in his place by declaring categorically that the UAE will not “participate in the civil administration of the Gaza Strip, which is under Israeli occupation.”

It is reasonable to conclude that this is also the position of the other countries Netanyahu expects to help Israel reconstruct the Strip. Because this time, unlike in previous rounds of hostilities, unless there is a historic compromise with the Palestinians that leads to a viable and stable peace, donor countries will be reluctant to invest time, energy, and money in rebuilding the enclave, only to see it destroyed again within a few years.

This is Netanyahu's legacy: failure to defend Israel when it needed it most; conducting a war with no achievable objective in mind; creating the conditions for Israel, its politicians and military personnel to be accused of war crimes; and having no grasp of how to bring this war to an end in a way that serves as a springboard toward peace with the Palestinians.

Israel has entered into yet another never-ending war, with no exit strategy



Sanctions have allowed the country's oil wells and refineries to fall into the hands of unsavory private actors

Oil theft the untold driver of Syria's humanitarian crisis

SIR ALAN DUNCAN

More than 13 years since the onset of civil war, the suffering in Syria has rarely been further from the headlines. Concurrent crises in Ukraine and Gaza have captured global attention. With the conflict largely frozen and the peace process stalled, awareness of Syria has been reduced to sporadic moments, such as the recent strike on Iran's Damascus consulate. Yet the humanitarian crisis engendered by Bashar Assad's brutal fightback against his people remains very real.

What is unusual about the humanitarian crisis in Syria is one of its key drivers: oil. Once a cornerstone of the Syrian economy, oil has become a source of misery for the Syrian people — affecting the environment, health and long-term prospects for recovery.

International sanctions imposed on the industry in 2011 have had the unintended effect of allowing the country's oil wells and refineries to fall into the hands of

unsavory private actors, including the self-proclaimed Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. According to statements from this group in 2022, more than three quarters of its operating budget of \$780 million is made up of such oil revenue.

The destinations for this illicit oil are difficult to trace but are thought to include the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Damascus regime itself. In short, vast quantities of Syrian oil are being stolen and the funds misappropriated, rather than going in any meaningful sense toward supporting the Syrian people. This also matters because of what it is doing to the environment in northern Syria and, by extension, the health of those who live there. This is the epicenter of a real and growing social crisis.

The groups that have seized control of oil extraction are unable or unwilling to adhere to proper industry standards of production and refining. Some of the refineries they have set up are little more than makeshift huts. This has led to frequent oil spills,



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which have contaminated the soil and poisoned northern Syria's waterways.

As an investigation in pan-Arab magazine Al-Majalla found, the region lacks a facility for managing the byproducts and waste from oil refining, “resulting in its haphazard disposal, including by mixing it with water. Disposing of oil refining waste into rivers and canals has contaminated the soil with substances like arsenic, lead and mercury. These, in turn, are absorbed by plants and vegetables.” It is no surprise, then, that agriculture has been widely decimated, exacerbating existing food shortages.

The toll on human health is devastating. Exact figures are hard to come by, such is the makeshift and sparse nature of Syrian healthcare provision, but cases of cancer are increasingly concentrated around Syria's oil-producing north — and have increased up to three times faster than the comparative period before the war. Cancer cases and deaths are expected to double in the current decade, according to the International

Atomic Energy Agency. Respiratory diseases and other health issues associated with toxic emissions are also rising.

One person quoted in Al-Majalla's investigation, whose young nephew is battling leukemia, put the problem bluntly: “In the past, (oil) companies treated harmful gas and oil waste. Nowadays, no one treats the source of these cancer-causing emissions.”

All told, oil is driving suffering across large swaths of Syria. But I believe it can also drive a radical and impactful solution.

The UN's humanitarian appeal for Syria for 2023 sought \$5.4 billion but raised only a third of that. Compare that to the \$15 billion that GulfSands, an independent energy company I advise, estimates would be available every year for reinvestment if oil operations were returned to the hands of legitimate parties. This potential is currently being squandered and stolen. It is time for the international community to implement a radical solution and help end this human tragedy.

Opinion

Europe's missed opportunity in Tunisia

HAFED AL-GHWELL

Once hailed as the Arab Spring's lone democratic success story, Tunisia is now fully in the grip of regression, with an alarming crackdown on migrants, civil society groups, nongovernmental organizations, journalists, and the political opposition. This narrative is incomplete, however, without considering the role of the EU in all this. Its engagement has subtly transitioned from being a champion of democratic values to striking transactional bargains that have, inadvertently or otherwise, come to undermine its very ideals during Tunisia's cycle of repression.

Since the initial exuberance about the democratization of Tunisia in the aftermath of the events of 2011, Europe's stance on the country has demonstrably shifted. At first, the EU greeted the democratic transition with enthusiasm and support, aligning itself with the nation's nascent aspirations for freedom and a rules-based civil society. It represented a beacon of democratic progress in the region. However, as Tunisia's economic struggles, fluctuating political landscape, and security dilemmas began to intersect with the challenges Europe itself faced,

particularly the surge in irregular migration, the EU's priorities visibly morphed. The humanitarian and liberal rhetoric took a back seat and Europe's foreign policy paradigm transitioned toward a more practical, realpolitik approach wherein migration control, counterterrorism, and energy security began to dictate the terms of the relationship with greater assertiveness. This utilitarian

shift has come into sharp focus in recent months, given the manner in which the EU and its member states have engaged with the current regime. In the thick of domestic and regional turbulence, demonstrated by the regime's puzzling stewardship, the EU has found itself entangled in a frustrating paradox.

On one hand, its policymaking and external engagements are bound by foundational principles including the promotion of human rights, support for democracy, and the shoring up of human security in challenging contexts overseas.

On the other, it is compelled to take action to secure its borders by tacitly endorsing, or at least turning a blind eye to, Tunisia's contentious migrant-expulsion policies and reported alliances with smuggling networks, thereby raising concerns about



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complicity in human rights abuses. This dichotomy marks a transactional turn in policy-setting, a move that already has been construed as the bloc actively undermining its own fundamental ethos.

Consequently, the strategic calculus appears to have overridden the EU's normative considerations. Even as Europe continues to claim to be a champion of democracy and human rights, those values are compromised by the exigencies arising from Tunisia's complex sociopolitical milieu and Europe's own self-interest.

