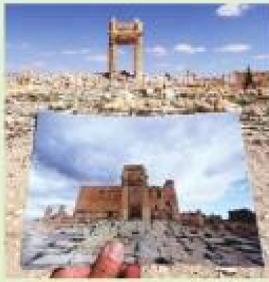


SPOTLIGHT

OMENS OF A DAESH RESURGENCE IN SYRIA Page 3



OPINION

FAR-RIGHT ATTACKS ACROSS BRITISH CITIES

By Chris Doyle Page 10



SAUDI ARABIA MDLBEAST HOSTS ONYX ARENA MUSIC PARTY Page 5

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BLAKE LIVELY GOES FLORAL WITH ELIE SAAB Page 16



TUESDAY, August 6, 2024
Safar 2, 1446
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ARAB NEWS

The Voice of a Changing Region

SINCE 1975

GRAVE RISKS

Lebanon's hospitals given crisis medical supplies 'in case of war'

●32 tonnes of aid include wound trauma kits ●Families pack Beirut airport to escape

Najla Housseari Beirut

The World Health Organization delivered 32 tonnes of emergency medical supplies to Lebanon on Monday amid growing fears of a full-scale war between Israel and Hezbollah.

The aid, which will equip Lebanon's most under-resourced hospitals, included at least 1,000 trauma kits to treat possible war wounded.

"The goal is to get these supplies and medicines to hospitals ... especially in the places most exposed so that we can be ready to deal with any emergency," Health Minister Firass Abiad said.

Beirut airport's departure hall was packed on Monday, and families fled the country after states including Saudi Arabia, France, Britain, Italy, and Turkiye urged their nationals to leave.

"It is just very sad, oh God, the situation is really sad. We get out of a crisis, we go into another one," said Sherin Malah, who lives in Italy and decided to return home early after a visit to her mother in Lebanon.

Germany is preparing to move its citizens to safety and has prepared transport aircraft to shuttle them from Beirut to Cyprus.

The US urged Americans in Lebanon "to book any ticket available," the UN asked the families of its staff to leave, and the Swedish Embassy moved its



People await their flights at the Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport's departure hall as urgent calls grew for foreign nationals to leave Lebanon. AFP

NUMBER

39,623

Palestinians have been killed in Israel's Gaza onslaught.

operations to Cyprus.

Tension has soared since Israel's assassination last week of senior Hezbollah commander Fouad Shukur in Beirut and Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran a few hours later.

Iran said on Monday: "No one has the right to doubt

Iran's legal right to punish the Zionist regime." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was "determined to stand against Iran ... on all fronts."

Meanwhile, Hezbollah and Israel continued their near-daily exchanges of fire.

Four people were killed in

Israeli airstrikes on the Lebanese border towns of Mays Al-Jabal and Hula, and Hezbollah hit military targets in northern Israel with explosive drones.

●Detailed reports Page 6
●Opinion by Dr. Ramzy Baroud, Ghassan Charbel Page 9

SECURITY

Vessel hit by Houthis limps into port in Djibouti

Arab News Jeddah

A container vessel attacked in the Gulf of Aden by the Iran-backed Houthi militia in Yemen limped into port in Djibouti on Monday after the crew extinguished fires on board.

The Liberia-flagged MV Groton was hit by a ballistic missile 60 nautical miles off the coast of Yemen on Saturday while en route from Dubai to Jeddah. It was the Houthis' first attack on shipping lanes in two weeks.

The missile strike started fires in

BACKGROUND

The Houthi attacks on ships have drawn US and British retaliatory strikes and disrupted global trade.

the cargo holds and containers on the main deck.

"No injuries or pollution have been reported, and there is no water ingress caused by the hit," the vessel's operators said.

"Full evaluation of the damage will be made ... followed by the necessary repairs."

The Houthis militants have launched attacks on international shipping near Yemen since last November in solidarity with Palestinians in Israel's war in Gaza.

The attacks have drawn US and British retaliatory strikes and disrupted global trade as ship owners reroute vessels around the south of Africa.

Yemeni judge's plight Page 6

The Brief

SAFETY FIRST

Citizens and residents have been urged to exercise caution as thunderstorms are expected to continue in some regions of the Kingdom until Friday. P4

TRADE GROWTH

Saudi Arabia's non-oil private sector demonstrated strong growth in July, supported by sustained demand. P12

ESPORTS FESTIVAL

Three teams were crowned champions at the Esports World Cup in Riyadh on 'Super Sunday'. P15

ARMY CHIEF VOWS JUSTICE

UN and US call for peaceful transition in Bangladesh

Prime minister driven out by protests after 20 years in office quits and flees to London

Shehab Sumon Dhaka

The UN on Monday called for peaceful democratic transition in Bangladesh, and the US warned against violence after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled by air force plane to India and then to London.

"We urge all parties to refrain from further violence. Too many lives have been lost over the course of the past several weeks, and we urge calm and

restraint in the days ahead," US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said.

Hasina, 76, quit after hundreds of people were killed in a crackdown on demonstrations that began as protests against job quotas and swelled into a movement demanding her downfall.

Army chief Gen. Waker-Uz-Zaman said he would form an interim military government.

"The country is going through a revolutionary period," he said.



People carry an injured protester to a hospital in Dhaka. AP

"I promise you all, we will bring justice. We request you to have faith in the army of the country. Please don't go back to the path of violence and please return to nonviolent and peaceful ways."

Hasina had governed for 20 of the past 30 years as leader of the political movement she inherited from her father, state founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was assassinated in a 1975 coup.

Protesters in Dhaka on

Monday climbed on top of his statue and chiseled at the head with an axe.

Detailed report Page 6

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We are determined to continue working on the next 1K MILE Entrepreneurship program to transform innovative ideas into projects that contribute to the development of the national economy.

Bandar Alkhorayef
Saudi industry and mineral resources minister



Radars

KSA today



Riyadh Perfumes exhibit

An exhibition to discover all things scents and the history that led to the Arabian Peninsula becoming one of the most popular places in the world for perfumes. Until Sept. 14, book through saudievents.sa.



Jeddah Camel festival

"The Year of the Camel" is an interactive experience that explores the cultural impact of camels and details the animal's historical presence in the region. Located at City Walk. Visit the Saudi Events app for more details.



Riyadh Kingdom of art

The annual Prince Faisal bin Fahd Arts Hall exhibition features works from 28 Saudi and Saudi-based artists that explore the Kingdom's evolving visual landscapes and the dynamic relationship between people and their urban environments.



AlUla Sky high

Experience the breathtaking beauty of AlUla from 1,200 meters above ground in a hot air balloon for an unforgettable adventure that will ignite all your senses. Visit experiencealula.com for more information.

The Register

THE PICTURES THAT MARK THE DAY



Saudi Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Waleed Elkhoreiji met with Sudan's ambassador designate to the Kingdom, Dalfallah Al-Haj Ali, in Riyadh on Monday.

During the meeting, Elkhoreiji welcomed the ambassador and wished him success in his new work duties, the Foreign Ministry reported on X. Meanwhile, Abdulmajeed Al-Samary,

undersecretary of protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, received the credentials of Seychelles' recently appointed ambassador to the Kingdom, Gervais Moumou, in Riyadh on Monday.

Today's Number

1.5m

Tabuk region's farms are home to around 1,580,575 grape trees that produce more than 43,750 tonnes of fruit annually, Saudi Press Agency reported on Monday.

Review

'A New Earth'

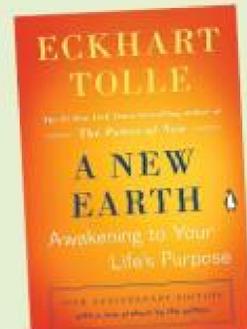
HAIFA ALSHAMMARI

"A New Earth" by German writer Eckhart Tolle is a transformative work published originally in 2005 before it was selected in 2008 for Oprah's Book Club and was featured in a series of weekly webinars with Tolle and Winfrey.

Tolle, a spiritual teacher and bestselling author of several books such as "The Power of Now" and "Stillness Speaks," writes that most of the struggle people go through is not an outcome of external factors but a result of what is happening inside the mind.

The self-help book invites readers to reflect on and understand their egos. By bringing awareness to human nature and ego's impact on behavior, the author encourages readers to shift their thoughts from the negative thinking that might be clouding their experience of living in the present moment.

Tolle stresses the importance of recognizing ego, as opposed to the actual self, as a mental pattern constructed through habits rather than facts or realistic ideas of one's true personality. In doing so, people will be able to have a flexible mindset, allow growth, and start aligning their actions with core values and inner wisdom, Tolle notes.



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



'DEEPLY GRATEFUL' Pax Jolie-Pitt

G Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt's son, Pax, has been discharged from an intensive care unit following an e-bike accident in Los Angeles.

Pax Thien Jolie-Pitt, 20, was admitted to hospital on July 29 after receiving head and hip injuries leading to complex trauma, requiring intensive medical care.

On Sunday, a source told PEOPLE that Jolie has been by her son's side at the hospital, and both are "deeply grateful for the quick and life-saving action of first responders, and the outstanding medical care he received." The "Eternals" actress is staying with Pax at the hospital while his siblings are "visiting and helping ... they are all very close."

'TOO PRECIOUS' Snoop Dogg

G US rapper and record producer Snoop Dogg is getting over his fear of horses.

Last week, the music star, who has cheered on American athletes at the Paris Olympics, expressed his desire to overcome his fear of the animals.

He said: "I am interested in the horses that dance and I want to give them some carrots and apples ... make sure they're fed before they do their thang."

During the Olympics, the "Young, Wild & Free" rapper received courage and motivation from US businesswoman and writer Martha Stewart.

Stewart revealed on Friday that the rapper had called her and asked for help to approach a horse at the equestrian events.

"Snoop called me and said he knows I know horses, and he's a little

fearful of horses," she said, adding that he told her he had never ridden a horse because of his fear.

Stewart suggested that they attend a dressage event at the Paris Olympics.

"I have to keep him away from the horses," the TV host said. "No feeding, no sugar, nothing. But we're going to have so much fun."

Later, on X, Snoop Dogg posted several pictures of himself near horses.

@rikikitegan wrote on X: "I just learned that Snoop Dogg is actually terrified of horses so Martha Stewart dressed up and went with him to be his emotional support friend ... it's just too precious."

@kate_mccrea wrote: "Dressage has gotten more positive publicity from Snoop's involvement than anything I have ever witnessed in my life, and as a lifelong unapologetic horse girl, I love him forever for that."



TheRegion

The Middle East Roundup

Arab News Jeddah

• Al-Jasra Handicraft Center is the ideal place to immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of Bahrain's cultural heritage. Visitors can participate in a range of workshops in traditional crafts, like copper shaping, and in doing so help preserve the country's cultural legacy. The workshops run until Aug. 31.

• The inaugural Jordan International Food Festival features a diverse array of events daily, catering to foodies, families, and friend groups alike. Held at a site between King Hussein Business Park and the King Hussein Medical City until Aug. 11. For updates and more information visit jiff.jo.

• Enjoy the thrill of a dune buggy safari at Nujum Desert Camp in Abu Dhabi, where you can speed across the sands and take in stunning desert views. Afterward, indulge in a delicious dinner featuring Emirati dishes at the camp. The meeting point is the Andaz Capital Gate Hotel, with the trip running from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. For more details check visitabudhabi.ae.

Prayer Times in Saudi Arabia

	Aug. 6	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghreb	Isha
Makkah	4:26	5:49	12:28	3:43	7:05	8:35	
Madinah	4:18	5:44	12:28	3:52	7:11	8:41	
Riyadh	3:49	5:16	12:00	3:24	6:43	8:13	
Abha	4:23	5:44	12:17	3:32	6:49	8:19	
Dammam	3:30	4:59	11:47	3:15	6:33	8:03	

The deterioration in living conditions and the unanswered grievances of Sunni Muslims means there will always be an appeal for Daesh.

Karam Shaar

Senior fellow at the Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy



Spotlight

RESEARCH & STUDIES
THE MIDDLE EAST, BETTER EXPLAINED

ARAB NEWS

MIDDLE EAST

Omens of a Daesh resurgence

Five years after the terrorist group's defeat, a fresh spate of attacks threaten to push Syria over the precipice

Anan Tello London

Just when Syrians thought they could finally put the horrors of the past decade behind them, the first half of 2024 bore witness to a series of savage attacks by an Islamist group that many hoped had been vanquished for good.

Daesh claimed responsibility for 153 terrorist attacks in Syria and Iraq in the first six months of this year, according to US Central Command — already surpassing the 121 attacks reported over the entirety of 2023.

At its peak in 2015, the terrorist group controlled roughly 110,000 sq. km of territory — a third of Syria and 40 percent of Iraq, including major cities like Raqqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq.

It also commanded an army exceeding some 40,000 militants and had at its disposal a formidable arsenal captured from local forces. However, after an international effort, Daesh met its territorial defeat in the village of Baghuz, eastern Syria, in March 2019.

