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& FINALLY
MONA ZAKI-STARRING
'FLIGHT 404' CHOSEN
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SUBMISSION

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WEDNESDAY, September 18, 2024
Rabi Al-Awwal 15, 1446
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ARAB NEWS

The Voice of a Changing Region

SINCE 1975

LEBANON CHAOS

10 killed, 2,800 injured as pager blasts hit Hezbollah

Iranian ambassador among those hurt in group's 'biggest security breach yet'

Najla Houssari Beirut

At least 10 people were killed and 2,800 injured, many seriously, when handheld pagers used by Hezbollah members exploded on Tuesday in an incident described as the group's "biggest security breach yet."

The explosions sparked widespread panic in the southern suburbs of Beirut, as well as areas in the south of Lebanon, and in the Bekaa, especially Ali Al-Nahri and Rayak.

Hundreds of people were rushed to hospital for emergency treatment, with medical reports saying that some of the injured lost limbs in the explosions.

Hezbollah members in Syria were also targeted, according to Syrian media.

Minister of Health Firas Abiad said 10 people were killed in the explosions, while another 2,800 were injured, including 200 critical cases.

Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani, was among those injured when his pager exploded, Mehr News Agency reported.

The communication devices exploded while they were in members' hands or in their pockets, leaving many writhing on the ground in agony.

Security cameras in shops and on the streets showed people injured while walking, standing, or sitting. A camera



An injured victim on his scooter waits for medical help in Beirut soon after his pager exploded on Tuesday. X

DECODER

A pager is a wireless telecom device that receives and displays messages.



in a supermarket captured the moment a device exploded as a man approached a cashier.

The unprecedented security breach led to chaos. Appeals were made for blood donations, and the Health Ministry told hospitals to ensure emergency departments were prepared.

Hospitals in the south reached full capacity, and the injured were transferred to Sidon and Beirut. Many of those seeking treatment arrived in civilian vehicles or on motorcycles.

Hezbollah turned to old wireless devices, or pagers, fitted with lithium batteries after Israel targeted and killed a number of its leaders and members by hacking cell phones and cameras connected to the internet.

Hezbollah said that "it is at the highest level of readiness to defend Lebanon and its steadfast people." It promised to retaliate after blaming Israel for detonating pagers.

The US said it was not aware in advance and had no involvement in mass explosions of pagers.

• Related reports Pages 6 & 7
• Opinion: Ray Hanania & Ramzy Baroud Pages 9 & 10

GLOBAL RELIEF

Burning oil tanker towed to safety in Red Sea

Saeed Al-Batati Al-Mukalla

A burning tanker in the Red Sea carrying almost a million barrels of oil has been successfully moved to a safe location without leaking, the EU naval mission said, raising hopes of defusing an environmental disaster in the shipping artery.

The Greek-flagged oil tanker has been abandoned and burning in the Red Sea since late August when the Houthis attacked it several times over claims that ships owned by the Soumion parent company visited Israel ports.

Wim Zwijnenburg of the Humanitarian Disarmament Project at the Dutch peace organization PAX said that satellite images showed the burning ship and warships escorting it sailing near the coast of Eritrea.

Since November, the Houthis have seized a commercial ship, sunk two, and burned several others while launching hundreds of ballistic missiles, drones and drone boats at ships in shipping lanes off Yemen in a campaign that the Yemeni militia claims is intended to put pressure on Israel to end its war in the Gaza Strip.

Spotlight Page 3



The Brief

AGRO BOOST

A workshop in Madinah focused on the use of AI to revolutionize agriculture, cutting costs and boosting efficiency. P4

JAKARTA CENTER

President Joko Widodo opened the Indonesia Islamic Financial Center in Jakarta, dedicated to strengthening the country's Shariah economy. P8

UK COMPANIES

UK-based companies are set to expand their operations in Saudi Arabia as both countries eye boosting trade partnership. P13

HEALTHY HABIT

Nouf Al-Marwaai honored for promoting yoga in KSA

Expresses gratitude to Saudi government for support, encourages youngsters to practice discipline

Saleh Fareed Jeddah

India's Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar has honored Nouf Al-Marwaai, president of the Saudi Yoga Committee, in recognition of her contribution to yoga in Saudi Arabia.

The ceremony was held in New Delhi as part of the second News18 SheShakti Summit.

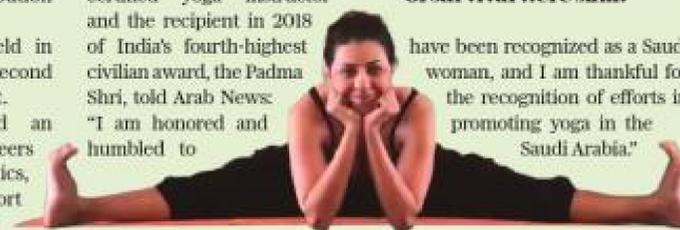
The summit featured an inspiring lineup of pioneers from diverse fields — politics, science, arts, business, sport and entertainment — who

shared their groundbreaking journeys and insights on empowerment resilience, and leadership, reflecting the unstoppable momentum of women.

Al-Marwaai, Saudi Arabia's first certified yoga instructor and the recipient in 2018 of India's fourth-highest civilian award, the Padma Shri, told Arab News: "I am honored and humbled to

Al-Marwaai said her life was affected by severe health challenges at the age of 18 and doctors told her parents that her chances of survival were slim.

have been recognized as a Saudi woman, and I am thankful for the recognition of efforts in promoting yoga in the Saudi Arabia."



Al-Marwaai, whose interest in yoga began when her life was clouded by severe health problems, shared her journey on a SheShakti 2024 panel.

She said her life was affected by severe health challenges at the age of 18 and doctors told her parents that her chances of survival were slim.

"Later, I started practicing yoga after getting a book from my father. It was not easy to follow. That year, in 1998, doctors told my parents that I won't live anymore,"

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I met with Prime Minister of Egypt Mostafa Madbouly and we discussed ways to support the private sector and develop mutual investment opportunities in our countries.

Khalid Al-Falih
Saudi Investment minister



Radar

KSA today



Dhahran National Day

Join the Ithra Center in celebrating Saudi National Day at the Children's Oasis through an experience filled with surprises from Sept. 20-23. Visit the Ithra app for more information.



Jeddah Art workshop

Artist Rania will host a coloring workshop for children on Sept. 20. Register through @upgrade.sa on Instagram.



Riyadh Concert

Singer Faya Younan will be performing at the Vocally Theatre Sept. 19-21. Visit riyadh.platinumlist.net for tickets and other details.



AIUia Music festival

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

The Register

THE PICTURES THAT MARK THE DAY



Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister for International Multilateral Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Rassi received Ukraine's Ambassador to the Kingdom Anatolii Petrenko in

Riyadh on Tuesday. In a separate meeting on the same day, Al-Rassi met with Ambassador of El Salvador to the Kingdom Ricardo Ernesto Cucalon Levy, the Foreign

Ministry stated on X. During the meetings, all sides discussed relations between their countries and developments of common concern.

Today's Number

22m

Saudi Ministry of Culture's Jeddah Historic District Program has completed over 22 million safe working hours in the historic district without any work-related incidents, including 5.5 million hours in the restoration of historic buildings, Saudi Press Agency reported.

Review

Crust Corner

SULafa ALKHUNAIZI

Crust Corner is a hidden gem among Riyadh's gastronomical experiences. From filling salads to nourishing juices, this local joint is worth a try.

Who said healthy food should be boring? Colorful salads are Crust Corner's specialty while its star dish, Mexican chicken, has the perfect balance of savory flavors of chicken and the creamy chipotle dressing. The texture plays a big role, bringing out the creaminess of the avocado, the crunchy lettuce, and the toasted grilled corn.

The Greek salad is also bursting with authentic flavors. The cool salad is a mix of romaine lettuce, salty feta cheese, addictive cherry



tomatoes, cucumber, and tangy kalamata olives. The dish is then topped off with baked za'atar pita and served with a lemony Greek dressing.

Crust Corner's herbed chicken bowl, which is served with fluffy white or brown rice, steamed broccoli and carrots, is a perfect light meal for those on the go. The chicken is grilled with a mixture of herbs and spices.

To satisfy the sweet tooth, the acai bowl is a great alternative to ice cream. Acai, the purple berries of the South American palm tree, is offered in two different flavors: granola and peanut butter. Each dessert has a topping of fresh fruits such as strawberry, blueberry and banana.

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



BOOKED AND BUSY

Rihanna

Rihanna made a stunning appearance in a white teddy coat styled like a dressing gown at the launch of her Fenty Hair collection at Selfridges in London.

The 36-year-old singer and businesswoman turned heads in the plunging, off-the-shoulder coat, which she accentuated with a matching belt fixed at the waist.

Her long, dark hair was styled in elegant waves, and she accessorized with eye-catching drop earrings.

Rihanna appeared in high spirits as she waved to crowds outside the London store.

The Barbadian singer's fans remain eager for new music.

'ALL GOOD HERE'

OceanGate investigation

The US Coast Guard has disclosed new details about the implosion of the Titan submersible, including the final text message sent before the disaster.

During a hearing on Sept. 16, the Coast Guard presented an animation illustrating the events leading up to the tragedy, which occurred during a dive to the Titanic wreck site in June 2023.

According to Associated Press, the animation revealed that the Titan responded "All good here" to queries from the support ship Polar Prince about the submersible's status.

The submersible lost contact after this exchange, and the Polar Prince sent repeated messages asking if the submersible could still see the ship on its display. OceanGate co-founder Stockton

Rush, and Pakistani businessman Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman were among the five on board who died in the disaster.

The investigation into the submersible's implosion will examine "mechanical considerations, as well as compliance with regulations and crew member qualifications," according to the Coast Guard.

Tony Nissen, OceanGate's former engineering director, told the hearing that he felt "100 percent" rushed to start operations, and revealed concerns about the submersible's hull, particularly after it was struck by lightning in 2018.

Nissen claimed he was fired in 2019 for refusing to approve an expedition to the Titanic due to safety concerns about the hull, which



OceanGate later attributed to issues with the support ship.

He also criticized Rush, describing him as difficult to work with, and fixated on cost and scheduling issues.

TheRegion

The Middle East Roundup

Arab News Jeddah

- The Petra Music Festival in Jordan is a rave experience one can attend with friends and family. It will be held at the Culture Village, Little Petra, Albaida, Petra City, on Friday, Sept. 20. For more details visit calendar.jo.
- Enjoy Italian food and live

music by Lebanese singer Johnny Aouad, who will perform twice a week at Gía La Cucina d'Amore, Monot, Beirut, Lebanon. Held every Thursday and Saturday, from 9 p.m. to midnight until Dec. 21. More details on lebtivity.com.

- Beloved Egyptian music icon Angham will perform at Exhibition World Bahrain on Sept. 20,

singing a number of hit songs and taking the audience on a journey of emotions. For tickets and other details, visit calendar.bh.

- The Dubai ITS World Congress takes place until Sept. 20 at Dubai World Trade Centre and focuses on the future of transportation. For more details, check dwtc.com.

Prayer Times in Saudi Arabia

	Sept. 18	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghreb	Isha
Makkah	4:52	6:08	12:16	3:41	6:23	7:53	
Madinah	4:51	6:08	12:17	3:44	6:24	7:54	
Riyadh	4:22	5:39	11:48	3:16	5:56	7:26	
Abha	4:44	5:58	12:05	3:28	6:12	7:42	
Dammam	4:07	5:25	11:35	3:03	5:43	7:13	

The potential for a major environmental disaster is significant as the vessel could break apart at any time.

Julien Jreissati
Program director, Greenpeace MENA



Spotlight

RESEARCH & STUDIES
THE MIDDLE EAST, BETTER EXPLAINED

ARAB NEWS



The Greek-flagged oil tanker MV Sounion was struck by Houthi missiles near Yemen's Red Sea coast on Aug. 21, before militants boarded the vessel on Aug. 29 and detonated explosives, causing fires on board. AFP/AnsarulLah Media Center

MV SOUNION

Another Red Sea time bomb

Operation to salvage stricken oil tanker attacked by Houthis progresses amid threat of an ecological disaster

Nadia Al-Faour Dubai

An EU-led operation to salvage a stricken oil tanker, which has been burning in the Red Sea for almost a month after coming under attack by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi militia, reached an important milestone on Monday, potentially staving off one of the worst ecological disasters in history.

The Greek-flagged oil tanker MV Sounion was attacked by Houthi militants on Aug. 21 off the coast of Hodeidah. Carrying 150,000 tonnes of crude oil, the tanker was left severely damaged and at risk of spilling its cargo into one of the world's most fragile marine ecosystems.