Brussels' engagement with a Tunisia enmeshed in internal strife, while the bloc deals with external pressures from migrant flows caused by regional instability, is now a matter of pragmatism versus principle. It is a conundrum that represents a stern test for the EU's resolve in upholding its foundational values while addressing contemporary geopolitical realities.

This veneer of pragmatism belies an unsettling erosion of Europe's moral high ground. Once predicated on the nurturing of fledgling political institutions, the European policy on Tunisia has been distilled into more limited and myopic areas of focus: curbing migration and securing borders.

Implicit within the EU's apparent complacency with Tunisia's undemocratic trajectory is the assumption that Europe can navigate the results of partnering with an illiberal regime without jeopardizing its own values and security interests.

Europe's silence suggests a belief that it can compartmentalize its relations, addressing shared concerns such as migration while disregarding internal repression.

Such a stance not only undermines the transformative promise but also signals to other nations that the European commitment to democracy is negotiable in the face of pressing strategic concerns.

The reality is stark. Once upon a time, Europe had at its disposal the diplomatic wherewithal to sway Tunisia's future and steer

President Kais Saied away from the shadow of Ben Ali. Financial aid, trade agreements, and diplomatic relations, all of which are powerful tools in the European arsenal, could have been wielded to enforce a reversal, or at least a slackening, of the tightening noose. However, the prioritization of migration control over democratic values has created a dissonance in EU-Tunisia relations, overshadowing Europe's once powerful role as a promoter of democracy in its immediate neighborhood.

The prioritization of migration control over democratic values has created a dissonance in EU-Tunisia ties

Once upon a time, Europe had at its disposal the diplomatic wherewithal to sway Tunisia's future

A boost for Biden's global democracy agenda

ANDREW HAMMOND

US President Joe Biden has faced criticism for making "revitalizing democracy the world over" a key goal of his administration. Yet his agenda might be taking stronger root across much of the West and beyond, and could outlive his administration, whether it ends in 2025 or 2029.

An illustration of the appealing nature of his message was on display on Tuesday and Wednesday this week at the Copenhagen Democracy Summit. This global event, the brainchild of Anders Fogh Rasmussen, a former NATO secretary-general and Danish prime minister, featured keynote speakers from around the world, from the Asia Pacific to the Americas.

The speakers included Republican US Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen and President-elect Lai Ching-te, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

The event coincided with the publication of research based on interviews with almost 70,000 people worldwide, which found that faith in democracy remains

high around the globe, with 85 percent of those polled agreeing that democracy is important to their country.

This is a timely reminder, given that 2024 is a banner year for elections, during which an estimated 2 billion people in dozens of nations will go to the polls.

The research also found, however, that governments generally were not seen to be living up to the democratic expecta-

tions of their citizens; only a little more than half of those polled were satisfied with the state of democracy in their country. This dissatisfaction was not limited to nondemocratic nations; it was also prevalent in several Western countries with long democratic traditions.

A good example was the US, where former

President Donald Trump will once again be on the ballot for the Republican Party in the presidential election in November. Still tarred by the assault on the Capitol by his supporters on Jan. 6, 2021, he has openly stated that should he win, he will be a dictator on the first day of his second term.

The consequences of a Trump victory are not only important domestically but internationally. During his first term, foes of the US around the world, from Venezuela



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to Iran and Russia, relished the disorder he brought to Washington. In particular, the Jan. 6 debacle was watched with glee by those nationalist populists around the world who try to defy calls for the rule of law and democratic norms to be respected.

Other think tanks, such as the US-based Freedom House, in recent years have also regularly highlighted the hostile environment democratic governance faces around the globe. A key challenge, especially following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, is the growing concern about the increasing influence of Moscow and other authoritarian and/or autocratic states.

According to Rasmussen, there is a "trend which shows we risk losing the Global South to the autocracies. We are witnessing an axis of autocracies forming, from China to Russia to Iran. We must act now to make freedom more attractive than dictatorship, and unite through an alliance of democracies to push back against the emboldened autocrats."

Yet there are some in the US, and beyond, who would prefer Biden not to overemphasize democracy-based political rhetoric. They argue, for example, that such ideas

sometimes make a simplistic, binary distinction between "good" and "bad" that can sit awkwardly in a fast-changing, complex world of ambiguity and uncertainty, where there is frequently a need to work with states that lack democratic traditions but with which the US has shared interests.

Some critics instead favor an international approach by Washington based more on classic, quantifiable national interests. They argue that other states, especially developing ones, might be more likely to aspire to emulate the US because of its material prosperity, rather than any appeals based on its democratic virtues.

Economic modernization and liberalism, it is suggested, will be the impulse for future

democratic reforms and help counteract the appeal of alternative, authoritarian models of development that have brought significant indebtedness to key US allies.

In this key election year, a boost to the US promotion of democracy around the world is to be welcomed. Biden's support for this long-standing agenda will outlast his administration in what might be a long battle for fresh ideas in the field of international relations.

Economic modernization and liberalism will be the impulse for future democratic reforms

There are some in the US, and beyond, who would prefer Biden not to overemphasize democracy-based political rhetoric

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We anticipate a cost reduction and improved value addition if the right technologies at the efficient sizes are adopted.

Amr Nader
CEO and co-founder of A3&Co.®



Business



The region's abundant solar, wind, and land resources present opportunities for the adoption of green energy, positioning the Middle East cement sector to lead in sustainability initiatives globally. SPA

ROBUST GROWTH

KSA cement sector leads with digital maturity, circular economy practices

De-carbonization strategy aims at lessening the sector's ecological impact while preserving its market standing

Dayan Abou Tine Riyadh

The Saudi cement sector is poised to maintain its position as a key player in the global market, by harnessing circular economy principles and navigating challenges using digital innovation, according to an industry expert.

Amr Nader, CEO and co-founder of cement consultancy A3&Co.®, stated, "We anticipate a cost reduction and improved value addition, leveraging circular economy and even for net-zero transition if the right technologies at the efficient sizes are adopted."

Near-zero strategies refers to significantly reducing or offsetting carbon emissions associated with cement production, often by implementing cleaner energy sources, improving its efficiency, and deploying carbon capture and storage technologies.

