

999

SECURITY AND SAFETY FOR ALL

ISSUE 148 MAY 2024

BEWARE OF
CLONED WEBSITES

THE FUTURE OF
WORK IS GREEN

SPOTLIGHT:
DANGERS OF
THE METAVERSE

YOUTH IN THE CYBER TRAP

NEW ONLINE TRENDS THAT ENDANGER
CHILDREN'S DIGITAL WELL-BEING

IN THIS ISSUE: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT UAE'S NATIONAL HEALTHCARE INSURANCE SCHEME

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Warehousing
and Quality
Control



*The family serves
as the strongest
defence for our
children, who are
the most valuable
asset of our nation*

Digital guardrails

The wise leaders of the UAE consistently regard the nation's youth as its most valuable asset, a perspective that is clearly manifested in the government's robust monitoring guardrails against the digital threats targeting children in today's interconnected world.

In March, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, highlighted the extensive efforts to shut down over 160,000 websites and social media accounts promoting substance abuse and behaviours foreign to the UAE's cultural norms. The responsibility, His Highness stressed, falls upon families to vigilantly monitor their children's digital activities. "The family serves as the strongest defence for our children, who are the most valuable asset of our nation," His Highness stated.

While the Internet offers a vast playground of connections and opportunities, it also hosts precarious trends such as 'lookmaxxing', 'starvemaxxing', and 'chroming', which are explored in depth in our cover story this month. The allure and addictive nature of the Metaverse further underscore the necessity for parental awareness and intervention in the dual-edged nature of technological advancements, as discussed in this issue.

As technology propels the rapid dissemination of both information and misinformation, the virtual landscape becomes even more complicated and perilous, with the emergence of cloned websites. Cybercriminals craftily create "facsimiles" of reputable websites to swindle users, targeting sectors as diverse as retail, banking, and even government and news portals. Our feature on cloned websites offers insights into recognising and avoiding these digital traps.

Parallel to addressing these cyber threats, the UAE is making headway in the green sector. By 2030, the country aims to create 50,000 green jobs, marking a substantial commitment to sustainable development and economic diversification. Investments between Dh\$150-Dh\$200 billion are earmarked to support this initiative, setting a clear trajectory towards reduced carbon emissions and enhanced energy efficiency.

With sustainable investments poised to invigorate the green sector, it's essential to ensure that the workforce supporting this growth remains robust and healthy. To this end, starting 1 January 2025, the UAE Government will implement a mandatory national insurance scheme for all private-sector employees and domestic workers. Previously limited to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the mandatory health insurance scheme will now encompass Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Umm Al Quwain, Ajman, and Fujairah, aiming to provide comprehensive healthcare across the emirates.

As we focus on creating a healthier work environment, our Tips & Trivia section offers practical advice for reducing sedentary habits at work and enhancing overall workplace well-being.



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United Arab Emirates**

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Veteran Emirati
commentator, journalist,
and writer on local issues



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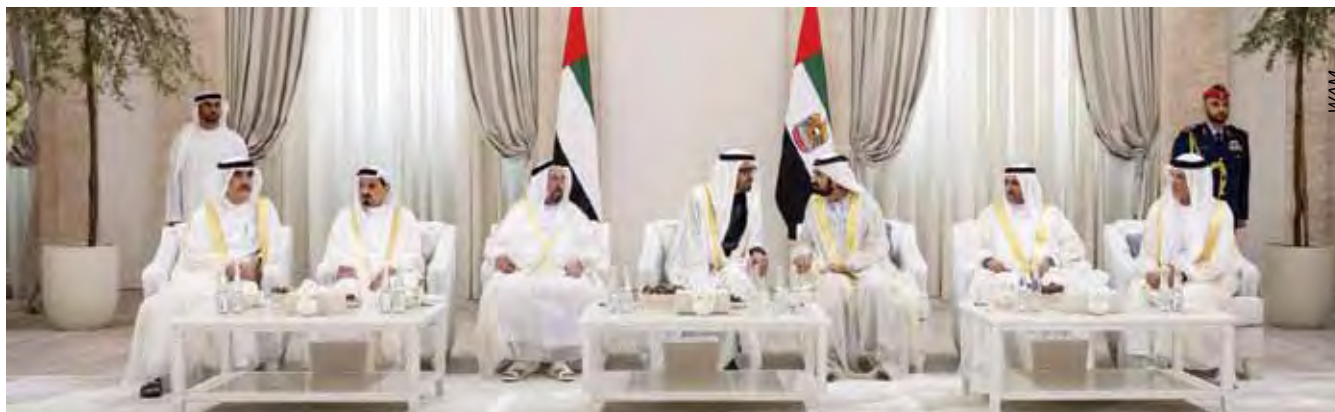
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Internationally
respected artist

President receives Rulers of Emirates on Eid Al Fitr



HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan along with Their Highnesses the Members of the Supreme Council and Rulers of the Emirates

PRESIDENT His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan received Their Highnesses the Members of the Supreme Council and Rulers of the Emirates, Crown Princes and Deputy Rulers, and sheikhs on the occasion of Eid Al Fitr.

Their Highnesses exchanged greetings and prayed to God to bless and bring joy to the UAE and its people and to maintain the country's stability and prosperity.

HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed received at Al Mushrif Palace in Abu Dhabi HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai; HH Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Supreme Council

Member and Ruler of Sharjah; HH Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al Nuaimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ajman; HH Sheikh Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Fujairah; HH Sheikh Saud bin Rashid Al Mu'alla, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Umm Al Qaiwain; and HH Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah.

Their Highnesses engaged in cordial conversation and conveyed their pride in the continued progress of the UAE under the leadership of HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, praying to God to bless the UAE with further success.

The reception was also attended by HH Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice-President, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Presidential Court; HH Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Ruler of Abu Dhabi and National Security Adviser; HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler's Representative in the Al Dhafra Region; HH Sheikh Suroor bin Mohammed Al Nahyan; HH Sheikh Nahyan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation; HH Lieutenant General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior; amongst other UAE government officials.

President directs infrastructure study after record UAE rainfall

PRESIDENT His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has instructed the relevant authorities to promptly study the infrastructure condition across the UAE, following the heaviest rainfall on record last month.

His Highness also ordered the provision of necessary support to all families affected by the severe weather, including relocating impacted families to safe locations in collaboration with local authorities.

Emphasising that the safety and security of citizens and residents are the UAE government's utmost priorities, His Highness commended the community's high level of awareness and responsibility during the adverse weather. His Highness praised the spirit of unity shown by the UAE community, highlighting it as the true essence of the UAE identity.

Furthermore, the President lauded the national and local emergency and crisis teams,

along with various authorities, for their effective management of rescue and evacuation efforts, which significantly contributed to the preservation of lives and properties.

During the unprecedented weather condition last month, Al Ain recorded 254 mm (10 inches) of rain in less than 24 hours, as reported by the National Meteorology Centre. This marked the highest rainfall since records started in 1949, predating the formation of the UAE in 1971.

UAE gov't waives outstanding school dues to support students

PRESIDENT His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has directed the settlement of outstanding financial dues for UAE resident students enrolled in public schools, amounting to a total of Dhs155 million.

This initiative applies to students residing in the UAE and registered in public schools, covering all their unpaid dues up to the 2023-2024 academic year, in collaboration with the Emirates Schools Establishment.

The move, initiated by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, exemplifies the UAE community's ethos of generosity and forms part of his commitment to supporting students and boosting their motivation to excel academically.

Mohammed bin Rashid lauds UAE's resilience amidst record rainfall



HIS Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, praised the nation's resilience amidst the unprecedented weather conditions recently faced by the country.

"We thank Allah for His grace and blessings for the safety of everyone in the UAE due to the exceptional weather conditions. Our country stands strong, secure, and safe under the wise leadership of my brother, the President of the UAE, and with the dedicated efforts of our loyal teams of citizens and residents who tirelessly work day and night," HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid stated on his official X (formerly Twitter) account.

The Vice-President highlighted how crises, such as severe weather events, reveal the inherent qualities and values of a nation and its people.

"Crises reveal the true character of nations and societies. The recent weather conditions underscored the commitment, consciousness, solidarity, and great love exhibited by all citizens and residents towards every corner of our country. May Allah safeguard the UAE and its people, and may its glory, prosperity, and safety endure perpetually," His Highness stated.

According to the National Centre of Meteorology, the downpour, surpassing any recorded since data collection began in 1949, affected numerous regions across the country.

Suqia's Board of Trustees formed to lead UAE's global water aid efforts

HIS Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has issued Decree No. 31 of 2024, establishing the Board of Trustees for the UAE Water Aid Foundation (Suqia).

The Board will be chaired by the Managing Director and CEO of the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA). It will include representatives from the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Emirates Red Crescent, United Arab Emirates University, and Khalifa University, along with three representatives from DEWA and the CEO of the UAE Water Aid Foundation. These representatives must be senior executives nominated by their respective organisations.

Effective from its date of issuance, the Decree will be published in the Official Gazette.

Founded in 2015 under the Mohammed



Suqia is a non-profit organisation committed to providing humanitarian aid by addressing water scarcity worldwide

bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives, Suqia is a non-profit organisation committed to providing humanitarian aid by

addressing water scarcity worldwide, significantly improving the lives of millions in various countries.

New judicial authority to streamline legal disputes in Dubai

HIS Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has issued Decree No. 29 of 2024 establishing the 'Judicial Authority for Resolving Jurisdictional Conflicts between DIFC Courts and Judicial Authorities in the Emirate of Dubai'.

The Decree applies to all judicial entities in Dubai, including the Court of Cassation, the Court of Appeal, the Court of First Instance, and any future courts within the Judicial Authority of Dubai. It also governs the DIFC Courts.

Under the Decree, the previously named

Judicial Tribunal for Dubai Courts and DIFC Courts will now be known as the 'Judicial Authority for Resolving Jurisdictional Conflicts between DIFC Courts and Judicial Authorities in Dubai', across all relevant legislation in Dubai.

The newly formed Authority will be chaired by the President of the Court of Cassation at Dubai Courts, with the Deputy Chief Justice of DIFC Courts serving as the Deputy Chairman. Additional members include the Secretary General of the Dubai Judicial Council, the President of the Court of Appeal at Dubai Courts, the President of the Court of First Instance at

Dubai Courts, and two judges from DIFC Courts, selected by the Chief Justice of DIFC Courts.

The Chairman may appoint an employee from any of Dubai's judicial bodies as the Secretary General of the Authority.

The Authority's primary role is to determine the appropriate court for disputes, specify enforceable judgements in the event of jurisdictional conflicts, and carry out tasks assigned by HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid or the Chairman of the Dubai Judicial Council. Decisions made by the Authority are final and not subject to appeal.

Mansour bin Zayed leads meeting to advance gov't work system



HH Sheikh Mansour discusses initiatives and policies with officials of the Ministerial Development Council

HIS Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice-President, Deputy Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Presidential Court, led the Ministerial Development Council meeting at

Qasr Al Watan in Abu Dhabi.

The Council deliberated on several initiatives, policies, and projects to enhance the governmental work system in the UAE.

Topics of discussion included labour market regulation, Emiratisation, and health sector advancements.

A review of proposed federal legislations pertaining to financial markets, civil aviation, artificial intelligence, and the labour market was also held. Improvement proposals for government housing services provided by the Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme were tackled.

The Council also assessed 2023 reports detailing the results and achievements of various federal entities, including the United Arab Emirates University, the UAE Space Agency, the Emirates Tourism Council, the Medical Liability Supreme Committee, and the Higher Committee for Government Digital Transformation.

Reports from the Postal Sector Regulation Committee and the Emirates Scientists Council were also reviewed.

Sultan Haitham visits Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque during state visit

HM Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of Oman visited the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, accompanied by His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice-President, Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the Presidential Court, and head of the honorary delegation accompanying the country's guest.

During his state visit to the UAE, HM Sultan Haitham and accompanying delegation paid respects at the tomb of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the UAE's Founding Father, recalling his enduring legacy and contributions to fostering dialogue, understanding, and coexistence globally.

The delegation received a briefing from Dr Yousef Al Obaidli, Director-General of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Centre, on the mosque's remarkable architecture, Islamic art, and its role in promoting peace and openness, inspired by Sheikh



HM Sultan Haitham during a tour at the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque accompanied by HH Sheikh Mansour

Zayed's values. They also explored the Centre's efforts in presenting Islamic

culture and enhancing intercultural understanding.

ADJD releases 200 inmates during Eid after debt settlement by donors

UNDER the directives of His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice-President of the UAE, Deputy Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department (ADJD), the ADJD has facilitated the release of 200 financially distressed inmates from rehabilitation and correctional centres.

This was made possible through the contributions of donors who settled the debts of inmates facing financial difficulties. It reflects strong community solidarity and the role of humanitarian contributions in enhancing social cohesion.

On this occasion, Counselor Yousef Saeed Alabri, Undersecretary of the ADJD,

reiterated the department's commitment to community initiatives that benefit inmates and their families.

Alabri commended the donors for their support, which enabled the inmates to reunite with their families in time to celebrate Eid Al Fitr during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince approves 1st tranche of housing-benefits packages

UNDER the directives of President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, has approved the initial disbursement of the 2024 housing and benefits packages for Emiratis in Abu Dhabi.

The first batch of housing and benefits packages, valued at Dhs2.18 billion, has been distributed amongst 1,502 citizens across the emirate.

The housing benefits package encompasses housing loans, ready-built



HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed and HH Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed

houses, and residential land grants, with a total value exceeding Dhs2.082 billion.

Furthermore, 95 citizens, including senior citizens, retirees with low incomes, and families of deceased citizens, have been exempted from housing loan payments,

ADMO

providing relief amounting to over Dhs98 million.

Mohamed Ali Al Shorafa, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Abu Dhabi Housing Authority, remarked, "The distribution of this year's first housing benefits package highlights our wise leadership's continued dedication to meeting the needs of our citizens and addressing their housing demands."

This initiative seeks to provide adequate housing that meets their needs, enhances their welfare, and supports their stability and overall quality of life, thereby nurturing the continuous holistic development of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Abu Dhabi, Dubai Crown Princes meet during Ramadan at Al Bateen Palace

HIS Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, welcomed His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai, at Al Bateen Palace during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Their Highnesses engaged in a discussion about strengthening community ties and upholding Emirati values of compassion and generosity throughout Ramadan.



HH Sheikh Khaled welcomes HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid at Al Bateen Palace

ADMO

The gathering, which included sheikhs, guests, and well-wishers, featured the Maghrib prayer and an iftar banquet hosted by HH Sheikh Khaled.

On this occasion, prayers were offered for the enduring health of the leadership and the continued security, stability, and prosperity of the UAE under the guidance of President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Their Highnesses also prayed for the prosperity and welfare of the UAE and its people and exchanged wishes for the lasting prosperity and blessings of Arab and Islamic nations worldwide.

Abu Dhabi Gov't Ramadan evening unites employees and their families

HIS Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, attended the Abu Dhabi Government Ramadan evening at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre.

The event, organised by the Abu Dhabi Government, brought together government employees and their families from various departments, entities, and authorities.

His Highness Sheikh Khaled conveyed heartfelt greetings to the attendees in celebration of the Holy Month of Ramadan, expressing hopes for the nation's continued progress and prosperity.



HH Sheikh Khaled mingling with children of Abu Dhabi Government employees

WAM

During the event, the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince encouraged government officials and employees in the emirate to strive for success in advancing development initiatives and achieving significant milestones in the emirate's progress. Additionally, His Highness engaged with several small and medium-sized business owners who shared their success stories with the audience.

The Abu Dhabi Government Ramadan evening is a key event in the government's social calendar, fostering a spirit of cooperation amongst employees and facilitating the exchange of ideas through enhanced communication.

Interior Minister honours 10th Holy Qur'an Tahbeer Award winners



HH Sheikh Saif bin Zayed is standing on stage with the recipients of the 10th session of the Holy Qur'an Tahbeer and its Sciences Award

HIS Highness Lieutenant General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, honoured the recipients of the 10th session of the Holy Qur'an Tahbeer and its Sciences Award, themed 'Year of Sustainability'. His Highness Sheikh Saif conveyed heartfelt congratulations to the winners and their families for their exceptional participation and exemplary performance in upholding

the Islamic values and ethics embodied in the Award.

