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OPINION

STOKING DIVISION TO
WIN INDIA'S ELECTIONS
COMES AT A COST

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ARAB NEWS

The Voice of a Changing Region

SINCE 1975

Nearly all
of Israel's
15,000
active-duty
combat
soldiers are
currently
engaged in
fighting.

A Palestinian
man carries
goods he
retrieved
from under
the rubble
of destroyed
buildings on
Monday in the
northern Gaza
Strip's Jabalia
refugee camp.
AFP



MIDDLE EAST WAR

Israeli military strategy in Gaza branded a failure

Country lacks adequate forces to fight there, police West Bank and defend northern border

Arab News Jeddah

Israel's military strategy in Gaza has failed because it lacks adequate forces to fight there while policing the occupied West Bank and defending its northern border with Lebanon, expert analysts said on Monday.

"The Israeli military is stretched to the point where it's operating

in Gaza and in the north and in the West Bank — and that is having a strain on its capabilities," said Rami Dajani of the International Crisis Group.

Nearly all of Israel's 15,000 active-duty combat soldiers are currently engaged in fighting.

About 10,000 are in Gaza, 2,500 in northern border areas, and 2,500 in the West Bank.

Israel also has about 26,000 reservists in active combat roles,

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Opinion by Ramzy Baroud,
Chris Doyle Page 9

mostly in the West Bank.

In Gaza, the army has avoided occupying large tracts of territory in favor of controlling strategic areas, but there

is renewed fighting in parts of northern Gaza where the military said months ago that Hamas had been neutralized.

"Since January or February, Israel has pursued a strategy of surgical, limited operations instead of staying in the territory," said Michael Milshtein, head of the Palestinian Studies Forum at Tel Aviv University.

"This whole strategy has failed."

If Israel needs more troops,

it will have to call up those who have already completed military service and remain in the reserves until they are 40. But public anger at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's failure to bring Israeli hostages home could make recruitment difficult.

"Right now many people, I think maybe even the majority, feel there is no strategy," said Milshtein.

CAMPAIGN

80 sign up to be next Iran president

Arab News Jeddah

Iran's hard-line parliamentary speaker on Monday began his campaign for the country's snap presidential election on June 28.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf was one of 80 applicants at the end of the five-day registration period.

Others included former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, ex-Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani and former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili.

The Guardian Council, a 12-member body of jurists that vets all candidates for public office, will narrow the list by June 11.

Ghalibaf, 62, an Iran-Iraq war veteran, is a former commander

FASTFACT

The election was planned for 2025 but was brought forward after the death of President Raisi.

of the air force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. He was mayor of Tehran from 2005 to 2017 and before that was chief of the Iranian police forces.

Ghalibaf vowed to improve Iran's struggling economy if elected. "If I don't run for election, the work that we have started in the past few years to solve the economic problems of the people ... will not be completed," he said.

The election was planned for 2025 but was brought forward after the death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash on May 19.

The Brief

CHIPS DEBATE

A forum in Riyadh this week will see policymakers and industry leaders discussing ways to boost domestic production of chips. P4

EGYPT'S PLAN

President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has directed the Egyptian government to focus on lowering inflation and regulating markets. P6

LED LIGHTS

Saudi Arabia is set to become the first G20 country to install LED street lights to conserve energy, said a top official of the National Energy Services. P12

MONEY MATTERS

Violence fears as Yemeni currency hits new low

Riyal edging closer to 1,800 against the dollar in Aden, Al-Mukalla and other government districts

Saeed Al-Batati Al-Mukalla

Fears are growing of violence in Yemen sparked by soaring prices after the value of the riyal fell on Monday to an all-time low of 1,770 against the dollar.

The currency was edging closer to 1,800 against the dollar in Aden, Al-Mukalla and other districts controlled by the internationally recognized government.

The riyal was trading at 215 to the dollar in late 2014 when the

war broke out after the Houthis took control of the capital, Sanaa. It reached 1,700 in December 2021, but rebounded to 1,200 after Saudi Arabia injected hundreds of millions of dollars into the central bank in Aden.

The government and the central bank blame the devaluation on currency speculation by black-market money traders, and on the Houthis depriving the government of oil revenues by attacking oil terminals in southern Yemen.

The salary has become insufficient to cover a third of the family's expenses.

Taha Bafadhel
Teacher



State workers say their wages have not risen in more than a decade and have lost more than 200 percent of their value while prices have skyrocketed.

Teachers in Hadramout province have gone on strike to demand a pay rise.

One of them, Taha Bafadhel, told Arab News he had to work three jobs to support his family and make ends meet.

"The salary has become insufficient to cover a third of the family's expenses. Even a second

job would not meet the expenses," he said. "The reason for this is the currency collapse, which has resulted in a rise in prices, and also unchanged salaries."

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No. 181 • 16 pages



My involvement with conservation has made it ever more apparent to me how the well-being of the planet, environment, wildlife, and ourselves are all interconnected.

Princess Reema bint Bandar
Saudi ambassador to the US



Radar

KSA today



Jeddah
French tarts

Roll your sleeves up and learn how to make and decorate French tarts with Hanadi Abdulgader. Book through experiences.suplift.com.




Dhahran
Magnets Around Us

Learn about magnets and their properties through interactive science experiments at Energy Exhibit's "Magnet Around Us" workshop at Ithra, which will run until June 26. More details on the Ithra app.



Al-Ahsa
Paragliding

Explore the beautiful skies of Al-Ahsa while enjoying the feeling of liberation that comes with flying. Book this unique experience through experiences.suplift.com.



Riyadh
Motorbike ride

Enjoy the thrill of a motorbike ride with your guide Yusuf Ibrahim and zip through the picturesque city of Riyadh. Book through experiences.suplift.com.

TheRegister

THE PICTURES THAT MARK THE DAY



Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister for Consular Affairs Ambassador Ali Al-Yousef received the recently appointed Ambassador of China to the Kingdom Chang Hua on Monday in Riyadh.

Al-Yousef welcomed the ambassador and wished him success in his new duties, the Foreign Ministry reported on X.

The two sides also reviewed consular issues of common interest.

What's Trending Today's hot topics explained by Nada Jan



'ARE YOU OK?' Justin Timberlake

Justin Timberlake paused his concert in Texas for a moment to help a struggling fan in the crowd.

The singer was ending his performance of "Cry Me a River" during his "Forget Tomorrow World Tour" at the Moody Center in Austin when he noticed a fan in need of medical assistance.

"Sorry everybody, one second, one second. We need some assistance right here about five rows back," a fan's TikTok shows him telling the security.

The 43-year-old singer stayed still, giving the fan time to recover before asking: "Are you OK?" The fan confirmed they felt better. "No problem," he said, giving the member of the audience a thumbs-up.

'LIGHTNING IN A CUP' Sofia Vergara

Colombian actor Sofia Vergara launched her own coffee line on June 3, an endeavor that supports female coffee farmers and she says "came from personal necessity."

According to "People," the star of "Modern Family" has now joined the aromatic black beverage club with Dios Mio Coffee, which means "Good Lord!" in Spanish, a common expression used by Latinos when they like the taste and flavor of something.

The 51-year-old "Griselda" actor said that her own high standards for the coffee she drinks were behind her launching her own brand.

The official description of the brand says the experience is "like a bolt of lightning striking a mug full of sabroso (delicious) brew."

Vergara told "People": "Creating Dios Mio came from personal necessity — I have a very high bar when it comes to my coffee, and I



couldn't believe how hard it was to find quality coffee where I live in LA."

She revealed in a press release that she had worked with the National Federation of Coffee Growers, Women Program, of Colombia, which is "aimed to support the thriving well-being and female leadership in the coffee industry," to ensure that only authentic Colombian beans were used in the brand.

She said: "It's exciting to highlight the female coffee growers in Colombia who work tirelessly and meticulously at what they do."

Vergara added that her coffee honored the different "qualities and characteristics of Colombian women," as it blends "sweetness, balance, and strength."

Vergara said: "Drinking and enjoying coffee has long been a tradition in our everyday lives and I love that we can finally share Dios Mio."

Sweetness is light roast, Balance is medium, and Strength is the dark roast, according to the release.

Today's Number

292k

King Abdul Aziz Port in Dammam set a new record by handling 292,612 containers in May this year, highlighting its pivotal role in supporting commercial movement, the Saudi Ports Authority reported. The port has a capacity to handle up to 105 million tonnes of cargo.

Who's Who



Dr. Ahmad Alsinan

Dr. Ahmad Alsinan has been head of strategic opportunities at NEOM's deputy CEO's office since September 2023.

Alsinan is responsible for strategizing, coordinating, and executing business opportunities. He leads a dynamic team, collaborates with internal and external stakeholders, and plays a pivotal role in shaping business opportunities, including investments, investor attraction deals, joint ventures, strategic partnerships, and alliances. He oversees the due diligence processes, evaluates closed deals and investment performance KPIs, and manages investment proposals sent to NEOM's board of directors.

In 2022, Alsinan moved to NEOM as the head of strategy, business and corporate development at NEOM Mobility, where he led a multibillion-dollar scale partnership proposal to deliver the future sustainable mobility ecosystem at NEOM.

He played a pivotal role in closing a transformative \$100 million joint venture deal with Pony.ai, a leading autonomous vehicle company, and led the green hydrogen mobility project deployment at NEOM. He was also nominated as NEOM's corporate representative on Saudi Arabia's Governance and Regulatory Framework Committee for Modern and Future Mobility Enablement.

TheRegion

The Middle East Roundup

Arab News Jeddah

• The Gulf Bride Show 2024 gathers designers, artists, professionals, corporate manufacturers, and related sectors with an audience to see the latest trends in the bride supply world. Held at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre from June 5-9.

• The Chocolate Factory at Jbeil, Lebanon, is inviting people to fulfill a childhood dream to see, smell, touch, and taste chocolate in a fully automatic factory and learn about the production process, from raw materials to end products. The tour takes place every Saturday until Sept. 28.

• "A Sneak Peek" Exhibition at

Qatar Auto Museum explores the past, present, and future of the automobile and its impact on global life and culture. It also celebrates the mission to drive culture forward and to inspire the next generation of innovators, designers, engineers, collectors, and policymakers through a shared passion for cars. The exhibition will run until Jan. 26, 2025.

Prayer Times in Saudi Arabia

June 4	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghreb	Isha
Makkah	4:14	5:39	12:18	3:33	6:56	8:26
Madinah	4:06	5:34	12:19	3:42	7:03	8:33
Riyadh	3:38	5:06	11:51	3:14	6:35	8:05
Abha	4:12	5:34	12:07	3:24	6:40	8:10
Dammam	3:18	4:49	11:37	3:05	6:24	7:54

Spotlight



A comprehensive and just peace is the only hope for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Rev. Munther Isaac
Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran
Christmas Church

PALESTINE

'Know you are not forgotten'

US Christians send letters of comfort and healing to Palestinian coreligionists in Gaza and the West Bank

Daoud Kuttub Jerusalem

Deeply aggrieved by the images and stories of suffering emerging from Gaza and the West Bank since the conflict between Israel and Hamas began on Oct. 7, George and Sara Salloum, a Christian couple from North Carolina, were motivated to act.

George is an American-Palestinian whose family emigrated to the US before he was born. Guided by their Christian faith, he and his wife Sara have long-held ties with the Middle East, particularly the Palestinian refugee community.

"We have been following the situation in Palestine for years and have lived among Palestinians who were displaced to Jordan," Sara told Arab News.

"On our first visit to the West Bank, we were heartbroken by all we saw and heard. The most painful realization was learning that the Church in Palestine felt unseen and abandoned by the global church and especially by the American church."

Appalled by the carnage wreaked upon Gaza in the wake of the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attack on southern Israel, George and Sara were shocked by how few Christians in the US were willing to acknowledge or share their grief.

"No one understood or was willing to acknowledge the situation in Palestine," George told Arab News. "We felt isolated even as Christians knowing that fellow Christians in Palestine were being oppressed."

When the Salloums heard about a conference organized by the Bethlehem Bible College called "Christ at the checkpoint," they resolved to travel to the birthplace of Jesus to take part, even though "many friends and relatives were extremely worried about us and our safety."

Nevertheless, George and Sara were determined to go and used the opportunity to encourage Christian friends to see things from the Palestinian perspective.

"Many evangelicals in America have lost their focus on the gospel," the couple told conference attendees. "They have moved so far away from the message of our Lord that we feel ashamed



The Salloums attended a conference in May at Bethlehem Bible College, left, while war raged in Gaza. Supplied/AFP

of what is being done and said in the name of Christ.

"We feel that we need to challenge the far-right evangelical Christians who unquestioningly support Zionism. Most are surprised to learn that the Israeli occupation forces are oppressing Palestinian Christians.

"We have a mailing list of nearly 700 friends and churches across many denominations with whom we communicate regularly. We have been trying to educate them about their brothers and sisters in Christ who are living under oppression."

Three weeks before traveling to Bethlehem for the May 22-25 conference, the couple invited their friends and the wider church community to write messages of solidarity for their fellow Christians.

"Write words of

encouragement to the church in Palestine and the people in Gaza and we will personally hand-deliver them," said Sara. For authenticity purposes, the Salloums insisted the messages must be handwritten not SMS, WhatsApp, or email.

Sara was not sure what to expect. "I thought maybe we would get one or two cards or letters." Instead, they were overwhelmed by the level of support they received.

Every day, the mail would arrive with stacks of handwritten notes. By the time they packed to travel, they had in their possession more than a hundred personalized messages of support and words of comfort and healing.