On Sept. 14, the salvage mission, led by the EU's Operation Aspides, finally got underway after repeated delays. On Monday, it issued a statement via the social media platform X announcing the ship had been moved.

The Sounion "has been successfully towed to a safe area without any oil spill," the EU mission said. "While private stakeholders complete the salvage operation, Aspides will continue to monitor the situation."

Until the vessel has been safely docked and unloaded, however, the environmental and commercial threat posed by a major spill remains.

The initial attack on the Sounion involved missiles launched by Houthi militants, which struck the vessel as it navigated through one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. Soon after, the militants returned and detonated



explosive charges, setting parts of the ship ablaze.

The attack is part of a broader Houthi campaign to disrupt global shipping as a show of solidarity with Palestinians amid the ongoing war in Gaza. The Houthis have targeted more than 80 vessels in the Red Sea since October 2023, killing at least four sailors.

In response to the attacks, the US and UK have mounted strikes against Houthi targets in Yemen. However, these strikes have failed to deter the militia's attacks on shipping.

The Sounion attack presents a multifaceted crisis. The immediate concern is the possibility of a catastrophic oil spill, potentially four times worse than the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska, which spilled 11 million gallons of crude oil and devastated the local ecosystem.

The Red Sea's marine life, including its renowned coral reefs, is especially vulnerable, and a spill could have lasting consequences, affecting species and habitats for many decades to come.

Julien Jreissati, Greenpeace's Middle East and North Africa program director, warned that

the Red Sea's unique coral species, some of the most resilient to climate change, are under threat.

Should a spill occur, its "magnitude could be nearly impossible to contain, spreading contamination across vast areas of seawater and coastlines," Jreissati said in a statement.

The long-term impact on marine life would be "devastating, with oil residues potentially persisting in the environment for years or even decades," he said, adding that the "potential for a major environmental disaster is significant as the vessel could break apart at any time."

The economic and humanitarian impact would be equally severe. The Red Sea is also a vital global shipping route, connecting Europe, Asia, and Africa. A major oil spill would disrupt this passage, affecting global trade.

Furthermore, a spill could contaminate desalination plants that supply fresh water to millions in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Eritrea.

The EU's Aspides naval



The attack by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis, left and bottom, raises the possibility of an oil spill four times worse than the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster, far left. AFP

the vessel remains undisclosed, and both ships' radars have been turned off for safety reasons.

While the US Navy has offered assistance, the operation is currently being managed by private entities, with no direct involvement from American forces.

Sabrina Singh, the deputy spokesperson for the US Department of Defense, confirmed earlier this month that the US Navy is "standing by" but has not been called into action.

The Houthi militia has justified its attacks on international shipping as part of its resistance to Israeli actions in Gaza, claiming that the Sounion belongs to a company with alleged ties to Israel.

However, the militia has also attacked multiple vessels with no ties to Israel.

Houthi spokesperson Yahya Saree vowed further attacks as the anniversary of the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attack that triggered the Gaza war approaches, signaling that the threat to Red Sea shipping is far from over.

The Sounion crisis echoes the near catastrophe of the FSO Safer, another oil tanker that posed an enormous environmental threat in the Red Sea. The decaying vessel was anchored off the coast of Yemen for years with more than 1 million barrels of oil on board.

After months of international negotiations and funding efforts, the Safer was finally unloaded in 2023 under a UN-led effort, narrowly avoiding what could have been one of the worst oil spills in history. The Safer's precarious condition and the drawn-out efforts to secure it illustrated the difficulty of managing such crises in conflict zones.

INNUMBERS

15k

Tonnes of crude oil aboard the Greek-flagged MV Sounion.

80

Vessels targeted by the Houthi militia since Oct. 7, 2023.

mission, established in February to protect merchant vessels in the region, is leading the rescue operation, working closely with private sector actors.

Early in the operation, the crew of 23 Filipinos and two Russians, along with four private security personnel, were rescued by a French vessel and taken to Djibouti.

Aspides initially attempted to tow the vessel, but the mission was paused due to unsafe conditions and concerns about further damage to the tanker. It was not until mid-September that salvage crews were able to secure a connection to tow the vessel.

The tanker, still smoldering and billowing smoke, had to be moved at a "painfully slow" pace to a safe location in the northern Red Sea.

Greek news agencies reported over the weekend that the rescue vessel, Aigaion Pelagos, was towing the Sounion, escorted by the rescue tug Panormitis and several frigates equipped with firefighting and oil spill recovery capabilities.

The destination of





The Madinah Dates Season features auctions of harvests from more than 29,000 farms, showcasing a range of date varieties. SPA

TECH INNOVATION

Madinah workshop explores AI's role in farms of the future

Experts tackle crop health, pest control, sustainability

Arab News Riyadh

The use of artificial intelligence to revolutionize agriculture, cutting costs and improving efficiency, has been highlighted at a workshop held as part of the Madinah Dates Season.

The workshop, held at the Madinah Chamber of Commerce, brought together Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz University faculty, researchers, and AI enthusiasts to discuss the future of farming.

AI tools designed to monitor crop health, detect early signs of disease, and offer insights for treatment were showcased at

the workshop, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Tuesday.

Devices predicting pest activity were also presented, enabling farmers to implement targeted control strategies, reducing crop losses and chemical use.

Experts explored the role of advanced electronic systems in revolutionizing Saudi agriculture, enhancing sustainability, addressing challenges, and boosting local production.

As part of this year's Madinah Dates Season, the workshop also raised awareness of date palm varieties, nutritional value, and agricultural practices.

A dates hackathon, to utilize AI in agriculture and resource management, will run until Oct.

FASTFACTS

\$390m

In 2023, Saudi date exports increased by 14 percent, reaching SR1.462 billion (\$390 million) in 119 countries, up from SR1.280 billion in 2022.

6.5m

Madinah, with 6.5 million palm trees and an annual production of 263,000 tonnes, is central to Saudi Arabia's food security goals and Vision 2030.

3, with 233 teams of innovators, programmers, and students taking part.

The event's first track focuses on creating data sets to improve date cultivation and quality, aiming for sustainable agricultural development through AI systems that enhance efficiency and cut costs. The second track addresses challenges such as water use, pest management, and crop monitoring, promoting smart systems for irrigation and automated processes.

Entries will be judged by AI experts on data quality, diversity, and innovation, with awards for the top three teams in each track. The prize pool is SR900,000 (\$240,000).

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Saudi universities join King Salman academy for Arabic language test

Hebshi Alshamari Riyadh

The King Salman Global Academy for Arabic Language, in collaboration with several Saudi universities, conducted the Hamza Arabic language proficiency test for non-native speakers on Tuesday.

The academy aims to enhance the global status of Arabic, promote its use, and support the goals of the Human Capacity Development Program.

The Hamza test, a computerized exam, assesses non-native speakers in four language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. It lasts 155 minutes,

consists of 75 questions, and follows the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, targeting learners and teachers of Arabic at universities and educational centers.

Mona Al-Shayqi, an Arabic language supervisor at the Madinah Education Department, said that learning another language is vital for students, as it opens doors to different cultures, and enhances critical and creative thinking by comparing language structures.

Language skills significantly boost job prospects, both locally and globally, with multilingual individuals excelling in scientific

HIGHLIGHT

Participating universities include Umm Al-Qura University, Islamic University of Madinah, King Abdulaziz University, King Faisal University, Taif University, Qassim University, and Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University.

fields and understanding specialized terminology, she added.

Mahmoud Abdulrahman, head of the language proofreading department at the Egyptian newspaper Al-Youm Al-Sabea,

said Arabic stands out as one of the world's richest languages, and is known for its adaptability across eras. He highlighted the importance of learning different languages to express a range of emotions and engage in meaningful conversations with people from other cultures.

Bilingual individuals are better equipped for critical and creative thinking, he added.

Abdulrahman said that incorporating language learning into daily activities, like reading stories or watching movies, is an effective method to deepen understanding and maintain interest.

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Economic growth

KSA localizes rose cultivation to boost agriculture

Saudi Arabia has announced the localization of rose cultivation to meet rising local demand, create jobs, and reduce reliance on costly, lower-quality imports.

The initiative also aims to boost exports to Gulf and Middle Eastern markets, supporting agricultural growth in line with Vision 2030.

The Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture unveiled incentives to strengthen the sector, offering financial returns to enhance rose producers' economic standing.

Key incentives include the success of tissue culture rose cultivation, which lowers production costs while promoting growth.

The ministry offers affordable agricultural land, investment opportunities leveraging the comparative advantages of roses, and loans covering 70 percent of project costs from the Agricultural Development Fund. SPA Riyadh

Astronomy

Partial eclipse visible early Wednesday in KSA

A partial lunar eclipse was visible from Earth early Wednesday morning, starting before sunrise in Saudi Arabia.

Jeddah Astronomy Society director Majed Abu Zahra noted that the eclipse was seen across Europe, Asia, Africa, both Americas, and the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans, the Arctic and Antarctica.

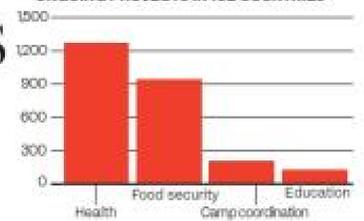
The eclipse lasted from 5:12 a.m. to 6:15 a.m. Saudi time and was the only lunar eclipse in Saudi Arabia for 2024.

Abu Zahra explained that the full moon entered Earth's shadow, moving from west to east. It peaked at 5:44 a.m., with 3.9 percent of the moon's surface covered. The moon appeared reddish or orange near the horizon during sunrise.

The moon was at perigee during the eclipse, making it appear 6.7 percent larger than usual, making it the second supermoon of 2024 and coinciding with the harvest moon. SPA Riyadh

The Day's FIGURES

KSRELIEF LARGEST COMPLETED AND ONGOING PROJECTS IN 102 COUNTRIES



Source: ksrelief.org

SEDRA community

New design contest launched for architects

ROSHN Group, in collaboration with the Public Investment Fund, launched the MUSAHAMA Design Competition. Registration is open until Sept. 30.

The competition will select designs for facilities within the SEDRA housing development project, promoting local talent and aligning with Vision 2030.

Participants will design amenities for the SEDRA Pedestrian Spine, including a mosque, neighborhood convenience center, early education center, and park.

Entries will be judged on local material use, design, functionality, urban response, and sustainability.

Designs will be developed over 14 weeks, with winners announced in February 2025.

The top prize for the design firms track is SR400,000 (\$106,000), with SR300,000 for second place and SR200,000 for third place. SPA Riyadh

Risk assessment

Course bids to enhance hiking safety at reserve

The Imam Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Royal Reserve Development Authority, in collaboration with the Saudi Climbing and Hiking Federation, has hosted a two-day hiking risk assessment course at King Khalid Royal Reserve.

Some 25 participants, including tourist guides, hiking enthusiasts and local community members, attended the event to obtain skills in identifying hazards faced by outdoor sports practitioners.

The course covered risk analysis, avoiding common hiking mistakes, and safety strategies, including emergency risk management.

A key component was a five-step risk assessment process: identifying hazards, assessing who might be at risk, evaluating hazard levels, controlling and mitigating risks, and applying these skills in simulations of diverse terrains. The course aims to enhance skills in tourism activities at royal reserves. SPA Riyadh

News Saudi Arabia

MEOW YOU'RE TALKING!

Purrfect plan to pamper kitties in the Kingdom

Horayra Community's '1 Million Cats' campaign wants to ensure no cat naps hungry

Nada Hameed Jeddah

A Saudi cat food company, inspired by Islam's directives on treating animals with love and kindness, is helping to take care of strays and those abandoned in the Kingdom.

The Horayra company is named after Abu Huraira, a close companion of Prophet Muhammad. Abu Huraira, which means "Father of the kitten," was given his nickname due to his affection for a kitten.

When tending to people's sheep he would carry the kitten with him, playing with it during the day and placing it in a tree at night for safety. This reflects the values of compassion and love for animals that is at the heart of the company's Horayra Community.

Saud Al-Sohimi, owner of the brand, told Arab News: "The goal is to feed the largest number of needy cats, promote

the culture of compassion for animals, and rescue them from homelessness."

The initiative brings together experts, cat lovers and rescuers across the Kingdom.

They launched the "1 Million Cats" campaign recently to feed this number of cats across the Kingdom by distributing free food to rescuers and pet stores.

The company has offered SR5,000 (\$1,332) to someone who has the best story about feeding a cat.

By sharing videos with the campaign's hashtag on social media, the community contributes to a larger story of collective effort and compassion, Al-Sohimi explained.

Speaking about the company's products, he added that it is made "from natural ingredients, ensuring their health and care."