Five years on, and on the 10th anniversary of the group's 2014 blitzkrieg of Iraq and Syria, there are fears that Daesh could be about to stage a comeback, at a time when the world's attention is distracted by crises elsewhere.

On July 22, Geir Otto Pedersen, the UN special envoy for Syria, told the Security Council that the "resurgence" of terrorist activities posed a significant threat to Syrian civilians, especially amid a deepening, country-wide humanitarian crisis.

Joshua Landis, director of the Center for Middle East Studies and the Farzaneh Family Center for Iranian and Arabian Gulf Studies at the University of Oklahoma, told Arab News the group's lack of territory meant its militants had to content themselves with low-level insurgent activity.

"(Daesh) has remained a threat in Syria and the number of people that ISIS has killed and the number of attacks in 2024 has risen compared to last year," said Landis, using another acronym for the group.

Daesh "is also trying to reconstitute itself, although it remains without territory and must carry out hit-and-run attacks and assassinations," he added.

Analysts are particularly concerned about northeast Syria's prisons and detention camps, where militants and their families have been held since their capture in 2019.

Some 50,000 Daesh



Main: 50,000 Daesh suspects and their families are detained in northeast Syria. Right: The group devastated swathes of the country, including many of its precious antiquities.
AFP



suspects and their family members are currently held by the SDF across 27 detention facilities, CNN reported in June. With local forces overstretched, many inmates have either escaped or been released.

According to Landis, the SDF "has amnestied a lot of detainees and converted many death sentences to 15-year prison terms. This means that many detainees are being freed from prisons in northeastern Syria."

Human Rights Watch reported last year that there remain some 42,000 foreign Daesh supporters and their family members, the majority of them children, from 60 countries detained in northeast Syria.

The New York-based monitor said the children in those camps are "held in conditions so dire they may amount to torture, and face escalating risks of becoming victims of violence or susceptible to recruitment by (Daesh)."

Local authorities warn these detention camps have become breeding grounds for radicalization, potentially contributing to a Daesh revival. Such a reemergence would be devastating for a country

already brought to the very brink.

Thirteen years of civil war and sanctions, the twin earthquakes of February 2023, and the spillover of the Gaza conflict have traumatized and impoverished the Syrian people.

In early 2024, the UN said some 16.7 million people in Syria — nearly three-quarters of the population — required humanitarian assistance. This came at a time when international aid budgets were already stretched to their limit.

"Another reason that (Daesh) has grown is because of the infighting in northeast Syria between the Arab tribes and the SDF and Kurdish militia," said Landis.

"The chaos and internecine fighting in northeast Syria have been replicated by infighting inside Syrian government-controlled territory and northwest Syria, which is ruled by opposition militias under Turkish sponsorship and protection.

"The general poverty in Syria

and declining humanitarian aid combined with ongoing sanctions is having a bad impact on stability."

He added: "So long as Syria is divided and suffers from a shrinking economy, (Daesh) will find recruits in Syria. Police forces in all the various regions have been weakened by the lack of funds, bad government, and poverty."

Syria has experienced a sharp economic decline since 2022, according to the World Bank's Syria Economic Monitor for Spring 2024. The report projects that the real gross domestic product will contract by 1.5 percent this year, exceeding the 1.2 percent decline of 2023.

According to UN figures, more than 90 percent of the Syrian population lives below the poverty line.

Despite growing concerns of a Daesh resurgence in the region, Karam Shaar, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy, does not foresee the terrorist group regaining control over

large areas in Syria and Iraq as it did a decade ago.

"Because of the deterioration in living conditions and the fact that the grievances of many Sunni Muslims in that region remain unanswered, there will always be an appeal for (Daesh)," he told Arab News.

"Yet, I don't think they could ever control large swathes just because of the current situation on the ground and them being too weak to do so."

One reason for this is that Daesh's "modus operandi has actually changed," he said. "They are now a borderline criminal group as opposed to being a terrorist group. The distinction between the two is whether there is a political message to their activities or not."

He said Daesh leaders "know full well that if they decide to control large areas, there would be a serious response from multiple actors on the ground, including the Kurds backed by the US, the Syrian regime backed by Russia and Iran."

In Iraq, the group may be deterred by "the Iraqi army, also backed by the US," he added.

Both Shaar and Landis believe a redeployment of foreign troops to eliminate Daesh insurgents is unlikely. "I don't see this happening given the current circumstances," said Shaar.

Landis concurred that "more foreign troops are unlikely to be sent to Syria" to combat a resurgence. "Turkiye is seeking a deal with Assad. The US is likely to want to withdraw from Syria in the future, not increase its military position there."

Daesh leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, left, was killed in a US-led raid in 2019, while the wives and children of his supporters were imprisoned in camps like Al-Hol, right.
AFP



Pakistani ambassador visits Arab News HQ in Riyadh



Pakistani Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahmad Farooq visited Arab News' headquarters in Riyadh on Monday. He met Editor-in-Chief Faisal J. Abbas and the team. During the meeting, the two sides discussed historical relations between Pakistan and the Kingdom, and areas of cooperation and coverage.

AN photo by Huda Bashatah

'FROM THEN TO NOW'

Tuwaiq Sculpture symposium opens call for global talent

30 artists will transform Saudi stone into public art

Arab News Riyadh

Artists from Saudi Arabia and around the world are being invited to take part in an annual sculpture symposium in Riyadh.

Thirty artists will be selected for Riyadh Art's Tuwaiq Sculpture 2025 event, providing them with a platform to create and display public artworks in a live setting.

Using stone sourced from the Tuwaiq area, the completed pieces will then go on show around the city as part of the Kingdom's national public art initiative.

The open call for next year's participants closes on Sept.

1, and selected artists will be announced at the end of September.

Under the theme "From Then to Now," the sixth Tuwaiq Sculpture symposium aims to enhance the cultural and artistic landscape of Riyadh.

Led by curator Sebastian Betancur Montoya and associate curator Dr. Manal Al-Harbi, the symposium will take place from Jan. 15 to Feb. 8, 2025, with the exhibition running from Feb. 12 to 24, 2025.

Artists wishing to take part must have a minimum of five years of experience sculpting and exhibiting in outdoor spaces and galleries. Qualifying

HIGHLIGHT

The open call for next year's participants closes on Sept. 1. The symposium will take place from Jan. 15 to Feb. 8, 2025, with the exhibition running from Feb. 12 to 24, 2025.

applicants will also be required to submit a proposal in response to the curatorial theme.

The 30 selected artists will receive an all-expenses-paid three-month stay in Riyadh while they produce their sculptures, working only with Saudi-sourced granite of three different colors.

WEATHER CAUTION

Civil Defense warns of torrential rain, high winds in Kingdom until Friday

Arab News Riyadh

The General Directorate of Civil Defense has urged citizens and residents to exercise caution and prioritize their safety by avoiding areas prone to torrents, marshes, and valleys.

It strongly advised not to swim in these areas as they are unsuitable and pose a significant danger, and emphasized that individuals should strictly adhere to instructions given

through various media and social network platforms.

This advice is particularly relevant as thunderstorms are expected to continue in some regions of the Kingdom until Friday, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Monday.

The directorate has said that the Makkah region will experience moderate to heavy rainfall, resulting in torrential rains and hail, and strong winds that will cause dust storms. This

will primarily affect several governorates.

Civil Defense has forecast light to moderate rainfall and gusty winds that may raise dust for the Riyadh region. These weather conditions will also impact various governorates.

The directorate said that Asir, Baha, and Jazan regions will have moderate to heavy rainfall, while the regions of Madinah and Najran will get moderate rainfall.

TheSpace

Why not more secret negotiations to resolve international issues?

HASSAN BIN YOUSSEF YASSIN



Seemingly out of nowhere, Russia and the West proceeded with the biggest prisoner exchange since the Cold War. A major agreement had been struck, negotiated in secret over the past two years. Its announcement took the world by surprise, providing some elation but also profound admiration for how it had been arrived at.

It reminded me of the true power of diplomacy: painstakingly working out an agreement far from the spotlight, allowing negotiations the time and space necessary to address the needs and interests of all parties.

When the Oslo Agreement between Palestinians and Israelis was announced in 1993, the world was equally surprised. It had taken place after two years of discreet negotiations in Norway. Less than one month later, Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin were shaking hands on the White House's lawn.

The accord — which set up an interim Palestinian Authority, required the withdrawal of Israeli troops from parts of the West Bank and Gaza, and resolved to reach a final agreement within five years — was a tremendous achievement. It was sadly orphaned and left to expire with the assassination of Rabin in 1995 by a right-wing extremist.

These two examples show how patient negotiations away from outside scrutiny and pressure can yield unexpected results. Even in a context of bombs and fiery confrontation, they can produce results that open a window

for peace and understanding.

So, what is holding us back today? Israel's continued targeted assassinations clearly show that Tel Aviv has no interest in peace. The quiet negotiations intended to allow for a prisoner swap between Israelis and Palestinians have been purposefully derailed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. This is most likely because he has no interest in resolving a situation that would lead to him losing his seat of power.

President Joe Biden exhibited the opposite when he chose not to run for a second term, putting his country's interests above his own.

Netanyahu appears determined to drag everything down in the sole interest of his own preservation. However, a sensible deal was indeed struck with President Vladimir Putin, so it should not be impossible to strike a deal with Netanyahu if the right elements are put on the table.

Gaza has been all but destroyed, and tens of thousands of innocent Gazans have been killed. We cannot stand by as such tragedy and savagery continue. Instead of playing Netanyahu's wicked waiting game, we should take an example from the quiet, sensible diplomacy that has shown it can yield tremendous results.

Against the fire of hatred, let us build a patient and inconspicuous road to peace.

Hassan bin Youssef Yassin worked closely with Saudi Arabia's petroleum ministers, Abdullah Tarki and Ahmed Zaki Yamani, from 1959-1967. He led the Saudi Information Office in Washington from 1972-1981 and served with the Arab League's observer delegation to the UN from 1981-1983. For full version, log on to www.arabnews.com/the-space

The Day's FIGURES

KSRELIEF PROJECTS IN YEMEN July 2024



Source: ksrelief.org

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Entertainment
Warner Bros. zone wows Jeddah Season visitors

The Warner Bros. Discovery zone at Jeddah Season is proving a must-visit attraction, featuring live performances of "Tom and Jerry."

The zone offers an immersive experience that brings the beloved cartoon characters to life. The "Tom and Jerry" theme park allows visitors to experience exciting adventures and comedic chases between the iconic cat and mouse.

The zone also offers interactive games, theatrical performances and creative workshops. Guests can watch classic clips of "Tom and Jerry" on a big screen, accompanied by live music from a band playing the soundtrack. **SPA Jeddah**

Narcotics control
Authorities bust drug smugglers in Jazan

Saudi authorities in Jazan foiled attempts to smuggle more than 800 kg of qat into the Kingdom.

Border Guard land patrols in Al-Ardah governorate thwarted the smuggling of 500 kg of qat, while in Al-Dayer governorate, 90 kg were seized. A citizen was also arrested in Al-Dayer for trying to smuggle 226 kg of qat.

Preliminary legal procedures have been completed and all seized items have been handed over to the relevant authorities.

Security authorities called on citizens and residents to report any information related to drug smuggling or selling to the General Directorate of Narcotics Control. **SPA Riyadh**

Cultural identity
Carpentry is part of rich Baha heritage

"A trade in hand ensures against poverty" is a long-standing saying in the Baha region, mostly used by elderly people who work as carpenters and take advantage of the diverse trees in the area.

The region has a rich heritage of handicrafts and industries, which form an important part of its cultural identity.

Locals are seeking to develop and modernize these crafts to keep pace with today's challenges.

Mohammed Al-Zahrani, a carpenter in his 80s, said: "Carpentry is a difficult and tiring profession as it requires a lot of time and effort." **SPA Riyadh**

News Saudi Arabia

JAZZING IT UP

MDLBeast hosts first Onyx Arena music party in Jeddah

Afrojack and Bebe Rexha set to perform at the Jeddah Season event later this month

Afshan Aziz Jeddah

The music entertainment company MDLBeast unveiled its new music venue, the Onyx Arena, as part of the Jeddah Season.

According to MDLBeast officials, the first night of the three-week extravaganza saw a packed house with around 5,000 attendees gathering to enjoy performances by renowned international and local electronic music artists.

The first night saw the stage ablaze with talent as DJ Shaolin set the tone with an energetic set, electrifying the audience with a mix of crowd-pleasing tunes.

Following his performance, Lil Eazy, a Somali hip-hop artist born and raised in Jeddah, took the stage, bringing a dynamic energy and vibrant music that had the crowd grooving along.

Lil Eazy told Arab News: "Performing for a big crowd is a completely different feeling. I'm thrilled to have played at MDLBeast; it's a fantastic opportunity."

Noting the changing landscape for musical talent in the Kingdom, he added: "Before MDLBeast, we played underground for limited audiences, and now having the chance to showcase our music on big stages is incredible."

Lil Eazy said he is excited and preparing for Soundstorm 2024. "To aspiring DJs, I advise you to follow your passion," he added. "The music industry in the Kingdom is growing, and leading music entertainment companies are providing equal opportunities to be seen and heard."

