



SPOTLIGHT
ISRAELI PROVOCATIONS
AT AL-AQSA Page 3

SPORT
SAUDI FIGHTER
AL-QAHTANI
AND JORDAN'S
ALHYASAT
FACE OFF
Page 15



SAUDI ARABIA
INDIAN MOVIE STARS
SHINE IN RIYADH Page 5

& FINALLY
'I AM AMPLIFYING
OUR VOICES,'
MISS UNIVERSE
LEBANON SAYS
Page 16



WEDNESDAY, November 13, 2024
Jumada Al-Awwal 11, 1446
www.arabnews.com

ARAB NEWS

The Voice of a Changing Region

Since 1975

MIDDLE EAST WAR

11 dead in new Israeli onslaught in Lebanon

First daytime raids hit south Beirut

Najla Houssari Beirut

Israeli airstrikes pounded Beirut's southern suburbs on Tuesday in the heaviest daytime attacks on the Hezbollah stronghold in 50 days of fighting.

Casualties were limited because most civilians had already left and the few who remained heeded Israeli evacuation warnings, but there was widespread destruction of residential buildings and commercial, medical and educational centers.

Smoke billowed over the city as about a dozen strikes hit the southern suburbs from mid-morning. Video footage showed two missiles demolishing a 10-story building, sending up clouds of debris. The Israeli military said it had struck Hezbollah command centers and weapons production sites.

Elsewhere, an Israeli strike killed five people in the Lebanese village of Baalchmay southeast of Beirut, five were killed in a strike on the town of Tefahita in the south, and another was killed in a strike in Hermel in the northeast.

Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraac issued evacuation warnings for towns in the southern region along the Litani River, which local mayors said were 90 percent uninhabited.

In northern Israel, residents were forced to take shelter from attack drones launched by Hezbollah in Lebanon. Two people were killed in the city of Nahariya when a residential building was hit, and another missile struck the yard of a kindergarten in a Haifa suburb, where the children had been rushed into a shelter. No one was hurt.

Israeli attacks have killed at least 3,287 people in Lebanon since the Gaza war began last October, most of them in the

NUMBER

3,243

people including 201 children have been killed in Israel's Lebanon offensive.

past seven weeks. Hezbollah attacks have killed about 100 civilians and soldiers in northern Israel, the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, and southern Lebanon.

Israel's new Defense Minister Israel Katz said there would be no ceasefire in Lebanon until Israel achieved its goals of disarming Hezbollah and forcing it beyond the Litani River.

Related reports Pages 6 & 7



Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli airstrike that targeted the southern Lebanese village of Mahmoudiyeh. AFP

COP29 IN BAKU

Kingdom in drive to curb carbon emissions

Manal Al-Barakatli Baku

A Saudi agency launched a new carbon exchange platform at the COP29 climate change conference in Baku on Tuesday aimed at curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

The platform enables organizations and individuals to offset their emissions by funding projects that reduce or capture carbon, such as reforestation or renewable energy.

Voluntary carbon markets were essential in targeting climate finance at underserved communities, said Riham El-Gizy, chief executive of the Regional Voluntary Carbon Market Co., which launched the platform.

"Conventional finance often fails to reach rural areas in Africa and Saudi Arabia," she told Arab News. "The voluntary carbon market fills this gap, channeling resources where they are most needed."

Nearly 200 nations have gathered at the annual UN climate summit, focused this year on funding a global transition to cleaner energy sources. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told world leaders time was running out to limit a destructive rise in global temperatures.

"On climate finance, the world must pay up, or humanity will pay the price," Guterres said. "The sound you hear is the ticking clock. We are in the final countdown to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius and time is not on our side."

Related reports Page 11
Opinion: Mukhtar Babayev & Arnab Neel Sengupta Page 9

The Brief

SAUDI PAVILION

Military products are highlighted at the Saudi pavilion at the China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition. P4

RED SEA ATTACK

A suspected attack by the Houthis saw multiple blasts strike near a vessel traveling through the Red Sea with no damage reported. P6

HOUSING DEMAND

Saudi Arabia will need to build 115,000 homes annually over the next six years to address the demands of its population. P12

NEW PHASE

NEOM board of directors announces leadership change

Aiman Al-Mudaifer takes over at helm of company after departure of Nadhmi Al-Nasr

Arab News Riyadh

The NEOM board of directors on Tuesday announced the appointment of Aiman Al-Mudaifer as acting chief executive, following Nadhmi Al-Nasr's departure.

"As NEOM enters a new phase of delivery, this new leadership will ensure operational continuity, agility and efficiency to match the overall vision and objectives of the project," the company said.

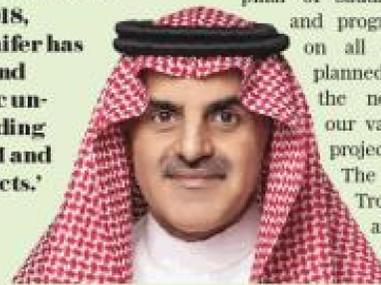
"Al-Mudaifer takes the helm of the organization with the support of a strong leadership team across NEOM's regions, sectors and departments."

Head of the Public Investment Fund's local real estate division since 2018, Al-Mudaifer has a deep and strategic understanding of NEOM and its projects, the company said.

In his role at PIF, he oversaw all local real estate investments and infrastructure projects.

He is also a board member of

'Head of the Public Investment Fund's local real estate division since 2018, Al-Mudaifer has a deep and strategic understanding of NEOM and its projects.'



several prominent companies in the Kingdom.

"NEOM is a fundamental pillar of Saudi Vision 2030 and progress continues on all operations as planned, as we deliver the next phase of our vast portfolio of projects including The Line, Oxagon, Trojena, Magna and the Islands of NEOM," the company

said. "Through these projects, NEOM seeks to achieve harmony between livability, business and nature, and to create a better future for current and future generations."

2 Riyals • Vol. XLIX
No. 343 • 16 pages



9 771319 833016

At Cityscape Global 2024, we witnessed the signing of agreements and partnerships worth over SR180 billion (\$48 billion), reflecting the Kingdom's ambition to lead the real estate sector on a global scale.

Majed Al-Hogail

Saudi minister of municipal and rural affairs and housing



Radars

KSA today



Diriyah Cozy Nights

Relax at Smar, a destination that blends entertainment and recreational facilities in an open environment. Until Nov. 30. More details on riyadh.platinumlist.net.



AlUla Incense Road

Embark on a captivating two-hour journey through AlUla's Old Town, where you can immerse yourself in local scenes from the past and create your own incense blends. Until April 5. Book through experiencealula.com.



Riyadh Concert

Enjoy the "Dream Night Light" concert featuring Skinny in a dazzling setting illuminated by vibrant lights. Held on Nov. 15 at Saudi Media City. Visit riyadh.platinumlist.net for tickets.



AlUla Giant swing

This experience in AlUla offers thrill seekers the chance to swing 85 meters above the ground in a 70-meter arc. Visit experiencealula.com for booking.

The Register

THE PICTURES THAT MARK THE DAY



12 نوفمبر 2024
أبوظبي - الإمارات العربية المتحدة

Saudi Shoura Council Speaker Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh headed the Kingdom's delegation at the 18th periodic meeting of the Speakers of the Shoura Councils, Houses of Representatives, and National Assemblies of the Gulf Coopera-

tion Council states in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday. Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council Jassem Al-Budaiwi emphasized the prominent regional and international standing of the GCC across political, economic, commercial, and information technology

levels, the council said in a report. The Kingdom's delegation included Secretary-General of the Shoura Council Mohammed Dakhil Al-Mutiri and members of the Shoura Council Fadel bin Saad Al-Buainain and Dr. Arwa bint Obaid Al-Rashid, among others.

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



'THE RIGHT DIRECTION'

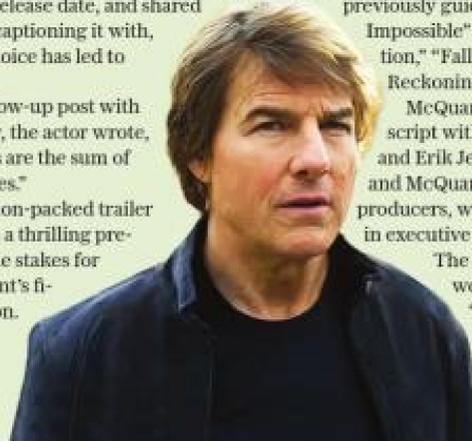
Britney Spears

Britney Spears has reunited with her 18-year-old son, Jayden James Federline, after a period of estrangement, according to exclusive reports from Page Six. The mother and son have reportedly been spending quality time together, reconnecting after Jayden moved to Hawaii with his brother Sean Preston and their father, Kevin Federline, in 2023. A source confirmed that Jayden is back in California, where his mother lives, after living in Hawaii. Although it is unclear whether Jayden is staying with Spears at her \$7.4 million mansion in Thousand Oaks, his older brother, Preston, 19, is believed to still live in Hawaii. "Britney is thrilled to have her baby back," the second source said. "Everything is moving in the right direction."

'THE FINAL RECKONING'

Tom Cruise

The title for "Mission: Impossible 8" has been officially unveiled, with the upcoming film to be called "The Final Reckoning." Previously planned as the second part of "Dead Reckoning" (2023), the release date has been set for May 23, 2025. The film had reportedly been delayed several times as a result of the pandemic and the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists' strike. American actor Tom Cruise revealed the title, release date, and shared a poster, captioning it with, "Every choice has led to this." In a follow-up post with the trailer, the actor wrote, "Our lives are the sum of our choices." The action-packed trailer gives fans a thrilling preview of the stakes for Ethan Hunt's final mission. Cruise returns to the



role, displaying his signature death-defying stunts, scuba diving, exploring a wrecked submarine, skydiving, and running into peril. Angela Bassett reprises her role as CIA Director Erika Sloane, first introduced in "Mission: Impossible - Fallout." New cast members include Hannah Waddingham, Janet McTeer, Nick Offerman and Holt McCallany, among others. Christopher McQuarrie returns as director and co-writer, continuing his collaboration with Cruise, having previously guided "Mission: Impossible" films "Rogue Nation," "Fallout," and "Dead Reckoning." McQuarrie co-wrote the script with Bruce Geller and Erik Jendresen. Cruise and McQuarrie are listed as producers, with several others in executive producer roles. The trailer leaves fans wondering: Will "The Final Reckoning" mark the end of Ethan Hunt's saga?

Today's Number

\$7.1bn

Since its inception in 2015, Saudi aid agency KSArelief has implemented 3,116 projects worth more than \$7.1 billion in 105 countries, in cooperation with 454 local, regional and international partners.

Review

Chi Spacca

WAAD HUSSAIN



Chi Spacca at VIA Riyadh is a haven for grill lovers, celebrating bold flavors and the art of grilling. The restaurant brings a taste of Italy's rustic side with dishes that are hearty and satisfying. The beef sliders are a standout, featuring cheddar, spicy mayo and pickles. The veal meatball spiedini, seasoned generously and served with garlic bread, highlights Italian flavors that deliver a rich, comforting taste. For those who enjoy a bit of spice, the harissa-marinated chicken is a must-try. The dish bursts with flavor thanks to the aromatic green harissa seasoning. Chi Spacca's dessert offerings also impress, with options like lemon tartlets topped with fresh berries and mini apple tarts drizzled in caramel, providing a balance of tangy and sweet flavors. The drinks menu offers refreshing choices like the cicci - a blend of fresh berries, passion fruit, apple juice and lemon - and the sakura, which combines rose cordial, lemon juice and soda for a light, floral finish. The atmosphere at Chi Spacca is warm and energetic, enhanced by live music from a four-piece band, making it an ideal spot for a lively evening out. However, parking at VIA Riyadh is not free, which may be a minor inconvenience for some guests. Still, Chi Spacca's robust flavors and the vibrant ambiance make it worth the visit, especially for those who appreciate expertly grilled dishes.

TheRegion

The Middle East Roundup

Arab News Jeddah

- The show "Mansour, The Festival," which is the first live event featuring the award-winning Emirati cartoon character, offers fun for the whole family. There are workshops on drone tech, arts, crafts and robot-building. Held from Nov. 15 to 17 at Zayed Sports City

in Abu Dhabi. More details at mansourfestival.ae.

- Bourj Hammoud is a walking tour with food in Beirut's Little Armenia. It is an opportunity to learn about the district, where Armenians have worked hard to preserve their customs and traditions. Until May 14, 2025. For more

details, visit lebtivity.com.

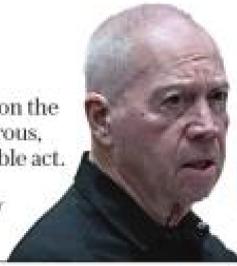
- The Traditional Handicrafts Festival is back with a celebration of Emirati culture and skills. Visitors can enjoy making traditional crafts at the event, which takes place until Nov. 16 at Souq Al-Qattara in Al-Ain, UAE. More details on abudhabi-culture.ae.

Prayer Times in Saudi Arabia

	Nov. 13	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghreb	Isha
Makkah	5:12	6:30	12:06	3:17	5:40	7:10	
Madinah	5:16	6:36	12:06	3:14	5:36	7:06	
Riyadh	4:48	6:08	11:38	2:45	5:07	6:37	
Abha	4:59	6:15	11:55	3:09	5:34	7:04	
Dammam	4:36	5:57	11:24	2:29	4:51	6:21	

Challenging the status quo on the Temple Mount is a dangerous, unnecessary, and irresponsible act.

Yoav Gallant
Israel's former defense minister



Spotlight

RESEARCH & STUDIES
THE MIDDLE EAST, BETTER EXPLAINED

ARAB NEWS

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

Dangerous political games

An NGO report calls 2024 'a record year in terms of the scope and severity of Israeli violations' of Haram Al-Sharif

Jonathan Gornall London

As feared, they came in their thousands, swarming into the Al-Aqsa compound in Jerusalem at the height of the week-long Jewish harvest festival of Sukkot.

On Oct. 20, more Israeli settlers occupied the Al-Aqsa compound in Jerusalem. Over the next two days, thousands more followed.

Inside, protected by police who prevented Muslims from entering, they performed Jewish religious rituals in defiance of the longstanding status quo at the Haram Al-Sharif, known to Jews as the Temple Mount.

The forced entries over three days, the latest in a series of provocative acts orchestrated by far-right Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, came as no surprise to Ir Amim, an Israeli human rights organization.