Horayra Community's initiative to feed and take care of stray cats brings together experts, cat lovers and rescuers across the Kingdom. AN photos/Supplied

The company also donates cat food for strays with every purchase of a Horayra product, which is certified by the Saudi Food and Drug Authority, and is available in Qatar and Kuwait.

They also manufacture special bags for stray cats which are distributed to supervisors in the Horayra Community for delivery to rescuers across the Kingdom.

Reflecting on the public's love for cats, Al-Sohimi recalled how a woman in



The goal is to feed the largest number of needy cats, promote the culture of compassion for animals, and rescue them from homelessness.

Saud Al-Sohimi
Horayra brand owner

HIGHLIGHTS

● Horayra Community launched the '1 Million Cats' campaign recently to feed this number of cats across the Kingdom by distributing free food to rescuers and pet stores.

● The brand donates cat food for strays with every purchase of a Horayra product, which is certified by the Saudi Food and Drug Authority.

At the end of the year, the Horayra Community intends to honor the people who contributed to the campaign.

"The Horayra Community's members are increasing every day. It is a shining example of the compassion and kindness of the Saudi people toward animals.

"Their efforts have significantly improved the lives of stray cats across the Kingdom, fostering a healthier environment for both humans and animals," Al-Sohimi said.

BIBLIOPHILES UNITE

Riyadh International Book Fair promises celebration of literature

Arab News Jeddah

Saudi Arabia's Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission is gearing up for the 2024 Riyadh International Book Fair, which is set to take place from Sept. 26 to Oct. 5 at King Saud University in Riyadh.

With about 2,000 local, Arab and international publishing houses and agencies from more than 30 countries adorning 800 booths, this year's fair promises to be a celebration of literature, knowledge, and creativity.

The fair will host writers, thinkers, and intellectuals from Saudi Arabia and beyond, making it a pivotal literary platform in the region.

Qatar will be the guest of honor at the fair. The rich cultural and intellectual legacy of the country will be on display through a dedicated pavilion featuring rare manuscripts and publications



The Riyadh International Book Fair will host writers, thinkers, and intellectuals from Saudi Arabia and beyond. File photos

from Qatar's Ministry of Culture. Leading literary and artistic luminaries, alongside key organizations from Qatar's cultural landscape, will feature at the event.

Mohammed Hasan Alwan, the CEO of the commission, said that the fair illustrated the

unwavering support for cultural endeavors in Saudi Arabia.

He told Arab News: "The fair offers visitors a unique intellectual and cultural experience, incorporating the latest technologies and digital solutions. Attendees can discover thousands of new releases across

various fields and enjoy a wide range of activities and events within the diverse cultural program, featuring prominent cultural figures from Saudi Arabia and beyond.

"This makes the 2024 edition a truly inspiring cultural journey, building on the successes of previous editions."

This year's fair boasts a dedicated business zone, with participation from literary agencies managing authors' works and contracts, and with printing presses offering services to publishers. Additionally, there will be government and financial institution booths related to the publishing business sector.

The zone will host special sessions and workshops on topics such as entrepreneurship, licensing and copyright.

The fair will also feature a children's area brimming with

FASTFACTS

● The Riyadh International Book Fair is set to take place from Sept. 26 to Oct. 5 at King Saud University.

● The rich cultural and intellectual legacy of the fair's guest of honor Qatar will be on display through a dedicated pavilion featuring rare manuscripts and publications.

literary, cultural, and entertainment activities aimed at igniting the spark of curiosity in the young generation.

By championing local authors, providing a platform for self-published works, and offering a diverse range of cultural activities, the fair reflects the Kingdom's efforts to nurture creativity and promote literary innovation.

The fair's diverse cultural and intellectual activities are to be hosted in partnership with the Cultural Channel.

The program includes dialogue sessions, workshops, poetry evenings, and concerts and artistic performances designed to enrich the cultural sector, foster knowledge and promote reading as a way of life, while contributing to the sustainability of the cultural and intellectual renaissance underway in Saudi society.



News Middle East

WEST'S HYPOCRISY

Israel fosters hate, says Arab League chief

Gobran Mohammed Cairo

The secretary-general of the Arab League, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, condemned the "tolerance exhibited by major powers and the Western world toward the continuation of the Gaza war for an entire year" and warned that it will "exact a significant toll on regional stability."

His comments came during a

meeting with Tor Wennesland, the UN's special coordinator for the Middle East peace process. Their talks focused on the evolving situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as the risks Israel's war on Gaza pose to regional stability, particularly in light of Israeli calls for escalation of the conflict with Hezbollah along the Lebanon front.

About Gheit warned that

SPEEDREAD

About Gheit and Wennesland agreed that though efforts to address the Gaza humanitarian crisis will be crucial, they must be complemented by a political path that directly addresses the core issue of the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

the "hatred fostered by Israel through its massacres undermines any prospects for comprehensive peace in the future and threatens to destabilize the peace framework that has prevailed in the region for over four decades."

Wennesland offered his perspective on efforts to preserve the framework for a two-state solution, including the establishment of an independent

Palestinian state. The Arab League chief emphasized the need for continued political engagement across all platforms, particularly within the UN and its Security Council, to uphold and maintain the vision for two states.

He said: "Expanding the recognition of the Palestinian state is a pivotal step in this endeavor, as it facilitates negotiations between the two states on an equal footing"



Palestinians on Tuesday in front of the UN relief agency UNRWA's headquarters in Beirut wave their national flags during a protest against Israeli attacks. AP

BRINKMANSHIP

Israel claims it thwarted Hezbollah operation to kill security official

US envoy warns Tel Aviv of 'dangers of escalating tensions in Lebanon'

Najla Houssari Beirut

Three people were killed and two others injured during an Israeli raid on two houses in the border town of Blida, Lebanon, on Tuesday.

Rescue workers were seen searching through debris in footage shared by activists on social media.

The Israeli military reported "targeting a Hezbollah cell in the town of Blida, resulting in the death of three members."

The intensity of violent hostilities between Hezbollah and the Israeli army escalated after reports from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office indicating that the security Cabinet approved a decision to expand the war in Lebanon, "with the aim of allowing Israeli

settlers in the north to return to their homes."

This escalation came a day after Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant met with US presidential envoy Amos Hochstein, who delivered a message from the US warning of the "dangers of escalating tensions in Lebanon and the necessity of containing the conflict to avoid a full-scale war."

But Gallant told Hochstein that "the only viable path to ensure the return of the residents of the north is through a military operation against Hezbollah."

Netanyahu's office said he made it clear to Hochstein during their meeting "firmly and decisively that our residents cannot be returned without a fundamental change in the security situation in the north, and Israel appreciates and respects the support of the United States, but will do what is necessary to maintain its

security and facilitate the safe return of residents of the north to their homes."

This escalation coincided with the Israeli military's announcement regarding what it termed the "foiling of a Hezbollah attempt to assassinate a high ranking

FASTFACT

Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency UNRWA, said: "We should always be ready for the worst, although we are hopeful that the worst won't happen."

security figure using an explosive device," but it did not specify the location or date of the incident.

The announcement said: "We warned the targeted individual before the explosion. The Shin Bet uncovered the explosive device linked to a remote

activation mechanism, which included a camera and a mobile phone intended for activation by Hezbollah from Lebanon."

It added: "Security assessments indicate that certain elements within Hezbollah were also involved in the preparations related to the Tel Aviv operation in September 2023, and that Hezbollah continues to escalate tensions in the region, leading it toward perilous situations."

Media reports in Beirut quoted a source close to Hezbollah, saying that "any Israeli military land operation in southern Lebanon will not be a mere promenade and will cost heavily."

The source added: "Israelis know that there are many obstacles facing any land operation. Nevertheless, Hezbollah is ready for any scenario and will deal with any bad option."

The ball is in Israel's court,

the source said, "as it continues its violations of the Lebanese airspace and its occupation of the Kfarchouba Hills and the Shebaa Farms."

Hezbollah increased the intensity of its operations against Israeli military outposts in the past 24 hours, on Tuesday targeting "Israeli soldiers in the Karantina Hill," according to its official statements.

On Monday night and Tuesday morning it also targeted "a gathering of soldiers in the Al-Abad site with a guided missile," in addition to "buildings used by the enemy's soldiers in the Manara settlement."

The militant group also hit "several Israeli vehicles in the Ramiyah outpost with a guided missile." At the time a support force entered the area, it was targeted by Hezbollah "with artillery missiles, causing confirmed hits."

SOLIDARITY

Russian, Egyptian ministers stress need to establish Palestinian state

Gobran Mohamed Cairo

The foreign ministers of Egypt and Russia reiterated the necessity of establishing a Palestinian state on the entire Palestinian territory, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

They also agreed on the need for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and unconditional humanitarian aid access.

Badr Abdelatty, who was in Moscow on Monday, and Sergey Lavrov exchanged views on the Israeli aggression against the occupied Palestinian territories in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

The two men held an expanded consultation session, followed by a joint press conference.

Abdelatty emphasized the need for bilateral cooperation in various fields, especially in the sectors of energy, food security,

BACKGROUND

The two men held an expanded consultation session, followed by a joint press conference.

tourism, transport and logistics, "which contribute to advancing economic and trade relations between the two countries ... especially with Egypt's accession to the BRICS membership."

The two ministers discussed the developments of important projects being implemented, most notably the Dabaa nuclear power plant and the Russian industrial zone in the Suez Canal Economic Zone.

Abdelatty and Lavrov also touched on the situations in Syria, Sudan and Libya, in addition to the need to achieve security in the Red Sea and ensure freedom of maritime navigation in this vital region of the world.

He emphasized the importance of Somali sovereignty over its territories, and condemned any action that undermines its unity.

Regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Abdelatty emphasized the importance of Egypt's water security and the need to reach a binding legal agreement on filling and operating the dam, and rejecting any unilateral measures.

The dam is on the Blue Nile tributary in the northern Ethiopia highlands, from where 85 percent of the Nile's waters flow.

News Middle East

PLIGHT

Poll: 57% of Gazans think Oct. 7 was incorrect

1,200 Palestinians polled face-to-face, 790 in West Bank, 410 in Gaza, with a 3.5 percent margin of error

Reuters Ramallah

A majority of Gazans believe Hamas' decision to launch the Oct. 7 attack on Israel was incorrect, according to a poll published on Tuesday pointing to a big drop in backing for the assault that prompted Israel's devastating Gaza offensive.

The poll, conducted in early September by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, found that 57 percent of people surveyed in the Gaza Strip said the decision to launch the offensive was incorrect, while 39 percent said it was correct.

It marked the first time since Oct. 7 that a PSR poll found a majority of Gazan respondents judging the decision as incorrect.

It was accompanied by a drop in support for the attack in the West Bank, though a majority of 64 percent of respondents there still thought it was the correct decision, the poll found.

PSR's previous poll, conducted in June, showed that 57 percent of respondents in Gaza thought the decision to be correct.

Israel launched its assault after the unprecedented Hamas raid which killed 1,200 people and resulted in another 250 being abducted, according to Israeli tallies.

PSR said it surveyed 1,200 people face-to-face, 790 of them in the West Bank and 410 in Gaza, with a 3.5 percent margin of error.

PSR polls since the Oct. 7 attack have consistently shown a majority of respondents in both Gaza and the West Bank to believe the attack was a correct decision, with support generally greater in the West Bank than Gaza.



More than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli military offensive that has laid waste to the Gaza Strip since last October. AFP

PSR said the poll released on Tuesday marked the first time since Oct. 7 that its findings had shown simultaneously in the West Bank and Gaza a significant

drop in the favorability of the attack and in expectations that Hamas will win the current war.

Overall, the poll found a majority of 54 percent of respondents in Gaza and the West Bank thought the decision was correct.

In August, the Israeli military accused Hamas of mounting an effort to falsify the results of PSR

polls to falsely show support for Hamas and Oct. 7, though the military said there was no evidence of PSR cooperating with Hamas.

PSR said it had taken the allegation seriously and investigated it. PSR said on Tuesday its analysis of the data did not flag any inconsistencies that would arise when data

is arbitrarily altered, and that a review of quality control measures "convinced us that no data manipulation took place."

Support for Oct. 7 did not necessarily mean support for Hamas or killings or atrocities against civilians, PSR said, adding that "almost 90 percent of the public believes Hamas men did not

commit the atrocities depicted in videos taken on that day."

The poll showed a drop in the number of respondents in Gaza who said they support Hamas to 35 percent from 38 percent. But the movement remained more popular than Fatah, led by President Mahmoud Abbas, in both in Gaza and the West Bank.

ORDEAL

Iran releases Austrian citizen from prison before end of sentence

Reuters Dubai

Iran has granted an early release from prison to Austrian citizen Christian Weber, who was convicted of offenses that originally included spying, Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer said on Tuesday.