During the conference, the letters from both Carolinas, New York, California, and other US states were displayed at



INNUMBERS

50,000

Estimated number of Christian Palestinians in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

1,300

Estimated number of Christian Palestinians residing in Gaza prior to the war.

Source: US State Department, 2022

the entrance of the Bethlehem Bible College. Photos of the messages were sent to churches in Gaza, which responded with gratitude.

One of the notes, penned by a well wisher named Rebecca, said: "Greetings from New York.

I am sorry for the destruction, death, and loss you and your community have suffered. Please know that there are many of us here praying for your protection and sustenance and of course for a ceasefire."

A letter from "your brethren in the US" stated: "We send our love and prayers for the churches in Palestine."

Another included stylized calligraphy of the word Salam (peace in Arabic) in the shape of a flag. Below it was written: "Dear brothers and sisters, I can't imagine the suffering and isolation you are feeling."

"Take heart and know you are not forgotten. I mourn as you mourn but one day we will rejoice together."

Another read: "Although we are far apart geographically, we are one with Christ and you are in our prayers. We weep over the situation in your beloved homeland where you are suffering in ways we cannot imagine."

In Arabic, another wrote: "I send you hope."

"My family and I pray for lasting peace and an end to the violence throughout Gaza."

Some 50,000 Christian Palestinians are estimated to reside in the West Bank and Jerusalem, according to the US State Department's international religious freedom report for 2022, while approximately 1,300 Christians

lived in Gaza.

However, the number of Christians living in Gaza, the West Bank, and occupied East Jerusalem has been falling steadily over many years, endangering the very survival of church communities in the cradle of Christianity.

The primary reason given by families who have chosen to emigrate is the lack of economic prospects under Israeli occupation.

Like their fellow Muslim Palestinians, Christians in the West Bank face restrictions on their movements, military checkpoints and raids, land seizures, home demolitions, settler violence, and limited water, electricity, and health services.

In Gaza, they have long endured airstrikes and the hardships of 15 years under blockade. Since Oct. 7, they have lost loved ones, homes, businesses, and employment under Israeli bombardment.

A 2020 poll of 995 Christian Palestinians from Gaza and West Bank conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research showed that 59 percent of respondents considering emigration cited economic reasons as the largest factor in their decision to leave.

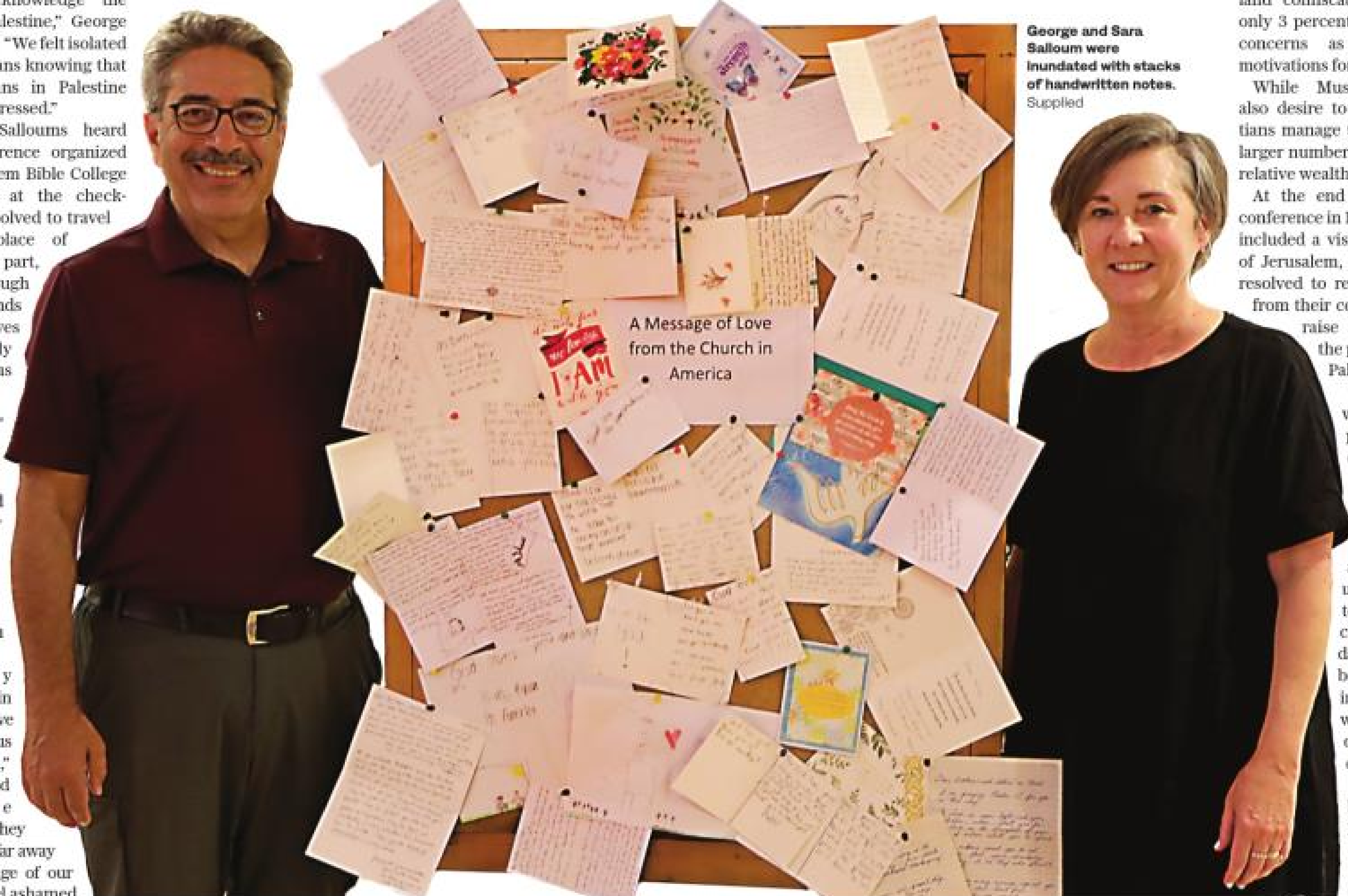
Three percent of Palestinian Christians in the survey said the Israeli army destroyed their homes, and 14 percent had their land confiscated. By contrast, only 3 percent named religious concerns as their primary motivations for moving abroad.

While Muslim Palestinians also desire to emigrate, Christians manage to do so in much larger numbers because of their relative wealth.

At the end of the four-day conference in Bethlehem, which included a visit to the Old City of Jerusalem, George and Sara resolved to return with others from their community to help raise awareness about the plight of Christian Palestinians.

"In October, we are bringing people from our church to the Middle East," said George. "We are trying to break down fear and help bring understanding to the American church of the damage that is being done, often in the name and with the support of the American church."

"What will become of the Middle East if the church of Jesus Christ disappears from Palestine?"



George and Sara Salloum were inundated with stacks of handwritten notes. Supplied

News Saudi Arabia



The workshop covered the annual exploration report and discussed future survey and excavation plans. AN photo/Abdulrahman bin Shalhoub

PRESERVING THE PAST

Riyadh workshop explores Saudi Arabia's archeological landscape

Experts share recent discoveries and plans for preservation

Rahaf Jambi Riyadh

The Heritage Commission on Monday hosted a workshop on archeological surveying and excavation to discuss survey and excavation projects with partners from universities, organizations and government agencies.

The event in Riyadh included a presentation of the annual report of exploration projects and discussion of future survey and excavation plans.

Abdullah Al-Zahrani, director general of the antiquities sector at the commission, told Arab News: "This workshop aims to introduce our archeological field-work conducted in Saudi Arabia

over the past year and the beginning of this year. We hope to gain knowledge about the latest results and discoveries from our archeological endeavors in Saudi Arabia by the end."

He added: "The Heritage Commission is now collaborating with various Saudi universities, including King Saud University, as well as other Saudi colleges and commissions specializing in archaeology. We'd like to thank all our partners for their excellent work at archeological sites, collaborating with the Heritage Commission to share knowledge and the results of Saudi Arabia's history."

The Heritage Commission's 2030 Archaeological Survey and Excavation Projects Plan was developed collaboratively

with national and international universities, as part of its cooperation with entities such as the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives, the Royal Commission for AlUla, the Diriyah Gate Development Authority, the Jeddah Historic District Program, regional development authorities, royal reserves, the NEOM project, the Red Sea project, and others.

According to the presentation, 72 scientific initiatives marked the culmination of the Heritage Commission's surveying and archeological excavation work.

In 2023, 1,556 archeological sites were registered in the National Register of Antiquities. Additionally, 1,900 stone structures were documented across the Kingdom, discovered

in diverse locations, sizes and shapes. Moreover, 7,600 rock facades were recorded, documenting those featuring drawings and inscriptions.

Paola Pesaresi, senior director of heritage management at the Diriyah Gate Development Authority, said: "The Kingdom is unveiling its history from north to south, and we are just one part of this ecosystem, which is remarkable. With support, cooperation, collaboration, and working together, the Heritage Commission plays a huge role in this."

Pesaresi added: "Heritage is mentioned in its own word because it represents wealth for future generations; we are handing it down from our forefathers to the future, and this is our job."

TECHNOLOGY

Kingdom's chip production, digital economy under focus at tech event

Arab News Riyadh

The third Future of Semiconductors Forum in Riyadh on June 5 and 6 will see experts discuss ways to boost domestic production of chips and the nation's digital economy, according to a statement released by the organizers.

The event will be hosted by the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology and the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology.

The participants will discuss production including the sourcing of raw materials and manufacturing of completed

microchips. Additionally, they will examine the application of this technology in space exploration, quantum technologies, 6G communications, electric vehicles, and integrated sensors to enable smart cities.

Dr. Munir Eldesouki, president of KACST, said that the forum reflects the goals and priorities set by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in research, development and innovation.

Dr. Tony Chan, president of KAUST, said the forum offers opportunities to enhance the digital economy, advance research cooperation between

HIGHLIGHT

Discussions will also take place on the Saudi Semiconductors Program, a regional initiative with 16 Saudi Arabian universities that has trained over 400 researchers and students in microchip design and manufacturing.

various entities, and exchange knowledge about best practices in the electronic chip industry.

Among those expected to attend are policymakers, industry leaders, and scholars in semiconductor technology.

Notable participants include Shuji Nakamura, a Nobel laureate in physics for his development of blue/green light-emitting and violet-laser diodes; and Kang Wang, who serves as co-director of the Center for Quantum Science and Engineering at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Also expected is Steven P. DenBaars from the University of California-Santa Barbara, renowned for holding more than 190 US patents and co-founding the Institute of Engineering Electricity and Electronics with four photonics and electronics companies.

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Lifetime journey

Italian, Sudanese Hajj pilgrims arrive in Makkah

The first group of 130 pilgrims from Italy arrived in Makkah on Monday for Hajj.

Chairman of the Company of Mutawifs for Pilgrims from African Non-Arab Countries Ahmed Sindi said that in implementing the directives of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, services provided to pilgrims ensure that they can perform Hajj easily and comfortably.

A group of Sudanese pilgrims also arrived in Makkah. The 305 pilgrims, the first of an expected out of 8,000 Sudanese, were received with gifts and roses upon their arrival. **AN Riyadh**

Humanitarian mission

Saudi aid agency continues relief efforts worldwide

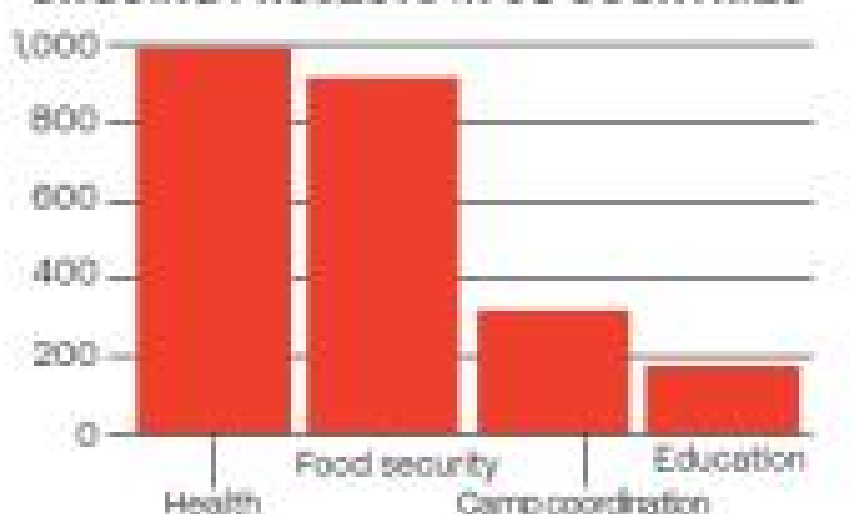
Saudi aid agency KSrelief recently concluded the Noor Saudi Volunteer Program in Kabul, Afghanistan, in collaboration with the Al-Basar International Foundation.

As part of the program, KSrelief's eye health team examined 4,500 people in one week, provided 1,008 pairs of glasses, administered medication to 5,600 patients and performed 408 eye surgeries.