Emphasising the Award's role in cultivating generations based on the moderate and tolerant principles of Islam, His Highness expressed gratitude to all participants, partners, sponsors, distinguished scholars, and media professionals for their collective efforts in advancing the humanitarian objectives of the Award.

Marking the 10th anniversary of the Tahbeer Award for the Holy Qur'an and its Sciences, His Highness Sheikh Saif bin Zayed also unveiled the Award's new visual identity, which aligns with the UAE's vision and cultural values. The updated slogan and components aim to enhance the Award's role in promoting knowledge, education, advanced science, sustainability, and positive values and ethics.

Saif bin Zayed bolsters security cooperation with Albanian counterpart

HIS Highness Lieutenant General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, met with Taulant Balla, Albania's Minister of Interior, and his accompanying delegation at the Ministry of Interior (Mol) headquarters in Abu Dhabi.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed UAE-Albania cooperation and explored ways to enhance their collaboration in police and security fields, boost coordination, and exchange expertise and knowledge in combating crime.

The meeting was attended by Major General Expert Khalifa Hareb Al Khaili, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Interior, along with several Mol officers. The Albanian delegation included Ridi Kurtezi, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania to the UAE, and other Albanian officials.



HH Sheikh Saif bin Zayed during the meeting with Taulant Balla, Albania's Minister of Interior



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13th Ramadan Councils Majlis wraps up, highlighting Emirati values



UNDER the patronage of His Highness Lt General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, the 13th edition of the Ramadan Councils Majlis concluded.

Held during the holy month of Ramadan, this year's theme was "Emirati Society: Ancient Roots, Global Horizons". Organised by the Ministry of Interior (Moi) through the Culture of Law Respect Office at the General Directorate of Community Protection and

Crime Prevention, in collaboration with the Security Media Department, the Councils took place across 21 locations in the emirates.

These sessions focused on the enduring values of Emirati society, emphasising their role in fostering cohesion and solidarity and in driving achievements towards global recognition.

The Moi aims to enhance community engagement and outreach across all emirates. To support this, a smart service

was provided through the 'moivae' smart application and the website www.moi.gov.ae, enabling public participation and access to information about the Councils.

This year's Ramadan Councils explored the central theme through three key topics: Family: The Pillar of Society, Emirati Values System, and Digital Communities, delving into traditional values, developmental dynamics, and Emirati achievements on a global scale.

Badran lauds Dubai Islamic Bank's Dhs5 million donation to Faraj Fund

DUBAI Islamic Bank donated Dhs5 million to the Ministry of Interior's Faraj Fund as part of the "Farajit" initiative, facilitating the release of 90 financially insolvent inmates from correctional and rehabilitation facilities across the nation.

HE Khalil Dawood Badran, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Faraj Fund, conveyed gratitude to Dubai Islamic Bank for its continued support in achieving the Fund's objectives.

The Farajit initiative, coinciding with the holy month of Ramadan and Zayed Humanitarian Day, aims to alleviate the burdens on the families of inmates and promote values of giving and social solidarity in the UAE.

Nawaf Al Rayssi, Head of Community Support Services at Dubai Islamic Bank, reaffirmed the bank's commitment to supporting the Faraj Fund's mission through ongoing collaborations. He emphasised that the Farajit initiative is a key part of the bank's charitable activities aimed at fostering social solidarity and supporting charitable projects.



Abu Dhabi Civil Defence marks 1st graduation of firefighting leaders



Al Mazrouei



Al Dhaheeri in a commemorative photo with the graduates

ABU Dhabi Civil Defence celebrated the graduation of 65 participants from the first international advanced course for firefighting leaders, held at the Civil Defence Academy in Singapore. The course aimed to equip firefighting leaders with diverse training programmes in firefighting and rescue techniques.

Major General Staff Pilot Faris Khalaf Al Mazrouei, Commander-in-Chief of Abu Dhabi Police, expressed his pride in the course's achievements, emphasising the importance of continually developing the skills of Civil Defence personnel. He highlighted the necessity of

providing top-quality training and qualification programmes to maintain the highest levels of performance and effectiveness in ensuring community security and safety.

The graduation ceremony was attended by Brigadier Salem Abdullah bin Barrak Al Dhaheeri, Acting Director-General of Abu Dhabi Civil Defence Authority; HE Jamal Abdullah Al Suwaidi, UAE's Ambassador to Singapore; General Commissioner Eric Yap, Commander of the Singapore Civil Defence Force; Brigadier Allan Shaw, Director of the Singapore Civil Defence Academy; and several delegations.

Brigadier Al Dhaheeri praised the Singapore Civil Defence's role as a strategic partner and lauded the outcomes of the cooperation between the two entities, expressing hopes for further future collaboration to bolster common goals. He congratulated the graduates on their advanced skill levels and high efficiency demonstrated during the course.

The course lasted for 25 weeks and included specialised theoretical and practical lectures on firefighting and rescue, handling hazardous materials, search and rescue, fire investigation, incident management, civil protection, and others.

Abu Dhabi Police warn public against online scams, financial fraud

ABU Dhabi Police have issued a warning about fraudulent calls and counterfeit electronic links being shared on social media platforms, to deceive the public with offers of fake services, incentives, and benefits.

The police force noted a resurgence of deceptive tactics by fraudsters aimed at misleading victims into divulging their banking details, which are then used for unauthorised financial transactions. They strongly advised the public to avoid clicking on suspicious links and to refrain from sharing confidential information such as bank account details, online banking passwords, personal identification numbers for ATMs, or security codes. They stressed that legitimate bank employees would never request such sensitive information.

In case of suspected fraud, the public is encouraged to promptly report the incident to the nearest police station or contact the safety service at 8002626 or send a text message to 2828 with any concerns about calls from unknown numbers asking for banking details.



Additionally, the public is advised to activate protection programmes to block

harmful websites and to remain vigilant against false temptations.

Al Marri discusses ways to bolster cooperation with Qatari Consul-General

LIEUTENANT General Abdullah Khalifa Al Marri, Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police, met with HE Saeed bin Ali Al Hajri, Consul-General of the State of Qatar, at the Police Officers Club.

The meeting was attended by Major General Expert Khalil Ibrahim Al Mansouri, Assistant Commander-in-chief for Criminal Investigation Affairs, Major General Ahmed Mohammed Rafie, Assistant Commander-in-chief for Administration Affairs, and Major General Abdullah Ali Al Ghaithi, Assistant Commander-in-Chief for Operations Affairs and several senior officers.

During the meeting, ways to enhance cooperation between Dubai Police and the Qatari Consulate were discussed, as well as topics of mutual interest.

Al Marri affirmed Dubai Police's keenness to strengthen cooperation and communication with diplomatic missions in the country and to



Al Marri during a meeting with the Consul-General of the State of Qatar at the Police Officers Club

strengthen the relations between the UAE and Qatar.

For his part, Al Hajri commended the continuous cooperation between the Qatari Consulate and Dubai Police across various sectors, noting the advanced level and progress of security and policing in Dubai

and the UAE, and the country's esteemed global reputation for security and safety.

Following the meeting, Al Marri gave Al Hajri a tour of the Police Officers Club and conveyed his appreciation for the visit, which is part of the routine diplomatic visits made by diplomatic entities to Dubai Police.

Dubai Police, Economic Security Centre unite against financial crimes

DUBAI Police and Dubai's Economic Security Centre have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation, strengthen partnerships, and exchange information to combat financial crimes.

The MoU was signed by Expert Major General Khalil Ibrahim Al Mansouri, Assistant Commandant for Criminal Investigation Affairs at Dubai Police, and Faisal bin Selaitin, Executive Director of Dubai's Economic Security Centre.

Al Mansouri stated that the agreement is in line with the directives of Lieutenant General Abdullah Khalifa Al Marri, Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police, to bolster the UAE's efforts against organised and cross-border crimes, including money laundering. The MoU aims to promote partnerships with various governmental, semi-governmental, and private sector entities to integrate roles and improve communication to combat financial crimes.



Al Mansouri (right) and bin Selaitin (left) during the MoU signing

Bin Selaitin praised the productive partnership, noting that the agreement is a step towards developing an effective strategy to combat various financial crimes, supporting the leadership's vision to safeguard the country's financial and economic system.

The agreement includes establishing a communication mechanism for the exchange of information, monitoring, and follow-up, implementing joint awareness campaigns, enhancing the performance of personnel, and conducting training courses and workshops to achieve the outlined objectives.

Ajman Police honour volunteers, sponsors at Police Carnival

BRIGADIER General Khalid Mohammed Al Nuaimi, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Ajman Police, honoured the volunteer team, supporting sponsors, Fazaa members, and billiards championship organisers at the Police Sports and Shooting Club's Carnival.

The event, attended by Brigadier General Obaid Al Matroushi, Director of the Club,

and other key personnel, recognised the collaborative efforts that contributed to the successful execution of the events.

Brigadier Al Nuaimi conveyed gratitude to the volunteers, sponsors, and supporters from various sectors for their continuous support of Ajman Police and the Police Club. He also commended the Club's employees, coaches,

and event organisers.

Lieutenant Colonel Noura Sultan Al Shamsi, Head of the Media and Public Relations section at Ajman Police, along with Majid Al Matroushi, the event organiser, also honoured the 32 participating companies and stores for their contributions to the Police Carnival.

Al Nuaimi praises emergency team's exemplary coordination efforts

MAJOR General Ali Abdullah bin Alwan Al Nuaimi, Commander-in-Chief of Ras Al Khaimah Police and Head of the Local Emergency, Crisis, and Disaster Management Team in Ras Al Khaimah, praised the efforts of the team in serving the public.

During a meeting, he highlighted the effective coordination between relevant authorities in managing potential hazards, determining hazard levels, and issuing necessary alerts.

The meeting also involved a review of the roles and responsibilities of each entity within the team, as well as strengthening the frameworks and means of coordination and cooperation amongst them to ensure their effective performance. The focus was on maintaining high standards and readiness to handle expected scenarios efficiently.



Al Nuaimi inspecting the Ras Al Khaimah Police's operations room

Sharjah Police, Sharjah Charity Society strengthen community cooperation

MAJOR General Saif Mohammad Al Zari Al Shamsi, Commander-in-Chief of Sharjah Police, met with Abdullah Sultan bin Khadem, Executive Director of Sharjah Charity Society, and his delegation in the presence of several police officers.

During the meeting, Al Shamsi highlighted the ongoing cooperation between Sharjah Police and the Sharjah Charity Society, emphasising the synergy between security and community roles through enhanced collaboration with various community organisations that support individual stability.

Al Shamsi said that these collective efforts and humanitarian initiatives in various sectors are driven by the extensive care and support under the wise vision of His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi,



Al Shamsi hands out a commemorative token to bin Khadem and Sharjah Charity Society delegation

Member of the Federal Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah.

Bin Khadem conveyed appreciation for the

ongoing partnership and initiatives between the two entities to improve the quality of life in Sharjah.

Fujairah Police conclude 'Beware of Sudden Deviation' traffic campaign

FUJAIRAH Police, represented by the Traffic and Patrols Department, concluded the second sub-campaign of 2024 titled 'Beware of Sudden Deviation'.

The campaign, which was part of the department's operational plan to instil principles of traffic culture, aligns with the strategy of the Ministry of Interior and Fujairah Police to ensure safe road mobility through modern traffic systems.

Colonel Saleh Mohammed Abdullah Al

Dhanhani, Director of the Traffic and Patrols Department, highlighted that sudden vehicle deviation is a major cause of severe accidents, often leading to injuries or fatalities. These accidents typically occur due to driver inattention, distraction, or insufficient spacing between vehicles, particularly at high speeds.

He urged drivers to adhere to lane discipline and use signals when changing lanes to prevent accidents and avoid

penalties. In Fujairah, sudden deviation is a traffic offence carrying a fine of Dhs1000 and 4 black traffic points.

Captain Moza Al Darmoki, Director of the Traffic Awareness and Media Branch, stressed the significance of traffic awareness campaigns in promoting safe driving. These campaigns involve various programmes, lectures, and the use of multimedia channels to enhance public knowledge and offer preventative guidance on road safety.

1st

Abu Dhabi's top position in the Middle East and North Africa region in the Smart City Index 2024 compiled by Switzerland's International Institute for Management Development (IMD). Both Abu Dhabi and Dubai placed 10th and 12th places, respectively, on the global list.

1st

UAE's ranking in a recent Reuters poll on economic growth forecast amongst the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The country's economy, expected to show strong performance in non-oil sectors, was forecast to expand 4.0% in 2024, an upgrade from 3.8% in January's poll.

1st

UAE's top position in the Middle East and North Africa region and No. 3 in the list of best countries in the world to launch a business this year, according to Business Name Generator. Multiple factors such as taxes, Internet speeds, cost of living, as well as projected GDP growth were part of the analysis.

1st

UAE's global leadership in green hydrogen competitiveness, according to a study by business consulting company Alvarez & Marsal. The report named the UAE as the world's lowest Levelised Cost of Hydrogen (LCoH) in 2023, which represents the cost of producing 1 kg of Green Hydrogen, including the investment and operational costs of the assets used in its production.

1st

UAE's ranking in the Middle East and North Africa region and second only to China in the list of the top emerging FDI destinations in the world, based on the latest FDI Confidence Index 2024 by global consulting firm Kearney. The country also made its entry into the top 10 most attractive markets globally for foreign direct investment.

BE IN THE LOOP

ISNR ABU DHABI 2024 RAMPS UP PREPARATIONS FOR MAY EVENT



The Supreme Organising Committee of the International Exhibition of National Security and Resilience (ISNR Abu Dhabi 2024) ramped up preparations for the May event. Led by Major General Dr Ahmed Nasser Al Raisi, Inspector General at the Ministry of Interior, President of Interpol, and Chairman of the Supreme Organising Committee of ISNR Abu Dhabi 2024, the meeting reviewed and refined work plans to ensure readiness across all sub-committees. Discussions focused on enhancing security, equipment manufacturing, advancing safety technologies, and optimising response mechanisms.

MOI COMMENDS TEAMS FOR EXCEPTIONAL RESPONSE TO UAE'S HEAVIEST RAINFALL ON RECORD



The Ministry of Interior (MOI), in collaboration with the National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority, the National Centre of Meteorology, and other strategic partners, commended the efforts of field teams in response to the UAE's heaviest rainfall on record that happened last month. The MOI also highlighted the crucial roles played by emergency response teams, including civil defence, ambulance services, rescue operations, and police patrols, in the recovery efforts.

MOI BRINGS JOY TO PEOPLE OF DETERMINATION DURING EID AL FITR



A delegation from the Ministry of Interior visited the Al-Modif Centre at the Zayed Higher Organisation for People of Determination under the 'Eid Mubarak' initiative. This community-driven effort focuses on enhancing communication and social responsibility, as well as promoting kindness and generosity, especially amongst children of determination. The visit included gift distributions, purchase vouchers, and Eidiyas to fulfil the children's wishes. The delegation included representatives from Public Relations, Community Police, Child Protection Centre, and the Women's Police Association.

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UAE NEWS BULLETIN

POLICE NEWS, PEOPLE, NUMBERS AND EVENTS

ABU DHABI

DHS600,000

An Asian man was arrested in Abu Dhabi for embezzling Dhs600,000 from his employer. The arrest was conducted by the Al Khalidiya Police Centre's Criminal Investigation Department after the company reported the incident. The investigation is ongoing, pending further legal action.

AJMAN

23,638

Ajman Police responded to 23,638 emergency calls during the heaviest rainfall in 75 years to hit the UAE, assisting with incidents of stranded vehicles. They also recorded 923 cases of vehicle damage due to flooding.