"I am very pleased that ... the Foreign Ministry and the embassy in Tehran have succeeded in securing the early release of Christian Weber from Iranian custody," Nehammer said on social media platform X.

"The Austrian embassy's team in Tehran is now working hard to ensure that he can leave the

country as quickly as possible and can be reunited with his family in Austria," he added.

Austria and Iran have both said little publicly about the case, which Vienna disclosed in late 2022.

At the time, Iran was undergoing some of the biggest anti-government demonstrations in its modern history following the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a Kurdish woman arrested for allegedly violating dress codes.

Austria said then that the charges against its citizen were not related to the Amini case.

In February, Austria's foreign



Iran's Mizan news agency said Weber was detained for crimes committed in West Azerbaijan and freed in consideration of Islamic mercy. Social media

FASTFACT

The Austrian Embassy's team in Tehran is now working hard to ensure that he can leave the country as quickly as possible and can be reunited with his family in Austria.

minister said a conviction against Weber for spying had been overturned on appeal and that his sentence for unspecified other crimes had been halved.

The Austrian Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that "administrative steps" still need to be

completed with the Iranian authorities.

The Iranian judiciary's Mizan news agency said Weber had been detained for crimes committed in Iran's West Azerbaijan province and freed in consideration of Islamic mercy.

He was handed over to Austria's ambassador to arrange his exit, the agency said.

Mizan did not specify the crime for which Weber was jailed. Calls to the Austrian Embassy before regular office hours went unanswered.

Iran's judiciary was not immediately available for comment.

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

German media demand access to war-torn Gaza

AFP Berlin

German news media outlets on Tuesday called on Israel to grant them access to war-torn Gaza, charging that the "almost complete exclusion of international media ... is unprecedented in recent history."

"After almost a year of war, we call on the Israeli government: allow us to enter the Gaza Strip," a group of newspapers, agencies and broadcasters wrote in an open letter.

They also urged Egypt to permit them entry to the widely devastated Palestinian territory via the Rafah border crossing in the south of the Gaza Strip.

The media organizations wrote that "anyone who makes independent reporting on this war impossible is damaging their own credibility."

"Anyone who prohibits us from working in the Gaza Strip is creating the conditions for human rights to be violated."

The open letter was addressed to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and had been delivered on Monday, they said.

Signatories included editors and reporters from Der Spiegel, Die Welt, public broadcasters ARD

'Anyone who prohibits us from working in the Gaza Strip is creating the conditions for human rights to be violated. We know the risk. We are prepared to take it. Grant us access to Gaza.'

and ZDF and the German Journalists Association.

They said they have decades of experience in conflict reporting and wrote: "We know the risk. We are prepared to take it. Grant us access to the Gaza Strip. Let us work, in the interest of everyone."

STRENGTHENING ECONOMY

Indonesia launches national Islamic finance center to boost local halal industries

Indonesia ranked 3rd in 2023 Global Islamic Economy Indicator, behind Saudi Arabia and Malaysia

Sheany Yasuko Lal Jakarta

President Joko Widodo opened on Tuesday the Indonesia Islamic Financial Center, a new special area in Jakarta dedicated to strengthening the country's Shariah economy and helping local industries tap into the global halal market.



President Joko Widodo delivers a speech during the opening ceremony of the Indonesia Islamic Financial Center in Jakarta on Tuesday. Supplied

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim-majority country, with about 87 percent of its 270 million population professing Islam. Its government has lately been working to further develop the local halal industry to harness the potential of the domestic market.

"Indonesia has a huge chance, a potential to become a global halal hub, the center of the global halal ecosystem, as long as we strengthen our Shariah economy ecosystem," Widodo said during

the opening ceremony.

"Indonesia's Shariah banks, an important part of the Shariah economy ecosystem, must continue to grow with modern management, must be competitive (and) professional to reach the potential markets we have — our 236 million Muslim population — while also growing to become the standard of Shariah banking in Indonesia, in the

ASEAN region, and in the world."

The IIFC comprises Indonesia's biggest Islamic bank, Bank Syariah Indonesia, and Danareksa, a state-owned holding company.

The center will serve as a platform for the development of local industries — from Muslim fashion to halal tourism and food.

"(The center) will support all aspects so we don't lose our potential to other regions or

HIGHLIGHT

Center to serve as platform to develop local industries, from Muslim fashion to halal tourism and food.

countries," Widodo said.

BSI's tower at IIFC — the construction of which is to be completed next year — will be a "center for business and halal ecosystem literacy," the bank's director Hery Gunardi said.

"We are ready to develop and accelerate the nation's goal of becoming a sustainable global hub and establishing an Islamic ecosystem."

Indonesia was ranked third in the 2023 Global Islamic Economy Indicator, which measures the strength of the Islamic economy in 73 countries. It was placed just behind Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Energy infrastructure

Germany to provide winter aid for Ukraine

Germany will provide 100 million euros (\$111 million) in aid to help Ukraine through the coming winter as it weathers Russian attacks on its energy infrastructure, the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday.

Moscow has pounded Ukraine's energy network throughout the two-and-a-half year war, destroying swaths of the country's infrastructure and causing severe power shortages and blackouts. Russian forces have recently shifted their focus from shelling energy distribution networks to targeting energy production facilities, which are much more costly and take years to repair or rebuild. **AFP**

Women empowerment

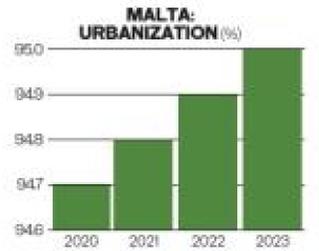
EU chief unveils her new team

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen put women in many of the top roles on her new team for her next five-year tenure at the head of the bloc on Tuesday, despite the reluctance of many EU member states to give in to her demand for gender parity.

Von der Leyen put only two men in her top echelon with four women as vice presidents, including Kaja Kallas as foreign policy chief. Kallas was already agreed on by government leaders. The appointments of the Commission team — which veers to the right after the June elections saw a surge of far-right parties — still have to be confirmed. **AP**

The Day's FIGURES

Source: Statista



Nature Aerial view taken on Tuesday shows the flooded town of Uttendorf, Austria. High winds and unusually heavy rainfall have hit swaths of Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia since Friday.

AFP

What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

'Britain's Birds'

ROB HUME, ROBERT STILL, ANDY SWASH, HUGH HARROP, AND DAVID TIPLING

A bestselling guide since it was first published, Britain's Birds has quickly established itself as the go-to photographic identification guide to the birds of Great Britain and Ireland—the most comprehensive, up-to-date, practical

and user-friendly book of its kind. Acclaimed by birdwatchers of all kinds, from the beginner to the most experienced, the guide has now been thoroughly revised and updated to make it even better than before.



Conservation efforts

Sea turtles return on Cyprus beaches

Protected Green and Loggerhead turtles are making a big comeback on the beaches of two British military bases in Cyprus, with the number of nests surpassing last year's record count by nearly 25 percent, environmentalists said on Tuesday.

There were 382 sea turtle nests recorded this year on all sandy beaches inside the bases — 100 more than last year's count. Bases Environmental and Police Officer Alexia Perdiou said a decades-long commitment by base authorities to safeguard nests is paying off. **AP**

Illegal harvest

Peruvian police seize 1.3 tonnes of shark fins

Peruvian authorities said Monday they had seized about 1.3 US tonnes of illegally harvested shark fins, a delicacy in some Asian countries that has placed the predatory creatures at grave risk.

The discovery was made at the warehouse of an export company from where they were to have been shipped, without the necessary license, to Asia, the Sunat customs agency said on X. According to the Pew Environment Group, between 63 million and 273 million sharks are killed every year. **AFP**

WORK IN PROGRESS

Bangladesh opposition party rallies to demand a new election

AP Dhaka

Thousands of activists and leaders of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party on Tuesday rallied in the nation's capital to demand a democratic transition through an election as an interim government has yet to outline a time frame for new voting.

The supporters gathered in front of BNP headquarters in Dhaka, where they chanted slogans demanding a new election.

The interim government headed by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has rolled out a number of plans to reform various sectors

of the country, from the Election Commission to financial institutions. But major political parties — including the BNP, which is headed by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia — want the new election sometime soon.

Yunus took the helm after former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina fled the country amid a mass uprising last month, ending a 15-year spell in power. The protests began in July and later morphed into an anti-government movement. Hasina has been living in India since.

In his recent speeches, Yunus hasn't outlined a time frame for a

new national election and said they would stay in power as long as the people want them to stay. A team of newspaper editors recently said that Yunus should complete crucial reforms first and stay in power for at least two years.

The BNP initially demanded an election in three months, but later said it wants to allow the interim government some time for reforms to be undertaken. The country's main Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami party, which was once officially an alliance partner under Zia's party, also wants to give the Yunus-led government more time before an election is conducted.

شَكَرْتُ لَكُمْ الْإِذْنَ وَبَلَاءَكُمْ
وَمَا ضَاعَ مَغْرُوفٌ يُكَافِئُهُ شُكْرٌ
(طهية بن العسوية الكندي)

YOUR DAILY ARABIC PROVERB
I have thanked both your favors and actions; being appreciated is never lost.
Hujayya bin Al-Mudharab Al-Kindi
(Pre-Islamic Arab tribal notable and poet)

Opinion

What to watch for in last weeks of US election campaign

KERRY BOYD ANDERSON



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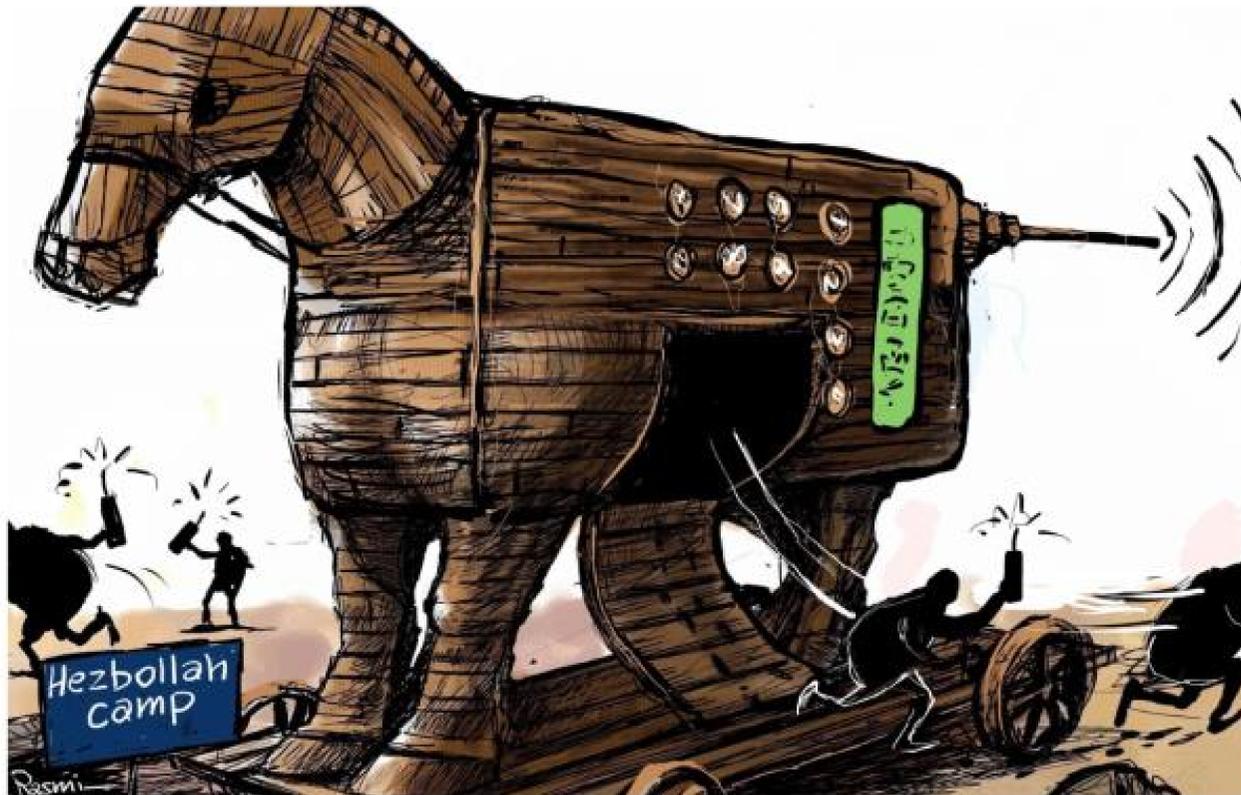
After months of political campaigning, the US is now into the final countdown to the 2024 election. For observers of this election — which has major implications for American and global politics — there are a few key events and factors to watch over the next few weeks. Election day is Nov. 5, but early voting is already starting in some states. The presidency, the House of Representatives and about a third of Senate seats will all be contested. In many states, voters will also make choices about state- and local-level positions. For the presidential race, most of the traditionally important events are already over. The Republican and Democratic parties have held their primary elections and caucuses to choose their candidates. Another traditionally important event in presidential campaigns is a debate between candidates — or, typically, several debates. This year saw some changes in recent norms, as President Joe Biden and former President Donald