The atmosphere, enhanced by laser displays, buzzed with excitement when American rap star Don Toliver took the stage.



The first night of the three-week extravaganza at Onyx Arena in Jeddah saw a packed house with around 5,000 attendees gathering to enjoy performances by DJ Shaolin, Lil Eazy and Swedish DJ Axwell. Supplied



Fans went wild, singing along to every note.

Thrilled by the energetic crowd, Toliver remarked during his performance: "It's amazing to see such an active crowd who can vibe with me. It was an amazing night performing for the Jeddah

crowd."

The night concluded with Swedish DJ Axwell delivering a powerful set with beats and tracks that kept the crowd engaged until the very end.

MDLBeast has partnered with Jeddah Season this year to bring

the vibrant Onyx Arena parties to life every Friday until Aug. 16.

The highlights include performances by Jack Harlow, Salvatore Ganacci, Jeed, and Saud on Aug. 9, followed by DJ Loush, Bebe Rexha, and Afrojack on Aug. 16.

Equipped with state-of-the-art technical facilities, sound, and lighting equipment, the Onyx Arena is designed to host global music parties, events, and conferences.

Iman Abdullah, a visitor, was thrilled by the event, saying: "I had an incredible time at the party and couldn't contain my excitement singing along with Don Toliver. He's been my favorite for a long time, and vibing with him was fantastic. His tracks



The music industry in the Kingdom is growing, and leading music entertainment companies are providing equal opportunities to be seen and heard.

Lil Eazy
Somali hip-hop artist

and energetic performance were outstanding.

"It's great to have such entertainment in Jeddah, and the ticket prices were reasonable. I



bought a VIP pass and enjoyed the view and the food."

Another visitor, Hanouf Raheem, said: "The arena is huge, and the lighting perfectly matches the vibe. The best part is that it's fully air-conditioned, allowing us to escape Jeddah's summer heat and enjoy the party to the fullest."

"Everything was well-managed, and the crowd control was impressive. It's amazing to have such options for weekend entertainment. I've already purchased passes for the rest of the parties."

BUILDING LITERARY BRIDGES

Kingdom's library brings Saudi culture to Chinese readers

Arab News Riyadh

King Abdulaziz Public Library in Riyadh is spearheading an initiative to introduce Saudi culture to Chinese-speaking audiences through its publishing program.

A series of scientific, cultural and literary works in Arabic were selected for translation into various languages, including Chinese.

The purpose of the program is to present a comprehensive portrait of contemporary Saudi culture to Chinese readers, an official statement noted.

The first volume of "The Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Saudi Arabia" is one of the most prominent works the library has translated into Chinese, and represents the first step toward translating all 20 volumes of the encyclopedia.

The volumes will cover all

regions of the Kingdom with a focus on their history, archeology, culture and geography, economy, social patterns, customs and traditions, tourism, and wildlife.

The library also translated the book "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the People's Republic of China: A History of Trade Relations between China and the Arabian Peninsula," which highlights the contributions of the Arab-Islamic nation and China, and their scientific

achievements in many fields such as astronomy, sciences, geography, agriculture and medicine, among others.

The book also shows their long-standing relations before and after the emergence of Islam, as they exchanged trade and travel via the Silk Road. The book reveals the reality of their cooperation and mutual understanding and is an important source for researchers from both civilizations, the official

statement explained.

Among works selected for translation into Chinese is Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Mana's book "In the Footsteps of Al-Mutanabbi," which documents the locations the Abbasid-era poet passed through during his journey from Cairo to Kufa.

Some of the books the library is also translating into Chinese include "Modern Woman in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Rights Challenges and Achievements" by Hend Al-Sudairy.

Al-Sudairy's book places women in a broader cultural context, exploring diverse topics and historical developments and highlighting their social and economic contributions. It allows readers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the reality on the ground by examining and connecting Saudi

FASTFACTS

● King Abdulaziz Public Library in Riyadh selected a series of scientific, cultural and literary works in Arabic for translation into various languages, including Chinese.

● The purpose of the program is to present a comprehensive portrait of contemporary Saudi culture to Chinese readers, an official statement noted.

● 'The Art of Sadu between the Past and the Present,' 'Saudi Landmarks and Places,' and 'Traditional Jewelry of Women in Central Arabian Peninsula' are among the works to be translated into Chinese.

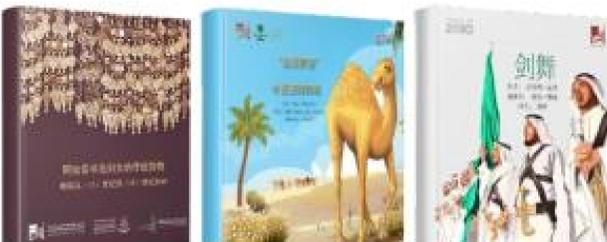
women's past with their present.

Other works to be translated into Chinese include "The Art of Sadu between the Past and the Present," "Saudi Landmarks and Places," and "Traditional Jewelry of Women in Central Arabian Peninsula."

The library has also completed the translation of 11 children's stories from Arabic to Chinese. These stories cover a wide range of topics, offering young Chinese readers a window into Saudi Arabia's rich history and culture.

Since establishing its branch at Peking University in China six years ago, the library has been engaged in numerous activities aimed at introducing Chinese audiences to various elements of Saudi, Arab and Islamic culture.

The initiatives include facilitating seminars and workshops on traditional Saudi arts and the Arabic language.



News Middle East

DIPLOMACY

Arab League chief, Turkish foreign minister discuss Gaza crisis caused by Israeli aggression

Gobran Mohamed Cairo

Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit has warned against the region being dragged into a spiral of escalating violence in light of the grave risks posed by current Israeli actions.

He expressed his concerns when he received Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan.

Gamal Roshdy, spokesman for the secretary-general, said that the meeting included an in-depth discussion of the regional situation.

They also explored ways to advance relations between the league and Turkiye in political, economic and other matters during the next phase.

The meeting included an exchange of views on important regional and international issues, most notably the developments of the Palestinian cause amid the ongoing Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip.

The secretary-general emphasized the need for the international community to protect the



Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan attends a meeting in Cairo on Monday. AFP

Palestinian people, especially the residents of Gaza, who are suffering daily under the Israeli onslaught.

He called for an immediate ceasefire, urgent aid provision, and a reliable path toward implementing the two-state solution.

The secretary-general expressed his appreciation for Turkiye's principled and decisive positions in international forums in their support of the Palestinians.

The two sides also discussed the latest developments in Syria, Libya and Sudan.

GRAVE RISKS

Sonic boom from Israeli warplanes causes terror in Beirut

Israeli airstrike kills 2 civilians digging grave in Lebanese border town of Mays Al-Jabal

Najia Houssari Beirut

Israeli warplanes on Monday broke the sound barrier over Beirut and southern parts of Lebanon, creating a sonic boom that caused terror among residents already anxious about escalating hostilities between the Israeli military and Hezbollah.

During yet another day of growing uncertainty about the course of the conflict, on Monday morning Israeli military jets attacked the town of Mays Al-Jabal, killing two civilians who were digging a grave in the local cemetery. They were named as town residents Mohammed Fawzi Hammadi, a paramedic affiliated with Lebanon's Islamic Risala Scout Association, and Ali Ghaleb Shaqir. Israeli forces also bombed Taloussa, a village in the Marjayoun district of Nabatieh governorate, with phosphorous bombs. These weapons are not banned under international law, but their use is heavily restricted and prohibited in populated areas.

Elsewhere, Israeli soldiers raided the town of Rab El-Thalathine. One person was injured and taken to the hospital, where his condition was described as "stable."

Hezbollah military operations also continued on Monday, following the killing of two of its members by an Israeli airstrike on Houla the day before. The group said it launched an "air attack with a squadron of drones on the headquarters of the newly established 91st Brigade at the elite



Workers unload crucial medical supplies delivered by the World Health Organization at Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport on Monday. AFP

barracks, targeting the positions and whereabouts of its officers and soldiers, hitting them directly."

Hezbollah also targeted "Al-Mallikiyah site with an attack drone, effectively hitting its intended targets." The group said it also fired on the Zar'it barracks and Ras Al-Naqoura naval site with heavy artillery.

Israeli Army Radio reported "a drone exploding near a shelter in the Ayelet HaShahar area in Upper Galilee" and "fires erupting in various places in Upper Galilee

BACKGROUND

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati received a telephone call from Canada's Foreign Minister Melanie Joly during which there was an 'emphasis on the necessity to halt the escalation, resort to peaceful solutions, and implement international resolutions.'

as a result of intercepting several missiles launched from Lebanon."

Meanwhile, the Israeli military said "a drone explosion in the Finger of the Galilee caused moderate injuries to an officer and a soldier." However, Israeli news outlets reported that "the officer was killed." And alarms reportedly sounded in towns in Western Galilee and around the city of Nahariya after rockets were launched from Lebanon.

Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah is expected to

deliver a speech on Tuesday at a memorial service for the party's military leader, Fouad Shukur, who was assassinated by Israel in the southern suburbs of Beirut last week.

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati's office said that he received a telephone call from Canada's Foreign Minister Melanie Joly during which there was an "emphasis on the necessity to halt the escalation, resort to peaceful solutions, and implement international resolutions."

Mikati said when he appeared at a social event on Monday: "We insist on living because despair is forbidden. We will continue to uphold our responsibilities and work to spare the country from any dangers."

His comments came as a growing number of foreign countries urged their citizens to leave Lebanon immediately.

The US Embassy reiterated a State Department warning that American citizens should not travel to the country and those already there should depart as soon as possible. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Turkish authorities issued similar advice.

German airline Lufthansa extended its suspension of all flights to Tel Aviv, Tehran and Beirut until Aug. 12.

In another development, Elie Ferzli, a former deputy speaker of the Lebanese parliament questioned whether international calls for calm would be successful in the short term.

He said: "It is early to talk about de-escalation now. This will not happen before we respond ... and the situation reaches its peak."

"Everyone today is anticipating Hezbollah and Iran's response, and all the countries of the axis of resistance might join them in response to Israel's latest breach of all considerations and rules, as it targeted the southern suburb of Beirut, assassinating Fouad Shukur. It (also) struck deep inside the Iranian capital Tehran and blew up Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh at his residence."

CONCERN

Houthis deny ailing judge's appeal to travel for treatment

Saeed Al-Batati Al-Mukalla

Yemen's Houthi militia has turned down an appeal from Abdul Wahab Qatran, an outspoken legal activist freed from jail, to fly overseas for medical treatment.

Mohammed, Qatran's son, told Arab News on Monday that the Houthis denied his father's plea to fly to Egypt to seek medical

treatment for ailments developed while in prison.

The Houthis freed Judge Qatran from jail in June after six months in a security and intelligence facility on allegations of distributing false information about their militia and its commanders, inciting the people against them, and accusing Houthis leaders of corruption.

Mohammed said that his father

is in urgent need of medical attention for blood pressure, skin, and eye problems.

Following his release, Qatran accused the Houthis of forcefully detaining him at Sanaa's Security and Intelligence Prison, plundering his house, papers, and gadgets, and denying him medical care, clean water, and sufficient food, circumstances that caused him to suffer skin ailments.

In a post on his new Facebook page this week, Qatran said that a doctor in Sanaa informed him that he is most likely suffering from scabies after experiencing extreme itching and red patches on his skin after washing in dark and rusty waters in the Houthi detention facility.

"After half a year in their cells, my possessions were robbed and rights were taken, just this

Facebook profile was left, and I had scabies!" Qatran said on Facebook.

Qatran's post drew hundreds of responses from Yemenis who sympathized with him, wished him a swift recovery, and urged the Houthis to enable him to seek better treatment abroad.

Qatran also posted on Sunday a 14-page report of Houthi investigators accused him of

more than 40 charges, including asking the public to revolt against the militia, accusing Houthis of enrichment and corruption, expressing sympathy with Yemeni activists abused by the Houthis, sharing Facebook posts of Houthi critics, criticizing the Houthis for attacking ships in the Red Sea, praying for the late former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, and expressing support.

News Middle East

CONFLICT

'Won't be intimidated': Somalis protest after Al-Shabab assault

On Friday, suicide bomber and gunmen attacked Lido Beach, killing 37 people

AFP Mogadishu

Crowds of Somalis joined a demonstration on Monday against the jihadist group Al-Shabab at the site of a deadly beachfront attack in the capital Mogadishu last week.

A suicide bomber and gunmen attacked the popular Lido Beach on Friday evening, killing 37 people and wounding scores more, in one of the deadliest strikes in the East African country in months.

"We came here to Lido Beach to show we can't be intimidated," said one of the protesters, Abdissalam Ahmed Abdullahi.

"Mogadishu people are not afraid of Kharijite enemy," he said, using a government term for the Al-Qaeda-linked militants who have carried out numerous attacks in the predominantly Muslim country for years.

Survivors of Friday's assault described how following an explosion, gunmen stormed onto the beach intending to "kill everyone they could," with graphic video shared online showing bloodied bodies on the sand.