DUBAI

Dubai Police

494

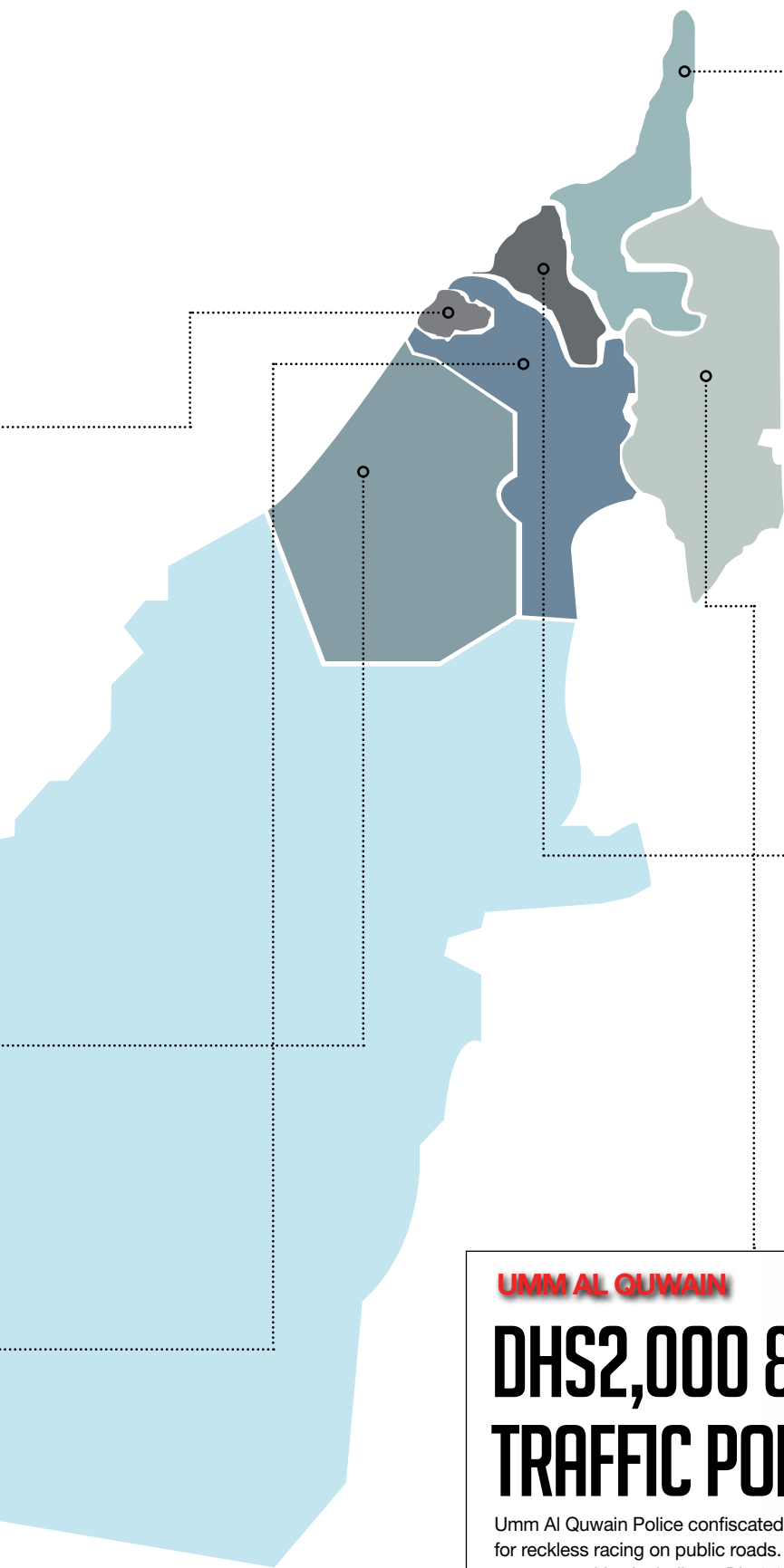
Dubai Police arrested 494 individuals in 2023 for phone fraud schemes targeting bank customers. The fraudsters used phone calls, emails, SMS, and social media links to deceive victims and gain access to their savings and bank accounts.

RAS AL KHAIMAH

RAK POLICE

1,038

Ras Al Khaimah Police arrested a fireworks dealer found with 1,038 boxes of fireworks, weighing 18.5 tonnes, stored on a farm behind his house. Trading, importing, exporting, or manufacturing fireworks without legal permits attracts a minimum fine of Dhs100,000 and/or a prison sentence of at least one year.



FUJAIRAH

Fujairah Police

DHS1,000 & 4 BLACK TRAFFIC POINTS

Fujairah Police initiated the 'Beware of Sudden Deviation' traffic safety campaign for 2024. Violating this rule incurs a Dhs1,000 fine and 4 black traffic points, as part of efforts of the Ministry of Interior and Fujairah Police to ensure safe road usage.

SHARJAH

2

Two Asian women in Sharjah died from suffocation caused by carbon monoxide poisoning from their private vehicle when traffic stopped due to the huge puddles of water on the streets last month. Despite authorities' attempts to save them, both were pronounced dead at Al Qasimi Hospital.

UMM AL QUWAIN

DHS2,000 & 23 BLACK TRAFFIC POINTS

Umm Al Quwain Police confiscated several vehicles for reckless racing on public roads. Offenders face severe penalties including a Dhs2,000 fine, 23 black traffic points, and 60 days of vehicle impoundment.

YOUTH IN THE CYBER TRAP

999 EXAMINES NEW ONLINE TRENDS THAT
ENDANGER CHILDREN'S DIGITAL WELL-BEING

BY K NIVEDITA







“The family serves as the strongest defence for our children. We emphasise the importance of cooperation amongst families, media, and schools to safeguard our children, who are the most valuable asset of our nation

HH SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM

Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai

“President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan stressed that protecting the rights of children and ensuring their proper upbringing will always rank high amongst the UAE's priorities

HH LT GENERAL SHEIKH SAIF BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior



In response to increasing online trends that negatively impact today's youth, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, announced in March 2024 that the Digital Wellbeing Council, under the leadership of His Highness Lt General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, has shut down over 160,000 websites and account in 2022.

These platforms had been targeting “our youth, through promoting substance use and unfavourable habits that are foreign to our culture”, according to His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid.

The decisive action by the Council, in collaboration with various social media platforms, highlighted the UAE's commitment to safeguarding the digital well-being of its younger population.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid emphasised that safeguarding the welfare of children includes monitoring how they spend their time online. “The family serves as the strongest defence for our children. It is crucial to instil awareness in new generations. We emphasise the importance of cooperation amongst families, media, and schools to safeguard our children, who are the most valuable asset of our nation,” His Highness stressed.

Following this remark, a Dubai court upheld in March 2024 a previous ruling to imprison a man who befriended children through video games and then sent them indecent material. Police, who monitored his Instagram account since 2023, discovered he was enticing children with money and found indecent child videos on his devices.

HIGH PRIORITY

At the World Summit “WeProtect” in 2022, His Highness Sheikh Saif said that “the health and safety of any child are crucial to the development and upbringing of a normal family and society”.

“With the challenges of modern technologies in abundance, it is necessary that we act decisively to eliminate the phenomenon of online child sexual exploitation to ensure their safety and security,” His Highness stated.

Addressing the challenges posed by modern technology, His Highness Sheikh Saif stressed, “President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan stressed that protecting the rights of children and ensuring their proper upbringing will always rank high amongst the UAE's priorities.”

“For this reason, we are required to secure a supportive and child-friendly digital environment. The family's role is always an essential element for

the success of all these efforts,” His Highness Sheikh Saif said.

DIGITAL HAZARDS

Many people overlook the broader implications of social media beyond time-wasting and eye strain. Grooming and predation represent a dark facet of cybercrimes, where anonymous criminals exploit children and young adults across the globe for purposes ranging from sexual exploitation to recruitment in terrorism.

Police forces across the emirates have been repeatedly alerting parents to these dangers. In 2023, the WeProtect Global Alliance reported that predators on gaming platforms could target children in under 19 seconds, with an 87 per cent increase in child sexual abuse material cases since 2019.

Meanwhile, a 2021 survey across 54 countries found that 44 per cent of 18-20-year-olds in the MENA region had experienced online exploitation in childhood, often sending compromising images to predators.

The UAE government is aggressively tackling this issue, through the Higher Committee for Child Protection at the Ministry of Interior and collaborating with global entities like Interpol. These efforts focus on enhancing international cooperation with the private sector and NGOs to safeguard children and prosecute offenders.

“ This frequent use of social media can put young people at risk for various dangers. Cyberbullying, privacy issues, and negative impacts on mental health and education are some of the risks that they may face while using their platforms



ANDREW FAWCETT

Partner, Digital and Data
at Al Tamimi and Company

CONTENT EXPOSURE

Andrew Fawcett, Partner, Digital and Data, at Al Tamimi and Company, Abu Dhabi, tells 999, “The UAE has one of the highest rates of internet usage per head of population with 99 per cent of the population being active on social media, which implies that more children and adolescents are also engaging in online activity.”

“In fact, social media platforms have become a crucial aspect of their lives, as it has transferred the way they communicate, connect and share information. However, this frequent use of social media can put young people at risk for various dangers. Cyberbullying, privacy issues, and negative impacts on mental health and education are some of the risks that they may face while using their platforms,” added Fawcett.

A 2023 study by experts from Saudi Arabia found a correlation between mobile phone and social media use amongst teenagers and a rise in mental distress, self-harm, and suicidal tendencies. “Youth use cell phones and other forms of media in large numbers, resulting in chronic sleep loss, which has a negative influence on cognitive ability, school performance, and socio-emotional functioning,” said the study, published in the *National Library of Medicine*, the world’s largest biomedical online resource.

“According to data from several cross-sectional, longitudinal, and empirical



research, smartphone and social media use amongst teenagers relates to an increase in mental distress, self-harming behaviours, and suicidality,” the study added.

WHO IS OUT THERE?

In the digital era, the influence of social media and viral videos can lead to dangerous behaviours amongst the youth.

For example, in late 2018, a 21-year-old in Abu Dhabi was tried in court for using Instagram to incite violence against schoolteachers. Meanwhile, a case in Dubai in 2021 involved a 12-year-old girl being blackmailed by a 15-year-old boy over private photos shared online, illustrating the risks of sharing personal information on the Internet. Additionally, the allure of social media fame has driven reckless driving amongst teenagers, as reported by police across the emirates during Eid 2024 festivities.

SECRETIVE BEHAVIOUR

Parenting in the digital era has become more challenging due to young people’s exposure to dangerous social media trends. Often, children and teenagers keep their online activities secret, including the apps they use, leaving

What’s in the numbers?

160,000

The number of websites and accounts that the Digital Well-being Council and various social media platforms have shut down in 2022.

99%

The UAE’s Internet penetration rate, making it the world’s most connected country, according to the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority.

105

The number of information, complaints, and reports about cybercrimes against children that Dubai Police’s Digital Guardians has received from September 2023 to January 2024.

“In response to this challenge, the UAE has enacted laws to combat cyber threats and ensure the safety and security of its citizens and residents in the digital world



DR HASSAN ELHAIS

Lawyer at a Dubai-based law firm

them vulnerable to cybercriminals. In January 2024, the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department emphasised the importance of teaching children about online safety, such as not sharing personal information with strangers to prevent online blackmail.

A distressing case in Europe involving a 14-year-old boy underscored these dangers. Unbeknownst to his family, the boy engaged in online conversations with someone he believed to be a girl, sharing personal photos. This individual, actually a male predator, used the photos to blackmail the boy into committing explicit acts on Skype.

This incident, which resulted in self-harm and a suicide attempt by the boy, revealed a broader issue of predators targeting children online. The police investigation pointed to similar cases worldwide, emphasising the urgent need for digital awareness and protection for young people.

LAW KEEPERS ON ALERT

“In the age of the Internet, where communication and interaction occur digitally, the frequency of online threats and cybercrimes has become a growing concern for governments worldwide. In response to this challenge, the UAE has enacted laws to combat cyber threats and ensure the safety and security of its citizens and residents in the digital world,” Dr Hassan Elhais, lawyer at a Dubai-based law firm, told 999.

Guided by the leadership, police forces in the UAE have been amongst the most alert in the world about the criminal networks that target children and the youth on virtual platforms.

His Highness Sheikh Saif said in 2022, “The UAE, which works in close

partnership with organisations worldwide, has achieved a 34 per cent decrease in the number of cases of online sexual exploitation of children between 2019 and 2020, the beginning of the pandemic. Children are our future, and we leave no stone unturned to protect them.”

DIGITAL GUARDIANS

The Anti-Cybercrime Department of Dubai had set up an initiative called ‘Digital Guardians’ to combat cybercrimes committed against children. A brainchild of Lieutenant General Abdullah Khalifa Al Marri, Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police, it serves as a platform where people, including victims, could provide information and register complaints, amongst others.

Captain Ahmad Al Jallaf, Head of the Anti-Cybercrimes Against Children Section at the Cybercrime Investigation Department at Dubai Police, said, “The chances of adults exploiting children have increased. This newly established section has received 105 pieces of information, which includes complaints and reports about cybercrimes against children since September 2023. The areas that the section focuses on are

crimes such as cyberbullying, spread of child pornography, different kinds of exploitation, cyber threats and extortion against children.”

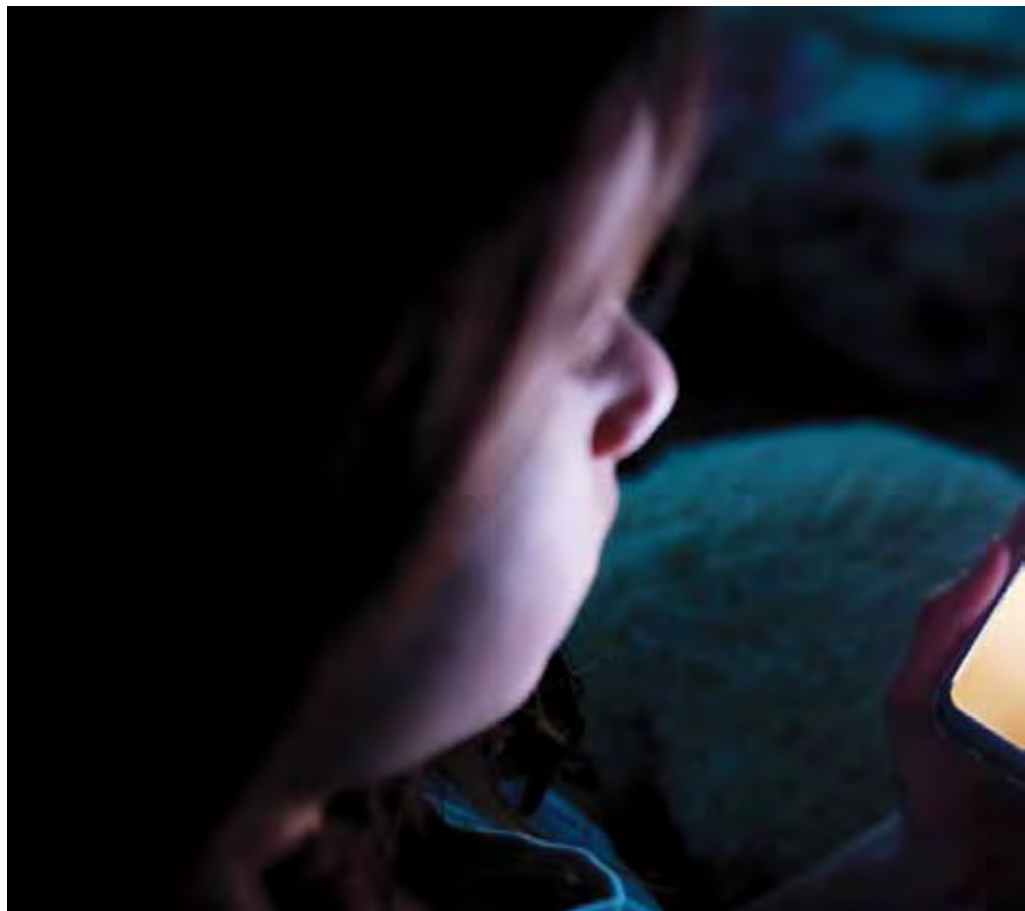
This September 2023 to January 2024 figure reported by Dubai Police revealed two realities— how vulnerable children in the country are and how police are doing the most important thing, which is listening to them, to fight the menace.