Trump bypassed the Commission on Presidential Debates and negotiated their own terms for a debate on CNN. That June 27 debate fundamentally changed the 2024 election. Biden's performance was widely seen as poor, amplifying concerns about his age and mental acuity. As Trump gained a clear lead in polls after the debate, concerned Democrats began to demand a change. Eventually, Biden ended his candidacy and endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris. The Democratic Party rapidly united behind her, making her the official candidate at the convention in August. On Sept. 10, Trump and Harris participated in a televised debate on ABC News. Afterward, Trump said he would not debate Harris again, though he might change his mind, and Harris has expressed interest in another debate. Meanwhile, vice presidential candidates J.D. Vance (Republican) and Tim Walz (Democratic) are scheduled to debate on Oct. 1 on CBS News. While Americans might not have another opportunity to see Harris and Trump

go head-to-head, both candidates will hold many campaign rallies and events, especially in the battleground states that will determine who wins. There are still several weeks left before the election concludes, leaving room for unexpected events. There is a tradition in US politics of speculating about an "October surprise" — a last-minute news event that is unexpected or planned by an opponent that could change the election's outcome. Throughout the rest of September and October, pollsters will frequently release new data. This close to the election, polling can provide useful insights. However, observers should focus on polling in the battleground states that will determine the election's outcome, rather than on national polling. Poll results in Pennsylvania, for example, are far more relevant than nationwide surveys. Also, polling can help to explain that a race is very tight but, in a close race, polling may not be useful for predicting the winner; for example, some polling in several battleground states

is so close that the results fall within the survey's margin of error. As Americans and many people around the world anxiously wait to see who wins, the reality is that the result might be unclear as Nov. 6 dawns. Some previous elections took days or even weeks for the final vote tallies to be completed and for courts to settle disputes. Trump, who argues that he won the 2020 election, has invested significant campaign resources in preparing to challenge votes that favor Harris. Trump's insistence that he won the last election also means that many of his supporters would not accept a Harris victory. Also, when Trump won in 2016, his opponents accepted his win but, in a very different political environment in 2024, they might be less willing to do so if the outcome is close and contested. Observers of US politics are naturally focused on the weeks leading up to Nov. 5, but the weeks immediately following the election will also be crucial to the future of US politics and policy.

While Americans might not have another opportunity to see Harris and Trump go head-to-head, both candidates will hold many rallies



Many Americans oppose the country's continued support of Israel's genocide in Gaza more than they oppose Trump

Democrats to blame if voters shun Harris over Gaza

RAY HANANIA



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

Jill Stein, the Green Party candidate for this year's US presidential election, was cheered by hundreds of attendees at the annual convention of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Dearborn, Michigan, last week — a sign that Democrats have a serious problem when it comes defeating Donald Trump on Nov. 5. Having covered American elections for half a century, I know they are unpredictable. Polls can only tell you which way the wind is blowing at any given moment and cannot predict who will win. Any issue can surface at the last minute to influence an election. At the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee convention, I listened as several Arab Americans who had been hired by the Biden administration explained why they quit over America's support of Israel's Gaza war. They said they were repeatedly told that "Arab voters" would come back to Harris and the Democrats because their only other option

was a candidate who wants to "kick all Muslims" out of the country. It would be a huge mistake for Democrats to take the support of Arabs and Muslims for granted. But it is not just the votes of Arabs and Muslims that are being taken for granted, it is the votes of all Americans who have a conscience and who believe that the principles of the rule of law and the truth really matter. Many Americans oppose the country's continued support of Israel's genocide in Gaza — the US is providing billions of dollars in funds and weapons, which are being used to kill thousands of civilian women and children every week — more than they oppose a Republican candidate who is loose with his rhetoric. Harris has been overly cautious about what she says on the Israeli assault on Gaza. She has emphasized that she supports Israel's right to exist, called Hamas a terrorist organization and expressed empathy for the families of those "killed by Hamas." She has also expressed

empathy for the Palestinians killed, but always avoids pointing a similarly harsh finger of blame at the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. That double standard of blaming Hamas for the massacre of more than 1,000 Israelis on Oct. 7 but failing to blame Israel for the massacre of more than 40,000 Palestinians is the crux of Harris' failure on this issue. The Democrats can tell voters who oppose the ongoing Israeli genocide that not voting for Harris will result in a potential election boost for Trump all they want. But what they cannot say is that voting for Stein's principled views on Nov. 5 is immoral. For any voter with a moral conscience, the issue is not about the candidate they vote for winning the election. It is about standing up for what is right. It is about being true to America's principles, which reject criminal behavior whether it is on the streets of Chicago or Gaza. It is about telling Democrats that Americans are willing to put their morality above

political expediency. It is about principled voters telling Democrats that they can no longer be taken for granted. If the Democrats' failure to speak out against Israel's atrocities results in Trump beating Harris, it will be because tens of thousands of women and children have been massacred by a foreign power using US weaponry and funding. That is not the fault of the Arabs, Muslims and other voters who took a stand and refused to vote for Harris. Harris still has time, but the clock is ticking. She must clearly outline a policy that puts all lives, regardless of race or religion, above political expediency. She must not only reiterate her call for a ceasefire and assertion that she supports the two-state solution, but also go further: blame Netanyahu for the unjustified massacre of thousands of Palestinian civilians and vow to end America's funding and arming of Israel. Until she does, the choice in the US presidential election is an easy one. True leadership requires toughness and the making of difficult decisions.

Opinion

The real goal of Israel's military campaign in Gaza

RAMZY BAROUD

Never in its history of war and military occupation has Israel been so incapable of developing a coherent plan for its future and the future of its victims. While Tel Aviv continues to carry out a genocidal war against the Palestinians in Gaza, it seems to have no idea what to do beyond simply destroying the Strip and its people.

Even Defense Minister Yoav Gallant has indicated on multiple occasions that Israel has no postwar plan in Gaza. "Since October, I have been raising this issue consistently in the Cabinet and have received no response," Gallant said in May.

Others suggest that Netanyahu and his far-right government might have a plan but, according to US Sen. Chris Murphy, there is "no workable plan" and, according to Vox, it "is no plan at all." This is inconsistent with the wishes of the US administration.

True, both Israel and the US are in full agreement regarding the war itself. Even after Washington finally began shifting its position from wanting the war to continue to asking Netanyahu to conclude his bloody task, American weapons have continued to flow at the same rate.

The Americans, however, are not convinced that destroying Hamas, fully demilitarizing Gaza, taking control of the Gaza-Egypt border, shutting down UNRWA and "de-radicalizing" the besieged Palestinian population is the right approach.

Netanyahu himself must have long known this. But still his exhausted army keeps moving from one phase to the next, declaring "tactical victories" without achieving a single strategic goal in Gaza.

Ever more delusional plans, pertaining to both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, continue to be leaked to the media.

The first major leak was a taped recording of a speech by the extremist finance minister in Netanyahu's Cabinet, Bezalel Smotrich. "I'm telling you, it's mega-

dramatic. Such changes change a system's DNA," Smotrich told a group of Jewish Israeli settlers in June, according to The New York Times. The minister's "carefully orchestrated program" hinges on transferring the authority of the West Bank from the occupation army to a group of civilians under his leadership. The goal is to seize more Palestinian land, expand the illegal settlements and prevent any possible continuity of a viable Palestinian state.

In fact, the plan is already underway. In



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

May, Israel appointed Hillel Roth, a close ally of Smotrich, as the deputy in the West Bank Civil Administration.

The plan for Gaza is another episode of cruelty, and it is also delusional. It was revealed this month in an article by the editor of the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. Aluf Benn wrote that Netanyahu's plan also consists of the hiring of an Israeli "governor of Gaza," Lt. Col. Elad Goren, who became head of the humanitarian-civilian effort in the Strip in August.

Using a combination of tactics, including starvation and military pressure, Netanyahu wants to drive the population of northern Gaza to the south in preparation for formally annexing the region and bringing back Jewish settlers.

These are not the only plans that have been leaked or, at times, openly communicated by Israeli officials. At the start of the war, ideas like ethnically cleansing the Gaza population into Sinai were advocated by Israeli officials and were also the main topic of discussion on Israeli evening news programs.

Some Israeli officials spoke of fully occupying Gaza, while Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu floated the idea of dropping a nuclear bomb.

The plan of evacuating Gaza did not

work simply because the Palestinians would not leave and Egypt rejected the insinuation that ethnically cleansing Gazans was an option. Additionally, the total depopulation of northern Gaza also did not work, partly because Israel was massacring civilians in both the north and the south at comparable rates.

Israel's new plans will not succeed in achieving what the original plans failed

to do, simply because Israel continues to face the same obstacle: the steadfastness of the Palestinian people.

However, much can still be learned from the nature of the Israeli schemes — mainly the fact that Israel regards the Palestinian people as the enemy.

This conclusion is not only gleaned through statements by top Israeli officials, including President Isaac Herzog, who said that "an entire nation out there ... is responsible." Almost every Israeli scheme seems to involve killing Palestinians in large numbers, starving them or displacing them en masse. This means that the Israeli war has always been a war against the Palestinian people. The Palestinians themselves know it. Should the rest of the world not also know it by now?

Ever more delusional plans, pertaining to both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, continue to be leaked to the media

Almost every Israeli scheme seems to involve killing Palestinians in large numbers, starving them or displacing them en masse

Starmmer has tough job resetting relations with Europe

YOSSI MEKELBERG

In the British psyche, the short distance that separates the UK from Europe between Dover and Calais, 40.2 km to be precise, symbolizes that the two are completely separate worlds. For those who supported Brexit, the two should never again be joined together.

This mentality of "splendid isolation," which contributed to the misconceived idea of leaving the EU — an event that still has not revealed a single one of the rewards promised by its promoters — has left the newly elected Labour government the challenging task of repairing relations with its immediate neighbors. Or, as the current government calls it, "resetting relations with Europe."

For this to succeed, the first stepping stone requires rebuilding the trust that was badly damaged by the preceding Conservative governments. Only then can they get down to the nitty-gritty of issues such as security, trade and immigration, where the interests of both Europe and the UK intertwine.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his Cabinet colleagues are under no illusions about the legacy left to them after 14 years of successive Tory administrations,

which in their latter years were particularly chaotic, directionless and disruptive, especially with regard to relations with Europe. This state of affairs was dictated by the most anti-European factions within the party and the right-wing British media.

Labour's recent election manifesto was clear that Brexit was not going to be reversed. Instead, the new prime minister has embarked on a salvage operation to

repair the badly damaged relations between the UK and the rest of the continent, much of it concerning the bruises the Europeans are still nursing from the Brexit negotiations.

However, as in many other policy areas, Labour was too cautious in the run-up to July's general election and was at pains to avoid straying too far

from Tory policy by promising that it would not reapply for full EU membership, nor attempt to return to the single market, the customs union or the freedom of movement arrangements. This has left little room for any quick return to the kind of relations with Europe that the struggling British economy and society need in the wake of the Brexit debacle.

This is especially unfortunate because the British public now consistently expresses,



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and in big numbers, that it regrets leaving the EU and believes the UK is worse off as a result. With that in mind, Starmer embarked on his first visit abroad to Berlin and followed this with talks in Paris.

And a new government in the UK that is not responsible for Brexit is an opportunity to move forward. What the UK and the EU have in common in terms of values and interests is far greater than what separates them. In a world of increasing global instability, it is imperative that the EU and the UK mend fences.

A question that is impossible to answer right now, even for the British prime minister and his Cabinet ministers, who probably do not wish to even contemplate it, is should there be a grand plan to start the long march toward reentering the EU, especially if Labour stays in power for two or even three terms? Or is it a case of plugging the many holes created by Brexit and allowing relations to evolve into some kind of entente cordiale and seeing where that takes UK-EU relations?

One small step forward was outlined by Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds, who suggested what he calls "practical" and "sensible" measures to improve trade relations.

In Berlin, the prime minister and his

German counterpart Olaf Scholz were quick to agree on prioritizing a new defense treaty and improving economic relations, in addition to close cooperation on foreign policy. Their joint summary of the talks also emphasized a wide range of other areas for close collaboration, including growing their respective economies, law enforcement, tackling irregular migration and, no less important, closer people-to-people activities.

