

OPINION
BREAKING THE
SILENCE ON
GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE
By Dr. Hanan Balkhy
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& FINALLY
FANS PRAISE
CO-STAR AS MAY
CALAMAWY
CUT FROM
'GLADIATOR II' Page 16



MONDAY, November 25, 2024
Jumada Al-Awwal 23, 1446
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ARAB NEWS

The Voice of a Changing Region

SINCE 1975

Lebanon on 'brink of collapse'

● EU's foreign policy chief calls for 'immediate ceasefire' ● Hezbollah rocket lands near Tel Aviv

The EU's foreign policy chief warned on Sunday that Lebanon was "on the brink of collapse" after Israel launched an intense air campaign two months ago following nearly a year of clashes with Hezbollah.

"Back in September I came and was still hoping we could prevent a full-fledged war of Israel attacking Lebanon. Two months later Lebanon is on the brink of collapse," Josep Borrell said in Beirut.

"We see only one possible way ahead: an immediate ceasefire and the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701," Borrell said after meeting Lebanese parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, who has led mediation efforts on behalf of Hezbollah.

His remarks came as Hezbollah fired heavy rocket barrages at Israel on Sunday, with Israeli media reporting that a building had been hit near Tel Aviv, after a powerful Israeli airstrike killed at least 29 people in Beirut the day before.

The Lebanese army said on



Smoke rises from the site of an airstrike that targeted an area in Beirut's southern suburbs on Sunday amid the ongoing war between Israel and Hezbollah. AFP

● Related reports P6&7
● Opinion: Christopher Phillips P9

Sunday at least one soldier had been killed and 18 more injured in an Israeli strike that caused severe damage at an army center in Al-Amiriya near the southern city of Tyre.

Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister, Najib Mikati said the

attack "represents a direct bloody message rejecting all efforts to reach a ceasefire, strengthen the army's presence in the south, and implement UN Resolution 1701."

In Gaza, the Health Ministry on Sunday said that at least 44,211 people had been killed in

more than 13 months of war.

The toll includes 35 deaths in the previous 24 hours, according to the ministry, which said 104,567 people have been wounded in the Gaza Strip since the war began when Hamas militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

Landmark Riyadh event for conjoined twins

Ghadi Joudah Riyadh

The inaugural International Conference on Conjoined Twins kicked off in Riyadh on Sunday.

Riyadh Gov. Prince Faisal bin Bandar delivered a speech on behalf of King Salman celebrating the achievements of the Saudi Conjoined Twins Programme, which has successfully operated on 61 pairs of twins since 1990.

Prince Faisal added that it is the only program globally specializing in separating conjoined twins.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of the World Health Organization, also addressed the conference via video.

"I commend Saudi Arabia for its leadership in organizing this important World Conjoined Twins Day Conference," he said.

"The conference provides critical insights, from surgical innovations to long-term strategies, shaping rare initiatives. A broader platform and registry for congenital anomalies would benefit low and middle-income countries."

Detailed coverage Page 5

The Brief

JAKARTA TRADE
Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto held talks in Abu Dhabi on Sunday as he seeks closer cooperation with the UAE on Jakarta's industrialization efforts. **P8**

NON-OIL EXPORTS
Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports reached \$21.17 billion in the third quarter of 2024, a rise of 16.76% compared to the same period in 2023. **P12**

IPL AUCTION
The bidding war in the Indian Premier League 2025 Mega Auction began in Jeddah on Sunday, where the squads of the 10 franchises are being finalized from a pool of 574 players. **P15**

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FRANKLY SPEAKING

'The extraordinary has become the ordinary in Saudi Arabia'

Middle East expert Norman Roule backs a more robust narrative to highlight Kingdom's vision, sees Saudi-US collaboration continuing to thrive

Arab News Dubai

Saudi Arabia's transformation, showcased by world-class entertainment events, AI and green energy investments, and mega-projects, continues to redefine its global image and influence, but according to Middle East expert Norman Roule, more can be done to explain the Kingdom's ambitions to the world.

On the diplomatic front, the former senior American intelligence officer believes Saudi-US relations will continue to thrive regardless of the administration in Washington and despite the temporary pause caused by the Gaza war.

"Truth be told, I see so much that is extraordinary in Saudi Arabia that the extraordinary has become the ordinary," he said on the Arab News current affairs program "Frankly Speaking,"

referring to the star-studded "1001 Seasons of Ellie Saab" fashion show on Nov. 14 as part of Riyadh Season 2024, which has drawn over 6 million visitors and turned the Saudi capital into a cultural and entertainment hub.

"Saudi Arabia must have what it needs to achieve its vision as a global node of progress, stability, interfaith relationships," Roule said, noting that the Kingdom "is located in the center of so many pathways of global commerce and social exchange between India and Africa, between Europe and Asia."

Calling for a more robust narrative strategy to dispel misconceptions and showcase Saudi Arabia's impact, he underscored the importance of investing in media programs similar to "Frankly Speaking" to communicate the Kingdom's vision "in English to the international community."

'NEOM is 90 minutes from Athens and about 60 km from the Suez Canal.'

"The world needs more of it, not just to understand what the Kingdom is doing in and of itself, but how those ambitions will shape the global society and



Will President Trump be able to end the wars in Gaza and Ukraine?

economy. Understanding Saudi Arabia's investments in green energy and those of the UAE. It's critical to the future of the planet for developing countries — for the Global North and the Global South," Roule told Katie Jensen, the host of "Frankly Speaking."

"Understanding how entertainment connects Europe to Asia, how it will shape how people move in the world. That can only be done with more information being put out."

Roule spoke of Saudi Arabia's influence on critical issues, such as women's empowerment and cultural exchange, stating that it can reach well beyond its borders, shaping developments across the region and even other continents. "The role of protecting women's rights is not just a Saudi issue," he said, "but I'd like to see Saudi

Arabia's influence touch Afghanistan and Africa."

Roule also offered an enthusiastic assessment of NEOM — a key part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 initiative to diversify its economy beyond oil — describing it as a game-changer for Saudi Arabia's future. The \$500 billion futuristic city on the Red Sea is designed to address challenges like population growth and sustainability while leveraging the Kingdom's strategic location near the Red Sea.

"NEOM is 90 minutes from Athens and about 60 km from the Suez Canal," he said, and noted that its vision includes carbon-neutral technologies, transformative trade hubs like Oxagon, and revolutionary urban designs such as The Line.

"So much of this has never been done anywhere in the world. It will be amazing," Roule said.

The Interview Page 3

Radar



A spectacular finale in Riyadh as the world's top show jumpers delivered thrilling equestrian action. We are proud to be a home to the world sport.
Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki
Saudi sports minister

KSA today



AIUla Concert

Oud virtuoso Naseer Shamma takes the stage with Spanish guitar legends the Barcelona Guitar Trio, followed by pianist Khatia Buniatishvili on Nov. 29. Visit experiencealula.com for tickets and other details.



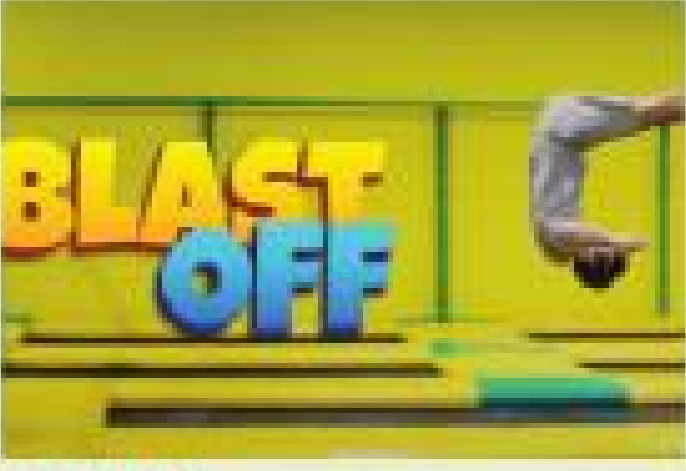
AIUla Hiking

Explore the 8 km Journey Through Time Trail, featuring ancient pictographs and rain-water pools, for a unique blend of history and nature. For more details, visit experiencealula.com.



Dhahran Box of Nature

Discover the ideal natural setting for sustainable living at the Energy Lab in Ithra's Energy Exhibit, where science and art merge to create innovative environmental dioramas. More details on the Ithra app.



Jeddah Blast Off

Enjoy the inflatable play structure at the Wonder District for an experience with air pressure zones that add a fun twist to traditional bouncy castles.

The Register

THE PICTURES THAT MARK THE DAY



CEO of the Saudi Fund for Development Sultan Al-Marshad received First Deputy Prime Minister of Tajikistan Hokim Kholiqzoda and his accompanying delegation in Riyadh on Sunday. During the meeting, the Saudi fund's

development projects were discussed, as well as ways to enhance development cooperation between both sides, the official account wrote on X. Saudi Ambassador to Tajikistan Walid Al-Rashidan was among the

officials in attendance. Kholiqzoda's visit included a tour of the Saudi fund's exhibition center, which showcases the organization's 50-year journey, including notable development projects and their impacts on the lives of beneficiaries.

#JOIN THE SQUAD

Citizens, residents and visitors in Riyadh explain to Arab News why Saudi Arabia is the best country to host the FIFA World Cup 2034.

I'm very happy to say that the World Cup 2034 bid is a real huge event for Saudi Arabia, and it's a promotion for not only the men's game but also the women's game ... I believe it's going to be a great event, and the world can come to see Saudi Arabia and its wonderful hospitality and the humble people welcoming anybody who loves football.

MONIKA STAAB
WOMEN'S FOOTBALL
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR,
SAUDI ARABIAN
FOOTBALL FEDERATION

BACKING THE BID
Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch all the videos of citizens, residents and visitors voicing their support for Saudi Arabia.

Today's Number

125

King Salman has issued a royal order appointing 125 members to the public prosecution as the investigative lieutenants, Saudi Press Agency reported on Sunday.

Review

'Archive 81'

GHADI JOUDAH

"Archive 81" is a horror series released on Netflix in 2022 that follows Dan Turner, an archivist who has been tasked to retrieve some videotapes. These tapes document the investigation into a secret cult and the disappearance of one of its members. Melody Pendras, a graduate student looking into the ghostly past of a building known as the Visser, which has a dark past tied to supernatural events, recorded the tape. As Turner digs deeper into the footage, he gradually gets caught up in the drama, filming the line between the world and the supernatural. "Archive 81" features an intriguing mixture of horror, mystery and psychological thriller elements.



The show's narrative, through its development footage layout intertwined with Turner's contemporary narrative, creates an unsettling atmosphere that keeps the viewer on edge. The performances, especially by Mamoudou Athie and Dina Shihabi, add depth as the characters maneuver their own conflicts. The series excels in its production design and filming, capturing the eerie atmosphere of the Visser structure as well as the unsettling atmosphere of the cult. The tempo is generally well managed, with a suspense structure as Turner discovers the shocking truth behind the tape.

TheRegion

The Middle East Roundup

Arab News Jeddah

- Exhibition World Bahrain is holding two events on Nov. 26-30. Jewellery Arabia 2024 brings together over 650 renowned local and international brands showcasing limited-edition pieces and unique collections for discerning visitors. Scent Arabia 2024 presents

perfumes, oud, home fragrances, bukhour, and candles from both the Gulf region and international brands. More details on calendar.bh.

- Experience circus magic with Pluma, a young girl who wants to soar through the skies. The show is being held at the Pluma Circus Tent, Dubai Festi-

val City Mall, and will run until Dec. 8. Tickets are available on dubai.platinumlist.net.

- "Manzar: Art and Architecture from Pakistan 1940s to Today" is an exhibition held at the National Museum of Qatar, Doha. Runs until Jan. 30. More details on nmoq.org.qa.

Prayer Times in Saudi Arabia						
Nov. 25	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhuhr	Asr	Maghreb	Isha
Makkah	5:18	6:37	12:08	3:16	5:38	7:08
Madinah	5:23	6:43	12:09	3:12	5:33	7:03
Riyadh	4:55	6:15	11:41	2:44	5:05	6:35
Abha	5:03	6:21	11:57	3:09	5:32	7:02
Dammam	4:43	6:05	11:27	2:27	4:48	6:18

FRANKLY SPEAKING *The* Interview

with Katie Jensen



Arab News Dubai

After voting for Republican candidate Donald Trump in anger at the Biden administration's perceived inaction regarding the Gaza war, many Arab Americans are now voicing concern as the US president-elect prepares to return to the White House with top team nominees vocal in their support for Israel.

Former senior American intelligence officer Norman Roule, however, says the incoming Trump administration's policy in this regard will be largely similar to that of President Joe Biden's administration.

"It is certainly true that many of the Trump senior designees are openly pro-Israel, but their rhetoric as to what they would do to support Israel is no different than the Biden administration itself," he said on the Arab News current affairs program "Frankly Speaking."

He believes one positive thing to look forward to is that Trump would avoid embroiling the US, Israel or the region in an endless conflict.

"If there is a difference between the Biden approach and the Trump approach," he said, "the Trump approach might be more of, to the Israeli government: Do what you feel is necessary, but do it efficiently, humanely, and quickly, we're not looking to support Israel for an endless war there itself."

Roule stressed that America must end the war and facilitate aid access for the Palestinians in Gaza, who have suffered for over a year from a deepening humanitarian crisis, while at the same time ensuring Israel's security from Hamas militants.