On the eve of the Jewish High Holiday season, Ir Amim ("City of Nations" in Hebrew) issued a report revealing that 2024 was already "a record year in terms of the scope and severity of Israel's violations of the status quo on the Mount."

It warned that the situation "is particularly dangerous given that undermining the status quo on the Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount is liable to escalate into another front of violence" and added that the Israeli government's "distorted priorities regarding the management of the war in Gaza and the north are also reflected in its conduct on the Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount."

In January 2023, nine months before the Oct. 7 attack on Israel, Ben Gvir staged one of his controversial visits to the site, ignoring warnings from other Israeli politicians that he risked provoking violence and saying that he would not "surrender to the threats of Hamas."

According to Hamas, it was repeated provocations such as those orchestrated by Ben Gvir that led to the Oct. 7 attack, which it codenamed "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood."

Resolving the thorny status of Jerusalem is viewed as an important prerequisite to peace. On Monday, Arab and Muslim leaders concluded a landmark summit in Riyadh with a unified demand for Israel to withdraw from all occupied Palestinian territories.

The summit's closing statement stressed that East Jerusalem is the "eternal capital of Palestine," and rejected



Ben Gvir, Israel's national security minister, main, has insisted Jews should be allowed to pray at the site, resulting in confrontations, below. AFP



any Israeli decisions aimed at "Judaizing" it, considering such measures "null, void and illegitimate under international law."

The leaders of 57 nations said they considered "Al-Quds Al-Sharif a red line for the Arab and Islamic nations," and reaffirmed their "absolute solidarity in protecting the Arab and Islamic identity of occupied East Al-Quds and in defending the sanctity of the holy Islamic

and Christian sites therein."

For Muslims, the mosque compound is the third-holiest site in Islam. As the Temple Mount, it also holds great significance for Jews, who believe it was the site of both the First Temple, destroyed by Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar II in 587 B.C., and the Second Temple, built in the first century B.C. and destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70.



For Muslims, Haram Al-Sharif, left, is the third-holiest site in Islam, while for Jews the Temple Mount was the site of the First and Second Temples. AFP

For decades, a delicate status quo has preserved the balance of interests at the site, which has been a waqf — an Islamic religious endowment — since the 12th century. Since 1948, the site has been managed by the Jordanian-appointed Jerusalem Islamic Waqf and Al-Aqsa Mosque Affairs Council, known simply as the Waqf.

By international agreement, the Waqf has retained responsibility for the site ever since, although since the occupation of the Old City of Jerusalem by Israel after the Six Day War in 1967, Israeli forces have controlled access to it.

The compound has always been open for Jews to visit during specified hours, but they are not allowed to pray there or display religious symbols.

Ironically, said Daniel Seidemann, an Israeli lawyer and founder of nongovernmental organization Terrestrial Jerusalem, it was Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who "best defined this core understanding in 2015 when he said: 'Muslims pray at the Temple Mount; non-Muslims visit the Temple Mount'."

Seidemann added: "Until 2017, Netanyahu reasonably maintained the status quo. But since then, he has incrementally allowed Jewish prayer, while disingenuously asserting

that Israel is committed to maintaining the status quo.

"That was, and is, a lie."

In the past, said Seidemann, "many hundreds of Israelis, many Jewish, visited the mosques daily without incident. They came as guests and were treated as guests."

"But today's visitors are best represented by Ben Gvir. He visits as the proprietor and treats

FASTFACTS

• Jews, other non-Muslims may visit Al-Aqsa compound in East Jerusalem, but may not pray there or display religious symbols.

• In recent years, the restrictions have been increasingly flouted by hardline religious nationalists, prompting violent reactions.

the Muslims as his tenants.

"Jewish visits to the Mount no longer have anything to do with piety, and everything to do with ultra-nationalist religious triumphalism."

He added: "Commencing with the new Netanyahu government, the veil has been ripped away. The violation of the status quo is both so blatant and consistent it cannot be denied."

After a period of calm

during Ramadan, said Ir Amim researcher Aviv Tatarsky, "Israel again imposed harsh restrictions on Muslim entry to Al-Aqsa, reverting to the unprecedented measures implemented after Oct. 7 and the subsequent outbreak of the war."

Muslim worshippers under the age of 40 "are consistently denied access to the Mount by the police, even during Muslim prayer times."

"The most stringent restrictions are imposed during Jewish visits, which ultimately translates into a ban on Muslim entry while Jews conduct prayer unencumbered on the Mount."

This exclusion of Muslims from their place of worship during Jewish visits, he said, "is not only a breach of Muslim worship rights and the status quo, but also contributes to heightened tensions in an already volatile climate."

Ir Amim has made a number of recommendations for maintaining the status quo. These include allowing unrestricted Muslim access and, "if the police find it difficult to manage the simultaneous presence of Muslim worshippers and Jewish visitors, the entry of Muslims should take precedence," it says, adding: "Muslim worship rights trump non-Muslim visiting rights."

In addition, it says, Israel must prevent any Jewish prayer or worship activity on the Mount, prohibit government ministers from speaking against the status quo and visiting the Mount, and cancel the allocation of all funds to the Jewish Temple movements.

"Even after years of activity by the Temple movements, only a small minority of the Jewish public visits the Temple Mount," said Tatarsky. "The government is ultimately promoting the interests of a fringe extreme Jewish group, while severely harming millions of Muslim residents and Israel's relations with Arab countries, especially Jordan." In the past, Jewish extremists have made no secret of their wish to destroy the mosque and replace it with a "Third Temple." This ambition is enshrined in the Amidah, the central prayer of the Jewish liturgy, which includes the entreaty "that the Temple be rebuilt speedily in our days."

In recent years, extremist groups have stepped up the campaign to see a "Third Temple" built on the site. Ben Gvir has insisted Jews should be allowed to pray on the site, a position denounced by some Israeli politicians and rabbis.

A threat made by Ben Gvir in August to build a synagogue at the Al-Aqsa compound drew condemnation. A statement from Netanyahu's office reiterated that "there (was) no change" to the existing policy.



Arab News Japan Team receiving the Chief of Mission Award from Jun Imanishi, consul general of Japan in Dubai on Monday, in the presence of Editor-in-Chief Faisal J. Abbas. Photo/Arab News Japan

GCC-JAPAN CULTURAL BRIDGE

Arab News Japan honored with Chief of Mission Award in Dubai

Diana Farah Dubai

The consul general of Japan in Dubai, Jun Imanishi, hosted a Chief of Mission Award ceremony, during which Arab News Japan was recognized for its efforts in strengthening ties between Japan and the UAE.

The ceremony, held at the consul's residence, highlighted Arab News Japan's role in bridging cultural and business relationships between the Gulf Cooperation Council region and Japan.

Imanishi explained that the Chief of Mission Award is granted to individuals and organizations that contribute to fostering mutual understanding and friendship between Japan, the UAE, and Dubai.

Others honored included Yamanote Atelier founder Sheikh

Suhail Al-Maktoum and freelance journalist Amin Abbas.

The consul general said his motto regarding diplomacy is that it is all about people-to-people relations. "People need to support each other."

Speaking specifically about Arab News Japan, the consul general commended the platform for its work: "It has shown and brought the region closer to Japan in terms of mutual understanding."

Arab News Editor-in-Chief Faisal J. Abbas expressed gratitude for the honor bestowed by the consul general. "Our mission is to bridge the gap between the Middle East and the Far East," Abbas said.

"In all our international editions, be it in our Japanese edition, in our Pakistan edition, in

our French edition and hopefully in our upcoming editions, we make sure it is not merely translation; we make sure that we adopt part of the culture and look for that cultural aspect that brings us together," Abbas told guests.

He said that while the region is currently going through conflict, it is important to remember Japan. "Japan is inspirational, because we should not forget that not a long time ago, this country was completely destroyed after the Second World War, yet look where it is today," he said. "If I would like to leave you with one thought it's that the night is darkest just before the dawn, there is light at the end of the tunnel."

"If we look at Japan, we should be very inspired and hope to rebuild our region to be like Japan," he added.

DEFENSE COLLABORATION

Kingdom highlights military growth at Airshow China

Saudi Arabia's defense industry aims to forge global partnerships at Zhuhai event

Arab News Riyadh

Military products and the achievements of both government bodies and national companies are highlighted at the Saudi pavilion at this year's China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition.

Airshow China 2024, one of the world's largest aviation expos, started in Zhuhai on Tuesday and will run until Nov. 17.

The Saudi pavilion features military products, particularly in aviation, and turns the spotlight on national companies

that work in military industries. It also underscores efforts to boost national manufacturing capabilities, and localize over 50 percent of government spending on military equipment and services by 2030.

The governor of the General Authority for Military Industries, Ahmad Al-Ohali, said: "This strategic participation, occurring for the first time in China, aims to enhance the Kingdom's global presence in the military industries sector and to solidify its position as one of the fastest-growing economies among the G20 nations."

Al-Ohali added: "Our

HIGHLIGHT

The defense sector is projected to contribute \$17 billion to the Saudi economy by 2030, with a \$9 billion addition to non-oil revenues.

participation also seeks to establish fruitful international partnerships to empower and develop the military industries sector, while also promoting the Kingdom's message of welcoming investors from around the world. Additionally, it aims to highlight the key objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 within the military sector."

TheSpace

Developing people is the secret to lasting success

FIRAS ABUSSAUD



Imagine a team that is falling behind, deadlines are missed, creativity is low, and everyone seems unmotivated.

The leader is frustrated and assumes the team is not good enough.

Then something changes. The leader takes a different approach by focusing on helping each person grow. By teaching, guiding and nurturing individual strengths, the team starts to shine. Goals are not only met but exceeded.

What made the difference? The key here is that the leader prioritized developing people. This simple shift reveals a powerful truth: when you invest in people, you create success that lasts. Developing people goes far beyond holding training sessions. It is about helping each member grow in every way — learning new things, improving thinking, and building stronger relationships.

Great leaders take the time to understand each person's unique strengths and areas for improvement. They do not stop there, they also provide the right tools, clear guidance, and encouragement needed for progress. This approach creates a team of motivated, engaged and loyal individuals.

When people feel supported, they take ownership of their work, think creatively, and contribute in meaningful ways. Empowering people is an investment in long-term success, transforming teams into communities marked by trust and collaboration.

In today's rapidly evolving workplace, artificial intelligence is revolutionizing how leaders can support and develop their teams. AI

trains algorithms to recommend personalized intervention based on an individual's job role, skill gaps, and career aspirations. These platforms analyze user activity, identify areas for improvement, and suggest relevant and tailored learning paths.

AI-powered performance-management tools can help leaders track employee progress, and provide insights that would otherwise take years to uncover. For instance, these tools might flag consistent strengths, like collaboration skills or attention to detail, or highlight areas where additional training or support is needed.

Some advanced AI platforms go further by analyzing vast amounts of workforce data to uncover hidden talents within a team. By examining work patterns, contributions, and even learning styles, these platforms can identify employees who may have untapped potential in areas beyond their current roles.

Investing in people's development has a ripple effect on organizations. Supported individuals perform at their best, take initiative, approach problems creatively, and push themselves to achieve higher results.

Development also fosters loyalty. Employees who see that their leaders care about their growth are more likely to stay with the organization, reducing turnover and fostering a strong, committed team.

When people feel supported, they take ownership of their work, think creatively, and contribute in meaningful ways. Empowering people is an investment in long-term success.

Firas Abussaud is a petroleum engineering systems specialist with more than 22 years of experience in the industry. For full version, log on to www.arabnews.com/thespace

The Day's FIGURES

KSRELIEF PROJECTS IN YEMEN

November 2024



Source: ksrelief.org

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Islamic diplomacy Pakistan PM visits MWL, praises solidarity efforts

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his delegation visited the Muslim World League headquarters in Makkah. They were received by Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the league's secretary-general and chairman of the Organization of Muslim Scholars.

Sharif commended the MWL's efforts to foster Muslim solidarity, unite the voices of Muslim scholars, and convey the true message of Islam.

Sharif arrived in the Kingdom to participate in the Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh, held on Monday. **AN Jeddah**

Al-Qafila in Makkah Desert convoy event brings Saudi traditions to life

An event in Makkah showcasing the history of long-distance desert travel has been hailed by visitors for highlighting an important part of Arabian history.

The Al-Qafila (Arabic for "convoy") event was held at the Hira Cultural District, and included live performances showcasing the area's historical depth and folk heritage. It highlighted the use of convoys throughout Saudi history. The mode of travel was once crucial for inter-country transportation and trade, offering safety and protection from hazards and harsh climates. **SPA Makkah**

Rich biodiversity Rare reptile found in Northern Borders desert

The Northern Borders region is distinguished by its diverse ecosystems due to its vast size and unique geography, resulting in rich biodiversity and natural resources essential for ecological balance, especially among its varied wildlife.

Recently, in Wadi Al-Hanthalia, south of Arar, a rare lizard species known as Savigny's agama (*Trapelus savignii*) was spotted.

Adnan Khalifa, a member of the Aman Environmental Society and a wildlife enthusiast, said that this lizard is one of the rare and limited species in the region. **SPA Riyadh**

News Saudi Arabia

MOVIE MAGIC

Indian film icons Bobby Deol, Suriya hail Riyadh visit

The duo are in the Kingdom's capital to promote epic saga 'Kanguva,' in theaters on Nov. 14

Rashid Hassan | Riyadh

Bollywood icon Bobby Deol and Tamil cinema veteran Suriya spent time with fans and members of the press to promote their new film "Kanguva" in Riyadh.

They are among the latest international stars to visit the Kingdom's capital and interact with local fans of their work.

"Kanguva" is an epic fantasy action film directed by Siva, starring Suriya, Deol, and Disha Patani, which hits the Kingdom's theaters on Nov. 14.

Speaking to fans at an event in Riyadh this week, Deol expressed his appreciation for fans in Saudi Arabia. "Today I am here with all of you, and so many of you. I am happy to be here among you all. I love you, Suriya loves you, we all love you for so much of your love



Bollywood icon Bobby Deol and Tamil cinema veteran Suriya spoke to fans at an event in Riyadh this week. AN photo

HIGHLIGHT

Bobby Deol and Suriya are among the latest international stars to visit the Kingdom's capital to promote their film.

and compassion," he said. Speaking about his first visit to Riyadh, Deol added: "I feel so happy that our people live here and are liked by the host country. I am glad to see you all. It's your energy, it's your love that gives

us strength, and whatever we are today, it's because of your love.

