

## SAUDI ARABIA

ENVOY PAYS TRIBUTE TO HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI 'EPIC STORY'

Page 5



## OPINION

BIDEN LOOKS FOR LEGACY ON FOREIGN FRONT

By Andrew Hammond Page 9



## SPORT

TOP TEAMS REACH FINAL STAGES AT ESPORTS WORLD CUP Page 15

& FINALLY SAUDI DESIGNER HONAYDA SERAFI MAKES HISTORY

Page 16



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# ARAB NEWS

The Voice of a Changing Region

SINCE 1975

## FAST FACT

Saudi Arabia denounced the international community's failure to hold Israel accountable for its violations.

An elderly man sits amid the rubble inside a school used as a temporary shelter for displaced Palestinians in Gaza City, after it was hit by an Israeli strike on Saturday. AFP



## VITAL ROLE

Iran keeps nuclear chief despite UN sanctions

AP Tehran

Iran's newly elected president reappointed a US-educated official who came under UN sanctions 16 years ago as head of the country's nuclear department, state TV reported on Saturday.

Mohammed Eslami, 67, will continue his work as chief of Iran's civilian nuclear program and serve as one of several vice presidents.

Eslami's reappointment by President Masoud Pezeshkian comes as Iran remains under heavy sanctions by the West following the collapse of the 2015 deal that curbed Iran's nuclear activities.

He has experience working

## FASTFACT

Mohammed Eslami, 67, will continue his work as chief of Iran's civilian nuclear program and serve as one of several vice presidents.



in Iran's military industries for years, most recently as deputy defense minister responsible for research and industry.

Meanwhile, two European intelligence sources said dozens of Russian military personnel were being trained in Iran to use the Fath-360 close-range ballistic missile system.

The sources said they expected the imminent delivery of hundreds of the satellite-guided weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine.

## CARNAGE

# Israeli strike on Gaza school shelter kills nearly 100 people

Kingdom calls for an end to 'genocide' taking place in Gaza • US 'deeply concerned'

Arab News Jeddah

Rescuers in Gaza said an Israeli airstrike on a religious school housing displaced Palestinians killed nearly 100 people on Saturday, sparking international condemnation.

Saudi Arabia condemned the strike and denounced the international community's failure to hold Israel accountable for its violations.

In a Foreign Ministry statement,

the Kingdom called for an end to the "genocide" taking place in Gaza where Israeli violations to international humanitarian law are bringing an "unprecedented humanitarian disaster."

An independent UN-appointed expert accused Israel of committing "genocide" in its Gaza war after the strike.

"Israel is genociding the Palestinians one neighborhood at the time, one hospital at the time, one school at the time, one refugee camp at the time, one safe zone at

the time," Francesca Albanese, the United Nations special rapporteur on the rights situation in Palestinian territories, said on social media platform X.

The White House said it was "deeply concerned" about civilian casualties.

"We are deeply concerned about reports of civilian casualties in Gaza" following the strike, National Security Council spokesman Sean Savett said in a statement, adding that the US was "asking for further details."

He said the strike "underscores the urgency of a ceasefire and hostage deal, which we continue to work tirelessly to achieve."

Palestinian civil defense spokesperson Mahmoud Bassal said: "So far, there are more than 93 martyrs, including 11 children and six women. There are unidentified remains."

Tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought shelter in Gaza's schools, most of which have been closed since the war began in October.

Around 350 families had been sheltering at the compound, Bassal said — some of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced by Israel's onslaught on Gaza.

The upper floor housing families and the lower floor, used as a mosque, were both hit, he said.

Hamas said the strike was a horrific crime and a serious escalation.

Spotlight Page 3  
Related reports Pages 6&7

## The Brief

### SAUDI ARTIST

Majed Al-Zahrani, an artist from Baha, has breathed new life into discarded metal, transforming it into captivating sculptures and paintings. P4

### SISTANI WARNS

Iraq's cleric Ali Sistani has warned of the risk of a regional escalation following the killing of Hamas and Hezbollah leaders. P6

### REMITTANCES UP

Expatriate remittances from Saudi Arabia reached \$3.2 billion in June, reflecting an annual increase of 11%. P12

## PROFICIENCY

# Saudi students get languages boost with online platform VIPKid

'Globalized future' at heart of company's vision, CEO Cindy Mi says

Nada Alturki Riyadh

An online education platform is using local and international teachers to improve the foreign language skills of Saudi youth.

VIPKid was founded a decade ago and expanded to the Kingdom two years ago.

Founder and CEO Cindy Mi, an English teacher for 25 years, told Arab News: "I've always been a student and a teacher myself. The goal is to build a global classroom to allow more children to get access to best-quality language

learning educational experiences ... so they can be ready for their more globalized future."

VIPKid has helped more than 1 million children worldwide learn English and delivered over 280 million live online classes in English and Mandarin.

Mi said that she was inspired to expand to Saudi Arabia after speaking at the annual Future Investment Initiative forum in the Kingdom.

The platform's multicultural programs allow experienced teachers worldwide to meet their



Saudi counterparts to share best practices, improve subject matter competency and gain confidence in the classroom.

"We work with partners like government bodies, educational institutions and other tech companies so that we can help them launch similar programs, especially in the field of teacher training," Mi added.

To help students learn better at school, teachers also need to learn themselves, requiring investment, she said.

"I think the Kingdom has

invested a lot (in) teachers ... it is very helpful for them to improve their language proficiency with a peer from other parts of the world."

Detailed report Page 5

2 Riyals • Vol. XLIX  
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The ongoing violent attacks by Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian civilians are considered war crimes. They disregard all legal, moral and humanitarian values.

Jassem Albudawil  
GCC secretary-general



# Rad ar

## KSA today



### Riyadh Digital park

Enjoy an interactive playground at Hello Park, where families can experience multimedia games, colorful projections and themed environments that transform weekly. More details on the Wafy app.



### Abha Panoramic views

Relax with friends and family, and enjoy the picturesque atmosphere at Aryash, a destination that overlooks the city and provides a stunning view of the landscape. For more details visit platinumlist.net.



### Al-Ahsa Quest game

Escape the Room is a thrilling, 60-minute real-life adventure game where friends and families can solve mysteries, puzzles and exciting stories. More details on enjoy.sa.



### Jeddah Museum

Visit the Tariq Abdelhakim Center to explore a museum housing a collection of artifacts, musical compositions, and visual and auditory materials showcasing the esteemed musician's legacy. More details on the Saudi Events App.

## The Register

THE PICTURES THAT MARK THE DAY



Saudi Minister of Sport and Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee President Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki recently held talks with the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games Organizing Committee Chairman Casey Wasserman at the Paris 2024 Olympics.

The two sides discussed strengthening bilateral sports cooperation and the Kingdom's participation in the next Olympic games, Saudi Press Agency reported.

Qualifiers for LA28 Olympics are expected to begin in 2026.

## Today's Number

# 3.5m

The inaugural week of Buraidah Dates Carnival in Qassim featured over 3.5 million kg of dates transported using 6,940 vehicles, Saudi Press Agency reported.

## Review

### 'A Good Girl's Guide to Murder'

JASMINE BAGER

Fans of Holly Jackson's highly popular 2019 novel, "A Good Girl's Guide to Murder," can now experience the story visually with the new BBC TV adaptation, which premiered on Netflix this month.

The adaption was made by Poppy Cogan and directed by Dolly Wells. It was developed by Moonage Pictures for BBC Three and is available for streaming on Netflix.

Much like the book, we follow the story alongside 17-year-old Pippa Fitz-Amobi, portrayed by Emma Myers of "Wednesday" fame. Set in a small British town, Pippa's journey uncovers deep secrets and buried realities.



In the story, Pippa is quiet and timid but also stubbornly refuses to believe what everyone else in town has come to accept, that five years prior, her slightly older school friend, Sal Singh, murdered his girlfriend Andie Bell and then killed himself.

With the looming EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) due date fast approaching — which is required for all seniors to complete for their university application — the studious "good girl" Pippa decides to take it as the perfect opportunity to investigate the case herself.

The truth, she finds out, is much more sinister than she could have ever imagined.

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



### SCATHING REACTION Ed Kelce

Travis Kelce's father, Ed, did not mince words when it came to a lyric in a Kanye West song referencing his son and Taylor Swift.

The line, "I twist my Taylor spliffs tight at the end like Travis Kelce," from Kanye's collaboration with Lil Wayne on the album "Vultures 2" sparked Ed's ire.

Ed took to Facebook to share a Daily Mail article about the lyric, which was actually sung by Wayne, adding his own comment: "Mental illness on full display."

Neither Swift nor Travis have addressed the subject.

@im\_right though wrote on X: "Imagine getting mad about this ... I don't like Kanye, Kelce or Swift but come on ... this is not offensive at all."

### BRIDE-TO-BE

### Adele

Grammy-award winner Adele, known for her powerful vocals and emotional ballads, confirmed her engagement to sports agent Rich Paul during a concert in Munich, Germany.

While performing for a packed crowd, a fan playfully asked Adele to marry them. The singer, with a smile on her face, responded: "I can't marry you, I'm already getting married!" She then revealed a sparkling engagement ring on her finger, confirming the news to the delight of her fans.

@Adkinsstans wrote on X: "No more sad songs I fear," while @Bidal4life said: "I hope we get a love-song-filled album from her."

@BorkorElse wrote: "Adorable. Second chance at love."

While Adele and Paul have mostly kept their relationship private, they have occasionally shared glimpses of their love story.

Engagement rumors swirled in 2022 when Adele was seen wearing a diamond ring on her ring finger at the BRIT Awards.

The singer swiftly clarified at the time that she was not engaged, but simply "in love," adding that she has found a happiness that she never thought possible.

Adele, in an interview with Oprah Winfrey in November 2021, recalled their first encounter: "I met him at a birthday party, we were on the dance floor."

They reconnected years later, going out for dinner. "He says it was a business meeting, but I'm like, 'A business meeting about what?'" Adele joked.

That dinner marked the first time they spent time together outside of a party setting.

"He's just hilarious. He's so funny."



## TheRegion

The Middle East Roundup

### Arab News Jeddah

Children can embark on a delicious journey where expert chefs will guide them through the world of French pastry and culinary arts, fostering independence and confidence through hands-on experiences. Held at Ecole Ducasse Abu Dhabi Studio until Aug. 23. For more details

check visitabudhabi.ae.

"House of Color" at City Centre Bahrain is a safe space for creatives to unleash their potential — and vent any stress — using paint guns and balloons. Have fun while earning a chance to win a Range Rover Velar. The experience for adults will run until Aug. 31. Visit calendar.bh for more details.

The Jordan International Food Festival blends gastronomy with live entertainment. This unique fusion of food and music not only highlights country's rich cultural heritage but also fosters connections between artists and attendees, making the festival a vibrant celebration of flavor and rhythm that continues until Aug. 11.

### Prayer Times in Saudi Arabia

Aug. 11	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghreb	Isha
Makkah	4:37	5:57	12:27	3:48	6:55	8:25
Madinah	4:31	5:54	12:27	3:55	7:00	8:30
Riyadh	4:03	5:25	11:59	3:27	6:32	8:02
Abha	4:32	5:50	12:16	3:30	6:40	8:10
Dammam	3:45	5:09	11:45	3:18	6:21	7:51

Being anti-genocide is a winning position for our communities across the country.

Chris Habiby National government affairs and advocacy director, ADC



# Spotlight

US ELECTION POLL

## Arab vote boosts a Palestine ally

Jill Stein is the favorite among Arab Americans, outpacing Kamala Harris, thanks to her stance on Palestine

Anan Tello London

**Jill Stein, the US Green Party's presidential candidate, has emerged as the top choice among Arab American voters in the lead-up to the US election on Nov. 5, according to a recent poll.**

Stein has garnered the support of more than 45 percent of Arab Americans surveyed by the Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee, the largest Arab American grassroots civil rights organization.

This places Stein, a physician and environmentalist, ahead of the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, who received 27.5 percent in the same poll.

The survey was conducted between July 27 and 28 through a partnership between the ADC, Molitico for data insights, and the Community Pulse, which specializes in polling solutions.

According to Abed Ayoub, ADC's national executive director, Arab Americans have increasingly gravitated toward Stein owing to her advocacy for Palestinian human rights and her opposition to the Israeli military's actions in Gaza since October.

In a post on the social media platform X, he said: "Green Party candidate Dr. Jill Stein's strong polling at 45.3 percent, akin to the previous poll, demonstrates consistent community support, largely because of her vocal stance on Palestinian human rights."