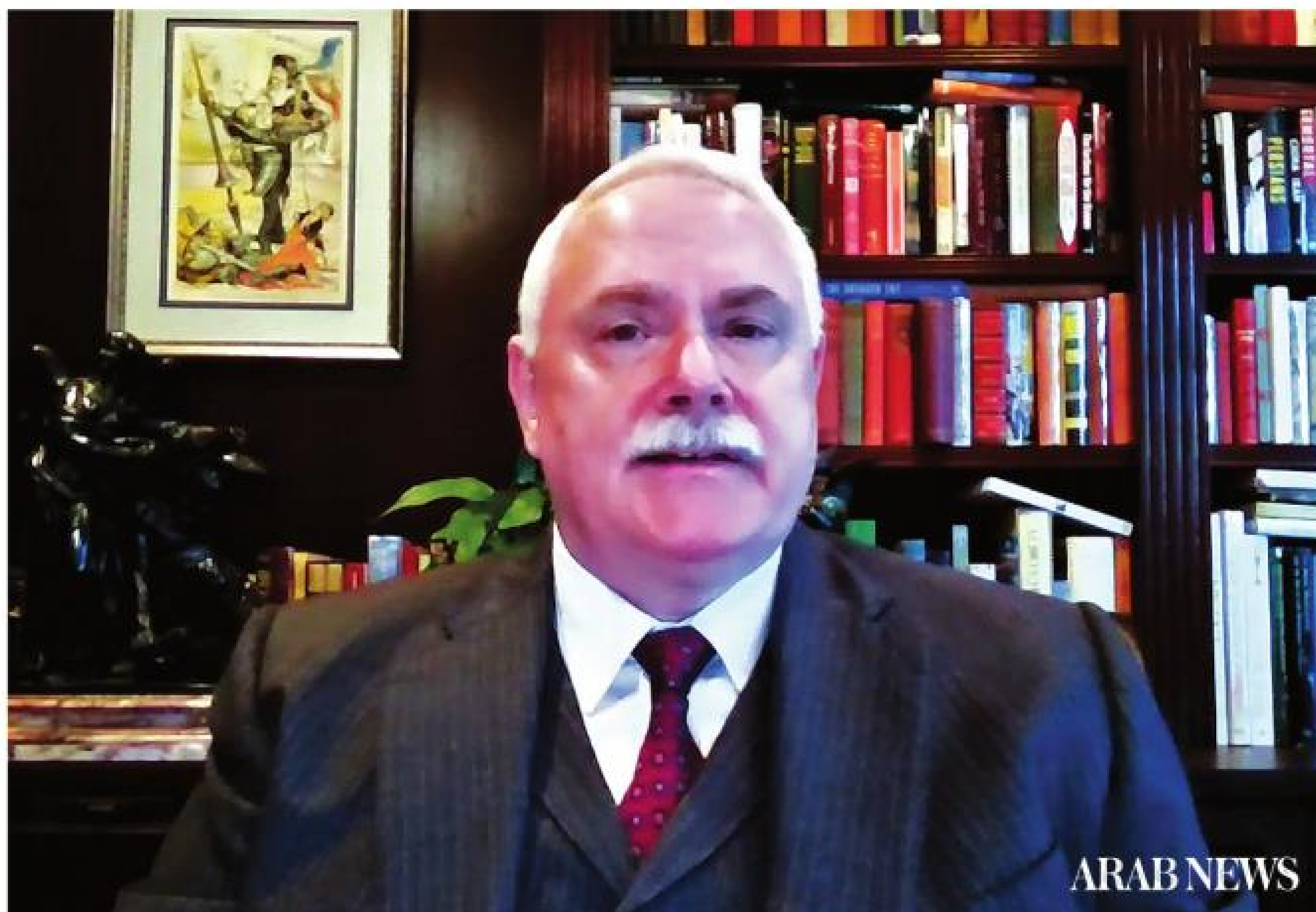
"First, we must provide humanitarian relief to the Palestinian people who have suffered tremendously, largely because of Hamas' use of this population as human sacrifice, but we must bring in international aid and end the conflict," he said.

"But at the same time, we must end the role of Hamas in threatening Israel. It's not unfair that Israel seeks its security to prevent another repetition of October 7th."

On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led Palestinian militants carried out a surprise attack on southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people and taking 240 others hostage. Israel retaliated by launching a widespread bombing campaign on the Gaza Strip, killing at least 44,000 Palestinians within 14 months, according to the local health authority.

Saudi Arabia has consistently condemned Israel's actions in Gaza, and Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan has ruled out normalizing relations with Israel until a Palestinian state is established.

Roule lauded the Saudi leadership's consistent and clear stance on the Palestine issue. "The Saudi foreign minister's position has been consistent, it's been clear, and it's been directed to achieve what the entire Arab world seeks — a two-state solution that is fair to the Palestinian people, that allows security for



(Main and below) Roule, a Middle East expert, believes Saudi-US relations will continue to thrive regardless of the administration in Washington and despite the temporary pause in the strategic agreement caused by the Gaza war. AN photos

NORMAN ROULE
FORMER SENIOR US INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Will President Trump be able to end the wars in Gaza and Ukraine?

Middle East expert offers insights into how the incoming Trump administration will approach the conflicts in three different countries, says parts of Saudi-US agreement not connected to Israel can still move forward

movement of that deal was quite positive and was only upended by the Gaza conflict."

Roule expects to see continued progress on elements of that deal, which "provides Saudi Arabia and the US with what they need to maintain and build what is a very positive and critical relationship for the United States and for the region."

At some point all wars come to a diplomatic solution. They may not be attractive, but that solution is needed. I think the Trump position is going to be: Where does this end?

Moving on to Lebanon, he said that to bring peace to the war-torn country, "there's a simple solution with a difficult approach to get there."

"We need first to remove Lebanese Hezbollah north of the Litani (River) to empower the Lebanese armed forces to come south of the Litani and do their job — and be able to do so without fear of Lebanese Hezbollah," he said.

Nevertheless, Roule stressed that the first priority is to "end the conflict" and "end the suffering of the Lebanese people, and the suffering of the Israeli people."

Pointing to the fact that "60,000 Israelis have left their home and prior to the Lebanese recent conflict, 100,000 Lebanese were not going into their homes, and now we have a million displaced Lebanese," Roule said: "We've got to make that our first priority."

Achieving peace in Lebanon, according to Roule, hinges on one key factor: "The Lebanese people must be willing to stand up against Lebanese Hezbollah."

WATCH FRANKLY SPEAKING

Find the full interview at arabnews.com/FranklySpeaking

Scan this code to visit



Israel, and does not provide undue diplomatic recognition or other inducements to Israel before that diplomatic solution of the two-state relationship comes about," he said.

Asked if parts of the much-talked-about Saudi-US deal could still move forward despite the Kingdom's stance on not normalizing relations with Israel without the two-state solution being achieved, Roule said the two countries "have a separate relationship that needs to progress at the same time."

"And it's been doing quite well in recent months," he said. "Both the Biden administration in its remaining time and the (incoming) Trump administration" will seek to



implement the parts of the deal that are not related to Israel."

Despite the temporary pause in a comprehensive strategic agreement owing to the Gaza conflict, Roule sees collaboration continuing in areas like AI, green energy

and regional stability.

"We have a massive technological cooperation that's ongoing, particularly in AI," he said. "The issue of data centers is coming to the forefront of the relationship, but also ... the sense in Washington is the



Minister of Culture Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan meets Saudi scholarship students in Tokyo. SPA

ART EXCHANGE

Saudi culture minister engages with manga students in Tokyo

Arab News Riyadh

Saudi Minister of Culture and Chairman of the Literature, Publishing and Translation Commission Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan met Saudi scholarship students participating in the Manga Industry program in Tokyo.

The program, organized in collaboration between the commission and Manga Productions, a subsidiary of Misk, aims to develop talented manga artists through professional training rooted in Japanese techniques,

the art form's birthplace.

Prince Badr highlighted the Saudi leadership's strong commitment to developing human capabilities across various fields, emphasizing the importance of academic and professional training in cultural disciplines.

The meeting was attended by the CEO of the commission, Mohammed Alwan, CEO of Manga Productions Essam Bukhary and students studying manga art at Kadokawa Contents Academy.

The program offers virtual workshops, intensive training courses and overseas training in

Japan. It also includes competitions blending manga with Saudi cultural themes, such as Munjanha, which transforms Arabic proverbs into manga stories; Manga Al-Qaseed, which adapts Arabic poetry; and Manga Al-Ibil, which celebrates the cultural symbolism of camels in Saudi heritage.

More than 1,850 participants have benefited from the program's virtual workshops, with 115 advancing to intensive training, producing 115 manga stories. Of these, 21 students were selected for advanced training in Japan.

CREATIVE PULSE

Riyadh Music Week to spotlight Saudi talent and creativity

Event will include global summits, local performances, awards and cultural displays

Arab News Riyadh

The Music Commission, in collaboration with MDLBeast and the Saudi Research and Media Group, is set to launch the inaugural Riyadh Music Week, running from Dec. 5 to 14 at various venues in the Saudi capital.

The event will spotlight the Kingdom's growing music sector, highlighting its creative and commercial evolution. It will also serve as a platform for dialogue with international stakeholders on music policy and development.

Among the highlights is the Global Music Makers Summit, a premier gathering of industry

leaders and policymakers from around the world.

The event will also celebrate Saudi traditional music, with small venues in Riyadh hosting performances to show off local musicians' diversity and talent.

The week will also host the Music Cities Convention and Awards, which will be held in the Middle East for the first time.

Riyadh Music Week will include panel discussions, seminars and workshops led by industry experts, covering the latest global music trends.

The program incorporates key events from Riyadh's music calendar, such as XP Music Futures, SoundStorm, and the inaugural Billboard Arabia Music Awards.

The week provides a unique

HIGHLIGHT

The week will host the Music Cities Convention and Awards, which will be held in the Middle East for the first time. The event will also celebrate Saudi traditional music, with small venues in Riyadh hosting performances to show off local musicians' diversity and talent.

platform for local and international collaboration, celebrating Saudi Arabia's rich musical heritage and dynamic contemporary scene.

By supporting emerging and established artists, Riyadh Music Week underscores the Kingdom's commitment to nurturing talent and growing its music industry.

TheSpace

Kingdom's credit rating gets another vote of confidence

BASIL M.K. AL-GHALAYINI



Last week, global credit ratings agency Moody's announced an upgrade in the Kingdom's credit rating to Aa3 with a stable outlook. This announcement came after Fitch Ratings upgraded Saudi Arabia's rating to A+ with a stable outlook in May 2023.

Credit ratings are assessments of the creditworthiness of borrowers, which can include governments, corporations, or any entities that issue debt. Moody's, S&P Global Ratings, and Fitch Ratings play a crucial role in providing these assessments. A higher rating suggests lower risk for investors, enabling the country to borrow at lower interest rates.

Saudi Arabia, a key player in the global economy and a member of the G20, has undergone a transformation in recent years. With its oil reserves and strategic positioning, the country has steadfastly committed to diversifying its economy away from oil dependence and enhancing its non-oil revenue sources.

Initiatives such as Vision 2030, spearheaded by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, have modernized the economy, attracted more foreign investment, and fostered a more sustainable and diversified economic landscape.

Moody's decision to upgrade Saudi Arabia's credit rating to Aa3, its first since 2016, recognizes the country's economic reforms and fiscal management progress. The new

rating places Saudi Arabia among a select group of countries with high creditworthiness, indicating low credit risk for investors.

The stable outlook attached to the rating underscores confidence in the country's ability to maintain its economic stability and continue its path of reforms. This positive outlook is a testament to Saudi Arabia's resilience in facing financial, economic, and geopolitical challenges.

The upgraded credit rating is expected to have several positive implications for Saudi Arabia.

It can lead to lower borrowing costs for businesses in the country, as higher credit ratings typically result in reduced interest rates on debt issuances. This, in turn, can stimulate investment and economic growth, further bolstering Saudi Arabia's financial outlook.

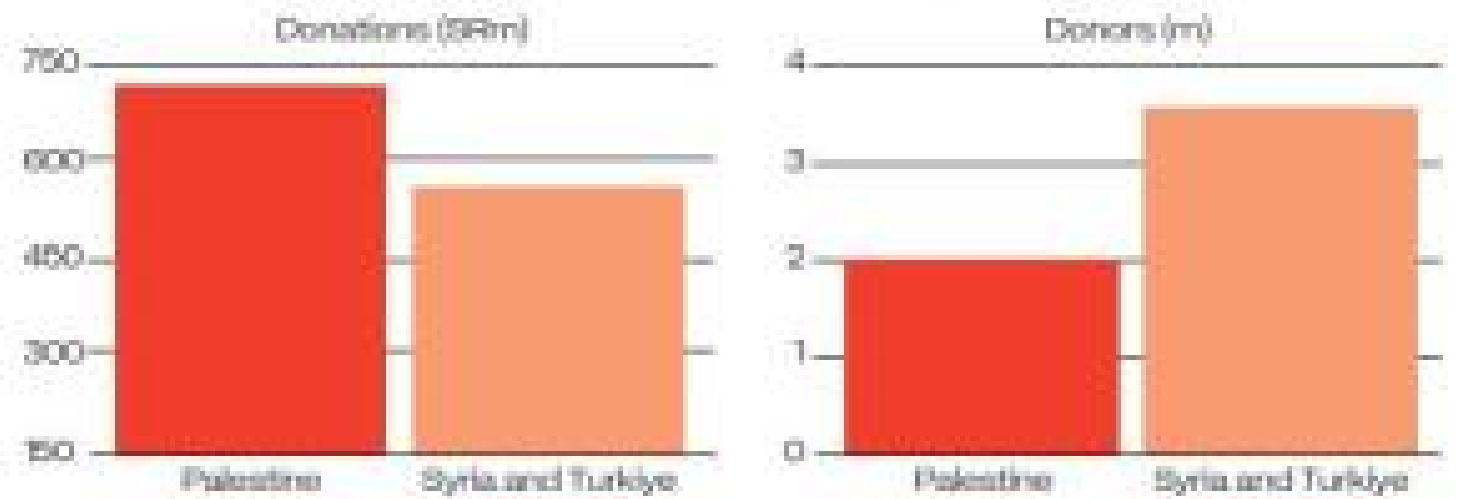
Major agencies upgraded Saudi Arabia's credit rating to reflect the country's ongoing efforts to diversify its economy, strengthen its fiscal position,

and enhance institutional frameworks. While challenges remain, the upgrade is likely to lead to lower borrowing costs, increased direct foreign investment, and stronger market confidence. Furthermore, a favorable credit rating invites a broader range of global investors, leading to the development and growth of bond and sukuk issuances in the Kingdom's debt capital market.