He elaborated on the significance of adopting oxy-fuel technology at suitable scales, emphasizing its use of oxygen and re-circulated flue gases for burning fuels instead of air.

This approach, combined with increased reliance on renewable energy sources and the anticipated integration of low-carbon hydrogen as a fuel source, indicates the potential for Saudi

Arabia's cement industry to sustain its competitive advantage beyond 2030 according to Nader.

These initiatives form part of a comprehensive de-carbonization strategy aimed at lessening the sector's ecological impact while preserving its market standing.

Nader emphasized the importance of digital maturity for achieving operational excellence and de-carbonization in the Saudi cement industry. While most cement plants in the country boast state-of-the-art technologies, they still lack maturity in data ingestion, cataloging, and analysis, Nader added.

While some plants are initiating proper digital maturity strategic initiatives, others are still in the early stages of trial initiatives. However, Nader believes that the transition to digital maturity is on the priority list of most plants and is expected to materialize within the next 2 to 5 years.

He further highlighted that the Saudi competitive pricing edge is driven by lower production costs even after factoring in carbon adjustment border taxes, potentially increasing exports to regions with stringent carbon regulations.

"In regard of carbon boundary tax of Europe and other carbon boundary taxes in the world, we see that as an opportunity for further export from Middle East

The production cost in efficient Saudi plants is still lower than the global average by approximately 15 percent and there is still room to improve that by adopting operational excellence

Amr Nader
CEO and co-founder of A3&Co.®

plants that will early adopt near-zero transitions in time frame between 2024 and 2028," he said.

Carbon boundary taxes, also known as carbon border adjustment mechanisms or CBAM, are policies implemented by governments to address carbon leakage and ensure that industries subject to carbon pricing within their jurisdictions remain competitive with foreign industries that may not face similar carbon pricing.

These taxes aim to prevent the relocation of industries to countries with weaker climate policies while also encouraging

other nations to adopt similar carbon pricing measures.

Nader highlighted challenges affecting demand in the cement sector, such as heightened sea freight costs, reduced vessel availability due to geopolitical tensions, and increased pricing by Saudi plants to counter higher energy costs from ARAMCO.

"Despite the increase in fuel prices by average 100 percent for all fuels, the production cost in efficient Saudi plants is still lower than the global average by approximately 15 percent and there is still room to improve that by adopting operational excellence," he added.

He explained that large companies in the Kingdom, with capacities exceeding 8,000 tonnes per day, have significant opportunities for improvement by implementing operational excellence strategies and early adoption of near-zero science-based targets initiative verified strategies.

This will not only reduce costs further but also enables them to remain below the global cost average by the same 15 percent, even with the anticipated increase in energy prices next year, he added.

Reduced government investment has posed another challenge according to Nader, causing a slowdown in large-scale

projects and consequently diminishing the demand for cement. This trend translated into a 4 percent decline in domestic sales and a 30 percent drop in exports for Saudi Arabia's 17 cement firms during the first quarter of 2024 compared to the same period last year, as reported by Al-Yamama Cement. Notably 97 percent of cement sales were domestic, with only 3 percent being exported.

FASTFACT

Large companies in the Kingdom, with capacities exceeding 8,000 tonnes per day, have significant opportunities for improvement by implementing operational excellence strategies and early adoption of near-zero science-based targets initiative verified strategies.

Nader also linked the decline to certain mega-projects in the Kingdom that demand green cement, a product not commonly manufactured in most of Saudi Arabia's plants.

"Nevertheless it must be noted that Saudi Arabia consumption per capita is still one of the highest in the world at approximately 1.3 tonnes per capita yet the utilization of the sector is less than 60 percent due to high installed capacity in the period

between 2013 and 2017," Nader added.

In its April report, Al-Jazira Capital also associated the decline with the increased influence of Ramadan on sales, noting that the holy month spanned 21 days in March 2024, compared to just 9 days in the previous year.

Nader had emphasized in a February interview with Aggregates Business that the Middle East's cement plants, characterized by their large size, enjoy advantages in economies of scale and operational efficiency. With most plants equipped with modern technology and automated processes, they outperform their European counterparts, some of which date back to the 1950s.

Additionally, the region's abundant solar, wind, and land resources present opportunities for the adoption of green energy, positioning the Middle East cement sector to lead in sustainability initiatives globally.

Looking ahead, Nader foresees a growing emphasis on sustainability and de-carbonization in the region, leading to increased production of green products.

Furthermore, he predicts a doubling of cement exports from the Middle East within the next two to three years, with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Algeria currently leading as the largest exporters.



ACTION-ORIENTED APPROACH

Alvarez & Marsal outlines approach as it launches regional HQ in Riyadh

Decision reflects company's dedication to long-term growth and transformation in the Saudi market

Reina Takla, Miguel Hadchity Riyadh

Global consulting firm Alvarez & Marsal is set to introduce its distinct, unbiased, and action-oriented approach to Saudi Arabia's market following the launch of its regional headquarters, according to a top official.

This decision, aimed at solidifying A&M's presence in the region, reflects the company's dedication to long-term growth and transformation in the Saudi market, James Dervin, managing director of the firm in the Middle East and co-head in the region, told Arab News.

He described the firm's strategic vision in the Saudi market as "relatively simple," adding that the aim is "to bring A&M's differentiated, and non-conflicted, execution-focused proposition to a market which is at an inflection point in terms of demand for translation of strategy into action and results."

Speaking of the inauguration of the firm's regional headquarters, Dervin explained that "the decision was actually made some time ago, and we had been working on the establishment of the RHQ (regional headquarters) for approximately 12 months and simply wanted to be sure that we were able to meet all of the requirements, which, alhamdulillah, we were able to do."

He further emphasized the significant growth witnessed across A&M's team and service areas in the country, making the establishment of a regional headquarters a natural progression.

Starting from Jan. 1, 2024, Saudi Arabia declared it would only award deals to foreign companies with Middle East bases within Saudi Arabia. As a result, numerous international firms across sectors such as energy, technology, healthcare, and hospitality have set up headquarters in Riyadh.