Stein has been a favorite among Arab American voters since ADC's last opinion poll in May, where she led with 25 percent support. In comparison, President Joe Biden, who withdrew from the presidential race in July, and Republican candidate Donald Trump, polled at 7 percent and 2 percent, respectively.

In 2022, 2.2 million people in the US reported having Arab ancestry in that year's Arab Community Survey. The majority of Arab Americans are native-born, and 85 percent of Arabs in the US are citizens.

While the community traces its roots to every Arab country, the majority of Arab Americans have ancestral ties to Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Iraq. The top four states by Arab American population size are California, Florida, Minnesota and Michigan.

Ayoub noted in his post that Biden's declining popularity among Arab Americans was "due to the retiring president's staunch support for Israel's continued actions in Gaza."

Stein has consistently criticized Biden and his administration for their unwavering



Arab Americans are gravitating towards the US Green Party's presidential candidate Jill Stein, bottom, for her opposition to the war in Gaza, main, while others, frustrated by President Joe Biden's stance on Israel, are backing the 'uncommitted' vote movement, below. AFP

### FASTFACTS

- Arab Americans live in all 50 states, but up to 95% live in metropolitan areas.
- New York, Detroit, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, DC, and Minneapolis are the top 6 metropolitan areas.
- Nearly 75% of all Arab Americans live in just 12 states: California, Michigan, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio, Minnesota, Virginia, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.
- Nearly a quarter of Arab Americans are Muslim, while the religious background of the rest are Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant.



conflict. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei vowed revenge, warning Israel that it had "paved the way for your harsh punishment."

Netanyahu's government has neither claimed responsibility nor commented on Haniyeh's death. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Washington was "not aware of or involved in" the killing.

However, the day before Haniyeh's death, Israel claimed responsibility for killing

Fouad Shukr, a top Hezbollah commander, in an airstrike on southern Beirut. Hezbollah has promised a "definite" response.

Whether or not the US was involved, Biden's Middle East policy has faced sharp criticism since October, with human rights groups urging the administration to halt arms transfers to Israel.

In late April, Amnesty International reported that US weapons supplied to Israel had been "used in serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and in a manner inconsistent with US law and policy."

In May, the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, requested arrest warrants for Netanyahu, his defense minister, and three Hamas leaders, including

Haniyeh, for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Chris Habiby, ADC's national government affairs and advocacy director, says the poll placing Stein ahead among Arab Americans revealed two key insights. "First, President Biden is deeply unpopular among Arab Americans," he told Arab News.

"Second, being anti-genocide is a winning position for our communities across the country."

Habiby said the poll reflected "what we have been demanding for the 10 months and 300 days this genocide has been ongoing — an immediate, permanent ceasefire and an arms embargo on all weapons being sent to Israel."

Biden faced a significant defeat in the Michigan Democratic primary in February when a majority of voters in Dearborn, a city with a large Arab and Muslim population, chose to vote "uncommitted" rather than for him.

Dearborn Mayor Abdullah Hammoud publicly supported the "uncommitted" vote movement, citing Biden's policy

on the Israel-Gaza conflict, according to USA Today.

In contrast, Stein has actively courted the Arab American vote in Michigan and beyond.

In an interview with Arab News in June, Stein pledged that, if elected, she would halt military support for Israel's "apartheid government" and push for a genuine peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

"Arabs and Muslims have been taken for granted in America. They are victims of racial profiling, Islamophobia and violence," she said.

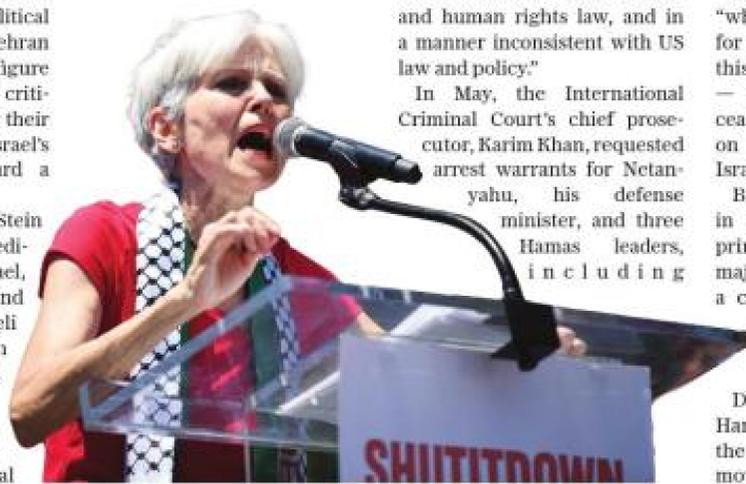
"There is an absolute violation of our constitutional rights by the government to shut down our dialogue. People are trying to grapple with this genocide we are seeing live and in real-time."

Stein stressed that it is "against US law to send weapons to Israel, which is violating humanitarian rights and interfering in the delivery of humanitarian aid."

Despite Stein's growing popularity among Arab American communities, other presidential candidates still have an opportunity to gain more support before November.

ADC's poll indicates that, in addition to the 27.5 percent of respondents who support Harris, 18 percent are undecided, and 6 percent said they do not plan to vote.

"With nearly 1 in 4 voters either undecided or inclined to sit out the election, there is plenty of room for Harris or any other candidate to earn more support from the community if the right positions are taken," wrote ADC's Ayoub on X.





Al-Zahrani's creations, from towering trees to delicate deer, are a testament to his skill and imagination. SPA

### CREATIVITY

## Saudi artist breathing new life into metal waste with innovative sculptures

Arab News Riyadh

Majed Al-Zahrani, a visionary artist from Baha, has breathed new life into discarded metal, transforming it into captivating sculptures and paintings.

With a keen eye for detail and a passion for creativity, Al-Zahrani has carved a unique niche for himself in the world of art, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

Using nothing more than simple tools, the young artist has crafted intricate metal sculptures that defy their humble

### HIGHLIGHT

Majed Al-Zahrani, a visionary artist from Baha, said that he hopes to inspire young people to explore their creativity and contribute to environmental conservation through recycling.

origins. Al-Zahrani's creations, from towering trees to delicate deer, are a testament to his skill and imagination.

Al-Zahrani said that his artistic

journey began in 2013 when he started experimenting with scrap metal. Over the years, he has developed a mobile workshop equipped with tools he has designed and built himself.

His commitment to recycling and sustainability is evident in his choice of materials, as he repurposes construction waste to create stunning works of art, SPA reported. Al-Zahrani said that he hopes to inspire young people to explore their creativity and contribute to environmental conservation through recycling.

### SPORT

## Two falcons fetch big bucks at international auction in Riyadh

Enthusiasts bid SR170,000 on Polish falcons as event promotes falconry heritage, conservation

Arab News Riyadh

The first auction night of this year's International Falcon Breeders Auction saw a large crowd of falcon enthusiasts gather to witness the auction of two exceptional falcons.

The event, organized by the Saudi Falcons Club, is being held at its headquarters in Malham, north of Riyadh, and will continue until Aug. 24.

It features more than 35 elite falcon production farms from 16 countries showcasing their prized birds for sale, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

A Falco cherrug, known locally as a Hur, from the Polish Fire Falcons farm, commanded a bid of SR65,000 (\$17,320), followed by another falcon from the same farm that sold for SR105,000,



The auction features more than 35 elite falcon production farms from 16 countries showcasing their prized birds for sale. SPA

bringing the total for the evening to SR170,000.

Twelve auction nights will be held throughout the event. Competitions and auctions are streamed live on TV channels and the club's social media platforms.

The club announces the falcons on offer before each auction night, SPA reported.

With a history of exceeding

SR18 million in sales over the past three years, the auction introduces new international breeding farms and fosters collaboration among producers and investors.

The event aligns with the Saudi Falcons Club's commitment to preserving falconry heritage and promoting the Kingdom as a global center for the sport.

## TheSpace

### Saudi budget is focused on improving services and diversifying the economy

TALAT ZAKI HAFIZ



Saudi Arabia's budget results for Q2 and the first half of this year, recently released by the Ministry of Finance, revealed a financial deficit of SR15.3 billion (\$4 billion) and SR27.7 billion, respectively. Despite those deficits, the budget results reflect the Kingdom's strong financial position, especially when considering that the government's reserves total SR393.9 billion, and the current account totals SR101 billion for the six months ending June 30, 2024.

The government's strong financial position has supported its generous spending on public services including healthcare, social development, education, municipal services, infrastructure, and transportation, which amounted to SR321 billion for the first half of this year, compared to SR277 billion for the same period last year, an increase of 16 percent.

This increase can be attributed to the government's ongoing efforts to improve public services provided to citizens and residents in line with the Quality of Life Program, which aims to improve the standard of living for everyone in the Kingdom.

The government has also focused its spending on capital expenditure, which amounted to SR99 billion for the first half of this year, compared to SR69 billion for the same period last year, an increase of 43 percent. This significant rise in CAPEX is due to continuous government support for

various strategic projects aimed at economic diversification in line with Saudi Vision 2030.

Total revenues amounted to SR353.6 billion in Q2 and SR647 billion in the first half of 2024, compared to SR314.8 billion and SR595.8 billion for the same periods last year, increases of 12 percent and 9 percent respectively.

Oil revenues came to SR394.9 billion in the first half of 2024, compared to SR358 billion in the same period last year, an increase of 10 percent. Non-oil activities generated

SR252 billion in the first half of 2024, compared to SR237 billion in the same period last year, up 6 percent.

According to the General Authority for Statistics, non-oil and government activities grew by 4.4 percent and 3.6 percent respectively in Q2 of 2024, while real GDP shrank by 0.4 percent compared to Q2 of 2023. In contrast, the seasonally adjusted real GDP increased by 1.4 percent in Q2 of 2024.

Significantly, oil revenues have improved this year, despite the Kingdom's official voluntary oil cuts of 1.5 million barrels per day, in addition to the agreements made within OPEC+.

Public debt amounted to SR1,149 billion by the end of Q2 2024, reflecting an increase of 9 percent compared to SR1,050 billion at the beginning of the period. The majority of that debt – around 60 percent – is domestic.

Despite the budget deficits in Q1 and Q2 of 2024, the government's financial position remains very strong in terms of liquidity, and that supports its efforts to improve public services and diversify the economy in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

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

## The Day's FIGURES

### KSRELIEF PROJECTS IN YEMEN

August 2024



Source: ksrelief.org

## Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

### Awareness

#### Riyadh Gamethon challenge to boost financial literacy

Saudi Arabia's Social Development Bank is organizing a game design challenge to create titles aimed at raising financial awareness and promoting savings.

The Gamethon event will take place at Riyadh Boulevard from Aug. 21-23. It will bring together innovators, developers, designers and programmers to build games focused on financial literacy, savings and financial planning.

With a prize pool of SR100,000 (\$26,600), the event aligns with the Kingdom's efforts to support the promising growth sector. SPA Riyadh

### Helping hand

#### KSrelief extends humanitarian aid efforts worldwide

Saudi aid agency KSrelief distributed 1,795 food parcels to 12,565 people in Yemen.

The Al-Amal Charitable Bakery project in Lebanon distributed 25,000 bread bags to 12,500 families in one week, including Syrians, Palestinians, and Lebanese.

In Medan, Indonesia, KSrelief project has completed six heart surgeries and six catheterization procedures.

In Cambodia, KSrelief completed its project for facial and jaw surgeries and head and neck tumors, conducting 69 operations within one week. SPA Riyadh

### Border control

#### Kingdom arrests 20,471 illegals in one week

Saudi authorities arrested 20,471 people in one week for breaching residency, work and border security regulations.

A total of 12,972 people were arrested for violations of residency laws, while 4,812 were held over illegal border crossing attempts, and a further 2,687 for labor-related issues.

The Saudi Ministry of Interior said that anyone found to be facilitating illegal entry to the Kingdom could face imprisonment for a maximum of 15 years, a fine of up to SR1 million (\$260,000), as well as confiscation of vehicles and property. SPA Riyadh

## News Saudi Arabia

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

# Edtech platform sharpens Saudi children's language portfolio

Empowerment of youth a common thread between Saudi Arabia and China, says CEO

Nada Alturki Riyadh

**An online teaching platform is strengthening Saudi children's educational journeys while also unleashing the potential of local and international educators.**

Cindy Mi, an English teacher for 25 years who founded VIPKid a decade ago and brought the company to Saudi Arabia about two years ago, told Arab News: "I've always been a student and a teacher myself. The goal is to build a global classroom to allow more children to get access to best quality language learning educational experiences ... so they can be ready for their more globalized future."