Basil M.K. Al-Ghalayini is chairman and CEO of BMQ Financial Group.

The Day's FIGURES

SAUDI FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS ON KSRELIEF'S SAHEM PLATFORM



Source: sahem.ksrelief.org

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Humanitarian efforts UN official lauds Saudi landmine work in Yemen

The UN special envoy's military adviser to Yemen, Antony Hayward, praised the work carried out by Saudi aid agency KSrelief's Project Masam to clear landmines in Yemen.

During his visit to the agency's headquarters in Marib, he said that the project works to protect the lives of civilians and secure large areas of Yemeni territory despite the challenges posed by landmines.

He emphasized the importance of continuing such projects to achieve stability in Yemen and protect civilians.

Ousama Al-Gosaibi, the initiative's managing director, said 470,416 mines had been cleared since 2018. SPA Riyadh

Spiritual Journey Umrah guests tour Madinah's historic sites

The first group of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Guests Program for Umrah and Visit toured the King Fahd Glorious Qur'an Printing Complex in Madinah.

The pilgrims toured the complex's technical and administrative departments, learning about the various stages of printing the Holy Qur'an, preservation efforts, and its translation.

The complex officials gifted copies of the Holy Qur'an to the guests. The group also visited the Battle of Uhud site, Mount Al-Ramah, and the Uhud Martyrs' Cemetery, learning about this historic turning point in Islam. SPA Riyadh

Riyadh Season Bangladesh Days celebrates heritage in Riyadh

Bangladesh Days, held as part of Riyadh Season concluded at Al-Suwaidi Park.

The event attracted people of all ages, who were able to enjoy a rich cultural experience reflecting the diversity of Bangladeshi heritage.

Bangladesh Days offered visitors the opportunity to taste renowned Bengali cuisine, purchase traditional clothing and artisanal items, and attend folkloric performances.

The activities provided a comprehensive experience, offering a close-up look at the vibrant traditions of Bangladesh and reflecting the cultural diversity Riyadh Season seeks to highlight. SPA Riyadh

News Saudi Arabia

TOWARD BRIGHT FUTURES

World's first International Conference for Conjoined Twins kicks off in Riyadh

Top World Health Organization official commends Saudi Arabia's efforts in the field

Ghadi Joudah Riyadh

The Inaugural International Conference for Conjoined Twins kicked off in Riyadh on Sunday.

The event unites leading medical experts, humanitarian organizations, and families from around the globe to share vital insights, discuss innovative separation techniques, and forge collaborative pathways in the pursuit of improved lives for conjoined twins.

Riyadh Gov. Prince Faisal bin Bandar delivered a speech on behalf of King Salman celebrating the achievements of the Saudi Conjoined Twins Programme, which has become a global leader in the field.

"Since 1990, 143 cases of twins from 26 countries have been reviewed by my dear colleagues, who have successfully separated a total of 61 pairs of twins to date," he said.

Prince Faisal added that it is the only program globally specializing in separating conjoined twins, making it one of the largest humanitarian medical programs in the world.

He also highlighted a recent milestone: The UN General Assembly is considering an initiative by Saudi Arabia to designate Nov. 24 as the annual World Conjoined Twins Day.

In a video address, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of the World Health Organization, congratulated Saudi Arabia on its leadership in organizing the conference.

"I commend Saudi Arabia for its leadership in organizing this important World Conjoined Twins Day Conference," he said.

This recognition would honor the medical and humanitarian efforts in this field and highlight the challenges faced by conjoined twins and their families.



Riyadh Gov. Prince Faisal bin Bandar delivered a speech on behalf of King Salman celebrating the achievements of the Saudi Conjoined Twins Programme, which has become a global leader in the field. SPA

Ghebreyesus praised the initiative as a model for global collaboration in rare and complex medical cases.

"The conference provides critical insights, from surgical innovations to long-term strategies, shaping rare initiatives. A broader platform and registry for congenital anomalies would benefit low and middle-income countries," he said.

A keynote address was delivered by Dr. Abdullah Al-Rabeeah, adviser to the Royal Court and supervisor-general of Saudi aid agency KSrelief.

As the head of the multidisciplinary team for the Saudi Conjoined Twins Programme, Al-Rabeeah provided insights into the occurrence and challenges associated with conjoined twins.



The history of conjoined twin separation reveals both the challenges and progress in medical science.

"The first successful separation was by Johannes Fatio back in 1689 by using a constricting band for a set of Omphalopagus twins or those sharing liver and gastrointestinal organs," he said.

With a 0.5 percent incidence rate, this early success involved "presumably, a small joining in the skin, probably a little bit of the liver," said Al-Rabeeah.

He added that a major

breakthrough came in 1957 with the first successful separation of craniopagus, or twins sharing one brain.

Al-Rabeeah said that the epidemiology shows distinct patterns: "In Western countries, it's been estimated that we get one conjoined twins in every 50 to 200,000 births."

He added that, however, it is more prevalent in Southeast Asia and Africa, "presumably because identical twinning and twinning is (found) more in dark-skinned people in Africa and also in South-east Asia, increasing the incidence."

The survival statistics, Al-Rabeeah reported, entail that "60 percent of conjoined twins are stillborn, and those who live 40 percent of them will die in the first few days of life, and 70 percent of those who would survive will be females."

He emphasized that the reasons behind this regional disparity remain unknown and require further research.

Throughout the conference,

leading medical professionals presented their expertise on various aspects of caring for and separating conjoined twins. Topics included embryology, multidisciplinary team-building, antenatal care, and labor management.

Dr. Nadia Al-Ghilan, from the maternal-fetal medicine department at King Abdulaziz Medical City, gave a presentation titled "Caring for Conjoined Twins: A Prenatal Journey," describing the complex process of managing pregnancies involving conjoined twins.

She said that caring for conjoined twins is a complex and delicate process as it requires meticulous prenatal planning and a dedicated medical team.

Al-Ghilan said that "this journey is filled with unique challenges, ethical considerations, and the utmost care to ensure the best possible outcomes for the twins and their family."

Early diagnosis, she stressed, is critical for effective prenatal referral, counseling, and planning for delivery and postnatal care.

Al-Ghilan also underscored the importance of genetic testing in understanding the chromosomal health of conjoined twins.

"Techniques like amniocentesis and chorionic villus sampling can help identify genetic abnormalities, providing valuable information for developing treatment strategies."

The conference not only serves as a platform for scientific exchange but also fosters dialogue on building global partnerships to support conjoined twins and their families, particularly in low and middle income countries.

The conference emphasized the importance of comprehensive care, from prenatal counseling to post-separation rehabilitation.

HIGHLIGHTS

● KSrelief arranged a special visit for conjoined twins, who had undergone separation surgeries in Saudi Arabia, and their families to the At-Turaif district, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

● The UN General Assembly is considering an initiative by Saudi Arabia to designate Nov. 24 as the annual World Conjoined Twins Day.

MARVELOUS EFFORTS

The inspiring story behind Saudi Arabia's Conjoined Twins Programme

Tamara Aboalsaud Riyadh

Ahead of the International Conference on Conjoined Twins held in Riyadh, Saudi aid agency KSrelief Supervisor-General Dr. Abdullah Al-Rabeeah hosted a media roundtable on Saturday to discuss the goals and expectations of the two-day conference that concludes on Nov. 25.

Recalling the inspiration behind the Saudi Conjoined Twins Programme, Al-Rabeeah explained that in 1990, amid the Second Gulf War, a set of Sudanese conjoined twins, Samah and Heba, were seeking financial support from King Fahd to get treatment abroad.

King Fahd brought the issue to Al-Rabeeah's team at the time at King Faisal Specialist

Hospital and Research Center, and after months of tests and deliberations, they completed the first successful conjoined twins separation surgery in the Kingdom.

The operation took 18 and a half hours.

"We started to invest in the nationalization of the medical team until ... all specialties were from Saudi Arabia," Al-Rabeeah said. "Today we have seen 143 sets over 34 years. We have separated 61 sets with 100 percent success ... and we have 7 sets waiting to be separated."

King Abdullah Specialized Children's Hospital now has the only known conjoined twins operating room.

King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin

When I come out of the operating room, going in with one bed, and coming out with two beds ... this is the best moment in my life.

Dr. Abdullah Al-Rabeeah
KSrelief Supervisor-General



Salman moved this program under KSrelief to support low-income families and families from conflict zones.

"Humanity has no politics, no boundaries, no religion, and no color," said Al-Rabeeah.

The conference will cover a range of topics, including the candidacy process, antenatal and post-natal care, cardiac conditions, ethical considerations, reconstruction, and 3D imaging.

Al-Rabeeah also said the conference is set to discuss and sign several UN agreements related to children, including on conjoined twins, polio vaccination in Afghanistan, artificial limbs, infectious diseases in children, and the children of Gaza.

He also spoke about the importance of combining

medical knowledge in the Gulf and working together to create specialized centers across the region for different matters, to make operations more cost-effective and advanced.

"Science is not owned; it is for everybody," the Saudi aid agency chief said.

On the technological developments that are optimizing this procedure, Al-Rabeeah mentioned the use of argon lasers, ultrasonic knives, new electric coatings to avoid bleeding, less sensitive prosthetics, and, most importantly, early diagnosis.

Al-Rabeeah said that the greatest research in this program has been done on early detection of conjoined twins in the womb. They are now capable

of detecting conjoined twins sometimes at just eight to 10 weeks.

Al-Rabeeah's most crucial piece of advice is urging women to start prenatal care early.

The importance of psychological care for both the patients and the families was also discussed. Al-Rabeeah pointed out what is referred to as "separation trauma" that twins endure when learning how to adjust to their bodies after having been connected all their lives.

"The twins, they have pain, they have suffered. I have seen two kinds of tears in my life. We all know about the tears of despair, the tears of pain. But with conjoined twins, I have seen clearly the tears of happiness and joy."

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Kamal Adwan Hospital chief injured by Israeli drone

AFP Gaza City

Gaza's civil defense agency said on Sunday a drone strike seriously injured a hospital chief in an attack on the healthcare facility, and 11 people were killed in Israeli raids on the Palestinian territory.

Hossam Abu Safiya heads the Kamal Adwan Hospital, one of just two partly operating in northern Gaza, as the war-ravaged territory is in the grip of a dire humanitarian crisis.

Abu Safiya suffered an injury to his back and left thigh by metal

fragments after an attack on the hospital complex, civil defense agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said.

After losing a lot of blood, the doctor was in a "stable" condition, Bassal said, adding an Israeli drone bombed the hospital in Beit Lahia, north Gaza.

Israel on Oct. 6 began an air and ground operation in Jabalia and then expanded it to Beit Lahia.

Hospital staff have reported several strikes at the facility, while the World Health Organization chief said he was "deeply



Hossam Abu Safiya, director of the Kamal Adwan Hospital, is treated by colleagues for his injuries in the northern Gaza Strip. AFP

concerned about the safety and well-being of 80 patients, including eight in the intensive care unit" at Kamal Adwan Hospital.

Hospitals in the Gaza Strip have been hit multiple times since the outbreak of war between Israel and Hamas, sparked by the militant group's unprecedented attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

Gaza's civil defense agency on Sunday morning also said 11 people, "including children," after two Israeli airstrikes on Al-Bureij and Al-Maghazi refugee camps in central Gaza

and artillery fire in Beit Lahia.

Witnesses also described artillery fire in Al-Mawasi in southern Gaza.

"I am afraid," said 30-year-old Rania Abu Jazar, after she was forced to leave her makeshift shelter, a tent, in the early hours of the morning after intense fire.

"My children are hungry, and my (one-year-old) daughter Amal's milk is in the tent. I do not know what to do. If we return, they might shell us again; the tanks are blind, and they do not care about killing children and women," she added.

GRAVE RISKS

Mikati warns Israeli military action a rejection of political solution

Borrell in Beirut: Pressure must be exerted on Israel, Hezbollah to accept US proposal

Najla Houssari Beirut

An Israeli strike on a Lebanese army center on Sunday killed a soldier and wounded 18 others, the Lebanese military said, with the caretaker prime minister, Najib Mikati, calling the attack "a direct bloody message rejecting all efforts to reach a ceasefire."

The attack came as top EU diplomat Josep Borrell called for an immediate ceasefire in the Israel-Hezbollah war while on a visit to Lebanon.

According to the Lebanese Army Command, the first adjutant, Diab Mohammed Jaafar, was killed when Israel targeted Al-Amariyeh checkpoint on the road between Tyre and the town of Naqoura.

In a statement, Mikati said: "Israel's messages rejecting a solution are ongoing, and just as it turned against the US-French call for a ceasefire in September, here it is once again responding with Lebanese blood, blatantly rejecting the solution that is being discussed."

He called on "the countries of the world and the relevant international institutions to assume their responsibilities on the issue."

Mikati's condemnation came amid growing concerns that the Israeli military is trying to solidify its westward incursion in the coastal town of Al-Bayada, located between Tyre and Naqoura, while facing strong resistance from the eastern side



Firefighters douse the flames at the site of an airstrike that targeted the Al-Hadath area near Beirut's southern suburbs on Sunday as the war between Israel and Hezbollah continues. AFP

of the border area in its positions in Khiyam.