Al-Shabab has been waging a bloody insurgency against Somalia's fragile federal government for more than 17 years and has previously targeted the Lido Beach area, which is popular with business people and government members as well as ordinary Somalis.

"Somali people in general, and those in Mogadishu particularly,



Somalis protest against Friday's deadly attack. Al-Shabab has been waging a bloody insurgency against Somalia's fragile federal government for more than 17 years. Reuters

need to unite in fighting against the enemy," said Livestock Minister Hassan Hussein, one of several government officials who joined the rally.

He described Al-Shabab militants as "bedbugs."

Amina Ibrahim Halane said she joined the rally to show sympathy for the victims of Friday's attack, saying they were simply "innocent men ... enjoying their city."

Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre described the attack in a

statement as a "barbaric atrocity fundamentally contradictory to the cherished values of our religion and culture."

Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairman of the African Union's executive commission, expressed

condolences for the victims in a tweet labelling the incident "horrific" and "callous."

The UN in Somalia called the attack "an abhorrent act that warrants the firmest condemnation."

INVESTIGATION

Algeria arrests dozens over alleged election fraud

AFP Algiers

A court in Algiers said Monday that three rejected presidential candidates were placed under "judicial supervision" while another 68 people, including elected officials, were temporarily detained as part of an investigation into electoral fraud.

They are suspected of being involved in "signature sales" for the upcoming presidential election set for September 7. Candidates are required to gather large numbers of them to be eligible to stand.

"Sixty-eight defendants were placed in temporary detention, three were placed under judicial supervision, and six were released after hearings," the court said in a statement.

Last week, Lotfi Boudjemaa, attorney general at the Court of Algiers, told state news agency APS that "more than 50 elected officials" admitted to having unlawfully received money to endorse presidential candidates.

On Monday, the three candidates placed under judicial supervision were named as Saïda Neghza, former minister Belkacem Sahli, and a relatively unknown hopeful named Abdelhakim Hamadi.

While they are not under arrest, they will be required to regularly

SPEEDREAD

• They are suspected of being involved in 'signature sales' for the upcoming presidential election set for September 7.

• Sixty-eight defendants were placed in temporary detention, three were placed under judicial supervision, and six were released after hearings, court says.

DISPLACEMENT CRISIS

Sudan's govt denies famine exists in Zamzam camp in Darfur

Reuters, AP Khartoum

Sudan has denied the existence of famine in North Darfur's Zamzam camp for internally displaced people.

In a statement, Sudan's Federal Humanitarian Aid Commission said talk about famine in the camp was inaccurate and conditions were "not consistent" with those that must be met to declare famine.

On Sunday, an aid group said that malnourished children at the camp were at risk of dying, because it was forced to ration treatment due to a blockade imposed by a notorious paramilitary group.

Doctors Without Borders said the Rapid Support Forces, which have besieged El-Fasher city as part of its war against the Sudanese military, have blocked three trucks carrying lifesaving medical supplies, including therapeutic food, for the city and the nearby Zamzam camp where famine was

confirmed last week.

Sudan plunged into chaos in April last year when simmering tensions between the military and the RSF developed into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum, before spreading across the northeastern African country. Darfur saw some of the worst and most devastating bouts of fighting in the war.

The conflict has killed thousands of people and pushed many into starvation. It created the world's largest displacement crisis with more than 10 million people forced to flee their homes since April 2023, according to the UN migration agency. Over 2 million of those fled to neighboring countries.

International experts on the Famine Review Committee confirmed Thursday that starvation at Zamzam camp, where up to 600,000 people shelter, has grown into full famine.

International experts use set criteria to confirm the existence of famines. A famine is declared in



The conflict created the world's largest displacement crisis with more than 10 million people forced to flee their homes. Reuters

FASTFACT

Sudan plunged into chaos in April last year when simmering tensions between the military and the RSF developed into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum, before spreading across the northeastern African country.

an area when one in five people or households severely lack food and face starvation and destitution that would ultimately lead to critical levels of acute malnutrition and death.

In Zamzam camp, which has swelled with the arrival of new displaced people, many children are in critical condition, Doctors Without Borders said, adding that the malnutrition ward at

its field hospital in the camp is overcrowded with a 126 percent bed occupancy rate.

The group said RSF fighters have blocked the trucks in the town of Kabkabiya for over a month, adding that it was forced to limit the number of children receiving therapeutic food in the overcrowded camp as its stock of medicine covers only two weeks.

"Deliberately obstructing or delaying humanitarian cargo is putting the lives of thousands of children at-risk as they are cut-off from receiving life-saving treatment," it said on social media platform X.

There was no immediate comment from the RSF.

The RSF has imposed a siege on El-Fasher in its monthslong attempt to take it from the military and its allied rebel groups. The city, the provincial capital of North Darfur, is the last stronghold for the military in the war-torn Darfur region.

check in with the authorities until after the investigation is concluded.

Boudjemaa said last week those involved in the fraud "will be arrested."

In a press conference before officially submitting her candidacy last month, Neghza complained of "hardships" in the process of registering and getting the signatures.

She said she hoped that "the electoral process takes place in a climate of transparency and integrity, without any favoritism."

To qualify to appear on the ballot candidates are required to present a list of at least 50,000 individual signatures from registered voters or from 600 members from at least 29 of Algeria's provincial assemblies.

Only three hopefuls, including incumbent Abdelmadjid Tebboune, had their candidacies approved for the Sept. 7 election.

Abdelali Hassani of the moderate Islamist party the Movement of Society for Peace and Youssef Aouchiche of the center-left Socialist Forces Front are the two candidates who will stand against Tebboune.



Demonstrators celebrate in Dhaka. After the military confirmed Sheikh Hasina's resignation, thousands poured onto the capital in jubilation. Reuters

MASS PROTESTS

Bangladesh premier quits, flees country

Military chief assumes control at a 'critical time for our country'

Shehab Sumon Dhaka

Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country on Monday, ending 15 years in power as thousands of demonstrators defied a nationwide curfew and stormed her official residence.

In a televised address, Bangladesh's military chief, Waker-Uz-Zaman, announced he was assuming control at a "critical time for our country" and confirmed that Hasina left Dhaka for a "place of safety," as local media reported neighboring India as her initial destination.

"I am taking responsibility now and we will go to the president and ask to form an interim

government to lead the country in the meantime," he said.

Zaman said the military would stand down and that an investigation would be launched into the deadly crackdowns that fueled outrage against the government.

"Keep faith in the military, we will investigate all the killings and punish the responsible ... I have ordered that no army and police will indulge in any kind of firing," he said.

"Now, the students' duty is to stay calm and help us."

Hasina had ruled Bangladesh since 2009 and was elected for a fourth consecutive term in a January vote that was boycotted by her main opponents, sparking concerns over how free and fair the election was.

She was forced out by weeks of protests that started peacefully but turned into deadly clashes

with security forces, leading to a communications blackout, curfews, and around 300 deaths.

Students were the ones leading earlier protests that began in July to demand reforms to a quota system for government

HIGHLIGHT

Hasina had ruled Bangladesh since 2009 and was elected for a fourth consecutive term in a January vote that was boycotted by her main opponents.

jobs, which the Supreme Court eventually scaled back. But as the rallies turned deadly and authorities attempted to quell the violence with force, the movement escalated into a campaign to oust Hasina.

At least 11,000 people have been arrested in recent weeks, with the unrest leading to closure of schools and universities across the South Asian nation and authorities issuing a shoot-on-sight curfew at one point.

Student activists called for a march to Dhaka on Monday in defiance of the latest curfew to press for Hasina's resignation. This comes after nearly 100 people, including over a dozen police officers, were killed the day before following a fresh wave of deadly clashes across the country.

After the military confirmed Hasina's resignation, thousands of people poured onto the capital's streets in jubilation. Television visuals showed masses storming Hasina's official residence in the capital, pumping fists, making victory signs, and removing furniture and other household items.

UKRAINE WAR

Kyiv receives \$3.9bn grant from America, PM says

Reuters Kyiv

Ukraine has received a \$3.9 billion grant from the United States via the World Bank, Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said on Monday.

"This is the first tranche of direct budget support from the United States in 2024. In total, Ukraine will receive \$7.8 billion in direct budgetary assistance from the US this year, which will allow us to confidently pass this financial period," Shmyhal said on the Telegram messaging app.

The Ukrainian Finance Ministry,

in a separate statement, said the funds would be directed toward wages for teachers, staff of the State Emergency Service and other public employees, as well as assistance for displaced persons, low-income families and people with disabilities. "The grant will help Ukraine to reimburse priority social and humanitarian expenditures without increasing the debt burden," Finance Minister Serhiy Marchenko said in a statement.

The ministry said that since February 2022, direct budget support from the US had reached almost \$27 billion, the largest



President Volodymyr Zelensky during Ukrainian Air Forces Day at an undisclosed location. AFP

source of financial assistance to Ukraine. Marchenko said the grant was a part of a large \$60 billion package of support for Ukraine.

Meanwhile, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday that Ukrainian pilots have started flying F-16s for operations within the nation, confirming the long-awaited arrival of the US-made fighter jets more than 29 months after Russia's invasion. The Ukrainian leader announced the use of F-16s, which Kyiv has long lobbied for, as he met military pilots at an air base flanked by two of the jets, with two more flying overhead.

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Violence

UK vows 'swift sanctions' for rioters

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday vowed "swift criminal sanctions" following an emergency meeting on the far-right riots that broke out across England last week over the murder of three children.

The prime minister met with ministers and police chiefs, including Scotland Yard boss Mark Rowley, to discuss how to quell the violence that first broke out in Southport, north-west England, on Tuesday.

Over the weekend, several police officers were injured and scores of people were arrested as mobs throwing bricks and flares clashed with officers. **AFP**

Security

N. Korea expands its short-range weaponry

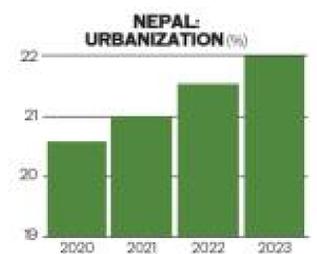
North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the delivery of 250 new tactical ballistic missile launchers to front-line troops, state media KCNA reported on Monday, which Seoul said could be used to threaten South Korea.

The launchers have been described as a modern tactical weapon to be transferred to army units on the border with the South. North Korea said it test-fired a new tactical ballistic missile last month.

"The launchers are intended to be used in various ways, such as to attack or threaten S. Korea," Lee Sung-joon, spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said. **Reuters**

The Day's FIGURES

Source: Statista



What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

The Real North Korea

ANDREI LANKOV

In this book, Andrei Lankov argues that North Korea is not irrational, and nothing shows this better than its continuing survival against all odds.

A living political fossil, it clings to existence in the face of limited resources

and a "zombie economy," manipulating great powers despite its weakness.

The writers says the old system is slowly falling apart. In the long run, with or without reform, the regime is unsustainable, according to a review on goodreads.com.



Cooperation

Philippines, Vietnam to hold joint drills

The Philippines and Vietnam coast guards will hold joint exercises this week, Manila said Monday, in the first such drills between the countries in dispute with Beijing in the South China Sea.

China claims most of the strategic waterway — despite an international tribunal ruling that its assertion has no legal basis — and the Philippines, Vietnam and several other nations claim various islands, islets, reefs and shoals. Vietnam's 91-meter CSB 8002 ship will conduct the maneuvers with a Filipino coast guard ship near Manila Bay. **AFP**

Hurricane in Florida

Debby makes landfall on Gulf Coast

Hurricane Debby made landfall on Florida's Gulf Coast on Monday, knocking power out for hundreds of thousands of people as the US southeast braced for potentially historic levels of rain and major flooding.

Debby barreled ashore in Florida's Big Bend region as a Category One hurricane, the lowest on a five-stage scale, thanks to an unusually warm Gulf of Mexico. The National Hurricane Center said its maximum sustained winds were 80 miles per hour.

More than 250,000 customers have lost electricity so far. **AFP**

إِنَّ كُلَّ مَدِينَةٍ صَوَاتٌ خَاصَّةٌ بِهَا.
(إنعام كجح جي)

YOUR DAILY ARABIC PROVERB
Every city has its own unique sounds.

Inaam Kachachi
(An Iraqi-French journalist, columnist, novelist and woman of letters)

Opinion

A trapped Netanyahu is pushing the region to the brink

GHASSAN CHARBEL

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fears the end of the war. He will be confronted with investigative committees, and questions about accountability and errors.

For him, the issue is practically one of life or death, and much more than just clinging to office to avoid accountability.

True, the prime minister needs to sign off on any assassination operation targeting a major enemy, and that may lead to security and political repercussions. But it is also true that the military and security establishment is the one making the list of targets and presenting it to the prime minister to make a choice.

In all likelihood, the latest assassinations in Beirut and Tehran probably reflect the Israeli security establishment's desire to restore the power of deterrence that was shaken to the core by the events of Oct. 7. Image has always been important for Israel. It believes that making enemies pay a hefty price for attacks they carry out will discourage any future attacks.