Since its founding in 2013, VIPKid has helped more than 1 million children worldwide learn English and delivered over 280 million live online classes in English and Mandarin.

The CEO was inspired to expand the platform to the region after speaking at a Future Investment Initiative session about the future of education with Saudi Ambassador to the US Princess Reema bint Bandar.

Reflecting on her discussion with Princess Reema, Mi said: "Her vision of empowering women and especially the youth of the Kingdom for the future was truly an inspiration."

She added that Saudi Vision 2030's goal to improve education was also part of the inspiration.

"We are very happy and honored to support the initiative by providing the children of the Kingdom with the highest quality language tutors from the US or from China, learning Mandarin Chinese and English, so that the children can be well prepared for the future."

Over the years, VIPKid has built more than 10 core language-learning modules. It also offers over 1,800 supplemental elective



**Cindy Mi is an English teacher for 25 years who founded the online learning platform VIPKid a decade ago and brought the company to Saudi Arabia about two years ago.** AN photo by Abdulrhman Bin Shalhoub/Supplied

classes for learning English and Mandarin.

VIPKid launched a pilot training program for local English teachers in 2023. It ended last month, and was designed to raise the standard for both proficiency and pedagogy.

Mi added that VIPKid's multicultural programs allow experienced teachers from all over the world to meet with their Saudi counterparts to share best practices, improve subject matter competency and gain confidence in the classroom.



"We work with partners like government bodies, educational institutions and other tech companies so that we can help them launch similar programs, especially in the field of teacher training."

In order to help students learn better at school, teachers also need to learn themselves, which

requires investment, Mi said. "I think the Kingdom has invested a lot (in) teachers ... it is very helpful for them to improve their language proficiency with a peer from other parts of the world."

According to Mi, VIPKid's classrooms are a safe space to make mistakes and teachers encourage students in ways that promote confidence. "That confidence would be the light in the learning," she added. "It would be the lighthouse, and then the students would say, 'Oh, I can do this. I can speak very confidently.'"

Noting the advancements and changes brought about by technology and artificial intelligence, Mi said that "the human part is always the most important."

**I can totally see so many women in the Kingdom, in the region, teach children around the globe and share the wonderful culture with the world.**

Cindy Mi VIPKid CEO

LEARNING FROM PAST

## Saudi ambassador pays tribute to Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Arab News Japan

Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Japan Dr. Ghazi Faisal Binzagr said that he was honored to represent the Kingdom for the first time at the peace memorial ceremonies this week in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in memory of the atomic bombs dropped on both cities 79 years ago.

"It was both a privilege and an honor to attend the ceremonies. I admire how both cities have turned a tragic historical event in which two cities were destroyed, and many human souls perished, into a profound

message of peace and hope to the world and humanity," Binzagr told Arab News Japan.

Binzagr stressed the need for global responsibility in eliminating weapons of mass destruction. "We must not forget the horrors of these weapons," he said, "and we must all unite in our efforts to rid the world of them without any exceptions or excuses."

During his visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Saudi ambassador was deeply moved by the survivors' stories of loss and tragedy. Their resilience, he said, is

**During his visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Saudi Ambassador Binzagr was deeply moved by the survivors' stories of loss and tragedy.** AN photo



a powerful testament to the strength of the human spirit and the importance of learning from our past.

"At a time when many conflicts are escalating in many regions around the world, we must all stand for fundamental resolutions that honor human dignity, ensure justice for all, and support ecosystems that bring opportunity and growth," he said.

Binzagr said that humanity must use wisdom in ensuring dialogue and bridge-building, not destruction and extension.

**At a time when many conflicts are escalating in many regions around the world, we must all stand for fundamental resolutions that honor human dignity, ensure justice for all, and support ecosystems that bring opportunity and growth.**

Dr. Ghazi Faisal Binzagr  
Saudi ambassador to Japan

"I deeply respect what I saw as a message of forgiveness and reconciliation from Japan's Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Wisdom rests in remembering

our painful memories, not to preserve them but to transcend them into something better. In particular, the children's message was impressive. It reflected that the Hibakusha memories inspired the new generations of children to be part of building a better world."

He thanked the Japanese organizers in both cities and "the many volunteers who made the experience profound and enriching. Their dedication and hard work were instrumental in making this experience so meaningful and impactful, and for that, we are truly grateful."

An injured man comforts his daughter in front of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip after several members of his family were killed in an Israeli strike in Nusirat. AFP



AGGRESSION

## Egypt: Israel lacks political will to end Gaza war

Reuters, AFP Cairo

Egypt said on Saturday that Israel's "deliberate killing" of unarmed Palestinians shows that it lacks a political will to end the war in Gaza.

Egypt's Foreign Ministry statement came after more than 100 Palestinians were killed and

dozens wounded in an Israeli strike on a Gaza school sheltering displaced people, according to the Palestinian news agency.

Turkiye denounced the "new crime against humanity" after Israel's deadly strike on the school in Gaza, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

"Israel has committed a new

crime against humanity by massacring more than a hundred civilians who had taken refuge in a school," the ministry said.

"This attack shows once again that the Netanyahu government wants to sabotage permanent ceasefire negotiations.

"The international actors who do not take measures to stop

Israel are making themselves complicit in these crimes."

A spokesperson for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, urged Washington to put an end to the "blind support that leads to the killing of thousands of innocent civilians, including children, women, and the elderly."

Speaking to Al-Jazeera television, Khalil Al-Hayya, the head of the Hamas team for the indirect ceasefire talks with Israel, said statements of condemnation were no longer sufficient.

"Dismiss (Israeli) ambassadors, close down embassies, and sever ties with the occupation," he said.

## REGIONAL THREAT Ali Sistani warns of Middle East escalation

AFP Baghdad

Iraqi cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani warned on Saturday of the risk of a regional escalation with potentially "catastrophic consequences" following the killing of two militant leaders.

Sistani also urged an end to the "genocidal war" in Gaza, where the civil defense agency said an Israeli airstrike on a school housing displaced Palestinians killed nearly 100 people.

"Once again, the Israeli occupation army has committed a huge massacre ... adding to its series of ongoing crimes" in Gaza, Sistani said in a statement since the start of the 10-month-old war.

The recent high-profile killings of two leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah increased the danger of "major clashes" that could have "catastrophic consequences" for the region, he warned.

"We once again call on the world to stand against this terrible brutality," Sistani said, urging Muslims "to unite in order to press for an end to the genocidal war" in Gaza.

On July 31, Hamas's political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, was killed in an attack blamed on Israel in the Iranian capital.

It came hours after Israel killed Hezbollah senior military commander Fouad Shukur in a strike on the Lebanese group's stronghold in south Beirut.

GROWING RISKS

# Lebanese govt accuses Israel of intending to prolong war, expand its scope

• Airstrikes, shelling target towns in southern Lebanon • Hezbollah targets Israeli military gatherings

Najla Houssari Beirut

**The Israeli army intensified its hostilities on Saturday against border villages in southern Lebanon, destroying and flattening several neighborhoods.**

The Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned Israel's "disregard for international law and humanitarian standards" in a statement on Saturday.

It said that "the deliberate killing of large numbers of unarmed Palestinian civilians in the attack against the Al-Taba'een school in the Gaza Strip is clear evidence of Israel's intention to prolong the war and expand its scope, especially as international mediators intensify efforts to reach a ceasefire."

The ministry said that the Israeli "occupation army's systematic and indiscriminate shelling, and the killing of children and civilians, clearly demonstrate the

Israeli government's disregard for international law and humanitarian standards."

It urged "the international community and relevant countries to take a unified, serious and effective stance to protect the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and put an end to this humanitarian catastrophe.

"The first step to avoiding de-escalation and a wider conflict in the region is to halt the aggression on Gaza and adopt a peaceful diplomatic path by taking serious steps to obligate Israel to accept a two-state solution in line with relevant international resolutions," the ministry added.

It circulated a document from the Lebanese government to its diplomatic missions abroad, containing "the principles aimed at achieving long-term stability in southern Lebanon."

The ministry requested its missions to "conduct the necessary communications in their respective countries, both bilaterally and within the councils of

Fire engulfs a car targeted by an Israeli strike in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon on Friday. The Israeli strike killed Hamas members from the nearby Ain Al-Helweh Palestinian refugee camp. AFP



Arab ambassadors, to present the Lebanese stance outlined in the document."

The document stated that "the Lebanese government believes that a full-scale war can still be avoided, and it is committed to protecting the safety and security of its citizens, retaining its right to self-defense under international law.

"At the same time, the government believes that de-escalation is the most appropriate path to avoid a destructive cycle of violence, which would be more challenging to contain."

The document said that "the government cannot act alone. The international community must play a decisive and immediate role in calming tensions and curbing the ongoing Israeli aggression against Lebanon."

The text added: "To achieve de-escalation, the Lebanese government proposes a systematic and organized approach that would provide an alternative to the current chaos. This approach would be purposeful, with the primary goal of restoring stability."

The government statement also

demanding the "full and equitable implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. There is a need for immediate de-escalation and cessation of provocative actions to reduce risks and protect civilians.

"Any activity within this framework should not obstruct the full re-commitment to Resolution 1701 or increase the risk of a full-scale conflict," it said.

The document also said that "the Lebanese government believes that a ceasefire in Gaza would immediately calm tensions in southern Lebanon, paving the way for long-term sustainable stability. In this context, the Lebanese government supports President Biden's agreement to ceasefire in Gaza and calls for its immediate implementation following Resolution 2735."

The Lebanese reaction came as a local TV team survived an Israeli raid on the Majdal Selm village this morning.

Israeli artillery shelling targeted Houla, while Israeli

warplanes raided several houses in Tayr Harfa, Tyre.

The Health Ministry emergency operations center said that "the Israeli artillery shelling with phosphorus shells on Kfarkila has resulted in a severe case of asphyxiation for one resident, who required hospitalization."

The destructive artillery shelling flattened several houses in Aitaroun, while Israeli warplanes hit Aita Al-Shaab.

Hezbollah separately said in a statement that it destroyed "spy equipment in the Israeli military Ramia site with an attack drone."

Hezbollah released footage of its operation targeting "a newly established Israeli military position in Khirbet Manot."

It also announced targeting "a gathering of Israeli soldiers in Tel Sha'ar with rocket weapons."

Israeli warplanes continued to fly at medium altitude over southern villages, extending to Sidon and Beirut.

## News Middle East

PEACE AND JUSTICE

# UK pro-Gaza MPs set to team up in bid to 'make constituents heard'

5 independents, including ex-Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, in talks to form parliamentary bloc

Arab News London

**A group of independent MPs elected to Parliament in the UK for their stances on Gaza are set to formally team up.**

The five MPs, including former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, were elected on July 4 on separate platforms, but are now in talks to create an official bloc that would see them match Reform UK and outnumber the Green Party.

Corbyn, who had the whip removed as a Labour MP in 2020, a year after leading the party to a defeat at the 2019 general election,

Former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn addresses protesters in London. File/AFP



**I was elected by my constituents to speak out against the genocide in Gaza, against child poverty and against the demonization of migrants and refugees.**

Jeremy Corbyn  
Former Labour leader

said: "I was elected by my constituents to speak out against the genocide in Gaza, against child poverty and against the demonization of migrants and refugees."

"I am proud to work alongside my

fellow independent colleagues to make sure our constituents' voices are heard.

"This country is demanding real change — and the more MPs who are prepared to stand up for

international law, defend refugees and oppose the far-right, the better. We are a movement for peace and justice, and we are not going away."

Shockat Adam, who defeated senior Labour figure Jonathan

Ashworth in a shock result in Leicester South, told The House magazine that the group is keeping "all options are open" for cooperation.

Adam said: "I had never met any of these individuals before. Like myself, I don't think they'd heard of me, and I don't know all of them either. So, we're just getting to know each other."

"We have commonalities, especially on our foreign policies, et cetera, but we're just navigating where we are politically on lots of things. We are working together on issues that we have common ground on."

He told the BBC that the five are

"looking at options that would give us more access to the levers of power."

In addition to looking to work with each other, they have also looked elsewhere for support, writing to a separate group of seven MPs who recently had the whip withdrawn for voting to scrap a cap on child benefits in the UK.

The group of five independents said they "look forward to working closely" with the suspended Labour MPs.