UAE'S LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Fawcett said that cybercriminals are difficult to track down because they often trick the child by posing as a child themselves.

However, Fawcett said, “The UAE has implemented laws to protect the rights of children and to combat cybercrimes related to children, information technology, and the Internet. These laws include Child Rights Law 3 of 2016 and the aforementioned Cybercrimes Law,” said Fawcett.

He explained that under Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 Concerning Child Rights, also known as “Wadeema’s Law”, children are entitled to certain rights, including the right to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The law also covers the





rights of children with disabilities, children in conflict with the law, and children in need of special protection.

In particular, Wadeema's Law states: The telecommunications companies and

Internet service providers shall notify the competent authorities or the concerned entities of any child pornography materials being circulated through social media and the Internet, and they also shall provide necessary information and data on the persons, entities, or sites that proliferate such material or intend to mislead the children.

THE FINE LINE

Children's engagement with social media not only impacts their well-being but also carries legal risks. Fawcett highlighted the importance of this awareness, telling 999, "It is crucial for young people to be aware of the potential consequences of their online behaviour and to use social media responsibly."

Fawcett and Dr Elhais pointed to the UAE's robust legislative framework as a countermeasure. Specifically, they referenced the Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021 on Combatting Rumours and Cybercrimes, which came into effect on 2nd January 2022, covering offences like privacy invasion, blackmail, defamation, and publishing non-compliant media content.

Meanwhile, Article 43 of the law stipulates penalties for actions that damage someone's reputation or provoke disrespect through information systems, with consequences escalating to provisional imprisonment for up to 10 years.

“The ‘Digital Guardians’ platform has received 105 pieces of information, which includes complaints and reports about cybercrimes against children since September 2023



CAPTAIN AHMAD AL JALLAF

Head of the Anti-Cybercrimes Against Children Section at the Cybercrime Investigation Department at Dubai Police

Federal Decree-Law No. 31/2021 introduces penalties for threats against individuals, with Articles 402 to 404 specifying the punishments based on the threat's nature and severity.

Dr Elhais stressed the importance of these legislative measures, saying, "The UAE's legislative measures against online threats by imposing penalties for electronic extortion, intimidation, and defamation, aim to create a safer digital environment for its citizens and residents. However, as technology evolves, it remains imperative to continually assess and update these laws to effectively combat emerging cyber threats."



4 DANGEROUS SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS

While a vast playground of connections and opportunities beyond the confines of real life, social media has been identified as addictive due to the dopamine release triggered by notifications. Concern over its impact on children has led to legislative actions across the world.

In March 2024, Florida passed legislation significantly restricting social media use amongst young adults. The new law prohibits social media use for those under 14 and requires parental consent for users aged 14 and 15.

Florida House Speaker Paul Renner emphasised the vulnerability of young users, saying, “Children do not have a brain that is developed enough to be able to understand that they are being sucked into addictive technologies. They cannot see the harm and move away. As a result, we have to step in for them.”

This concern arises amidst the backdrop of trending social media challenges this year, highlighting the potential harm and superficial nature of these trends targeting young audiences.



1

Lookmaxxing

This is a trend that has gained momentum on platforms like Reddit and TikTok, and poses significant concerns for the mental health of its predominantly young male audience. It encourages teens to enhance their physical attractiveness, often pushing them beyond healthy lifestyle changes to obsess over perceived imperfections. Mewing, a tongue exercise purported to alter jaw shape, has become a popular remedy within this trend. However, as lookmaxxing spreads globally, it increasingly leads young people to feel dissatisfied with their appearances, exacerbating body image issues and potentially harmful behaviour.

2

Starvemaxxing

An offshoot of Lookmaxxing, Starvemaxxing is ringing warning bells amongst parents and teachers worldwide. This practice involves individuals starving themselves to achieve an unrealistic standard of facial aesthetics. Despite some proponents claiming it's merely about dieting or portion control, the National Eating Disorders Association in the US warns that Starvemaxxing can lead to severe eating disorders, underscoring the medical dangers of such dietary restrictions. While extreme dieting has traditionally been associated with young women, Starvemaxxing highlights the impact of media-driven beauty standards on young men as well. In response, many online users are speaking out against the trend, and platforms like TikTok are taking steps to offer support by providing resources for those struggling with body image issues and eating disorders.

3

Chroming

This dangerous social media challenge has drawn widespread concern after the tragic death of an 11-year-old boy in the UK who was participating in the activity at a friend's house. This trend involves the inhalation of volatile substances, including petrol, kerosene, paint thinners, spray paint, permanent markers, nail polish remover, hairspray, deodorants, and lighter fluid, seeking euphoric and hallucinogenic effects. However, these substances lead to severe adverse effects, such as slurred speech, depression, headaches, and dizziness. The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne in Australia warned that Chroming is predominantly an issue amongst adolescents. Patients treated for Chroming can only be discharged following a thorough risk assessment to evaluate the likelihood of repeat ingestion or attempts at self-harm, underscoring the grave risks associated with this trend.

4

'The Belt' challenge

A recent trend on platforms like TikTok, this challenge has raised serious safety concerns. Originating from a well-known hip-hop dancer known for his physical and sensuous choreography, the challenge involves using a belt as a prop to dance to a remix song. Introduced in January 2024, the dancer intended the belt to symbolise life's struggles. However, the choreography includes potentially hazardous movements such as wrapping a belt around the throat and fists. These actions pose risks to those participating in the dance challenge on social media.

What parents can do

Protecting children from online dangers requires the same level of vigilance as other aspects of a child's upbringing. Here are several effective strategies:

Let's talk



The value of conversation is immeasurable. Andrew Fawcett, Partner, Digital and Data at Al Tamimi and Company, Abu Dhabi, tells **999** that parents must listen to their children and remain open and supportive. "Teach your child how to protect and not give away personal information," he says. Key advice includes not downloading files without scanning them, avoiding links from strangers or dubious sources, and never sending personal pictures to strangers.

Establishing trust



Children must know they can confide in their parents without fear of repercussions, even if they make a mistake. Online predators often exploit a lack of trust between children and adults or familial discord. Cybercriminals gain the trust of children and adolescents before coaxing them into sexual or other acts.

Parental controls



Using parental controls can restrict access to inappropriate sites while allowing enjoyable internet use. These software settings, available on most devices, enable parents to monitor online activity, track locations, and block unsuitable content. Fawcett emphasises the importance of helping children make safe online choices, including selecting suitable games and apps. "Discuss with your child their boundaries when online," he says, adding that it's important for children to recognise signs of grooming.

Scroll together



Experts recommend setting aside time for parents and children to explore social media together. This not only strengthens the bond but also educates children about the Internet's nature. UNICEF suggests making online activities a part of family routine, playing games together, and discussing favourite apps or recent videos. "Discuss your child's online experience with them regularly," Fawcett tells **999**. Conversely, parents should encourage physical activities and limit screen time.

Protect your data



If a child uses your device, adjust the privacy settings to safeguard your accounts, including location, photos, videos, and banking details.

Ensure your software and antivirus are up to date to leverage new security features and address potential vulnerabilities. Covering your camera with a sticker when not in use can prevent webcam hacking.

Trolls menace



Trolls, prevalent on social media, often post critical and hurtful comments about various topics and celebrities. Since children and adolescents are keen to express themselves and are sensitive about their views, teaching them the value of silence and kindness is essential.

Report cybercrimes

The Aman service, which is a communication channel for security, community, and traffic, can be approached 24/7 through the toll-free number **8002626 (AMAN2626)**, by text messages to **(2828)** or by e-mail **(aman@adpolice.gov.ae)**. The **Abu Dhabi Police General Command app** is another way to get in touch with the cops.

ONLINE HAZARDS

999 LISTS SOME OF THE MOST PERILOUS
THREATS CHILDREN FACE ON THE INTERNET

BY K NIVEDITA



Cyberbullying

This is the digital counterpart to traditional playground or neighbourhood park bullying. UNICEF categorises cyberbullying as bullying occurring on social media, messaging, gaming platforms, and mobile phones. It entails repeated behaviour with harsh words, threats, and shame, designed to scare or anger the targeted individuals.

In December 2023, a child in the US committed suicide following cyberbullying during an online game, leading to the arrest and confession of another young boy for harassment that contributed to his death. Additionally, a 15-year-old from a prestigious private school in the US committed suicide due to cyberbullying in April 2022.

The term “Cyberbullicide” was introduced by S Hinduja and JW Patchin in 2010 after their survey of 2,000 middle school students indicated that suicide could result indirectly or directly from online aggression. The insidious nature of cyberbullying lies in its invisibility to most parents and teachers, leaving young victims to suffer in silence until it becomes unbearable.



Body image issues

On social media, everyone appears content and visually perfect, without signs of being frumpy or overweight. What impact does viewing endless images of glamorous influencers, celebrities, and models, who never show common issues like bloating, have on teenagers experiencing physical and hormonal changes? A study published in February 2023 by the *American Psychological Association* found that “Teens and young adults who reduced their social media use by 50 per cent for just a few weeks saw significant improvement in how they felt about both their weight and their overall appearance compared with peers who maintained consistent levels of social media use.”

The study’s lead author Gary Goldfield from the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute in Canada highlighted that adolescents are particularly vulnerable and at risk of developing eating disorders, mental health issues, and a negative self-image.

Violent content

UNICEF warns that children can be exposed to age-inappropriate content online, including violent, dangerous, frightening, or sexually explicit materials. Misinformation or fake news also poses a significant risk, rapidly spreading and impacting both the real and digital worlds. Fake news, defined as outright lies or misleading information that mimics reality, undermines credible information and can cause substantial harm. Children and adolescents, lacking the maturity to discern truth from falsehood, are particularly susceptible to misinformation and fake news. In an era marked by terrorism and escalating cybercrime, the thought of a terrorist recruiter influencing a child online is alarming. Many young individuals in different parts of the world who were apprehended for attempting to join terrorist groups have reported being contacted by someone they met online.



Addiction

Time flies on social media. Users, intending only to briefly check their feeds or play a game, often find themselves spending more time than planned and still not feeling satisfied. Children and young adults are particularly susceptible to the novelty, excitement, and sense of accomplishment provided by online activities. It's easy to overlook that social media was designed for entertainment, not as a replacement for real life. Signs of social media addiction include constant post-checking, meticulous planning of future posts or reels, and an inability to focus on tasks without frequent social media breaks.

For addicts, no experience feels complete without sharing it online for likes and reposts. Many young people express a desire to cut down their social media use but find themselves unable to break free. Studies indicate that nearly 27 per cent of children who engage with social media for three hours or more daily experience poor mental health. During a critical period of brain development, prolonged social media exposure can adversely affect social skills.



Online Blackmail

Today's children and young adults have grown up in a digital age, unfamiliar with a world without the internet. The norm of oversharing on social media is prevalent, encompassing even the trivial aspects of daily life. A study by online security company AVG Technologies highlighted the risks associated with this trend, revealing that nearly a third of teens (28 per cent) regretted posting something online, 32 per cent had requested the removal of online content about them due to disliking it (61 per cent, or finding it too personal (28 per cent).

The lack of mature judgement in children means that a seemingly harmless image or status update can lead to embarrassment and reputational damage. The permanence of internet content poses a significant risk; even deleted posts can be preserved by someone. An innocuous photo uploaded by an individual can become fodder for viral memes or identity theft. The situation is exacerbated by children's extensive online networks, including hundreds of "friends" and followers, many of whom are strangers. This exposes them to various threats, underscoring the dangers of sharing personal information with unknown individuals online.



Cybersecurity

International criminal syndicates actively search for vulnerabilities in individuals' online security. Children, often unaware of the risks, can inadvertently become the weakest link in a family's cybersecurity by disclosing sensitive information such as addresses, parental names, personal details, and contact numbers. They may also be enticed into clicking links that introduce malware into their Internet networks, compromising safety.

Organisations like Interpol alert the public to the globalisation of cybercrimes, including phishing and identity theft. With criminals employing AI-powered deepfake technology to defraud adults of millions in dollars and dirhams, children are particularly vulnerable to such sophisticated tactics. Engaging with seemingly friendly and interesting individuals online can lead children to lower their guard and share information, potentially resulting in financial and other damages to themselves and their families.

The UAE enforces strict cyber protocols, criminalising the unconsented sharing of images, posting content from accident scenes, or tracking individuals' locations. Abusive content uploads are also illegal. Should a child unknowingly breach these laws, they could face severe penalties.





Ali Obaid is a veteran Emirati commentator, journalist, and writer on local issues

A few weeks ago, a report titled “Where to go if World War III breaks out” caught my attention. It opens a discussion about the prevalence of conflicts such as the war in Gaza, the fighting in Sudan, and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. It poses a thought-provoking question about where one could possibly find refuge in the event of a third world war.

The report presents a list of the safest destinations should war actually break out, starting from the southernmost point of the Earth, Antarctica, with its beautiful landscapes. However, it notes that it is unlikely that a large number of people could relocate there in the event of war due to its location.

The report explains how war could result in famine and damage to agricultural crops. In this context, it highlights Argentina as a suitable refuge due to its abundant agricultural resources, particularly its extensive wheat production. Meanwhile, Chile—the most advanced country in South America with diversity in crops and natural resources—is also listed as a safe haven. Also included in the list is Fiji, which, despite having only 6,000 soldiers in its army, is rich in natural resources and ranks high in the Global Peace Index. Several countries known for their political neutrality and high rankings in the Global Peace Index, such as Switzerland, Greenland, Iceland, New Zealand, Bhutan, South Africa, and Indonesia, round up the list.

The report may have explored potential safe havens; however, the primary issue in the context of a global war extends beyond merely identifying such locations. It critically involves the logistical and strategic complexities associated with accessing these places. It disregards whether long-range missiles, fighter jets, atomic bombs, and nuclear weapons would allow fleeing humans to move from one place to

another on the Earth’s surface without being targeted or affected by warfare.

The search for safe havens is fundamentally flawed as a solution, given the impossibility of achieving complete safety in the face of modern warfare’s nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. This assertion is substantiated by the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which countries worldwide were compelled to shut their borders and airspace, severely restricting movement to such an extent that even birds were prevented from entering territories. This scenario demonstrated that in times of

global crisis, conventional measures of isolation do not guarantee the protection of populations. Similarly, the search for a safe haven in the event of a third world war is not a viable solution, as no place would be entirely safe given humanity’s development of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

The idea of safe havens should first be established in our thoughts and attitudes before seeking physical locations. By letting go of selfish ambitions and the drive to expand at others’ expense, we can create a safer, more peaceful environment for ourselves and everyone around us.

The Earth can sustain all inhabitants provided that human intentions to live peacefully are genuine. Historically,

the recurrent theme of conflict—from past events through to present-day wars and likely future conflicts—can primarily be attributed to human greed and the desire to possess what belongs to others. This cyclical nature of conflict is further perpetuated by the transmission of these negative principles from one generation to another.

Let’s not search for safe havens on Earth; search for them within ourselves. We should not harbour hatred within us if we desire to live peacefully.

Historically, the recurrent theme of conflict—from past events through to present-day wars and likely future conflicts—can primarily be attributed to human greed and the desire to possess what belongs to others



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ATTACK of the CLONES

CLONED WEBSITE SCAMS ARE INCREASING GLOBALLY.
999 DELVES INTO THE RISKS THESE FAKE SITES POSE TO UAE RESIDENTS AND
HIGHLIGHTS HOW AUTHORITIES ARE BOLSTERING DIGITAL DEFENCES

BY ABDUL WASEY



Cybercriminals are increasingly employing cloned websites, imitating reputable sites' designs and using their prestige to deceive users. These deceptive online portals often look identical to the original, with slight URL changes, misleading users with adverts for counterfeit goods or dubious cryptocurrency schemes.