Israeli forces are trying to encircle the South Litani area from both sides.

Hezbollah said it "targeted a gathering of the enemy army's forces east of the city of Khiyam with a salvo of rockets," and "a gathering of Israeli forces at the Metula site (Israel's outlet toward Khiyam) was targeted with a volley of rockets followed by an aerial attack with a squadron of assault drones ... hitting its targets accurately."

The Israeli military said Hezbollah launched 160 projectiles toward Israel on Sunday.

Sirens sounded across

FASTFACT

Israeli airstrikes on Saturday pounded central Beirut, killing at least 20 people and wounding 66, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

northern and central Israel, reaching Tel Aviv at successive intervals, forcing thousands of Israelis to head toward shelters.

Footage from central Israel showed extensive material damage and fires.

The Israeli military issued further warnings to residents of Beirut's southern suburbs to evacuate, targeting Bourj

Al-Barajneh and Hadath.

Former Israeli minister Benny Gantz claimed that the Lebanese government "is leaving Hezbollah unchecked," adding: "It is time to act against its assets forcefully."

These developments came during a round of discussions conducted by Borrell, high representative of the EU for foreign affairs and security policy, in Beirut with Mikati and Speaker Nabih Berry.

In a statement, Borrell stressed the need for exerting pressure on Israel and Hezbollah to accept the US proposal for a ceasefire.

Borrell emphasized that "the

situation in the Middle East, particularly here in Beirut, presents a significant challenge to the international community. The international community cannot remain inactive in the face of these events. The absence of peace in the Middle East has reached an intolerable level, and people are dying under bombardment."

He added that two months on from his last visit to Beirut, he now views Lebanon as on the verge of collapse due to the conflict, which has led to the devastation of numerous villages, as well as airstrikes aimed at Beirut and Baalbek. He also reiterated that "the

human cost is exceedingly high."

Borrell said Israeli airstrikes had claimed the lives of over 3,500 people in Lebanon, a figure three times greater than the casualties recorded in 2006.

The only viable path forward, Borrell said, is an immediate ceasefire and the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1701.

Borrell praised the UNIFIL forces and confirmed the EU's readiness to allocate €200 million (\$208.3 million) to the Lebanese Armed Forces.

He emphasized the Lebanese need to "assume their political responsibilities by electing a president and putting an end to this prolonged power vacuum that has exceeded two years."

Borrell said a ceasefire proposal for Gaza is pending Israeli government approval, and "we, as the international community, need to work to ensure the respect of international law, as we see famine being used as a weapon of war through international law violations, the complete siege imposed on Gaza and the number of people that are dying in Lebanon."

He added that in his view the decisions of the International Criminal Court to issue arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defense minister, Yoav Gallant, for Israel's activities in Gaza were not politically motivated and had been made under international law, which applied to everyone. "We strongly support the court," he said.

DAMASCUS VISIT

UN envoy concerned over expansion of conflict

AFP Damascus

The UN special envoy for Syria said on Sunday that it was "extremely critical" to end the fighting in Lebanon and Gaza to avoid the country being pulled into a regional war.

"We need now to make sure

that we have immediately a ceasefire in Gaza, that we have a ceasefire in Lebanon, and that we avoid Syria being dragged even further into the conflict," said Geir Pedersen ahead of a meeting with the Syrian foreign minister in Damascus. "We agree that it is extremely critical that

we de-escalate so that Syria is not further dragged into this," he said.

Since Syria's civil war erupted in 2011, Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes in the country, mainly targeting the army and Iran-backed groups.

The Israeli military has intensified its strikes on targets in Syria

since its conflict with Hezbollah in neighboring Lebanon escalated into full-scale war in late September after almost a year of cross-border hostilities.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor said Israeli strikes on the city of Palmyra earlier in the week killed

105 people, the vast majority of them pro-Iran fighters, in the deadliest such attack on radical groups to date.

Israel rarely comments on individual strikes in Syria but has repeatedly said it will not allow Iran to expand its presence in the country.

News Middle East

CONFLICT

Aid only 'delaying deaths' as Sudan counts down to famine

War in the country has killed tens of thousands of people

AFF Cairo

War-torn Sudan is on a "countdown to famine" ignored by world leaders while humanitarian aid is only "delaying deaths," Norwegian Refugee Council chief Jan Egeland said.

"We have the biggest humanitarian crisis on the planet in Sudan, the biggest hunger crisis, the biggest displacement crisis ... and the world is giving it a shrug," he said in an interview

from neighboring Chad after a visit to Sudan this week.

Since April 2023, war has pitted Sudan's regular army against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, killing tens of thousands of people and uprooting more than 11 million.

The United Nations says that nearly 26 million people inside Sudan are suffering acute hunger.

"I met women barely surviving, eating one meal of boiled leaves a day," Egeland said.

One of few organizations to have maintained operations in

Sudan, the refugee council says some 1.5 million people are "on the edge of famine."

"The violence is tearing apart communities much faster than we can come in with aid," Egeland said.

"As we struggle to keep up, our current resources are merely delaying deaths instead of preventing them."

"It is beyond belief that we have a fraction of the interest now for Sudan's crisis than we had 20 years ago for Darfur, when the crisis was actually much smaller," Egeland said.

Sudanese who fled escalating violence in the Al-Jazira rest at a camp in the eastern city of Gedaref. The war-torn country is on a 'countdown to famine.' AFP

He said Israel's wars in Gaza and Lebanon and Russia's war with Ukraine had been allowed to overshadow the conflict in Sudan.

But he said he detected a shift in the "international mood," away from the kind of celebrity-driven campaigns that brought Hollywood star George Clooney to Darfur in the 2000s.

"More nationalistic tendencies,

more inward-looking," he said of Western governments led by politicians compelled to "put my nation first, me first, not humanity first."

"It will come to haunt" these "short-sighted" leaders, when those they failed to assist in their homeland join the tide of refugees and migrants headed north.

In Chad, he said he had met young people who just barely survived ethnic cleansing in Darfur, and had made the decision to brave the perilous crossing of the Mediterranean

to Europe even though they had friends who had drowned.

Inside Sudan, one in every five people has been displaced by this or previous conflicts, according to UN figures.

Most of those displaced are in Darfur, where Egeland says the situation is "horrific and getting worse."

The North Darfur state capital of El-Fasher has been under siege by the RSF for months, nearly disabling all aid operations in the region and pushing the nearby Zamzam displacement camp into famine.



GAZA WAR

Tel Aviv names Netanyahu ally as US ambassador

AFF Jerusalem

The Israeli government said Sunday it had approved the nomination of Yechiel Leiter, an ally of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as the country's ambassador to the US.

The announcement comes after US President-elect Donald Trump named hard-line conservative Mike Huckabee as his choice for US ambassador to Israel under his

incoming administration.

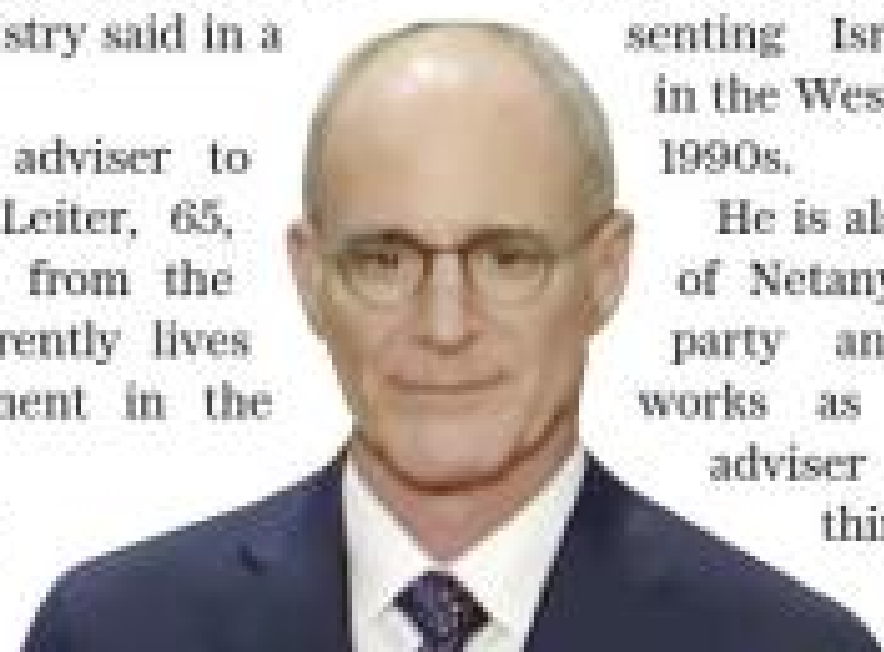
"The government has unanimously approved the appointment of Yechiel Leiter as ambassador to the US," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

A former adviser to Netanyahu, Leiter, 65, is originally from the US and currently lives in a settlement in the

occupied West Bank.

Close to the US Republican Party, Leiter used to be one of the leaders of the Yesha Council, an umbrella group representing Israeli settlers in the West Bank in the 1990s.

He is also a member of Netanyahu's Likud party and currently works as a strategic adviser to Israeli think tanks.



Yechiel Leiter

HIGHLIGHT

The announcement comes after US President-elect Donald Trump named hard-line conservative Mike Huckabee as his choice for US ambassador to Israel under his incoming administration.

His son, Moshe Leiter, was killed in combat in November 2023 in the Gaza Strip, where war erupted between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas after its attack on southern Israel in October last year.

Yechiel Leiter will take on the ambassador role after Trump's inauguration next year, succeeding Mike Herzog, President Isaac Herzog's brother, who was appointed in 2021.

Leiter is a fierce critic of US President Joe Biden, slamming "American pressure" during the war in Gaza in an interview with private Israeli channel Tov in January.

Israel welcomed Huckabee's nomination this month, as he is a stalwart supporter of the country's government.

In 2017, he was present in Maale Adumim for the expansion of one of Israel's largest settlements in the West Bank.

RIOTS

Israel's PM condemns settler violence on soldiers in West Bank

Reuters Jerusalem

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned on Sunday Jewish settlers who attacked senior Israeli military officers including Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth, the head of the army's Central Command in the occupied West Bank.

The Israeli army said that a group of settlers trailed Bluth and other officers in the West Bank city of Hebron on Friday, blocked their exit and hurled abuse at them. It added that five rioters had been arrested.

"All violence directed against Israeli military officers and soldiers must be dealt with to

the fullest extent of the law," the prime minister's office said in a statement.

Some of the crowd yelled "traitor" at Bluth, who had visited Hebron to attend an annual religious event in the city.

On Saturday, dozens of settlers, some of them masked, hurled stones at Israeli troops and border police near the West Bank settlement of Itamar, police said.

There has been a general surge in violence across the West Bank since the Oct. 7, 2023 attack by Hamas militants on southern Israel.

Palestinians have been repeatedly targeted by settlers, who want Israel to annex the West

There has been a general surge in violence across the West Bank since Oct. 7, 2023. Reuters



Bank. The Israeli military is meant to protect the local Palestinians, but Bluth acknowledged in August that the army had failed to safeguard civilians when settlers went on the rampage in one town.

Palestinians say they are often left to the mercy of the settlers, with soldiers doing little or nothing to rein them in.

Some settler youth groups reject the jurisdiction of the

BACKGROUND

On Saturday, dozens of settlers hurled stones at Israeli troops near the West Bank settlement of Itamar, police said.

Israeli military in areas that they see as under their control and have attacked Israeli forces.

Settler leaders have said violence has no place in their movement and have called for offenders to be prosecuted.

Most countries deem Jewish settlements built on land Israel captured in a 1967 war to be illegal. Israel disputes this and

cites historical and biblical ties to the land. Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future independent state.

Separately, analysts and officials have said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is facing legal perils at home and abroad that point to a turbulent future for the Israeli leader and could influence the wars in Gaza and Lebanon.

The International Criminal Court stunned Israel on Thursday by issuing arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his former defense chief Yoav Gallant for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in the 13-month-old Gaza conflict.

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Indonesia's Prabowo seeks UAE cooperation in industrialization efforts

Indonesia, UAE signed new agreements covering energy, tech, healthcare

Sheany Yasuko Lai Jakarta

Indonesia's new leader, President Prabowo Subianto, is seeking closer cooperation with the UAE on Jakarta's industrialization efforts as he made his first official trip to Abu Dhabi since taking office last month.

Indonesia's relations with the UAE grew under former President Joko Widodo, who in 2021 secured a more than \$46 billion investment commitment from the Gulf state. The two countries signed a free trade deal a year later, which came into force last September.

The UAE was Prabowo's last stop in his first foreign trip since becoming Indonesia's new leader in October.

"Now that I have earned the trust from my people to lead Indonesia, I want to continue our good relations," Prabowo told UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan during their first official meeting in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

Jakarta's priorities are focused on defense, food security and energy security, he said, adding that the government also wants to implement a downstream policy that includes domestic processing of raw materials.

"This means we want to perform a massive industrialization," Prabowo said. "In this



context, we see that the UAE and Indonesia have similar priorities. We can work together across different sectors and we want to invite the UAE to actively participate in our economy."

The two leaders also presided over the signing of several agreements as part of their meeting, covering areas such as technology, renewable energy, infrastructure and health.

"They agreed to increase trade

Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan in Abu Dhabi on Saturday. Supplied

between the two countries, specifically by optimizing the utilization of Indonesia-UAE CEPA," Indonesian foreign ministry spokesperson Roy Soemirat told Arab News on Sunday.