However, it is unlikely that there will be a coalition between the two groups, with the suspended seven all expected to remain Labour MPs when their suspensions are lifted.

OUTRAGE

## Australian FM joins condemnation of Israeli minister's call to starve Gazans

Arab News London

Australia's foreign minister has joined growing condemnation of an Israeli minister for claiming that starving millions of people in Gaza might be "justified and moral."

Penny Wong said the comments by Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich, if put into action, would amount to a war crime. The Guardian reported on Saturday.

On Wednesday, Smotrich sparked outrage after saying: "No one in the world will allow us to starve 2 million people, even though it might be justified and moral in order to free the hostages."

On Saturday, Wong said on X: "The deliberate starvation of civilians is a war crime. There is no justification for it, ever. Australia joins international partners, including the UK, Germany and France, in

condemning the comments made by Israeli Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich."

She repeated Australian demands for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

Simon Birmingham, Australia's shadow foreign minister, denounced Smotrich's remarks as "repugnant," adding: "We maintain our consistent call for respect of international law and humanitarian needs."

"The implication in Bezael Smotrich's comments is repugnant. Thankfully the comments do not reflect Israeli policy and nor should they ever do so."

The Health Ministry in Gaza said on Saturday that at least 39,790 people had been killed in the war between Israel and Hamas, now in its 11th month.

The toll includes 91 deaths in the previous 48 hours, according to ministry figures, which also list 92,002 people as having been wounded in the Gaza



Displaced Palestinians make their way as they flee the eastern part of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip following an Israeli army evacuation order. Reuters

Strip since the war began when Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7.

The latest tolls do not appear to include Saturday's pre-dawn Israeli strike on a school housing displaced people in Gaza City.

More than 1.9 million of Gaza's pre-war population of 2.3 million have been driven from their homes, fleeing repeatedly across the territory to escape offensives.

Most are now crowded into ramshackle tent camps in an area about 50 sq. km on the Gaza coast.

With sanitation systems collapsed, diseases have run rampant, health officials say, and

humanitarian groups are trying to feed the population.

The UN says a half-million Palestinians are facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity.

ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

## Militia infighting kills at least 9 in Libya's capital

AP Cairo

Clashes between two heavily armed militia groups in Libya's capital terrorized residents and killed about a dozen people, the latest bout of violence in the North African nation, officials said on Saturday.

The hours-long clashes,

which involved heavy weapons, occurred on Friday in Tripoli's eastern neighborhood of Tajoura between Rahba Al-Durua militia, which is led by warlord Bashir Khalafallah — known as Al-Baqrah — and another militia Al-Shahida Sabriya, the officials added.

The Health Ministry's Ambulance and Emergency

Services said at least 9 people were killed and 16 others were wounded in the hours-long clashes.

The clashes stemmed from an attempted assassination of Al-Baqrah on Friday, which his militia blamed on Al-Shahida Sabriya, according to local media reports.

SriLankan Airlines



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POST-HASINA DHAKA

# Students take charge of Bangladeshi capital as police 'disappear'

Cops went on strike after prime minister ousted on Monday

Shehab Sumon Dhaka

Nearly a week on from the sudden collapse of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government, police are nowhere to be seen in the country's capital, Dhaka. Students and volunteers have stepped in as substitutes in an attempt to stop the city descending into chaos.

The Bangladesh Police Association, which represents 150,000 of the country's police officers, announced its strike on Tuesday, a day after the ouster of Hasina's government by student-led protesters.

The lack of police is one of the country's newly appointed interim government's top priorities.

"There is an absence of law enforcement," Farida Akhter, adviser to the caretaker Cabinet, told Arab News on Saturday. "We are in a transition period at the moment. Normalcy can't be restored unless law enforcers return to work."

But many police fear retribution and punishment from the new administration and the student movement for the force with which they tried to crush the uprising. Hundreds were killed in the weeks-long protests.

The BPA has since apologized and claimed police had been "forced" to open fire.

"We are working to build confidence among members of the law enforcement agency," said Akhter, who was sworn



Students and volunteers have stepped in as substitutes in an attempt to stop the city descending into chaos. AFP

in on Thursday evening along with other members of the caretaker government, which is led by Nobel-winning economist Mohammed Yunus.

Reports of robbery, attacks on minorities and their places of worship, arson, destruction of government buildings, and other criminal activity have been rife over the past few days.

"We are concerned about this issue and want to address this first. My colleague in charge of the Home Ministry is working on this. We hope to see some positive development this week," Akhter said. "In many cases, community members and students have joined hands

## HIGHLIGHT

Many police fear retribution and punishment from the new administration and the student movement for the force with which they tried to crush the uprising.

to protect others ... It's very significant."

Sabikun Nahar, a student at Eden Mohila College in Dhaka, was trying to manage traffic in the Dhanmondi area of Dhaka on Saturday.

"The police have disappeared from the scene ... That's why students are volunteering to

manage the traffic. As soon as the police take over, we will return to classrooms," she told Arab News.

With more than 20 million residents, Dhaka is widely considered the world's most densely populated urban area and relies on thousands of police wardens to manage its severe congestion.

"We are asking people on the streets to abide by the traffic rules," Nahar said. "But managing the traffic is not our job. The sooner the police come back, the better for all of us."

Dhaka residents, meanwhile, are focused on the struggle to keep their neighborhoods safe.

CONFLICT

# Russia launches new operation to halt advancing Ukrainian troops

AFP Moscow

Moscow on Saturday mounted a "counter-terror operation" in three border regions adjoining Ukraine to halt Kyiv's advance deeper into Russia and warned that the fighting endangered a nuclear power plant.

Ukrainian units stormed into Russia's western Kursk region on Tuesday morning in a shock attack, the largest and most successful cross-border offensive by Kyiv of the two-and-a-half year conflict.

Its troops have advanced several kilometers and Russia's army has rushed in reserves and extra equipment — though neither side

has given precise details on the forces they have committed.

Russia's nuclear agency on Saturday warned the Ukrainian attack posed a "direct threat" to the nearby Kursk nuclear power station.

At least 16,000 civilians requested state assistance to leave their homes in Russian border areas, where emergency aid has been ferried in, and extra trains to the capital Moscow have been put on for people fleeing.

"The war has come to us," one woman from the border zone said at a Moscow train station on Friday, declining to give her name.

Russia's army confirmed

## SPEEDREAD

Ukrainian units stormed into Russia's western Kursk region on Tuesday morning in a shock attack, the largest and most successful cross-border offensive by Kyiv of the two-and-a-half year conflict.

Saturday it will still fighting the Ukrainian incursion.

It said Kyiv initially crossed the border with around 1,000 troops, around 20 armored vehicles and 11 tanks. Though it claimed Saturday to have destroyed five times that much military hardware so far.

## Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

### Security

#### Beijing warns Philippines over disputed reef

China warned the Philippines on Saturday to stop "infringement" around a disputed reef in the South China Sea, after the Philippines said one of its planes was harassed by the Chinese air force.

"We sternly warn the Philippines to immediately stop its infringement, provocation, distortion and hype," the Southern Theater Command of the People's Liberation Army said in a statement, adding that "China has indisputable sovereignty over Huangyan Island (Scarborough Shoal) and adjacent waters." AFP

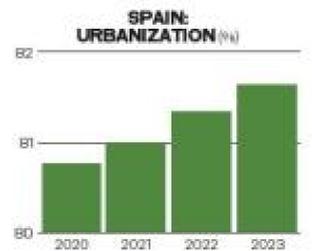
### Diplomacy

#### India and Maldives look to reset ties

India's foreign minister has called the Maldives a "priority" for New Delhi on his first trip to the archipelago nation since its pro-China president expelled Indian troops.

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said he was in the Maldives to "take stock of our defense and security engagement," months after President Mohamed Muizzu's administration signed a military assistance pact with Beijing. Known as a luxury holiday destination with pristine white sand beaches and secluded resorts, the atoll nation has also become a geopolitical hotspot. AFP

## The Day's FIGURES



Source: Statista

## What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

### Crude Nation

RAUL GALLEGOS

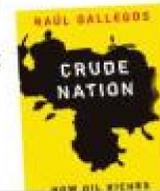
Beneath Venezuelan soil lies an ocean of crude — the world's largest reserves — an oil patch that shaped the nature of the global energy business.

Unfortunately, a dysfunctional anti-American government controls this vast resource and has used its wealth to foster voter support, ultimately wreaking economic havoc.

"Crude Nation" reveals how

mismangement has led to Venezuela's economic ruin and turned the country into a cautionary tale for the world.

Raul Gallegos, a former Caracas-based oil correspondent, paints a picture both vivid and analytical of the country's economic decline, the government's foolhardy economic policies, and the wrecked lives of Venezuelans, according to a review on goodreads.com.



### Investigation

#### Sinaloa leader flew 'against his will' to US

The US ambassador to Mexico has revealed new information about the arrest of Sinaloa cartel co-founder Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, details of which remain murky two weeks later.

Zambada, 76, was arrested in the US after flying there on July 28 along with Joaquin Guzman Lopez, the son of former Sinaloa leader Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman.

Zambada was taken "against his will" while Guzman "voluntarily surrendered." AFP

### Political crisis

#### Maduro says no negotiating with opposition

President Nicolas Maduro has ruled out negotiating with opposition leader Maria Corina Machado after he appeared before Venezuela's Supreme Court, asking the country's top judicial body to ratify his disputed reelection.

He was responding to Machado's offer of "guarantees and incentives" for a "negotiated transition" of power that would see him leave office, in an interview as she continues to challenge the July 28 vote. AFP

هذه الدنيا كتابٌ أنت فيها الفكرُ  
(الهادي آدم)

YOUR DAILY ARABIC PROVERB  
This world is a book, and you are its thoughts.  
Al-Hadi Adam  
(Sudanese poet)

# Opinion

## Biden looks for legacy on foreign front

ANDREW HAMMOND



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For full version, log on to [www.arabnews.com/opinion](http://www.arabnews.com/opinion)

**J**oe Biden viewed the Asia-Pacific region as key to his foreign policy when he took office as president in 2021. However, the crisis in Gaza and the wider Middle East since late 2023, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, has shifted his administration's focus in consequential, unexpected ways.

The fact that the Middle East remains uppermost in the minds of the Biden team was once again illustrated when US Secretary of State Antony Blinken cut short by a day a recent trip to Asia so that he could be present at a White House meeting between Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on July 25.

Nonetheless, with about six months remaining in office, Biden and Blinken still seek to craft a foreign policy legacy in the vast Asia-Pacific arena. It was regarding this, and reassurances about US commitment to the region, that Blinken engaged with allies during his recent trip to the region. The Biden team's achievements include

the development of deeper partnerships across the region since 2021, including with India, Japan, Australia, South Korea, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Moreover, in October 2021 Biden said the US on his watch would defend Taiwan if China attacked, which was an apparent departure from Washington's long-held foreign policy position of "strategic ambiguity" on this issue. While the White House asserted there had been "no change in our policy," Chinese President Xi Jinping complained the US was seeking "all-around containment, encirclement, and suppression against us."

This was the context that shaped Blinken's trip last month. It was his 18th to the region since taking office in 2021 and took place very soon after Biden's withdrawal from the 2024 presidential race. The overall stated goal of the visit, which might be his last as secretary of state, was "advancing a free and open" Asia-Pacific.

There was also a great need to offer reassurances about US policy on the region

under the next president. Allies in Asia have significant concerns about what a second Trump presidency might bring, not least because while he was in office between 2017 and 2021 he indicated that the six-decade-long US military presence in Japan and South Korea might be reduced or eliminated entirely.

The Biden team, meanwhile, has plans to establish in Japan a new Joint Force Headquarters for the almost 55,000 US military personnel stationed there. This is proposed as a counterpoint to Japan's planned Joint Operations Command for its own armed forces.

Blinken's visit in July, his longest tour of the region as secretary of state, encompassed visits to six countries. It began in Laos, where he attended the annual ASEAN Regional Forum alongside the foreign ministers of ASEAN member states and regional powers such as China, Australia, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and India.

He then headed to Vietnam to offer condolences following the death of

communist leader Nguyen Phu Trong. Last year, Washington and Hanoi upgraded their ties to the level of a comprehensive strategic partnership.

Blinken also visited Tokyo, where he and US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin held "2+2" talks with their Japanese counterparts, during which they concluded that China's "foreign policy seeks to reshape the international order for its own benefit at the expense of others."