A recent alert from Dubai's toll operator, Salik, sounded the alarm bell for potential financial losses from falling prey to scammers imitating their website.

On 4th April 2024, the company advised its customers to remain vigilant against cloned websites, fraudulent emails, and social media scams falsely carrying its name and label. These schemes were designed to deceive potential investors into buying Salik stocks, 'recharging' a Salik account, or 'purchasing' a tag.

Ibrahim Sultan Al Haddad, CEO of Salik, informed the public, saying, "We are constantly striving to raise awareness amongst the general public to remain alert about fake websites as well as various phishing emails and scams that

are masquerading our identity and being circulated across social media and other platforms."

Al Haddad cautioned, "We would like to advise customers not to reveal their personal and financial details to these accounts as these are fraudulent schemes run by scammers operating from outside the country, attempting to steal data and money." He added that the company only uses official brokers and official channels, and through the Dubai Financial Market (DFM) for those who are interested in purchasing Salik shares.

The sophistication and authenticity of cloned websites make them particularly dangerous. However, this is not something people can afford to overlook because it can jeopardize a life, identity, or asset. The UAE authorities remind everyone to practise constant vigilance and scrutiny when clicking on links or entering personal information online.

THE TRICKS

Cloned websites often target popular retail, travel booking, and

banking platforms. They are designed by scammers in such a way that the differences from the original sites are subtle enough to be easily overlooked by unsuspecting users.

The usual method involves distributing links through emails, SMS, or social media posts. These messages urge recipients to take immediate action. For instance, an email might impersonate the IRS, instructing the recipient to pay an outstanding balance via a provided link to avoid fines or even a business shutdown.

Alternatively, an SMS might offer a limited-time discount on popular items like the latest gadgets and home appliances, directing users to a fraudulent site.

In more direct attacks, the message might appear to come from a bank, asking customers to authenticate their credentials on what is actually a cloned banking portal.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

In August 2023, the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department (ADJD) posted a video on Instagram highlighting the risks of buying

“As criminals constantly change their criminal methods, Dubai Police work tirelessly to qualify elites of officers and employees specialised in utilising the latest technologies to tackle emerging and transnational organised crime



**LIEUTENANT GENERAL
ABDULLAH KHALIFA AL MARRI**
Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police

products from unreliable websites, often advertised through social media ads.

The video cautioned that these fraudulent websites lure customers with exceptionally low prices. Once enticed, customers who complete transactions via bank transfers or credit cards find themselves victims of scams, often left

without their purchased items or with counterfeit goods.

Educational initiatives and public awareness campaigns carried out by UAE authorities are crucial in equipping the public with the skills to identify and avoid cloned websites. These programmes aim to improve the overall cybersecurity literacy of the population. However, these campaigns can only serve as reminders, and ultimately, the responsibility to protect our assets from cybercriminals rests on our shoulders.

Cybersecurity experts stress the importance of continuous vigilance and enhanced security measures to keep pace with the evolving tactics of cybercriminals. They advocate for a multi-layered security approach that combines technology, education, and legal measures.

Lieutenant General Abdullah Khalifa Al Marri, Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police, recently reaffirmed the force's commitment to thwarting cyber fraud and online scams. "As criminals constantly change their criminal methods, Dubai Police work tirelessly to qualify elites of officers and employees specialised in utilising the latest technologies to tackle emerging and transnational organised crime," said Al Marri.

PERSISTENT THREAT

Website cloning is neither a new phenomenon nor is it limited to the business sector. In June 2023, the organisers of a popular weekly raffle draw in the UAE warned residents about scammers using its name in deceptive schemes.

According to an email alert sent to the draw participants, fake websites have been "replicating" its official site to trick individuals into believing they are entering the legitimate draw. These cloned sites are often used for phishing attacks, aiming to capture sensitive personal details, including bank account credentials, from unsuspecting victims.

BEYOND FAKE NEWS

The rise of technology enables information to spread swiftly, but it also allows disinformation to propagate at a similar pace. The media not only contends with the issue of fake news but also with the challenge posed by cloned websites.

The proliferation of deceptive sites, which mimic reputable sources to dupe people out of their cash, can erode public trust in the media.

In August 2017, the Emirates News Agency, WAM, was targeted by an imitation website designed to disseminate fake news.

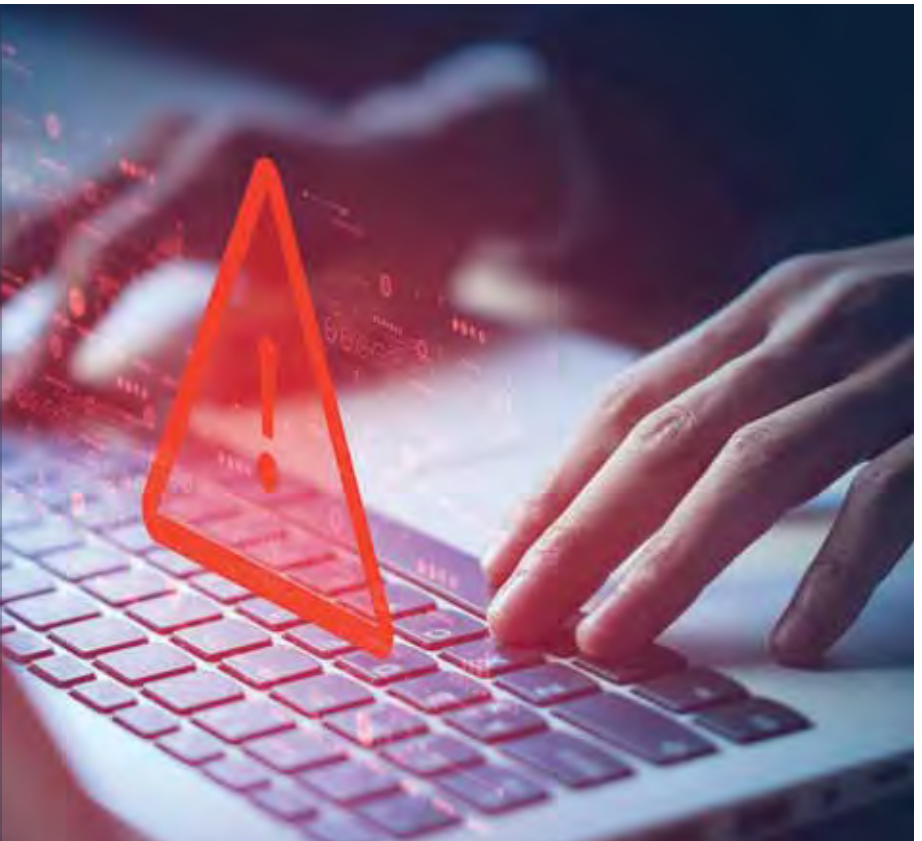
Types of commonly cloned websites

Official service websites:

These sites often impersonate government services offering applications for passports, tax returns, pension advice, or driving test bookings. They mislead by charging higher fees for services that are cheaper or free on official sites.

Retail and reputable

business websites: These cloned websites mimic well-known retailers, financial institutions, or banks to steal personal information and money.



“Some organisations have been working on copying our website to publish false news about the country.



And it is not just us; it happened to Russia Today, before that to BBC, and France 24

MOHAMED AL RAYSSI

Executive Director of WAM

WAM acknowledged attempts to clone its website by unknown sources and advised users to access their site only through the link provided on their official Twitter page.

At that time, Mohamed Al Rayssi, Executive Director of WAM, was quoted by the media, saying, “Some organisations have been working on copying our website to publish false news about the country. And it is not just us; it happened to Russia Today, before that to BBC, and France 24. We have been warning about this, as such fabrications are increasing.”

A more recent example happened with the Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) newspaper last month. A cloned version



of the PDI website fabricated an article describing a contentious exchange between two well-known social media personalities, falsely promoting a dubious investment platform. The newspaper categorically denied publishing the story.

The bogus site replicated PDI's appearance—using similar colours, typography, and interface—differing only in URL.

Such deception not only misleads readers but also damages the credibility of legitimate news outlets, which could diminish public confidence and disrupt informed public discourse.

PRIME TARGETS

Government organisations and travel & leisure companies across the globe are often key targets of website cloning.

In January 2024, fake websites that resembled the RTA's official site tricked people into losing money. When someone searched for 'Nol recharge' on Google, the first four results were all scam sites. A Dubai resident even lost Dh\$1,051 when he tried to add Dh\$30 to his Nol card on one of these sites. According to the victim, the site was very similar to the RTA's real website, so he didn't realise it was fake.

Websites pretending to be Global

Identifying real vs cloned websites

- Check the website address:** Look for the padlock symbol indicating security, though this alone isn't foolproof.
- Domain name:** Genuine government sites in the UAE, for example, end in .gov.ae and in the United Kingdom, gov.uk. Any deviation suggests it's not an official government site.
- Spelling and grammar:** Watch for unusual errors which wouldn't typically be present on a professional website.
- Formatting, images, and links:** Odd or poor-quality visuals can be a red flag.
- Source of the link:** Be cautious of how you arrived at the site. If via a search engine, beware of paid ads which can be purchased by anyone.
- Payment methods:** Scam sites may ask for payment via unusual methods like pre-paid cards.
- Requests for personal information:** Legitimate sites will not ask for sensitive details like passwords or PINs.



Village and the Museum of the Future have also been selling fake tickets. One tourist reported losing Dhs6,000 to a fraudulent website, cargovanexpeditinginny.com, which Google has now flagged as 'Dangerous' due to its involvement in scams like phishing, a local media report pointed out earlier this year.

In a separate case, another resident lost over a thousand dirhams trying to buy a Dhs22 ticket to Global Village from a suspicious site, according to a *Khaleej Times* report.

IMMIGRATION SCAMS

When expats return to their home country after years abroad, their excitement must be tempered with caution.

Last month, the Philippines' Bureau of Investigations issued a warning about fake websites mimicking the country's eTravel System, which integrates border control, health surveillance, and economic data analysis.

"It is only when the victims encounter our officers at the airport that these passengers realise they have been duped by Internet fraudsters and scammers," said Norman Tansingco, Chief at the Philippines' Bureau of Investigations.

UAE-based *The Filipino Times*, the largest digital news platform for Filipinos globally, first reported the modus operandi in September 2023.

The report detailed how a UAE-based Filipino almost fell victim to a scam while filling out an eTravel online form upon her

arrival in Manila.

She recounted, "I was connected to a site with the banner of the Philippines eTravel. I filled in the forms and then at the end, I was asked for a \$27 (Dhs99) payment."

Suspicious, she approached an airline staff who advised her to just scan a QR code on the airport walls as the site she logged onto was a scam.

Following this incident, authorities identified eight cloned eTravel websites charging fees from passengers. Investigations revealed that some operators of these cloned sites were based abroad.

According to Internet threat intelligence company CTM360, this was not an isolated case nor a new trend, stating that it has become a common tactic amongst cybercriminals. "These fake websites are part of a broader scam campaign targeting multiple immigration services simultaneously. Some of the top countries being targeted include Singapore, South Korea, the Philippines, and Turkey. We expect this scam to also occur in other

countries in the near future," CTM360 wrote in an article.

The Internet intelligence company explained that scammers use paid ads on search engines to ensure their fake sites appear at the top of search results. They manipulate algorithms to enhance visibility, making it easier for people to stumble upon these deceptive sites. "The adverts are crafted to make the sites appear legitimate, increasing the likelihood that people will trust them unknowingly," it said.

BEWARE, FLAT RENTERS

Many unsuspecting individuals have fallen prey to cloned websites. Jericca (name withheld), a newcomer to Dubai, was tricked by a fake Airbnb listing for a studio in Jumeirah Lake Towers, priced at Dhs3,000 monthly.

The supposed property owner, based outside the country, directed her to a cloned website resembling Airbnb to pay Dhs6,000, covering the first month's rent and a security deposit in October 2023. However, the victim only realised that the booking site was fraudulent after completing the transaction.

FAKE COMBO MEAL ADVERT

Rahul Khillare, another Dubai resident and F&B industry executive, experienced a costly mishap when he fell victim to a cloned website scam in October 2023.

While browsing a social media platform, Khillare clicked on an advertisement that resembled that of a well-known fast-food chain, offering a combo meal for just Dhs14. Enticed by the deal, he entered his credit card details to make the purchase.

The modus was the same. The advertisement had directed him to a cloned website that closely mimicked the appearance of the legitimate fast-food chain's website, according to a report by *Khaleej Times*.

Like Jericca, Khillare only discovered it was a scam when Dhs14,000 was deducted from her bank account instead of Dhs14.

“These fake websites are part of a broader scam campaign targeting multiple immigration services simultaneously. Some of the top countries being targeted include Singapore, South Korea, the Philippines, and Turkey. We expect this scam to also occur in other countries in the near future

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The UAE has established robust legal frameworks to combat such cyber threats, with stringent penalties for cybercriminals.

Victims of website cloning may file criminal complaints under Federal Law No. 5 of 2012, commonly referred to as the UAE's New Cyber Crime Law. This legislation provides a legal framework to address issues related to cybercrime, including the unauthorised duplication of website content.

Article (11) of the Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021, meanwhile, imposes strict penalties for cybercrimes involving the creation of fake websites, emails, and online accounts. Anyone found impersonating both natural and legal entities through these digital means can face severe consequences. The law specifies imprisonment and fines ranging from Dhs50,000 to Dhs200,000, which may be imposed either separately or together depending on the case.

The penalties increase if the fake digital identity is used to cause harm to the impersonated victim. In such instances, the minimum imprisonment term is 2 years. Furthermore, if the impersonation targets any UAE entity, the offender could face up to 5 years in prison and fines between Dhs200,000 and Dhs2,000,000.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Preventative strategies play a vital role in combating cloned websites. These include verifying the security of web connections, using 'https://' protocols, and confirming the authenticity of websites through official channels only.

Salik, for instance, has advised customers to ensure secure connections and to avoid clicking on suspicious links.

REPORT CLONED WEBSITES

The UAE Ministry of Interior's eCrimes Platform: This is available through the MoI UAE app on Google Play, the App Store, and AppGallery.

Abu Dhabi Police's Aman Service: Cloned website victims may report via email at **aman@adpolice.gov.ae**, the smartphone app, SMS at **2828**, call **8002626**, or use their online portal.

Dubai Police's eCrime website: It is dedicated to reporting online crimes within Dubai. Cybercrimes can also be reported by dialling **04 606 1600**.

My Safe Society App: Run by the UAE's Federal Public Prosecution, this app is available on iTunes and Google Play.

Emerging technologies such as advanced SSL certifications and AI-driven security solutions are becoming crucial in detecting and preventing clone website scams.

Original website owners can take a proactive approach to protect themselves against cloning. They must secure ownership of their website's designs and intellectual property (IP). This can be achieved through clear contractual agreements with web developers or employees who contribute to the site's creation. In the UAE, as in many jurisdictions, IP created by an employee typically belongs to the employer. However, specific contractual provisions

are advisable to prevent any legal ambiguities.

Additionally, various elements of a website, such as logos, domain names, and original content like text, images, and designs, can be protected under trademark and copyright laws. Website owners in the UAE have the option to register these elements, providing them with proof of ownership which can be crucial in legal disputes over cloned content.

To further protect their digital assets, website owners should implement robust terms and conditions, disclaimers, and copyrights clearly stated on their sites.



Anyone found impersonating both natural and legal entities through these digital means can face severe consequences. The law specifies imprisonment and fines ranging from Dhs50,000 to Dhs200,000, which may be imposed either separately or together depending on the case



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Dr Maysa Rashed Ghadeer is a prominent UAE writer interested in local affairs and a former member of the Federal National Council (FNC)

Life cannot proceed along a straight line without any curves; similarly, prosperity and stability are not perpetual states for nations, communities, or individuals. The inherent nature of Earth's creation revolves around change and contradiction, essential for appreciating life's pleasures such as the joy of daybreak after nightfall, relief following distress, knowledge succeeding ignorance, and rest after fatigue.