"So, thank you so much for having us here today."

Suriya is in Riyadh for the first time for the film's promotion.

The style icon told Arab News: "I am happy to be among our people living here and to see a lot of transformation going on in the Kingdom, including in the cinema sector, thanks to Vision 2030 — the ambitious plan to transform Saudi Arabia, diversify its economy and open to the world.

"It aims to create an ambitious nation, a thriving economy, and a vibrant society that allows citizens and residents to achieve their dreams, hopes and aspirations, I am happy to see the transformation," the actor added.

Suriya and Deol also spoke about sharing the

screen in "Kanguva," admiring each other's roles and working together.

Deol said he is geared up for the release of "Kanguva," his first multilingual work in both Tamil and Hindi. He shared his admiration for Suriya, highlighting the powerful presence the actor brings on the screen.

Over the past few weeks, Suriya and Deol have been promoting "Kanguva" across India and abroad.

With Suriya in a double role and Deol as a dangerous villain, the film was made with a budget of over \$35million and is one of the most anticipated Indian films of the year.

The film also features Patani as a character connected to both a historical and contemporary timeline. Primarily known for her glamorous roles, action-packed sequences and songs, this role portrays her in a fresh look.

ADVERTORIAL

Art of the Kingdom The First Travelling Exhibition of Saudi Contemporary Art Opens at Paço Imperial in Rio de Janeiro



Manal Al Dowayan | They Are the Purpose, We Are the Accident I, II, IV, 2022

Sarah Ibrahim | Soft Machine/Far Away Engines, 2021

Sarah Abuabdallah and Ghada Al Hassan | Horizontal Dimensions, 2021

Rio de Janeiro

The first travelling group exhibition of Saudi contemporary art was inaugurated today at the historic Paço Imperial in Rio de Janeiro. Titled Art of the Kingdom, this landmark exhibition introduces the public to the works of leading contemporary artists from Saudi Arabia, fostering a deeper global understanding of the Kingdom's evolving art landscape. Debuting in Brazil, the exhibition will move on a global tour starting 2025, reaching the National Museum of China in Beijing. Titled "Poetic Illuminations",

the inaugural edition of this exhibition in Brazil is curated by Diana Wechsler and features 17 Saudi artists from different generations and artistic practices, showcasing a diverse collection of artworks ranging from paintings to installations and video works. The exhibition sheds light on Saudi Arabia's history, memory, and cultural tradition, woven artistically, offering audiences in Brazil and beyond the unique opportunity to engage with Saudi Arabia's cultural narratives and art practices. "Art has the power to unite people and cultures, and Art of the Kingdom exemplifies this

mission," said Mona Khazindar, Advisor to Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Culture. "This exhibition not only stands as a testament to the incredible talent of Saudi contemporary artists, but it also creates a platform for Saudi artists to share their stories and perspectives with the world. By launching Art of the Kingdom in Rio de Janeiro, we aim to foster cross-cultural dialogue and understanding through art, while celebrating and nurturing Saudi artists' creativity and empowering local talents to engage with the world". Explaining the concept of the

exhibition, curator Diana Wechsler stated "Is it possible to approach a culture through contemporary art? How do the visual arts contribute to reconfiguring the narratives we construct about society, memory, the past, and the present? These two questions are the starting point of the exhibition". "Through a curated selection of artists and works, the exhibition seeks to explore these themes, guided by the idea that the essence of art, in conceptual terms, is poetic illumination its ability to symbolically shed light on the world we inhabit, revealing not only elements of our past but also our dreams,

longings, and fantasies," she emphasized. Two main themes emerge from the exhibition's repertoire. The first is the desert as a definition of space, infinity, and life the second is the singularity of cultural tradition, and the evolution of a unique visual culture, shaped by diverse pasts and presents. The stunning setting of Paço Imperial, a cultural landmark in Rio de Janeiro, adds to the beauty and significance of this exhibition, as it creates an artistic conversation between the historical setup and the contemporary works on display.

As the Kingdom proceeds on an unprecedented journey of cultural transformation, Art of the Kingdom exhibition offers a unique opportunity to explore the ways in which Saudi contemporary art contributes to shaping new cultural narratives. Participating artists Ayman Yossri Daydban Ahmed Mater Emy Kat Mohamed Alkhatib Ayman Zedani Shadia Alem Nasser Al Salem Manal Al Dowayan Lina Gazzaz Muhammad Shono Sarah Ibrahim Samra Faisal Faisal Nazer Moath Alofi Ahaad Alamoudi Sarah Abuabdallah Ghada Al Hassan.

TROUBLED WATERS

Suspected attack by Houthis sees blasts near ship in Red Sea

AP Dubai

A suspected attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels saw multiple explosions strike near a vessel traveling through the Red Sea on Tuesday, though no damage was immediately reported by the ship, authorities said.

The attack comes as the rebels continue their months-long assault targeting shipping through a waterway that typically sees \$1 trillion in goods pass through it a year over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip and Israel's ground

offensive in Lebanon.

The Houthis have insisted that the attacks will continue as long as the wars go on, and the assaults already have halved shipping through the region.

Meanwhile, a UN panel of experts now allege that the Houthis may be shaking down some shippers for about \$180 million a month for safe passage through the area.

A vessel in the southern reaches of the Red Sea, about 130 km southwest of the rebel-held port city of Hodeida, reported

the attack, the British military's UK Maritime Trade Operations center said. No one was wounded on board in the blasts, and the ship was continuing on its journey, the UKMTO added.

The Houthis didn't immediately claim the attack. However, it can take the rebels hours or even days before they acknowledge one of their assaults.

The Houthis have targeted more than 90 merchant vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October 2023. They seized one vessel and sank

HIGHLIGHT

The Houthis have targeted more than 90 merchant vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October 2023.

two in the campaign, which also killed four sailors. Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a US-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets, which have included Western military vessels as well.

The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the US or the UK to force an end to Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza.

The Houthis have shot down multiple American MQ-9 Reaper drones as well.

It's unclear why the Houthis' attacks have dropped, though they have launched multiple missiles toward Israel as well.

On Oct. 17, the US military unleashed B-2 stealth bombers to target underground bunkers used by the rebels. US airstrikes

also have been targeting Houthi positions in recent days as well.

Meanwhile, a report by UN experts from October says "the Houthis allegedly collected illegal fees from a few shipping agencies to allow their ships to sail through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden without being attacked."

It put the money generated a month at around \$180 million, though it stressed it hadn't been able to corroborate the information provided by sources to the panel.

ISRAELI EXCESSES

Children among 14 killed in Gaza strikes

No repeat of Jerusalem incident will be accepted, France says

AP, Reuters Gaza, Paris

Two Israeli strikes in Gaza killed at least 14 people, including two children and a woman, most in an Israeli-declared humanitarian zone, Palestinian officials said.

One strike late on Monday hit a makeshift cafeteria used by displaced people in Muwasi, the center of the so-called humanitarian zone.

At least 11 people were killed, including two children, according to officials at Nasser Hospital, where the casualties were taken.

Video from the scene showed men pulling bloodied wounded from among tables and chairs set up in the sand in an enclosure made of corrugated metal sheets.

The strike came hours after the Israeli military announced an expansion of the zone, where it has told Palestinians evacuating from other parts of Gaza to take refuge.

Hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are sheltering in sprawling tent camps in and around Muwasi, a largely desolate area of dunes and agricultural fields with few facilities or services along the Mediterranean coast of southern Gaza.

Another strike early on Tuesday hit a house in the urban Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, killing three people including a woman, according to Al-Awda Hospital, which received the casualties. The strike also wounded 11 others, it said.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on either strike.

Meanwhile, France's foreign minister said ahead of summoning Israel's envoy that a repeat of an incident in Jerusalem that saw armed Israeli security forces entering a property administered by France must never happen again.

Two French security officials with diplomatic status were briefly detained on Nov. 7 after Jean-Noel Barrot was due to visit the compound of The Church of the Pater Noster on the Mount of Olives.

The site, one of four administered by France in Jerusalem, is under Paris's responsibility and it not the first time that problems have arisen over France's historic holdings in the Holy City.

"It is an opportunity for France to reiterate that it will not tolerate Israeli armed forces entering these areas, for which it (France) is responsible, for which it ensures protection," Barrot told France 24 television when asked what the ambassador would be told.

"And to strongly reaffirm that this incident must never happen again, meaning that Israeli forces enter armed and without authorization."

Diplomatic relations between France and Israel have worsened since President Emmanuel Macron called for an end to the supply to Israel of offensive weapons used in Gaza.

The French government also attempted to ban Israeli weapons' firms from exhibiting at a trade fair in Paris and has become increasingly uneasy over Israel's conduct in the wars in Gaza and Lebanon.

Earlier, France's foreign minister said that the EU could soon launch a new round of sanctions against Israeli settlers



Palestinians mourn by the body of a relative killed in Israeli strikes in Khan Younis, Gaza, on Tuesday. AFP

NUMBER

43,655

Palestinians have been killed in Israel's Gaza onslaught.

accused of fueling violence in Palestinian territories.

France had already imposed sanctions against "28 violent settlers" and been instrumental in deciding sanctions at the EU level, Jean-Noel Barrot told the Paris Peace Forum, an annual gathering dedicated to international dialogue.

The EU's sanctions regime had already been activated twice, and

"might be activated a third time soon," he said. "We are deeply attached to the security of Israel," Barrot said, but "in the interest of Israel, of Israeli security, international law needs to be respected and justice needs to be reached."

During a visit to the West Bank on Thursday, Barrot had already threatened a new round of sanctions, and renewed France's commitment to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Settlement activities "threaten the political perspective that can ensure durable peace for Israel and Palestine," he said after talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah.

The US, Britain, Canada and

Australia have also imposed sanctions against extremist settlers.

Josep Borrell, the EU's foreign affairs commissioner, said in August that Israeli settlers were endangering "any chance of peace" and called on the Israeli government to "stop these unacceptable actions immediately."

Sanctions would also be aimed at the "enablers" of violent settler actions, "including some Israeli government members," Borrell said.

Over 700 Palestinians in the West Bank have been killed by Israeli troops and settlers in the last year, according to the Ramallah-based Health Ministry.

BARBARITY

Israel fails to meet US aid demands to ease Gaza catastrophe

Reuters Geneva

International aid groups said that Israel had failed to meet a series of US demands intended to improve the humanitarian crisis in Gaza by a Tuesday deadline.

The US told its ally Israel in a letter on Oct. 13 that it must take steps to improve the aid situation in war-ravaged Gaza within 30 days. If not, it could face potential restrictions on US military aid.

"Israel not only failed to meet the US criteria that would indicate support to the humanitarian response, but concurrently took actions that dramatically worsened the situation on the ground, particularly in Northern Gaza," a group of eight aid groups including Oxfam, Save the Children and the Norwegian Refugee Council said in 19-page report.

For more than a month, Israeli forces have been pushing deeper into north Gaza, surrounding hospitals and shelters and creating fresh waves of displacement in an operation they say is designed to prevent Hamas fighters regrouping there.

On Friday, global food security experts released a rare warning of imminent famine in parts of northern Gaza unless immediate steps were taken to ease the situation.

Louise Wateridge, senior emergency officer for UNRWA in Gaza, told a Geneva press briefing that aid trucks into the Strip had fallen in October and that no food was allowed to enter northern Gaza for an entire month.

"The people here need everything. They need more. It's not enough," she said.

Asked what she expected Washington to do about the deadline, she said: "Anything that happens now is already too late. Thousands and thousands of people have been killed senselessly. They have been killed because there is lack of aid, because the bombs have continued and because we have not been able to even reach them under the rubble."

Israel said on Monday it had met most of the US demands.

News International

CREATING IN THE DARK

Lebanese artists struggle to keep creativity alive in a nation at war

Artists use their work as an outlet for the frustration and despair they feel

Reuters Beirut

As Israel presses a deadly offensive against armed group Hezbollah in his home country, Lebanese artist Charbel Samuël Aoun wrestles with the role of art in a country engulfed in conflict.

"Does art still have a place in such a crisis?" said Aoun, a 45-year-old mixed media painter and sculptor.

Lebanon has historically played a central role in the Arab world's artistic scene, serving as a vibrant hub for visual arts, music and theater, blending traditional and contemporary influences.

Now, Lebanese artists are using their work as an outlet for the frustration and despair they feel after a year-long Israeli offensive that has killed more than 3,200 people, the vast majority of them since September.

Aoun's pieces are a direct reflection of Lebanon's back-to-back crises. In 2013, he began gathering dust from Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon to create a series of layered paintings, before moving on to explore other mediums.

Now, he says the darkness and hopelessness of the war — and the debris left behind by Israel's intense bombing campaign across Lebanon's south, east and Beirut's southern suburbs — has revived his desire to work with dust.

"You either stop everything or keep going with the little that still has meaning," he said.

Two of his exhibitions have been canceled due to the war. While he once lived on the income from his art, he now also relies on selling honey from his beehives, which he first set up as a project to create art from beeswax.



Displaced and refugee children attend a charity event where Lebanese singer Joy Fayad and musician Oliver Mualouf perform in Dbayeh, Lebanon. Reuters

"I can no longer rely on the art market," he said.

Galleries across Beirut have shut down in recent months, with owners saying there was no demand to buy art at this time. Lebanon's famed modern art museum, the Sursock Museum, has

moved its collections to underground storage.

Lebanese singer and musician Joy Fayad has grappled with the emotional toll of the conflict — which made it difficult for her to perform for months.

"It limited my creativity, it was like I shut down. I couldn't give to others, nor to myself," Fayad, 36, said.

Instead, she threw her energy into songwriting. One line in a new song reads: "You are from

BACKGROUND

Lebanon has historically played a central role in the Arab world's artistic scene, serving as a vibrant hub for visual arts, music and theater, blending traditional and contemporary influences.

the downtrodden people, whose word has been silenced, and by their weapons, you are paying the price with your blood."

She recently began performing again, singing for displaced and refugee children in Lebanon at a charity event north of Beirut.

"They're changing the atmosphere, having fun after such a difficult period," she said, especially for those who became accustomed to the sound of bombs instead of beats.

BOOSTING TIES

Iran, Russia link bank card systems

AFP Tehran

Iranian bank cards can now be used in Russia, state television reported, as the two countries linked their banking systems in the latest bid to counteract sanctions.

Iranian banks have been excluded since 2018 from the SWIFT international financial messaging service, which governs the vast majority of transactions worldwide.