Timing has exceptional importance during

war. The two assassinations took place soon after Netanyahu stood for the fourth time before the US Congress, where he was met with sustained applause. He mentioned Iran 27 times during his speech and but not once did he talk about a ceasefire.

Some would say that Netanyahu concluded from the visit that the US will not abandon its defense of Israel despite criticism by President Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris. Some have said that Netanyahu waited until Hamas was weakened in Gaza before turning to the danger coming from Beirut and Tehran. They believe that the Israeli PM senses that neither Hezbollah nor Tehran want a full-scale war, so has decided to take the war to them in order to embarrass them.

Netanyahu has acknowledged that the assassinations leave Iran and Hezbollah with no choice but to retaliate. He then followed this up with the official announcement of the killing of Mohammed Deif, the leader of Hamas' military wing. Perhaps he wanted the next phase of the war to take on



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the shape of a confrontation with Iran and its allies, rather than with the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

The Israeli prime minister wanted the issue of Iran, its role in the region, and its nuclear file to overshadow efforts to reach a ceasefire in Gaza, and a settlement and establishment of a Palestinian state. He may want to revive the possibility of a US-Iranian confrontation should the US take part in thwarting an Iranian attack on Israel, especially if Tehran's allies seek to target military bases in the region.

Some believe that Netanyahu may be pushing the region to the brink of a full-scale conflict in order to put an end to the possibility of an open-ended war of attrition, with the demand that Iran cease fire on all fronts without exception.

The Israeli military and security establishment is aware that Hezbollah's rockets and drones can reach any location in Israel. The same can be said of Iran and its rockets and drones. In spite of this, Netanyahu chose to confront the two parties with the possibility of

a full-scale war. Hezbollah cannot refrain from retaliating after the assassination of senior military commander Fouad Shukur in its stronghold in Beirut's southern suburbs. Iran also cannot refrain from responding to the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

The Israeli establishment is acting as though it wants to shift the war from a confrontation with Hamas leader Yehya Al-Sinwar and his agenda to a confrontation with the agenda of the Iranian supreme leader.

The Middle East has been on edge for decades. However, the new images are unprecedented, and the summer of assassinations and exchange of blows is growing hotter. What are the limits of Israel's influence in the region? What are the limits of Iran's? Can the US accept the change in the "rules of engagement" between Iran and Israel in order to prevent the region from slipping into a full-scale war?

It is the terrible Middle East where governments are at a loss, armies are confused, and factions and US bases are on alert.

The latest assassinations in Beirut and Tehran reflect Israel's desire to restore the power of deterrence that was shaken to the core by the events of Oct. 7

COURTESY: AMALAO RAMZYBAROUD AL-AWBAT



The Gaza war is not just important to Netanyahu, but also to the very future of Israel's far-right camp, whose entire political and ideological program has been shattered

The last battle of Israel's far right

DR. RAMZY BAROUD

The idea that the war in Gaza is essentially waged by and sustained for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has long dominated political analysis

on the subject. The notion is often kept alive by public opinion inside Israel. Most polls produced since the start of the Israeli attack on Gaza suggest that an overwhelming majority of Israelis believe that Netanyahu's decisions are motivated by personal, political, and familial interests.

This conclusion, however, is too convenient and not entirely accurate. It wrongly assumes that the Israeli people oppose Netanyahu's war in Gaza, though, in reality, they have so far been quite approving of all tactics used by the Israeli army. For example, more than 300 days into the conflict, 69 percent of all Israelis support Netanyahu's desperate tactics of assassinations, including the killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31.

While Netanyahu's decision to target a political leader reflects his own failure and desperation, how is one to explain the Israeli people's enthusiasm for the expansion of the circle of violence?

The answer does not lie in the events of Oct. 7. Indeed, it is time to start thinking beyond the confines of the revenge theory, which has dominated our understanding and analysis of the Israeli assault on Gaza.

For years before the current war, Israel has been moving slowly to the right and far right, with political extremism exceeding that of any generation of the country's leadership since the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in 1948.

According to an Israeli Democracy Institute poll, published in January 2023, 73 percent of Israeli Jews aged between 18 and 24 identify as "right wing." Considering that the likes of current Israeli ministers Itamar Ben-Gvir, Bezalel Smotrich, and Orit Strook are also classified as "right wing," one can conclude that the majority



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of Israeli youth practically identify as right-wing extremists.

These youth are the core of the Israeli army and the settler movement. They are the ones carrying out the attacks in Gaza, the daily pogroms in the West Bank, and serving as the foot soldiers for the widespread racism campaigns targeting Palestinian Arab communities inside Israel.

There are a good number of analysts who have tried to explain how Israel became a decidedly right-wing society, and how youth, in particular, emerged as the gatekeepers of Israel's version of suicidal nationalism.

The explanation, however, is straightforward. Israel's far-right extremism is only a natural evolution of the Zionist ideology, which, in its most "liberal" forms, was always predicated on ethnic hatred, a sense of racial supremacy, and predictable violence.

Between April 2019 and November 2022, Israel had five general elections. Though the focus of most remained fixed on Netanyahu's role in dividing Israeli society,

the elections, in reality, were a historic fight among Israel's ideological groups to determine the future of the country and the direction of Zionism.

In the most recent election, the far-right extremists won, forming the most stable Israeli government in years. While the right was preparing to permanently reconfigure Israel, its political, educational, military and, most important, judicial institutions, Oct. 7 took place.

Initially, the Hamas assault and its aftermath posed a challenge to all segments of Israeli society: the humiliated army, the degraded intelligence, the humbled politicians, the confounded media, and the angry masses.

But the greatest challenge was faced by the far right, which was about to shape the future of Israel for generations. Thus, the Gaza war is not just important to Netanyahu, but also to the very future of Israel's far-right camp, whose entire political and ideological program has been shattered, most likely beyond salvation.

Opinion

History and culture collide in controversial Olympics opener

DR. MOHAMMED AL-SULAMI

The opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympics sparked significant controversy primarily due to a performance representing the Last Supper, which depicts episodes in the life of Jesus. This scene, featuring colorfully dressed performers, was intended to represent Greek deities enjoying a party, not Jesus and his followers, according to the organizers.

However, religious groups across the Middle East, including Egypt's Al-Azhar and the Coptic Orthodox Church, condemned the depictions as blasphemous and insulting to both Christianity and Islam. Egypt's Al-Azhar, a leading Sunni Muslim authority, labeled the portrayal as "extremism and reckless barbarism," criticizing the normalization of what they see as morally degrading behavior, including homosexuality and sexual transformation. The Coptic Pope Tawadros II also expressed outrage, calling for an apology from Olympic organizers.

The act featured drag queens, and was meant to symbolize inclusivity and diversity. However, several religious groups in Europe criticized it as disrespectful to their beliefs. The scene, intended as an artistic interpretation celebrating community tolerance and the absurdity of violence, was seen by some as a mockery of a sacred

Christian moment, prompting apologies from the organizers. In Russia, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova labeled it a "mockery of a sacred story for Christians," saying that "the Apostles were shown as transvestites." She added that "evidently in Paris they decided that if the Olympic rings are multicolored, you can turn it all into one giant gay parade." A spokesman for the Russian Orthodox Church, Vakhtang Kipshidze, also condemned this section, writing on his

personal Telegram channel that it was "cultural and historical suicide."

In Turkiye, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan fueled the controversy by criticizing the ceremony's alleged promotion of LGBTQI content, describing it as "immorality". The Turkish leader said that

he planned to contact Pope Francis to discuss what he sees as an attack on Christian values and human nature. Erdogan declined an invitation to the ceremony after his granddaughter warned him of the LGBTQI presence at the event. In China, the decision by Chinese state television to broadcast LGBTQI-related content during the Paris Olympic Games opening ceremony also became a hot topic on social media. Indeed, the topic remains a taboo in Chinese mainstream media.

In response to the backlash, the Paris 2024 organizing committee insisted that



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X: @mohalsulami

the scene had no intention of disrespecting any religious groups, and that the performance was misunderstood. Despite these clarifications, the controversy continues to resonate strongly in the Middle East, with broadcasts of the ceremony being cut off or censored in several countries, including Algeria, Morocco, and Turkiye.

In addition to the Last Supper controversy, other issues have marred the games, such as the ban on hijab in alignment with France's laws on secularism, which clashed with the International Olympic Committee's policies. Indeed, French sprinter Sounkamba Sylla said she was barred from the Olympic opening ceremony due to her hijab. She said on her Instagram account: "You are selected for the Olympic Games, organized in your country, but you can't take part in the opening ceremony because you wear a scarf on your head." According to Amelie Oudea-Castera, minister for sport and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, "our citizens expect us to follow these principles of secularism, but we also need to be inventive about solutions to make everyone feel good." She added that Sylla "understands our principles, our rules." It is important to note that foreign athletes are not affected by the secularism rules.

There were also broader social and political controversies, including protests

against Israel's participation due to the conflict in Gaza, and criticisms over the environmental impact of the event on the Seine River. The ceremony was also a stage for presenting French culture and national identity to a global audience. In France, the political debate focuses on how to balance tradition with modernity and inclusivity.

Some right-wing and far-right political groups argue for a more traditional representation of French culture, while others on the left advocate for a more diverse and contemporary portrayal that reflects France's multi-cultural society.

Finally, the Algerian team commemorated the massacre of Algerian independence activists in Paris in 1961 by throwing flowers into the Seine. About 12,000 people were arrested during the

1961 protest and an estimated 120 people died, according to historians. Many of the bodies were never recovered, while others dragged from the water showed signs of harrowing violence. It came during the final year of Algeria's war for its independence, which it eventually won in 1962.

The controversy highlights the complex interplay between cultural expressions, religious sensitivities, and political contexts, demonstrating how global events, such as the Olympics, can become flashpoints for broader social and political issues.

Several religious groups in Europe criticized the act as disrespectful to their beliefs

In France, political debate focuses on how to balance tradition with inclusivity

Protesters? No, far-right rioters in UK cities are simply thugs

CHRIS DOYLE

The vile scenes of far-right attacks across British cities over the past week is tempered only by the far larger counter-fascist backlash where communities have come together to face down the thuggery. But how has it come to this, a situation where mosques have been attacked, police stations set alight, and people in fear of their lives?

No doubt, the Labour victory at the July elections played a role. The far right wanted to test the resolve of the government. This is one reason why riots are dispersed across numerous cities, stretching police resources.

The proximate cause was a rumor spread by influential extremist accounts that the brutal stabbings of three young girls in Southport were perpetrated by a Muslim. This was deliberate misinformation (the attacker was a 17-year-old non-Muslim), but highly effective. The nature of these attacks in dozens of cities demonstrate that they were coordinated and planned, not spontaneous outrage. Thugs may be arrested, but those who orchestrated this, and those who were blowing dog whistles, must also be held accountable.

The violence against Muslims and mosques has been largely underplayed. A Muslim man was stabbed in Crosby, Liverpool. Mosques were a magnet for these extremists. Online, a deluge of posts sought to justify what were akin to pogroms against British Muslims. Such posts call for Islam to be destroyed and Muslims expelled.

Many believed that Britain had a moderate rational political environment, at least until Brexit. The complacent end of British politics may have semi-smugly watched far-right successes in France, Germany, Austria, and Italy, among other European states, as though there was no issue in Britain. This was always a mirage.

Britain nominally has not had a far-right party in power. The country's "first past the post" voting system always denied an easy path to influence through the ballot box. Like the US, power is in the hands of one of two parties, and has been consistently for a century. This does not mean the far right have not been and will not be a threat. Neo-Nazi groups have a long history of brutal, mindless violence they sadly love to indulge. It tends to be motivated by passions and emotions, not thought.



Chris Doyle is director of the Council for Arab-British Understanding in London.
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For full version, log on to www.arabnews.com/opinion

Back in the 1900s there was the British Brothers' League followed by Sir Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts. In the 1970s and 1980s, the National Front was the prime driver, often hero-worshipping Adolf Hitler, and triggering counter movements and activities, such as Rock Against Racism. The British National Party at one point had over 50 local councilors and two seats in the European Parliament. A million people were calculated to have voted for the party

in the early part of this century. The English Defense League, now disbanded, was just one of the latest emanations of this movement, and had a key role in sparking the Southport riots. The targets of all these groups were what they deemed to be non-whites: Jews, Blacks, Asians, and Muslims. Most BNP and EDL supporters want a complete end to all immigration, but the EDL as a movement was founded on a vicious anti-Islam platform.

Being anti-Muslim has a dangerous public acceptability as opposed to neo-Nazi racism. Islamophobia has gripped the Conservative Party for years. The EDL taps into this.

The EDL's thuggish violence has

men-in-suits as partners who try to lend a veneer of legitimacy. Nigel Farage, leader of the Reform Party, denies any links, but does not condemn fully. His statements opposing the violence come with a chorus of "buts" and "howevers". The media, which loves to sensationalize, platforms the likes of Farage, thereby normalizing the far right. Even the BBC risked legitimizing the men of violence, referring to them as "protesters" — what were they protesting for? — as opposed to violent thugs.