In Syria, KSrelief distributed 949 food baskets and hygiene kits in Sarmada, Idlib province, aiding 5,721 people affected by earthquakes. **AN Riyadh**

The Day's FIGURES

KSRELIEF LARGEST COMPLETED & ONGOING PROJECTS IN 98 COUNTRIES



Source: ksrelief.org

Diplomatic Quarter

EMBASSY ACTIVITIES



During his interview with Arab News, Pakistani envoy Ahmad Farooq reflected on his one-year tenure in Saudi Arabia. Photo/Load El-Kellawy

Riyadh

Makkah Route is a great convenience for pilgrims, says Pakistani envoy

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have the closest of relations, brotherly and fraternal, said Ahmad Farooq, Pakistan's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, reflecting on his one-year tenure in Riyadh.

"This has been a very rewarding experience for me being in a country where Pakistan is so well respected and we have such a strong bond between our leadership and our people," Farooq told Arab News.

Farooq took charge as head of mission on May 20, 2023, and has now completed a year since his tenure began.

The ambassador highlighted four major areas that he described as "most promising" in strengthening economic partnerships between the two countries. These are information technology, agriculture, mining and defense.

Farooq also highlighted

his deep appreciation for the Kingdom's dedication to enhancing the Hajj experience for pilgrims in Makkah.

"Pakistan has amongst the largest number of pilgrims coming for Hajj, and also if you look at the data we are amongst the largest number of people who come for Umrah," he said.

Farooq said the Makkah Route Initiative began two years ago from Islamabad and that it has turned out to be a big success. "It's a great convenience for the pilgrims coming from Pakistan," the envoy said.

Many of the pilgrims coming for Hajj are elderly, he said, and, for them, it is convenient to complete all the immigration procedures in Islamabad. When they arrive in the Kingdom they can simply leave the airport and have their luggage delivered to their hotel.

News Saudi Arabia

CONNECTING CULTURES

Japanese film festival begins with Saudi Arabia on its mind

Short film format key to Saudi storytelling, says Japanese festival founder

Jasmine Bager Dhahran

When celebrated Japanese actor Tetsuya Bessho landed in Dhahran last month for the Saudi Film Festival, it was his first time in the Kingdom. But the surroundings felt instantly familiar. He slipped back in time to the early days of his career when the world around him felt ripe with ample stories to pick from.

He had journeyed from Japan to learn more about Saudi films, shorts in particular, and was more convinced than ever that short films could be a tool and portal to help us all learn from each other, and ourselves. And Saudi Arabia, he was convinced, was a blossoming place to find these untold narratives.

This week, Bessho is back in Tokyo getting ready for his own film festival, the Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia, now in its 26th year. The festival starts on June 4 and ends on the 17th, with online streaming available.

"When I was young, I wanted to become a lawyer or a diplomat, or something like that. I wanted to change the world and, in a way, I'm doing that. I became an actor," Bessho told Arab News.

Short films, he found, were a window from which viewers could look into intimate spaces, from where he could allow people to peer into an unfolding story.

"Remember back in 1997? Windows 97 — the internet world started. And Microsoft, they talked about maybe creating a world where we will be stepping into the internet world; not on your TV, not in the movie theater — short clips. We have been focusing on these internet worlds," he added.

Since then, Bessho has dedicated his life to elevating the short film format and encouraging filmmakers to explore that medium.

"Short films are one of the great art formats and also the entertainment that I didn't know (about previously). All the filmmakers started with short



I can see some of the younger generation ... they try to bring a different type of narrative story; a new kind of story that is very Saudi — bringing local flavor to it, their own original story

Tetsuya Bessho
Japanese actor

films; it's like an audition, so I saw potential after that," he said. "I was shocked, I was amazed — because even a really short film, like five minutes, eight minutes, 10 minutes — it had great messages and great quality of acting," he said. "It's a different style of storytelling."

While in Dhahran, he came to the Saudi Film Festival specifically to scout for short films made by Saudis so he could potentially showcase them in Tokyo at his festival. His film festival has showcased many shorts from Middle Eastern filmmakers previously, but none from Saudi Arabia — yet.

"I can see some of the younger generation ... they try to bring a different type of narrative story; a new kind of story that is very Saudi — bringing local flavor to it, their own original story. I can see them through animation, too," Bessho said.

He sees great potential in



emerging Saudi filmmakers and hopes he can add one — or a few — in next year's programming.

He believes Saudi Arabia is also strategically positioned to excel in the format. Just like in Latin countries, where the language — albeit with various dialects — might tie them in, Saudi filmmakers have been able to create their own rhythm within the short film circuit, he added.

"I think the Arab region has a potential to create wonderful

Behind the scenes of Hanaa Alifassi's upcoming Saudi short film 'When the Shelves Hymn,' which is part of the AIJLa Creates Initiative.

Top: A still from the Saudi short film 'Yallah, Yallah Beenah!'; Japanese film veteran Tetsuya Bessho believes Saudi Arabia is also strategically positioned to excel in the short film format. Supplied

entertainment and Saudi is the key country to cultivate that Arabian entertainment. Like Ali (Kareem Obaid) has a different background, he has a strong motivation and mission to exchange the cultures globally like us, with us. And then in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Film Festival, which is a great entertainment hub."

Indeed, Obaid, who is a millennial Iraqi German filmmaker, has worked as a script consultant at the Saudi Film Festival in Dhahran, and has been immersed in the blossoming industry from within the region and from abroad.

Obaid got in touch with the Short Shorts Film Festival when he submitted a short film seven or eight years ago. Bessho flew him to Tokyo and they stayed in touch since. In 2024, they reunited in Saudi Arabia.

Obaid's short film, "Postmodern Times" will be part of the Japanese festival's "Very Shorts" program this year.

But Bessho has not done it alone. Back in May, the Short Shorts Festival's director, Seigo Tono, also came to Dhahran. Tono was on hand to select the winners of the short film category at the Saudi Film Festival, where he carefully watched each nominated short film along with his fellow jurors, including Obaid. They presented the selected winners on stage on the final night.

"By showing Japanese films to the public overseas, people can learn about the Japanese culture — maybe they might be interested in Japan afterward," Tono told Arab News.

"The same applies to Saudi films," he said.

Next year marks 70 years since Saudi Arabia and Japan launched official diplomatic relations. The Short Shorts Festival will attempt to spotlight Saudi short films during its 2025 edition. This year, the Saudi Film Festival spotlighted Indian cinema. Bessho hopes his country will be next on the list.

But for now, both Bessho and Tono will be back in Japan for their own festival.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Baha's stunning new destination for nature lovers

Arab News Riyadh

Nestled in the heart of the Bani Hassan governorate, the newly built Jadar Park has become one of the most prominent tourist attractions in Baha, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Monday.

Khaled Al-Ghamdi, head of the Bani Hassan municipality, said that its location within the lush Khairah Forest complements the

nearby Waterfall Park.

Jadar Park was carefully constructed to preserve the site's natural terrain, he said.

Jadar Park spans 30,000 square meters, with 17,000 set aside for green spaces. It also has a 2,000-meter-long network of pedestrian walkways and water channels of over 2,182 meters.

Jadar Park was carefully constructed to preserve the site's natural terrain. SPA



NUMBER

30k

Jadar Park spans 30,000 square meters, with 17,000 set aside for green spaces, reports Saudi Press Agency.

Al-Ghamdi underscored the municipality's commitment to developing Bani Hassan's tourism sector, to ensure citizens, residents and visitors enjoy year-round access to recreational spaces.

The local community has welcomed the addition of Jadar Park, which has cemented Baha's reputation as one of the Kingdom's most popular tourist sites for nature lovers, he said.

GRAVE RISKS

‘We reject war,’ Lebanon tells Iranian foreign minister

Israeli army, Hezbollah continue attacks as security analyst sees ‘a state of military deterrence’

Najla Houssari Beirut

Lebanon wants to avoid a wider war and is looking for sustainable solutions that restore calm and stability to the south, Foreign Minister Abdullah Bou Habib said on Monday.

His remarks at a joint press conference in Beirut with acting Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani came as Hezbollah said it launched a squadron of drones toward the headquarters of the Israeli military's Galilee formation.

An Israeli military drone targeted a car on Monday on the road between the villages of Kharayeb, Zrariyeh, and Kauthariyet Al-Rez with four rockets, killing one person.

The acting Iranian foreign minister arrived in Beirut on Monday for a visit during which he planned meetings with Lebanese

officials as well as representatives from Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad.

Kani held talks with his counterpart in the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

At the joint press conference, Kani said Iran has “always supported stability, safety, security, and progress in Lebanon and has spared no effort to promote the progress and well-being of the Lebanese people.”

Kani stressed that “the close relationship between Iran and Lebanon is a major indicator of stability in the region and that resistance is the basis of stability in the region.”

The Iranian official said the discussion focused on “events in Gaza, especially in Rafah, and we agreed on the necessity for countries in the region, especially Islamic countries, to adopt a joint movement to confront Israeli aggression and protect the



Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati receives Iran's acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani and Iran's Ambassador Mojtaba Amani in Beirut on Monday. Reuters

Palestinian people.

“We also agreed on an initiative to hold an emergency meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as a common proposal that enables us to take a decisive collective step in this regard.”

The Lebanese minister said Kani affirmed Iran's keenness to preserve Lebanon's stability.

Bou Habib reiterated Lebanon's position rejecting war and its vision for a solution that would “restore calm and stability”

through the implementation of UN Resolution 1701, approved in 2006 to resolve the Lebanon War that same year. Kani's visit to Lebanon is the first since the death of Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in a helicopter crash last month.

The talks took place as hostilities between Hezbollah and the Israeli army entered a new tense phase. Israeli attacks on Monday reached the outskirts of Saida and Iqlim Al-Tuffah — some 15 km from the southern border

The Israeli moves indicate “serious connotations and fear that the almost eight-month-long operations will turn into an open war,” said a political observer.

Israeli warplanes raided Jabal Al-Ruhan, Jabal Abou Rashed, and the outskirts of Mejdoun in Jezzine in five stages.

A drone struck a motorcycle in Naqoura, killing one person and injuring another.

Other warplanes carried out mock raids over the southern region, breaking the sound barrier over Al-Zahrani, which shattered the glass of several houses and shops in Kharayeb, Zrariyeh and Erzay, as well as the window of a special needs school in Sarafand.

Israeli artillery shelling and raids targeted the outskirts of Mhaibib, Khiam, Alta Al-Shaab, Hanin in Bint Jbeil, and the Kasaret Al-Arayesh, Aramta heights, in Iqlim Al-Tuffah.

‘TERROR’ THREAT

Turkiye raps Syrian Kurdish groups’ plans for elections

AP Ankara

Plans by US-backed Kurdish groups to conduct local elections in northern Syria are “unacceptable” and a threat to Turkiye's national security, Turkiye's defense minister said on Monday.

Turkiye considers the move as a step by Syrian Kurdish groups toward the creation of a separate Kurdish entity across its borders. Ankara accuses the Syrian Kurdish groups of ties to a banned Kurdish militant organization.

In a written reply to questions, Yasar Guler reiterated Turkiye's commitment to establishing a secure corridor along its borders with Syria and Iraq to counter the threat posed by Kurdish militants.

A Kurdish-led autonomous administration that controls northern and eastern parts of Syria has announced plans to hold municipal elections June 11. The vote to choose mayors will be held in the provinces of

Gaza destruction



Residents inspect the damage after Monday's airstrike in the Gaza Strip. Israel has killed more than 36,000 Gazans in 8 months of war.

| AFP

FASTFACT

Defense Minister Yasar Guler reiterated Turkiye's commitment to establishing a secure corridor along its borders with Syria and Iraq to counter the threat posed by Kurdish militants.

Hassakeh, Raqqa, Deir El-Zour and the eastern part of Aleppo province.

“It is not possible to accept such a situation,” Guler said.

“The so-called election efforts that threaten the territorial integrity of Syria will negatively affect peace and tranquility in the region.”

“We will not allow any fait accompli that is to the detriment of our national security and the territorial integrity of our neighbors,” he added.

He did not elaborate on what action Turkiye could take if the Kurdish groups proceed with the elections.

Turkiye has launched a series of major cross-border operations into Syria since 2016 to drive away a Kurdish militia group, known as the People's Protection Units, or YPG, from its border and now controls parts of northern Syria.

REFORMS ON TRACK

El-Sisi asks PM Madbouly to form a new government

Gobran Mohamed Cairo

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi reappointed Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly on Monday to form a new government after the latter submitted his Cabinet's resignation.

The president asked Madbouly to form a new administration comprising highly qualified and experienced individuals with a view to achieving multiple objectives.

Priorities include maintaining Egypt's national security, citizen development in health and education, and strengthening political engagement.

Other important focus areas are improving security, stability, and counterterrorism efforts, along with promoting cultural awareness and national identity, and encouraging moderate religious dialogue to strengthen citizenship and societal harmony.

El-Sisi's directives for the new government include continuing economic reforms and increasing local and foreign investments.

Other initiatives include promoting private sector growth, controlling price increases and inflation, and monitoring markets as part of the state's economic

President El-Sisi



development. El-Sisi has assigned the current government to continue in a caretaker role and perform its duties and tasks until a new government is formed.

El-Sisi wrote on the X platform: “I assigned Dr. Mostafa Madbouly to form a new government that includes the necessary expertise and competencies

to manage the next phase to achieve the desired development in government performance and confront the challenges facing the state.”

Madbouly, who has been prime minister since June 2018, thanked the president and pledged to make every effort to serve the country and its people.

Madbouly served as minister of housing, utilities, and urban communities from February 2014 until June 2018.