This perspective does not imply that we should not seek progress, but rather that understanding this reality fosters acceptance and adaptability. This enhances our ability to manage crises, challenges, and transitions effectively.

This concept was exemplified last month by the UAE, which experienced its highest rainfall in 75 years. The aftermath necessitated considerable time and effort, requiring patience, wisdom, and effective management—qualities exhibited by both the leadership and the people.

The sensationalism and exaggeration made on social media platforms, as well as the critical coverage by certain news organizations attempting to undermine the UAE's crisis management, are less significant than the substantive lessons learned. Despite some focusing solely on the negatives, the crucial aspect lies in the response and the adaptive measures put in place. It resulted in a thorough review of the UAE's crisis strategies, evidenced by high-level meetings during the crisis peak. These meetings aimed to

develop proactive plans to mitigate similar future events, focusing on necessary improvements in infrastructure.

Weather phenomena such as these, amplified by global warming and climate change, pose universal challenges. Although such events are inevitable, the learned lesson is that preparation can substantially mitigate their impact. This involves revising infrastructure standards and emergency responses.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 crisis has underscored the importance of innovative thinking and future

planning. The UAE's transition to remote work and education during the pandemic showed the benefits of proactive legislative and infrastructural preparedness.

The recent record rainfall in the UAE also highlighted the strength of community solidarity. The collective response demonstrated remarkable resilience and unity within Emirati society—attributes that were visibly supportive during the crisis. This solidarity, manifesting across various government bodies and amongst citizens

and residents alike, helped navigate the emergency effectively.

While some may perceive such crises as vulnerabilities, they also reveal the profound strengths of society, such as human solidarity, resilience, and robust response mechanisms. These qualities stand in stark contrast to criticism and fault-finding, showcasing a community's capacity to rise above challenges and emerge stronger.

While some may perceive such crises as vulnerabilities, they also reveal the profound strengths of society, such as human solidarity, resilience, and robust response mechanisms

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A person wearing a VR headset, looking down, with their hand visible in the foreground.

Reality check: METAVERSE

HOW CAN WE SAFEGUARD YOUNG USERS FROM THE THREATS POSED
BY THE METAVERSE? EXPERTS POINT OUT STRINGENT PARENTAL
MONITORING AND ROBUST REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

BY KHALID AL DHANHANI



The future of technology presents significant transformations and challenges, particularly concerning the metaverse. This digital frontier, merging enhanced physical reality with persistent virtual spaces, is viewed as the next evolution of the Internet, enabling 3D environments for interaction.

However, the metaverse operates outside established regulatory framework. A McKinsey report highlighted this critical issue, stating, “One of the main challenges posed by the intersection of law, compliance, and the metaverse is the lack of clear legal frameworks.”

This regulatory gap affects various metaverse elements, including virtual currencies, digital property, and user-generated content, which pose unclear

legal implications.

The immersive nature of metaverse platforms raises mental health concerns, with potential for increased anxiety, depression, and other mental and psychological conditions.

The risk of identity theft could also rise if robust security measures are not implemented. Privacy issues also loom large, given the metaverse’s capability to track users’ behaviour online.

Addressing these challenges is crucial for the safe and ethical integration of the metaverse into daily life, balancing its potential benefits against the need for regulatory oversight.

In this context, **999 Magazine** provides expert insights on the primary risks associated with the metaverse and its implications for communities and individuals.

“While metaverse technology and AI drive innovation, we must not ignore their dark side, with cybercriminals using these tools for more sophisticated attacks



ENGINEER MOHAMMED AL SHEHHI

Lecturer at the Higher Colleges of Technology, Abu Dhabi

One of the main challenges posed by the intersection of law, compliance, and the metaverse is the lack of clear legal frameworks — McKinsey report



RANSOMWARE RISKS

The detailed personal information contained in metaverse profiles makes them particularly susceptible to ransomware attacks. Compared to traditional social media accounts, metaverse profiles often hold more sensitive data, thus increasing the risk of exploitation by cybercriminals.

Engineer Mohammed Al Shehhi, a technical expert and lecturer at the Higher Colleges of Technology in Abu Dhabi, highlighted the dual nature of emerging technologies. “While metaverse technology and AI drive innovation, we must not ignore their dark side, with cybercriminals using these tools for more sophisticated attacks,” Al Shehhi said.

Children as young as 13 can enter virtual reality rooms with indecent content, because the technology has no rigorous age verification processes, relying merely on a Facebook account for access

He emphasised the importance of adapting cybersecurity strategies to the unique challenges posed by AI and the metaverse, suggesting that “traditional advice may no longer suffice”.

He said the complexities introduced by the integration of AI into the metaverse, which can enhance user experience but also provide new tools for cybercriminals. “As cybercriminals increasingly utilise AI to enhance their operations, we face more complex and automated threats,” he said.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

The metaverse’s inherent data collection raises privacy issues. As users navigate these virtual spaces, platforms capture detailed information about their actions, preferences, and even physical attributes through avatars.

This collected data is at risk of being exploited for targeted advertising or sold to third parties, increasing the potential for unauthorised use.

The decentralised nature of the metaverse allows easier access for cybercriminals, making users’ private information more vulnerable to fraud and unauthorised account access. The challenges of securing digital identities are profound, with current systems offering no safeguards against the creation of avatars that mimic real individuals, thereby facilitating identity theft.

Moreover, technologies like virtual reality headsets and eye-tracking introduce further risks, as they enable the collection of highly sensitive data, such as voice fingerprints, which can be misused for extensive profiling and targeted marketing.

ONLINE HARASSMENT

Dr Jamal Salem Al Ameri, Executive Director at the Saeed Association for Prevention of Traffic Crashers (SAPTC), told 999, “Technology drives globalism and excellence across all fields. However, parents must monitor their children’s use of the metaverse to protect them from harmful content that could negatively influence their development and behaviour. Vigilant supervision ensures they benefit from technology while avoiding its potential dangers.”

He further discussed the unique challenges of virtual interactions on the metaverse, which can be as authentic as those in the physical world but also expose users, especially young people, to cyberbullying and harassment. This is prevalent in environments such as massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), where criticism and harassment can be rife.

Al Ameri also touched on the broader social implications of technology’s pervasive influence. “The invasion of technology into our lives has compromised social relationships and



“The invasion of technology into our lives has compromised social relationships and traditional family upbringing, making many people overly dependent on mobile phones



**DR JAMAL SALEM
AL AMERI**

Executive Director at the Saeed Association for Prevention of Traffic Crashers (SAPTC)

traditional family upbringing, making many people overly dependent on mobile phones and communication devices. This can lead to a neglect of customs and traditions passed down through generations, threatening our national identity,” he explained.

Stressing the impact of the metaverse as part of the 4th Industrial Revolution on society, Al Ameri noted: “The metaverse can affect every aspect of domestic life and influence child development at all stages. It is concerning when parents allow their children to use technology for passive entertainment rather than educational purposes, as this can adversely affect a child’s cognitive and behavioural development.”

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Ahmed Mohammed Al Shehhi, Director-General of Ras Al Khaimah Foundation for the Holy Quran and its Sciences and President of the Jalfar Centre for Studies and Research, said, “With the emergence of the metaverse and its tools, there is an urgent need to enhance positive digital identity in societies.”

He emphasised that amidst the growth of social media platforms, it is crucial for UAE content creators to maintain a positive digital reputation by choosing their words carefully and sharing beneficial content that reflects the ethical standards and ideals of the UAE society.

Al Shehhi warned of the pitfalls in the metaverse, such as the propagation of non-purposeful content that can distort social norms and values. “The

“The commercialisation of digital platforms prompts creators to prioritise follower growth over content quality, often sacrificing positive impact for monetary gain



**AHMED MOHAMMED
AL SHEHHI**

Director-General of Ras Al Khaimah Foundation for the Holy Quran and its Sciences

commercialisation of digital platforms prompts creators to prioritise follower growth over content quality, often sacrificing positive impact for monetary gain. This results in a proliferation of non-purposeful content, overshadowing the genuine benefits some materials may offer,” he said.

For Al Shehhi, there’s a need for a disciplined understanding of freedom in the digital age, stating, “Responsible, disciplined freedom considers human rights to expression and preserved freedoms, along with the ethical aspect, seeing humans as dignified, civilised beings.”

“Misconstruing freedom as mere indulgence in desires without ethical or intellectual boundaries is dangerous, because it can lead to societal deterioration rather than progress. This is particularly relevant in the metaverse, where unchecked freedom can lead to harmful behaviours and cyberbullying. The UAE has enacted many laws to promote responsible dealing with modern technologies,”

Al Shehhi advised the importance of balancing real and virtual world interactions, regulating screen time, and protecting against digital addiction, especially amongst children.

INHERENT COMPLEXITIES

Ehsan Misbah Al Suwaidi, a social advisor at the Sharjah Consultative Council, highlighted concerns over the difficulties parents face in monitoring their children’s activities within these immersive environments.



The inherent complexities of the metaverse make it difficult for parents to even see the virtual worlds their children are engaged with through virtual reality glasses. This lack of visibility can lead to addiction as children may spend excessive time in this digital universe, potentially losing touch with reality.

Al Suwaidi noted, “Children are the main target audience of the metaverse, primarily through movies and electronic games, which nurtures them in a non-real environment, making it difficult for them to interact with the real world.”



The design of the metaverse, as Al Suwaidi pointed out, echoes themes from science fiction narratives about transforming humans into cyborgs, further complicating children's perceptions of self and reality.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

"Children as young as 13 can enter virtual reality rooms with indecent content, because the technology has no rigorous age verification processes, relying merely on a Facebook account for access," Al Suwaidi highlighted.

This lack of stringent controls not only makes children susceptible to

exploitation but also exposes them to adult-oriented content.

CULTURAL EROSION

Al Suwaidi also discussed the potential erosion of cultural, religious, and linguistic identities within the metaverse. The virtual space could facilitate the spread of incorrect religious information and encourage a distancing from traditional languages and practices, which are foundational to cultural and religious identity.

"The metaverse's capacity to blur essential cultural and religious identities presents a serious risk,

possibly leading to shifts in moral and ethical values," he warned.

Given these varied and serious challenges, Al Suwaidi called for proactive parental involvement and education to mitigate the dangers of the metaverse.

"The best way to handle the metaverse is cautiously and scientifically. Parents should educate their children on correct usage, and awareness centres should reinforce positive values and risk awareness," he said.

He also urged organisations to develop materials that promote culture and national identity, helping to fill online spaces with constructive content.





The future of work is green

THE UAE'S 2050 NET ZERO INITIATIVE NOT ONLY PUTS ALL HANDS ON DECK TO ACHIEVE A GREENER, MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE BUT ALSO SERVES AS A MAJOR IMPETUS FOR THE CREATION OF 50,000 GREEN JOBS BY 2030.

999 HIGHLIGHTS THE MOST IN-DEMAND GREEN SKILLS

BY MARK GARAMOND

In a major step towards sustainability and economic diversification, the UAE plans to create 50,000 new green jobs by 2030. This initiative underscores the nation's commitment to environmental sustainability and positions it as a vital contributor to the global green economy.

With an investment of Dhs150-Dhs200 billion earmarked for economic growth and environmental sustainability by 2030, the nation is on a clear path to reducing carbon emissions and enhancing energy consumption efficiency.

As stated by HE Suhail bin Mohammed Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, the UAE Energy Strategy 2050 and the National Hydrogen Strategy would serve as the major impetus for this green jobs creation.

"Through the UAE Energy Strategy 2050 and the National Hydrogen Strategy, we intend to increase the efficiency rates of individual and institutional energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions. This will ensure environmental sustainability in keeping with our goals. To ensure a prosperous, energy-secure and climate-safe future for our nation and the world, we will be creating 50,000 new green jobs by 2030," said Al Mazrouei.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines green jobs as "decent jobs that contribute to preserve or restore the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency".

A recent ILO report predicts that adopting sustainable practices will

WHAT IS NET ZERO?

Net zero refers to a balance where the amount of greenhouse gases emitted is equal to the amount reduced or absorbed by the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide, the principal greenhouse gas heating the planet, is the focus of reduction efforts.

The Paris Agreement, a legally binding global climate change treaty signed by 196 countries, mandates that nations devise long-term strategies to cut greenhouse gas emissions and limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

For its part, the UAE aims to be the first country in the MENA region to achieve this target, demonstrating its commitment to leading by example in the fight against climate change.





“To ensure a prosperous, energy-secure and climate-safe future for our nation and the world, we will be creating 50,000 new green jobs by 2030



HE SUHAIL BIN MOHAMMED AL MAZROUEI

Minister of Energy and Infrastructure

create 24 million new jobs globally by 2030, helping millions overcome poverty. This aligns with the Paris Agreement’s goal of facilitating a just transition to create decent work and green jobs.

Although some job losses are anticipated—primarily in the petroleum industry—these will be counterbalanced by new opportunities in renewable energies and the shift towards a circular economy, according to the ILO report.

While there will be some loss of employment—mostly in the petroleum industry—this would be offset by jobs created in renewable energies and transitioning to a circular economy, the report says.

EARLY TRANSITION

In the early 2000s, long before climate change became a part of the global lexicon, the UAE was already taking its first steps towards a sustainable future not reliant on fossil fuels. This journey began with the inauguration of the first solar-powered plant in Abu Dhabi in 2009, which was set up to power the forward-thinking Masdar City. Since then, the country has reached numerous milestones.

The Green Future Index 2023, ranking 76 economies on their progress and commitment to a low-carbon future, placed the UAE at the number 2 spot, an impressive eight places up from the previous year. This ranking is a testament to the UAE’s successes in energy transition.

“In the last 10 years, the UAE has increased its renewable energy capacity more than any other country in the world.

Key findings of LinkedIn’s Global Green Skills Report 2023

66%

The green talent pool, made up of male workers with at least one green skill or one green job experience.

10%

The percentage of women with at least one green skill or green job experience.

25%

The increase in the green skills gender gap over the past 7 years.

2.5x

The rate at which women need to join the green talent pool to close the gender gap.

34%

The proportion of female workers in the renewable energy industry.

“ In the last 10 years, the UAE has increased its renewable energy capacity more than any other country in the world. By 2030, the UAE intends to more than triple this capacity in order to achieve a total of 14.2 GW



HE DR SULTAN AL JABER

UAE Special Envoy for Climate Change,
Minister of Industry and Advanced
Technology, and President of COP28

By 2030, the UAE intends to more than triple this capacity in order to achieve a total of 14.2 GW and continue to lead the way for a global energy transition,” stated HE Dr Sultan Al Jaber, UAE Special Envoy for Climate Change and Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and President of COP28.

“ Trillions of dollars are being invested every year and will be for the foreseeable future. The efforts around climate are increasing exponentially. With all of that effort comes a lot of hiring



ALLEN BLUE

Co-founder of LinkedIn

The UAE’s efforts to decarbonise its economy indicate a significant demand for skilled professionals capable of driving this transition, such as solar installers, engineers, consultants, environmental managers, technicians, and ecologists.

These professionals are needed across various sectors including

agriculture, manufacturing, research and development (R&D), and service industries that are focused on sustainable development. Their green skills are essential for the UAE to meet its goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

GREEN SKILLS WANTED

The world is currently facing a green skills gap, i.e., a shortfall of people equipped for jobs created by sustainability initiatives.

According to LinkedIn’s Global Green Skills Report 2023, published in February 2024, the demand for green jobs is surging, growing nearly twice as fast as the availability of skilled workers to fill these positions. However, the report, which analysed data from LinkedIn’s membership across 48 countries, revealed that only 1 in 8 people possess skills relevant to combating the climate crisis, with women notably underrepresented in this area.

Allen Blue, Co-founder of LinkedIn, emphasised the scale of opportunities in the green jobs market. “Trillions of dollars are being invested every year and will be for the foreseeable future. The efforts around climate are increasing exponentially. With all of that effort comes a lot of hiring,” said Blue.