"President Prabowo welcomed

the UAE president's invitation to strengthen cooperation in infrastructure and collaboration in international forums to resolve global issues, including peaceful conflict resolution."

Prabowo's visit to Abu Dhabi was his second this year, following a trip in May as president-elect.

He was concluding his first overseas trip as president, which also included stops in China, the US, and the UK.

GROWING DEMAND

Bangladesh prepares to send trained nurses to Saudi Arabia in 2025

Shehab Sumon Dhaka

Bangladesh is preparing to send the first batch of trained nurses to Saudi Arabia by early next year, the country's state-owned recruiting agency told Arab News on Sunday.

Bangladeshi nationals make up the largest group of expatriates in Saudi Arabia, with nearly 3 million working and residing in the Kingdom. But only a few dozen clinicians are among the group, according to Bangladesh Medical Association data.

In 2022, the two countries signed an agreement on the recruitment of health workers, targeting the large numbers of certified doctors, nurses and medics from Bangladesh's more than 100 medical colleges.

Bangladeshi authorities are now preparing a batch of over 100 nurses to send to Saudi Arabia, said the Bangladesh Overseas



A Bangladeshi nurse tends to a dengue patient at a hospital. AFP

Employment and Services Ltd., a recruitment agency under the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment.

"We got a request to send 150 nurses to the Kingdom ... If everything goes alright, we can expect the first batch to (fly out) to the

Kingdom early next year," BOESL Executive Director Shawkat Ali said.

In Saudi Arabia, nurses must undergo the Saudi Prometric Exam to practice in the Kingdom. Though Bangladesh has many nursing school graduates, most do

not have the required Prometric certifications, he added.

"Our nurses are very skilled and industrious ... We have received huge queries for the nurses. But here they need to have the Prometric certification. If we can prepare them in line with the Saudi requirements, it will open new opportunities for our nurses."

Only around 2 percent of Bangladeshi workers in the Kingdom are skilled professionals, but the number has been on the rise since the beginning of the year, according to data from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

Though most Bangladeshi migrant workers are seeking employment in Saudi Arabia's giga-projects under its Vision 2030 transformation plan, there has also been a growing demand for health workers from the South Asian nation.

Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Hypersonic weapon

Ukraine shows fragments of Russian missile

Ukraine on Sunday showed journalists fragments of the Russian missile used to strike the city of Dnipro last week, after Moscow said it had tested its new Oreshnik ballistic missile.

Russia on Thursday carried out a strike on the city which President Vladimir Putin said was a test of its new Oreshnik hypersonic intermediate-range ballistic missile. Ukraine's SBU security service displayed metal fragments, ranging from bulky to tiny, on fake grass in front of camouflage netting at an undisclosed location Sunday. The SBU did not name the missile used but said it was a type they had not seen before. **AFP**

Slow growth

India's killer smog throttles the economy

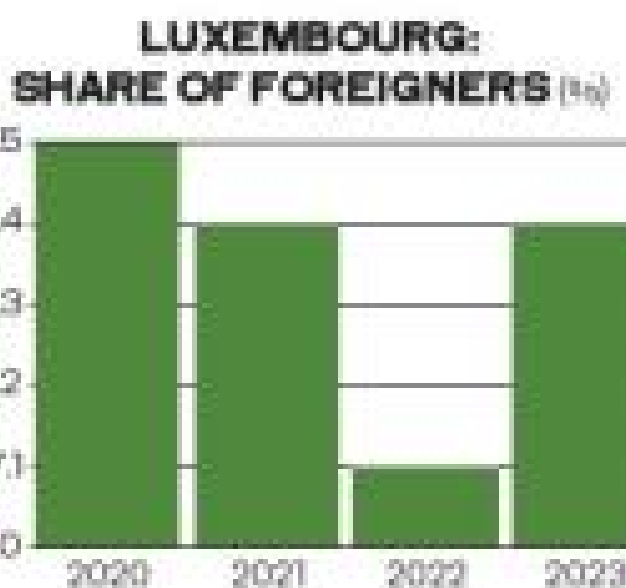
Noxious smog smothering the plains of north India is not only choking the lungs of residents and killing millions, but also slowing the country's economic growth.

Experts say India's worsening air pollution is having a ruinous impact on its economy — with one study estimating losses to the tune of \$95 billion annually, or roughly 3 percent of the country's GDP. The true extent of the economic price India is paying could be even greater.

Bhargav Krishna of the Delhi-based research collective Sustainable Futures Collaborative said "costs add up in every phase." **AFP**

The Day's FIGURES

Source: Statista



What We're Reading

FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

'The Physical Nature of Information'

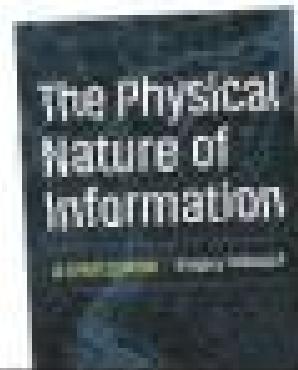
'THE PHYSICAL NATURE OF INFORMATION'

Applications of information theory span a broad range of disciplines today.

It teaches the tools universally used by physicists working on quantum computers and black holes, engineers designing self-driving cars, traders perfecting market strategies, chemists playing with molecules, biologists

studying cells and living beings, linguists analyzing languages, and neuroscientists figuring out how the brain works. No matter what area of science you specialize in, "The Physical Nature of Information"

unlocks the power of information theory to test the limits imposed by uncertainty.



Safety measures

China's local authorities step up security

Local authorities in China are stepping up safety management and police patrols following several high-profile mass killings, as the central government calls for enhanced public security, media reports said on Sunday.

In the eastern city of Wuxi, where a 21-year-old student's stabbing spree left eight people dead and 17 injured on Nov. 16, local officials convened on Friday to discuss measures to maintain social stability, state-run local media reported. **Reuters**

Taiwan emergency

Japan, US to compile missile plan

Japan and the US aim to compile a joint military plan for a possible Taiwan emergency that includes deploying missiles, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported on Sunday.

Under the plan expected to be compiled next month, the US would deploy missile units to the Nansei Islands of Japan's southwestern Kagoshima and Okinawa prefectures, and to the Philippines, the report said. Other weapons will be deployed to the Nansei Islands. **Reuters**

YOUR DAILY ARABIC PROVERB

We are not in need of much knowledge,
but rather a lot of good morals.

Saad Zaghloul
(Egyptian nationalist and statesman)

Opinion

Global shifts suggest Syria's 'waiting game' could pay off

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS

At the height of Syria's civil war, Bente Scheller, a political scientist and former German diplomat, published "The Wisdom of Syria's Waiting Game." In it, she argued that Syrian foreign policy under President Bashar Assad and, before that, his father Hafez Assad had long followed a strategy of "waiting out" international difficulties and crises. Damascus would rarely change the policies that provoked ire from outsiders, but instead waited for former critics to soften their stance.

This has been Assad's approach since the Syria conflict exploded in 2011, refusing demands to loosen his brutal grip on power, confident that, with considerable help from allies Russia and Iran, eventually it will be his enemies that bend. Thirteen years after many in the international community cut ties with Damascus and erected sanctions, the regional climate appears to be shifting, and Assad may believe that Syria's waiting game is once again paying off.

Syria's international rehabilitation has already begun. Even during the civil war, Damascus was never fully isolated. As well as allies Russia, Iran, and China, significant powers, notably Brazil and India, declined to sever ties. As it became clear Assad would survive, a trickle of Arab states, such as the UAE, Egypt, and Jordan, which had called for his overthrow reestablished ties. In 2023, Saudi Arabia favored Syria's return to the Arab League after its suspension 12 years earlier.

But there is still a long way to go. While back in the Arab League and attending regional events such as the recent Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh, Assad is far from fully reintegrated. Jordan, among others, protests the flow of Captagon from Syria, allegedly overseen by the Assad regime, while trade and diplomatic relations with the Arab world remain far below pre-2011 levels. Despite low-level talks with Ankara, detente with Türkiye appears to have stalled over continued Turkish control of northern Syria. Meanwhile, relations with the EU and the US remain severed, with economic sanctions still in place.



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www.arabnews.com/opinion

However, three recent developments could shift the dial. First, the Lebanon war. Almost 500,000 people have sought sanctuary in Syria since October, mostly Syrians who fled war in their own country during the previous decade. This helps Assad paint a more positive international image of his war-torn state — even if many refugees are reportedly trying to move on to either Iraq or rebel-held northern Syria. It also increases Syria's importance to the international aid community and raises the, albeit remote, possibility that Damascus might be included in Lebanese peace talks.

Second, the continued rise of populist right-wing parties in Europe increases the chance that ties with the continent could improve. Populist governments in Hungary and Italy have already pushed for the EU to loosen sanctions in exchange for Assad taking back Syrian refugees, and Rome even reopened its Damascus embassy in September.

Finally, there is the reelection of Donald Trump. On the one hand, there are signs that Trump's return could benefit Assad. His

pick for health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., recently noted how Trump wants to remove US troops from northeastern Syria. This would likely benefit Assad, who wants to recapture all this region.

It is also possible that Assad's relative neutrality during the Gaza war — not joining its allies Iran and Hezbollah in fighting Israel — may be rewarded with a less hawkish approach from the Trump administration. A softer US view of Russia under Trump might also benefit Assad. While the lifting of US sanctions on Damascus appears unlikely, Assad may hope that a less aggressive White House will enforce them less vigilantly.

However, although the geopolitical wheel appears to be turning, it is far from clear Assad will seize this opportunity. It requires considerable diplomatic skill to utilize these changing circumstances effectively. Although the Syrian leader has followed his father's "waiting game" diplomacy, it is yet to be seen if he has inherited Hafez Assad's ability to navigate a way back into international favor.

Even during the civil war, Damascus was never fully isolated



It is a tool of war, used to instill terror and rip communities apart

Breaking the silence on gender-based violence

DR. HANAN BALKHY



Dr. Hanan Balkhy is the World Health Organization's Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

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Each year about 800 000 women and girls are victims of gender-based violence. GBV takes many forms — physical, sexual, emotional and psychological — and its consequences are devastating. Cutting across cultures, borders and communities, GBV is a public health emergency, and a serious violation of human rights. It is a scourge that affects one in three women worldwide. Hold that figure in your head for a moment. If the scale of the problem is staggering, so, too, is the inadequacy of the global response.

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on Nov. 25 marks the beginning of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, an annual international campaign that runs until Dec. 10, Human Rights Day. This year, as we face up to the horrifying extent of GBV, a single question is paramount. How many more must suffer before the world takes meaningful action?

Nowhere is the crisis more pronounced than in conflict zones, such as Sudan and Gaza, where women and girls are being systematically targeted. In Sudan, where violence has spiraled since the outbreak of conflict, the UN reports that over 6.7 million people are at risk of GBV. Armed groups have weaponized sexual violence. It is a tool of war, used to instill terror and rip communities apart.

In Al-Jazirah state in Sudan, where the situation has deteriorated rapidly in recent weeks due to intense fighting, hunger has intensified, health facilities have been attacked, and there are reports of mass rapes and killings. The victims of this violence are not statistics — they are women and girls whose lives are being deliberately torn apart. Nor does the violence end when they flee their homes. Displacement brings new threats.

In Gaza, the conflict and blockade exposes women, girls, children, and adolescents to heightened risks of

violence. There has been a rise in incidents of sexual violence, domestic abuse, and trafficking. The psychological toll of such violence is profound.

These are not isolated incidents. The threats are systemic, pervasive, and cry out for immediate action. In humanitarian settings, women and girls face a double burden — the trauma of the emergency, whether wars, natural disasters or health outbreaks, coupled with the dramatic increase of GBV. Dysfunctional healthcare systems, when not destroyed, as well as the attacks on health facilities, mean survivors have little, if any, access to lifesaving care. And in food-insecure environments, victims are further marginalized, exposed to the threat of sexual exploitation and abuse, while access to healthcare becomes even more challenging.

Violence against women and girls is preventable. There is no excuse.

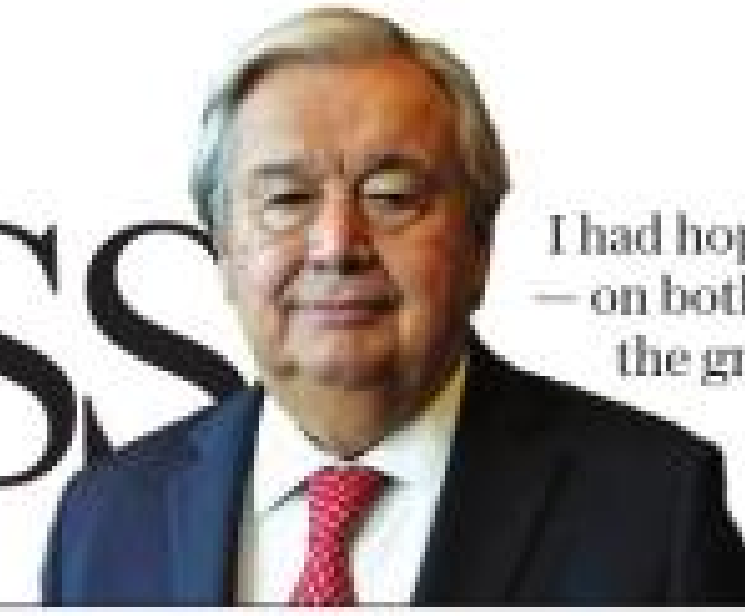
Global bodies such as the World Health Organization are making great strides in addressing GBV. While WHO's efforts

in my own region, the Eastern Mediterranean, have focused on strengthening health systems by training thousands of healthcare providers, and integrating GBV services into mental health and psychosocial support systems to offer comprehensive, culturally sensitive care, much more remains to be done.