Austin also joined Blinken in the Philippines for more "2+2" talks, given that Manila, like Tokyo, has a mutual defense treaty with the US. The final two important stops on the tour were Singapore and Mongolia.

All this activity reinforces the fact that Biden and Blinken have not lost sight of their longer-term ambition to intensify the US "pivot" toward the Asia-Pacific region. This, despite the fact that Biden's greatest international legacy as president might be his determined defense of Ukraine, and his wider statecraft that has helped to strengthen the fragile Western alliance.

With about six months remaining in office, Biden and Blinken seek to craft a foreign policy legacy in the vast Asia-Pacific arena



The chaos in Sudan mirrors previous conflicts in Africa, yet the implications of this one are very alarming

## Sudan needs peace now

HAFED AL-GHWELL



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For full version, log on to [www.arabnews.com/opinion](http://www.arabnews.com/opinion)

**T**he civil war in Sudan that began in April 2023 is on the verge of plunging the entire Horn of Africa into turmoil. With nearly 10 million people internally displaced and more than 25 million facing acute hunger, the humanitarian toll is already catastrophic and continues to escalate.

This tragedy stems from an unending cycle of failed peace initiatives and the intensification of the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces. Ironically, each attempt at peace seems only to exacerbate the war, plunging civilians deeper into despair.

The chaos in Sudan mirrors previous conflicts in Africa, yet the implications of this one are very alarming. The US special envoy for Sudan, Tom Perriello, has warned that the civil war could devolve into a multi-decade version of "Somalia on steroids," potentially transforming Sudan into a permanent failed state.

As the conflict continues to rage, the risk

grows of a regional conflagration threatening to pull in neighboring countries such as Ethiopia, South Sudan, Chad, Libya, and the Central African Republic. The geopolitical fallout of this could be immense, with illicit flows of drugs, weapons, and fighters destabilizing an already volatile African continent.

Al-Fashir, a heavily populated Sudanese Armed Forces stronghold in Darfur, exemplifies the potentially dire consequences of the conflict. As the Rapid Support Forces advance on the city, which is home to nearly 3 million people, aid groups fear widespread atrocities including gender-based violence, torture, and massacres.

Across Sudan, civilians are caught in the crossfire and face relentless bloodshed and deprivation. Attempts to provide aid are thwarted by the combatants' strategic embargoes. The situation is dire. The US State Department has confirmed that both sides have committed war crimes, with the Rapid Support Forces and its allied

militias accused of engaging in forms of ethnic cleansing.

Despite repeated international warnings and sanctions, the hunger for military advantage continues to outweigh the desire for peace. Neither side is prepared to commit to any grand bargains in the interests of peace, or even a temporary ceasefire that freezes this brutal conflict and allows for more sophisticated diplomacy to take place while the guns grow cold.

It cannot be overstated how rapidly the window of opportunity for influential actors to enforce a credible peace is closing.

In the absence of a credible, enforceable and widely accepted peace process, Sudan risks emulating Libya's fragmented political future or becoming a perma-failed state akin to Somalia. If the past few years of UN mediation in Libya has taught the international community anything, it is that waiting for both sides to fight to a stalemate and then seeking bargains with the elite among this unelected and unaccountable lot will only create a new

ruling class as disconnected from the public as the current belligerents.

If Sudan is to find peace and keep it, therefore, the public must also have a significant and meaningful voice in any resolution. Failure to ensure this will only result in grave consequences that extend far beyond Sudan.

Recent history is rife with examples of how conflicts can easily spill over borders, as seen with how the turmoil in Libya has affected the Sahel region, and how the inconclusive war against Daesh has left splinters active and able to destabilize parts of West, Central, and Southern Africa.

Sudan, with its population of about 50 million people, poses an even greater risk. The flow of refugees, fighters, and weapons could disrupt fragile states across Africa and beyond. Such instability would severely hamper efforts to counter extremism, with Sudan likely serving as a haven for terrorist groups — as was the case with Al-Qaeda during the 1990s.

## Opinion

## It is not too late to build a principled and powerful EU

ANA PALACIO



Ana Palacio, a former foreign minister of Spain and former senior vice president and general counsel of the World Bank Group, is a visiting lecturer at Georgetown University. @ProjectSyndicate

For full version, log on to [www.arabnews.com/opinion](http://www.arabnews.com/opinion)

Every year when European parliamentarians return from their summer break, the calls for a structural overhaul of the EU seem inevitable. This year will be no exception, though the impetus for change might be more powerful than ever.

The EU is facing numerous daunting, even existential, challenges. War rages on its doorstep, economic competitiveness lags, and deep social polarization persists. Political uncertainty in France and indecision in Germany compound the fragility of the EU at the same time as an unpredictable leadership transition in the US threatens to usher in a prolonged period of American isolationism, leaving Europe with little choice but to take its fate into its own hands.

The EU has managed to overcome severe disruptions in recent years, from sovereign debt crises to the withdrawal of the UK. But in the present geopolitical environment it is weak, vulnerable, and ill-prepared to handle the challenges it faces. A major reason for this is the enduring influence of populist forces that

weaponize concerns about illegal migration and openly defy European unity.

For example, Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who has led Hungary's government since 2010 (after previously holding the office between 1998 and 2002), has seemingly made it his mission to erode the rule of law in Hungary and across the EU, while undermining European cohesion.

Last month, his government assumed the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. Within days, he paid surprise visits to Kyiv, Moscow and Beijing to discuss a potential Ukraine peace deal. It was a clear bid both to exploit the EU's institutional apparatus and to undermine it strategically.

He also attended, again with no warning or coordination with the EU, the summit of the Organization of Turkic States, which includes as an "observer" the internationally unrecognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

EU leaders scrambled to clarify that Orban had no mandate to represent the EU externally, let alone to negotiate any kind of peace deal for Ukraine. To highlight the fact that Orban was acting

out of turn, the EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, stripped Hungary of the right to host the next meeting of member states' foreign and defense ministers, a responsibility that normally falls to the nation that holds the presidency of the Council of the EU.

Unfazed, Orban proceeded to announce a new fast-track visa system that would enable citizens of eight countries, including Russia and Belarus, to enter Hungary without security checks, raising fears about the integrity of border-free travel in the Schengen Area, and EU security more broadly.

Orban has also sought, with his counterpart in Slovakia, to use EU levers to force Ukraine to end its ban on the flow of Russian oil through the Druzhba pipeline, part of which runs through Hungarian territory.

Most recently, Hungary blocked a joint EU statement on "irregularities" during the presidential election in Venezuela, prompting Borrell to issue a separate statement.

During previous crises, from the Brexit negotiations following the withdrawal of the UK to the EU's previous dealings with

Hungary over Orban's assaults on democracy and the rule of law, the bloc has relied largely on a legalistic and technocratic approach, which has often left it worse off.

But calls for the EU to start speaking the "language of power" have gone unheeded. And while proposals for strengthening Borrell's mandate in his role as the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy have been advanced, they represent little more than cosmetic changes.

To regain its footing, the EU must act with greater urgency and resolve, even if that entails uncomfortable confrontations with member states. And to thrive in the world of today and tomorrow it must once again establish itself as an indispensable partner for the US.

The EU faces a stark choice. It can either continue to allow internal and external forces to weaken it or it can act boldly to reclaim its integrity and strengthen its influence. From encouraging innovation and bolstering the rule of law to establishing and implementing a shared foreign policy vision, the EU must demonstrate that it can be both principled and powerful. Otherwise, it risks being left behind.

**The EU must act with greater resolve, even if that entails uncomfortable confrontations with member states**

**To thrive in the world of today and tomorrow, the EU must once again establish itself as an indispensable partner for the US**

## Digital currencies can boost inclusion in Mideast and Asia

EHTESHAM SHAHID



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For full version, log on to [www.arabnews.com/opinion](http://www.arabnews.com/opinion)

Digital currencies are emerging as a beacon of hope in the often-elusive dream of financial inclusion, particularly in Asia and the Middle East.

The latest evolution of this promise comes in the form of central bank digital currencies, which are poised to revolutionize cross-border payments. By offering more efficient and inclusive financial solutions, central bank digital currencies can reshape the financial landscape and create new opportunities in regions long underserved by traditional banking systems. However, they need to address inherent inefficiencies of the payment system if they are to achieve their full potential.

For the uninitiated, central bank digital currencies, popularly known as CBDCs, are digital forms of official currencies issued and regulated by nations' central banks. To understand how they work, think of a digital wallet on your smartphone or in a mobile banking app; instead of holding only your bank's default digital currency, your wallet could also hold the central bank's digital currency, which could be used to pay for goods and services, transfer money to others, or savings, just like physical cash.

CBDCs offer inherent advantages in financial transactions, including greater transparency and security, thereby helping to reduce fraud and money laundering.

Judging by the growing number of nations exploring the potential implementation of a CBDC, they are, quite literally, gaining currency. The International Monetary Fund recently reported that 130 nations, together accounting for 98 percent of the world's gross domestic product, were

investigating the possible introduction of a CBDC. A survey conducted by IMF country teams indicated that of 31 economies in the Middle East and Central Asia, 19 were either considering or actively exploring the possibility.

One of the most significant benefits of digital currencies is their potential to expand access to financial services. In

many parts of Asia and the Middle East, large segments of populations remain unbanked or underbanked, often as a result of lack of physical banking infrastructure or stringent identification requirements. Digital currencies, accessible using mobile phones and the internet, offer a viable solution to this. By giving them the ability to bypass traditional hurdles to banking, more individuals can participate in the financial system, making it easier for them

to save, invest, and make transactions.

Moreover, digital currencies can facilitate faster transaction times than traditional banking systems. This efficiency can help individuals and businesses manage their finances more effectively and with fewer delays.

Digital currencies can also offer a safer and more secure alternative in economies still heavily reliant on cash. They reduce the risks associated with carrying and storing cash, especially in high-crime areas.

The high cost of financial transactions is a barrier for many people in these regions. Traditional banking systems and remittance services often impose hefty fees, which can be prohibitive to people on low incomes. Digital currencies lower these costs significantly. Reduced transaction fees, including for cross-border remittances, mean digital currencies make the transfer of money, domestically and internationally, more affordable.

This is particularly beneficial to migrant workers in the Middle East, many of whom send money home to their families in Asia. In other words, lower transaction fees make more financial services more affordable to more people.

Digital currencies also enhance the efficiency and speed of financial transactions.

Traditional banking processes can be slow and cumbersome, especially for international transfers that require several intermediaries.

Digital currencies can facilitate instant transactions, reduce wait times, and generally improve the user experience. This immediacy is crucial for businesses and individuals who rely on timely payments to manage their finances and sustain their operations.

Governments in Asia and the Middle East are increasingly recognizing the potential of digital currencies to support financial inclusion initiatives.

Central banks are also exploring the potential of CBDCs to enhance monetary policy, improve payment systems, and reduce reliance on cash. Such initiatives in Gulf Cooperation Council member countries aim to modernize financial systems and extend their reach to underserved populations.

While the benefits are clear and far-reaching, the adoption of digital currencies can be challenging due to low levels of digital and financial literacy, limited internet access in remote areas, and regulatory uncertainties.

Governments and financial institutions must therefore invest in education and infrastructure to ensure the benefits can be fully realized.

**Judging by the growing number of nations exploring the implementation of a CBDC, they are — quite literally — gaining currency**

**Digital currencies enhance the speed of financial transactions. Traditional banking processes can be slow**

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The collaboration with KACST represents a cornerstone in Saudi Arabia's journey toward semiconductor leadership.  
Muneer bin Mahmoud Al-Dosouqi  
KACST president



# Business

INVESTMENTS

## Saudi Arabia makes significant moves in semiconductor sector

The Kingdom is heavily investing in developing local semiconductor manufacturing capabilities

Miguel Hadchity Riyadh

**Saudi Arabia is rapidly emerging as a key player in the global semiconductor industry, driven by ambitious initiatives that would establish a strong foothold in this crucial sector.**

Semiconductors, which are essential components for powering AI software, electric vehicles, smartphones, and various advanced technologies, have created intense competition among nations and tech giants. Currently, Taiwan leads with 46 percent of global semiconductor foundry capacity, followed by China, South Korea, the US, and Japan.

This concentrated supply chain has prompted Saudi Arabia, under its Vision 2030 initiative, to heavily invest in developing local semiconductor manufacturing capabilities. The goal is to reduce dependency and enhance economic diversification.