"We have witnessed strong growth across our team and service areas in the country in recent years, so as the company continues to deepen our roots in the Kingdom, this seemed a natural next step to take. It also reflects A&M's commitment to the Saudi market for the long term," Dervin added.

In a market witnessing increasing competition, A&M aims to stand out by its action-oriented approach, Dervin highlighted.

He added: "Our proposition is differentiated, elsewhere in the world, in the region, and in the Kingdom. We're not 'blue-sky' thinkers, and we're not auditors. A&M's proposition is about taking action and achieving results in line with our 'get-stuff-done' brand."

A&M's suite of services spans restructuring, turnaround,



FAST FACT

Starting from Jan. 1, 2024, Saudi Arabia declared it would only award deals to foreign companies with Middle East bases within Saudi Arabia. As a result, numerous international firms across sectors such as energy, technology, healthcare, and hospitality have set up headquarters in Riyadh.

Alvarez & Marsal's suite of services spans restructuring, turnaround, performance improvement, and more, catering to a diverse range of business needs in Saudi Arabia. SPA

performance improvement, and more, catering to a diverse range of business needs in Saudi Arabia.

Dervin elaborated on the company's offerings, stating: "We work across the spectrum of under-performance, ranging from mild underperformance or 'turnaround' territory, through to stressed and distressed situations."

He further emphasized the company's ability to provide advisory or executive support, including taking on management roles like chief revenue officer and chief financial officer, a service not commonly offered by competitors.

"The market, in general, is developing at an extraordinary rate, and the Kingdom's visionary leadership deserves immense credit for the great strides that already have, and are still being made, for example; the Kingdom's 2018 bankruptcy law was generally regarded as the most progressive in the region upon implementation, and appears to have meaningfully informed the UAE's equivalent legislation, which was revised in 2024," Dervin noted.

He further mentioned that the implementation of the law, and

The all-encompassing nature of the Saudi Arabian transformation is driving significant demand for A&M's distinctive 'get-stuff-done' brand of services — for our ability to fix problems, our 'skin in the game,' and our freedom from audit conflicts.

James Dervin
Alvarez & Marsal managing director in the Middle East and co-head in the region



subsequently the introduction of processes like financial restructuring, have provided tools to aid in the rescue of businesses and to minimize the occurrence of outright failure and subsequent liquidation.

The enactment of the new Companies Law, coupled with the growing sophistication of the capital markets, is rendering the Kingdom — and the broader region — an increasingly enticing hub for foreign investment, according to the top official.

This trend aligns seamlessly with the fundamental objectives of Vision 2030, he said.

Earlier this month, Bryan Marsal, A&M's CEO and co-founder, commented on the close alignment of his firm's global brand with the local market dynamic in Saudi Arabia, following the establishment of the regional HQ.

"The all-encompassing nature of the Saudi Arabian transformation is driving significant demand for A&M's distinctive 'get-stuff-done' brand of services — for our ability to fix problems, our 'skin in the game,' and our freedom from audit conflicts," he said in a statement.

Dervin highlighted A&M's unique

position in influencing the restructuring landscape, particularly its expertise in corporate rescue, turnaround, and performance improvement, which are virtually unparalleled in the region.

Aligned with Vision 2030, A&M is committed to supporting Saudi youth employment programs, exemplified by initiatives like the Bidayah Graduate Program.

Dervin expressed pride in the program, stating: "We are obviously extremely proud of the Bidayah program, which is a pioneering initiative for A&M from a youth development perspective."

He added: "We have designed and implemented a bespoke graduate training program providing these exceptional individuals with rotating roles across the business, hopefully providing them with a breadth of experience and visibility of the options and opportunities within our firm and in the market more broadly."

The managing director said that the company is hoping to play a meaningful part in the personal and career development of young Saudis, "who themselves have a vital role to play in the development of the economy and society in the

Kingdom." Looking ahead, A&M aims to further empower Saudi graduates through partnerships with local universities and educational institutions.

"Our objective is to empower new graduates, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge for a successful career. More details of these partnerships, and its potential to contribute to the development of the next generation of Saudi business leaders, will be shared closer to the next intake," affirmed Dervin.

As A&M continues to expand its footprint in Saudi Arabia, Dervin emphasized the crucial role of young Saudi professionals in driving the company's growth and success.

"Much like the Kingdom itself, we cannot be truly successful without young Saudi professionals playing their part in our development, as we look forward to a bright future for our growing Saudi Arabian office," he concluded.

More than 180 major global companies and organizations have already established regional headquarters in the Saudi capital. These include Apple, Microsoft, and Alibaba, as well as the IMF, IBM, and Google.

Business News



Global venture capital firms are capitalizing on the KSA's expansive strategy, as evidenced by SVC's \$30 million investment in US-based General Atlantic, SPA

STARTUP WRAP

Saudi venture capital sector continues to expand globally

Global venture capital firms capitalize on Kingdom's expansive strategy

Nour El-Shaerl Cairo

Saudi Arabia's venture capital landscape continues to grow with its reverberations reaching far continents.

Global venture capital firms are capitalizing on the Kingdom's expansive strategy, as evidenced by the state-owned Saudi Venture Capital Co.'s \$30 million investment in a US-based investment firm.

SVC has pledged this injection to a private equity fund managed by the renowned US-based investment firm General Atlantic.

"The investment in the private equity fund by General Atlantic is part of SVC's Investment in Funds Programme and an implementation of its strategy related to attracting top global fund managers to invest in Saudi-based companies as well as stimulating investment for later stages," Nabeel Koshak, CEO and board member at SVC, commented.

Established in 1980, General Atlantic boasts a formidable reputation as a global growth equity investor, overseeing a vast portfolio of \$84 billion in assets under management.

The focus of this venture will be on investing in high-growth, tech-enabled companies within Saudi Arabia.

The initiative aims to bolster innovation and entrepreneurship in the region, particularly in key sectors such as consumer goods, financial services, healthcare, life sciences, and technology.

"We are very proud to partner with SVC and broaden our commitment to Saudi Arabia. Vision 2030 sets the stage for a period of dynamic growth and innovation in Saudi Arabia, which will create

attractive investment opportunities for our global investors. SVC is a highly strategic investor who will deepen our expertise in this important region," Bill Ford, chairman and CEO of General Atlantic, said.