SECURITY

Somalia to expel Ethiopian troops unless Somaliland port deal scrapped, official says

Reuters Nairobi

Somalia will expel thousands of Ethiopian troops stationed in the country to help with security by the end of the year unless Addis Ababa scraps a disputed port deal with the breakaway region of Somaliland, a senior Somali official said on Monday.

Security experts and foreign diplomats said the move risks further destabilizing Somalia as local forces would be unable to fill the security vacuum, which would likely be exploited by fighters from Al-Shabab — an affiliate of Al-Qaeda.

At least 3,000 Ethiopian soldiers are stationed in the Horn of Africa country as part of an African Union peacekeeping mission fighting Al-Shabab,

which controls large portions of Somalia, while an estimated 5,000-7,000 are stationed in several regions under a bilateral agreement.

Relations between Mogadishu and Addis Ababa nosedived earlier this year after landlocked Ethiopia agreed to lease 20 km of coastline from Somaliland — a part of Somalia which claims independence and has had effective autonomy since 1991, but has failed to win international recognition.

Ethiopia offered Somaliland possible recognition in exchange for being allowed to set up a naval base and commercial port — a move Mogadishu has called illegal.

"If they do not repeal the (agreement) before the end of June, or when the new mandate of the



A soldier serving in the African Union Mission in Somalia jumps off a military vehicle near the scene of an explosion in Mogadishu. Reuters

BACKGROUND

Relations between Mogadishu and Addis Ababa nosedived earlier this year after landlocked Ethiopia agreed to lease 20 km of coastline from Somaliland.

mission is decided, all Ethiopian troops, ATMIS and bilateral, will have to go," Somalia's National Security Adviser Hussein Sheikh-Ali told Reuters by phone.

"Ethiopia cannot be an ally and at the same time an aggressor," Spokespeople for the Ethiopian government and the

Ethiopian National Defense Forces did not respond to requests for comment.

The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, which is mandated by the UN Security Council, is due to fully withdraw and hand over security responsibilities to the Somali state by

the end of 2024.

But the Somali government has requested several times for the withdrawal of troops to be slowed down, citing setbacks on the battlefield.

The troops come from Burundi, Djibouti, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia.

SOLIDARITY

Indonesia stands firm on Palestine support: FM

In April, Israeli media reports claimed Jakarta began OECD-brokered talks with Tel Aviv

Sheany Yasuko Lal Jakarta

Indonesia will continue to support Palestine in the face of systematic pressure from Israel and its allies to normalize ties with Tel Aviv, Foreign Affairs Minister Retno Marsudi said on Monday.

Jakarta has no diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv and has been one of the most vocal supporters of Palestine since the beginning of Israel's onslaught on Gaza in October.

The Indonesian government has repeatedly called for an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories and for a two-state solution based on pre-1967 borders.

Speaking to university

students at the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta on Monday, Marsudi highlighted the "worsening situation" in the besieged enclave — where over 36,400 Palestinians have been killed — and said that Israel has been making "strategic and systematic efforts to finish off" Palestine.

"There are systematic efforts by Israel and its allies to ... lobby and pressure Muslim countries to start considering opening up and normalizing ties with Israel," she said.

In April, viral Israeli media reports claimed that Jakarta had plans to establish diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv as part of a deal to smooth Indonesia's entry into the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

But the Indonesian Ministry

Indonesia has consistently upheld universal principles and values to continue supporting the nation of Palestine.

of Foreign Affairs swiftly rejected those claims then, saying that the world's most populous Muslim-majority country would remain consistent in defending Palestine.

One of the staunchest supporters of Palestine, Indonesia was among the 78 countries to first recognize Palestine in 1988. It sees Palestinian statehood as mandated by the

nation's constitution, which calls for the abolition of colonialism.

Indonesia will continue its support for Palestine on the international stage, Marsudi said, including by pushing for an immediate and lasting ceasefire and urging Tel Aviv to comply with an order by the International Court of Justice to stop its military offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

Israel's ground and air attacks have in the last eight months destroyed most of Gaza's civilian and medical infrastructure, injuring over 82,000 people while thousands remain missing under the rubble.

The Israeli military has

also blocked water, food and aid supplies to the territory, bringing its more than 2 million inhabitants to the brink of famine.

"Indonesia has consistently upheld universal principles and values to continue supporting the nation of Palestine. Consistency in embracing these principles is not easy. It's truly not easy to keep this principle amid today's messy world filled with pressure and promises of transactions here and there," Marsudi said.

"But thank God that until this very moment, the Indonesian government has been able to remain steadfast and consistent in defending the nation of Palestine ... We have a duty to defend justice and humanity because it is in line with the mandate of our 1945 constitution."



Retno Marsudi

ASYLUM ROW
Italian prime minister to visit Albania to discuss migrants

AFP Tirana

Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni is due this week to travel to Albania for a visit focusing on migration, just days before the European Parliament elections, Albanian media said on Monday.

Under a controversial deal between Rome and Tirana, Albania has agreed to take in asylum seekers plucked from the seas off Italy, register them at a center on the Adriatic Sea and then house them at another center inland while their claims are processed.

Meloni's government had hoped to have the project up and running before the EU-wide elections on June 6-9 to bolster her claim to be tough on illegal migration.

The Italian leader, who heads the Brothers of Italy party, was due to arrive in Tirana on Wednesday to meet her Albanian counterpart Edi Rama and discuss the holding centers for migrants.

Media in both countries said on Monday that during her visit, which coincides with Italian cultural week in Albania, Meloni was expected to visit one of the holding centers set up under the deal she signed with Rami in November 2023.

DIPLOMACY

Lavrov begins Africa tour in Guinea

AFP Conakry

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was in Guinea on Monday on the first leg of an African tour aimed at buttressing Moscow's influence in the world's poorest continent.

Russia's Foreign Ministry announced the visit on the

Telegram social media app with a photo of Lavrov arriving at Conakry airport. It was his first visit to Guinea since 2013.

He was received by Guinean counterpart Morissanda Kouyate.

Lavrov planned to meet Guinea's junta leader Mamady Doumbouya, in power since a 2021 coup, Guinea's Foreign Ministry said.

Guinea is poor despite considerable mineral and natural resources and has endured decades of dictatorial rule.

State news agency Tass said Guinea would be part of a tour of African countries but did not give details on which other nations Lavrov would visit.

However, Russian news agency

afrinz.ru said he was expected in Chad on Wednesday "at the head of an important delegation."

The same article also said that a trip to Burkina Faso was possible, without providing a specific date.

In July, Russian President Vladimir Putin invited African leaders to a summit in Saint Petersburg.

UNANNOUNCED VISIT

Zelenskyy in Manila to promote peace summit

Marcos welcomes Ukrainian decision to open embassy in Manila this year

AP Manila

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with the Philippine president on Monday in a rare Asian trip to urge regional leaders to attend a Swiss-organized global peace summit on the war in Ukraine that he accuses Russia, with China's help, of trying to undermine.

Zelenskyy arrived unannounced and under heavy security in Manila late Sunday after speaking over the weekend at the Shangri-La defense forum in Singapore. He was given a red-carpet welcome with military honors Monday at the presidential palace before meeting with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., after which he left the Philippines.

Marcos pledged that his country would take part in the peace summit, Philippine Communications Secretary Cheloy Garafil said.

"I'm happy to hear today from you that you'll participate in our



Philippines' President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. shakes hands with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Manila on Monday. AFP

peace steps," Zelenskyy told Marcos. "It's a very strong signal." Zelenskyy said Ukraine needs more mental health workers for its soldiers. Marcos

promised to help and welcomed a decision by Ukraine to open an embassy in Manila this year which would hasten efforts to deliver assistance.

"We have ourselves been trying to promote the continuing adherence to international law in our part of the world," Marcos said. "The issues that you are facing are similar and in parallel to ours and, therefore, the position the Philippines takes is always to promote peace."

Both leaders spoke critically

HIGHLIGHT

Both leaders spoke critically of China at the Singapore forum, which was attended by top defense and government officials from around the world, including from Washington and Beijing.

of China at the Singapore forum, which was attended by top defense and government officials from around the world, including from Washington and Beijing. The talks were held amid the raging wars in Gaza and Ukraine as well as growing tensions and rivalry for influence between the United States and China in the Indo-Pacific region.

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Landslide victory

Sheinbaum is Mexico's first female president

Claudia Sheinbaum, a Nobel Prize-winning climate scientist, will become Mexico's first female president after winning a landslide election victory and promising to continue the work of her mentor and outgoing leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador.

Sheinbaum, 61, secured between 58.3 percent and 60.7 percent of votes, according to the INE electoral institute's rapid sample count released late Sunday night, the most support won by a candidate in a Mexican presidential election since the end of one-party rule in 2000. **Reuters**

Relationship test

Beijing accuses 2 Chinese of being British spies

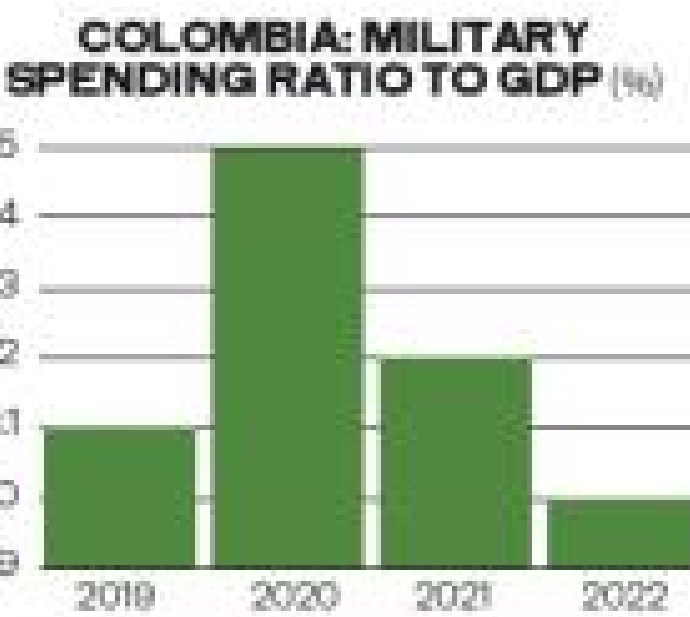
Beijing has accused two Chinese citizens of spying for Britain, in the latest test of a relationship that has grown increasingly fraught.

China and the UK have clashed over Beijing's clamp-down on free speech and open elections in Hong Kong, a former British territory that was guaranteed its own economic and political freedoms for 50 years after its handover to Chinese rule in 1997.

In a message on social media on Monday, the Ministry of State Security, China's main intelligence service, said it uncovered a major espionage case involving a couple. **AP**

The Day's FIGURES

Source: Statista



What We're Reading

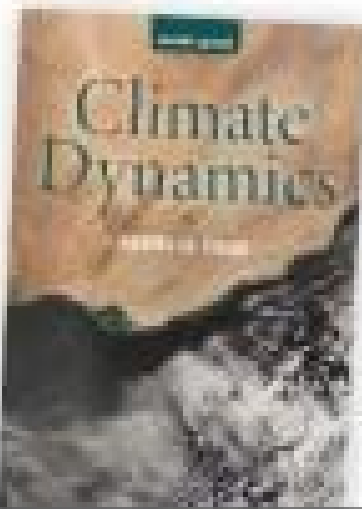
FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

'Climate Dynamics'

KERRY H. COOK

Climate Dynamics provides an essential foundation in the physical understanding of Earth's climate system. This second edition includes updated and expanded

information on hydrology, the cryosphere, observed contemporary climate change, and climate prediction. In addition, the illustrations are expanded and now in full color.



Criminal charges

Indonesia to deport fugitive to Thailand

One of Thailand's most wanted fugitives will be escorted home on a Thai air force plane after being arrested on Indonesia's tourist island of Bali following months on the run in connection with several killings and drug trafficking charges in his homeland, officials said Monday.

Chaowalit Thongduang escaped from detention in Thailand while being treated at a hospital. When he was detained Thursday, he was using a fake Indonesian national identity card which he received shortly after arriving in Indonesia's northernmost province of Aceh in December after a 17-hour speedboat trip from India, said Wahyu Widada, head of the Indonesian National Police's Criminal Investigation Department. **AP**

Climate change

Heat wave kills at least 56 in India

India saw nearly 25,000 cases of suspected heat stroke and 56 people lost their lives after several heat wave days across the country from March-May, local media reported, citing government data.

May has been a particularly bad month for the region, with temperature in capital Delhi and nearby state of Rajasthan touching 50 degrees Celsius.

In a contrast, parts of eastern India have been reeling under the impact of cyclone Remal. Heavy rain in the north eastern state of Assam has killed 14 people since Tuesday. A confluence of factors has led to a very hot summer in South Asia, a trend scientists say has been worsened by human-driven climate change. **Reuters**



People wade through a flooded street in Biyagama, a suburb of Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Monday. Over 5,000 people were evacuated to safety. AP

HEAVY RAIN

Sri Lanka closes schools as floods, mudslides wreak havoc on the island

AP Colombo

Sri Lanka closed schools on Monday as heavy rain triggered floods and mudslides in many parts of the island nation, leaving at least 10 people dead and six others missing, officials said.

The Education Ministry announced that the reopening of schools would depend on how

the weather develops.

Heavy downpours have wreaked havoc in many parts of the country since Sunday, flooding homes, fields and roads, and forcing authorities to cut electricity as a precaution.

Six people died after being washed away and drowning in the capital, Colombo, and the remote Rathnapura district on

Sunday, according to the disaster management center. Three others died when mounds of earth collapsed on their houses, and one person died when a tree fell on him. Six people have gone missing since Sunday.