"Semiconductors are the foundation of modern technology and crucial for economic growth, representing a \$500 billion industry today, projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2030," said Frederic Ozeir, partner and head of Automotive and Manufacturing Industries for India, Middle East, and Africa region at Oliver Wyman, in an interview with Arab News.

He added: "For a modern economy, they (semiconductors) are fundamental to nearly all electronics across key sectors like computing, telecom, energy, automotive, and healthcare."

Ozeir explained that these tech components drive technological innovation, advancing AI, 5G, and autonomous vehicles with significant improvements in speed, efficiency, and capabilities.

Semiconductors also serve as strategic assets for national security, essential for defense systems and infrastructure, with applications ranging from communications equipment to advanced weaponry. Economically, they drive growth, employment, and global competitiveness, similar to oil in energy-dominant economies.

At the forefront of Saudi Arabia's semiconductor push is the \$100 billion Alat project, led by the Kingdom's wealth fund. Alat aims to address rising domestic demand and position the nation as a global hub for semiconductor innovation and production.

In collaboration with King Abdulaziz City for Science and



Saudi Arabia's proactive approach in the semiconductor sector reflects a strategic vision aimed at enhancing its global competitiveness. SPA

Technology, Alat is focused on developing local talent and infrastructure necessary for semiconductor design and manufacturing.

"The semiconductor industry represents a transformative opportunity for Saudi Arabia's industrial sector," emphasized Alat CEO Amit Midha. "Our partnership with KACST is pivotal in advancing our capabilities across key semiconductor technology segments, including power, perception, and processing."

Saudi Arabia's semiconductor ambitions extend beyond economic diversification to emphasize a strategic imperative for enhancing national sovereignty and technological independence.

To this end, the Kingdom has launched a billion-riyal investment fund dedicated to semiconductor companies and established the National Semiconductor Hub.

At least 50 semiconductor design companies will be established in Saudi Arabia by 2030, supported by a deep tech venture capital fund exceeding SRI billion (\$266 million) as part of a new tech hub.

These initiatives are complemented by efforts to attract global expertise through targeted residency programs aimed at accelerating knowledge transfer and capacity building.

"Saudi Arabia has inherent competitive advantages for building a successful semiconductor industry," Ozeir noted. "The country also offers competitive utilities and infrastructure, providing reliable energy, clean water, and extensive land. Political stability and government support are also key, with a stable regulatory environment that includes direct incentives and efficient processes," he emphasized.

Ozeir elaborated that to develop this sector, the nation needs to create a suitable enabling environment by addressing the need for a specialized workforce, including process engineers, material scientists, and precision technicians. "Additionally, the country must develop its industry ecosystem and ensure access to international markets, as local demand for semiconductors is

**The semiconductor industry represents a transformative opportunity for Saudi Arabia's industrial sector.**

Amit Midha  
Alat CEO



still nascent," he said.

Talat Zaki Hafiz, a Saudi economist, highlighted the broader economic benefits, stating: "The semiconductor industry will contribute significantly to both the Kingdom's economy and the industrial sector in general, especially as Saudi Arabia is engaging and promoting several industries that require significant and sizable amounts of semiconductors."

For instance, Saudi Arabia is advancing into high-tech industries such as electric cars, helicopters, drones, and advanced ships, which require substantial amounts of semiconductors.

This shift will drive significant demand for semiconductors, aligning with Vision 2030's goals of economic diversification and industrial advancement, according to Hafiz.

The urgency of Saudi Arabia's semiconductor push is underscored by global supply chain disruptions, which have exposed vulnerabilities in dependent economies. By developing a robust

semiconductor ecosystem, Saudi Arabia aims not only to secure its supply chain but also to emerge as a leading exporter of high-tech components in the global market.

"The collaboration with KACST represents a cornerstone in Saudi Arabia's journey towards semiconductor leadership," said Muneer bin Mahmoud Al-Dosouqi, president of KACST. "It underscores our commitment to fostering a sustainable industrial ecosystem based on advanced technologies and clean energy sources," he added.

Ozeir outlined the strategic approach for the coming years: "Saudi Arabia should adopt an integrated, cluster-based approach to develop its semiconductor industry. Initially, this involves front-end manufacturing, backward integration into wafer production and design, and then expanding capacity to forward-integrate into leading-edge fabrication and back-end manufacturing in the medium term."

Oliver Wyman's partner noted that the Kingdom could also implement supportive policies similar to leading semiconductor nations, combining direct grants for foreign direct investments, low-interest loans, investment tax credits, and sovereign funds that boost international investments.

"Specialized visa schemes, financial benefits for foreign manpower with expertise, and elite university programs in semiconductor-related fields will be essential to drive this development," he added.

Saudi Arabia's proactive approach in the semiconductor sector reflects a strategic vision aimed at enhancing its global competitiveness.

"Being the largest economy in the Middle East and the fastest-growing economy in the Arab world and internationally, the Kingdom can easily succeed in becoming a competitive player in the global semiconductor market," Hafiz said.

He added: "It possesses the resources needed for manufacturing semiconductors that can help and support its efforts to play a competitive role and obtain leadership in the global semiconductors market and industry."

Despite hosting the world's largest reserves of oil and emerging as a global energy superpower, Saudi Arabia has been very active in pursuing and building capacities in clean energy and reducing the carbon impact on both humanity and the environment.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

# Expatriate remittances from Saudi Arabia hits \$3.2bn in June

Increase in expatriate fund transfers highlights Kingdom's pivotal role in global remittance landscape

Dayan Abou Tine Riyadh

**Expatriate remittances from Saudi Arabia reached \$3.2 billion in June, reflecting an annual increase of 11.32 percent, according to the latest data from the Saudi Central Bank, also known as SAMA.**

This figure underscores the Kingdom's significant role in global remittance flows and is a testament to the economic dynamics influencing the region.

The latest SAMA bulletin indicated that remittances sent abroad by the Kingdom's nationals decreased by 1 percent annually, totaling SR5.12 billion. This follows a peak in May, which was the highest value recorded in a year and a half.

Saudi Arabia has long been a magnet for expatriates seeking lucrative job opportunities. With its robust economic growth and high salary levels, the Kingdom offers an attractive destination for professionals from around the world.

The average executive salary in Saudi Arabia exceeds \$100,000 annually, which is not only among the highest in the Middle East but also sets a global benchmark. This competitive compensation is a major draw for expatriates, contributing to the Kingdom's substantial remittance outflows.

The growth in remittances can be attributed to several inter-related factors. The recovery of the job market in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased employment opportunities and, consequently, higher earnings for expatriates. Additionally, the Saudi government's strategies to attract and retain foreign workers, including favorable employment policies and incentives, have further bolstered the expatriate workforce.

Technological advancements have also played a pivotal role in facilitating this growth. Innovations in financial technology and mobile banking have made sending money abroad faster, more secure, and less expensive. With the advent of digital payment systems and mobile apps, expatriates can now transfer funds with ease, contributing to the rising volume of remittances.

The demographic composition of Saudi Arabia provides further context for this surge in remittances. Non-Saudis represent 41.6 percent of the Kingdom's population, amounting to approximately 13.4 million individuals. This diverse expatriate community includes significant numbers from countries such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Yemen, and Egypt. Other countries



With its robust economic growth and high salary levels, the Kingdom has long been a magnet for expatriates, offering an attractive destination for professionals from around the world. SPA

## FASTFACTS

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• Additionally, the Saudi government's strategies to attract and retain foreign workers, including favorable employment policies and incentives, have further bolstered the expatriate workforce.

employment hub for expatriates from the South Asian country.

Similarly, Bangladesh has been a significant beneficiary of remittances from Saudi Arabia. The financial support from Bangladeshi expatriates contributes to improved living standards and economic stability in their home country. Remittance-receiving households in Bangladesh use these funds for essential needs such as food, education, and healthcare, as well as for investments in land and modern farming techniques, thereby fostering economic development.

Globally, the remittance market has shown resilience despite economic uncertainties.

During the pandemic, while there were initial fears of a downturn, remittances remained relatively stable. India, the top recipient of global remittances, experienced only a minor decline during the pandemic and saw a rebound in subsequent years.

The country was expected to face a significant decline of 23 percent due to economic slowdowns and falling oil prices in host countries. However, it defied these expectations, maintaining its position as the top recipient, accounting for 12 percent of global remittances, with only a 0.2 percent decline in 2020 and an 8 percent growth in 2021.

The resilience of remittances

highlights their critical role in supporting economies and households across low- and middle-income countries.

The broader global trend toward digital and mobile remittances is also noteworthy. According to a February 2024 study by IBS Intelligence, the global digital cross-border transfers market was valued at \$148 billion at the start of the year. This market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 12.58 percent, reaching approximately \$340 billion by 2030. This growth is driven by increased mobile phone usage, online shopping, and the demand for quick, secure, and convenient money transfer services.

In summary, the increase in expatriate funds transfer from Saudi Arabia highlights the Kingdom's pivotal role in the global remittance landscape. The combination of high salaries, favorable employment conditions, technological advancements, and a significant expatriate population contributes to the robust flow of funds to countries around the world. This trend not only reflects the economic dynamics of the region but also underscores the vital support expatriates provide to their families and economies back home.



The combination of high salaries, favorable employment conditions, technological advancements, and a significant expatriate population contributes to the robust flow of funds to countries around the world. SPA



## Business News



Sandbox is a five-month program that provides startups with more than 50 hours of workshops, including access to financial analytics. Supplied

## STARTUP WRAP

# Saudi and Egyptian startups lead funding activity

Graduation of accelerator programs accompanies region's funding rounds

Nour El-Shaerl Cairo

**Funding activity flourished in the Middle East and North Africa region, driven largely by Saudi and Egyptian startups.**

The region experienced a variety of funding rounds across diverse sectors, alongside the graduation of accelerator programs.

Saudi startup Blend successfully raised SR5 million (\$1.3 million) in a pre-seed investment round backed by a group of angel investors.

These investments aim to develop innovative tech solutions serving the restaurant, cafe, hypermarket and cloud kitchen sectors.

Founded last year by Omar Al-Lihyan, Blend offers a system that integrates multiple food delivery platforms into a single screen. This allows restaurant owners to efficiently manage orders and items while easily tracking reports. The company has already integrated with five local delivery applications.

"As the only local Saudi company serving this sector, we have a deep understanding of the real challenges and technical needs that business owners face when dealing with delivery applications," Al-Lihyan said.

The company said in a press release it planned to expand to other Gulf countries, including Kuwait and Bahrain, by the end of next year and across the region by the end of 2026.

These developments come at a time when

the restaurant and cafe sector was undergoing significant changes in line with Saudi Vision 2030, which aims to attract tourists and increase the population in the Riyadh region to 15 million people, according to the press release.

Al-Lihyan said new players were expected to enter the market and that 30 percent of Blend's customers had not yet started their operations.

Blend has graduated from several programs supporting startups, including the Misk Accelerator and MVPLab Accelerator under the National Information Technology Development Program, and has a presence at the Zaka Center under Monsha'at.

**Qardy secures seven-figure pre-seed round to boost digital lending for MSMEs in Egypt**

Qardy, a digital lending marketplace for financial institutions to fund micro, small and medium enterprises, has successfully secured a seven-figure pre-seed round of investment.

The funding round saw participation from White Field Ventures, Vastly Valuable Ventures and other angel investors.

Since its soft launch in late 2022, Qardy claims to have become a trusted partner for

MSMEs and financial institutions. The company said it had more than 1,000 corporate clients and had facilitated loan transactions worth about \$12 million.

Qardy offers a range of financial programs to support MSMEs with their working capital and capital expansion needs through a network of financial institutions, including national and commercial banks, leasing, factoring and microfinance companies.

"We are thrilled to have reached this important milestone in our journey," Chief Operating Officer Tamer El-Manasterly said.

"The support and trust of our investors have been instrumental in driving our growth and enabling us to expand our reach and impact in the market. This investment will allow us to further enhance our services, as well as accelerate our plans for expansion in Saudi Arabia and the region," he said.

**Lucky One raises \$3m to scale consumer credit offerings in Egypt**

Leading Cairo-based consumer credit fintech Lucky One has raised \$3 million in a convertible note to bolster its path to profitability by the first quarter of 2025 and scale its credit lending services for the Egyptian masses.

The financing round saw participation from existing investors, including Lorax Capital Partners, KEM and DisrupTech Ventures.

The funds will be used to expand the platform's credit services, enhancing its position as a leading consumer credit fintech in Egypt.