The move is part of a raft of sanctions that were re-imposed on Iran after the US withdrew from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal.

Iranian bank cards can now be used in Russia, state television channel IRINN said on Monday, showing the withdrawal of money using an Iranian bank card from an ATM in Russia.

BACKGROUND

Russia has been pushing for the creation of an international payment platform as an alternative to the SWIFT service, from which key Russian banks have also been excluded since 2022.

The operation was made possible by connecting Iran's interbank network Shetab to its Russian equivalent Mir, the channel said.

Iranians can currently withdraw money in Russia, and will in the future be able to use their cards to pay for in-store purchases, it added.

"The plan is also going to be implemented in other countries that have a wide range of financial and social interactions with Iran, for example Iraq, Afghanistan and Türkiye," it said.

Both Iran and Russia have sought to counteract the effects of sanctions on their economies.

RADICAL SHAKE-UP

Trump makes new appointments, Rubio tipped for secretary of state

AFP Washington

US President-elect Donald Trump announced new members of his incoming administration on Monday, and was expected to pick Senator Marco Rubio as secretary of state.

Both Rubio and Congressman Michael Waltz, who has been lined up for the powerful National Security Adviser role, have notably hawkish views on China, which they see as a threat and challenge to US economic and military might.

The two appointees, both from Florida, would be key architects

of Trump's "America First" foreign policy, with the incoming president having promised to end the wars raging in Ukraine and the Middle East, and avoid any more US military entanglements.

The 78-year-old Republican tycoon has vowed his second stint in power will result in a radical shake-up of the federal government.

Trump announced immigration official Tom Homan as the country's

"border czar" on Monday, tasking him with fulfilling his key domestic promise of mass deportations of undocumented migrants.

US media also reported that Stephen Miller was set to be his deputy chief of staff with a broad portfolio.

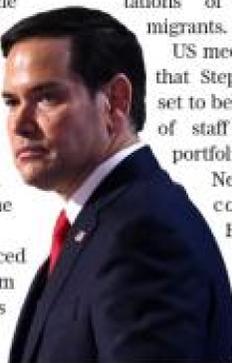
New York congresswoman Elize Stefanik, a hard-line defender of Israel, got the nod for UN ambassador,

Trump's transition team said in a statement.

In a further announcement, Trump's team said Lee Zeldin, an early political ally, would be proposed as Environmental Protection Agency chief with a mandate to slash climate and pollution regulations that are considered red tape by businesses.

Top nominations, including for Stefanik, Zeldin as well as the secretary of state, would need approval by the Senate, but Trump is hoping to bypass oversight from the upper chamber by making appointments while it is in recess.

Marco Rubio



A prominent Saudi company based in Riyadh is seeking qualified candidates for the following positions:

- Electricians
- Plumbers
- Tilers
- Landscape Designers
- Natural Stone Installers

Candidates must possess a minimum of 15 years of experience and demonstrate the ability to work effectively within a team and under pressure. Competitive salaries and benefits will be offered.

Please contact via WhatsApp: 0564675338

ریاض میں قائم ایک بڑی سعودی کمپنی مندرجہ ذیل آسامیوں کے لیے درخواستیں طلب کرتی ہے:

- انیکٹریشن
- ٹائل لگنے والے
- قدرتی پتھر لگنے والے
- پنمبر
- لینڈ سکیپ ڈیزائنر

کم از کم 15 سال کا تجربہ ضروری ہے۔ امیدواروں کو ٹیم میں کام کرنے اور کام کے دہاز کو برداشت کرنے کی صلاحیت ہونی چاہیے۔ پرکشش تنخواہ اور مراعات دی جائیں گی۔

رابطہ کے لیے واٹس ایپ نمبر: 0564675338

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Filipino sisters fight to protect nation's biodiversity haven

Ann and Billie Dumaliang were featured in TIME Magazine's Next Generation Leaders last month

Samantha Beltran Manila

On the outskirts of Manila, a 2,600-hectare nature reserve has been lauded by top climate activists and film stars after it gained international recognition for one of the largest collaborative reforestation efforts in the Philippines.

Behind the rescue of over 2,000 hectares of that land are sisters Ann and Billie Dumaliang. They have been at the forefront of conserving the biodiversity-rich Masungi Georeserve and nurturing it as a geotourism site, which is home to lush rainforests, 60-million-year-old limestone formations and over 400 species of flora and fauna.

They have become the faces of conservation in the Philippines, a country named in 2024 as the deadliest in Asia for environmental defenders — for the 11th year in a row — with the killings of 17 activists.

The Dumaliang sisters and the nearly 100 rangers at the reserve are no stranger to the deluge of threats that come with their work, which range from physical to legal, and include disinformation and harassment campaigns.

Over the years, rangers at the reserve have been shot at by intruders and were the targets of booby traps and improvised explosives set across the



Filipino conservationists and sisters Billie and Ann Dumaliang were featured in TIME Magazine's Next Generation Leaders in October 2024. Supplied

landscape.

But the dangers that come with their conservation efforts have not deterred them from the mission to protect Masungi.

"We're a small group and a team of young people. All of these groups that we're up against

have unlimited resources ... how do we compete with these very powerful and well-resourced interests?" Billie, 31, told Arab News.

The sisters were among the trailblazers featured in TIME Magazine's Next Generation Leaders last month, recognized for their work protecting Masungi from illegal loggers, land grabbers and quarrying companies.

Billie says TIME's "empowering" recognition was a "symbol" that the international community has been paying attention to their team's work and the challenges they face.

"A lot of times when you don't have enough support at home, if your organization is repressed or harassed, sometimes it's really the international community that provides the much-needed support," Billie said.

HOT SPOTS

Indian travel agents record surge in outbound tourism to Middle East

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi

An increasing number of Indian travelers are visiting the Middle East this year, tour operators said on Tuesday after recording a significant surge to the region during the Diwali holiday season.

The Middle East has become an increasingly popular foreign destination for many Indian travelers, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE often cited as the top two countries in demand.

As the festive Diwali season and the long holidays that came with it concluded earlier this month, tourism players in India say there was a notable increase in trips to Arab countries.

"In this festival season, there was a huge demand," Jyoti Mayal, president of the Travel Agents Association of India, told Arab News on travel from India to the



Air India flies near the landmark Burj Khalifa skyscraper, the world's tallest building, above the Dubai skyline on Feb. 13. AFP

UAE, citing Saudi Arabia and Qatar as particularly popular destinations.

"These countries in the Middle East are less explored and that's why more and more people are traveling (to them)."

Travelers from the western Indian state of Gujarat were drawn to new and affordable

packages offered to Gulf destinations like Dubai, said tour agent Manish Sharma.

"From Ahmedabad, I can say that compared to the past, there has been an increase of 30 to 35 percent in the outbound travels to the Middle East this time," Sharma, who runs his business in the Gujarati capital, told Arab News.

Their top choices were UAE cities such as Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Dubai, he added.

"The reasons for the growth are manifold — it's cheap, easy connectivity, it's near, you get good food," he added.

Members of the Gujarati middle class "take at least one or two vacations every year," he said. "During Diwali and summer vacation, they prefer to go to Dubai."

Many Indians appear to be taking advantage of the increasing number of direct flights to the UAE. There are at least 14 daily flights to Dubai from Ahmedabad alone.

"There has been an increase in Dubai travel in the last 10 years, (and) in the last three years tourism has grown greatly. But this year, tourism to UAE has gone phenomenally and the reason is the increase in the number of flights," Sharma said.

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Storm Usagi

Fifth storm bears down on Philippines

The Philippines prepared Tuesday to evacuate potentially tens of thousands of people as the fifth major storm in three weeks bore down on the archipelago shortly after the onslaught of Typhoon Toraji.

Now a weakened tropical storm, Toraji blew out to sea overnight after causing relatively limited damage and no reported deaths. But Tropical Storm Usagi is now just two days away from the coast of Luzon, the archipelago nation's largest and most populous island, and gaining strength, the national weather agency said. Civil Defense Chief Ruel Rapsing of Cagayan province said: "We preemptively evacuated 40,000 people that time." **AFP**

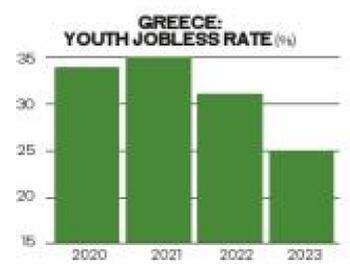
Security forces

Parts of Indian state closed after 10 killed

Ethnic organizations in parts of India's violence-wracked northeastern state shut schools and businesses Tuesday, protesting the killings of 10 people by paramilitary soldiers. They called for an 11-hour shutdown in the hill districts of Manipur from 5:00 a.m. Tuesday. Heavy gunfire was reported overnight in the periphery of the hills and the Imphal Valley.

Life was paralyzed in the area, with schools and businesses closed and people staying indoors. There were no vehicles on the road. The Manipur state police said those killed Monday were "armed militants" and the soldiers fired at them after they attacked their post near the district town of Jiribam on Monday. **AP**

The Day's FIGURES



Source: Statista

What We're Reading Today

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

'Dragonflies and Damselflies of the World'

KLASS-DOUWE B. DIJKSTRA

Airily dancing over rivers and ponds, the thousands of colorful dragonfly and damselfly species that cohabit our planet may seem of little importance. Few life-forms, however, convey the condition of the most limiting resource on land and life's most bountiful environment as well as they can: While

the adults are exceptional aerial hunters, their nymphs are all confined to freshwater. "Dragonflies and Damselflies of the World" showcases

their beauty and diversity while shedding light on how they evolved into the vital symbols of planetary health we celebrate today.



Life woes

35 killed, dozens wounded in China car ramming

A driver has killed 35 people and wounded 43 others in southern China, police said Tuesday, a day after the car ploughed down people exercising in a sports center in the city of Zhuhai. After the attack was reported on Monday, police only said people had been wounded.

Preliminary investigations suggested that the 62-year-old driver, surnamed Fan, had been "triggered by (his) dissatisfaction with the division of property following his divorce," the police said. **AFP**

Brief turbulence

11 injured in Lufthansa flight to Frankfurt

Eleven people were injured when a Lufthansa flight from Buenos Aires to Frankfurt hit severe turbulence while traveling over the Atlantic, the airline said on Tuesday.

"Unfortunately, five passengers and six crew members suffered mostly minor injuries," a Lufthansa spokesperson told Reuters in an email, confirming a report by the DPA news agency. The turbulence was brief and occurred in an inter-tropical convergence zone, the company said. **Reuters**

YOUR DAILY ARABIC PROVERB
*He who despairs not from what has passed
him by, finds comfort and relief.*
Aktham bin Sayfi
(Pre-Islamic Arab orator)

Opinion

There is no alternative to multilateral climate action

MUKHTAR BABAYEV



Mukhtar Babayev, President-designate of COP29, is Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan.

©Project Syndicate

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

Our world is at a critical juncture. The devastating effects of global warming are increasingly evident and the crisis is deepening. To mitigate it, we must urgently reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. Failing to act now will only increase the human and economic toll.

This month's COP29 climate change conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, presents a unique opportunity for effective collective action. Amid heightened geopolitical tensions and global uncertainty, COP29 will serve as a test of the multilateral system on which humanity's ability to respond to this existential threat depends.

The groundwork for coordinated action was laid in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 with the creation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which established the annual Conference of the Parties to promote consensus-based solutions. The philosophy was simple: given that climate change is a global issue, addressing it requires a collaborative approach.

The convention fosters cooperation between smaller countries and superpowers, enables civil society organizations

to engage directly with governments and facilitates cross-border technology transfers. Perhaps most importantly, it provides a framework for collective action in which each country's efforts encourage others to step up their own.

The 2015 Paris climate agreement marked a turning point, setting the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and ensuring that the increase stays well below 2 C. To monitor progress, the agreement established a system of nationally determined contributions, through which each country outlines its emission-reduction plans.

Regrettably, the first global audit, released ahead of last year's COP28 in Dubai, showed that we are far from meeting these climate targets. It also offered a comprehensive roadmap, calling on all countries to commit to targets aligned with the 1.5 C goal and establishing clear steps and timelines — including transitioning away from fossil fuels — that could bring the Paris agreement's objectives within reach.

COP29 represents the next step for the multilateral approach, with leaders expected to agree on a significant boost to

the \$100 billion climate finance target — the so-called New Collective Quantified Goal. Moreover, each country must submit its updated nationally determined contributions by February 2025.

Transparency is essential to this process. Building trust in countries' commitment to bold climate action and willingness to provide the necessary financing is key.

As COP29 president, Azerbaijan is urging all countries to submit goals aligned with the 1.5 C target as soon as possible. We are also doing everything we can to secure a fair and ambitious new climate finance goal that addresses developing countries' needs and matches the scale and urgency of the crisis.

One thing is clear: without a viable backup plan, we must do all we can to meet the 1.5 C goal. Sleepwalking into climate catastrophe is not an option.

To be sure, the multilateral system has its flaws. But it remains the best framework to tackle this daunting challenge. Over three decades, it has fostered lasting international cooperation, a shared understanding of the science and a strong consensus concerning global climate goals.

The alternative to multilateralism is a

fragmented response, with governments pursuing their own agendas without coordination or cooperation. This approach would mean slower progress, higher costs and less equitable outcomes.

Consider, for example, COP29's objective of finalizing negotiations on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which aims to standardize carbon markets. By channeling resources toward the most effective mitigation projects, this framework could save \$250 billion annually by 2030.

Given the alternatives, we have no choice but to make the current system work. The COP29 presidency will leave no stone unturned to achieve an international consensus. With an agenda focused on advancing transformative climate action, Azerbaijan could help bridge geopolitical divisions. But our success hinges on countries' willingness to engage constructively and commit to the multilateral process.

The science is clear, the frameworks for coordinated action are in place and the plan has been laid out. Now, we must find the political will to put these tools to use. COP29 is our chance to prove that multilateralism can work.

Building trust in countries' commitment to bold climate action and willingness to provide the necessary financing is key



COURTESY: ANILUO (RUBEN ARSHAK) AL-AMBAT

The irony of Spain being caught off guard is striking, given its politicians' proactive stance on climate change

What the fury in Spain over devastating floods tells us

ARNAB NEIL SENGUPTA



Arnab Neil Sengupta is a senior editor at Arab News. [X: @arnabng](https://twitter.com/arnabng)

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

Anyone familiar with the classic film "My Fair Lady" will recall the phrase, "The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain." On Oct. 29, however, this famous line took a dark turn when explosive downpours struck the Valencia region, leaving at least 219 dead and 78 missing. As videos of mud-slinging protesters targeting Spain's royals, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and regional leaders during their visit to Paiporta went viral, it became evident that the climate change rhetoric favored by European politicians held little comfort when faced with a real-life disaster.