Saudi Arabia's WheeKeep secures \$8m series A funding

Saudi logistics startup WheeKeep raised \$8 million in a series A round led by Fintech Collective, with participation from local and international investors.

Founded in 2020 by Sultan Al-Olayan, Amr Al-Marzouki, and Youssef Fayed, WheeKeep provides mobile self-storage units for individuals and businesses.

The new capital will aim to fuel WheeKeep's expansion plans in Saudi Arabia and beyond.

The investment by General Atlantic is part of SVC's Investment in Funds Programme and an implementation of its strategy related to attracting top global fund managers to invest in Saudi-based companies.

Nabeel Koshak
CEO and board member at SVC



Saudi Qsalarly partners with Itqan Capital to launch \$80m fund

Saudi human resources tech company Qsalarly has partnered with Itqan Capital to launch an \$80 million investment fund.

Founded in 2022 by Mohammed Badwi and Amr Abu Shady, Qsalarly offers a digital platform for accelerated salary payments.

The fund aims to provide opportunities for investors seeking financial growth.

Qatari investors commit \$20m to MENA Fund I

Qatari investors are boosting the regional startup landscape with a \$20 million commitment to the newly announced MENA Fund I. Golden Gate Ventures, founded by Silicon Valley natives, announced its first \$100 million MENA fund, with \$20 million in commitments from some of Qatar's most prominent families.

The anchor investor is the multi-faceted Al Khor Holding, a company with 60 years of heritage. Other notable investors include the Al Attiya Group, widely recognized for its support in developing local businesses, and Sheikh Jassim Bin Jabor Al Thani.

The announcement of the first close of its \$100 million MENA Fund I, backed by the pillars of Qatar's private business community, represents a major step forward in Golden Gate Ventures' ambitions to drive innovation and entrepreneurship in the MENA region.

MENA Fund I is the first international venture capital fund to be established and managed within Qatar. Michael Lints, partner at Golden Gate Ventures, has moved to Qatar to deepen the firm's commitment to the MENA region.

Glint completes first close of its second venture fund at \$3m

Egypt-based investment firm Glint completed the first close of its second venture fund at \$3 million, supported by Wadi Degla Group.

Glint Fund II, led by Tarek Aboualalam and Youssef Helmy Habib, aims to support Egyptian entrepreneurs with early-stage investments ranging from \$250,000 to \$500,000.

"Glint's second fund represents an important step to further develop our ecosystem," said Aboualalam.

UAE's Property Finder raises \$90m debt round to buyout lead investor

Dubai-based Property Finder secured \$90 million in debt from Francisco Partners to finance the buyout of its first institutional investor, BECO Capital.

The online real estate platform bought back the company's stake, which had also invested in ride-hailing app Careem and logistics startup Fetchr.

"We've seen tremendous growth in the real estate market across the entire UAE, not just Dubai," said Michael Lahyani, CEO and founder of Property Finder.

UAE's Lune raises \$1.5m in seed round

UAE-based data analysis company Lune has raised \$1.5 million in a seed round from Dubai Future District Fund, Plus Venture Capital, Reach International, and Judah Ventures, alongside other family offices and angel investors.

Founded in 2020 by Helal Tariq and Alexandre Soued, Lune enables financial institutions to turn customer transaction data into valuable insights.

BizBriefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Bankruptcy liquidation

Genesis to return \$3bn to customers

Crypto lender Genesis Global received court approval on Friday to return about \$3 billion in cash and cryptocurrency to its customers in a bankruptcy liquidation, leaving its owner, Digital Currency Group, with no recovery from the bankruptcy.

US Bankruptcy Judge Sean Lane approved Genesis' Chapter 11 liquidation plan and overruled an objection raised by DCG, which had argued that Genesis should pay its customers and creditors no more than what the crypto assets were valued at in January 2023, when Genesis filed for bankruptcy. **Reuters**

Endorsement

Shareholders back Boeing CEO pay deal package

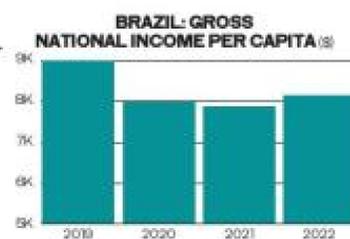
Boeing shareholders voted Friday to back outgoing CEO Dave Calhoun's pay deal and reelection to the board, in an endorsement of company leadership as it faces heavy scrutiny over safety problems.

The company announced the preliminary vote results at its annual meeting, saying all 11 directors had been reelected and that shareholders backed Calhoun's planned \$33 million compensation package.

On March 25, Boeing said Calhoun would step down at the end of 2024. It named former Qualcomm CEO Steve Mollenkopf as the new chairman. **AFF**

Chart of THE DAY

In 2022, the national gross income per capita in Brazil amounted to around \$8,140



Source: Statista

What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

After 1177 B.C

ERIC H. CLINE

Eric H. Cline's "After 1177 B.C." tells how the collapse of powerful Late Bronze Age civilizations created new circumstances to which people and societies had to adapt. Those that failed to adjust disappeared from

the world stage, while others transformed themselves, resulting in a new world order.

"After 1177 B.C." reveals why this period was a new age with new inventions and new opportunities.



Steep increases

Canada exploring higher tariffs on Chinese EVs

Canada is looking at whether it needs to raise tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles after the White House announced major new levies on them, Trade Minister Mary Ng told Bloomberg News on Friday.

Canada's decision follows US President Joe Biden's steep tariff increases on Chinese imports, including electric-vehicle batteries, computer chips and medical products earlier this week.

Biden will increase tariffs this year from 25 percent to 100 percent on EVs, bringing total duties to 102.5 percent. **Reuters**

Pesticide scrutiny

Indian spice trade group fears plunge in exports

An Indian spice trade group said on Friday that spice exports could drop by 40 percent after two major brands were hit with contamination allegations over the use of a pesticide the group considers safe.

India is the world's biggest exporter, consumer and producer of spices, and its spice exports came to \$4 billion in the year from April 2022 to March 2023.