Co-founder and CEO Momtaz Moussa said: "We are thrilled to have successfully

closed this round, which will fuel our ambitious growth plans and support our mission of providing accessible consumer credit solutions to underbanked Egyptians. This round reaffirms the trust our investors have placed in us and solidifies our commitment to achieving sustainable profitability while creating true value in the Egyptian market."

**Sandbox graduates seven startups in its fourth cohort**

UAE-based Sandbox, the accelerator program backed by Oraseya Capital, has celebrated the graduation of seven startups as part of its fourth cohort.

Sandbox is a five-month program that provides startups with more than 50 hours of workshops, including access to financial analytics, marketing strategies and legal compliance programs.

The seven startups that made it to the finals are Qureos, Herogo, Lisan, Sthrive, Zoya, JobEscape and Opteam. Each received an investment of \$150,000.

**Twlm secures \$266,000 investment to expand order pickup services in Saudi Arabia**

Twlm said it has secured a \$266,000 investment led by Saudi Arabia's B Group, with participation from angel investors.

Founded last year by Ahmad Al-Dakheel, Abdulaziz Al-Rashoud, Abdullah Al-Dakheel and Walid Al-Qarny, Twlm offers an application that provides order pickup services from more than 250 restaurants and stores.

Twlm plans to use the investment to finance its expansion across the Kingdom, to reach 1,000 restaurants and stores by the end of the year.

## BizBriefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

### Mixed results

#### Wall Street ends wild week with slight gains

After a manic week where Japanese stocks fell to their worst loss since the Black Monday crash of 1987, only for US stocks to soar later to their best day since 2022, slight gains on Friday are carrying Wall Street almost exactly where it was last week.

The S&P 500 was up 0.3 percent in late trading, enough to shave what had been a brutal loss for the week down to 0.2 percent. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up by almost 0.1 percent, and the Nasdaq composite was 0.3 percent higher. **AP**

### EV adoption

#### India's Ola Electric shines in market debut

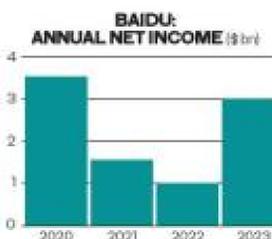
India's biggest e-scooter maker Ola Electric Mobility dazzled on its market debut Friday after raising \$734 million.

Ola Electric, backed by global investors such as Japan's SoftBank and Singapore's Temasek, has managed to establish a leading position in a country where electric vehicle adoption is low but growing fast.

Sales of two-wheelers dwarf cars in India, but less than 6 percent of the nearly 18 million scooters and bikes sold in India in the fiscal year ending March 2024 were electric. **AFP**

### Chart of THE DAY

The search engine giant has raised its R&D costs.



Source: Statista

## What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

### Black Pill

ELLE REEVE

Elle Reeve's "Black Pill" depicts the US as a country at a crossroads with the battle between the right and left spilling out from the darkest corners of the internet into the

real world with often tragic consequences.

Reeve clearly illustrates ongoing battle, culminating in the attempted coup on January 6th, where this cultural shift came from, and where it is going.



### Stock listing

#### WeRide eyes up to \$5bn valuation in US IPO

China-based autonomous driving startup WeRide said on Friday it was seeking a valuation of as much as \$5.02 billion in its initial public offering in the US and is aiming to raise as much as \$119.4 million by offering 6.45 million American depositary shares at a price range of \$15.50 and \$18.50 per share.

It would be the second major China-based company to seek US listing this year. In May, electric-vehicle maker Zeekr debuted on the New York Stock Exchange and is trading 35.6 percent below its offer price. **Reuters**

### Bourse

#### Deliveroo shares surge on higher revenues

Deliveroo shares surged more than 10 percent Thursday after the international food delivery app struck its first six-month net profit, an achievement described as a "major milestone" by its boss.

Profit after tax stood at £1.3 million (\$1.6 million) in the first half, which compared with a net loss totalling £83 million in the January-June period last year, as the British company continued to cut costs and as revenue edged higher.

"I am pleased with the performance we have achieved this half," chief executive Will Shu said. **AFP**

Abdelaziz Abdel Nabi, Asser Yehia and Tamer El-Manasterly founded in Qardy in 2022. Supplied



Across the geopolitical, technological, and societal landscapes, I believe we are witnessing a call for a new era of cybersecurity, and a stronger move toward convergence and consolidation.

**Joe Sarno**  
EVP of International sales, Fortinet



PRESS RELEASES FROM THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

RARE CARDIOVASCULAR ABNORMALITY

# Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, NYU Abu Dhabi to leverage 3D printing technology

Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, part of the M42 group, in collaboration with NYU Abu Dhabi, leveraged cutting-edge three-dimensional printing technology to print a 3D model of the heart and plan a complex surgical intervention on a 44-year-old patient, Mian Mohamed Shabbie, with rare cardiovascular anomaly.

The technology developed by NYU Abu Dhabi's Core Technology Platform can be used in various fields such as cardiovascular and neurological cases. The process involves three stages: 3D image reconstruction, a procedure that involves creating a three-dimensional model from raw diagnostic imaging data to provide a foundational digital framework of the patient's anatomy; 3D slicing,

which allows for a more detailed analysis of the individual structures and organs in greater detail and; 3D printing, which involves building a physical replica of the patient's anatomy that the surgeon can hold, examine, and use for pre-surgical planning and simulation.

This technology is instrumental in understanding the unique challenges of each case and allows for a more precise and tailored surgical approach with the highest accuracy and minimum risks.

When Shabbie was referred to Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi in critical

condition, he presented with complications stemming from a birth defect of the aorta, the main blood vessel that carries blood away from the heart. In Shabbie's case, his aorta — which normally has a left-sided arch after exiting the heart — had a right-sided arch with a giant aneurysm. The

aneurysm itself was of a rare kind, known as Kommerell's diverticulum, which has one of the main branches of the aorta, with a bulge at the site of its origin.

Dr. Houssam Younes, department chair for vascular surgery within the Heart, Vascular & Thoracic Institute at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, said: "Kommerell's diverticulum is a rare cardiovascular abnormality, even more so when combined with a right-sided aortic arch, as seen in only 0.03 percent of people worldwide. Due to its asymptomatic nature or presentation with symptoms commonly associated with other conditions, these congenital deformities are

infrequently detected, calling for a high level of physician and technological expertise during surgical interventions."

Dr. Yazan Aljabery, cardiac surgeon within the Heart, Vascular & Thoracic Institute at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, explained: "Correcting a case of Kommerell's diverticulum when the aorta arches left, as is typical, is relatively straightforward because the deformity is accessible and visible. However, when the vessel arches right, as in this case, the defect is obscured by other large vessels, making surgical interventions particularly challenging. Using a 3D-printed model in such cases enhances the safety of the procedure and allows for more precise and tailored surgery."

Left, Dr. Houssam Younes and Dr. Yazan Aljabery



ENTERTAINMENT

## Viu launches gift box bundle exclusively with Omantel

Viu, PCCW's leading pan-regional OTT video streaming service operating in 16 markets, announced the launch of the Viu Gift Box bundle exclusively with Omantel.

Viu is a leading streaming service included with Omantel's comprehensive suite of plans for new post-paid customers, ensuring a seamless and unparalleled entertainment experience within the Sultanate of Oman. This tailor-made bundle allows Omantel's eligible customers to upgrade to Viu Premium, coupled with free streaming data to enjoy Viu's content.

With the introduction of this bundle, Omantel's customers will gain three months of free access to Viu's extensive catalog of premium Arabic content, along with a unique selection of popular Turkish series and a vast slate of Korean dramas, all dubbed in Arabic (subject to their subscription plan). Customers will also enjoy a Viu premium subscription in addition to 3GB of



Both Viu and Omantel are devoted to consistently presenting superior entertainment experiences for their customers. Supplied

Viu streaming data from Omantel.

This strategic arrangement underscores Viu's commitment to offering quality entertainment choices and broad access to a diverse selection of content for users in Oman. It marks another milestone in the relationship between Viu and Omantel, building on the existing collaboration which also includes the option of direct carrier billing for Viu services. Both Viu and Omantel are devoted

to consistently presenting superior entertainment experiences for their customers. This alliance is set to meet the increasing demand for quality streaming content in the region and offer viewers in Oman the best of Korean, Turkish, and Arabic streaming content.

On the occasion of the collaboration, Rohit D'Silva, chief business officer, MEA, Viu, commented: "Our collaboration with Omantel, the leading telecommunications

provider in the Sultanate of Oman, is a thrilling development for Viu. It broadens our reach, allowing us to introduce our rich assortment of premium content to Omantel's customers. We are dedicated to enriching the entertainment experience and offering an outstanding streaming service across various devices."

Ali Bait Fadhil, acting general manager of Core Telco at Omantel, shared the company's enthusiasm

about the strategic alliance with Viu, affirming that Omantel is keen on reinforcing its leadership and expanding services in different segments through meaningful partnerships.

"Our customers' needs and preferences are our top priorities as we strive to earn and preserve their trust," Ali Bait Fadhil said. "The launch will offer our customers a distinctive service that showcases the finest films and series."

REPORT

## stc group paves way for sustainable transformation

stc Group, a leading digital enabler, launched its fifth annual sustainability report, continuing its commitment to driving forward sustainable transformation through environmental, social, and governance excellence.

The initiatives outlined in stc Group's 2023 Sustainability Report contribute to sustainable transformation and a future where businesses are the

catalysts for protecting people and the planet. As part of the updated sustainability framework, the group identified three core pillars in 2023.

### Environmental performance & climate

stc Group aspires to be a global leader in environmental stewardship and has made significant progress toward its commitment to achieving net

zero by 2050. This commitment has been validated and approved by the Science Based Targets Initiative and is supported by several environmental performance programs. Key initiatives and programs include the installation of seven operational solar powered sites at headquarters, as well as the incorporation of energy efficiency and sustainability measures for data centers and towers. Additionally, a solar

pilot project launched for 18 sites across the Kingdom. The group has also implemented advanced power-saving technologies using artificial intelligence, resulting in a 13 percent reduction in energy consumption across stc's 4G and 5G networks.

### Human capital development through technological innovation

Fundamental to stc Group's sustainability practices are initiatives that advance human capital by creating opportunities for growth that bridge societal divides through technological innovation. These social investment initiatives enrich the lives of customers, empower stc Group employees, and contribute to community development in impactful ways.

## Corporate Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

### International sales Fortinet appoints Joe Sarno as EVP

Fortinet, the global cybersecurity leader driving the convergence of networking and security, is pleased to announce the appointment of Joe Sarno as executive vice-president of international sales. In this role, Joe will oversee Fortinet's international sales business and join the executive leadership team. Sarno said: "The cybersecurity landscape is changing rapidly, with threats escalating every day. Across the geopolitical, technological, and societal landscapes, I believe we are witnessing a call for a new era of cybersecurity, and a stronger move towards convergence and consolidation."

### Kaspersky How much value does an email have?

With the number of global email users projected to grow to 4.73 billion by 2026, email has become one of the most important platforms for communication in the digital age. For many people, an email address is their main digital identity. Kaspersky examines what fraudsters can do with a person's email address and how to keep it safe.

"Much like your own name, an email address has an enormous amount of information attached to it. Both our professional and personal email addresses are among major assets of interest to a growing community of sophisticated cyber-criminals worldwide," says Brandon Muller, technical expert for the MEA region at Kaspersky.

### Regional MG Motor ME launches call center

In a move to bolster customer service and satisfaction, MG Motor Middle East launched a regional call center (600 55 1924) on Aug. 1. This initiative aligns with MG's mission to deliver high-quality service and customer satisfaction, demonstrating a commitment to understanding and addressing the unique needs of customers across the region.

The call center (600 55 1924) will provide tailored support for local markets and aims to enhance quality through direct engagement and customer feedback driving continuous improvement.

New Zealander Lydia Ko battled to victory during a tense final round to seal gold at Paris Olympics.



## Sport News

### GAMING HUB

# Trio of top competitions reach final stages at Esports World Cup in Riyadh

Arab News Riyadh

The Esports World Cup saw a number of teams celebrating reaching the latter stages of Fortnite, Street Fighter 6 and Teamfight Tactics.

Fortnite, held at the Amazon Arena within the SEF Arena at Boulevard Riyadh City, saw XSET, Heroic, Exceed and Karmine Corp. reach the quarter-finals courtesy of topping their groups.

In Street Fighter 6, held at the Qiddiyah Arena within the SEF Arena, nine of the last 16 are from Japan, including gachikun, Hikaru and Tachikawa.