What the people of Valencia seek is accountability, immediate government support and proof that politicians have learned the right lessons from this calamity, as there is no guarantee it will not happen again. After five decades without a major natural disaster, many residents were unprepared for the dangers of flash floods and did not know how to respond. Yet, as

climate change is increasingly blamed for intensifying weather patterns along Spain's Mediterranean coast, such floods are likely to become more frequent and deadlier.

The irony of Spain being caught off guard by an extreme weather event is striking, given its politicians' proactive stance on climate change and ambitious commitments aligned with the EU's green agenda. The Spanish government has pledged to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, focusing on renewable energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing energy efficiency. But these initiatives offered little solace to the estimated 100,000 protesters in Valencia.

In Valencia's case, mixed messages and the unprecedented intensity of the rainfall appear to have created confusion at the local level. Despite storm warnings from the national weather service being in place from Oct. 25, some municipalities were slow to act.

In hindsight, experts point to three major factors behind the heavy loss of life and property: insufficient information about

flood risks, poor coordination between regional and national authorities, and political decisions made years ago to neglect investments in flood relief infrastructure.

The full extent of the damage remains unclear, but the Consortium for Insurance Compensation, a public-private entity that handles insurance claims for extreme risks, estimates it will need to pay out at least €3.5 billion (\$3.7 billion) in compensation. Now, regional authorities have no choice but to undertake these long-overdue projects.

Luis Banon, a professor of transportation engineering at the University of Alicante, noted that delaying investments in comprehensive flood defenses has multiplied the economic cost "by 200."

What is politically attractive is talk of climate action. While the EU's climate policies are divisive, they also resonate with many Europeans, who support measures to combat climate change despite the burden on businesses and consumers. In Spain, where voters prioritize environmental issues, the

ruling Socialist Workers' Party has aligned its economic agenda with ambitious green policies. Yet, as extreme weather events become more frequent, political debates increasingly revolve around whether the rhetoric matches reality.

Spain's leadership in solar and wind energy production and its investments in green infrastructure are commendable. No one is suggesting that the national recovery plan should cease funding projects aimed at decarbonizing transport and industry. However, the disaster in Valencia has starkly demonstrated that climate rhetoric and long-term strategies are not substitutes for near-term actions and coordinated, practical measures that can prevent tragedies.

Ultimately, the rain in Spain may not always stay on the plain, but the lessons learned from the catastrophe in Valencia must stay firmly in the minds of policymakers. For Spain to be truly resilient, it must strike a balance between the lofty ideals of climate action and the urgent, on-the-ground interventions that protect lives today.

Opinion

Trump's win is not an oddity — it is the American reality

YOSSI MEKELBERG



Yossi Mekelberg is a professor of international relations and an associate fellow of the MENA Program at Chatham House.
X: @YMekelberg

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

It is not only Donald Trump's election victory that has sent shockwaves across the US and many parts of the world, but also its decisiveness, which defied all forecasts of a close race. If Trump's first victory in 2016 felt like a fluke, benefiting from a combination of him being a political novice but with star qualities as a multimillionaire businessman and a well-known reality TV presenter, this time he was elected, and by a big margin, for who he is.

Make no mistake, the margin of Trump's victory and the Republicans' control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate should not conceal the depth of the divisions within American society. This is a feature that will dominate the US for the foreseeable future. And for a stunned Democratic Party, there is an uphill battle, first to come to terms with defeat, but more significantly to reconnect with those who are its natural electorate yet have been swayed by Trump.

A quick glimpse of the distribution of votes across the US shows that most of this vast territory has been painted red,

emphasizing that the party representing leftist-liberal progressive ideas and values has lost the working class, who should be its backbone. These are mainly white men who are angry at seeing their jobs disappearing abroad and who feel marginalized. Trump is appealing to them.

It became apparent that the economy played a significant role in voters' preferences and the increase in the cost of living over the last four years has cost the

Democrats dearly. Anyone who visits a grocery store in the US will be astonished by how expensive fresh produce is in comparison to most other countries of similar economic development.

But it was not only the economy that decided last week's election; it was immigration too. The debate over this divisive issue has been hijacked by the populist right and, interestingly, even Latinos voted for Trump in big numbers. There is an interesting phenomenon operating here: those who are legal migrants begrudge the undocumented ones, whom they perceive as skipping

the hard work they had to do to earn their status. Moreover, they perceive illegal migration from Latin America as the main reason they are disparaged by others in US society and face a more difficult path to social acceptance. Yet the Biden administration and Kamala Harris in particular, who was in charge of securing the borders, did very little to stop illegal migration.

For the Democrats, this should be the beginning of a period of soul-searching: how do they reconnect with their electoral and ideological roots? If their position on the economy and migration put them in an inferior position, their inability to bring an end to the war in Gaza also cost them votes in certain parts of the country.

However, it was their pushing too hard and too fast for some aspects of their progressive agenda that made some voters uncomfortable and left them feeling that an elite was trying to force upon them changes that clashed with their traditional values. This is not to suggest that these progressive ideas are wrong as such, the opposite is often the case, but they cannot be enforced from

the top down and by patronizing those who object to them. Instead, they should engage with people and allay their fears.

What's more, it should not be forgotten that, while Trump won the Republican primaries easily and had months to build his campaign, Harris won her party's nomination almost by default when it became apparent that President Joe Biden was not fit to run for another term. Going through the grinding process of the primaries gains the winner credibility, legitimacy, better engagement with the public and the momentum for a presidential campaign. But the result of last Tuesday's election made it clear that Harris had too little time to lift the campaign and build trust.

For the second time in eight years, we are once more entering the territory of the unknown and the unpredictable. Trump won this election fairly and squarely and there will not be a repeat of the ugly scenes of Jan. 6, 2021, but an orderly and civilized transition of power, as we should expect. Nevertheless, there will be many Americans, along with many in the international community, who will be deeply skeptical.

A quick glimpse of the distribution of votes across the US shows that most of this vast territory has been painted red

The Democrats' inability to bring an end to the war in Gaza also cost them votes in certain parts of the country

Mainstream media at a loss in the aftermath of US elections

OSAMA AL-SHARIF



Osama Al-Sharif is a journalist and political commentator based in Amman.
X: @plato010

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

One of the biggest losers in last week's US elections, aside from the Democratic Party, was the traditional news media, or what is called the mainstream media, which includes newspapers, magazines and cable news networks. The mainstream media, sometimes dubbed corporate media, has been losing its audience for years. Still, the shocking outcome of last week's elections revealed how wrong pollsters, talk show analysts and pundits were in reading the minds of the American electorate across the board. Almost all polls conducted by liberal and conservative news organizations alike had predicted that the race between the two presidential candidates was so close that it was impossible to predict a winner.

They were all proven wrong. Just as the Democratic Party needs to investigate the reasons for its resounding loss, the mainstream media will have to reflect deeply and try to cope with the reality that younger audiences are increasingly migrating to the ever-expanding world of digital media, with all its pros and cons. This is another indicator that, just as the political landscape in America is changing, so is the media terrain. The

corporate media cannot claim to have its finger on the pulse of the nation anymore.

The billionaire owner of X, Elon Musk, a staunch Donald Trump supporter, claimed that the former president's three-hour interview with the No. 1 US podcaster, Joe Rogan, significantly contributed to his historic triumph at the polls. Rogan's show, the most listened to podcast in the US, with 14.5 million

Spotify followers and 17.9 million YouTube subscribers, gained more than 400,000 new followers following the interview.

In fact, about 39 percent of adult Americans listen to podcasts for at least one hour per week. In Saudi Arabia, the figure is even higher, at 59 percent.

The decline in the mainstream media's appeal and clout, which has been taking place for some time, is due to several factors, including the fragmentation of audiences, the availability of numerous digital news options that are primarily free and accessible anywhere, anytime, and the lack of trust in cable news networks and national newspapers, especially among younger generations. Another factor is that people can express themselves freely and with minimum

constraints on social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok and X.

The internet has changed the rules of mass communication at an alarming rate. In contrast, the X platform has about 500 million monthly active users worldwide, while Facebook has a staggering 3 billion monthly users and TikTok has 1.6 billion. No mainstream media platform can come close regarding the number of users/subscribers/viewers.

It all boils down to credibility and trust for the younger generation. The corporate media is viewed as partisan and biased, often bowing to party lines and echoing the policy lines of the party it is aligned with. The credibility factor has become even more relevant during Israel's war on Gaza, with the mainstream media generally sticking to the official government line and, more importantly, ignoring the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza and Israel's brutal targeting of civilians.

People continue to be news consumers, but the digital disruption has rattled the mainstream media's status quo.

However, the alternative media also has its risks. He who pays the piper calls the tune; in this case, he who owns the medium also sets the agenda. In Musk's

case, the platform is believed to use algorithms to hide or expose certain content. In the case of Facebook, there are allegations that much of the pro-Palestine content is hidden or exposes users to bans for "breaching community rules."

New media is not immune from running fake news. Israel has been accused of using specialized cyber units to run thousands of so-called bots to spread pro-Israel and anti-Palestine content.

Russia allegedly used the same methods to influence the 2016 US elections. One downside of digital media is that social media algorithms often prioritize controversial content over journalistic quality.

Facebook and Google are facing antitrust cases for being too big and, in effect, controlling what users can see or post. Ironically, some of the challenges facing the new media are similar to the ones the old media conglomerates once faced.

The US has always been ahead of the rest of the world in embracing new and innovative platforms, while ditching traditional ones. What does it say about the future of the mainstream media in the US today and worldwide? More importantly, what does this say about the future of journalism as we know it?

The reality is that younger audiences are migrating to the ever-expanding world of digital media, with all its pros and cons

The corporate media is viewed as partisan and biased, often echoing the policy lines of the party it is aligned with

srmq
Saudi Research & Media Group

Established in 1987 by
Prince Ahmad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz

CEO
Jomana Raashid Alraashid

ARAB NEWS

is a daily international newspaper published by the
SAUDI RESEARCH & PUBLISHING COMPANY

Founded in 1975 by
Hisham & Muhammad Ali Hafiz

Editor-in-Chief
Faisal J. Abbas

Deputy Editor-in-Chief
Noor Osama Nugall

ARAB NEWS WELCOMES
FEEDBACK FROM READERS

Letters sent from within the Kingdom should include the writer's name, address, phone and ID numbers. E-mails from readers abroad should include a name and city. Letters should be mailed to P.O. Box 478, Riyadh 11411, Saudi Arabia. Tel: +966112128000 • Fax: +966114418071 • E-mail: general@arabnews.com

EDITORIAL: general@arabnews.com
MARKETING: marketing@arabnews.com

TOLL FREE NUMBER: 8002440076

PRINTED AT: HALA PRINTING CO., RIYADH

Bahrain 200 Fils; Iran 200 R; Egypt LE 3;
India 12 Rs; Indonesia 2000 R; Japan 250 Y;
Jordan 250 Fils; Kuwait 200 Fils; Lebanon 1000

L; Morocco 2 D; Oman 200 P; Pakistan 10 Rs;
Philippines 25 P; Qatar 2 QR; Singapore \$3; Syria
20 L; Thailand 40 BHT; UAE 2 AED; UK 50 P; US
\$1.50; Republic of Yemen R 50; Sudan 25 P.

SRPC AND AFFILIATED AGENCIES

JEDDAH: Tel: (966-12)283-0200,
Fax: (966-12)283-6228. RIYADH: Tel: (966-11)212-
8000, Fax: (966-11)442-9094. DAMMAM: Tel:
(966-13)835-3838, Fax: (966-13)834-0489. ABU
DHABI: Tel: (971-2)681-5999, Fax: (971-2)681-
7595. CAIRO: Tel: (202-3)749-2775, (202-3)749-
2996, (202-3)338-8654, Fax: (202-3)749-2884,
(202-3)749-2855. MOROCCO: Tel: (212-537)262-
818, Fax: (212-537)883-819. JORDAN: Tel:
(962-6)553-7101, (962-6)551-7102, (962-6)553-
9409, Fax: (962-6)553-7103. LONDON: Tel: (44-
20)7631-8181, Fax: (44-20)7631-2310.

ADVERTISING:
SAUDI RESEARCH AND MEDIA GROUP
KSA: +966-11-284 0500
UAE: +971 4 3918500
E-mail: revenue@srmq.com
Website: www.srmq.com

DISTRIBUTION AGENT
TOLL FREE: (866)800-244-0076
Head Office: (Riyadh): P.O. Box 82116, Riyadh 11588
Tel: (966-11)4419933, Fax: (966-11)2121774
E-mail: info@saudi-distribution.com
Western Region: Tel: (966-12)653-0909
Eastern Region: Tel: (966-13)847-3569
Southern Region: Tel: (966-17)221-8693
Northern Region: Tel: (966-16)324-3070
Dubai: Tel: (971-4)381-6503, Fax: (971-4)381-6554
Abu Dhabi: Tel: (971-2)673-3555, Fax: (971-2)673-3384
Kuwait: Tel: (965)483-4822, Fax: (965)483-4778
Manama: Tel: (973-176)7770

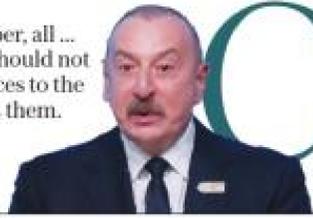
SUBSCRIPTION
Head Office: (Riyadh):
P.O. Box 22304, Riyadh 11495
Tel: (966-11)4419933 Fax: (966-11)4429555
TOLL FREE: +866-800-244-0076
Email: info@arabmediaco.com
Web: www.arabmediaco.com

PRINTING CENTER
Riyadh: P.O. Box 212
Riyadh 11383, Tel: (966-11)2657000
Fax: (966-11)2658000
Sales: Tel: (966-11)4708807
Fax: (966-11)4708526
www.halaprintpack.com

DISCLAIMER
Views expressed by writers
in this section are their
own and do not necessarily
reflect Arab News' point of view.

Oil, gas, wind, sun, gold, silver, copper, all ... are natural resources and countries should not be blamed for bringing these resources to the market, because the market needs them.