Hong Kong last month suspended sales of three MDH spice blends and one from Everest citing high levels of the pesticide ethylene oxide. Both firms say their products are safe for consumption. **Reuters**

The (Roshan) project supports the company's ambitions to contribute to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

Mohamed Habes
CEO of Al-Gharbia Development
and Investment Company



PRESS RELEASES FROM THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

Corporate

REAL ESTATE

Al-Gharbia Company launches 'Roshan' project in Jeddah

Al-Gharbia Development and Investment Company, the development arm of real estate company Tatweer Group in the western region, announced the launch of its first project in Jeddah at a ceremony in the city. The event was attended by real estate developers, businessmen and investors.

The project, named Roshan, is an ambitious urban and commercial development project located in the north of Jeddah. It consists of residential and commercial buildings and will be constructed in accordance with the highest design and engineering standards.

Boasting a strategic location, Roshan, to be built on a total area of 1 million square meters, will be located close to urban development projects, hotels, residential and commercial complexes, and government facilities.

Expressing delight at the launch of the new project, Mohamed Habes, CEO of Al-Gharbia Development and Investment Company, said Roshan represents "a wonderful start for the company." He said: "The project embodies the company's ambitious standards in construction and real estate development, which take into account the creation of a comprehensive and integrated community environment that guarantees its customers the enjoyment of quality of life in a balanced and harmonious society."

Habes added: "The project supports the company's ambitions to contribute to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030,



Roshan will also include green spaces and a central park built on an area of 29,000 square meters, offering an enjoyable healthy environment for its residents.

which aims to improve the quality of life, enhancing real estate development projects, playing a pivotal role in shaping a vibrant society and a thriving economy."

Comprising 20 commercial plots and 614 residential plots, Roshan will also include green

HIGHLIGHT

Roshan, to be built on a total area of 1 million square meters, will be located close to urban development projects, hotels, residential and commercial complexes, and government facilities.

spaces and a central park built on an area of 29,000 square meters, offering an enjoyable healthy environment for its residents.

Habes said the project's infrastructure facilities, such as electricity, water and sewage networks, and communication

and internet services, will be developed to guarantee comfort and luxury for the residents. Roshan will also include seven public parks, seven schools, seven mosques, a health center, and a main park in the heart of the project, consisting of sports areas and cycling tracks.

DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Petal Ads and talabat partner to boost regional expansion

Huawei has announced its partnership with talabat, a regional platform for everyday deliveries. Through this partnership, talabat will use Petal Ads, Huawei's digital advertising platform, to propel its business expansion through cutting-edge targeting capabilities.

The collaboration was officially initiated with a signing ceremony, which took place on May 7 at the Petal Ads booth during the Arabian Travel Market 2024 in Dubai. This alliance between two industry leaders signifies a commitment to revolutionizing digital advertising and enhancing user engagement.

talabat will integrate targeted advertising initiatives powered by Petal Ads. Furthermore, the

talabat app will be featured in Virtual Preload, a unique lifestyle folder on all Huawei devices. This first-of-its-kind initiative for talabat will ensure faster access to the app for Huawei users.

"Partnering with talabat, a leader in the food delivery and q-commerce industry, is a significant step for Petal Ads," said William Hu, managing director of Huawei Consumer Business Group, Middle East and Africa Eco Development and Operation. "This collaboration offers an exciting opportunity to leverage our digital advertising expertise and contribute to the success of the talabat platform, creating new avenues for businesses to connect with their audiences."

Dyson has unveiled its latest floorcare technology, designed to pickup wet and dry debris in one go to deliver a hygienic clean on hard floors, across large spaces. With 1-liter clean water tank to cover flooring up to 290 square meters, the Dyson WashG1 uses a combination of hydration, absorption, and extraction technologies to remove wet and dry debris in one go — automatically separating it out, so maintenance is more hygienic.

Charlie Park, vice president of Dyson Home Engineering at Dyson, said: "Wet cleaning is considered a necessary chore globally and the perceived burden has been the target of a vast array of wet floor cleaning formats. Despite this, users' expectations are often left

PIONEERING TECHNOLOGY

Dyson unveils first dedicated wet floor cleaner



unfulfilled when it comes to stain removal, pickup performance, and floor finish. Dyson engineers solve the problems others ignore and we thrive on the challenge of creating better technology. The Dyson WashG1 is the result of this; our first dedicated wet machine to wash hard floors, properly and

hygienically."

Two individually powered rollers counter-rotate whilst a pulse-modulated pump distributes water evenly across 26 precisely positioned hydration points, along the full width of each roller.

Each roller is made up of a highly absorbent microfiber, with 64,800 filaments per cm². This combination of high-density microfiber and consistent application of clean water ensures liquid spills are absorbed, whilst dry dirt, debris, and hair is enveloped by the millions of filaments. By positioning two rollers at the front and back of the machine, Dyson engineers also achieved longer dwell time on stains with each pass, for powerful and fast stain removal.

Corporate Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Trade Fair

Krohne showcases environmental solutions

Krohne, a global provider of industrial process instrumentation and measurement solutions, participated in IFAT 2024, the world's leading trade fair for water, sewage, waste, and raw materials management. Held in Munich, Germany, from May 13-17, IFAT provided a platform for Krohne to demonstrate its latest innovations and reinforce its dedication to addressing the unique environmental challenges faced around the world and in the Middle East and Africa region.

As the world grapples with rapid urbanization, industrial growth, and the increasing effects of climate change, the demand for efficient and sustainable environmental technologies has never been greater.

Cyberthreat

Kaspersky reports Careto APT malware attack

Kaspersky researchers have uncovered two new malicious campaigns operated by the notorious Careto Advanced Persistent Threat group, marking their first activity since 2013. Demonstrating a remarkably high level of sophistication, the actors conducted two complex cyberespionage campaigns using a multimodal framework. This framework enables the recording of microphone input, stealing a wide range of files and data, and gaining overall control over the infected machine. The campaigns targeted organizations in Latin America and Central Africa.

Football Training

Dubai Sports Council to develop sports coaches

The Dubai Sports Council has further stepped up its efforts toward sustenance of the sporting grassroots by launching an initiative to qualify and develop the capabilities and potential of coaches working in sports academies operating in the UAE.

The first step in this direction is an action plan with international and local private academies through the launch of specialized training courses under the supervision of sports experts from various international clubs.