Wolves Esports, Team Vitality, Toronto Ultra and T1 all topped

their groups in Teamfight Tactics, played at the stc Arena, to seal quarter-final spots.

A team prize pool total of \$2.5 million is on offer across all three competitions — with \$1 million each available in Fortnite and Street Fighter 6, and \$500,000 in Teamfight Tactics. There is also a \$50,000 award to the MVP in each tournament.

Each of those sums adds up to the Esports World Cup having the largest tournament prize pool in the history of esports, with \$60 million on offer.

Sunday will see grand finals taking place in each of the three competitions taking place in week six of the Esports World Cup.



The Esports World Cup features 22 tournaments across 21 titles throughout its eight-week duration. Supplied

The Esports World Cup, which began on July 3 and runs until Aug. 25, features 22 tournaments across 21 titles throughout its eight-week duration.

Meanwhile, the Esports World

Cup has drawn unprecedented viewership and live attendances for its inaugural event at Boulevard Riyadh City.

Last week, the Esports World Cup Foundation, the nonprofit organization hosting the EWC, announced a total of 177.5 million hours watched over the first four weeks, with a number of individual tournaments setting viewership highs.

In addition, a total of \$16.5 million of the event's record-breaking \$60 million prize pool has been distributed across nine of 22 total championships. The event's daily festival has attracted more than 1 million visitors during the first half of the landmark event.

### WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

# US beat Brazil to win Paris Olympics final

Team America claim the gold medal for a record-extending fifth time

AFP Paris

**Mallory Swanson scored the winning goal as the US edged Brazil 1-0 in Saturday's Olympic women's football final to claim the gold medal for a record-extending fifth time.**

Brazil fought hard on a hot afternoon at the Parc des Princes, but the US struck just before the hour mark when Swanson — on her 100th cap — ran through to finish past goalkeeper Lorena.

It is the first time the US have taken the Olympic title in 12 years, their gold in Paris adding to those won in 1996, 2004, 2008 and 2012.

They have now beaten Brazil in three of those finals, with the South Americans again having to settle for silver just as they did in Athens in 2004 and in Beijing four years later.

It was not quite the ending that their legendary captain Marta was hoping for, as she bowed out of her sixth and last Olympics aged 38 with a third silver medal.

Yet Brazil were never expected to get this far, while the US' victory confirms their renaissance under new English coach Emma Hayes.

She only arrived from Chelsea in late May but has worked wonders in a short space of time with a team that a year ago was sent packing from the World Cup in the last 16.

That campaign in Australia and New Zealand was the international swansong for USWNT icon Megan Rapinoe, who was among the crowd for Saturday's final, as was Tom Cruise.

Much of the talk in the build-up to the final was about Marta, with



the Brazil great free to return for a farewell Olympic appearance after serving a two-game ban for a red card in her team's last group outing.

But the 38-year-old multiple winner of the FIFA world player of the year award was left on the bench for the start of the game

It is the first time the US have taken the title in 12 years, their gold in Paris adding to those won in 1996, 2004, 2008 and 2012. AFP

by coach Arthur Elias.

Perhaps he was mindful of the energy-sapping conditions, and the need for his team to match up physically to the US.

A younger Marta had played in Brazil's defeats in the 2004 and 2008 finals, both of which came in extra time.

This was also the second clash between the nations in a final this year, after the US won 1-0 in the CONCACAF W Gold Cup in San Diego in March.

The US subsequently welcomed Hayes as coach and she oversaw wins against Japan and Germany in the knockout rounds to get to the Olympic final.

Brazil, meanwhile, scraped through their group as one of the best third-placed teams, before surprise wins against hosts France in the quarterfinals and World Cup holders Spain in the last four, both achieved without Marta.

Their direct approach posed problems to the US defense in the first half, and they had the ball in the net just over a quarter of an hour into the game.

Ludmila turned Naomi Girma inside out in the box before finishing, but the goal was disallowed for offside.

Swanson was denied at the other end by Lorena after flying down the left wing and bursting into the box, yet it was Brazil who had the best chance of the opening half.

Captain Adriana crossed from the right in stoppage time for Gabi Portilho to divert the ball toward goal, but Alyssa Naeher produced a fine save.

The Americans boasted the more dangerous attack, though, and they went ahead on 57 minutes when Korbin Albert, on her Paris Saint-Germain home ground, released Swanson to advance and finish expertly for her fourth goal of the Olympic tournament.

Brazil sent on Marta for the final half hour, but they never seriously looked like equalizing.

The veteran sent a late free-kick over the bar before Naeher kept out Adriana's header in stoppage time as the US secured a third straight 1-0 win to take the title.

## Sport Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

### Top clash

#### City beat Man United to win Shield cup

This time, Manuel Akanji made no mistake from the penalty spot.

After a 1-1 draw, Manchester City beat Manchester United 7-6 in a penalty shootout to win the Community Shield at Wembley Stadium on Saturday, with Akanji scoring the clinching penalty.

The Switzerland defender had different emotions after his last shootout — at the European Championship last month when he was the only player to not convert a penalty kick in a loss to England in the quarterfinals. **AFP**

### Diving

#### China completes historic diving clean sweep

China completed a historic clean sweep of all eight Olympic diving gold medals after Cao Yuan won the men's 10m platform final in Paris on Saturday. The diving powerhouse went one better than at the Tokyo Games three years ago when they claimed seven of the eight golds.

Defending champion Cao was a class above his rivals.

He finished on 547.50 points, with Japan's Rikuto Tamai on 507.65 to claim silver and Briton Noah Williams (497.35) the bronze medal.

Cao became the first to retain his Olympic 10m crown since American Greg Louganis in Seoul 1988. **AFP**



### Cycling

#### Hirschi foils Alaphilippe in San Sebastian

Swiss rider Marc Hirschi won the San Sebastian one-day classic on Saturday by edging Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe at the line after a 236-kilometer slog around the Basque Country.

Hirschi, 25, combined with UAE Emirates teammate Pavel Sivakov to tire Alaphilippe over the final kilometers. Lennert Van Eetvelt of Belgium was third at seven seconds while Kevin Vermaerke of the United States was fourth at 17sec. **AFP**

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US rapper Travis Scott was arrested this week in Paris after allegedly assaulting a security guard who tried to break up a fight between Scott and his bodyguard. According to prosecutors, a criminal investigation has been opened.



# & Finally

## The Six

### Lip definition

Looking to volumize your lips and refine the line? Here are six lip liners from Arab brands that are worth trying.



#### By Fouz Beauty

This is a double-ended product from Kuwaiti influencer Fouz Al-Fahad — it has a liner on one side and a matching lipstick on the other.



#### Hindash

Who doesn't love a pinky nude lip liner? The up-and-coming beauty brand from Jordanian makeup artist Mohammed Hindash has a product for a fabulous natural-looking lip.



#### Asteri Beauty

Looking for a versatile lip liner? A universal shade is always a good bet if you are unsure which color to choose. This one is creamy, hydrating and long-lasting — guaranteed.



#### Noha Nabil

From nude to red, Emirati Egyptian entrepreneur Noha Nabil offers every shade you need this season. You can easily layer them with a matching lipstick from her collection.



#### Bex Beauty

If you are in need of a bright red lip liner, Bex Beauty, founded by Emirati-Yemeni singer Balqeess Fathi, offers a set that also includes a matching lipstick.



#### Huda Beauty

Huda Beauty lip liners claim to offer high pigmentation, smooth application and long-lasting wear. Ideal for defining lips.

# Honayda Serafi makes history at New York store

CLOSE UP

Arab News Dubai

Saudi designer Honayda Serafi, founder of the label Honayda, made history this week by debuting at New York City's Saks Fifth Avenue, becoming the first Saudi woman designer to be featured at the luxury department store.

The collection available at Saks is her Spring/Summer 2024 Cosmos release, which draws inspiration from the achievements of women in space exploration.

It showcases bright sky blues and reds, with glamorous sequins and vibrant crystals that echo the shimmering stars. Electric blue taffeta, dark magenta crepe and soft lace create a variety of textures, while body-shaping silhouettes, modernized mermaid cuts and dramatic capes add to the collection's dynamic character.

This collection also pays tribute to visionaries such as Syrian scientist Maryam Al-Astrulabi, celebrating their contributions to history.

From Priyanka Chopra to Lupita Nyong'o and Adriana Lima, Serafi has dressed many A-listers around the world. Since founding her label Honayda in 2016, Serafi has captured the attention of some of Saudi's most stylish women and celebrities with her standout designs in elegant and sophisticated silhouettes.

In 2022, she became the first Saudi designer to showcase her collection at Harrods in London.

One of her achievements was designing a dress for Princess Rajwa of Jordan's pre-wedding henna night celebration in May 2023.

The princess looked radiant in an ethereal white creation with gold embroidery that was inspired by Al-Shaby thobes of the Najd region in Saudi Arabia, where Princess Rajwa — who was formerly known as Rajwa Al-Saif — is from.

"When I first got the call, I



Honayda Serafi has dressed many A-listers around the world. Getty Images

Inset: The collection available at Saks is her Spring/Summer 2024 Cosmos release. Supplied

was extremely happy and proud to be part of this exceptional and historical moment. What I am especially proud of is communicating the love story between the crown prince and Rajwa in the design itself," Serafi told Arab News at the time.

In June, Rajwa attended King

Abdullah II's silver jubilee celebrations in Amman alongside her husband, Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah II, in a bespoke gown by Serafi.

It was a flowy, floor-length gown in a deep red color. It featured intricate, silver embellishments along the

cape-like sleeves.

"As the creative director, I am deeply grateful for her trust and encouragement, which serve as a key to unlocking boundless creativity and beauty in my designs," Serafi previously told Arab News of the continuing relationship with the royal.

FILM SPOTLIGHT

## 'Sudan, Remember Us' selected for Toronto film festival

Arab News Dubai

The Red Sea Film Foundation-supported film "Sudan, Remember Us," directed by Hind Meddeb, has been selected for the Toronto International Film Festival's Docs section, the festival announced this week.

The documentary captures the events in Khartoum during spring 2019, starting with the defiance of young Sudanese activists after the overthrow of the dictatorship and documenting the military crackdown that followed.

The festival will run from Sept. 5 to 15. The full schedule is set to be released on Aug. 13.



'Sudan, Remember Us' is directed by Hind Meddeb. Supplied

NEW DROPS

## Disney teases 'Moana 2,' 'Toy Story' at D23

AP California

Disney has teased upcoming movies and television series including "Moana 2" in a showcase featuring sneak peaks, live performances and surprise appearances from actors including Dwayne Johnson, Zoe Saldana and Jude Law.

Fans at Disney's D23 convention welcomed CEO Bob Iger with a standing ovation this week. "The world needs to be entertained maybe even more so now than ever before and we take that responsibility seriously," he said before presentations promoted new movies in the "Avatar," "Toy Story" and "Incredibles" franchises.

INTERVIEW

## Contemporary Arab art exhibition in London explores identity

Rawan Talass Dubai

A new exhibition on contemporary Arab art, featuring more than 40 pieces, has opened at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

The 21st-century artworks, which include paintings, photographs and sculptures, are from the notable collection of the Barjeel Art Foundation in Sharjah, UAE.

Among the showcased participants at the exhibition, displayed

at the university's Brunei Gallery, are the Palestinian installation artist Mona Hatoum, Moroccan-Spanish painter Anuar Khalifi, Emirati photographer Lamya Gargash, and multidisciplinary Saudi Arabian artist Manal Aldowayan.

Titled "Hudood: Rethinking Boundaries," the show runs until Sept. 21 and explores the topical themes of identity and displacement.

"The exhibition delves into how boundaries influence



The show runs until Sept. 21. Supplied

personal and collective identities, particularly in the context of displacement and migration," the foundation's creator Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi, who began

teaching at SOAS in 2023, told Arab News.

"It also explores how political and social constructs of boundaries impact individuals and communities, reflecting on themes of conflict, unity, and division," he said.

The exhibition takes place amid anti-immigration riots in England and Northern Ireland, the most violent in the UK in over 10 years.

Significantly, this exhibition has been curated by eight SOAS

students, who chose their theme based on personal conversations. They also decided to go for an Arabic title for the show, meaning "boundaries."

Al-Qassemi said: "The students' diverse perspectives and innovative ideas brought fresh insights to the exhibition, ensuring it resonated with a wider audience."

"This student-led approach also offered them a unique opportunity to engage directly with contemporary art and curatorial practices."