“The number of green jobs globally has grown 8 per cent per year in the past five years, but employees don’t have the skills required to fill them

— World Economic Forum 2023

In January 2023, the World Economic Forum (WEF) stated, “The number of green jobs globally has grown 8 per cent per year in the past five years, but employees don’t have the skills required to fill them.” This highlights the critical need for education and training programmes that can equip more workers with the necessary green skills to meet the growing demands of the global effort to mitigate climate change.

“To meet today’s global sustainability challenges, the corporate world needs more than a few chief sustainability officers – it needs an army of employees, in all areas of business, thinking about sustainability in their decisions every day,”

stated in a recent WEF article.

Over the past few years, the UAE has introduced a package of initiatives aimed at making the country an attractive destination for the smartest professionals around the world. This includes the Strategy for Talent Attraction and Retention, a 10-year plan that facilitates immigration and ensures that skilled individuals can integrate smoothly into the country.

The Golden Visa, a long-term residence visa, enables foreign talents to live, work, or study in the UAE while enjoying extensive benefits, such as an entry visa for six months with multiple entries to proceed with residence issuance, and a renewable long-term residence visa valid for 5 or 10 years. These rules apply to traditional jobs as well as to the emerging field of green professions.

DEMAND OUTPACES GREEN TALENT

The Global Green Skills Report 2023 further elaborated that between 2022 and 2023, the share of talent with the skills to help address the climate crisis grew by 12.3 per cent. However, job postings requiring at least one green skill surged by nearly twice that rate, at 22.4 per cent.

The report also noted that job seekers possessing green skills had a 29 per cent higher likelihood of being hired compared to the workforce average, indicating a

strong demand for these competencies.

Blue underscored the urgency of the situation, saying, “You need to be able to hire people to improve your grid. You need to be able to hire people in order to be able to change your supply chain. And that growth is far outstripping the people who actually have those skills.”

This gap between the availability of green skills and the rapidly increasing demand poses a critical challenge for industries aiming to enhance their sustainability practices.

GREEN GENDER GAP

The LinkedIn report also shed light on the significant disparities between men and women in the green skills sector. It showed that only 1 in 10 women have at least one green skill compared to 1 in 6 men. Additionally, rather than decreasing, the gender gap in this area has widened by 25 per cent over the past seven years.

The disparity extends into leadership roles within the climate sector. Blue stated, “Women who are founding climate companies, women who are executives at climate-focused companies, are substantially underrepresented.

Blue noted, “The real challenge for us is to make sure that we’re doing the things necessary to make the transition inclusive, not just for women, but for all kinds of people.”

In-demand green skills in UAE

Renewable energy

The UAE plans to meet the greater part of its electrical energy from solar sources by 2050. Projects that are aligned with renewable energy targets involve research and development, solar energy, waste-to-energy, wind energy and water treatment investments, amongst others across the entire industry value chain. Already, companies from the US, Spain, and France have opened offices in the renewable energy sector.

Green skills needed: Jobs in this sector include manufacturing, research & development, recycling experts, labourers to carry out on-site installations and support, analysts, consultants, project managers and engineers as well as technicians.



Retrofitting



The UAE is witnessing a boom in the retrofitting industry as leadership encourages refurbishing and modernising of older buildings, including industries, to make these energy-efficient and eco-friendly. The Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, for instance, has set the target of reducing its energy demand by 30 per cent by 2030. Hence, the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority is investing \$8 billion (Dhs 29.36 bn) to retrofit 30,000 buildings. It is estimated that the project will save the emirate \$22.33 billion (Dhs81.95 bn) once it is completed.

Green skills needed: Jobs include Retrofit Assessor, Retrofit installer, and Retrofit Advisor.

SMART buildings

In 2021, the UAE was 14th in the world in terms of the concentration of sustainable buildings. Since then, the country has stepped up efforts to construct environment-friendly buildings and make older ones more energy-efficient. Major private sector players, from developers to construction companies and financial institutions, have committed to participating in decarbonisation.

Green skills needed: The country needs Green Building Experts, Sustainability Consultants, and Renewable Energy Specialists, amongst others.



Green transport



Vehicles are amongst the major polluters and the UAE has initiatives such as the Abu Dhabi Transportation Mobility Management Strategy, Abu Dhabi Surface Transport Master Plan, Dubai Autonomous Transportation Strategy, and Dubai Green Mobility Initiative to achieve sustainable transportation. COP28, the annual climate conference hosted by the UAE in 2023, saw 60 global pledges to double green transportation in the next seven years.

Green skills needed: There is a need for professionals in sustainable mobility, technical engineers, entrepreneurs, and marketing professionals for Electric vehicles (EVs) and other vehicles.

Waste management

At present, waste management in the UAE is managed by local authorities and involves recycling, converting waste into energy, and employing new technologies for better waste separation and collection. The country is focused on reducing the environmental impact of cities, with a specific emphasis on improving air quality and enhancing municipal and other waste management systems.

Green skills needed: In-demand skills in this sector involve Recycling Specialists, Recycling Sorters, Material Recovery workers who identify and extract valuable materials from waste streams, Facilities Managers, Analysts, and Consultants.



Water management



The UAE launched the Water Security Strategy 2036 in 2017, which not only enumerated challenges, such as high water consumption per capita in the country but also set a target to decrease the demand for water resources by 21 per cent and increase the re-utilisation of treated water to 95 per cent.

Green skills needed: While employment in water management primarily involves local water authorities, opportunities also exist in areas such as water conservation technology, water treatment engineering, and wastewater treatment specialisation, amongst others.



Top jobs shaping the future

As the UAE moves towards a greener future, traditional jobs that have built the country will adapt, requiring upskilling in energy efficiency and sustainability.

The country's Advanced Skills Strategy sets a national framework focused on lifelong learning for citizens and residents. It emphasises categories such as Basic Skills, Competencies, Personality Traits, and Specialised Skills—aimed at equipping talent with the necessary skills for various professions and sectors.

Several ministers have already announced significant job creation in various sectors. In September 2023, HE Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy, announced that the country aims to boost the economic contribution of food and agriculture by \$10 billion (Dhs30.67 billion) and create 20,000 jobs in the next five years.

Here are the most in-demand jobs in the coming years across various economic sectors:

1

Finance



In line with its national development goals, the UAE has been introducing a number of financial and tax policies and implementing stringent regulations and systems. Efforts have been intensified to curb practices such as Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS)—tax strategies used by multinationals to exploit gaps and mismatches in tax rules to avoid paying tax. Additionally, the country's position as an innovation and start-up hub, along with its aim to develop non-oil industries, underscores why the financial and banking sectors are amongst the most active.

Last year, numerous accounting and auditing firms increased their hiring and are likely to continue this trend in 2024. Some top companies are relocating their finance managers to the UAE.

Skills in demand include Financial Modelling (the ability to analyse a company's performance on a spreadsheet and calculate its future financial outcomes), Investor Relations, and Start-up Portfolio Management. Finance, according to several analysts, is also a stable sector with potential for professional growth in the coming years.

Portfolios: Chief financial officer, Head of Finance, Financial Planner, Finance Investment Manager, Compliance Officer, Fund Accountant, Financial Analyst, Commercial Finance Manager, Head of Finance and Financial Planner, amongst others

2

Technology



Techies did not have a great time in 2023. Giants such as Amazon and Microsoft laid off staff, creating insecurity in the industry. However, the UAE has transformed technology into a thriving sector. According to the International Trade Administration of the US, "The UAE is one of the largest data centre hubs in the Middle East and more are planned. Up to \$1 billion (Dhs3.67 bn) in additional investments are projected by 2026. The UAE data centre market is expected to grow at an average rate of 3.43 per cent between 2022 and 2027."

Cybersecurity professionals are highly valued in the country, which blocked 71 million attempted cyber-attacks in the first three quarters of 2023.

Portfolios: Data scientists, Data engineers, AI experts, Software Developer, IT Engineer, DevOps engineer, Digital marketing expert, amongst others

4

Tourism and Hospitality



International travellers have returned to the UAE, spurring growth in travel and tourism which, in turn, is causing a boom in hospitality. The country now boasts one of the richest hospitality sectors in the world and is a rich source of recruitment.

In 2023, the travel and tourism industry in the UAE was responsible for 317,500 jobs, accounting for 5.4 per cent of the country's total employment. By 2027, this share is estimated to increase by 2.4 per cent annually to 410,000 jobs, which would represent 5.9 per cent of total employment. In Abu Dhabi, hotel occupancy had reached 70 per cent by August 2023. Many new hotels are also coming up, amongst them the Anantara Santorini Abu Dhabi Retreat, opening in Abu Dhabi in February.

The expansion in hospitality and travel indicates a demand for professionals, from hotel managers to housekeepers, and from head chefs to gardeners. There are also opportunities for upskilling and cross-functional roles that allow professionals to grow.

The skills required in the Tourism and Hospitality industries range from communication and customer service to teamwork, time management, business strategy, and courtesy. As the country becomes a magnet for both business and personal travel, these professionals will be the face of the UAE to the world; hence, standards are high, as are the salaries, perks, and prestige.

Portfolios: The boom in the hospitality industry requires professionals at multiple levels

3

Legal



The UAE has been modernising its legal structure in recent years, with several new laws and reforms. The introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other cutting-edge technologies into the legal framework of the country has made legal procedures sharper and more modern, and this progress is set to continue into the new year.

"With the introduction of corporate tax in the UAE for the first time, businesses are seeking lawyers who can help them navigate the new status quo. Corporate lawyers are also in demand as the volume of IPOs, mergers and acquisitions soars on the back of the flourishing economy," stated in the 2024 Salary Guide of Robert Half Talent Solutions, an organisation that connects companies with suitably skilled jobseekers.

The skills that could give a candidate an advantage include knowledge of Arabic in addition to English, as this saves a company the expense of having legal documents translated externally. Family businesses, as well as oil and gas firms, also prefer lawyers who are fluent in both Arabic and English to draft legal documents.

Portfolios: Senior Legal Associate, Senior Legal Counsel, and Corporate Lawyer

5

HR and Administration



The UAE is pursuing long-term growth, with the National Entrepreneurship Agenda propelling the country towards becoming one of the top three countries in the Global Entrepreneurship Index. Dubai Chamber of Commerce alone has seen a 43 per cent increase in new member companies, rising to 30,146 in the first half of 2023 from 21,098 in the same period in 2022.

The rise in companies, startups, and multinational offices in the country has led to increased hiring of Human Resources and Administrative staff. There is a need for professionals who can assist in strategic planning aimed at retaining talent, especially high-performing assets, making appropriate offers, formulating remuneration and compensation policies to match industry standards, and creating a healthy work culture. The UAE has also introduced several labour laws and visa regulations in recent years, resulting in active hiring of HR professionals who are well-versed in the changes and can guide both local and foreign professionals. HR professionals, for their part, seek offices with a corporate culture that embraces fair practices, inclusion, and growth.

Portfolios: HR Director, Talent Manager, Talent Acquisition Manager



HEALTHIER HORIZON FOR ALL

NEXT YEAR, A NATIONAL HEALTHCARE INSURANCE SCHEME FOR ALL PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYEES AND DOMESTIC WORKERS WILL COME INTO FORCE. **999** EXPLORES HOW THIS NATIONWIDE POLICY WILL ENSURE COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH COVERAGE FOR EVERYONE

BY SAMUEL JACOBS



“The workforce is the real engine of the economy, and monitoring their concerns and protecting their rights are essential elements for advancing our national economy

HH SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM
Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai

Starting 1st January 2025, the UAE Government will implement a mandatory insurance scheme for all private-sector employees and domestic workers.

This initiative aims to make healthcare more accessible nationwide and expands the existing mandatory health insurance beyond Abu Dhabi and Dubai to include Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Umm Al Quwain, Ajman, and Fujairah.

Chaired by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the UAE Cabinet announced this nationwide healthcare expansion in March 2024. This initiative was announced alongside a new structure for the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE), which aims “to maintain its stability and enhance the competitiveness” of the UAE labour market.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid stated, “The workforce is the real engine of the economy, and monitoring their concerns and protecting their rights are essential elements for advancing our national economy.”

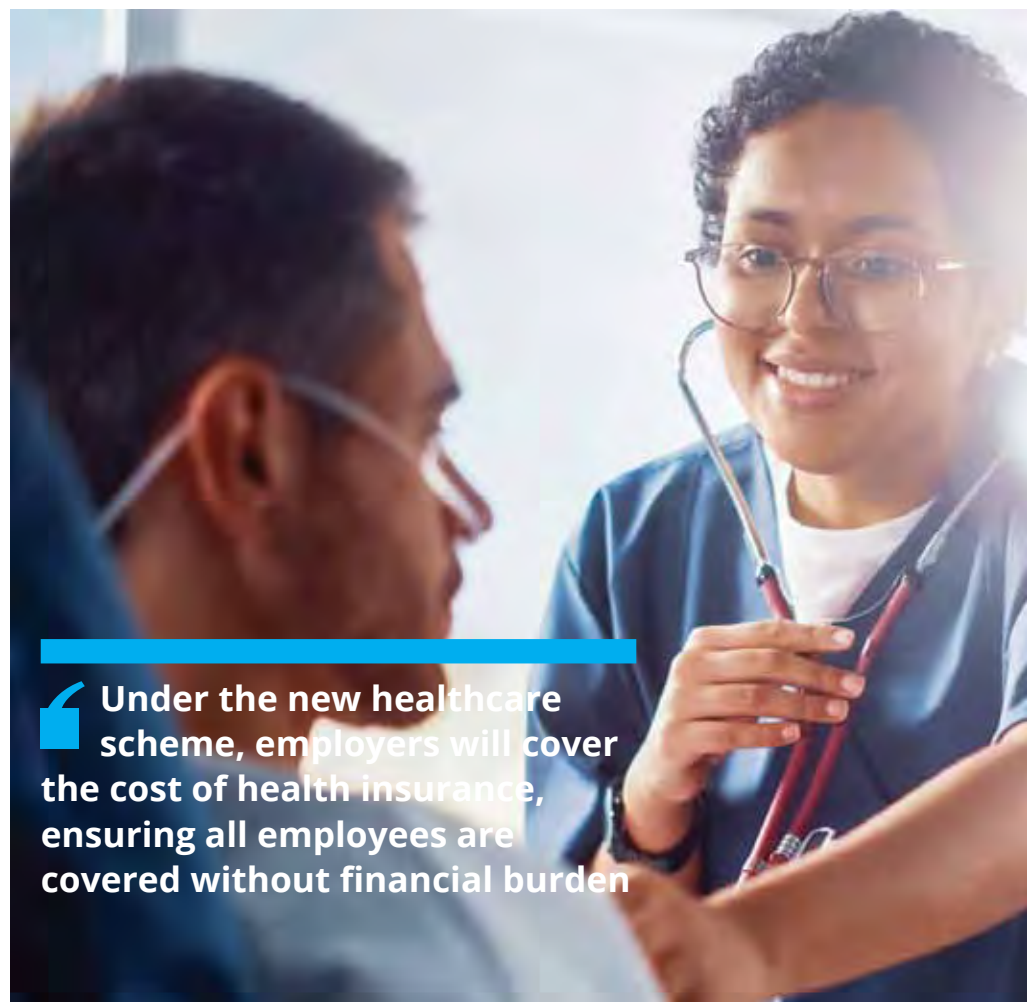
Under the new healthcare scheme, employers will cover the cost of health insurance, ensuring all employees are covered without financial burden. This initiative, to be spearheaded by MoHRE, is expected to boost job attractiveness and retention by providing essential health benefits and linking enforcement to the visa issuance and renewal process. The

scheme also foresees stimulating growth in the health insurance sector by facilitating expansion into new areas.

THREE-TIERED SYSTEM

A senior official from the Ministry of Health and Prevention (MoHAP) said

the new scheme will be a three-tier healthcare system. “The basic package will cost around Dhs750 per year,” said Abdullah Ahmed Ahli, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Support Services Sector at the Ministry of Health and Prevention (MoHAP), to *The National*.