By Monday, over 5,000 people had been moved to evacuation centers and more than 400 homes had been damaged, the

center said in a statement.

Navy and army troops have been deployed to rescue victims and provide food and other essentials to those affected.

Sri Lanka has been grappling with severe weather conditions since mid-May caused by heavy monsoon rains. Earlier, strong winds downed trees in many areas, killing nine people.

YOUR DAILY ARABIC PROVERB
*The joy of living is winning whom you desire after
refraining: it is a pleasure that does not entail sin
and a right congruent with love.*
Omar bin Abdulaziz
(Umayyad caliph)

Opinion

What the shifting discourse on Palestine means for Israel

RAMZY BAROUD

Not so long ago, if one were to say that a top Spanish government official would someday declare that "from the river to the sea, Palestine would be free," the suggestion itself would have seemed ludicrous. But this is precisely how Yolanda Diaz, Spain's deputy prime minister, concluded a statement on May 23, a few days before Spain officially recognized Palestine as a state.

The recognition of Palestine by Spain, along with Norway and Ireland, is important. Western Europe is finally catching up with the rest of the world regarding the significance of a strong international position in support of the Palestinian people and in rejection of Israel's genocidal practices in the Occupied Territories.

But equally important is the changing political discourse regarding both Palestine and Israel in Europe and all over the world.

Almost immediately after the start of the ongoing Israeli war on Gaza, some

European countries imposed restrictions on pro-Palestinian protests, with some even banning the Palestinian flag, which was perceived, through some twisted logic, as an antisemitic symbol.

With time, however, Western governments' unprecedented solidarity with Israel became an outright political, legal and moral liability. Thus, a slow shift began, leading to a near-complete transformation in the position of some governments and a partial though clear shift in the political discourse among others.

The early ban on pro-Palestinian protests was impossible to maintain in the face of millions of angry European citizens, who called on their governments to end their blind support for Tel Aviv.

Even countries like Canada and Germany, which supported the Israeli genocide against Palestinians until the later stages of the mass killings, began changing their language.

The change of language is also happening in Israel itself and among



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pro-Israeli intellectuals and journalists in the mainstream media.

The language in Israel is coalescing into two major and competing discourses: one that is irrationally ruthless, as represented by far-right ministers Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, as well as by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu himself; and another that is more pragmatic, even though it is equally militant and anti-Palestinian.

While the first group would like to see Palestinians slaughtered in large numbers or wiped out by a nuclear bomb, the second realizes that a military option is not viable, at least for now.

Prior to the war, the Israeli political discourse regarding Gaza revolved around a specific set of terminology: "deterrence" and "security," among others.

Now, this language has been relegated in favor of a grand discourse concerned with existential wars, the future of the Jewish people and the possible end of Israel, if not Zionism itself.

While it is true that Netanyahu fears an end

to the war will bring a terrible conclusion to his supposedly triumphant legacy as the "protector" of Israel, there is more to the story.

If the war ends without Israel restoring its so-called deterrence and security, it will be forced to contend with the fact that the Palestinian people cannot be relegated and that their rights cannot be overlooked. For Israel, such a realization would be an end to its settler-colonial project, which began nearly 100 years ago.

Additionally, the perceptions and language pertaining to Palestine and Israel are changing among ordinary people across the world. The misconception of the Palestinian "terrorist" is being quickly replaced by the true depiction of the Israeli war criminal, a categorization that is now consistent with the views of the world's largest legal institutions.

Israel now stands in near-complete isolation due, in part, to its genocide in Gaza, but also due to the courage and steadfastness of the Palestinian people and the global solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

The early ban on pro-Palestinian protests was impossible to maintain in the face of millions of angry European citizens

COURTESY: AMALD RASHMI/SHARPO AL-JARBAT



Starmer has more to lose than Sunak. He has alienated himself from supporters on several key issues regarding Gaza

How Israel's war on Gaza could impact UK election

CHRIS DOYLE

How will the Israel-Gaza crisis play out in the July 4 general election in the UK? It will be a factor, as it has been in recent by-elections and local elections. But to what extent?

This is a joker question because nobody can quite be sure. It is one thing for voters to care about events in Israel and Gaza, but quite another as to whether this will influence their vote.

Let's be clear. Foreign conflicts do not have a history of determining British elections. Tony Blair won a third successive election back in 2005 despite the Iraq war. It is hard to think of a previous British election where Israel-Palestine has been a factor. The overwhelming majority of UK politicians, including party leaders, do not make this issue a priority. They know elections are won on domestic issues.

Could 2024 be different? In some of the 650 parliamentary constituencies,

it will be a factor. These include, but are not exclusive to, those with large Jewish or Muslim populations, largely in urban areas. Half of British Muslims are aged 25 or under. This means that this is a demographic that is likely to be ever more influential in elections to come.

But will they be an influential factor this year? The Labour Party is way ahead in the polls, typically by more than 20 points, so even an independent candidate running on a pro-Palestinian rights platform is unlikely to do more than dent a potential Labour MP's majority. The electorate knows that independent MPs have limited power in the British parliamentary system.

The influence of Gaza may be more indirect. It may be more about how Gaza has shaped overall perceptions of party leaders and parties, such as how much they are liked or respected or how poorly they are perceived.

How party leaders have dealt with the issue of this crisis is key. Neither Prime



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Minister Rishi Sunak nor Labour leader Keir Starmer have impressed. Although voters select a specific candidate in their constituency, it is the choice of leader that is uppermost in most voters' minds.

Gaza is a challenge for Starmer because it is more of an issue for potential Labour voters. Sunak has incredibly low leadership ratings, so his inept performance over Gaza and even complicity in Israeli war crimes hardly alters matters. He knows he is unlikely to capture many pro-Palestinian or British Muslim voters.

Starmer has more to lose. He has alienated himself from supporters on several key issues regarding Gaza. It was not until February that he backed an immediate ceasefire, while more than 70 percent of the population has consistently backed that stance since October. He refused to call for an arms embargo on Israel, while one poll found that 62 percent of voters backed that, rising to a jaw-dropping 75 percent among those intending to vote Labour.

But what is most remembered and viewed is an interview Starmer did, in which he appeared to justify Israel's total siege on Palestinians in Gaza. He was asked whether Israel cutting off all power and water to Gaza was "appropriate." Starmer said: "I think that Israel does have that right. It is an ongoing situation." He added: "Obviously, everything should be done within international law."

Another accusation is that Starmer has led a purge of those candidates deemed to be too left-wing or even pro-Palestinian. At the same time, Labour has parachuted into safe seats candidates from Starmer's wing of the party, including one extremist pro-Benjamin Netanyahu lobbyist who has called the UN antisemitic and supports illegal settlements.

Starmer's Labour will win. But his limp positions on Gaza and lack of desire to hold Israel accountable could limit his majority and weaken him in the eyes of his party. This issue has damaged his standing before he even becomes prime minister.

Opinion

Stoking division to win India's elections comes at a cost

BARIA ALAMUDDIN

India's lengthy voting process, one of the most polarizing and divisive rounds of elections in modern times, will come to an end with the declaration of results today. Polls indicate that the issues concerning voters include soaring youth unemployment at nearly 50 percent and a vast wealth gap. But with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party fearing a dip in turnout, populist Hindu nationalist politicians have instead focused on demonizing and disenfranchising minorities as a means of juicing the vote.

Some of the most blatant abuses have been in BJP-governed states with substantial minority populations. Non-Hindu communities have suffered from "bulldozer justice," with entire districts demolished for allegedly lacking proper permits, and have found themselves inexplicably removed from voter rolls.

In several locations in Uttar Pradesh, the police attacked and dispersed non-Hindus who turned up to vote. Violence against voters was even more blatant in Kashmir, where the 2019 law revoking the region's special autonomous status has motivated higher anti-BJP voter turnout.

Oppositionists accused the police of detaining and intimidating party workers and deliberately suppressing the vote.

The BJP has also aggressively gone after opposition groups, with the Congress party's bank accounts frozen in February over a tax demand and senior oppositionists jailed on a variety of flimsy charges, while there has been a purge of media outlets perceived to be insufficiently favorable, including the

BBC. Meanwhile, a phalanx of supportive media institutions has been dedicated to promoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP.

Much attention has been focused on divisive and inflammatory comments made by the prime minister himself, with Modi telling one rally: "When they were last in power, the Congress said that Muslims have the

first right to the nation's resources. What does that mean? If they come to power, that means they will collect all the wealth. And who will they give it to? Those who have more children. To infiltrators."

Along with the demonization of Indian Muslims as "infiltrators" and the ubiquitous slur that their families are having more children in order to displace Hindus in India, political speeches and election propaganda have repeatedly emphasized



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the mantra of "Love Jihad" — the myth of Hindu women being seduced and forcibly converted. Evoking this specter, BJP state governments have introduced anti-conversion legislation and encouraged police crackdowns on interfaith couples.

Although extremist Hindu nationalists have also gone after secularists, Sikhs, Christians and others, India's more than 200 million Muslims are viewed by the BJP as the primary threat to its monolithic vision of Hindu supremacy. Consequently, they face growing discrimination in employment and education, along with increasingly systematic barriers to social advancement.

Modi's India is often portrayed as an economic miracle, with its massive infrastructure projects and widening access to technology, banking and consumer goods. Although the proportion of those living in extreme poverty has fallen, from 18.7 percent in 2015 to 12 percent in 2021, social inequalities have dangerously widened, with the top 10 percent of the population holding 77 percent of national wealth. India's 2019 citizenship law wields the power to make millions stateless.

BJP-aligned right-wing organizations

have enjoyed impunity for embarking on bouts of communal violence and lynching non-Hindus accused of smuggling beef. BJP politicians openly celebrate notorious Hindu vigilantes accused of murderous attacks on minorities. Hate speech has soared, with one research group finding that 75 percent of recent instances occurred in BJP-ruled states.

Throughout Europe, the US and elsewhere in the world, we also see populists and fascists whipping up communal and religious hatred as the surest route to political power.

I had the bittersweet pleasure of interviewing Indra Gandhi in 1984, just hours before the prime minister was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguard. Gandhi told me of her love of hiking in Kashmir's mountains and extolled the importance of her nation's inherent diversity: India must be a state for all its peoples, she told me, not a democracy for only one segment of the population.

Few doubt that the BJP's tactics for maximizing turnout among the Hindu majority will prevail, but when victory carries such dangerously high costs, all segments of society risk losing from the resulting social turmoil.

When victory carries such dangerously high costs, all segments risk losing from the resulting social turmoil

Population aging is a slowly unfolding yet insidious crisis

ARNAB NEIL SENGUPTA

Picture a city filled with people above the age of 40, with very few young couples in sight and even fewer happy pairs pushing prams or keeping an eye on children playing hide-and-seek games in public parks. Some neighborhoods of Tokyo and Rome, given these two cities' lopsided population ratios, are probably already familiar with such scenes. The actual situation in many cities could very well turn out to be not so tranquil, and the likely reasons have nothing to do with a preponderance of peevish pensioners.

For one, a shrinking pool of taxpayers and productive citizens does not bode well for the future of any country, especially one with an aging workforce and a growing cohort of people who will need social support and medical care. Young people in such countries will have fewer incentives to stay on, work hard and create jobs if they know that a big chunk of the taxes they pay will be distributed by the state in the form of pension and public health services for the aged.

For another, the global population is aging and declining at an uneven pace owing to forces that are beyond the control of intergovernmental organizations, to

say nothing of policymakers and heads of government. The imbalances are triggering a surge in both legal and illegal human migration, a phenomenon that is stirring political discord and ideological polarization in several economically advanced countries.

To look on the bright side, the fact that people are living much longer than before is a colossal achievement. The

problem is that lifespans have increased, or are increasing, in some countries or regions at the same time as couples there are choosing to have fewer and fewer children.

This is causing a strong imbalance in young versus older people both within a nation and across geographical borders. In numerical

terms, the global population aged 60 years and above is expected to double by 2050 and triple by 2100, according to the World Health Organization. Yet, by 2100, an overwhelming majority of countries globally will not have high enough fertility rates to sustain their population size.

Those who believe that the individual citizens of a country have no pressing responsibility to ensure the continuity of the collective population have a point. There are enough members of the human



Arnab Neil Sengupta is a senior editor at Arab News. X: @arnabnsg

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

species at present to stave off population decline at the planetary level for decades to come. According to the UN's 2022 population prospects, the world's population will reach a peak of about 10.4 billion people during the 2080s and will remain at that level until 2100.

But because "demography is destiny," according to the old maxim, the voluntary depopulation of an entire country is not cost-free; it postpones problems for future generations. Stein Emil Vollset, of the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, says the world faces "staggering social change through the 21st century" due to a "baby bust" in some countries and a "baby boom" in others.

Closer to home, a 2017 report prepared by the UN Population Fund's Arab States Regional Office and the Arab League predicted that nearly all Arab countries that entered the demographic windows — a period when the proportion of population of working age group is particularly prominent — by 2015 would have more than 20 percent of their populations aged over 60 by 2050. By the same year, the Gulf Cooperation Council's aging population is expected to be at an all-time high of 20.66 percent, the highest in the Arab region,

followed by the Maghreb, the Mashreq and the Least Developed Countries.

Like their peers across the Arab world, GCC citizens will also become economically less productive and need more healthcare as they become older. But as a recent report by PwC Middle East points out, "there are good reasons why tomorrow's highly digitalized GCC 'knowledge economies' can also be societies that value

the region's best traditions, ensuring that older citizens lead fulfilling lives to the end of their days."