The mistake would be to play to the far-right tune. Street violence must be addressed, but the underlying racism and Islamophobia must be tackled with the same ruthlessness reserved for antisemitism. Politicians have belittled Islamophobia all too often.

They should not. Muslims should not be scared of going to mosques.

However, politicians also have to divorce themselves from dangerous anti-immigration rhetoric. Britain, like many other countries, needs immigration. Immigrants have added to the glorious diversity of the nation, and it is time more stood up to state this unapologetically.

Britain needs immigration. Immigrants have added to the glorious diversity of the nation

Politicians have to divorce themselves from dangerous anti-immigration rhetoric

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I still see only a 25 percent chance of a (US) recession up from 15 percent because the data look fine overall.

David Mericle
Goldman Sachs economist



Business

BLOODBATH

'Black Monday' for global stock markets over US recession fears

Market meltdown triggered by a weak US employment report

AP, AFP New York, Tokyo

Global stock markets plunged as "Black Monday" hits Japan amid panic across bourses over fears of recession in the US.

Wall Street's tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite index tumbled 6.3 percent at the open, with the S&P 500 falling 4.2 percent and the Dow dropping 2.7 percent.

Black Monday refers to the global, severe and largely unexpected stock market crash on Monday, Oct. 19, 1987. Global losses were estimated at \$1.71 trillion. The severity of the crash sparked fears of extended economic instability or even a reprise of the Great Depression.

Major European indices were down around 3 percent in afternoon trading.

Tokyo's Nikkei tanked more than 12 percent in its worst day since the Fukushima crisis in 2011. It also suffered its biggest ever points loss, shedding 4,451.28.

The market meltdown was triggered by a weak US jobs report on Friday which showed the unemployment rate reached its highest since October 2021.

The report came two days after the US Federal Reserve decided, as expected, to keep interest rates at a 23-year high while signaling that it could cut them in September.

It was the first chance for traders in Tokyo to react to Friday's report showing US employers slowed their hiring last month by much more than economists expected.

Losses elsewhere in the world were nearly as neck-snapping. South Korea's Kospi index careened 8.8 percent lower, stock



Making things worse for Wall Street, Big Tech stocks also tumbled sharply as the market's most popular trade for much of this year continued to unravel. AP

markets across Europe sank roughly 3 percent and bitcoin dropped 12 percent.

Chances of recession

Goldman Sachs economist David Mericle sees a higher chance of a recession following Friday's jobs report. But he still sees only a 25 percent chance of that, up from 15 percent, in part "because the data look fine overall" and he does not "see major financial imbalances."

Still, stocks of companies whose profits are most closely tied to the

economy's strength took heavy losses on the fears about a sharp slowdown. The small companies in the Russell 2000 index dropped 5.5 percent, further dousing what had been a revival for it and other beaten-down areas of the market.

Making things worse for Wall Street, Big Tech stocks also tumbled sharply as the market's most popular trade for much of this year continued to unravel. Apple, Nvidia and a handful of other Big Tech stocks known as the "Magnificent Seven" had propelled the

FASTFACTS

• Wall Street's tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite index tumbled 6.3 percent at the open, with the S&P 500 falling 4.2 percent and the Dow dropping 2.7 percent.

• Tokyo's Nikkei tanked more than 12 percent in its worst day since the Fukushima crisis in 2011. It also suffered its biggest ever points loss, shedding 4,451.28.

S&P 500 to dozens of all-time highs this year, in part on a frenzy around artificial-intelligence technology. They were so strong that they overshadowed weakness for areas of the stock market weighed down by high interest rates.

Apple fell 4.6 percent on Monday after Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway disclosed that it had slashed its ownership stake in the iPhone maker. Nvidia, the chip company that's become the poster child of Wall Street's AI bonanza, fell even more, 8.3 percent.

CRUDE

Oil drops as wider market rout spills over

Reuters Houston

Oil fell on Monday, trailing a stock market selloff sparked by fears of a US recession, though declines were limited by Libyan supply losses and worries that a spreading conflict in the Middle East could further hit crude supplies.

Brent crude futures were down 66 cents, or 0.86 percent, at \$76.15 a barrel by 9:58 a.m. CDT (1458 GMT), with prices earlier trading around their lowest since January. US West Texas Intermediate crude was down 84 cents, or 1.14 percent, at \$72.68.

Supply concerns limited losses. Libya's biggest oil field, Sharara, has fully halted output, Bloomberg reported. Two field engineers

HIGHLIGHT

Brent crude futures were down 66 cents, or 0.86 percent, at \$76.15 a barrel by 9:58 a.m. CDT (1458 GMT), with prices earlier trading around their lowest since January.

told Reuters on Saturday that local protesters had partially shut down the site.

"The oil and product trade is going to be cautious as the market tries to get a handle on how bad the global market meltdown is going to be," wrote Phil Flynn, senior market analyst for Price Futures Group.

Slumping diesel consumption in China, the world's biggest contributor to oil demand growth, is also weighing on oil. The decline in oil prices closely trailed falls in European stock markets. Oil's losses were also limited by geopolitical risks in the Middle East.

CONCERNS

Gulf bourses close in red on US economic worries

Arab News Riyadh

Major stock markets in the Gulf tumbled on Monday, tracking Asian shares lower on fears that the US could be heading for recession, while concerns about a widening conflict in the region added to the worries.

The US unemployment rate jumped to near a three-year high of 4.3 percent in July amid a significant slowdown in hiring, heightening fears the labor market was deteriorating and potentially making the economy vulnerable to a recession.

The worryingly weak July payrolls report saw markets price in a 78 percent chance the

Saudi Arabia's Tadawul All Share Index dipped on Monday, losing 249.91 points, or 2.13 percent, to close at 11,504.46. File



Federal Reserve will not only cut rates in September, but ease by a full 50 basis points.

TASI falls

Saudi Arabia's Tadawul All Share Index dipped on Monday, losing

249.91 points, or 2.13 percent, to close at 11,504.46.

The total trading turnover of the benchmark index was SR10.5 billion (\$2.8 billion) as 16 of the listed stocks advanced while 215 retreated.

FASTFACT

The total trading turnover of the Saudi benchmark index was SR10.5 billion (\$2.8 billion) as 16 stocks advanced while 215 retreated.

The MSCI Tadawul Index decreased by 27.58 points, or 1.87 percent, to close at 1,447.66.

The Kingdom's parallel market Nomu also dropped 427.39 points, or 1.64 percent, to close at 25,701.47. This comes as 24 of the listed stocks advanced while 50 retreated.

The best-performing stock of the day was The Co. for

Cooperative Insurance, witnessing a 3.9 percent increase in its share price to reach SR160.

Other top performers included Dallah Healthcare Co. and Elm Co., whose share prices soared by 3.21 percent and 2.08 percent, to stand at SR161 and SR924.80, respectively.

Al Hassan Ghazi Ibrahim Shaker Co. and Saudi Al-Etihad Cooperative Insurance Co. were also among the leading companies.

Gulf bourses

The Qatari benchmark fell 2.5 percent, with all its constituents in negative territory

including the Gulf's largest lender by assets Qatar National Bank, which was down 2.3 percent.

Dubai's main share index dropped 4.2 percent, weighed down by a 8.9 percent plunge in blue-chip developer Emaar Properties.

In Abu Dhabi, the index was down 2.7 percent.

Oil — a catalyst for the Gulf's financial markets — extended losses in a volatile session, as fears of a recession in top oil consumer the US offset supply worries stemming from mounting tensions in the Middle East, the world's largest oil producing region.

ECONOMY

Saudi non-oil business activity steady with July PMI at 54.4

Private sector backed by sustained demand amid competitive pressures

Arab News Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's non-oil private sector demonstrated strong growth in July, supported by sustained demand amid intensified competitive pressures, according to an economy tracker.

The Riyadh Bank Saudi Arabia PMI survey, compiled by S&P Global, showed that the Kingdom's Purchasing Managers' Index slightly eased to 54.4 in July, down from 55 in June and 56.4 in May.

S&P Global noted that any PMI reading above 50 signifies growth in the non-oil sector, while readings below 50 indicate contraction.

Strengthening the non-oil private sector is crucial for Saudi Arabia as it seeks economic diversification and aims to reduce reliance on crude oil revenues.

Naif Al-Ghaith, chief economist at Riyadh Bank, commented: "PMI managed to stay in expansion, recording a solid 54.4, reacting to the status quo of demand and competition in the Saudi market. This figure highlights continued growth within the private sector, driven by sustained demand despite heightened competitive pressures."

He added: "Demand has played a crucial role in driving orders, ensuring that businesses remain active and forward-looking."

The report indicated that intense market competition has exerted downward pressure on prices, as companies aim to maintain market share by offering more attractive pricing to consumers.

S&P Global further observed that staffing and inventory levels continued to grow in July,



Extensive market competition has led to downward pressure on prices, as companies strive to maintain market share by offering more attractive pricing to consumers. File

despite fluctuating business confidence among some survey participants.

The report highlighted that stronger workforces helped businesses manage backlogs despite capacity challenges from the recent heatwave.

Al-Ghaith noted that July's survey results reflect the robust growth of Saudi non-oil businesses in international markets.

"Additionally, new exports have continued to expand, signaling a further increase in net non-oil trade. This

expansion in exports suggests that Saudi businesses are successfully penetrating international markets, which bodes well for the diversification of the economy away from oil dependency," he said.



Al-Ghaith added: "The growth in non-oil exports not only contributes positively to the trade balance but also indicates a strengthening of the country's industrial and service sectors. This trend is encouraging as it

Demand has played a crucial role in driving orders, ensuring that businesses remain active and forward-looking.

Naif Al-Ghaith
Chief economist, Riyadh Bank

underscores the effectiveness of economic reforms aimed at broadening the economic base and enhancing global trade relations."

According to the survey, both output and new orders — the two largest components of the PMI—grew at a reduced rate at the beginning of the third quarter. The report revealed that output growth eased to a six-month low, while the increase in new business was the smallest in two-and-a-half years.

It also noted that vendor

performance improved in July, with the average time for inputs to arrive at non-oil companies shortening over the month.

According to S&P Global, higher client demand, a healthy work pipeline, and increased government investments are key factors boosting business owner confidence for future growth.

"The combination of steady demand, competitive pricing, and expanding exports paints a positive outlook for Saudi Arabia's economic growth," concluded Al-Ghaith.

LENDING

Saudi bank loans increase by 11% to hit \$734bn

Dayan Abou Tine Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's banking sector loans increased to SR2.75 trillion (\$733.82 billion) in June, marking an annual 11.35 percent rise, official data showed.

An analysis released by the Saudi Central Bank, also known as SAMA, revealed that corporate credit accounted for 53 percent of the total lending in the month, while personal loans made up the remaining 47 percent.

Fitch projects that financing growth in the Kingdom will reach around 10 percent in 2024, driven by sustained

demand for corporate and wholesale credit, offsetting a slowdown in the retail mortgage market.

Additionally, 2024 could see banks capitalizing on direct lending opportunities to the country's mega-projects.

Personal loans, encompassing all types of credit extended to individuals, totaled SR1.29 trillion, marking a 7 percent growth year on year, the SAMA report noted.

Among corporate financing exchanges, those granted for real estate activities comprised the majority, and experienced 26 percent growth during this period to reach SR286.29

billion in June.

Closely following were loans extended for wholesale and retail trade, comprising 13 percent of corporate holdings and totaling SR195.87 billion. This category of claims saw an 8 percent rise during this period.

Lending for manufacturing activities constituted a 12 percent share totaling SR175.24 billion, reflecting a 1 percent increase compared to the same month last year.

Meanwhile, the electricity, gas, and water supply sectors accounted for 11 percent of corporate lending, growing by 28 percent during this period.

FASTFACTS

53%

Corporate credit accounted for 53 percent of the total lending in June.

47%

Personal loans in the banking sector made up the remaining 47 percent.

In terms of growth rates, lending for professional, scientific, and technical activities saw the highest annual increase, rising by 66 percent. Despite this significant growth, it comprised a relatively small share of total corporate loans, accounting for only 1 percent at SR8.52 billion.

According to Fitch, Saudi banks are projected to grow at about double the Gulf Cooperation Council average, with financing growth forecasted at approximately 12 percent for 2024.

The sector is expected to focus more on corporate

financing, which is anticipated to account for about 60 percent of new originations.

Elias Abou Samra, CEO of RAFAL Real Estate Development Co., told Arab News in July that despite higher interest rates, the housing market in Saudi Arabia is regaining momentum.

In the US, central bankers decided to keep the policy rate in the 5.25 percent to 5.50 percent range at the latest Fed meeting on July 31. Fed Chair Jerome Powell noted that the labor market is gradually normalizing, which permits a cautious approach to interest rate cuts.

Business News



According to a S&P Global report, demand conditions in the UAE non-oil private sector remained favorable, with sales rising sharply. Shutterstock

PERFORMANCE

UAE non-oil sector robust amid rising prices

Inflation accelerated further in July: S&P Global

Arab News Riyadh

The UAE's non-oil private sector growth remained steady in July but marked its slowest improvement in almost three years, an economy tracker showed.