Ilham Aliyev
Azerbaijan's president



COP29

SPECIAL COVERAGE

FAST FACTS

● The UN secretary-general also highlighted the urgency of ensuring that every person on Earth is protected by an early warning system by 2027.

● UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced that the UK would raise its emissions reduction target for 2035 to 81 percent.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaks during the opening ceremony of the climate change conference COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan on Tuesday. Reuters



RESPONSIBILITY

UN chief demands action to bridge \$359bn climate finance gap

Developed nations should increase their contributions to at least \$40 billion annually by 2025: Guterres

Nadim Hassan,
Nirmal Narayanan Riyadh

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued a stark warning to world leaders on Tuesday, urging them to close the \$359 billion gap in climate adaptation financing.

Speaking at the COP29 climate summit in Baku, Guterres emphasized that the most vulnerable communities are at risk, and failure to address the financial shortfall could lead to devastating consequences for lives, livelihoods, and development.

"The gap between adaptation needs and finance could reach \$359 billion annually by 2030," Guterres said. "These missing

dollars are not just numbers — they represent lives lost, crops destroyed, and entire communities abandoned to climate extremes." The UN chief called on developed countries to double their adaptation finance to at least \$40 billion annually by 2025, stressing that this is a matter of urgent global responsibility.

He also underscored that climate adaptation should be seen as an investment, not charity, with transformative potential to drive economic growth and sustainable development worldwide.

"Finance must be scaled up now. Developed countries must act quickly to close this gap and support those who are most vulnerable," Guterres said, adding that the increase in concessional finance would be essential to

meeting the needs of developing nations. The secretary-general also highlighted the urgency of ensuring that every person on Earth is protected by an early warning system by 2027, as part of the UN's "Early Warnings for All" initiative.

This would help safeguard communities from extreme weather events such as floods, storms, and heatwaves, which are already wreaking havoc, particularly in poorer nations.

Meanwhile, Simon Stiell, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, warned that the climate crisis is increasingly becoming an economic threat, with some countries seeing up to a 5 percent reduction in gross domestic product due to climate impacts.

Stiell pointed out that the global economy has already lost more than \$2 trillion over the past decade due to extreme weather events, and rising inflation exacerbated by climate-related disasters is putting additional pressure on households and businesses.

He described climate finance as "global inflation insurance" and warned that failure to act would have disastrous economic consequences. However, he remained optimistic, emphasizing that bold climate action could generate new economic opportunities, particularly through the growth of renewable energy.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev defended fossil fuels, stating that countries with natural resources should not be blamed for exploiting them. "Oil, gas,

wind, sun, gold, silver — these are gifts of God," and countries should not be criticized for bringing these resources to market, Aliyev said, emphasizing the importance of meeting global energy needs.

At the summit, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced that the UK would raise its emissions reduction target for 2035 to 81 percent, exceeding the previous target of 78 percent. Starmer said the new goal would be achieved without burdening the public, as it excludes emissions from international aviation and shipping.

Other leaders, including Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, stressed the importance of addressing climate justice and providing financial support to

poorer nations that bear the brunt of climate impacts.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan highlighted his country's vulnerability to climate change and its plans to expand nuclear energy capacity by 2050. Meanwhile, Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid framed climate justice as a human rights issue, calling for immediate action to protect current and future generations from climate-induced disasters.

Maimunah Sharif, the mayor of Kuala Lumpur, addressed the issue of plastic pollution, warning that by 2040, up to 13 billion tonnes of plastic will contaminate the air, water, and food we consume. Sharif emphasized the need for peace, unity, and concrete action to tackle environmental challenges.

EMISSIONS REDUCTION

Saudi firm launches carbon exchange platform at COP29

Manal Al-Barakatli Baku

A Saudi company officially launched a carbon exchange platform at the COP29 conference in Baku, to direct substantial funding into global climate initiatives.

Developed by Saudi Arabia's Regional Voluntary Carbon Market Co., the platform is set to accelerate efforts to reduce emissions and reinforce the Kingdom's role in the carbon credit market by 2030.

In an interview with Arab News, RVCMC CEO Riham El-Gizy highlighted the platform's

potential to drive transformative change in global climate finance. She explained that such high-profile initiatives are designed not only to attract more buyers but also to increase market awareness.

"Auction after auction, awareness grows, and it's not just about the event itself," El-Gizy said. "We are launching advisory services to help buyers on their decarbonization journeys, supporting their climate sustainability and carbon neutrality goals," she added.

The platform's launch attracted 22 Saudi and international companies, signaling strong market interest and a shared

commitment to sustainable development. The inaugural auctions are designed to channel significant funding into high-quality climate projects, with a particular focus on the Global South.

A Voluntary Carbon Market is a marketplace where businesses and individuals can purchase

We are launching advisory services to help buyers on their decarbonization journeys.

Riham El-Gizy
Regional Voluntary Carbon Market Co. CEO



carbon credits to offset their emissions by investing in projects that reduce or capture greenhouse gases. These projects can range from reforestation efforts to the development of renewable energy sources.

Unlike regulated markets, participation in VCMs is voluntary, allowing companies to contribute to climate goals and compensate for emissions they cannot directly eliminate.

"We've worked with the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private

Sector to issue the first-ever fatwa allowing carbon credits as Shariah-compliant commodities," she explained.

"Imagine if mortgages were backed by carbon credits rather than traditional commodities like rice or gold. This would funnel more capital into projects benefiting humanity and the environment."

The Islamic finance sector in Saudi Arabia, valued at \$500 billion, holds enormous potential to inject liquidity into the carbon market.

RVCMC's new platform will offer auction and block trade

functionalities, with plans to expand into spot markets by 2025. By creating a transparent and robust marketplace for carbon credits, the platform seeks to close critical financing gaps in climate action.

The inaugural auction is expected to trade over 2.5 million tonnes of high-quality carbon credits, with prominent companies such as Aramco Trading Co., Ma'aden, and Gulf International Bank participating. These transactions will fund a diverse array of projects focused on emissions reduction and environmental preservation.

CITYSCAPE GLOBAL

National Housing Co. closes \$532m in sales, reveals new projects

Event showcases Kingdom's commitment to sustainable urban growth, innovation in real estate

Nour El-Shaeri Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's National Housing Co. marked a strong presence on the opening day of Cityscape Global 2024, securing over SR2 billion (\$532.4 million) in sales.

The company's expansive booth highlighted its latest real estate projects, showcasing cutting-edge architectural designs, smart housing solutions, and advanced technologies to enhance market regulation.

During its participation, NHC also announced three major new developments that reflect its commitment to sustainable urban growth, in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

The first of these projects, Khuzam Boulevard in Riyadh, is set to become the longest commercial boulevard in the Kingdom, stretching 3.5 km. Designed as a premier entertainment and retail destination, the boulevard will enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors in the capital by offering a mix of leisure, retail, and dining experiences.

In Jeddah, NHC unveiled the Jawhara Oasis project, a mixed-use development covering more than 94,000 sq. meters for office spaces, alongside an additional 15,000 sq. meters dedicated to hotel accommodations. The project will feature sports and entertainment centers, shopping complexes, and other amenities, creating a vibrant, integrated environment for both business and leisure.

In Madinah, NHC announced Wahat Al-Dar, a sustainable residential and entertainment development spanning 154,228 sq. meters. Designed to blend seamlessly with the city's cultural and spiritual essence,



The company's expansive booth highlighted its latest real estate projects, showcasing cutting-edge architectural designs and smart housing solutions. SPA

this eco-friendly project will offer both comfort and sustainability, catering to the needs of residents and visitors alike.

NHC also highlighted its growing network of strategic partnerships with leading developers, solidifying its position as Saudi Arabia's largest real estate developer. These collaborations are central to NHC's role in driving national economic growth and supporting local content within the housing and real estate sectors.

Major deals

Alongside NHC's announcements, the Saudi Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of

FASTFACTS

- NHC also announced three major new developments that reflect its commitment to sustainable urban growth.
- The first of these projects, Khuzam Boulevard in Riyadh, is set to become the longest commercial boulevard in the Kingdom.
- In Jeddah, NHC unveiled the Jawhara Oasis project, a mixed-use development covering more than 94,000 sq. meters for office spaces.

Municipal and Rural Affairs and Housing signed a significant Service Provision Agreement during the event. This agreement, aimed at streamlining project implementation via the Furas platform, will enhance investment opportunities, align with Saudi Vision 2030 objectives, and promote greater coordination between the two ministries.

The Ministry of Interior's pavilion showcased its advancements in artificial intelligence, particularly in security operations, border protection, and crisis management. It also unveiled initiatives to reduce fatalities by 50 percent and

extending payment periods for traffic fines.

Eastern Province municipality secured investment agreements worth over SR800 million, with Mayor Fahd Al-Jubair signing multiple deals. These agreements include plans to upgrade the South Khobar Corniche, improve infrastructure in Dammam, and develop new recreational spaces in the Al-Khuzama district. Additional projects include revenue-sharing models for infrastructure upgrades, including enhancements to the North Dammam Corniche and the airport road.

King Abdullah Financial

District also entered into a strategic partnership with IoT Squared, focusing on advancing the district's smart city infrastructure. This collaboration will integrate Internet of Things solutions to optimize renewable energy usage, smart grids, and real-time incident management within the KAFD area.

Cityscape Global 2024 is being held at the Riyadh Exhibition and Conference Center in Mulsam and runs through November 14. The event, themed "The Future of Living," serves as a platform for showcasing innovation and collaboration in the real estate and urban development sectors.

REPORT

KSA needs 115k new homes a year to meet 2030 target

Miguel Hadchity Riyadh

Saudi Arabia will need to construct 115,000 homes annually over the next six years to address the demands of its growing population, according to new research by Knight Frank.

In its latest release, the real estate consultancy firm emphasized that this substantial increase should fulfill the Kingdom's 70 percent homeownership target by 2030, up from 63.7 percent at the end of 2023.

Christopher Payne, partner and chief economist at Knight Frank MENA, said: "The Kingdom aims to create a nation of homeowners with all the attendant benefits

that this brings, including economic stability and stimulus, wealth building, and community engagement."

An active housing market provides "greater choice, flexibility, and resilience for the Kingdom's residents," he added.

The report underscored the collaborative approach of the Ministry of Municipalities and Housing and the National Housing Co. in working with both private and international stakeholders to deliver affordable and diverse housing options.

It described this effort as "a national housing program" that will mobilize various partners to address both the demand and



Future phases of the Sakani program will enhance housing affordability and availability. File

supply sides of the housing market. Recent initiatives include NHC's partnerships, such as a deal with Egypt's Talaat Moustafa Group to build over 27,000 homes, and an agreement with China's CITIC

Construction Group to establish an industrial city for construction materials.

Payne added: "MOMAH's initiatives helped to increase spending on residential construction from

5.5 percent of non-oil GDP to 8.5 percent in 2022." Knight Frank projected that 65 percent of the anticipated 825,000 new homes by 2030 will be driven by household formation from marriage, while the remaining 35 percent will stem from the Kingdom's goal to elevate homeownership rates.

Additionally, it is noted that "existing platforms" will be utilized to ensure Saudi nationals have access to housing, reflecting the ministry's aim to make homeownership more accessible to a young, expanding population.

Further supporting this growth, the government's Sakani program, launched in 2017, has helped low- and middle-income families

access housing through mortgage guarantees, loan subsidies, and reduced payments. Sakani has facilitated over 800,000 housing contracts, spanning ready-made homes, self-construction, and off-plan units.

With a significant portion of new housing developments projected in Riyadh due to rising demand from economic activity, Knight Frank noted that "urban centers like Riyadh" will play a crucial role in fulfilling the demand.

This trend is already evident in the capital's property values, where apartment prices have surged by 62 percent, and villa prices by 37 percent over the last three years.

Business News



The airshow will showcase Bahrain's role as a hub for international aerospace events and its growing role in driving regional growth and innovation. Supplied

AVIATION

Bahrain airshow sets stage for aerospace partnerships

Event promises major deals, display of cutting-edge technologies

Mohammed Al-Kinani Manama

The Bahrain International Airshow 2024 is poised to elevate Bahrain's position as a leader in the global aerospace industry, foster economic growth, and forge vital industry partnerships.

Under the patronage of King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, the seventh biennial event will take place from Nov. 13 to 15 at Sakhir Air Base, attracting key players from the world's aviation, defense, and space sectors. The airshow will be graced by Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, along with prominent international thought leaders and industry experts.

The event will feature discussions on critical topics such as sustainability in aviation, cutting-edge technological innovations, infrastructure investment, space operations, gender equality in aerospace, and the future workforce challenges facing the industry.

Global participation

With the participation of both civil and military aviation manufacturers, along with representatives from the fields of transportation, telecommunications, research, and space exploration, BIAS 2024 will serve as a major platform for global collaboration and knowledge exchange.

The airshow will also showcase Bahrain's role as a hub for international aerospace events and its growing influence in driving regional growth and innovation.

The event will be hosted across a vast 14,000-square-meter exhibition hall, 40 luxury chalets, and an 86,000-square-meter static aircraft display area. Major international exhibitors, including Lockheed Martin, Rolls-Royce,

Thales, DHL, Indra Spain, Otakar, Defense Technology Equipment, and UAE's Tawazan, will present the latest in aerospace and defense technologies. These displays will provide attendees with a firsthand look at the most advanced technologies shaping the future of aviation and defense. Bahrain's role as a strategic player in the aerospace sector has been reinforced in recent years through significant investments and partnerships that have propelled the country's economic growth.

Economic insights

According to the event's organizing committee, Bahrain's gross domestic product grew by 4.9 percent in 2023, the highest rate since 2013. This growth is further supported by an increase in the performance of the non-oil sectors, which expanded by 1.3 percent year on year, reaching 3.7 billion Bahraini dinars (\$9.8 billion) in the second quarter of 2024. These figures reflect the ongoing success of Bahrain's economic diversification strategy, with the non-oil sector contributing more than 85 percent to the overall GDP.

For the first time, 13 companies from Europe, the US, China, Malaysia, and Thailand specializing in airport ground services will participate in BIAS 2024. This marks an expansion of the airshow's scope, introducing new players and expertise to the event. Additionally, international aviation institutes will offer educational opportunities for attendees, further enhancing the event's value by inspiring the next generation of aerospace professionals.