While governments, the private sector, healthcare providers, insurance providers and research and academia each have clear roles to play, the report says that thanks to ambitious transformation strategies, the GCC region "is well positioned to become a global innovator for developing policy and solutions to address the rapid change in the demographics."

In 1968, American biologist Paul Ehrlich and his wife Anne became well known for "The Population Bomb," a controversial book whose name reflected the fears of previous generations. Today's global economy faces a problem that is quite the opposite: a population bomb that will not explode but keep ticking for decades until it implodes.

The voluntary depopulation of an entire country is not cost-free; it postpones problems for future generations

srmg

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●●

Capability building has been a cornerstone of Vision 2030's implementation, with forums like the GPMF playing a pivotal role.

Thamer Al-Saadoun
National Transformation Program CEO

Business

GLOBAL
PROJECT
MANAGEMENT
FORUM



Experts discuss the role of artificial intelligence in project management during a panel at the Global Project Management Forum in Riyadh. Photo/Supplied

●●
New forms of generative AI help us in all the process implementations.
Margarete Schramboeck
Aramco Digital board member

EXPERTS

AI's role in revolutionizing project management highlighted

Inclusive AI means a completely new way of tackling projects, says expert

Ghadi Joudah Riyadh

Artificial intelligence is emerging as an integral tool for accelerating project management, signaling a big change in the sector, stated a senior Aramco official at an industry gathering in Riyadh.

Margarete Schramboeck, board member at Aramco Digital and Austria's former minister of economy and digital affairs,

said the energy firm is always at the forefront when it comes to partnerships, with many of these in cybersecurity, industrial automation, and telecom.

She shared her insights during an interview with Arab News on the sidelines of the Global Project Management Forum held in Riyadh.

Reflecting on the growing use of advanced technology in the industry, Schramboeck said: "New forms of generative AI help us in all the process implementations,

(and) inclusive AI means a completely new way of tackling projects."

Speaking at the forum during a panel discussion titled "Opportunities and success factors in giga-projects," Ghanem Al-Mohammadi, former minister of municipal and rural affairs, challenged the traditional definition of giga-projects in urban development. He argued that it should consider interconnectedness, transformational impact, and sustainability.

"People would gauge a project

based on cost, but I would define a giga-project by its interconnectedness as a project that serves a city and can drive transformational growth," he remarked.

Al-Mohammadi added: "Not only does it share complexity, but it also shares many attributes like stakeholder management and communication."

Participating in the discussion, Saadi Adra, CEO of Advisors, noted that managing 400 relatively small projects collectively adds up to the complexity

of a giga-project. While there isn't a solid definition of giga-projects, Hesham Al-Babtain, EPMO general manager at the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, noted that the term gained popularity locally with Saudi Vision 2030's large-scale projects such as NEOM and Qiddiya.

In 2020, a royal order was issued to merge the Ministry of Civil Service with the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, forming the Ministry of Human Resources

and Social Development.

"Since then, we reached 2.2 million with the labor market, the unemployment rate decreased to 7.7 percent, and women's participation in the labor market exceeded 35 percent," said Al-Babtain.

Laura Barnard, chief impact driver of PMO Strategies, emphasized the importance of ensuring that people understand that the most significant aspect is not the financial cost, but rather the positive impacts on society and the world through outcomes.

STRATEGY

AI use needs to be focused or will be a costly waste, forum hears

Ghadi Joudah Riyadh

Artificial intelligence technology is costly and requires project managers to identify specific areas within their initiatives that necessitate the platform, according to an industry head.

Fadwa Al-Bawardi, founder and CEO of FSAB Consulting, expressed her thoughts on the last day of the Global Project Management Forum in Riyadh.

Al-Bawardi said: "If they bring too many tools just as a fancy way (to say) that we are using AI it's going to negatively affect

the budget of the project."

She described AI as a toolbox that contains several different applications and instruments, adding: "All the algorithms, data, and results generated are part of the applications and tools within this toolbox."

Al-Bawardi discussed AI's potential to streamline project management tasks, predict outcomes, and provide valuable insights, saying:

"Utilizing AI tools during meetings increases efficiency and can analyze all the audio conversation and can translate it into an actionable list." She



Fadwa Al-Bawardi, founder and CEO of FSAB Consulting, speaks at the Global Project Management Forum in Riyadh. AN photo by Huda Bashatah

claimed the rise of AI is part of the "fourth industrial revolution," and the technology's application will thrive in the area of predictions.

Al-Bawardi noted: "Through AI, project managers can make predictions based on the data inputted into algorithms."

The other level is judgment, which is essential for determining the accuracy of these predictions."

Roy Mikhael from professional services firm KPMG stated that he believes embracing AI will revolutionize the way projects are executed and monitored.

Mikhael said that traditional project management offices often adhere to rigid processes and methodologies that may need to be more adaptable to changing project needs or environments.

He reiterated that integrating AI in project management enhances resource utilization, improves risk management, and streamlines communication.

"This ensures that resources are utilized with maximum efficiency, leading to cost savings and improved project performance," said Mikhael.

He added that it also enables

adaptive planning and agile execution, saying: "AI facilitates agile project planning by analyzing historical data, market trends, and external factors to adapt project plans dynamically."

Mikhael added that this approach ensures project adaptability and responsiveness to changing conditions.

"By integrating AI-enabled performance monitoring, project managers can gain real-time insights into project progress, identify bottlenecks, and make timely interventions to ensure project transparency and accountability," he said.

DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

AI key to crossing Vision 2030 finish line in Saudi Arabia: PwC executive

Majority of CEOs in Mideast willing to adopt AI within the next three years, says report

Manal Al-Barakat Riyadh

In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, the push for transformative strategies has become a cornerstone for businesses across Saudi Arabia, according to a top PwC Middle East executive.

Following the launch of the firm's latest report — "Digital acceleration: Fueling the ambition for transformation success in Saudi Arabia" — Marwan Khamis, a partner at PwC Middle East, emphasized to Arab News the pivotal role of emerging digital technologies in achieving sustainable growth and strategic objectives for organizations within the Kingdom.

Khamis highlighted that organizations are actively pursuing transformation initiatives at the halfway mark to Saudi Vision 2030, with a keen focus on leveraging emerging technologies like generative artificial intelligence, referred to as GenAI, to enhance decision making, efficiency, resource utilization, and compliance.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Global Project Management Forum in Riyadh, he said: "AI is coming into play. According to a recent survey that we have done, 73 percent of CEOs in the Middle East that were surveyed believe that they need to adopt AI within the next three years in order to make sure that they are delivering outcomes to their beneficiaries."

GenAI offers significant promise in automating routine tasks and streamlining project management processes, the report added.

This automation liberates organizations to concentrate more on strategic growth initiatives and cultivating robust client relationships.

By integrating real-time data and advanced



The two-day annual event held in the Saudi capital highlights the latest developments in the field of project management across various sectors. Photo/Supplied

Organizations are pursuing transformation initiatives at the halfway mark to Saudi Vision 2030.

Marwan Khamis
PwC Middle East partner



training programs, GenAI empowers businesses to analyze extensive datasets, identify operational efficiencies, and redefine industry best practices.

According to the report, resource availability and timely decision making emerged as the primary challenges for C-suite executives, cited by 90 percent of respondents, a fact that can be supplemented through the use of emerging technologies.

This was closely followed by resistance to change, at 80 percent, and data availability, which was cited by 7 percent of respondents.

Therefore, overcoming these hurdles requires a strategic approach, one that embraces technological

advancements while addressing cultural and economic factors that influence the pace and scale of transformation.

Khamis highlighted the critical importance of project management in the transformation journey of entities, saying: "As organizations are moving into their transformation journey, project management is becoming more and more important as a key driver for them to move into that transformation."

The executive also addressed the growing recognition of the need for advancement among Middle East CEOs, stating, "According to the recent CEO report that we've published in PwC, 48 percent of all Middle

East CEOs believe that their businesses need to transform within the next few years."

In order for these sought-after transitions to come to life, Khamis outlined the most result-proven strategies based on PwC research.

"The most effective transformation management offices and project management offices usually focus on two things. One is fostering a positive work culture where all project managers and experts collaborate effectively. The second is the adoption of digital solutions within the transformation journey," he said.

Khamis further emphasized that as it pertains to the Saudi market, specifically as it nears

the 2030 mark, quality execution has become paramount in achieving successful transformation across both public and private sectors.

The success story of the Saudi National Events Centre, known as NEC, serves as a testament to the transformative power of digital technologies.

Leveraging PwC Middle East's Transform Hub, the NEC has emerged as a frontrunner in delivering world-class events and experiences in Saudi Arabia and the region.

This underscores the potential for digital innovation to drive operational efficiency, innovation, and long-term success in the Kingdom's dynamic business environment.

CONSERVATION

KSA to become 1st G20 country to use energy-saving LEDs on streets

Reem Walid Riyadh

Saudi Arabia is set to become the first G20 country to install LED street lights to conserve energy, said a top official of the National Energy Services Co., known as Tarshid.

Speaking in a panel titled "Saudi Vision 2030 Outlook" on the first day of the Global Project Management Forum 2024 taking place in Riyadh from June 2 to 3,

Mohammed Muaafa, technical services director of Tarshid, said the company has worked on a large number of projects to conserve electricity in various types of commercial and residential projects across the Kingdom.

These efforts are in line with the Kingdom's target of producing 50 percent renewable electricity by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2060.

Mohammed Muaafa, technical services director of Tarshid, during a panel during the Global Project Management Forum 2024 in Riyadh. AN photo



"We will be the first country in G20 that fulfills this goal of turning all the street lamps into energy-saving ones," Muaafa said.

The top official said Tarshid's main objective is to reduce the consumption of electricity and reduction of emissions. He said the project has provided energy savings of 70-75 percent.

The Global Project Management Forum 2024 is designed to

bring together the most influential global community of project managers and diverse stakeholders for immersive learning, networking, and collaboration.

The two-day annual aims to highlight the latest developments in the field of project management across various sectors and serve as a platform for industry experts to share creative ideas to achieve their professional goals.

Business News



IATA's Director General Willie Walsh said that airlines are projected to connect nearly 5 billion people on 22,000 routes this year. Photo/Supplied

IATA PREDICTION

Airline industry revenues to hit \$1tn in 2024

Number of air travelers expected to reach 5 billion, says Walsh

Reina Takla, Miguel Hadchity Dubai

Middle Eastern airlines are maintaining their upward trajectory in passenger and cargo volumes thanks to strong regional economies, according to the International Air Transport Association.

Ahead of its General Assembly in Dubai, the IATA highlighted that Saudi Arabia's substantial investments in infrastructure and tourism contributed to robust growth, while the UAE remained a key destination for both leisure and business travelers.

On a global scale, the airline industry is set to achieve record revenues of \$1 trillion in 2024. All regions worldwide are expected to generate profits for a second year in a row, with the most significant increase being for Asia-Pacific carriers.

In a press release, the IATA struck an upbeat note, and said: "Although airlines continue to add capacity, yields remain healthy and the demand for travel remains buoyant and looks set to continue apace. Geopolitical risks are the main threat, especially to the Levant carriers." "The Gulf carriers are relatively less impacted unless tensions between Iran and Israel escalate."

Addressing the General Assembly, IATA's Director General Willie Walsh noted that the sector's projected net profit in 2024 is a significant achievement, especially considering the severe losses experienced during the pandemic.

"With a record 5 billion air travelers expected in 2024, the human need to fly has never

been stronger," Walsh stated.

The association revealed a revised, upbeat profitability forecast for the global airline industry in 2024, signaling an improvement over previous projections made in June and December 2023.

Net profits for airlines are expected to reach \$30.5 billion in 2024, reflecting a net profit margin of 3.1 percent. This is a notable increase from the estimated \$27.4 billion in net profits for 2023, which had a margin of 3 percent. It also surpassed the December 2023 forecast, which anticipated \$25.7 billion in profits with a 2.7 percent margin. However, the return on invested capital for 2024 is projected to be 5.7 percent, which remains approximately 3.4 percentage points below the average cost of capital.

Operating profits are expected to climb to \$59.9 billion in 2024, up from an estimated

\$52.2 billion in 2023. The total revenues for the industry are projected to hit a record high of \$996 billion in 2024, representing a 9.7 percent increase.

The number of air travelers is anticipated to set a new record at 4.96 billion, while total air cargo volumes are expected to reach 62 million tonnes.

Walsh highlighted that airlines are projected to connect nearly 5 billion people on 22,000 routes through 39 million flights this year, facilitating \$8.3 trillion in trade. He stressed that strengthening airline profitability and financial resilience is crucial for continued investment in customer needs and sustainability initiatives, especially the goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Despite the positive outlook, the top official pointed out that the airline industry still has significant ground to cover.

He noted that the modest profit of \$6.14 per passenger barely

covers the cost of a cup of coffee in many parts of the world.

Improving profitability will require addressing supply chain issues to deploy fleets more efficiently and reducing the burden of onerous regulations and rising taxes.

Walsh called for public policy measures that enhance business competitiveness. These measures would benefit the economy, jobs, and connectivity and support accelerated investments in sustainability.

In 2024, passenger revenues are projected at \$744 billion, which is up 15.2 percent from 2023. Passenger demand is expected to grow annually at 3.8 percent from 2023 to 2043.

Passenger yields are forecasted to strengthen by 3.2 percent, with an average return airfare of \$252 in 2024. The average passenger load factor is expected to reach 82.5 percent, close to pre-pandemic levels.