According to the S&P Global Purchasing Managers' Index, the UAE's PMI slipped to 53.7 in July from 54.6 the previous month as competitive conditions, rising price pressures and capacity overloads weighed on performance.

In July, the index was also below its long-run average of 54.4 but remained solidly above the 50 expansion mark.

David Owen, chief economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said: "The drop in the UAE PMI is a further signal that non-oil sector growth is on a downward trend in 2024."

He added: "Business capacity remained one of the key challenges facing the sector, as indicated by another steep uptick in backlogs as firms struggled to resolve supply and administrative issues."

In March, UAE Minister of Economy Abdulla bin Touq said that the country's economy is expected to grow by 5 percent this year, driven by a robust expansion in the non-oil sector and an increase in foreign direct investment.

The minister also said that the UAE's non-oil economy currently accounts for 73 percent of the nation's gross domestic product.

According to the S&P Global report, price inflation accelerated further in July,

with companies experiencing the fastest rise in input costs for exactly two years.

The financial agency revealed that higher input prices were once again partially passed through to customers, as output charges increased for the third month running in July.

The PMI survey revealed that business activity levels rose further in July, as companies commented on rising inflows of new work, ongoing projects, and improved supply chain conditions.

Egypt inching toward growth

In another report, S&P Global revealed that Egypt recorded a PMI of 49.7 in July, the second highest in almost three years, but marginally lower than 49.9 in June.

The US-based agency said that Egypt's non-oil economy held close to the line between growth and contraction in July, with output and new business declining at marginal rates.

The PMI survey added that employment grew in July while output expectations recovered slightly.

"The Egyptian non-oil economy still appears to be on the cusp of expansion, with the July PMI registering just shy of the 50 mark," said Owen. "While some firms pointed to a turning of the tide in economic conditions, particularly through rising export demand, market conditions were stated as weak elsewhere."

According to S&P Global, price pressures among Egyptian non-oil firms remained low in July compared to the past couple of years but showed

HIGHLIGHTS

- The UAE's PMI slipped to 53.7 in July from 54.6 the previous month as competitive conditions, rising price pressures and capacity overloads weighed on performance.

- The UAE's non-oil economy currently accounts for 73 percent of the nation's gross domestic product.

- Egypt recorded a PMI of 49.7 in July, the second highest in almost three years, but marginally lower than 49.9 in June.

- In July, job creation in Egyptian non-oil firms also saw a slight uptick, reversing a fractional decline in June.

- The non-oil private sector in Kuwait started the second half of the year positively, driven by a rise in new orders.

tentative signs of intensifying as input costs rose at their steepest pace since March.

"Inflationary pressures on firms largely followed the trend seen in the second quarter, which has been subdued compared to the heightened rates in recent years," Owen said.

"However, a slight pick-up in input cost inflation in July could make some firms concerned about the risk of prices picking up again and constraining business activity," he added.

In July, job creation in Egyptian non-oil firms also saw a slight uptick, reversing

a fractional decline in June, as companies hoped that the dip in sales would be brief and that conditions would improve.

Kuwait maintains momentum

S&P Global revealed that the non-oil private sector in Kuwait started the second half of the year positively, driven by a rise in new orders.

Kuwait's PMI in July stood at 51.5, broadly unchanged from 51.6 in June.

"As has been the case for some time now, firms in Kuwait were able to use advertising and competitive pricing to secure new business and expand output during July," said Andrew Harker, economics director at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

He added: "Discounts were often offered in spite of increasing input prices, including a record rise in staff costs."

According to the report, new orders continued to increase at a solid pace in July despite the rate of growth easing to a 10-month low.

S&P Global added that new orders from regular customers helped Kuwaiti non-oil companies to expand business activity again in July.

Harker said that non-oil firms faced difficulties in finding the right talents to meet the growing demand.

"A key challenge for firms in July was finding suitably skilled staff, and these difficulties meant that employment was unchanged during the month, resulting in a further build-up of outstanding business," said Harker.

BizBriefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Cost of living

Inflation in Türkiye falls to 61.78% in July

Türkiye's annual inflation rate slowed sharply in July to 61.78 percent, official data showed on Monday, as the country battles a cost-of-living crisis.

It is the second consecutive fall after consumer price rises eased to 71.6 percent in June.

"Annual inflation is falling," Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek said on the social media platform X.

"We continue to get positive results in all areas of our program, whose main objective is disinflation," he said.

"The decrease in inflation will be felt more in the coming period." **AFP**

Sector

India's services growth slows but still solid

Activity in India's dominant services sector remained upbeat in July on robust demand, leading to strong job creation, despite elevated cost pressures pushing up selling-price inflation to a seven-year high, a survey showed.

The HSBC final India Services Purchasing Managers' Index fell marginally to 60.3 in July from 60.5 in June and was considerably below a preliminary estimate of 61.1.

The overall pace of expansion was sharp and the index remained above the 50-mark that separates contraction from expansion for the 36th straight month. **Reuters**

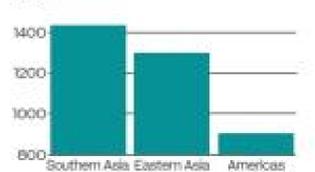
Chart of THE DAY

As of 2023, Southern Asia accounted for approximately 1.42 billion of the world's internet users, followed by Eastern Asia with over 1.31 billion.

Source: Statista

INTERNET USERS WORLDWIDE 2023

By subregion (in millions)



What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

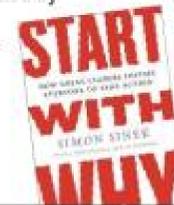
Start With Why

SIMON SINEK

In studying the leaders who have had the greatest influence in the world, Simon Sinek discovered that they all think, act, and communicate in the exact same way. Sinek calls this powerful idea The Golden Circle, and

it provides a framework upon which organizations can be built. And it all starts with why.

Drawing on a wide range of real-life stories, Sinek weaves together a clear vision of what it truly takes to lead and inspire, says a review published on goodreads.com.



Growth

Bahrain's Q1 real GDP up 3.3%, data shows

Bahrain's economy grew 3.3 percent year on year in the first quarter of 2024, according to a quarterly economic performance report by the Ministry of Finance, citing preliminary data from the Information & eGovernment Authority.

The Gulf state's non-oil gross domestic product increased 3.3 percent in the period, contributing almost 85.9 percent to overall GDP, while oil GDP grew 3.4 percent, the report said, with accommodation and food services, and financial services and insurance among the top performing sectors. **Reuters**

Outlook

UK car industry body cuts 2024 sales forecast

Britain's auto industry body cut its 2024 forecast for new car sales on Monday, saying weak private retail demand for electric vehicles is an overriding concern.

New car sales this year are expected to be at 1.97 million units, down from an earlier forecast of 1.98 million units, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders said.

The forecast cut comes even as new car sales in July rose 2.5 percent year on year to 147,517 units, its 24th consecutive month of growth, as per SMMT data. **Reuters**

The financial and banking sectors in Saudi Arabia stand on a strong footing and continue to sustain its momentum.

Gautam Sasihittal
CEO of KAFO DMG



PRESS RELEASES FROM THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

Corporate

DIGITALLY SOUND

stc Group provides unparalleled gaming experience at ESW

stc Group, an engine of digital transformation, is playing a key role in driving Saudi Arabia to become the world's most connected and digitalized nation, in line with Vision 2030. Furthermore, the group is supporting the Kingdom to become the premier global hub for gaming and esports.

As an elite and founding partner of the inaugural Esports World Cup, stc Group is delivering seamless connectivity across all competition venues.

stc Group is a naming partner for three key locations—stc Arena, stc Play Gaming Hall, and stc TV World Cup Studios—offering dynamic and immersive digital and gaming experiences. As part of its commitment to operational excellence, the group is providing a range of services designed to optimize network performance and enhance the gaming experience for gamers and audiences alike.

To ensure an exceptional gaming experience, stc Group established one of the first and largest operating centers dedicated to monitoring the gaming services infrastructure in real time, supported by high resolution 168-megapixel screens for continuous world-class service optimization.

stc Group's service optimization and tracking capabilities are further enhancing the gaming experience. By monitoring over 25 online games and streaming IP addresses, stc Group guarantees a 100 percent optimal path for connectivity. Sophisticated software conducts forensic analysis on IPs, ensuring precise and efficient management



stc Group is a naming partner for three key locations—stc Arena, stc Play Gaming Hall, and stc TV World Cup Studios—offering dynamic and immersive digital and gaming experiences. Supplied

of network traffic.

stc Group's commitment to seamless connectivity includes achieving significant latency reduction across key gaming servers, ensuring a highly responsive and outstanding gaming experience. By

optimizing link utilization to maintain less than 70 percent usage during peak times and implementing end-to-end quality of service configurations, stc Group guarantees smooth and uninterrupted gameplay.

The group's extensive range of services and cutting-edge connectivity solutions are integral to this transformation, aligning with Vision 2030's goal of establishing the Kingdom as a premier global gaming and esports destination.

HIGH PERFORMANCE

Esports World Cup heats up with HONOR 200 Pro at the helm

HONOR, a leading global provider of smart devices, took center stage at the prestigious Esports World Cup 2024 in Saudi Arabia. The HONOR 200 Pro was the official smartphone of the tournament, fueling the competitive spirit of the Honor of Kings competition.

The Honor of Kings tournament brought together the world's top esports athletes vying for a staggering share of \$3,000,000 prize pool. With teams like LGD Gaming, Team Vitality, Impunity Esports and more, the competition heated up. With millions of fans watching worldwide, these elite players demanded peak performance from their devices. This is where the HONOR 200 Pro stepped in, offering a powerhouse

combination of cutting-edge technology and features specifically designed to elevate mobile gaming experiences.

The HONOR 200 Pro boasts the lightning-fast Snapdragon 8s Gen 3 mobile processor, ensuring seamless responsiveness and smooth graphics rendering for even the most demanding MOBA titles like Honor of Kings. But raw power is only half the story. The phone's innovative All-range Cooling System 2.0 adopts a super-large stainless steel biomimetic VC that offers industry-leading, ultra-high thermal conductivity that helps keep the device cool under pressure. This prevents performance throttling and maintaining peak performance throughout intense matches.

Emirates NBD, the leading banking group in the Middle East, North Africa, and Turkiye region, has opened a new branch in the King Abdullah Financial District.

In line with Emirates NBD's strategic expansion plan, the new branch consolidates the bank's presence in the Kingdom, extending its diverse range of services to more consumers, communities, and entities across the country.

KAFO stands as the largest LEED-certified mixed-use business district in the world. As a key driver of Riyadh's economic ambitions, the district fosters a smart, sustainable environment conducive to innovation, collaboration, and business growth. The new Emirates NBD branch in KAFO is set to contribute to the achievement of the Kingdom's Vision 2030

EXPANSION

Emirates NBD launches new branch in KAFO



The official opening bolsters Emirates NBD's network, increasing its total number of branches in the Kingdom to 19. Supplied

goals and drive the transformation of the country's financial services industry.

The official opening bolsters Emirates NBD's network, increasing its total number of branches in the Kingdom to 19.

Aazar Ali Khwaja, group head, International & Group Strategy,

Emirates NBD, said: "As the leading banking group in the Middle East, North Africa, and Turkiye region, we are committed to transforming the Saudi financial services sector, leveraging our expansive network, partnerships and innovative offerings to empower consumers in the Kingdom."

Corporate Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

SEDRA

ROSHN opens sales for over 1,200 new units

ROSHN Group, Saudi Arabia's leading real estate developer and a PIF company, has announced the release of 1,251 new homes for sale in SEDRA Phase 4, part of its flagship Riyadh development and the city's most desirable community.

The fourth phase of SEDRA community, situated north of the third phase, boasts a strategic location offering residents convenient access to shopping and office areas in the ROSHN Front. It is also easily reachable via Airport Road and is close to two metro stations. Additionally, it is near Princess Nourah University, Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, King Khalid International Airport, and the SAR train station.

Leadership

KROHNE appoints new GM for MEA region

KROHNE, a global leader in industrial process instrumentation, is pleased to announce the appointment of Jay Gadhavi as the new general manager for the Middle East and Africa region. This strategic appointment underscores KROHNE's ongoing commitment to fostering sustainable innovation, strengthening partnerships, and upholding the family values that define the company's culture.

Jay Gadhavi brings a wealth of experience in the industrial measurement technology sector, having held several key leadership positions within KROHNE.

Kaspersky

Novice cybercriminals are a bigger threat

Kaspersky's Global Research and Analysis Team has published a report describing the recent ransomware attacks with the use of leaked code. This research sheds light on the tools and methods utilized by both organized ransomware groups and individual attackers.

With a vast array of tools and samples at their disposal, organized ransomware cybercriminal groups often have proprietary ransomware samples, while stand-alone criminals frequently rely on leaked DIY variants to launch their attacks.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach attends the medal ceremony for the men's foil team competition during the Paris 2024 Olympics at the Grand Palais in Paris on Sunday.