Key features

The airshow will also feature a series of impressive aerial displays. These include performances by the Royal Bahraini Air Force's

HIGHLIGHTS

- The seventh biennial event will take place from Nov. 13 to 15 at Sakhir Air Base, attracting key players from the world's aviation, defense, and space sectors.

- The event will feature discussions on critical topics such as sustainability in aviation, innovations, infrastructure investment and gender equality in aerospace.

- Major international exhibitors will include Lockheed Martin, Rolls-Royce, Thales, DHL, Indra Spain, Otakar, Defense Technology Equipment, and UAE's Tawazan.

- For the first time, 13 companies from Europe, the US, China, Malaysia, and Thailand specializing in airport ground services will participate in BIAS 2024.

Copra Zolo by Bell, the Royal Saudi Air Force's Typhoon and Saudi Hawks aerobatic display teams, as well as the Global Stars, Boeing 787-9, and the Indian Air Force's Sarang helicopter team. These high-flying performances will showcase the technical capabilities of both military and civilian aircraft, captivating audiences and demonstrating the precision and skill of the world's top aviators.

Since its launch in 2010, BIAS has grown significantly in both scale and prestige. Traditionally held in January, the event was moved to November in 2018 to better accommodate the needs of participants and the broader aerospace community. The 2022 edition attracted over 46,000 visitors from nearly 60 countries, with 186 companies participating and deals totaling \$1.85 billion. The

event also featured 100 aircraft on static display and was supported by 18 sponsors.

The final preparations for BIAS 2024 were reviewed in a meeting held two weeks ago, with Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, personal representative of King Hamad and chairman of the BIAS supreme organizing committee, confirming that everything is in place for the event.

Sheikh Abdullah emphasized that the ongoing success of BIAS reflects Bahrain's growing role as a premier host for international events and highlighted the importance of continuing to organize specialized aviation affairs. These events not only help solidify the aviation sector's role as a key economic growth driver but also create valuable opportunities for the youth in innovation and development.

As part of its commitment to engaging the next generation, BIAS 2024 will host approximately 5,000 students from public and private schools. These students will have access to the entertainment zone, where they can enjoy daily air displays and participate in educational programs and workshops. These initiatives are designed to spark interest in aviation, science, and technology, inspiring future careers in these fields. The Supreme Organizing Committee for the event is chaired by Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and includes key figures such as Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, Bahrain's newly appointed minister of transportation and telecommunications; Maj. Gen. Mohammed Al-Musalam, commander of Sakhir Air Base and head of the military committee; and Yousif Mahmoud, director general of BIAS.

BizBriefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Property

China mulls slashing tax on home buying

China is looking to slash taxes on home purchases as the government strengthens fiscal support for its ailing real estate sector, a media report said on Tuesday.

Regulators are preparing a proposal that would enable major cities such as Shanghai and Beijing to reduce the deed tax for buyers to as low as 1 percent from the current level of up to 3 percent, Bloomberg News said, citing people familiar with the matter.

The property sector has long accounted for around a quarter of gross domestic product.

AFP

Prices

UK grocery inflation edges higher again

British shoppers faced increased pressure on their budgets last month after grocery price inflation edged higher again, industry data showed on Tuesday.

Market researcher Kantar said annual grocery price inflation was 2.3 percent in the four weeks to Nov. 3, having been 2 percent in the previous four-week period.

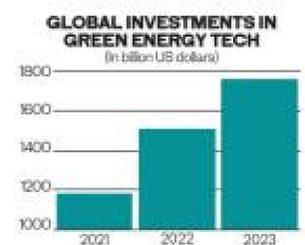
The data showed prices are rising fastest in products such as chilled soft drinks and chocolate confectionery, and falling fastest in items such as toothbrushes and household paper products.

Reuters

Chart of THE DAY

The total global energy transition investment toward decarbonization amounted to \$1.78 trillion in 2023, which was a new record.

Source: Statista



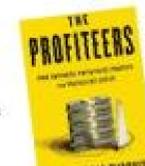
What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

The Profiteers

CHRISTOPHER MARQUIS

In an age when business leaders profess dedication to principles of environmental and social justice, Christopher Marquis' investigation into the real costs of doing business reveals the way that they gaslight to evade responsibilities



by privatizing profits and socializing costs, says a review published on goodreads.com. By bringing to light ideas that today are on the fringe but rapidly making their way into the mainstream, Marquis outlines a new regenerative paradigm for business in society.

Agriculture

France raises wheat, maize crop estimates

France's Farm Ministry on Tuesday raised its estimate of the country's 2024 soft wheat output to 25.56 million metric tonnes from 25.43 million last month, still one of the smallest soft wheat harvests since the 1980s.

Repeated heavy rain in France, the EU's largest grain producer, reduced planting and hampered development of wheat crops. For maize, harvesting of which is still underway, the ministry also raised its projection of 2024 output, including crop grown for seeds, to 14.62 million tonnes from 14.47 million last month.

Reuters

Bullion

Gold hovers near 1-month low as dollar strengthens

Gold ticked up on Tuesday but hovered near a one-month low, while investors awaited US economic data and comments from Federal Reserve officials for further clarity on the interest rate trajectory.

Spot gold rose 0.2 percent at \$2,624.17 per ounce by 0155 GMT, after hitting its lowest since Oct. 10 on Monday. US gold futures rose 0.5 percent to \$2,630.10.

The US dollar held near a four-month high as investors continued to pile into trades seen as benefiting from the incoming Donald Trump administration.

Reuters

Saudi Arabia is a key focus for our growth.
Suphaje Suthumpun
Group CEO of Dusit International



Corporate

PRESS RELEASES FROM THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

WORLD TRAVEL MARKET 2024

TDF and Dusit partner to elevate KSA's hospitality sector

As Saudi Arabia continues to make tremendous strides toward becoming one of the world's most attractive tourist destinations, the Tourism Development Fund, the national enabler of the Kingdom's tourism sector, has reaffirmed its commitment to advancing the industry. This was highlighted by signing an MoU with Dusit International, one of Thailand's leading hotel and property development companies.

Officially announced at World Travel Market 2024 in London, the MoU will see TDF work closely with Dusit International to develop a range of world-class hospitality

projects in the Kingdom.

In line with Saudi Vision 2030 and the National Tourism Strategy, the partnership is fully geared toward setting Saudi Arabia apart as a must-visit destination distinguished by a first-class array of luxury hotels and resorts.

The MoU marks the latest step taken by TDF to transform the Kingdom into a global hub of immersive tourism experiences, reiterating the fund's focus on effective and truly aligned partnership-building to advance the Saudi tourism sector and fulfill the Kingdom's potential as a leading player on the



The MoU was officially announced at World Travel Market 2024 in London.

international tourism stage.

Renowned for its rich traditions, stunning landscapes, proud heritage and diverse range of spiritual landmarks and historic sites, Saudi Arabia

is home to some of the most engaging tourist attractions in the world. Together with Dusit International, TDF will call attention to these places of interest and attract more visitors and travelers

to embark on rewarding journeys and tourist experiences across the Kingdom.

Qusai Al-Fakhri, TDF's CEO, said: "This MoU is a pivotal milestone in our strategy to attract world-class partners and create distinctive and sustainable tourism destinations in Saudi Arabia. We are pleased to be collaborating with Dusit International, whose expertise in hospitality aligns perfectly with our ambition to unlock the full potential of the Kingdom's tourism sector. Together, we aim to shape extraordinary destinations that will have a lasting positive impact on the sector."

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

BISR empowers students with esports skills

The British International School Riyadh has partnered with NES, a gaming-focused digital media company and subsidiary of Nesma Holding Company, to offer students access to the rapidly evolving world of esports. The partnership will provide BISR's students with hands-on experience across key industry areas such as game design, coaching, broadcasting, competition management, and data analysis.

The new partnership comes in line with Saudi Vision 2030, which aims to diversify the Kingdom's economy and create new jobs in various sectors, including esports. It also supports the National Gaming and Esports Strategy, which aims to position Saudi Arabia as a global hub for gaming and esports by 2030.

Through this collaboration, BISR will introduce an extracurricular skills academy with a focus on esports, designed to upskill students across various areas of the industry. The program will also lay the foundation for offering a formal BTEC qualification by BISR in the future. This marks a significant milestone in Saudi Arabia's educational landscape, further contributing to the upskilling and development of the esports



Students will gain exposure to the inner workings of the esports ecosystem, preparing them for future careers in a field that is rapidly expanding worldwide.

industry in the region.

As part of the program, students will gain exposure to the inner workings of the esports ecosystem, preparing them for future careers in a field that is rapidly expanding worldwide. NES will also assist in designing state-of-the-art esports gaming labs at BISR's Al-Hamra campus, providing a unique environment for students to explore their career paths in esports. The

first activity session, which was held on Oct. 19, saw enthusiastic participation, confirming the program's potential to engage students across disciplines.

Teslim Olomowewe, BTEC lead at BISR, said: "By partnering with NES, we are offering our students a unique opportunity to engage with the future of entertainment and technology. This partnership not only empowers our students

with the skills they need for the future, but also positions BISR at the forefront of educational innovation in Saudi Arabia. The initiative reflects BISR's dedication to providing students with a comprehensive education that meets the demands of modern industries."

Elie Honain, CEO at NES, said: "Nesma is proud to partner with BISR in support of Vision 2030 to empower youth in the Kingdom.

This program offers students an opportunity to develop teamwork, strategy, and leadership skills through competitive gaming. Esports fosters community and creativity, and we aim to create a supportive environment where all students can participate and grow. We encourage students to join this exciting initiative and help build a vibrant esports community that empowers our youth to thrive."

MEDICAL EXCELLENCE

Dallah Hospital Al-Nakheel achieves Global Healthcare Accreditation

Dallah Hospital Al-Nakheel, a healthcare institution located in Riyadh, has announced its accreditation by Global Healthcare Accreditation for Medical Travel Services. This prestigious recognition underscores the hospital's unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional care and services to both local and international patients, while aligning with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 healthcare transformation goals.

As part of Dallah Healthcare, one of the country's most prominent healthcare groups, Dallah Hospital Al-Nakheel integrates medical travel into its core strategy to establish itself as a premier destination for patients seeking specialized medical care in the region.

"We are immensely proud of achieving GHA accreditation," said Dr. Salah R. Elfaqi, chief medical officer at Dallah Health.

"This prestigious recognition not only validates our ongoing efforts to enhance patient safety and care but also positions us as a key player in the global medical travel market. GHA accreditation provides us with a framework to continuously improve our services for international patients and benchmark ourselves against the world's best. The rigorous accreditation process has already yielded valuable insights, helping

us refine our processes and elevate the overall patient experience. We see this as a significant step in our journey to becoming a leading international healthcare destination."

The GHA accreditation process involved a comprehensive on-site review of the hospital's policies, procedures, and patient care protocols, focusing on the patient's medical travel journey and safety. The accreditation seal

demonstrates that Dallah Hospital has implemented procedures designed to mitigate risks and enhance the patient experience throughout the entire medical travel continuum.

Renée-Marie Stephano, CEO of Global Healthcare Accreditation, said: "GHA congratulates Dallah Hospital Al-Nakheel and its leadership for their unwavering commitment to excellence and the well-being of their patients."

Corporate Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Milestone Citi celebrates 60 years in the UAE

Citi commemorated its 60th anniversary in the UAE with an exclusive event in the presence of CEO Jane Fraser, attended by the bank's global and local executives as well as many government, business, and industry leaders in the UAE.

Citi's partnership with the UAE started on Jan. 25, 1964, when Citi, then called the First National City Bank, opened its first branch in Dubai, followed by Abu Dhabi in 1971, becoming the first American bank to establish a presence in the country.

Ebru Pakcan, Middle East and Africa cluster and banking head, said: "Our long-standing relationship with the UAE is a testament to our strong and ongoing commitment to this thriving market."

Partnership Mastercard joins Buna for faster payments

Businesses and consumers paying into and out of the Middle East and North Africa region will benefit from faster, cheaper and more transparent cross-border payments through a first-of-its-kind public-private collaboration between Mastercard and Buna, the first regional payment system in the Arab world.

The collaboration will see Mastercard join Buna's cross-border payment systems as a direct participant. The collaboration will provide a simple, efficient and practical solution to current challenges that include high costs, long wait times and lack of transparency when moving funds into and out of the MENA region.

Cybercrime Kaspersky supports Interpol operation

As a firm advocate for a collaborative approach to combating cybercrime, Kaspersky has contributed to Interpol's global Operation Synergia II to disrupt cyberthreats such as targeted phishing, ransomware, and information stealers. The joint effort brought together private sector partners and law enforcement agencies from 95 Interpol member countries, resulting in the identification of more than 100 suspects, with 41 of them being arrested.

Italian Matteo Manassero will tee it up at the World Tour Championship Thursday in Dubai, looking to cap his career revival.



Sport News

PFL MENA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Saudi Al-Qahtani, Jordan's Alhyasat face off in featherweight main event

Kingdom's star Hattan Alsaif back in action as part of a showcase featuring former champions and No. 1 contenders

Arab News Riyadh

The Professional Fighters League, in partnership with the Ministry of Sport and the Saudi Mixed Martial Arts Federation, on Tuesday unveiled the full card for the 2024 PFL MENA Championships, which takes place on Nov. 29 at King Saud University in Riyadh.

The PFL MENA's inaugural season has reached its conclusion and four champions will be crowned — in the welterweight, lightweight, featherweight and bantamweight divisions.

This championship is creating a pathway for athletes from the region to compete in the PFL Global Season.

The main event in the featherweight division will have Jordan's Abdalrahman Alhyasat (5-0) taking on Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Al-Qahtani (9-2).