Polling data from April 2024 shows strong performance expectations for passenger markets, with 39 percent of respondents planning to travel more in the next 12 months.

Cargo revenues are expected to decline to \$120 billion in 2024 but still above 2019 levels, with yields in this area decreasing by 17.5 percent.

For 2024, the IATA expected \$1 trillion in revenues. However, total industry expenses are forecasted to grow to \$936 billion, with fuel costs accounting for 31 percent of operating costs. Non-fuel expenses, including labor costs, are well-controlled.

The total number of flights is expected to be 38.7 million in 2024, with 1,583 aircraft deliveries, mitigating supply chain issues.

TAKING FLIGHT IN 2024: A LOOK AT THE EXPECTED GLOBAL AIRLINE INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE



Source: International Air Transport Association

ARABNEWS

BizBriefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Infrastructure

Microsoft to invest \$3.2bn in AI in Sweden

Microsoft said Monday that it would invest 33.7 billion kronor (\$3.2 billion) over two years in cloud and artificial intelligence infrastructure in Sweden.

The group will train 250,000 people by 2027 to boost AI knowledge and competence and also increase capacity at its three data centers in the country, it said. "Microsoft's largest investment in our history in Sweden" would enable the country "to build world-leading AI data center infrastructure," the company's president and vice chair, Brad Smith, said at a press conference with Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson. **AFP**

Data

Inflation in Türkiye exceeds 75% in May

Turkish inflation jumped above 75 percent in May, official data showed on Monday, but officials expect consumer prices to have finally peaked.

Türkiye has been battling soaring consumer prices that prompted Erdogan to drop his opposition to interest rate hikes to combat inflation.

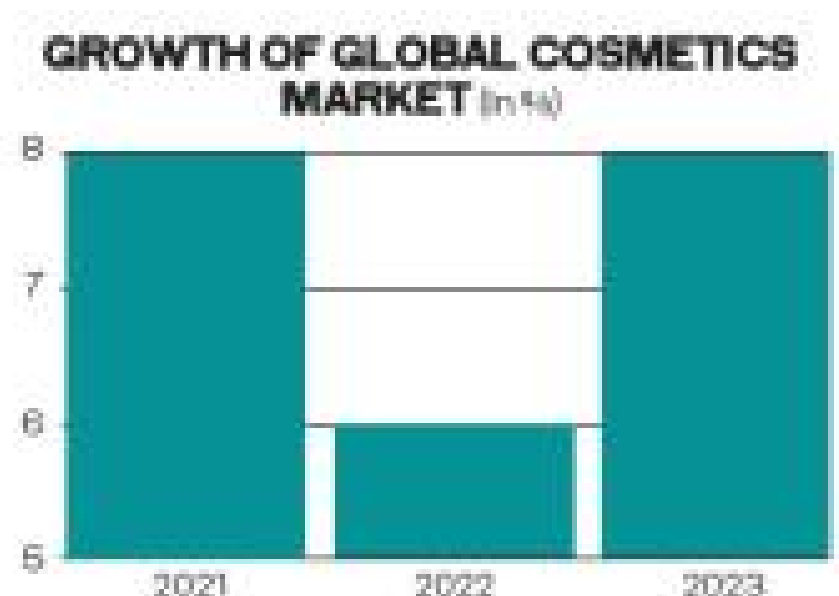
The central bank began to raise its key rate in June 2023, gradually taking it from 8.5 percent to 50 percent.

Last month, central bank governor Fatih Karahan raised the year end inflation forecast to 38 percent, up from a previous estimate of 36 percent. **AFP**

Chart of THE DAY

In 2023, the global cosmetics market grew by an estimated 8 percent compared to the previous year.

Source: Statista



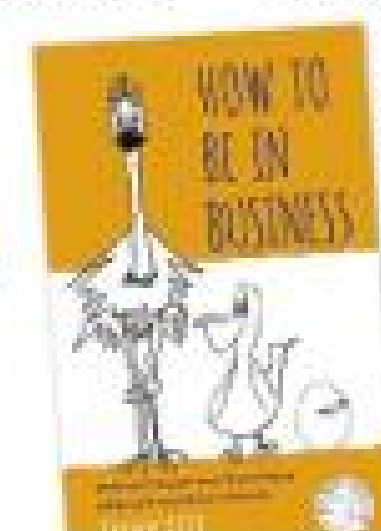
What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

How to Be in Business

JACKY FITT

Packed with sound advice and inspiration, if you're looking for a straightforward, step-by-step approach to build your business without losing yourself, then you've found it, says a review published on



goodreads.com. This book will help you market your business online and in person and much more importantly, you will learn the key elements of how to be a happy entrepreneur and adapt to succeed.

British manufacturers

UK factories return to growth, PMI shows

British manufacturers reported a return to growth last month after a long slowdown, according to a survey published on Monday, but the higher prices charged by firms may add to the Bank of England's caution about cutting interest rates.

The final reading of the S&P Global UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index for May rose to 51.2 from 49.1 in April.

The May reading represented only the second time in 22 months that the index was above the growth threshold of 50 although it was a touch below a preliminary May reading of 51.3. **Reuters**

Deal

Japan, EU to work on clean hydrogen

Japan and the EU on Monday agreed to work together on policies related to creating demand and supply for clean hydrogen as well as to cooperate in advancing technologies to develop the new fuel.

Japan sees hydrogen as a new and cleaner source to gradually substitute liquefied natural gas, part of the country's path to carbon neutrality by 2050.

The EU aims to produce 10 million tonnes and import 10 million tonnes of renewable hydrogen by 2030 as the bloc moves to cut carbon emissions. **Reuters**

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With this accelerator program, we are joining forces between the PwC and Women Choice teams to bring even more impacting results for women across industries and segments in Saudi.

Nezha Alaoui Founder and CEO of Women Choice



Corporate

PRESS RELEASES FROM THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

PwC, Women Choice empower female leaders in KSA

In a significant move to empower Saudi women, Women Choice, an international organization dedicated to advancing women's careers and businesses, and PwC Academy Middle East have jointly launched an innovative accelerator program specifically designed for mid-career Saudi women. It kicked off with a successful pilot event last month in Riyadh, marking the beginning of a series of workshops that welcomes 25 women per session from diverse industries. The program equips Saudi women with leadership skills and business acumen, further contributing to the Vision 2030 goal of increasing female participation in the workforce. The first session covered the fundamentals of business development, touching upon best practices and case studies on how to build effective and long-lasting relationships with clients.

"The role of 'women at work' has evolved, and globally leaders recognize that boosting women's workforce participation at work is not just a moral imperative, but also has a significant measurable impact on the sustained performance of the organization. At PwC, we are deeply committed to supporting the economic and societal growth across the region and our collaboration with Women Choice further reinforces this commitment. We are excited to see the difference this makes to the next-gen



The program equips Saudi women with leadership skills and business acumen, further contributing to the Vision 2030 goal of increasing female participation in the workforce.

women leaders of Saudi Arabia," said Samar Sayegh, PwC partner and PwC's Academy Middle East leader.

Nezha Alaoui, founder and CEO of Women Choice, said: "We are honored to be partnering with a renowned organization such as PwC, which has been constantly

supporting projects that help women grow their careers or entrepreneurial projects. With this accelerator program, we are joining forces between the PwC and Women Choice teams in order to bring even more impacting results for women across industries and segments in Saudi. The first event was a full house with a lot of positive feedback from attendees, so we look forward to the next sessions and to continue this beautiful journey in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

FAST FACT

In Saudi Arabia, women's workforce participation has more than doubled from 17.4 percent in 2017 to 36 percent in 2023, surpassing the targets set for 2030.

PwC Middle East continues its commitment to empowering women through this collaboration, building on its extensive history of supporting women's

career growth with digital tools, training, mentorships, and networking opportunities. This initiative is part of a broader collaboration with PwC Academy Middle East and the corporate sustainability team, aiming to integrate sustainable practices with professional development. In Saudi Arabia, women's workforce participation has more than doubled from 17.4 percent in 2017 to 36 percent in 2023, surpassing the targets set for 2030.

Corporate Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

New Study Hybrid work model here to stay: Cisco

Cisco recently announced key insights into the future of hybrid collaboration and workplace trends. As businesses continue to navigate the shift toward hybrid work environments, Cisco's latest predictions highlight the transformative impact of AI-driven collaboration technologies and the evolving challenges of cybersecurity.

As the global workforce continues its transition toward a more permanent hybrid model, organizational leaders are strategically balancing investments in physical office setups while empowering employees with flexible work arrangements, ultimately enhancing the productivity of today's hybrid workforce.

Online Security Kaspersky platform now offered on-premises

A large number of companies around the world have introduced strict security policies that do not allow cloud cybersecurity training solutions due to their infrastructure, regulation and compliance, or levels of confidentiality. To help these customers enhance the cybersecurity skills of their employees, Kaspersky has introduced an on-premises model of its award-winning Kaspersky Automated Security Awareness Platform. With the power to operate without the use of the Internet, the platform offers companies full control over their data and infrastructure.

Air Travel Wizz Air marks 20 years with flash sale

Wizz Air Abu Dhabi, the ultra-low-fare national airline of the UAE, celebrated the group's 20th anniversary by offering a 20 percent discount on all routes across its network, offering adventurous travelers the opportunity to discover a variety of must-see destinations and explore the history of charming neighborhoods. The flash promotion applied to bookings made on May 21.

Johan Eldhagen, managing director of Wizz Air Abu Dhabi, said: "For more than 20 years, Wizz Air has been sharing the love of travel with all adventurers in the world."

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Tatweer's Real Estate Development Program trains Alfaisal University students

During the closing ceremony of the Real Estate Development Program, Tatweer Real Estate Development and Alfaisal University hosted a workshop titled "Career Success," to equip students with practical experiences and prepare them for the professional world.

The workshop covered several topics, including setting career goals, with guidance provided on how to craft a resume that effectively reflects their skills and experiences. Additionally, tips were offered on preparing for interviews and responding effectively to questions. Students were also introduced to the laws and regulations governing the labor market in the Kingdom, enhancing their understanding of their rights and responsibilities as future employees.

In addition, the meeting addressed topics on professional development and training, emphasizing the importance of continuous learning and training

to enhance skills and increase the chances of success in one's career. The significance of time management was also discussed, with guidance provided on how to organize time effectively to maximize daily productivity. The meeting also covered the topic of effective communication in the workplace, stressing the importance of building positive professional relationships and interacting effectively with colleagues.

Bander Alsafer, chief operating officer at Tatweer, emphasized the importance of cooperation between educational institutions and corporations in preparing young people for the world of work. He added that such workshops significantly contribute to developing students' capabilities, enabling them to confidently and competently face future challenges. He said the workshop is within the framework of Tatweer's social responsibility.

The future of finance is poised for a period of rapid evolution, and Riyadh is set to be a key player in this exciting journey, as the Saudi capital prepares to host the Fintech Future Summit 2024 on June 4.

This highly anticipated event, taking place at Riyadh Airport Marriott Hotel, transcends a regular conference. It is a platform where industry leaders, visionary thinkers, and enterprising disruptors convene to explore groundbreaking opportunities and shape the course of the banking, financial services and insurance, and fintech sectors.

The Fintech Future Summit 2024 in Riyadh promises to be a vibrant meeting ground for:

- Industry leaders, sharing their expertise and insights on the cutting edge of financial technology.
- Tech innovators, showcasing their transformative solutions that are evolving the financial landscape.

INSIGHTFUL DIALOGUE

Fintech evolution set to accelerate at Riyadh summit



- Investors, seeking the next wave of promising fintech ventures.
- Entrepreneurs, eager to forge strategic partnerships and propel their businesses forward.

The summit will feature insightful panel discussions and sessions. These include: "Venture Building vs Scaleup Acceleration: The PIF Example" by Enrico Milovan from the Public Investment Fund; "Cyber Defense in Fintech: Fighting Financial Crime in Digital Age" by speakers Logan Simpson from HALA, Abdullah Faisal Biary

from United Cooperative Assurance, and Abdullah Alghamdi from the Ministry of National Guard; "Cashless Kingdom: The Digital Payment Revolution in Saudi Arabia" by Remo Giovanni Abbondandolo from Checkout.com, Laurent Dhacquer from Alrajhi Bank, Hadi Al-Beshri from Arab National Bank, and Meshal Alyahya from Banque Saudi Fransi; and "Faith and Finance: The Rise of Islamic Banking in Saudi Arabia," where Nahim Bassa will share his insights.

Additionally, "Digital Banking Redefined: Innovations Driving Fintech Growth" will feature Ahmed Ali Larik from Emkan Finance; "Data Wizards: How AI and ML Are Transforming Fintech in the Kingdom" will include Faisal Alshibl from UBS and Fahad bin Thabit from Takaful Al-Rajhi; and "Bridging the Gap: Fintech's Role in Driving Financial Inclusion in Saudi Arabia" will be presented by Essam Albakr from Ejada Capital.

With only the best of the best on show, we will create an immediate pressure to perform for athletes aiming to claim the title of the ultimate champion.

Sebastian Coe World Athletics president



Sport News

UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES

The King Cup: From Saudi Arabia to the world

With the recent influx of foreign players, the King Cup has gained more attention across the globe

Hashim Nadeem Jeddah

The image of Cristiano Ronaldo weeping after Al-Nassr's penalty shootout loss to Al-Hilal in Friday's King Cup final will live long in the memory — and not just for Saudi football fans.