Indiana Pacers' Pascal Siakam finished with 25 points and seven rebounds during their game against New York Knicks.

Boxing stars shine in Riyadh



Ukraine's Daniel Lapin defeated Portugal's Octavio PudiVitri in their light heavyweight fight, which was on the undercard of the 'Ring of Fire' heavyweight clash between Tyson Fury and Oleksandr Usyk in Riyadh later on Saturday evening.

Reuters

Sport Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Scottish Premiership Celtic celebrate title with win over St. Mirren

Luis Palma scored a late winner as Scottish champions Celtic twice came from behind to round off their triumphant Premiership campaign with a 3-2 win at home to St. Mirren on Saturday.

St. Mirren captain Mark O'Hara twice gave the visitors the lead at Parkhead but goals from Matt O'Riley and Kyogo Furuhashi meant Celtic were level come half-time.

The second half was a less incident-filled contest but when Palma turned in Anthony Ralston's cross in the 86th minute, home fans were able to roar on Celtic ahead of the trophy presentation. **AFP**

NBA

Siakam helps Pacers beat Knicks 116-103

Indiana Pacers coach Rick Carlisle challenged his team to play more physically and more tenaciously.

His desperate team responded with one of its most inspired performances all season.

Pascal Siakam finished with 25 points and seven rebounds, Myles Turner added 17 points and eight rebounds, and the Pacers turned the tables on the New York Knicks with a 116-103 victory to even the Eastern Conference semifinals at 3-3. **AP**



Imola contest

Max Verstappen secures pole position

Max Verstappen secured his eighth consecutive pole position in qualifying for the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix at Imola on Saturday to equal the record of Ayrton Senna.

The Red Bull three-time world champion's dominance in qualifying drew him level with Senna's run of eight poles, poignantly three decades after the late great Brazilian's tragic death at the Italian circuit in 1994.

Oscar Piastri's McLaren will start alongside the unstoppable Dutchman on Sunday after posting the second fastest time in a tight qualifying session. **AFP**

ROSHN SAUDI LEAGUE

Al-Hilal manager 'very proud' as draw preserves unbeaten season

Top Saudi club earns 1-1 equalizer in Riyadh derby thanks to Mitrovic's injury-time penalty

Arab News Riyadh

Al-Hilal manager Jorge Jesus saluted the resilience of his players after they preserved the club's unbeaten domestic season with an injury-time penalty from Aleksandar Mitrovic in their ROSHN Saudi League 1-1 draw against Al-Nassr.

A dramatic Riyadh derby exploded into life on Friday night after just 25 seconds when Al-Nassr midfielder Otavio thundered the hosts into the lead from distance at Al-Awwal Park. But Mitrovic ensured the champions remain on course for an invincible 2023/24 league campaign by smashing home a late spot kick awarded after a VAR check.

In a match in which both sides

created chances, both Jesus and Al-Nassr counterpart Luis Castro agreed the hosts enjoyed the better of the first half, and the title winners the second half.

While Al-Hilal could not maintain a remarkable ROSHN Saudi League winning run that stretched all the way back to September — 24 games in total — Jesus said the determination shown to earn a point bears all the hallmark of champions.

"I'm very proud of my players," he said. "They showed great resilience (to keep the unbeaten record). We have a fantastic group of players. I believe in their talents; they believe in my ideas.

"It has been a fantastic season until now. We want to finish as winners and there are three games left: two in the league and one the King's Cup final. We not only want

HIGHLIGHTS

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to be unbeaten in the next two games in the league, but also win the King's Cup. I don't think you can have a better season than this in local competitions." The penalty kick

was awarded deep into injury time when Sadio Mane was deemed to have caught Saud Abdulhamid just inside the penalty area. Spanish referee Jose Maria Sanchez Martinez pointed to the spot after being called to the screen by the VAR.

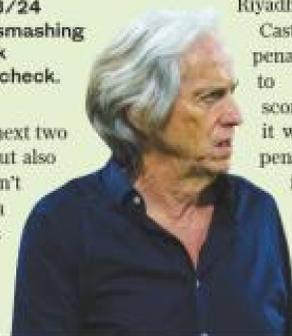
Jesus believed Saud was impeded by Mane, but Castro was unhappy that the decision denied his team three points against their Riyadh rivals.

Castro said: "The penalty given to them and scored by them; it wasn't at all a penalty. There is no injury, there is no foul at all."

Asked whether

the game will influence the upcoming King's Cup final between the two sides that will round off the season, Castro said: "No, this was one match and that is a different match. We all saw how Al-Hilal celebrated as if they won, but they only drew. That means it was a tough match for them. We had chances to win." Twelve points separate champions Al-Hilal and second-placed Al-Nassr in the ROSHN Saudi League table.

The previous league derby between the two this season saw Al-Hilal beat Al-Nassr 3-0 in December. As well as being unbeaten domestically this season, Al-Hilal also created world football history earlier in the campaign by winning 34 matches in succession across all competitions.



GERMAN FOOTBALL

Leverkusen complete Bundesliga season undefeated

AFP Leverkusen

Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday became the first team in Bundesliga history to go through an entire season unbeaten after a 2-1 home win against Augsburg extended their undefeated streak in all competitions to 51 games.

Crowned Bundesliga champions for the first time in April, goals from Victor Boniface and Robert Andrich put Leverkusen — who play the Europa League final against

Atalanta and the German Cup final this week — on course for victory.

Elsewhere, Leverkusen's rivals Cologne were relegated after a 4-1 loss at Heidenheim.

Union Berlin scored in stoppage time against Freiburg to win 2-1 and beat the drop, leapfrogging Bochum who will play a two-legged relegation play-off against second-division Fortuna Dusseldorf after losing 4-1 at Werder Bremen.

Xabi Alonso's Leverkusen took the lead after 12 minutes when

Amine Adli forced Augsburg goalkeeper Tomas Koubek into an error, winning possession before squaring for Boniface to tap in from close range.

Midfield star Andrich doubled Leverkusen's lead, backheeling in a rebound after 27 minutes.

Augsburg teenager Mert Komer pulled one back on his first start for the visitors with a stunning strike on the 62nd-minute mark, but Leverkusen held on to win ahead of what could be a historic week.