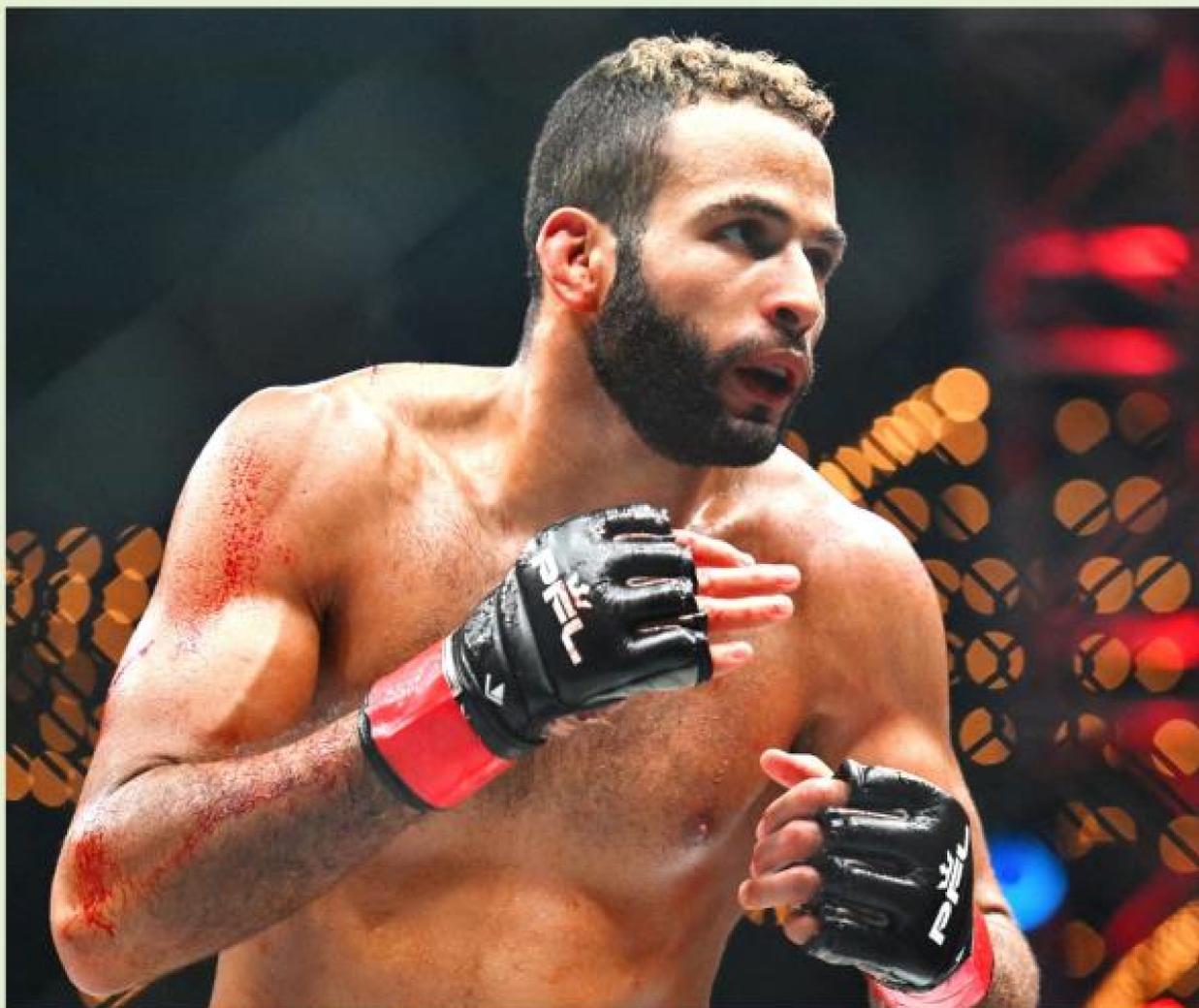
In the co-main event, the welterweight title will be decided between Kuwait's Mohammad Alaqraa (7-0) and Egypt's Omar El-Dafrawy (12-6).

At bantamweight, Iraq's Ali Taleb (11-1) meets Morocco's Rachid El-Hazoume (15-3), and in the lightweight division the title fight will be between Iran's Mohsen Mohammadseifi (6-2) and Lebanon's Georges Eid (10-4).

All championship bouts at PFL MENA will be five, five-minute rounds, and for the first time in the history of the PFL Championships, striking with elbows will be allowed.

In addition to the championship fights, undefeated Saudi Arabia star Hattan Alsaif will be in action against Algeria's Lilia Osmani.

There will also be five showcase bouts taking place including former Bellator World Grand Prix participant Mansour Barnaoui



Abdullah Al-Qahtani will feature in the featherweight main event, one of the championship bouts in four divisions. AFP

(21-6) facing England's Alfie Davis (17-4-1).

Also, Tunisia's Slim Trabelsi (7-0) battles England's Abraham Bably (5-0), and 2023 PFL featherweight titlist Jesus Pinedo (23-6-1) will face former Bellator featherweight

contender Jeremy Kennedy (19-4).

In addition, France's Asael Adjoudj (8-1) tangles with America's Jose Perez (9-1).

Opening the card will be a middleweight battle between Costello van Steenis (15-3) and Brazil's Joao Dantas (7-1).

Full PFL MENA Championships card:

Featherweight championship: Abdalrahman Alhyasat (5-0) vs.

Abdullah Al-Qahtani (9-2).

Welterweight championship: Mohammad Alaqraa (7-0) vs. Omar El-Dafrawy (12-6).

Amateur Women's Atomweight Bout: Hattan Alsaif vs. Lilia Osmani.

Bantamweight championship: Ali Taleb (11-1) vs. Rachid El-Hazoume (15-3).

Lightweight championship: Mohsen Mohammadseifi (6-1) vs.

Georges Eid (10-4).

Showcase Fights:

Lightweight: Mansour Barnaoui (21-6) vs. Alfie Davis (17-4-1).

Heavyweight: Slim Trabelsi (7-0) vs. Abraham Bably (5-0).

Featherweight: Jesus Pinedo (23-6-1) vs. Jeremy Kennedy (19-4).

Featherweight: Asael Adjoudj (8-1) vs. Jose Perez (9-1).

Middleweight: Costello van Steenis (15-3) vs. Joao Dantas (7-1).

MARTIAL ARTS

Commando Group dominate Abu Dhabi World Amateur Jiu-Jitsu Championship

Arab News Abu Dhabi

The UAE's Commando Group have emerged victorious at the Abu Dhabi World Amateur Jiu-Jitsu Championship, which is a part of the 16th Abu Dhabi World Professional Jiu-Jitsu Championship.

Athletes aged 30 and above competed in the blue- and white-belt divisions on Monday, with Commando Group building on their previous day's success with an impressive performance.

Brazil's Checkmat International ended second, with Kazakhstan National Academy in third. This year's amateur category competitions had a significant increase in participation.

Mubarak Saleh Al-Menhali, director of the technical department at the UAE Jiu-Jitsu Federation, said the high turnout

Championship concluded on Monday night at Mubadala Arena. UAEJUF



demonstrates jiu-jitsu's growing local and international popularity.

Al-Menhali added that the championship shows that jiu-jitsu "transcends age and experience, uniting everyone through shared passion."

"This aligns with the federation's mission to promote ... the incorporation of the sport into daily life, encouraging personal growth and fostering self-improvement for all

practitioners." One of the guests of honor, Amal Abdul Qadir Al-Afifi, secretary general of the Khalifa Award for Education, said the championship "reflects Abu Dhabi's commitment to elevating its sports landscape and showcases how the capital has emerged as a global sports hub."

She commended the UAE Jiu-Jitsu Federation for creating a sports platform that enables athletes of all ages to hone their skills.

Sport Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

NBA

Mitchell fires Cavs to 12-0 with Bulls win

Donovan Mitchell scored a season-high 36 points, and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Chicago Bulls 119-113 on Monday night to become the eighth NBA team to begin a season with 12 straight wins.

Darius Garland scored 17 points for Cleveland, and Evan Mobley had 15 points and 11 rebounds. The Cavaliers scored at least 110 points for the 11th time.

Garland rolled in a layup with 24 seconds left, and Mitchell made two free throws to help close it out. AP

'Match of the Day'

Lineker is leaving BBC soccer show

Former England striker Gary Lineker, the BBC's highest-paid presenter, will step down from his role on its flagship soccer show Match of the Day.

Lineker will finish up at the end of the season. The Sun newspaper reported he will also leave the BBC entirely after the 2026 World Cup. The 63-year-old Lineker earns £1.35 million (\$1.7 million) a year and has hosted Match of the Day since 1999.

He has courted controversy over his political views but has remained hugely popular. AP



Golf

Manassero looks to cap career revival in Dubai

Matteo Manassero quit golf five years ago at the age of 26, tormented by a sport which gave him so many highs but was no longer making him feel happy.

On Sunday, he could punch a ticket to play across the Atlantic on the lucrative PGA Tour and be back in the big time, where so many think his game belongs.

The 31-year-old Italian will look to cap his career revival this week by becoming one of 10 players from the European tour to be eligible to claim dual membership and a PGA Tour card for the 2025 season. AP

Follow Arab News Briefs all through the day @ArabNews

Megan Fox and Machine Gun Kelly are expecting their first child together. Fox announced her pregnancy on social media this week, sharing a photo of her baby bump alongside a positive pregnancy test.



Finally

The Six

Sharing stories

Here are six authors who will present their work at the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature in Dubai from Jan. 29 - Feb 3. These literary figures explore themes of cross-cultural integration and identity.



Faisal J. Abbas

The Saudi author will speak about his book "Anecdotes of an Arab Anglophile," charting the story of a personal journey from Anglophobe to Anglophile in this ode to the British capital.



Nadhim Zahawi

The Iraq-born British former politician will talk about his memoir "The Boy from Baghdad."



Hala Gorani

Emmy-winning US Syrian journalist Hala Gorani will discuss "But You Don't Look Arab," a chronicle of her career and her search for belonging.



Abraham Verghese

The US-Indian author, whose work is known for traversing national borders, will discuss "The Covenant of Water."



Zoufka Katouh

The author will bring to the stage her new book, "As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow," a coming-of-age novel set during Syria's civil war.



Safiya Sinclair

The Jamaican author will share insights on her memoir, "How to Say Babylon," a tome exploring themes of identity.

CLOSE UP

'I am amplifying our voices,' Miss Universe Lebanon says



Saffiya Ansari Dubai

Miss Lebanon Nada Koussa is preparing to compete at the Miss Universe pageant in Mexico on Nov. 16 and she told Arab News why she is participating while her country is "enduring unimaginable suffering" under Israel's bombardment.

The Miss Universe competition has contestants from more than 130 countries competing, with Koussa among a handful of candidates from the Middle East.

"Representing Lebanon on the international stage is always important, and it becomes even more crucial in times of crisis," she said.

Israel's attacks on Lebanon have killed more than 3,000 people in the 13 months of fighting along the border, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health on Nov. 5.

"At first, I hesitated, as I felt leaving would mean stepping away from my humanitarian work — supporting displaced individuals and providing psychological aid in schools and shelters.

"However, by participating in the Miss Universe competition, I am amplifying our voices as Lebanese people who are enduring unimaginable suffering," the contestant explained in a written response from Mexico.

Koussa hails from the village of Rahbeh in Lebanon and has a master's degree in clinical psychology.

She was crowned Miss Lebanon in July by a judging panel consisting of eight women: actress Razane Jammal, model and fashion blogger Nour Arida, interior designer Diane Ghandour, model and socialite Georgina Rizk, Dr. Petra Khoury, socialite Paola Pharaon Rizk, TV presenter Raya Abirached and restaurateur Mireille Hayek.

Koussa hopes to use the Miss Universe stage to highlight the importance of mental health, especially during times of crisis and conflict.

"Lebanon has endured many hardships, and I am dedicated to raising awareness about the need for psychological support for those affected by trauma," she explained.

"Since the onset of the conflict, I have focused on providing mental health support to families most impacted, visiting schools to assist both children and adults," she added.

Koussa joins Miss Egypt Logina Salah and Miss Bahrain Shereen Ahmed from the Arab world. All three are currently in Mexico on a promotional tour before the pageant kicks off this week.

Miss Lebanon Nada Koussa is preparing to compete in the Miss Universe pageant this week. Getty Images



Viola Davis

RSIFF

Viola Davis to be honored at Red Sea Film Fest

Afshan Aziz Jeddah

Academy Award-winning actress and producer Viola Davis and Egyptian star Mona Zaki will be honored at this year's Red Sea International Film Festival in Jeddah, set to run from Dec. 5-14 under the theme "The New Home of Film."

Jeddah's newly inaugurated Culture Square in Al-Balad is the main venue for this year's festivities.

At a press conference this week, Mohammed Asseri, RSIFF Acting CEO, said: "The new venue in Jeddah's historic district blends modern design with rich history."

Addressing the challenges regional filmmakers face in breaking into the international scene, Shivani Pandya Malhotra, managing director of the RSIFF, emphasized the importance of telling authentic regional stories.

"We believe in the power of these stories and are committed to giving filmmakers the platform to share them. Through Red Sea Labs and the Souk, we provide structure, pitch opportunities, and connect filmmakers with international buyers, distributors, and sales agents," she said.

RSIFF 2024 will open with "The Tale of Daye's Family," an Egyptian-Saudi co-production directed by Karim Shenawy.

Johnny Depp-directed "Modi, Three Days on the Wing of Madness" will be this year's Awards Night Gala film while the fourth edition's closing film will be "Better Man," directed by Michael Gracey.

In addition to these highlights, the festival will present such films as "Maria," directed by Pablo Larraín and starring Angelina Jolie as opera star Maria Callas, and "We Live in Time," featuring Florence Pugh and Andrew Garfield.

INTERVIEW

Emirates Airline Festival of Literature announces 2025 lineup

Shyama Krishna Kumar Dubai

The Emirates Airline Festival of Literature organizers announced the lineup of award-winning authors and speakers for its 2025 edition on Tuesday.

The annual literary event, set to take place from Jan. 29 to Feb. 3, will run under the theme "Where Stories Happen."

Included in the lineup are Nobel Prize laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah, Emmy Award-winning journalist Hala Gorani,



The Emirates Airline Festival of Literature revealed its 2025 author lineup on Tuesday. AN Photo

Palestinian chef and hotelier Fadi Kattan, and author and illustrator of the popular "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" series Jeff Kinney.

Closer to home, Saudi author

Faisal J. Abbas will talk about his new book, "Anecdotes of an Arab Anglophile," a witty and thoughtful take on what it is like being an Arab in London.

"With everything going on in the world, now more than ever, we need stories. We need human connection. We need to come together in the 'sanctuary of dreams,'" Tamreez Inam, head of programming, told Arab News.

"The festival welcomes people who want to dream and imagine a world that celebrates our shared humanity and offers a place where people can tell their own stories, find themselves in other stories and connect at that very human level. And I think

that's why the 2025 festival is so important; it's needed more than ever now," she added.

Dania Droubi, the festival's chief operating officer, revealed that the event will also host an international youth program.

"We have 150 university students from around the world coming ... they are going to be here to meet with another 150 from the UAE-based universities, and they're here to ... participate in these discussions, because the youth are the future."