GBV in Sudan, Gaza, and other conflict zones serves not only as a reminder of the urgent need for coordinated action, but also underscores how desperately we need peace to prevail. As we mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, we must ask ourselves what kind of world we want for women and girls, now and in the future.

As we stand in solidarity with survivors, we must commit to a world where no woman or girl is left behind. This means taking bold, immediate action. We must demand that leaders prioritize the health, safety, and rights of women and girls in every policy, decision, and program.

Business



I had hoped for a more ambitious outcome — on both finance and mitigation — to meet the great (climate) challenge we face.

Antonio Guterres
UN secretary-general

VISION 2030

KSA aims for \$600bn petchem growth with new committee

New initiative strengthens private sector role in driving growth, innovation

Nadim Hassan Riyadh

Saudi Arabia has established its first national committee for energy and petrochemicals under the Federation of Saudi Chambers to enhance private sector participation in these key industries.

With investments in the petrochemical sector expected to reach \$600 billion by 2030, the committee will work closely with government ministries, regulatory authorities, and major companies to unlock new opportunities for both local and international investors.

This initiative represents a significant step toward strengthening collaboration between the private sector and the government, facilitating policy development and accelerating investment in energy and petrochemicals.

Jaber bin Ayed Al-Fahad has been appointed as chairman, with Saad bin Ajlan Al-Ajlan serving as vice chairman.

The committee will focus on several strategic areas, including renewable energy projects, with a goal to achieve 50 percent renewable energy capacity, as well as localization programs aimed at achieving 75 percent local content in the energy sector.



The energy sector remains a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's economy, accounting for 40 percent of the country's gross domestic product. File

Energy remains a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's economy, accounting for 40 percent of the country's GDP and driving growth across key industries such as manufacturing, logistics, and mining. The formation of the new committee aligns with Saudi

Arabia's Vision 2030, which seeks to diversify the economy and open up new investment opportunities in strategic sectors, including energy and petrochemicals.

On Nov. 18, hundreds of business leaders from Saudi Arabia and Poland gathered in Warsaw for the

largest-ever Saudi-Polish Business Forum. The event underscored the growing economic ties between Saudi Arabia and Central and Eastern Europe, beyond the traditional focus on the energy sector. The forum was organized by the FSC and the Polish Chamber

of Commerce, with support from the Polish Ministry of Economic Development and Technology.

Saudi Arabia's push for economic diversification is driving substantial investments in the petrochemical industry, including the construction of new facilities,

the expansion of existing ones, and the integration of advanced technologies to improve efficiency and sustainability.

As part of its Vision 2030 goals, the Kingdom aims to become a global industrial hub, attracting foreign investments and fostering innovation in high-value industries. The petrochemical sector, with its considerable poten-

FASTFACT

The Kingdom is also placing a strong emphasis on high-value products, such as performance polymers, engineering plastics, and specialty chemicals.

tial for value creation, plays a central role in this strategy. Saudi Arabia's petrochemical industry has grown significantly, with annual production capacity now exceeding 118 million tonnes. This growth is supported by sustained investments in infrastructure, technology, and capacity enhancement.

The Kingdom is also placing a strong emphasis on high-value products, such as performance polymers, engineering plastics, and specialty chemicals, as it seeks to move up the value chain and capture a larger share of the global market.

AGRICULTURE

Saudi Arabia permits flour mills to export surplus production

Mohammed Al-Kinani Jeddah

Saudi Arabia has approved a plan allowing licensed flour mills to export surplus production to international markets, as long as local supply remains secure.

The General Food Security Authority issued the approval, stipulating that mills must repay the full value of government wheat subsidies for any quantities intended for export, according to the Saudi Press Agency.

Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al-Faris, governor of the GFSA, highlighted that this decision is in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which aims to support national industries and encourage competition based on high product quality.

Under Article 14 of the



In 2023, Saudi Arabia's grain production reached 1.75 million tonnes. File

Kingdom's Wheat Flour Production Law (2018), flour mills are prohibited from exporting wheat, flour, or related products without prior approval from the relevant authority. Additionally,

mills must repay any subsidies provided for these products before they are exported. Exports must also ensure that local supply is not disrupted.

Saudi Arabia has developed

a comprehensive strategy for its agricultural sector, focusing on sustainability, food security, and the welfare of farmers, alongside economic growth and preventative measures. Despite the Kingdom's desert climate and limited water resources, national policies are addressing critical challenges such as food and water security, sustainable agricultural practices, and ecological balance.

These efforts demonstrate Saudi Arabia's commitment to increasing agricultural productivity while responsibly managing its natural resources.

In 2023, Saudi Arabia's grain production reached 1.75 million tonnes, harvested from 323,000 hectares of a total 331,000 hectares planted, according to data from the General Authority

HUB

Morgan Stanley gets approval for regional HQ in Saudi Arabia

Nirmal Narayanan Riyadh

US-based investment bank Morgan Stanley has been granted approval to establish its regional headquarters in Saudi Arabia, as the Kingdom continues to attract international investment.

This move aligns with Saudi Arabia's regional headquarters program, which offers businesses various incentives, including a 30-year exemption from corporate income tax and withholding tax on headquarters activities, as well as access to discounts and support services. Saudi Investment Minister Khalid Al-Falih confirmed the progress of this initiative in October, stating that the Kingdom has successfully attracted 540 international companies to set up regional headquarters in Riyadh—exceeding its

2030 target of 500. "Establishing a regional HQ in Riyadh reflects the growth and development of Saudi Arabia and is a natural progression of our long history in the region," said Abdulaziz Alajaji, Morgan Stanley's CEO for Saudi Arabia and co-head of the bank's Middle

Establishing a regional HQ in Riyadh reflects the growth and development of Saudi Arabia.

Abdulaziz Alajaji
Morgan Stanley's CEO for Saudi Arabia

East and North Africa operations, according to Bloomberg.

Morgan Stanley first entered the Saudi market in 2007, launching an equity trading business in Riyadh, followed by the establishment of a Saudi equity fund in 2009.

TRADE

Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports surge 16.8% in third quarter of 2024

Chemical products led the Kingdom's non-energy exports in Q3: GASTAT

Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports reached SR79.48 billion (\$21.17 billion) in the third quarter of 2024, a rise of 16.76 percent compared to the same period in 2023, according to official data.

As reported by the General Authority for Statistics, the Kingdom exported non-oil goods worth SR19.58 billion to the UAE, followed by India and China at SR6.78 billion and SR6.48 billion.

Chemical products led Saudi Arabia's non-energy exports in the third quarter, accounting for 25.5 percent of total shipments, marking a 5.3 percent annual rise. Plastic and rubber products followed, comprising 24.9 percent of the total, with an 8.9 percent increase compared to the third quarter of 2023.

Strengthening the non-oil private sector is a key objective under Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 as the Kingdom works to diversify its economy and reduce reliance on crude oil revenues.

"The ratio of non-oil exports (including re-exports) to imports increased to 36.6 percent in the third quarter of 2024 from 34.9 percent in the third quarter of 2023. This was due to a 16.8 percent increase in non-oil exports and an 11.4 percent increase in imports over that period," said GASTAT.

In October, Moody's projected the Kingdom's non-hydrocarbon real gross domestic product would grow between 5 percent and 5.5 percent from 2025 to 2027, driven by increased government spending.

The International Monetary Fund projected the Saudi economy would expand by 4.6 percent in 2025, supported by diversification efforts to strengthen the non-oil private sector.

However, GASTAT highlighted that overall merchandise exports decreased by 7.3 percent year on year in the third quarter, primarily due to a 14.9 percent drop in oil exports.

Consequently, oil exports as a share of total exports fell to 71.3 percent in the third quarter from 77.3 percent recorded during the same period last year.

To stabilize the market, Saudi Arabia implemented a production cut of 500,000 barrels per day in April 2023, a reduction extended until December.

Key trade partners

China remained Saudi Arabia's top export destination in the third quarter, receiving SR41.94 billion worth of goods. Japan and South Korea followed at SR25.62 billion and SR25.50 billion, respectively, while India received SR24.35 billion. GASTAT data revealed that imports to the Kingdom increased by 11.4 percent year on year in the third quarter, reaching SR27.25 billion, while the nation's surplus



FAST FACT

The ratio of non-oil exports (including re-exports) to imports increased to 36.6 percent in the third quarter of 2024 from 34.9 percent in the third quarter of 2023.

Strengthening the non-oil private sector is a key objective under Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 as the Kingdom works to diversify its economy. File

of the merchandise trade balance decreased by 43.4 percent.

In the third quarter, China accounted for the largest share of imports at SR53.78 billion, followed by the US and India at SR17.58 billion and SR11 billion, respectively.

King Abdulaziz Sea Port in Dammam was the primary entry point for goods in the third quarter, with imports valued at SR64.88 billion, representing 29.9 percent of the total inbound shipments.

Among the other major terminals of entry for imports was Jeddah Islamic Sea Port, which handled 20.1 percent of the incoming shipments, followed by King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and King Abdulaziz International Airport, which handled 12.6 percent and 6.4 percent of the imports to the Kingdom.

September figures

In a separate report, GASTAT revealed that Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports increased

by 22.8 percent year on year in September, reaching SR25.95 billion. The authority revealed that the Kingdom sent non-energy goods valued at SR6.54 billion to the UAE in September, while India and China received inbound shipments worth SR2.35 billion and SR1.73 billion, respectively.

Plastic and rubber products comprised 25.7 percent of non-oil exports in September, a 19.5 percent annual rise, while chemical products accounted for 25.3 percent, marking a 4.4 percent increase.

The ratio of non-oil exports to imports rose to 37.1 percent in September, compared to 34.8 percent during the same month in 2023.

Despite the growth in non-oil exports, overall merchandise exports dropped 14.9 percent in September due to a 24.5 percent decline in oil exports. Consequently, the share of oil exports in total exports fell from 79.7 percent in September 2023 to 70.7 percent in September 2024.

China remained the leading trade partner, receiving SR13.91 billion in exports, followed by

Japan at SR7.98 billion and the UAE at SR7.49 billion.

Other major destinations for Saudi Arabia's exports include India, South Korea, the US, and Egypt, as well as Singapore, Bahrain and Poland.

In September, Saudi Arabia's exports to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries stood at SR12.08 billion, while the value of outbound shipments to Islamic non-Arab nations was SR6.71 billion.

According to GASTAT, the Kingdom's imports increased by 15 percent year on year in September, reaching SR69.88 billion, while the surplus of the merchandise trade balance decreased by 56.9 percent during the same period.

China held the first position in the Kingdom's imports, constituting 25.8 percent of total imports in September, valued at SR17.99 billion.

In September, Saudi Arabia received incoming shipments valued at SR5.39 billion and SR3.45 billion from the US and

Germany, respectively.

The report revealed that the Kingdom handled inbound shipments valued at SR19.65 billion or 28.1 percent of the overall imports at the King Abdulaziz Sea Port in Dammam in September.

Jeddah Islamic Sea Port handled 17.9 percent of the overall inbound shipments, while King Khalid International Airport managed 13.1 percent of the total incoming goods.

Saudi Arabia's non-oil sector is a key focus of its Vision 2030 plan to reduce reliance on oil and diversify the economy.

Initiatives like mega-projects, renewable energy investments, and expanding industries such as manufacturing, logistics, and tourism aim to drive growth and boost job creation.

These efforts are strengthening the Kingdom's global trade position and attracting foreign investment, with the non-oil sector playing an increasingly vital role in its economic transformation.

SAUDI ARABIA INTERNATIONAL TRADE (Q3, 2024)			
Key exported goods		Key imported goods	
Mineral products	SR198.8bn	Machinery & mechanical appliances, electrical equip.	SR57.5bn
Products of the chemical & allied industries	SR20.3bn	Vehicles, aircraft, vessels & associated transport equip.	SR32.5bn
Plastic & rubber	SR19.8bn	Products of the chemical & allied industries	SR21.3bn
Machinery & mechanical appliances, electrical equip.	SR11.7bn	Base metals & articles of base metals	SR21.2bn
Vehicles, aircraft, vessels & associated transport equip.	SR8.7bn	Mineral products	SR12.9bn

Source: General Authority for Statistics

ARAB NEWS

Business News



Upon finalization, QatarEnergy's stakes in these licenses will increase to 35.25 percent in Block 2913B and 33.025 percent in Block 2912. File

EXPANSION

QatarEnergy boosts global portfolio with Namibia Deal

Acquisition adds to Qatar's growing renewable energy initiatives

Miguel Hadchity Riyadh

QatarEnergy has further strengthened its global energy portfolio through a new agreement with TotalEnergies, boosting its ownership stakes in two offshore blocks in Namibia's Orange Basin.

According to a press release, the state-owned petroleum company will acquire an additional 5.25 percent interest in Block 2913B and 4.695 percent in Block 2912, subject to customary regulatory approvals.

Upon finalization, QatarEnergy's stakes in these licenses will increase to 35.25 percent in Block 2913B and 33.025 percent in Block 2912. TotalEnergies, the operator of both blocks, will maintain control with a 45.25 percent stake in Block 2913B and 42.475 percent in Block 2912. Other partners in the venture include Impact Oil & Gas, holding

9.5 percent in both blocks, and the National Petroleum Corporation of Namibia, which owns 10 percent in Block 2913B and 15 percent in Block 2912.

Located approximately 300 km offshore from Namibia, these blocks are situated in water depths ranging from 2,600 to 3,800 meters. The area is home to the promising Venus discovery in Block 2913B, which has drawn attention as a significant find that could play a pivotal role in Namibia's energy future.

Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi, Qatar's minister of state for energy affairs and CEO of QatarEnergy,



This agreement marks another important step in working with our partners toward the development of the Venus discovery.

Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi
QatarEnergy CEO



commented on the acquisition: "We are pleased to expand QatarEnergy's footprint in Namibia's upstream sector. This agreement marks another important step in working collaboratively with our partners toward the development of the Venus discovery located on Block 2913B."

He added: "I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Namibian authorities and our partners for their support, and we look forward to delivering on our exploration and potential development program." This latest offshore acquisition further complements QatarEnergy's growing portfolio in renewable energy. In October, the company announced its acquisition of a 50 percent stake in TotalEnergies' 1.25-gigawatt solar project in Iraq. The project is part of Iraq's \$27

billion Gas Growth Integrated Project and aims to boost the country's energy self-sufficiency by reducing its reliance on electricity imports and lowering environmental impacts.

The solar project, which will deploy 2 million bifacial solar panels, is expected to generate up to 1.25 GW of renewable energy at peak capacity, supplying electricity to around 350,000 homes in Iraq's Basra region. QatarEnergy will co-own the project with TotalEnergies, each holding a 50 percent stake.

QatarEnergy's dual focus on both traditional and renewable energy sources underscores its strategic approach to meeting global energy demands while addressing sustainability challenges. Its involvement in Namibia's offshore exploration and Iraq's renewable energy transition highlights the company's balanced portfolio of both fossil fuel and clean energy investments.

WINTER SEASON

Saudi Tourism Ministry strengthens Hail's private sector

Nour El-Shaerl Riyadh

The Saudi Ministry of Tourism has further empowered the private sector by launching the Ramlah Co. for Tourist Trips and Resorts, a new initiative to boost tourism activities in Hail,

one of the key destinations in Saudi Arabia's Winter Season campaign.

This move underscores the ministry's ongoing commitment to driving private sector growth as a central pillar of the Kingdom's tourism industry.

The launch of Ramlah Co. was officiated by Ahmed Al-Khateeb, Saudi minister of tourism and chairman of the Saudi Tourism Authority, during his visit to Hail, as reported by the Saudi Press Agency.

The Saudi Winter Season, which began in October and will continue through the first quarter of 2025, features seven

FASTFACTS

• Ramlah Co. for Tourist Trips and Resorts is a new initiative aimed at boosting tourism activities in Hail.

• The company offers a diverse range of activities in Hail and historical tours of landmarks like Jubbah.

major tourist destinations: Riyadh, Jeddah, the Red Sea, AlUla, the Eastern Province, Madinah, and Hail.

Ramlah Co.'s establishment is a significant step in enhancing Saudi Arabia's tourism offerings,

with private sector companies playing a vital role in designing and executing events, programs, and unique travel experiences. Fully licensed by the Ministry of Tourism, Ramlah Co. offers a diverse range of activities in Hail and historical tours of landmarks like Jubbah.

During his visit, Al-Khateeb also announced several initiatives that will boost tourism development in the region.

These include plans to offer 1,000 international training opportunities and 10,000 domestic training programs for Hail's residents, as per the minister's official X account.

BizBriefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Policy

Germany mulls moderate reforms of debt brake

New German finance minister has said that a moderate and targeted reform of the debt brake, which limits the public deficit to 0.35 percent of gross domestic product, was being discussed.

Germany's ruling Social Democrats and Greens in particular have bristled at the spending rules at a time when the Ukraine war has stifled growth in Europe's largest economy, unlike their more hawkish former coalition partner, the Free Democrats.

"I do think that targeted moderate reforms of the debt brake are possible," Joerg Kuckies said. **Reuters**

Data

Canada's retail sales grow 0.4% in September

Canada's retail sales grew 0.4 percent in September as consumers spent more at grocery stores and super-markets, data showed, and ensured the first quarterly increase in sales this year.

The month-on-month increase in September was the same pace of growth as in August but is likely to be followed by a rise of 0.7 percent in October, a preliminary estimate by Statistics Canada said.

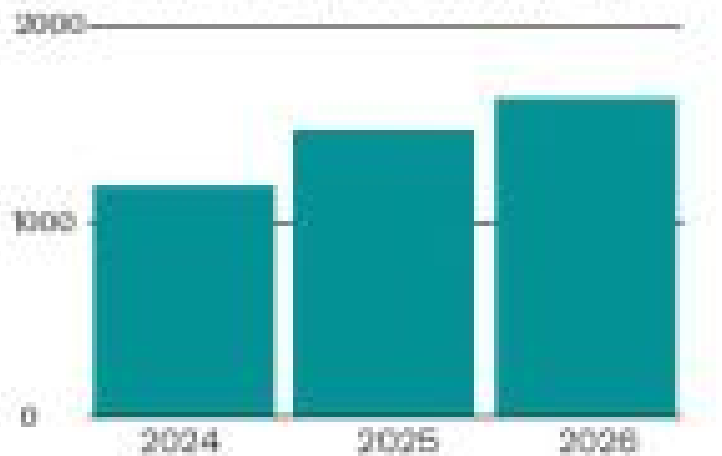
For the third quarter as a whole, sales rose 0.9 percent, the data showed. Retail sales fell in the first two quarters of the year. **Reuters**

Chart of THE DAY

The projected revenue of US e-commerce industry is \$1,541 billion by 2026.

Source: Statista

PROJECTED REVENUE OF US E-COMMERCE INDUSTRY (in billion USD)



What We're Reading

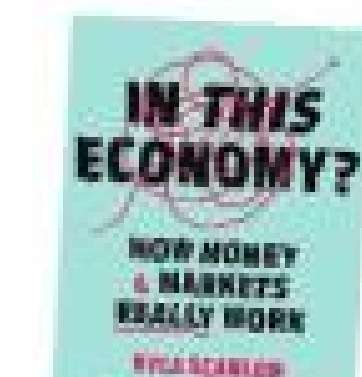
FOR THE TRAIN OR ON THE PLANE

In This Economy?

KYLA SCANLON

For anyone trying to make sense of disorienting headlines, there is no better interpreter than Kyla Scanlon. Through her witty illustrations, creative analogies, and insights, Scanlon breaks down everything you need

to know about how money and markets really work. This handbook reveals the hidden forces driving key economic outcomes and the outdated assumptions that constrain our political imagination, says a review published on goodreads.com.



Survey

Economic activity in Argentina slips

Argentina's economic activity fell 3.3 percent in September compared with the same month in the prior year, the country's official statistics agency said.

The result, Argentina's fourth consecutive month of year-on-year contraction, was an even larger contraction than the 2.7 percent drop expected by analysts surveyed by Reuters.

The grains-rich country's economic activity fell 0.3 percent versus a month earlier, breaking the momentum of growth built up over the previous months.

Fishing had the steepest decline in September, contracting 25.2 percent year on year. **Reuters**

Energy mix

Indonesia to cut coal-fired power to 33%

Top thermal coal exporter Indonesia is aiming to reduce coal-fired power to 33 percent in its energy mix by 2040 and increase the share of renewable energy production to 42 percent, a senior minister said.

President Prabowo Subianto said the country plans to retire all coal and fossil fuel power plants within the next 15 years to help reach net-zero emissions before 2050, a decade earlier than previously targeted.

Indonesia would need investment of \$235 billion to achieve that goal, as it needs to build renewable energy plants. **Reuters**

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Tourism Development Fund
CEO Qusai Al-Fakhri has been
appointed to the Executive
Committee of the World
Travel and Tourism Council.



Corporate

PRESS RELEASES FROM THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

PRESTIGIOUS RECOGNITION

Diriyah bags two 'Mostadam' sustainability certifications

Diriyah Company has been awarded two prestigious Mostadam (Ajwad) certifications for sustainability by the Ministry of Municipalities and Housing. The dynamic mixed-use developer was recognized for the Northern Diriyah Area and the Ritz-Carlton Residences development projects. The announcement was made at the Cityscape Global real estate event themed "The Future of Living," held in Riyadh from Nov. 11-14.

The certification — in line with the Kingdom's Quality of Life Program — a central aspect of Vision 2030 — is granted to residential buildings and communities based on ratings that measure the sustainability of these projects. This is achieved by applying sustainability and quality of life standards, such as increasing green spaces, providing safe pathways for pedestrians as well as cyclists, and reducing water waste by reusing it for irrigating the gardens and green areas of the project.

The Ajwad initiative has registered 74 projects, with five Diriyah projects included under the program to date, of which two have successfully attained this highly sought-after certification:

- Diriyah North (Masterplan certification — Diamond Level)
- The Ritz Carlton Residences (Asset certification — Gold Level)

The remaining three projects are scheduled for certification next year.

Diriyah North achieved 86 points on the Mostadam certification scale for its master plan, achieving Diamond level, the highest level of Mostadam



Diriyah Company was recognized for the Northern Diriyah Area and the Ritz-Carlton Residences development projects at Cityscape Global in Riyadh.

certification. This accomplishment underscores Diriyah's commitment to sustainability and enhancing the community's quality of life. Additional Diriyah districts will apply for the Mostadam Diamond certification in the coming months.

Diriyah North's sustainability achievements include meeting 100 percent of irrigation demand by Treated Sewage Effluent, providing 46 percent shaded walkways for pedestrians, and

The Diriyah project is fully committed to sustainability.

Jerry Inzerillo
Group CEO of Diriyah Company

dedicating 25 percent of the area to parks and open space.

Jerry Inzerillo, group CEO of Diriyah Company, said: "The Diriyah project is fully committed to sustainability. These latest

accreditations are a significant endorsement of our dedication to employing the highest standards of environmental protection in construction and design, enabling us to deliver a brand-new concept in urban development with a unique people-first urban regeneration project for everyone to enjoy."

The latest recognition follows a series of sustainability accolades recently awarded to Diriyah. Diriyah received LEED Platinum

certification in 2023, for the first phase of the Diriyah masterplan, becoming the first project in the Middle East to achieve the highest level of certification at masterplan level. Additionally, the Wadi Safar masterplan received the region's first SITES Gold pre-certification. Moreover, Bujairi Car Park and Samhan Car Park were also awarded Parksmart GOLD pre-certification in 2022 and 2023 respectively, for sustainability best practices.

Corporate Briefs

THE BEST OF THE BEST

Luxury Car

Ferrari 12Cilindri debuts in Saudi Arabia

Fast Auto Technic, the official Ferrari importer in the Kingdom, has officially welcomed the new 12Cilindri.

The new car was recently revealed during an event in the state-of-the-art Ferrari Riyadh showroom, followed by another event in Jeddah at the Edition Hotel, where Ferrari owners had the unique opportunity to be among the first to preview the car. The intimate unveiling ceremony underpins Ferrari's dedication to the client experience, with personalization emphasized at every touchpoint of the individual Ferrari journey.

Esports Tournament

AppGallery Gamers Cup concludes in UAE

The AppGallery Gamers Cup — All-Star Esports Tournament, concluded with resounding success recently at the DoubleTree by Hilton Resort and Spa Marjan Island in Ras Al-Khaimah. The tournament drew more than 400 gaming enthusiasts to celebrate the rapidly growing esports scene turning the city into a buzzing hub for gamers.

Organized under the guidance of the Emirates Esports Federation and in partnership with Ras Al-Khaimah Tourism Development Authority, China Cultural Center in the UAE, Nihao!China and Lotus Cars, the tournament celebrated the dynamic and fast-growing world of esports.

Security Solutions

Splunk Cloud now live on AWS UAE

Splunk, a Cisco company and a cybersecurity and observability leader, announced the official launch of its cloud offerings on Amazon Web Services Middle East in the UAE region, with Splunk Cloud Platform, Enterprise Security and Splunk IT Service Intelligence now available. This highly anticipated launch responds to the growing demand from organizations in the Middle East for locally provisioned Splunk services.

With the launch of Splunk Cloud on AWS UAE, businesses across the region can now access the full power of the Splunk Enterprise Platform as a scalable SaaS solution on AWS' highly secure cloud infrastructure.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

TDF CEO joins World Travel & Tourism Council Executive Committee

In a landmark achievement for Saudi Arabia's tourism sector, Tourism Development Fund CEO Qusai Al-Fakhri has been appointed to the Executive Committee of the World Travel and Tourism Council. This appointment highlights TDF's growing international influence and its vital role in transforming Saudi Arabia into a leading global tourism destination in line with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.

The Executive Committee membership, one of the highest roles bestowed on a Saudi entity within the WTTC, reflects TDF's commitment to sustainable tourism development and international collaboration. The WTTC unites key decision-makers, leaders, and experts from across the global tourism industry,

focusing on strategies that drive long-term growth in travel and tourism.

The TDF CEO's appointment underscores TDF's leadership in fostering international partnerships, advancing Saudi Arabia's tourism industry, and positioning the Kingdom as a top destination for foreign investment. By sharing insights and learning from global best practices, TDF will further accelerate the growth of Saudi tourism, enhancing its global standing and economic potential.

Al-Fakhri said: "Joining the WTTC's Executive Committee is a prestigious recognition of Saudi Arabia's growing influence in the global tourism landscape. It reaffirms TDF's commitment to driving tourism transformation in the Kingdom."

Abeer Medical Group has announced the soft launch of Lavender Health, a premium specialty healthcare facility dedicated to provide value-based healthcare services. The soft launch took place at the Global Health Exhibition, attended by high-profile guests including Dr. Ibrahim Alomar, assistant deputy minister for health investment, along with officials from the Ministry of Health and senior leadership from Abeer Medical Group. The event marked a significant milestone in the group's ongoing commitment to providing exceptional healthcare services, emphasizing quality and a delightful experience for everyone.

Alungal Mohammed, president of Abeer Medical Group,

SPECIALTY HEALTHCARE

Abeer announces soft launch of 'Lavender Health'



The soft launch took place at the Global Health Exhibition, attended by high-profile guests.

said: "As we embark on the 25th year in the Kingdom, I am happy to introduce Lavender Health, a new vertical with a selected set of specialties for the niche group. This facility is a testament to our dedication to high-quality healthcare and our mission to

meet the evolving needs of our care seekers."