Considering that the UK now has several similar agreements with France after constructive meetings were also held with President Emmanuel Macron, the long haul of repairing the accumulation of damaging events that began with the Brexit referendum of 2016 seems to have got off to a good start, although this is just the beginning.

The UK has, for too long, been under the spell of the merchants of right-wing populism who harbor a hollow nationalism that brought on the UK's most disastrous foreign policy decision of this post-Second World War era. Most Britons now acknowledge this and would like to fix it. Starmer's visits to Berlin and Paris, as the change of language makes clear, have already made a significant difference: he met with willing partners, not rivals. Long may this nouvelle entente continue.

The first stepping stone requires rebuilding the trust that was badly damaged by the preceding governments

What the UK and the EU have in common in terms of values and interests is far greater than what separates them

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The technology of the batteries and the powertrain in an electric vehicle is basically one of the most durable systems that you have.

Julia Palle

Formula E, vice president of sustainability



Business



This year's event is expected to reshape the Kingdom's mobility landscape as it aligns with Saudi Vision 2030, a plan to diversify the economy and promote sustainability. AN photo

MOBILITY LANDSCAPE

Industry leaders predict a promising future for EVs in Saudi Arabia

Experts highlight favorable conditions for adoption of electric vehicles

Miguel Hadchity,
Hajar Alqusayer Riyadh

The EV Auto Show, held at the Riyadh International Convention and Exhibition Center, has gathered industry experts to discuss the future of electric vehicles in Saudi Arabia and the broader Middle East.

This year's event, running from Sept. 17 to 19, is expected to reshape the Kingdom's mobility landscape as it aligns with Saudi Vision 2030, a plan to diversify the economy and promote sustainability.

The three-day gathering has drawn key stakeholders, including automakers, charging solution providers, and policymakers, all keen to share insights on the transformation of the regional EV market.

Battery EVs gaining traction

Heiko Seitz, partner and the Global eMobility Leader, PwC, was one of several panelists at the event who highlighted the favorable conditions for EV adoption.

"In Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, we have more favorable temperatures for battery electricity than we do up there in the Nordics in Europe," said Seitz.

He underscored that these climate advantages and technological advancements are key factors driving the region's shift to electric mobility.

Seitz elaborated on the market dynamics, saying: "We have more or less approached cost parity, which basically means, in simple terms, it is now almost equally affordable to drive an EV with the comparable car models compared to an internal combustion car in Saudi. In the UAE, the car prices are slightly lower, so they have already passed the tipping point."

Seitz expected prices to drop further as more models and brands enter the market, leading to greater EV adoption across the Middle East.

He predicted a dramatic shift in the composition of the global car market over the next decade, saying: "Seven years from now, the mix in the world available will be that 30 percent of all vehicles will be battery electric. So lots of change there, and that will change the cost profile in the Kingdom and the Middle East in general."

A greener future

Renewable energy is also playing a critical role in the Kingdom's EV strategy. "There is more and more renewable energy, especially solar energy, coming into the mix here in Saudi Arabia," said Seitz.

He expressed optimism that the country's efforts to integrate solar power would advance the greening of its mobility sector.

"This is one of the countries in the Middle East where it's safe to say mobility will not only be electrified, it will also be green in the future," he added.

Seitz also shared impressive forecasts for EV sales in Saudi Arabia, predicting that by 2030, 64 percent of all new cars sold in the Kingdom will be fully battery electric, driven by local and international brands eager to compete in the region's rapidly growing market.

Challenges and opportunities

The panel discussion also highlighted EV production progress within Saudi Arabia. Oswaldo Dorantes, manager

FASTFACTS

- Hosted at the Riyadh International Convention and Exhibition Center, this three-day event aligns with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

- The show also serves as a platform for knowledge exchange, focusing on advancements in battery technology, charging infrastructure, and regulatory developments.

of automotive at the National Industrial Development Center, emphasized the growing presence of manufacturers in the Kingdom.

"We already have some manufacturers in Saudi making multiple manufacturing schemes like CKD (completely

knocked down) and SKD (semi-knocked down) commercial vehicles and commercial trucks for medium and heavy-duty purposes," Dorantes said.

He highlighted various government and private sector initiatives to develop local talent and support the broader EV ecosystem, underlining that programs like the National Automotive and Vehicle Academy or Nava are playing a key role in this strategy.

However, scale remains a critical challenge in attracting suppliers. "When we look at the development of the ecosystem, the first priority is going to be scale. How can we justify bringing in one supplier if we don't have enough scale?" Dorantes asked.

He emphasized the importance of government support in overcoming this barrier, adding: "It doesn't matter if you can bring the most reliable technology if you're not competitive enough."

"This is something we look at from multiple perspectives, and that's why the government needs to support it in the beginning."

Technological advancements

On the technical side, Julia Palle, vice president of sustainability at Formula E, spoke about the durability and efficiency of EV powertrains.

"The technology of the

batteries and the powertrain in an electric vehicle is basically one of the most durable systems that you have," Palle said, adding that EVs transform 85 percent of their energy into movement, compared to traditional cars, which only convert up to 25 percent.

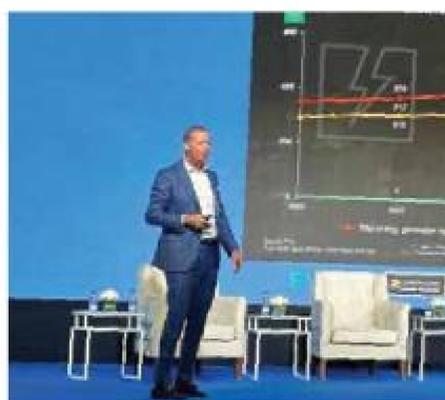
Palle's insights aligned with those of Klaus Wawra, managing director at Hofer Powertrain, who discussed the technology crossover between EVs and hybrids.

"With a hybrid vehicle, you will still need an electric motor, you need an inverter, an onboard charger, and a direct current fast charging converter. So, more or less, all the technologies you have to cover inside the EV, you can then scale dedicatedly to this hybrid application," Wawra explained.

Rising demand

The need for electric and hybrid vehicles is steadily increasing in Saudi Arabia. Hasan Nergiz, managing director at Al-Futtaim Electric Mobility Co., shared data indicating the growing popularity of hybrids in the market.

"Right now, if I look at our last month's order take, around 75 percent of Saudi customers are opting into hybrids," Nergiz said. This statistic reflects the broader trend toward sustainable mobility solutions in the Kingdom.



An industry expert speaks at the event in Riyadh on Tuesday. AN photo

INTERVIEW

Saudi Arabia's PIF revolutionizing e-mobility sector with \$39bn in investments

Public Investment Fund facilitating finance streams to create a healthy eclectic vehicle value chain: PwC official

Nirmal Narayanan,
Manal Al-Barakatli Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund is spearheading the growth of the e-mobility sector in the Kingdom with a planned \$39 billion investment, according to an expert.

Speaking to Arab News on the sidelines of EV Auto Show in Riyadh on Sept. 17, Heiko Seitz, partner and Global and Middle East e-mobility leader at PwC, said the Public Investment Fund is significantly facilitating finance streams to create a healthy electric vehicle value chain.

"Between now and 2030, the PIF ecosystem will invest a total of approximately \$39 billion in the creation of an entire new industry. We will see half of that capital going to the creation of (an) EV manufacturing ecosystem, one quarter going into battery manufacturing and supply chain, and another quarter into parts and chips etc.," said Seitz.

He added: "We see that there is a national effort to build an industry from scratch. It is quite spectacular and fascinating to see how a country is able, in such a short time, to partner up with leading companies globally, and bring the best of the world to the Kingdom, and therefore starting their own success journey from scratch."

During the talk, Seitz also highlighted some of the main challenges Saudi Arabia is facing in the e-mobility sector, which include the availability of new vehicles and the lack of charging infrastructure.

"Approximately 30 percent of all the cars being offered for sale currently in Europe are battery electric. Here in the Middle East, it's only approximately



Heiko Seitz, partner and Global and Middle East e-mobility leader at PwC, speaks to Arab News at EV Auto Show in Riyadh on Tuesday. AN photo

7 percent, so there are lots of vehicle models that could be sold here, but they're not yet. And that obviously limits the choice for the customer," said Seitz.

The PwC official added that the issues surrounding charging infrastructure will be resolved soon, as companies including Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Co., also known as EVIQ, are ramping up charging stations in the Kingdom.

In May, EV maker Lucid, backed

by the PIF, signed a memorandum of understanding with EVIQ to facilitate the activation of high-speed public charging infrastructure in Saudi Arabia.

"We see that there are lots of announcements of big companies like EVIQ starting to build the ecosystem, and I'm quite optimistic that we're going to have a very bright future for electric mobility in the region," added Seitz.

The PwC official further

highlighted that the costs of electric vehicles are coming down globally, and it is slowly becoming as affordable as an internal combustion engine vehicle.

"In Saudi Arabia, we see that it is almost actually equally affordable to drive an EV as a commercial fleet operator than it is to drive the equivalent combustion engine vehicle. For the end customer, it is still a little bit more expensive because fleet

customers always get better discounts," he said.

He added that the prices of EVs in Saudi Arabia will come down further, with the entry of new car brands into the Kingdom.

"What we see now is that with more vehicle brands coming to the Kingdom to compete, there is going to be a price war, just like we have seen this price war unfold in Europe," said Seitz.

He added: "I'm very confident that over the next years,

possibly, already over the next months, prices will come down significantly, just like we've seen in Europe, where it's already 15 percent cheaper without subsidies to drive a battery electric vehicle compared to the combustion engine car."

Citing a recent survey conducted by PwC, Seitz said that 40 percent of the Saudi population is interested in buying an electric vehicle in the next three to four years.

"With more models coming

●● We see that there is a national effort to build an industry from scratch (in Saudi Arabia).

to the market and with Lucid and Ceer, (and) other local Saudi brands bringing the east to the market, I don't see anything that should stop the customer from going all-electric," he said.

The PwC official also lauded Saudi Arabia's efforts in promoting green techniques in mobility, despite being an oil-rich nation.

He said: "Twenty-four percent of global carbon dioxide emissions come from the transport sector. So if we're serious about making our future greener and cleaner, we have to decarbonize mobility now."

Seitz praised Saudi Arabia for its "fabulous, green electricity agenda," adding: "We expect that by 2035, the entire mobility transport, the entire mobility energy demand and much more will be fully fueled by green energy based on solar power. So, here the Kingdom actually shows that you don't only electrify, you can also decarbonize mobility in an oil-rich country."

PLANS

Lucid to export Saudi-made EVs regionally, globally: official

Reem Walid,
Manal Al-Barakatli Riyadh

US electric carmaker Lucid Motors plans to export a significant share of its vehicles produced in Saudi Arabia to both regional and global markets, according to a senior official.

At the EV Auto Show in Riyadh, Ali Rizvi, director of Business Operations at Lucid Middle East, revealed that the company—supported by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund—is increasing its production efforts within the Kingdom.

This initiative supports Saudi Arabia's ambition to convert 30 percent of Riyadh's vehicles to electric by 2030. This goal is part of a larger strategy to

reduce emissions in the capital by 50 percent, contributing to the country's broader aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060.

"We are producing vehicles in the Kingdom, (and) a large part of those will be exported within the region and to the rest of the world as well," Rizvi said.

At the same panel, Mohammed Abuazzah, chief public relations officer at Saudi EV brand Ceer, discussed the company's strategy. "We have a portfolio — a Saudi-inspired portfolio — that is innovative, inspirational, and can answer what the people of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council, and hopefully globally, expect from an EV," Abuazzah said.



Industry leaders discuss the future of electric vehicles in the Kingdom at Riyadh show. AN photo

He emphasized the importance of engaging with customers and expanding the company's sales network in Saudi Arabia and the GCC.

Ulf Schulte, chief operating officer at Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Co., announced plans to expand the company's charging network. "So, there are

a lot of building blocks we are working on, and eventually now ramping up the number of sites. Our first site in Jeddah is going live today or tomorrow," Schulte said.

"Our focus this year is on Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam, but we're working to build a Kingdom-wide network to

enable a long-distance EV ecosystem," he added.

Andreas Flourou, group head of mobility at Red Sea Global, outlined the company's commitment to sustainability. "We're opening new hotels every quarter at the moment, and mobility is one of the foundations of our ethos based around

sustainability and protecting the environment," Flourou said. "We're opening a new hotel, AMAALA, by the end of next year. This will mean hundreds of additional vehicles, guest vehicles, staff transportation, buses, sea planes, and marine vessels. We need an increase in chargers within our destinations," he added. Gary Flom, CEO of National Transport Solutions Co., emphasized the role of EVs in transforming Saudi Arabia's infrastructure.