Sport News

TRIPLE DELIGHT

Trio crowned champions in Esports World Cup Super Sunday

KPL Dream Team earn 'Honor of Kings' gold, Alliance seize 'Apex Legends' success, and Team BDS make 'Rainbow Six Siege' history in Saudi Arabia

Arab News Riyadh

The Esports World Cup's Super Sunday in Riyadh had three champions crowned, with KPL Dream Team taking the "Honor of Kings Invitational Series 2024 Midseason," Alliance the "Apex Legends" contest, and Team BDS the "Rainbow Six Siege" competition.

The world's largest gaming and esports festival, which has a record-breaking prize pool of \$60 million, had \$7 million presented to the competitors at Boulevard Riyadh City.

KPL Dream Team claimed \$1 million with an astonishing "Honor of Kings" performance — going through the entire tournament without losing a single round. The Chinese stars swept LGD Gaming MY 3-0 in the final.

Gemini, whose real name is Jia Yi, the coach of KPL Dream Team, said: "It's because of the teamwork. We have good techniques and we worked hard for this event. It's been a long time that we've been playing this game. This is how we can take this event. I would like to thank our fans. They came all the way from China to support us here. The facilities here are excellent. It has been great to play here."

The story of the day, however, was "Rainbow Six Siege" where Team BDS followed up their 2022 and 2023 successes at Gamers8, organized by the Saudi Esports Federation. Not only did they create gaming history, but they did so by sweeping w7m esports 3-0 in the final.

Team BDS analyst eaglemees, real name Mees van der Arend, said: "We are all very happy at being Gamers8 and Esports



World Cup back-to-back-to-back champions. I don't think there are any teams that have been able to do this and create history. We're elated. Emotions are running high. Now we take some time to relax and then focus on our next tournament."

The Swiss/French organization earned \$750,000 for their tournament-winning exploits. In the "Apex Legends" tournament at the SEF Arena at Boulevard Riyadh City, Alliance took home

Team BDS celebrate winning 'Rainbow Six Siege' at the Esports World Cup in Riyadh. Supplied

the \$600,000 top prize in sensational style. The Swedish side pipped hometown heroes Team Falcons for the title.

Alliance star Hakis, real name John Hakansson, said: "It feels amazing. It's still kind of unreal — after 14 games of 'Apex Legends,' you are kind of cooked in the

brain. Overall, I'm pretty empty and super, super tired but super happy and super excited. It still does feel unreal."

Hakis added: "I think the most pleasing thing for us was definitely making the revenge. We had the chance to win the whole tournament in the game before 14 and we had to go again. To win the next game felt amazing. This is probably one of the closest tournaments we ever played."

"Falcons played amazing.

They're definitely a very respected team and one of the most successful in the whole game. Personally, I find it funny when the fans are cheering for Falcons. They're so passionate. We were kind of making jokes mid-game ourselves being like: 'Let's go, Falcons!' They're pretty special and it is what it is."

The Esports World Cup, which began on July 3 and runs until Aug. 25, features 22 global competitions in 21 leading games.

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

'Thank God, I make everyone happy,' Nurmagomedov says after UFC win in Abu Dhabi

Arab News Abu Dhabi

Umar Nurmagomedov has dedicated his victory over No. 2-ranked bantamweight Cory Sandhagen at UFC Fight Night in Abu Dhabi on Sunday to his family.

Maintaining his undefeated record, Nurmagomedov's victory now moves him a step closer to a UFC title shot.

The Dagestani powerhouse, whose record now stands at 18-0-0, executed a master class, overpowering Sandhagen (17-5-0) from start to finish. All judges scored the bout in favor of Nurmagomedov.

Cornered by his cousin and former UFC lightweight

champion Khabib Nurmagomedov, he extended his UFC winning streak to five, further cementing his reputation as a rising star.

"I bring one more victory in the main event to my family, and the legacy continues," said Nurmagomedov. "It was very good. It was very hard fighting in front of my people, my father, uncles. It was pressure. It pushed me a little bit. And now, thank God, I make everyone happy."

He thanked the fans for their support and asked them to come and watch UFC 308: Topuria vs. Holloway in Abu Dhabi on Oct. 26. "It's going to be very good matchups. It's going to be a good



Umar Nurmagomedov after defeating Cory Sandhagen in a bantamweight bout at UFC Fight Night on Saturday in Abu Dhabi. Nurmagomedov won by unanimous decision. AP

main event. I think I will come to see this fight myself, personally."

The atmosphere was electric, with a packed arena and a roster of celebrities, including lightweight champion Islam Makhachev and welterweight

champion Belal Muhammad.

Earlier in the night, the fight card lived up to its billing with Shara Magomedov winning a unanimous decision over Michal Oleksiejczuk in their middleweight clash.

"This fight was my dream. I'm happy, very, very happy. Every time I'm conquering new territory," said Magomedov. Last night's victory marks Magomedov's third straight win in the UFC.

Deiveson Figueiredo's impressive victory over Marlon Vera in their bantamweight battle was another highlight of the night. "It's great to be back here, fighting again, winning again," said Figueiredo.

Sport Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

IOC rules

Boxers with gender issues to stay put

The two female boxers at the heart of a gender dispute at the Paris Olympics will stay in the competition for as long as they keep winning because they meet all eligibility criteria, the International Olympic Committee said on Monday.

The IOC is in charge of holding the boxing tournament in Paris after stripping recognition of the International Boxing Association last year following failure to implement governance and finance reforms.

Algerian boxer Imane Khelif and Taiwan's double world champion Lin Yu-ting have reached the semifinals of their respective weight divisions. **Reuters**

Hailed by Japan

Noah Lyles is 'world's fastest anime fan'

Japanese media hailed Olympic 100m gold medalist Noah Lyles as the world's fastest anime fan after the American celebrated his win by miming an attack from "Dragon Ball."

Just five thousandths of a second separated the American champion from Jamaica's Kishane Thompson — a thrilling finish that was the event's closest in modern history. **AFP**



Euro soccer

Xavi Simons extends on loan at RB Leipzig

Paris Saint-Germain's Dutch midfielder Xavi Simons has extended his loan at RB Leipzig by another year, knocking back reported interest from Bayern Munich.

PSG confirmed the loan on Monday but stressed that the deal is "without the option to buy." "Paris Saint-Germain wishes Xavi a wonderful season with RB Leipzig," the club said in a statement.

The 21-year-old, who impressed with the Netherlands at Euro 2024, scoring the opener in the 2-1 semifinal loss to England, turned in a series of fine performances for Leipzig last season. **AFP**

Follow Arab News Briefs all through the day @ArabNews

Meghan Markle says she has yet to 'scrape the surface' of her experiences with the British royal family. 'When you've been through any level of pain or trauma, I believe part of our healing journey, certainly part of mine, is being able to be really open about it,' she told CBS News.



& Finally

The Six

Regional breeds

Aug. 8 marks World Cat Day. Here, we take a look at regional breeds of our furry best friends, both cats and dogs.



Egyptian Mau

The Egyptian mau is an elegant, spotted cat whose ancestry may date back 3,000 years to the cats whose images adorn the temples in ancient Egypt.



Arabian Mau

The Arabian Mau is indigenous to the Gulf and the breed is internationally recognized. It is a natural breed meaning that they are from the place they originated.



Bahraini Dilmun

The Bahraini Dilmun is also a natural breed. Due to living in extreme heat, the breed has adapted a short fur coat, nocturnal behavioral traits, and an affinity for water.



Saluki

The distinctive Saluki dog breed has been a hunting and guard dog for the desert people of the Arabian Peninsula for 5,000 years.



Sloughi

The Sloughi is from the Maghreb region of North Africa and supposedly dates back to 8,000-7,000 BC. The dog's original purpose was to hunt game.



Aidi Atlas Mountain Dog

The Aidi Atlas Mountain Dog hails from Morocco's Atlas Mountain range. The breed's original purpose was to protect people and livestock against predators.

CLOSE UP

Blake Lively goes floral with Elie Saab

Arab News Dubai

US actress and entrepreneur Blake Lively knows how to bring the drama.

The actress has gone full-throttle with a floral-themed press tour for her upcoming film, "It Ends With Us," where her character, Lily Bloom, plays a florist.

Lively was most recently seen wearing an ensemble from Lebanese couturier Elie Saab's Fall-Winter 2024 collection, opting for a sheer black blouse with embroidered pastel flowers and matching pants. She completed the suit look with a plaid coat.

The actress showed off the look in a recent Instagram post in which she joked that her "It Ends With Us" co-star Brandon Sklenar changed his outfit to let her shine. "Find you a co-star who changes his shirt to make your outfit look best," she wrote.

This is not the first time the actress has opted for Arab designers on this press tour.

Last week, she was spotted wearing rings by US Egyptian designer Jacquie Aiche, each reflecting the designer's signature bohemian-luxe aesthetic.

For that look, Lively also accessorized with two gold bangles — one from the Italian label Wagner Eleuteri and the other from the US luxury house Tiffany & Co. She completed the ensemble with a gold chain necklace from New York-based designer Brent Neale, featuring a nature-inspired pendant.

For her outfit, Lively paired a white crop top from the Canadian retailer Aritzia with a light green vest from Shop Archive and patterned pants from the New York-based independent fashion brand Tanya Taylor, featuring a mix of floral and abstract designs in earthy tones. The look was finished with strappy heels from Aquazzura and a textured



Blake Lively wears an Elie Saab suit while promoting her film, 'It Ends With Us,' Instagram

Inset: Lively seen wearing rings by US Egyptian designer Jacquie Aiche, Instagram

floral bag from Chanel.

In another post, Lively sported a cashmere cardigan from her friend Gigi Hadid's clothing brand, Guest in Residence. Hadid, who is of US, Dutch and Palestinian descent,

designed the camel-colored cardigan that Lively draped over her arms. She paired it with a nude dress by Michael Kors, featuring delicate lace detailing and a scalloped hemline.

Lively completed the outfit with white pointed-toe heels by Christian Louboutin, providing a subtle contrast to the neutral tones. For jewelry, she chose earrings from Brent Neale.



TEASER

HBO drops reel of upcoming shows

Arab News Dubai

HBO released preview footage of several eagerly anticipated new and returning series — including the second season of "The Last of Us" and first season of the "Game of Thrones" prequel "A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms."

The trailer ran before the second season finale of "House of the Dragon," and included footage from "The White Lotus" Season 3 and "It" spin-off series "It: Welcome to Derry," plus new superhero parody "The Franchise" and upcoming seasons of "The Gilded Age" and "And Just Like That ..." and more.

Several of the "big" titles will debut in 2025 — including the second season of "The Last of Us," "Welcome to Derry," and "A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms."



Justin Simien

STAR WARS

Justin Simien on losing 'Lando' series

Arab News Dubai

US filmmaker Justin Simien opened up about the grief he felt after Disney's decision to scrap his "Star Wars: Lando" series.

The filmmaker recently told Collider that the project was shelved despite reaching a significant stage in the development process. "It was pretty developed," Simien said.

This took an emotional toll on the "Haunted Mansion" director. "For me, the answer is that you have to really face it. It is true grief," he said. "You pour so much of your heart and soul into something but, ultimately, you don't have control over whether it lives or dies."

REVIEW

'Paper Mario: Thousand-Year Door' brings modern update

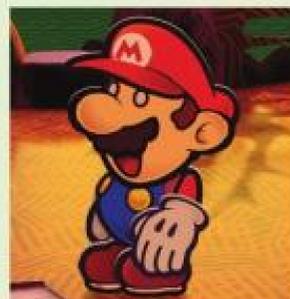
James Denslow London

Twenty years after its original release on the Nintendo GameCube, "Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door" returns to captivate a new generation of gamers on the Nintendo Switch.

This updated version features modern graphics, refined storylines and a host of new features that enhance accessibility, all while retaining the charm that endeared it to fans two decades ago.

One of the hallmarks of the "Paper Mario" series, and indeed the broader Mario franchise, is its vibrant and bold color palette, slick interface and the maddeningly addictive background music that players have come to love.

The transition to the Nintendo Switch allows for a visually stunning rendition of the classic game, making it an easy win for Nintendo as they reintroduce this beloved title to a loyal and supportive fanbase. Although the Paper Mario series occupies a



'Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door' returns to captivate a new generation of gamers. Supplied

somewhat niche space within the larger Mario universe, it stands out for its creativity, humor and innovative gameplay mechanics.

The storyline of "The Thousand-Year Door" revolves around a mysterious treasure hidden behind the titular door. The original game was lauded for its engaging narrative, memorable characters and enhanced gameplay mechanics, and these elements have been preserved and polished in the Switch version. Players guide

the 2D paper version of Mario through a richly detailed 3D world populated by familiar faces from the Mario universe. This blend of two-dimensional characters in a three-dimensional world creates a unique visual and gameplay experience that is as captivating now as it was 20 years ago.

With approximately 30 hours of gameplay focused on the main objectives, "The Thousand-Year Door" is not the longest game by RPG standards.