Dr. Alomar said: "The launch of Lavender Health is a commendable initiative that aligns with our continual efforts to enhance healthcare accessibility and quality in the Kingdom. We applaud Abeer Medical Group for their initiative and dedication to improving the health and well-being of our citizens."

Arshdeep Singh has become the first player to be sold in the IPL auction in Jeddah.



Sport News

SPORTING HUB

Two-day Tata IPL 2025 Mega Auction begins in Jeddah

Event marks a new chapter for cricket in KSA, Saudi Arabian Cricket Federation says

Rashid Hassan Jeddah

With the stage set for the much-anticipated Indian Premier League 2025 Mega Auction, the bidding war began at the Abadi Al-Johar Arena in Jeddah on Sunday, where the squads of the 10 franchises will be finalized over two days from a pool of 574 players.

Jay Shah, secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India and chairman-elect of the apex cricket body, the International Cricket Council, arrived in the Red Sea city of Jeddah ahead of the TATA IPL 2025 auction.

"This marks Saudi Arabia's first-ever international cricket event, set to take place on November 24-25, 2024," the Saudi Arabian Cricket Federation said in a statement to Arab News.

Shah was warmly received at the airport by Prince Saud bin Mishal Al-Saud, chairman of SACC, along with Vice Chairman Nawaf Al-Otaibi and CEO Tariq Sagga.

A number of investors, franchise representatives and officials from the BCCI also arrived in Jeddah in preparation for the highly anticipated

auction, which is a key event in the global cricket calendar.

"This historic event marks a new chapter for cricket in Saudi Arabia, as the Kingdom continues to strengthen its position on the global sports stage, in line with its Vision 2030," SACC said.

The IPL will enter its 18th season next year, and the Red Sea City is an important stop en route, where the squads of the ten franchises — Chennai Super Kings, Delhi Capitals, Gujarat Titans, Kolkata Knight Riders, Lucknow Super Giants, Mumbai Indians, Punjab Kings, Rajasthan Royals, Royal Challengers Bengaluru, and Sunrisers Hyderabad — will be finalized at the mega auction.

After the news of the mega auction to be held at an overseas venue came out, the names of Dubai, London, Riyadh and Jeddah started doing the rounds before the Red Sea City was finalized by the BCCI for the marquee event.

The Abadi Al-Johar Arena, named after the famous Saudi singer, and which has seating capacity of 15,000, hosts the mega event, where the squads of the 10 franchises will be finalized.

Out of a stellar list of marquee players featuring in the TATA IPL



Jay Shah was received at the airport by Prince Saud bin Mishal Al-Saud, chairman of SACC. Supplied

FASTFACT

The IPL will enter its 18th season next year, and the Red Sea City is an important stop en route, where the squads of the ten franchises will be finalized at the mega auction.

auction, Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh raked in the money, becoming the first player to be sold in the Jeddah IPL auction. He received \$2.13 million as Punjab Kings used their right-to-match card to beat Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Unlike regular auctions, the mega auction that takes place every three years is spread over two days instead of one. It is one of the most-followed events in cricket, as the 10 IPL franchises build their squads for the next three years (2025-27).

As the Tata IPL auction, cricket's most lucrative event, takes place in Jeddah, franchise representatives will spend more than \$71 million across two days.

The Tata IPL 2025 Mega Auction will see plenty of twists, turns, unexpected signings and records broken, as the availability of Indian and international stars is greater than ever and all ten franchises are looking to rebuild their squads from the start.

A total of 12 marquee players, including Indian stars such as Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant and KL Rahul, have created a buzz within the cricket fraternity. Players have been shortlisted from an initial pool of 1,574 names.

These players will go under the hammer over the two-day mega auction in Jeddah. The list includes 208 overseas players, 12 uncapped overseas talents and 318 uncapped Indian players, according to the cricket reference book Wisden.

Sport Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Premier League Salah shines as Liverpool beat the Saints

Mohamed Salah fired Liverpool eight points clear at the top of the Premier League as the leaders survived a scare from lowly Southampton thanks to the Egyptian star's second half double in a 3-2 away win on Sunday.

Arne Slot's side had squandered the lead given to them by Dominik Szoboszlai's second goal this season.

Mateus Fernandes put bottom of the table Southampton ahead after the interval before Salah sparred Liverpool's blushes.

Salah coolly netted the equalizer and then held his nerve to stroke home the late penalty. **AFP**

Formula One Verstappen wins 4th consecutive world title

Max Verstappen claimed a fourth consecutive Formula One world title under the lights of the Las Vegas Grand Prix and was immediately hailed as "among the greats."

The 27-year-old Dutchman came home in fifth place in a race won by George Russell of Mercedes as he became just the sixth man after Michael Schumacher, Lewis Hamilton, Juan Manuel Fangio, Sebastian Vettel and Alain Prost to claim four championships. **AFP**



NBA Nuggets rip Lakers, Spurs beat Warriors

Nikola Jokic scored 34 points and grabbed 13 rebounds to spark the Denver Nuggets over the Los Angeles Lakers 127-102, continuing their dominance of the NBA rivalry. The Nuggets won for the 13th time in the past 14 contests against the Lakers, including ousting the Lakers in the playoffs the past two seasons.

Serbian star Jokic failed to achieve his sixth consecutive triple double, managing only eight assists, but his effort was plenty as Michael Porter Jr. added 24 points and 11 rebounds. **AFP**

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GOLF

Continental Europe and Great Britain & Ireland teams announced for 2025 Team Cup

Arab News Dubai

The first 18 competitors for the 2025 Continental Europe and Great Britain & Ireland Team Cup sides have been announced by European Ryder Cup captain Luke Donald, with an exciting mix of Ryder Cup stars and some of the DP World Tour's brightest talent scheduled to compete at Abu Dhabi Golf Resort from Jan 10-12, 2025.

After consulting with respective Team Cup captains Francesco Molinari, of Continental Europe, and Justin Rose, of Great Britain & Ireland, Donald has confirmed the first nine competitors in each side for next year's matchplay contest, who between them have won 70 DP World Tour victories, with six representatives from recent Ryder Cups.

Molinari will lead Continental Europe in their defence of the Team Cup, which they won in 2023 after defeating Great Britain & Ireland in the three-day matchplay contest. The teams will compete in one session of fourballs on the Friday, two sessions of foursomes on the Saturday and one session of singles on Sunday, with every player taking part in each session. Each side will have three



SPEED READ

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Francesco Molinari will lead Continental Europe in their defence of the Team Cup, which they won in 2023 after defeating Great Britain & Ireland in the contest. Getty Images

Ryder Cup players, with three-time Ryder Cup player Molinari joined by Nicolai Hojgaard and Thorbjorn Olesen, and six-time Ryder Cup star Rose teeing it up

alongside Tommy Fleetwood and Tyrrell Hatton.

Olesen, who represented Europe at the 2018 Ryder Cup, was one of the four automatic

qualifiers for Molinari's side, with fellow Scandinavians Rasmus Hojgaard and Niklas Norgaard and Italian Matteo Manassero also earning an automatic place

When asked about a possible return for 'Gladiator 3,' Denzel Washington told The New Yorker, 'Well, first of all, there's 25 years between Gladiator one and two, right? I hope to be around, but I'll be 70 in two months. So, 25 years from now, you know, I don't know. I just hope to be around.'



Finally

CLOSE UP

Fans praise co-star as May Calamawy cut from 'Gladiator II'



Pedro Pascal took to Instagram to share images of May Calamawy on the set of 'Gladiator II' this week, after the actress was largely cut from the film. Getty Images/Instagram

Arab News Dubai

Fans of Egyptian Palestinian "Moon Knight" actress May Calamawy have taken to social media to complain after almost all her scenes were cut from Ridley Scott's "Gladiator II," while co-star Pedro Pascal seemed to wade into the online debate this week by sharing behind-the-scenes shots including the actress.

Pascal posted a series of photographs on Instagram taken on the film shoot in Morocco, including several snaps with Calamawy, after she was removed from all promotional material and largely removed from the film.

"Thank you for reminding people May Calamawy was in 'Gladiator II.' So sad how she's

been treated in this," one user commented on his Instagram post.

The 38-year-old star played the dual role of Layla El-Faouly and Scarlet Scarab in Marvel series "Moon Knight" before being cast in the highly anticipated "Gladiator II," a sequel to the Oscar-winning original released in 2000.

Her casting in the film was first announced in May 2023.

At the time, Deadline reported that Scott had cast Calamawy after a lengthy search, writing: "While many of the leading roles were straight offers, Scott wanted to do a similar search

HIGHLIGHTS

• May Calamawy also stars in upcoming crime mystery 'The Actor,' alongside Andre Holland, Gemma Chan, Toby Jones and Tracey Ullman.

• 'Gladiator II' stars Paul Mescal and Denzel Washington, alongside Pedro Pascal.

he did for the (Paul) Mescal part for the role that Calamawy ultimately landed.

"Given the importance of the character to the story, Scott wanted a thorough search, and following multiple auditions Calamawy landed the part," Deadline added.

However, fans noticed that in the final cut, which hit cinemas last weekend, Calamawy is only seen in passing and she has no dialogue.

Scott has yet to comment on Calamawy's removal from the two hour and 28-minute film, although her storyline may have not made it past the editing stage in order to trim the runtime.

Regardless, fans on social media are unhappy about the cuts.

"May Calamawy you will always be loved!!! They didn't deserve you anyway," one social media user wrote on X, while another posted: "You had May Calamawy ... and you decided to cut her? This could've possibly been her breakout role!"

Calamawy also stars in upcoming crime mystery "The Actor," alongside André Holland, Gemma Chan, Toby Jones and Tracey Ullman.



Idris Elba

AMAZON MGM

Idris Elba joins 'Masters of the Universe'

Arab News Dubai

British actor Idris Elba is set to join "Masters of the Universe," the Travis Knight-directed film for Amazon MGM. Sources said that Elba will play the role of Duncan, Man-At-Arms. The film is a coproduction between Escape Artists and Mattel and is based on the latter's battle and planet-themed media franchise popular in the 1980s.

The film stars Alison Brie as Evil-Lyn, Nicholas Galitzine as He-Man, and Camila Mendes as Teela. Scripted by Chris Butler, the film is produced by Todd Black, Jason Blumenthal, Robbie Brenner and Steve Tisch.

SERIES

Jon Hamm show renewed at Apple TV+

Arab News Dubai

Apple TV+ has renewed the drama series "Your Friends & Neighbors" starring Jon Hamm for a second season, with season one officially setting its premiere date.

The first season will premiere on April 11 with two episodes, followed by one episode weekly through May 30.

The official logline states, "After being fired in disgrace, Andrew 'Coop' Cooper (Hamm), a hedge fund manager still grappling with his recent divorce, resorts to stealing from the homes of his neighbors in the exceedingly affluent Westmont Village, only to discover that the secrets and affairs hidden behind those wealthy facades might be more dangerous than he ever imagined."

TheSix

Plan ahead

Banish work blues by planning for the weekend with these activities in Jeddah.



The Wonder District Jeddah

With multiple zones, there's plenty to explore at the festival this month from shopping to food, and gaming to rides.



Jeddah Square Festival

Experience the city's longest slide at the festival, which has taken local social media by storm alongside a plethora of rides and food booths.



Ghezlan Al-Reem Heritage Village

This hidden gem is the perfect place to get away from the city and bask in the tranquility of rural landscape and scenic beauty.



Jeddah Yacht Club & Marina

Head over to this picturesque beachfront location to dine, stroll, or lounge at coffee or art cafes.



African Night by VibeScape

Enjoy African theater shows, paint battles, and stargazing, among other unexpected activities on Nov. 29. Book your pass through sightscape.com.



Little Farms

Indulge in scores of creative activities alongside learning about animals at this cozy farm, which is open from Wednesday to Saturday every week. Visit @littlefarmsa on Instagram for more details.

INTERVIEW

'Disney movies unite us,' says Louaye Moulayess as he promotes 'Moana 2'

Bhishma Krishna Kumar Dubai

From a young age, Lebanese animator Louaye Moulayess has loved Disney movies.

Speaking to Arab News about his latest project, "Moana 2," which is released in cinemas in the Middle East on Nov. 28, Moulayess said diverse voice is what makes Disney storytelling so compelling.

"We all grew up with different kinds of stories told to us, right? I grew up with specific Lebanese

stories. For example, if I turned on the TV in Lebanon as compared to somebody in Lisbon, for example, we're going to watch different things. Our sensibilities are going to be a bit different. Now we all have something in common, which is Disney movies," he told Arab News.

"Moana 2," set in ancient Polynesia, picks up three years after the events of the 2016 original. Moana (Auli'i Cravalho) receives an unexpected call from her wayfinding ancestors and



Lebanese animator Louaye Moulayess is based out of Burbank, California. Supplied

forms her own crew to travel the vast seas of Oceania, reuniting with her shapeshifting, magical friend, Maui (Dwayne Johnson).

"I loved the first movie. When I started working on 'Moana 2,' I felt like I already knew the characters very well. So, I knew Moana and I knew Maui ... I knew how they moved, I knew what their personalities were. But, at the same time, they became somebody else three years after.

"So, the challenge was a bit

different than a new movie, where we would have had to figure out the characters and how they moved and how they behave. The challenge in 'Moana 2' was, I know this character, but this character has changed. How do we make it new and find the specificity of this new personality?" Moulayess said.

When asked what sparked his interest in animation, Moulayess pointed to Disney again. "I think the moment I made my decision was after watching 'Lion King.'"