"Today, we are witnessing a revolution, a revolution that is driving toward a future where electric vehicles are not merely an option but a cornerstone of our nation's transportation infrastructure," Flom said.

Business News



A British delegation led by UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade Jonathan Reynolds held talks with Saudi Commerce Minister Majid Al-Qasabi. SPA

BILATERAL TIES

Saudi Arabia, UK eye \$39.6bn trade by 2030

British companies plan expanding operations in the Kingdom

Reem Walid Riyadh

UK-based companies are set to expand their operations in Saudi Arabia as both countries discussed strengthening their trade partnership in a top ministerial meeting.

This falls in line with the two countries' target to increase bilateral trade to £30 billion (\$39.6 billion) by 2030.

During the gathering, Saudi Commerce Minister Majid Al-Qasabi, who is also chairman of the Economic and Social Committee of the Saudi-British Strategic Partnership Council, met with the UK's Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Jonathan Reynolds, and the accompanying delegation in Riyadh, to discuss elevating

economic partnership in priority sectors.

The two parties also tackled stimulating and financing emerging companies in promising fields based on research and innovation, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

According to data from the UK government's Department for Business and Trade, total trade in goods and services with Saudi Arabia reached £17.6 billion in the four quarters to the end of the first quarter of 2024.

"Today I met with His Excellency the Minister of State for Business and Trade and Chairman of the British Council, Mr. Jonathan Reynolds, and we discussed the progress of the negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement between the GCC countries and the United Kingdom and enhancing opportunities for trade cooperation

FASTFACTS

- Data from the UK showed total trade in goods and services with Saudi Arabia reached £17.6 billion in the four quarters to the end of the first quarter of 2024.

- 1,139 British investors operate in the Kingdom and benefit from the facilities resulting from the ongoing economic reforms.

between our two friendly countries," Al-Qasabi said in a post on X. "Economic growth is this government's driving mission, and boosting trade and investment with some of the world's biggest economies is crucial to that," Reynolds said, the UK government reported.

"I want to see a high-quality trade deal that supports jobs,

helps UK companies sell their products to the region, and increases choice for consumers — so it's great to be here to discuss exactly that," the business and trade secretary added.

Al-Qasabi also highlighted the follow-up of the implementation of 79 initiatives in 13 economic sectors to strengthen the Saudi-British partnership, noting that the level of growth in bilateral trade reached more than 30 percent from 2018 to 2023.

He added that 1,139 British investors operate in the Kingdom and benefit from the facilities resulting from the development reforms related to facilitating the practice of economic business.

Reynolds also met with Saudi Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources Bandar Alkhorayef to discuss opportunities to enhance industrial and mining cooperation.

PARTNERSHIP

UAE, Australia sign deal to boost exports

Nirmal Narayanan Riyadh

Australia has finalized a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with the UAE, which could boost its exports by \$678 million (\$458 million) annually.

In a press statement, Australia's Trade Ministry noted that the deal will eliminate tariffs on about 99 percent of his country's products, leading to savings of \$135 million in the first year and increasing to \$160 million annually once fully implemented.

As Australia's first trade agreement with a country in the Middle East and North Africa region, the CEPA aims to enhance bilateral trade and investment by streamlining trade processes, removing tariffs on a wide range of goods and services, and encouraging private-sector collaboration in key sectors. The agreement builds on the strengthening economic ties between the UAE and the southern hemisphere country with bilateral non-oil

HIGHLIGHT

99%

The deal will eliminate tariffs on about 99 percent of Australian products leading to savings of \$135 million in the first year.

trade reaching \$2.3 billion in the first half of 2024 — a 10 percent increase from the same period in 2023.

Australia's Trade Minister Don Farrell stated that, as a trading nation, the country is committed to opening up new opportunities for its exporters, farmers, producers, and businesses.

"Under this trade agreement,

BizBriefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Assessment

German investor morale tumbles in September

German investor morale darkened more than expected in September, the ZEW economic research institute said on Tuesday, as the assessment of the economic situation continued its downward trend.

The economic sentiment index fell to 3.6 points from 19.2 points in August. Analysts polled by Reuters had pointed to a reading of 17.

The assessment of the economic situation in Germany has also continued to worsen, with the indicator falling to minus 84.5 from minus 77.3, its lowest since May 2020.

Reuters

Cashless

Central bank digital currency gains momentum

A total of 134 countries representing 98 percent of the global economy are now exploring digital versions of their currencies, with almost half at an advanced stage and pioneers like China, the Bahamas and Nigeria starting to see a pick up in usage.

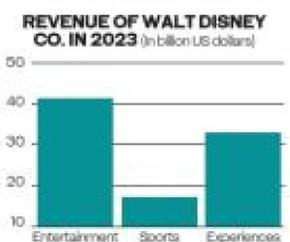
A research conducted by the US-based Atlantic Council published on Tuesday showed that all G20 nations are now looking into central bank digital currencies as they are known and that 44 countries in total are piloting them.

Reuters

Chart of THE DAY

In 2023, the Walt Disney Co. generated a total revenue of nearly \$32.6 billion with its parks, and experiences.

Source: Statista



What We're Reading

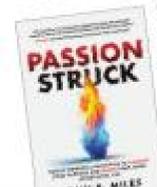
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John R. Miles reveals his groundbreaking discoveries that allow you to reshape your past and create an empowered and limitless future through authentic and candid personal stories, says a review published on goodreads.com.



Outlook

Bank of Spain ups 2024 growth forecast

Spain's central bank on Tuesday raised this year's economic growth forecast to 2.8 percent from 2.3 percent expected previously, predicting an acceleration from 2023 in contrast to the wider eurozone, largely thanks to booming tourism.

It was the second straight outlook upgrade by the Bank of Spain so far this year following its initial forecast of a 1.9 percent expansion. Last year, the economy expanded 2.5 percent.

Growth is likely to slow down in the third quarter to 0.6 percent, the report said.

Reuters

Data

Global defensive sector funds see surge in inflows

Global defensive sector funds are in demand from investors as concerns about a slowdown in the US economy forces them to seek assets such as consumer staples and utilities stocks.

According to LSEG Lipper data, defensive sector funds such as consumer staples and utilities attracted substantial inflows of \$1.43 billion and \$1.06 billion, respectively, over the last two weeks. Sectors such as technology, financials, and industrials experienced significant outflows, totaling \$2.97 billion, \$1.38 billion, and \$540 million respectively.

Reuters

Corporate

THE SAUDI VISION 2030 INITIATIVE PRESENTS SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES TO MODERNIZE THE BANKING SECTOR AND DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY.

Sonny Supriyadi
Chief Data Analytics Officer at Maybank

PRESS RELEASES FROM THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE



The two-day event will bring together experts and specialists from the global maritime transport and logistics sector to share knowledge, experiences, and insights.

SHIPPING CONFERENCE

Saudi Maritime & Logistics Congress returns for 5th edition

Reinforcing the significance of the Saudi Maritime and Logistics Congress in Dammam, which takes place from Sept. 18-19, several new speakers have been confirmed in the conference lineup, adding some heavyweight industry knowledge to the two-day program.

The event's fifth edition is being held under the auspices of Minister of Transport and Logistic Services Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser, who will also make the keynote address on Day 1.

Additionally, Bahri CEO Ahmed Alsabaey, IMI CEO Abdullah

Al-Ghamdi and Transport General Authority Deputy for Maritime Transport Essam M. Alammari are all now confirmed at the shipping and logistics conference and exhibition. The event will take place at Dhahran Expo and is free for industry to attend.

Also joining the prestigious speaker parade is Kaupo Laanemand, deputy minister for maritime and water affairs, Ministry of Climate, Estonia, and Poul Hestbaek, CEO, Folk Maritime.

Chris Morley, group director, Seatrade Maritime, the organizers

of the event, said: "The high-profile speaker lineup is testament to the importance of this event in the shipping calendar. As the industry gathers in the Kingdom, it allows for attendees to listen and learn from industry experts and be part of discussions that impact many facets of this global industry."

He added: "Our ultimate aim is to facilitate fruitful cooperation between the public and private sector entities that catalyzes growth for our industry."

Over the course of the event, topics under the spotlight will

include: Interconnected logistics and the supply chain of the future; Shipbuilding and repair; Digitization of maritime: The adoption of AI and machine learning; Offshore safety: The importance of maintaining world-class safety standards; and Energy transition for a sustainable future and workforce development.

The conference agenda will start with keynotes and an international virtual address from International Maritime Organization Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez, as well as an industry keynote from

ABS Senior Vice President Gareth Burton.

Saudi Maritime and Logistics Congress is being held with founding partners Bahri and Seatrade Maritime. With its main partners, the Saudi Ports Authority, known as Mawani, and the TGA, as well as strategic partners Saudi Aramco and IMI, the event expects more than 10,000 attendees from across 70+ countries, in addition to a record 200+ exhibitors and scores of local, regional and international speakers.

HEALTH AWARENESS

Hikma and Saudi Gastroenterology Association elevate IBD care across KSA

Hikma Pharmaceuticals KSA announced the expansion of its strategic partnership with the Saudi Gastroenterology Association. A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the two entities to enhance the management and treatment of inflammatory bowel disease across the Kingdom through early intervention, multidisciplinary collaboration and public and patient education.

IBD is a chronic inflammation of the intestine characterized by severe stomach pain and diarrhea



Senior officials from Hikma and SGA at the signing ceremony.

affecting nearly 5 million people worldwide. The main types of IBD are Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. In Saudi Arabia, the prevalence of this disease has been

increasing; as of 2012, the incidence was estimated at 0.94 patients per 100,000 individuals over the past 20 years.

The partnership will address

the critical gaps in IBD management from the perspectives of both physicians and patients. Leveraging a multifaceted approach that includes a social media awareness campaign and comprehensive medical training programs, the initiatives have been designed to disseminate essential knowledge about IBD management to healthcare professionals, patients and the public. The medical training programs, accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Medical Education, have been offered to healthcare professionals across

the Kingdom, including a specialized small intestinal ultrasound workshop, certified by the International Bowel Ultrasound Society.

Dr. Majed Almadi, president of SGA, said: "Our expanded partnership with Hikma marks a significant step toward enhancing IBD care across Saudi Arabia. Our initiatives are grounded in a patient-centric approach that not only focuses on but also enhances public awareness, improves diagnostics and treatments, and reduces the stigma associated with IBD."

LEADING CONFERENCE

Riyadh to host 5th Annual Future Banks Summit this month

Riyadh will host the 5th Annual Future Banks Summit and Awards KSA on Sept. 24 and 25. This year, the event will focus on cutting-edge innovations, practical case studies,

and interactive panel discussions. With a focus on guiding the banking sector in the Kingdom toward future readiness, the conference will explore the impact of AI, intelligent

automation, data analytics, cloud migration, cybersecurity, and digital payment models.

This year, more than 200 local and regional technology and business leaders from banks and

financial institutions will attend the summit. Through interactive keynote sessions, panel discussions, and live case studies, the event will address the latest disruptions in the banking,

financial services and insurance industry. It will highlight valuable insights, actionable strategies, and collaboration opportunities to support the Saudi financial sector.

Corporate Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Global Innovation GFH and FII Institute extend partnership

GFH Financial Group, a financial institution headquartered in Bahrain, and FII Institute, a global non-profit foundation dedicated to making an impact on humanity, have announced the three-year extension of a strategic partnership to foster global innovation and sustainable development. The move comes ahead of the highly anticipated 8th edition of the Future Investment Initiative Conference scheduled for Oct. 29-31 in Riyadh.

A signing ceremony was held in the presence of Richard Attias, chief executive of FII Institute, between Sahar Qanati, head of corporate communications at GFH, and Rakan Tarabzoni, chief operating officer of FII Institute.

Cybersecurity Kaspersky launches new service in KSA

Kaspersky has launched its Industrial Control Systems Security Assessment service, setting a new standard for safeguarding Saudi Arabia's critical industrial infrastructure. With more than 15 years of experience in OT and ICS security, the launch reflects Kaspersky's commitment to leading the charge in ICS cybersecurity whilst adhering to local security regulations.

Kaspersky's ICS Security Assessment service is designed to scrutinize and address vulnerabilities at every layer of industrial control systems, from physical and network security to vendor-specific vulnerabilities within ICS components, such as Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition systems.

Data Storage Uber runs on Oracle Cloud Infrastructure

Uber, the largest on-demand mobility and delivery platform in the world, relies on Oracle Cloud Infrastructure to help support the rapid growth and more than 1 million trips that Uber powers every hour. Uber has modernized its application tier and AI infrastructure and migrated much of its operational big data and streaming stack to OCI to help it drive profitable growth, deliver new products to market, and accelerate innovation.

ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ELITE

Runners-up Yokohama thrashed 7-3 in goal fest

Shanghai Shenhua drub South Korea's Pohang Steelers 4-1, while Buriram United of Thailand and Vissel Kobe of Japan play out a 0-0 draw

AFP Seoul

Asian Champions League debutants Gwangju FC scored after just 90 seconds on the way to a 7-3 home hammering of last year's runners-up Yokohama F-Marinos on Tuesday.

Also on the second day of action in Asia's top club competition, which has been rebranded as the Asian Champions League Elite, Shandong Taishan won 3-1 at home to Central Coast Mariners of Australia.

On a good night for Chinese teams, Shanghai Shenhua thrashed South Korea's Pohang Steelers 4-1, while Buriram United of Thailand and Vissel Kobe of Japan played out a 0-0 stalemate.

In South Korea, Gwangju grabbed an early lead over Japan's Yokohama when Jasir Asani's tame effort from outside the box squirmed under the grasp of visiting goalkeeper Riku Terakado.

The hosts extended their lead at a sparsely attended Gwangju World Cup Stadium on the quarter-hour mark when Oh Hu-seong headed in unmarked at the back post.

Yokohama hit back on 34 minutes when the Brazilian Elber slammed home as the rain came down.

The game turned goal crazy in a madcap second half, with Albanian international Asani netting twice more for his hat trick and the hosts adding three more.

Elber, with his second, and Takuma Nishimura pulled goals back for the bedraggled away team, who were reduced to 10 men late on.



South Korea's Gwangju, right, and Japan's Yokohama F. Marinos during their Asian Champions League Elite stage football match. AFP

The J. League's Yokohama are coached by the Australian John Hutchinson following the sacking of compatriot Harry Kewell after just six months in the job.

The former Liverpool and Leeds star Kewell took Yokohama to the two-legged Champions League final in May, where they lost to Al Ain of the UAE 6-3 on aggregate.

Kewell was axed two months later after a torrid run of form and Hutchinson was promoted from the backroom staff on a caretaker basis.

The Asian Champions League Elite begins with two leagues containing 12 teams each and split between East and West Zones.

SAUDI PRO LEAGUE

Al-Nassr head coach Luis Castro leaves the club

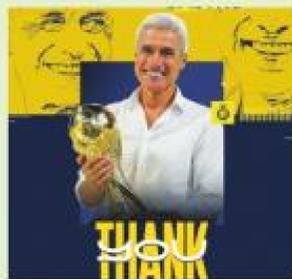
Arab News Jeddah

Luis Castro has left Al-Nassr, the Saudi Pro League club said on Tuesday. The 63-year-old was appointed head coach in July 2023.

In a message posted on social media platform X, the club wrote: "Al-Nassr can announce that Head Coach Luis Castro has left the club. Everyone at Al-Nassr would like to

thank Luis and his staff for their dedicated work during the past 14 months, wishing them the best of luck for the future."

The duration of the Portuguese coach's contract with Al-Nassr was not disclosed when he was appointed last year. His managerial career stretches back to 1998. He spent two seasons in charge of Ukrainian side Shakhtar Donetsk,



FASTFACT

The 63-year-old Portuguese boss arrived at the Saudi Pro League side club in July 2023.

during which they recorded home and away wins over Real Madrid in the group stage of the 2020-21 UEFA Champions League. Immediately prior to joining Al-Nassr, he coached Brazilian side Botafogo.

Three games into the new season, Al-Nassr sit in seventh place in the league after a win and two draws. They finished last season runners-up to Al-Hilal.

FOOTBALL

Man City's Rodri warns of strike action over fixture increase

AFP Manchester

Manchester City midfielder Rodri has warned leading footballers could go on strike if clubs continue to face an ever-expanding schedule.

City, the 2023 Champions League winners, face Italian giants Inter Milan at the Etihad Stadium on Wednesday, in their first match of the competition's

new league phase.

The expanded 36-team tournament will see all clubs play eight league fixtures, with 16 teams to play in an extra two-legged playoff round before the last 16.

City will also compete in an expanded Club World Cup at the end of the season.

"I think we are close to that. I think if you ask any player he will say the same," said Rodri when asked on

Tuesday if there was a possibility of players going on strike.

"It is not the opinion of Rodri or whatever. I think it's the general opinion of the players."

"And if it keeps this way, there will be a moment where we have no other option, I really think, but let's see," he added.

"I don't know what's going to happen, but it's something that worries us because we are the

guys that suffer."

City could play as many as 75 games this season, with international players set for an even heavier workload.

"From my experience between 40-50 is the amount of games in which a player can perform in the highest level," Rodri, who made his first City appearance of the season in Saturday's win over Brentford, said.

Sport Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

MLS expansion team Varas hired as head coach of San Diego FC

The MLS expansion team San Diego FC hired Mikey Varas as head coach on Monday.

He most recently was interim head coach of the US men's national team.

"The opportunity to build something special from the ground up, with such ambitious and committed ownership, and in a city with such a passionate fan base, is truly exciting," he said in a statement. "I look forward to working with the team and the community to develop a winning culture from the start." AP

Cricket

Bangladesh Tests no dress rehearsal: Rohit

Captain Rohit Sharma on Tuesday warned his India team there is "no dress rehearsal" in cricket as they face a Bangladesh side fresh from a historic Test series win over Pakistan.

India lead the World Test Championship standings ahead of Australia, where Rohit's team will tour for a five-match series later in the year.

But first they host Bangladesh in a two-Test series, starting with the opener in the northern Indian city of Chennai from Thursday.

"There is no dress rehearsal kind of stuff happening here," Rohit told reporters, cautioning against minds turning too quickly to Australia.



Ballon d'Or winner Barca extend contract of Aitana Bonmati

Barcelona extended the contract of women's Ballon d'Or winner Aitana Bonmati on Monday until 2028.

The 26-year-old playmaker signed a new contract to June 30, 2028, the club said.

Bonmati has played 275 games for Barcelona, scoring 96 competitive goals. She is the club's all-time top goalscorer and is tied with Alexia Putellas for the Champions League record of 22. AP

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Charlie Hunnam, best known for his role in 'The Sons of Anarchy,' is set to play the serial murderer and body snatcher Ed Gein, often referred to as 'the Butcher of Plainfield,' in a third season of the Netflix anthology series 'Monster.'



& Finally

The Six

Alluring AIUla

AIUla is set to welcome visitors with a lineup of activities this year. Here is a round up of six events and festivals taking place at the historic location.



AIUla Skies Festival

Experience breathtaking aerial views from hot-air balloons flying over AIUla. Runs from Sept. 26 - Oct. 5.



AIUla Wellness Festival

The festival offers workshops, five-day retreats and a series of wellness experiences. Runs from Oct. 17 - Nov. 2.



Ancient Kingdoms Festival

Discover how AIUla nurtured civilizations for millennia with a series of curated tours, exhibitions and concerts. Runs from Nov. 7 - 30.



All Day I Dream

Immerse yourself in curated melodic, soulful tunes and art installations. Runs from Oct. 17 - 18.



Concert Series

Amr Diab is making his debut in AIUla as part of the AIUla Skies Festival on Sept. 27, launching the new AIUla Moments Concert Series that will stretch into 2025.



Azimuth

Headliners include the likes of James Blake, The Blaze and Seth Troxler, while Saudi and regional artists such as Cosmicat and Baloo will also hit the decks. Runs from Sept. 19 - 21.

CLOSE UP

Mona Zaki-starring 'Flight 404' chosen as Egypt's Oscars submission

Arab News Dubai

Egyptian actress Mona Zaki and the Egyptian Film Syndicate announced this week that the film "Flight 404" will be Egypt's official submission for the Best International Feature Film category at the 2025 Academy Awards.

This means that the film will be considered for the shortlist. If the movie gets shortlisted, it could then be nominated for an Academy Award.

The movie tells the story of Ghada, who, just days before her Hajj pilgrimage, is confronted with an emergency that requires a large sum of money. Forced to seek help, she must turn to individuals from a troubled past she had promised to leave behind.

Besides Zaki, the film, directed by filmmaker Hani Khalifa and scripted by Mohamed Ragaa, stars actors Mohamed Farag, Mohamed Mamdouh, Shereen Reda, Khaled El-Sawy, Mohamed Alaa, Hassan Al-Adl, Sama Ibrahim, Shadi Alfons, Rana Raies, Gihan El-Shamashery and Arfa Abdel Rassoul.

The Oscar's 97th edition is set to take place on March 3, 2025, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

Key dates for the 2025 submissions and voting were announced earlier this year. The deadline for general

entries and Best Picture submissions is Thursday, Nov. 14. Preliminary voting for shortlists in 10 categories will occur between Dec. 9-13, with the results to be revealed on Dec. 17. The nominations voting period will run from Jan. 8-12, and the official nominations will be announced on Friday, Jan. 17—a shift from the usual earlier-in-the-week schedule.

Last year, Egypt selected Mohamed Farag-starring "Voy Voy Voy!" as its entry for the Oscars' Best International Feature Film award, while Yemen selected director Amr Gamal's "The Burdened" and Tunisia competed with Kaouther Ben Hania's "Four Daughters." Morocco selected Asmae El-Moudir's documentary "The Mother of All Lies." Jordan submitted Amjad Al-Rasheed's movie "Inshallah

a Boy" and Palestine submitted Lina Soualem's documentary "Bye Bye Tiberias."

None of the films won at the 2024 Oscars, though "Four Daughters" was nominated for Best Documentary Feature, a category ultimately won by "20 Days in Mariupol." This marked a historic moment for director Kaouther Ben Hania, as she became the first Arab woman to receive a second Oscar nomination.

Egyptian actress Mona Zaki stars in the film 'Flight 404.' Getty Images/ Supplied



Teddy Swims

AFTER-RACE

Peggy Gou, Teddy Swims round out Abu Dhabi F1 concerts

Arab News Dubai

US singer and song-writer Teddy Swims and South Korean DJ and singer Peggy Gou have been announced as the final artists for the 16th edition of the Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix at the 2024 Yasalam after-race concerts, headlining the opening day on Dec. 5.

The rest of the lineup includes US pop rock band Maroon 5, who appear on Dec. 6, US rapper Eminem who will perform on Dec. 7, and British rock group Muse, who will hit the stage on Dec. 8.

Access to the after-race concerts is exclusive to Abu Dhabi Formula One Grand Prix ticket holders.

HIT SHOW

Jude Benhalim jewels spotted in 'Emily in Paris'

Arab News Dubai

Egyptian jewelry label Jude Benhalim nabbed a starring role in the latest season of Netflix's hit series "Emily in Paris."

Throughout multiple scenes, the Cairo-based label's pieces are featured prominently on several characters in different episodes.

In episode six of season five, the Ripple Ring in gold is seen on Emily Cooper, portrayed by Lily Collins. Also in episode six, Camille's mother, Louise, played by Camille Japy, shines in the Droplet Earrings in white.

Additionally, Mindy Chen, brought to life by Ashley Park, is spotted wearing the Elea Hoops in the same episode.

INTERVIEW

Dubai gallery to host Andy Warhol exhibition 'The Glam Factory'

Dalal Awienat Dubai

Artworks by late pop art icon Andy Warhol will be displayed in the UAE as part of "The Glam Factory" exhibition at the Foundry gallery in Dubai.

Curated by Nada Ghandour, "The Glam Factory" highlights Warhol, a prominent American artist in the 1960s known for his pop art style. "Campbell's Soup Cans," "Marilyn Monroe" and "Banana" are among his most famous pieces.

In an interview with Arab News, Heritage Curator Nada Ghandour described the exhibition as a "new reading of Andy Warhol's work through the lens of our digital era and here in Dubai."

Warhol moved to New York City in 1949 to pursue his American

Andy Warhol was known for his pop art style, seen here in 'Campbell's Soup Cans.' Supplied

Dream and become rich and famous, said Ghandour.

"People today come to Dubai to also live out this dream. The American dream is more about opportunity and prosperity, and we know that many people today are moving to Dubai because it is a destination for stability and growth," she explained.

Inspired by Warhol's



workshop "The Silver Factory," Ghandour named the exhibition "The Glam Factory," paying homage to his artistic process.

To draw a portrait, she explained, Warhol would take about 150 photos. He would then choose small parts from each photo and mix them together.

"He was capable of doing the job of a plastic surgeon; this was the glamorous and beautiful aspect of it," she said.

Ghandour described Warhol

as an artistic and technological visionary.

"Warhol was ahead of his time and was describing the artificial intelligence that we know now," she said.

If he were alive now, she added, "he would speak to AI to create something in collaboration with a computer."

The collection features over 100 of Warhol's original pieces including screen prints, photos and magazine illustrations.