At the other end of the table,

Union — who were playing Champions League against the likes of Real Madrid as recently as December — were locked 1-1 at home to Freiburg in stoppage time and headed for a relegation playoff clash with Dusseldorf.

Union had been reduced to 10 men when Michael Gspurning was red carded with four minutes remaining but won a penalty just into stoppage time.

Kevin Volland missed the spotkick but Janik Haberer was there to turn in the rebound and save Berlin.

Follow Arab News Briefs all through the day @ArabNews

Canadian Egyptian actor Mena Massoud this week announced his engagement to British actress Emily Shah. 'She wanted to just be friends. But I wanted more,' he said.



& Finally

The Six

Travel hacks

Planning a trip this year? Here are six money-saving hacks for your travels.



Travel off-peak

Traveling during off-peak times proves to be more cost-effective as prices tend to be lower. Steer clear of holidays and peak seasons, like the upcoming Eid Al-Adha break, whenever feasible.



Book flights early

Advance bookings can secure you lower airfare prices. Airlines often release tickets at lower rates months ahead of the departure date. You can use Saudi Arabia's almosafer.com to grab the best deals.



Use an eSIM

Switch to an eSIM, like Airalo, to avoid the expensive roaming fees and the inconvenience of purchasing local SIM cards. It will help you access local networks at local rates.



Try different places to stay

When searching for accommodations, consider alternatives to traditional hotels such as vacation rentals, which frequently offer more economical options.



Pack light

Only pack what you truly need to avoid extra charges for overweight baggage, saving you money and hassle during your travels.



Travel with friends

Traveling with friends helps share costs. Use stc pay's Qattah to split expenses easily.

CLOSE UP

Tina Kunakey fronts Amina Muaddi's latest campaign

Arab News Dubai

French model Tina Kunakey this week starred in Romanian Jordanian footwear designer Amina Muaddi's latest summer-inspired campaign.

Kunakey, who has Moroccan origins, showcased Muaddi's new BRITO slipper, a single block of plexiglass carved into the designer's signature flared heel.

The handcrafted square-toed heels, made in Italy, come in hues of orange, purple, blue, pink, black and transparent.

This marks Kunakey's third collaboration with Muaddi. The model shared her thoughts on Instagram about working with the part-Arab designer once again.

"My admiration for you only deepens," Kunakey wrote, sharing a picture of herself in the pool for the shoot.

"Season after season, each new campaign your talent shines brighter. You continuously push boundaries, and your commitment to excellence is as inspiring as it is contagious," she added. "I couldn't be prouder to be part of this journey and am so grateful to share this path with you, not just as your model, but as your friend."

"Thank you for trusting me since the very beginning. I love you. I am so proud of you and I am excited, and so full of love for what you've built and what's to come."

In addition to her collection of shoes, Muaddi's jewelry and bag lines are also gaining acclaim among her celebrity

clientele. The shoemaker's label has garnered a loyal list of famous fans, including Dua Lipa, Gigi Hadid, Kylie Jenner and Hailey Baldwin Bieber.

Muaddi launched her eponymous footwear line in August 2018, about one year after departing from her role as co-founder and creative director of luxury footwear label Oscar Tiye.

The creator also helped design the shoes for Rihanna's Fenty collection. The collaboration received the Collaborator of the Year award at the 34th edition of the FN Achievement Awards in 2020.

A year later, she landed a spot on Women's Wear Daily and Footwear News' 50 Most Powerful Women list.

Her jewelry collection encompasses rings, earrings and bangles, while her handbag range includes a variety of styles, from sleek clutches with striking embellishments

to bold totes and crossbody bags.

Some of the bags are embellished with sparkling crystals or intricate sequins, while others are made from satin or leather and feature metallic finishes. The color palette includes classic cream, brown, black, red and silver.

Tina Kunakey is a French model with Moroccan heritage. AFP

Below: The model shared pictures of the campaign on Instagram. Instagram



Hoor Al-Qasimi. Instagram

NEW ROLE

Hoor Al-Qasimi appointed artistic director of the Biennale of Sydney

Arab News Dubai

The Biennale of Sydney announced this week that Emirati creative Hoor Al-Qasimi will become its artistic director for 2026.

The 25th edition of the biennale will run from March 7 to June 8.

Since its inception in 1973, the biennale has grown to become one of the longest-running exhibitions of its kind and was the first biennale established in the Asia-Pacific region.

Al-Qasimi created the Sharjah Art Foundation in 2009 and is currently its president and director.

ON DISPLAY

Christie's to stage retrospective of Saudi artist in London

Arab News Dubai

Christie's auction house has announced the first mid-career retrospective of Saudi artist Ahmed Mater.

The show, titled "Ahmed Mater: Chronicles" will take place at Christie's headquarters in London, from July 17 - Aug. 22.

Curated by Dr. Ridha Moumni, Chairman, Christie's Middle East and Africa, the exhibition will trace Ahmed Mater's career and will include works across various mediums, including photography, videos, paintings, sculptures and installations.

INTERVIEW

Saudi star Mishaal Tamer performs in London ahead of album release

Zaynab Khejji London

Saudi singer Mishaal Tamer said he felt honored to perform his first headline show outside Saudi Arabia in London and expressed gratitude to his fans for their support ahead of the October release of his album.

The music sensation said his debut album, "Home is Changing," is a tribute to the changes and reforms that swept through the Kingdom in recent years.

"There are so many opportunities that keep popping up, so many cool new things," he added. "People have the freedom and creativity to make the world around them and the environment around them, to shape it into what they see in their heads."

Speaking about his London show, Tamer said his fans there will always hold a special place in his heart.

"The people attending the show in London have been with



me from before the starting line and I really appreciate that," he said of the 220 people who attended the event. "I will love those people forever and they will be in my heart forever."

Tamer's sold-out gig took place on Friday at Camden Assembly, a live music venue and nightclub in Chalk Farm.

During his interview with Arab News, the singer also thanked his fans in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the world, saying he

owes his success as an independent artist to them.

"The kids that are back home and the ones abroad that have found me," he said. "This would be impossible without them. I am grateful to the fans."

He relayed how he was approached by two fans in the UK.

"One of them was Saudi, the other wasn't," Tamer said. "It made me realize that ... what we're doing is bigger than me."