After a 1-1 draw in a match that saw three red cards, newly crowned Saudi Pro League champions Al-Hilal defeated Riyadh rival Al-Nassr 5-4 on penalties to claim the Kingdom's most beloved cup competition.

Around the world, Ronaldo's tears went viral. Never before had the King Cup been the focus of a global audience to this extent.

But long before the arrival of Ronaldo and the influx of foreign superstars over the last year, the competition had been steeped in history. The late King Saud bin Abdulaziz established the King Cup in 1957, and the national tournament quickly became a testament to the nation's intense passion for football.

Al-Wehda, from Makkah, won the first edition of the King Cup in 1957, and the following decades would witness fierce competition between some of Saudi Arabia's most successful clubs such as Al-Hilal, Al-Ahli and Al-Ittihad.

Al-Ittihad, from Jeddah and the capital's Al-Hilal have faced each other the most times in the final of the King Cup, creating one of the fiercest rivalries in the competition's history. Currently, Al-Ahli hold the record with 13 titles, while Al-Hilal follow closely with 11 wins following Friday's



Al-Hilal fans celebrated the club's 11th King Cup triumph on Friday after beating Al-Nassr 5-4 on penalties. X/@AlHilal_EN

dramatic final against Al-Nassr.

As Saudi football began to establish itself on the international front, the King Cup quickly became a symbol of national pride and the country's most prestigious football tournament.

The early years of the competition were marked by the development of fierce rivalries and delivered finals that captivated a

rapidly increasing number of fans.

An iconic final in King Cup history occurred in 1982 between two of the country's biggest sides, Al-Hilal and Al-Ittihad, who played before the late King Fahd bin Abdulaziz. The encounter ended in a 3-1 win for Al-Hilal, a nail-biter that for every Saudi football fan who witnessed it remains one of the most memorable finals in the

tournament's history.

The King Cup was not contested between 1990 and 2007. When it returned in 2008, it had undergone a significant restructuring by the Saudi Arabian Football Federation, which saw only the Saudi league's top six participate. The competition returned to its original format in 2014.

Fast forward to recent years, the

King Cup aura continues to captivate the nation. During the COVID-19-interrupted year of 2020, the national tournament was held amid the challenges of the global pandemic, and the final between Al-Nassr and Al-Hilal took place under strict health protocols at the King Fahd International Stadium, Riyadh. Al-Hilal emerged victorious by a scoreline of 2-1.

LADIES EUROPEAN TOUR

World No. 1 Korda looks to maintain streak at Aramco Team Series in London

Arab News London

World No. 1 Nelly Korda will be heading to London this summer in imperious form, as the history-making golf superstar defends her Aramco Team Series presented by PIF — London title at Centurion Club, from July 3-5.

Korda has been inspiring in 2024, securing six titles, including five consecutive LPGA titles and her first Chevron Championship. Her visit to London will be the only time to catch the American playing in England this year.

Overcoming grueling conditions in 2023, Korda cemented her win at Centurion Club by scoring an impressive 11-under-par, claiming her first title on British soil and besting home favorite Charley Hull in the process.

With the 2024 Paris Olympics set for August, and the Solheim



World No. 1 Nelly Korda is looking to defend her Aramco Team Series title in London. File/AFP

Cup in September, the 2024 schedule is relentless for Korda, but the opportunity to defend her title in London was one that she could not turn down.

"Winning in London last year was definitely one of the highlights of 2023 for me. I played some really solid golf across the weekend, which showed me that my game was in a good place," she said.

"I am very proud of the hard work I have put in the past year

FASTFACTS

- A historic start to 2024 for Korda with 6 wins, including Major championship.
- Defending champion is set to compete with strong field ahead of bid to retain gold medal at Olympics in August.

and it is nice to see some of the results paying off. I am always looking to improve and focus on my next event and I am excited to be coming back to the Aramco Team Series in London."

The defending Olympic gold medalist has ascended the Rolex Women's World Golf rankings this year, now looking untouchable at the top — but despite this success Korda is level-headed, and keen to ensure she can use her profile to inspire more young girls to take up golf.

"It is inspiring to be in a position to have a positive influence on the game.

"Making an impact on the next generation is something that is important to me. I try to inspire young girls and boys to encourage them to pick up a golf club for the first time — and the Aramco Team Series is a big part of that, as I've seen firsthand how their initiatives can have such a positive impact on the next generation."

Already announced for the event are English duo Charley Hull and Georgia Hall, each looking to build on positive outings of their own in 2023 — and this time, overcome Korda on their home soil.

The duo will be part of a field that boasts a host of Olympians and Major winners, with the innovative team event attracting a blend of stars from both the LPGA and Ladies European Tour.

Sport Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST



Big in Japan

Special edition papers hail Saso's US Open win

Commuters at Tokyo's Shibashi Station were greeted with a special edition of the Yomiuri newspaper on Monday.

The big news was the victory of Yuka Saso at the US Open on Sunday, the second time she has won title. Japanese papers still print special editions to mark such moments.

She won in 2021 playing under the flag of the Philippines, the land of her birth. This time she won flying the flag of Japan, the birthplace of her father.

"Winning in 2021, I represented the Philippines. I feel like I was able to give back to my mom," Saso said. **AP**

Rich Initiative

World Athletics launches new biennial event

World Athletics on Monday launched a new season-ending three-day global championship starting in 2026 in Budapest to fill the gap between Olympics and world championships.

The World Athletics Ultimate Championship will take place every two years and aims to attract the biggest names in track and field from Sept. 11-13, 2026.

Gold medalists are set to receive \$150,000 each from an overall prize fund of \$10 million (€9.2 million). **AFP**

Tennis

Paolini into first Slam quarterfinal at French Open

Italy's Jasmine Paolini reached her first Grand Slam quarterfinal with a 4-6, 6-0, 6-1 win over unseeded Russian Elena Avanesyan at the French Open on Monday.

World No. 15 Paolini had never advanced past the second round at a major until this year, making the last 16 of the Australian Open in January.

The 28-year-old goes on to play former Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina for a place in the semifinals. **AFP**

Follow Arab News Briefs all through the day @ArabNews

Netflix has renewed big budget Indian drama series 'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar' after the Sanjay Leela Bhansali series trended in Top 10 charts in 43 countries following its May 1 launch.



Finally

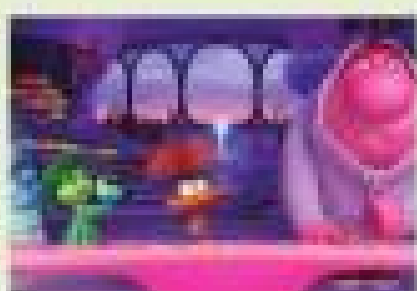
TheSix Summer movies

Mark your calendars for the best movies releasing in Saudi cinemas this summer.



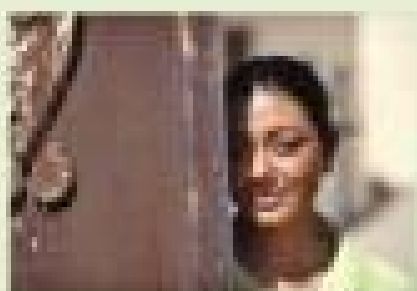
'Bad Boys: Ride or Die'

Directing duo Adil El-Arbi and Bilal Fa take on the fourth installment of the buddy cop action franchise starring Will Smith and Martin Lawrence. Release date: June 6



'Inside Out 2'

The Pixar film about a young girl's emotions gets a sequel as Riley takes on her teenage years. Release date: June 13



'Norah'

Saudi Arabia's first-ever Cannes entry tells the story of characters Norah and Nader as they encourage each other to realize their artistic potential. Release date: June 20



'A Quiet Place'

Discover how "the world went quiet" in the prequel film that depicts the sudden apocalypse brought on by bloodthirsty alien creatures. Release date: June 27



'Despicable Me 4'

After seven years, 'Despicable Me' returns with Gru facing a new nemesis in Maxime Le Mal and femme fatale Valentina. Release date: July 4



'Deadpool and Wolverine'

A reluctant Deadpool (Ryan Reynolds) teams up with an even more reluctant Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) for an important mission. Release date: July 25

CLOSE UP

Yara Shahidi attends Cam For A Cause Gala in LA

Arab News Dubai

Actress Yara Shahidi attended the Cameron Boyce Foundation's 2024 Annual Cam For A Cause Gala in Los Angeles on Sunday in a vintage Christian Dior dress.

The part-Middle Eastern star attended the gala that is held annually to raise funds to cure epilepsy through funding research, education and awareness campaigns. It is held by the Cameron Boyce Foundation in honor of US actor Cameron Boyce, who died at the age of 20 due to an epileptic seizure in 2019. Shahidi, whose father is Iranian, attended the event alongside the likes of US actress Sofia Carson, and actors Taylor Lautner and Dove Cameron. Shahidi showed off a Dior look complete with floral embroidery in a fitting move as the Harvard graduate and TV star is an ambassador for the luxury French brand.

The actress is known to experiment, however. She recently attended the Hulu on Disney+

Yara Shahidi and Sofia Carson, pictured in the inset image, attended the annual gala in Los Angeles. Getty Images



launch event in Los Angeles in a look by rising Lebanese designer Salim Azzam.

The fashion house is known for championing Lebanese artisanal craftsmanship at its atelier in the Chouf region of the country. The brand includes traditional hand-stitching techniques in its creations — and Shahidi's ensemble showed that off to great effect.

The "Grown-ish" star hit the red carpet in a hand-embroidered shirt dress created out of smocking cotton, complete with bird-and-tree motifs sewn across the length of the outfit.

Shahidi has had a busy year so far, most recently starring in a campaign alongside K-Pop star Jisoo, Irish Oscar nominee Paul Mescal, British singer Labrinth and Hong Kong rapper Jackson Wang for Cartier.

She stars in the film and image campaign that was released at the end of March to celebrate the Trinity Jewellery collection turning 100 years old.

Shahidi also starred in a campaign for French label Jean-Paul Gaultier in September 2023 and the 24-year-old was nominated for a NAACP Image Award earlier this year.

The NAACP Image Awards is an annual awards ceremony presented by the US-based National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The awards show honors outstanding performances in film, television, theater, music, and literature.

Shahidi was nominated for the outstanding actress in a motion series category for her role in "Sitting in Bars with Cake," a romantic comedy-drama film directed by Trish Sie and written by Audrey Shulman.



Gigi and Bella Hadid

AID FOR PALESTINE

Bella, Gigi Hadid donate \$1m to Gaza relief efforts

Arab News Dubai

Palestinian-heritage supermodel sisters Bella and Gigi Hadid are donating \$1 million to support relief efforts in Gaza, the BBC reported.

A representative for Bella told the BBC the funds would be equally distributed among four humanitarian organizations that focused on helping children and families impacted by Israel's war on Gaza — Heal Palestine, Palestine Children's Relief Fund, World Central Kitchen and the UN Relief and Works Agency.

All four organizations provide critical humanitarian aid, including food and medical programs, assistance for displaced families, and psychological support. The PCRf has thanked the sisters for their "astounding generosity."

The Hadid family, originally from Nazareth, has been outspoken supporters of Palestine throughout their careers.

The donation follows Bella's recent appearance at the Cannes Film Festival where she wore a dress made out of a red and white keffiyeh, a scarf which has become a symbol of Palestinian resistance.

She described it as "a beautiful way to represent the history, labor of love, resilience and, most importantly, the art of historic Palestinian embroidery."

She also explained the meanings behind the patterns of the Palestinian keffiyeh, noting that they symbolize various themes.

The olive leaves represent "strength, resilience and perseverance," she wrote.

"The larger part of the of the keffiyeh is the fishnet pattern which resembles the relationship between the Palestinian fisherman and the sea. It symbolizes abundance and grace," she explained.

REVIEW

'The Apprentice' stirs up a hornet's nest with Trump portrayal

Gautaman Bhaskaran Cannes

Iranian Danish director Ali Abassi's Cannes Film Festival competition entry "The Apprentice" was one of the most talked-about films at the recent event.

The movie caused a stir largely because it zeroes in on a hardly known aspect of Donald Trump, played by US Romanian actor Sebastian Stan. We first meet Trump as a young man in the early 1970s while he was working for his cold

and condescending father Fred (Martin Donovan).

Enter Roy Cohn (Jeremy Strong), a notoriously vicious lawyer who mentors the young Trump and imparts his three rules for success: Always attack, never admit to any wrongdoing, and never admit defeat.

With a screenplay by political journalist Gabriel Sherman, the film depicts an eager apprentice being tutored by Cohn to override humane notions of morality and ethics. While



'The Apprentice' stars Jeremy Strong and Sebastian Stan.

a disclaimer says that some artistic licence has been taken, it hasn't stopped the film from stirring up a hornet's nest — in fact, two weeks on from the

premiere and an eight-minute standing ovation the film still does not have a US distributor.

The movie goes further than a mere biographical sketch of Trump and Cohn by chronicling the dirty days of the Nixon era and the corporate greed that fueled the Reagan years. The second half of "The Apprentice" focuses less on the mentor-mentee relationship and more on Trump himself, with his first wife Ivana essayed in the film by the savvy and

self-aware Maria Bakalova.

The film has a grainy texture which portrays the 1970s and 1980s in all its tacky authenticity and Aleks Marinkovich's production design highlights some of the vulgarity that the era is famous for.

Some will say the film is too harsh, while many will say it is not harsh enough and Stan's performance as an almost gentle young man is so at odds with the character we know today that it is a little jarring.