“Under the new healthcare scheme, employers will cover the cost of health insurance, ensuring all employees are covered without financial burden

“The health insurance system will provide comfort to the employees and their families knowing they will have proper healthcare in emergency or when they fall sick



ABDULLAH AHMED AHLI

Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Support Services Sector at MoHAP

“The second package costs Dhs3,500, and the advanced package starts from Dhs7,500. Each package offers different benefits but all provide extensive health coverage,” added Ahli. “The health insurance system will provide comfort to the employees and their families

“It places a timely responsibility on both public and private sectors to bring all employees, including the largely underserved domestic workers, into the insurance fold



FAISAL ABBAS

Vice-President for Employee Benefits and General Insurance Team at Continental International Group

knowing they will have proper healthcare in emergency or when they fall sick. It will boost employees’ productivity, which will have a positive impact on companies’ performance. The system will provide health insurance to every individual regardless of their income level.”

TIMELY RESPONSIBILITY

Commenting on the initiative, Faisal Abbas, Vice-President for Employee Benefits and General Insurance Team at Continental International Group, noted, “It places a timely responsibility on both public and private sectors to bring all employees, including the largely underserved domestic workers, into the insurance fold.”

He added, “All companies and institutions, particularly in the Northern Emirates where insurance penetration is relatively low, must earmark a sizeable, dedicated budget for corporate health insurance and ensure all employees are insured comprehensively before the deadline.”

NORTHERN EMIRATES IN FOCUS

Government employees in the Northern Emirates are already covered under various schemes. In December 2023, the Sharjah Executive Council renewed the health insurance policy for Sharjah Government employees for 2024, enhancing benefits and raising the ceiling on previous benefits.

This policy supports over 116,000 individuals, including Sharjah government agency employees, retirees, their families, and the parents of Emirati citizen employees.

However, the mandatory healthcare insurance scheme is anticipated to provide peace of mind, particularly as many avoid insurance due to cost concerns.

Myra Bennett, Principal Consultant at Genie Recruitment, stated, “If a company can bear the cost, then it will really ease off some of the financial pressures on employees. Insurance schemes can benefit employees by reducing financial risks related to health and well-being.

“This can result in improved employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention. An employee may feel more at ease and less stressed with the knowledge they have medical insurance in place in case anything was to happen to their health.”

SEAMLESS TRANSITION

The implementation of the new healthcare insurance scheme is expected to follow a phased approach similar to that used in Dubai, which rolled out its health insurance mandates in stages based on the size of the organisation. This approach ensured a smoother transition and higher compliance rates amongst businesses.

For stakeholders in the health

UAE HEALTH INSURANCE 2025 AT A GLANCE

Start date

- Strict enforcement begins on 1st January 2025.

Coverage

- All private-sector employees, domestic workers, and their families without prior coverage.

Purpose

- Guarantees health insurance for registered workers at the time of residency permit issuance or renewal.
- Ensures all employees have access to quality healthcare services.

Scope and registration

- The scheme has already registered over 7.2 million workers from the private sector and federal government organisations.

Financial responsibility

- Employers are responsible for the cost of health insurance coverage.

Awareness and education

- The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MoHRE) will conduct campaigns to educate employers and employees about the scheme to ensure proper implementation.

“ Insurers will have to calibrate their offerings to ensure that the pricing remains fair and balanced



AVINASH BABUR

Founder and CEO of Insurancemarket.ae

insurance market, this development offers a significant opportunity. Both local insurers and international players, including reinsurers with substantial investments in the UAE market, are encouraged to start exploring their licensing and setup options in the Northern Emirates. The expanded mandate is likely to increase the demand for health insurance products and services, presenting a lucrative growth and investment opportunity.

Local insurance firms, such as The National Health Insurance Company (Daman), part of PureHealth, are already expanding their product line-ups in anticipation of increased demand when the new policy takes effect next year. Daman recently introduced a hassle-free option for renewing Abu Dhabi Basic Plans for domestic workers through TAMM, Abu Dhabi's unified digital government platform.

This initiative aligns with ongoing digital transformation efforts, aiming to simplify healthcare access and enhance customer experiences during insurance renewals. With optimised processes, renewals can now be completed in just 15 minutes, and include coverage for any fines incurred due to delays.

PREMIUM HIKE

Industry experts predict a rise in health insurance premiums due to increased demand.

Avinash Babur, CEO of Insurancemarket.ae, indicated that the expected surge in healthcare utilisation, coupled with factors like inflation

and advancements in healthcare, will contribute to a gradual increase in premiums.

“Given the inevitable rise in demand for healthcare services following the scheme's introduction, and considering the normal economic factors like inflation and healthcare advancements, a steady increase in premiums is anticipated,” Babur told the media.

“It is incumbent upon insurers to implement a controlled approach to premium adjustments, ensuring that these changes are gradual and communicated transparently to avoid sudden financial strain on both employers and individuals,” he added.

Babur also reminded insurers to thoughtfully ensure fairness and balance in implementing premium structure adjustments, particularly for families currently paying their own premiums.

“Insurers will have to calibrate their offerings to ensure that the pricing remains fair and balanced, taking into account the needs of all policyholders to avoid disproportionate impacts on family coverage costs,” he said.



“There is a strong indication that health insurance premiums in the UAE will experience significant growth in 2024 and 2025



ANAS MISTAREEHI
Founder and CEO of eSanad

MARKET GROWTH

Anas Mistareehi, Founder and CEO of eSanad, predicted that the new scheme would likely drive significant growth in health insurance premiums over the next two years. “There is a strong indication that health insurance premiums in the UAE will experience significant growth in 2024 and 2025,” he said.

Drawing from past trends, Mistareehi noted that Abu Dhabi experienced nearly Dhs10 billion growth in its market following the 2007 insurance mandate. Similarly, Dubai saw a surge in premiums by almost Dhs4 billion after its 2012 mandate.

According to the Central Bank of the UAE’s (CBUAE) Quarterly Economic Review, the country’s insurance sector demonstrated significant growth in the fourth quarter of 2023, with gross written premiums climbing to Dhs53.2 billion, a year-over-year increase of 12.7 per cent. This rise was primarily fuelled by a 16.5 per cent increase in health insurance premiums.

The sector’s composition remained stable with 60 licensed insurance companies, including 23 traditional national companies, 10 Takaful national companies, and 27 foreign entities.

Claims payments also saw an upward trend, with gross paid claims rising by 12.8 per cent to Dhs31.1 billion. This increase was notably driven by health insurance claims, which rose by 16.9 per cent.

Investments by the insurance sector grew, with total invested assets reaching Dhs76 billion by the end of 2023, accounting for 60.4 per cent of total assets. The retention ratio of written premiums slightly decreased to 52.9 per cent from 54.9 per cent in the previous year.

AT A GLANCE: UAE’s INSURANCE SECTOR

Key findings from CBUAE’s Quarterly Economic Review

Dhs53.2 billion

Gross written premiums in the UAE by the end of 2023, with a year-over-year increase of 12.7 per cent.

16.5%

Increase in health insurance premiums in 2023.

Dhs31.1 billion

Total gross paid claims recorded by the insurance sector in 2023, an increase of 12.8 per cent from 2022.

16.9%

Increase in health insurance claims in 2023.



Financial health indicators have shown improvement, with the own funds to minimum capital requirement ratio increasing to 335.7 per cent, and the own funds to solvency capital requirement ratio reaching 221 per cent. The sector’s profitability has also enhanced, evidenced by the net total profit to net written premiums ratio rising to 6.5 per cent, indicating a healthier and expanding market.

COMPETITION FOR QUALITY

Discussing the potential impacts on family members under the new scheme, Mistareehi suggested that the changes for families will be minimal. This mirrors

the policy in Abu Dhabi, where employers cover the employee, spouse, and up to three children, with minimal impact on larger families.

Mistareehi said that the new mandatory health insurance initiative is expected to drive investments in healthcare infrastructure, promoting higher quality services, competition, and innovation in the sector, ultimately advancing healthcare at a larger scale.

As the UAE strives to enhance its competitiveness on the global stage, such initiatives underscore its commitment to fostering a stable and supportive environment for its citizens, residents, and businesses alike.



Health insurance in UAE

Thiqa Programme

The Abu Dhabi Government initiative provides full medical coverage for UAE nationals and those with similar status residing in Abu Dhabi; UAE nationals and those with similar status from other emirates; non-UAE nationals sponsored by a UAE national family member, according to criteria set by the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi.

Dubai Health Insurance Corporation

This entity regulates the health insurance sector in Dubai, ensuring the rights of insured nationals and residents. It licences insurance companies, third-party administrators (TPAs), brokers, and health service providers.

Enaya Unified Health Insurance System

Enaya consolidates all government health insurance systems in Dubai. It is the healthcare benefits scheme for Dubai Government employees and citizens, covering nearly all types of ailments, both chronic and acute.

Insurance System for Advanced Healthcare in Dubai

A comprehensive initiative aiming to establish sustainable, high-quality healthcare. It also provides advisory services on insurance coverage and laws.

Insurance Partner Relation Management eSystem

An interactive platform for feedback, complaints, suggestions, or compliments related to insurance services.

Health Insurance Compliance and Audit Log

It monitors and controls fraud, waste, and abuse in insurance services, with a system to report any suspected manipulations.

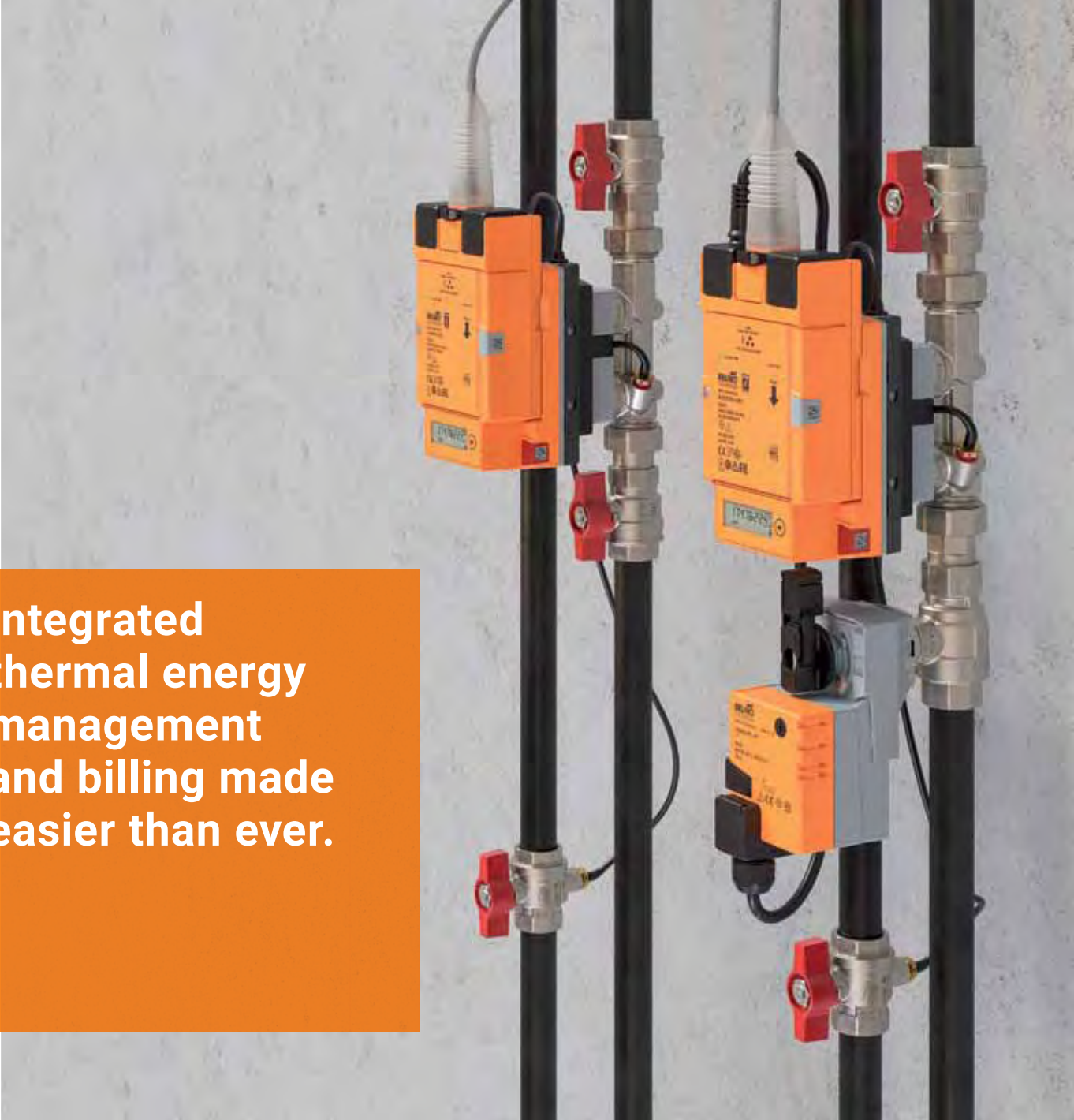
Health insurance in Sharjah

The Department of Health Insurance at Sharjah Health Authority oversees health insurance coverage for UAE nationals in the emirate of Sharjah. Initially, the Sharjah Government provided health coverage only to Sharjah Government employees, their dependents, and senior Emiratis (60 years old or above). However, since January 2020, it has decided to extend the insurance coverage to all citizens of Sharjah.

Health insurance in Ajman

The Government of Ajman provides all its employees with health insurance.

Source: u.ae



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STAND UP for your HEALTH

SITTING ALL DAY CAN LEAD TO A HOST OF SERIOUS HEALTH ISSUES—INCLUDING WEIGHT GAIN. IT'S TIME TO SWAP SOME OF THAT SITTING FOR STANDING OR WALKING

BY CATHERINE BERNIS

We often regard our work chairs and sofas as comfort zones, marking our personal spaces where we tend to remain seated for extended periods. But what impact does this have on our health?

The website of Britain's National Health Service (NHS) states, "There has been an explosion of research on the ills of sitting in recent years, prompted by our increasingly sedentary lifestyles. It is thought [that] excessive sitting slows the metabolism, impacting our ability to regulate blood sugar and blood pressure, metabolise fat, and may lead to weaker muscles and bones."

Modern work environments often promote prolonged period of sitting, which is linked to various health risks. New research in Taiwan involving over 482,000 participants suggests that regular exercise cannot fully mitigate the dangers associated with extensive sitting. This study, published in *JAMA Network Open*, indicates that workers who sit for long stretches have a 34 per cent higher risk of premature death from heart disease compared to their more active counterparts.

Despite high-intensity exercise, those who sit extensively are still at

risk comparable to those who engage in moderate exercise and less sitting. To combat this, experts recommend workplaces adopt more dynamic setups, such as standing desks and areas designated for physical activity, to encourage less sitting and more moving during the workday.

Standing also increases calorie expenditure. Livestrong.com notes that

a woman weighing about 60kg burns approximately 99 calories per hour by standing quietly, compared to 78 calories when sitting. This principle can be applied not just at home or in the office but also while travelling on public transport, enhancing fitness efforts simply by choosing to stand.

Here's the everyday approach to combat sedentary habits:

Everybody, sit less

0-5 years

- Reduce time spent in infant carriers, car seats or highchairs.
- Reduce time spent in walking aids or baby bouncers.
- Reduce time spent in front of the TV or other screens.

5-18 years

- Consider ways for children to 'earn' screen time.
- Make bedrooms a TV- and computer-free zone.
- Encourage participation in house chores such as setting the table or taking the bins out.

19-64 years

- Take the stairs and walk up the escalators.
- Set a reminder to get up every 30 minutes.
- Take a walk break every time you take a coffee or tea break.

65+ years

- Avoid long periods of sitting in front of a TV or computer.
- Take up active hobbies such as gardening, for example.
- Join in community-based activities, such as walking groups.





1 Strengthen your core

Many of us find standing for even short periods challenging, as it can cause discomfort in the lower back and feet. To make standing more bearable, try walking whenever possible, whether you're waiting at a Metro station, bus stop, or simply out on your flat's balcony.

For times when walking isn't an option, developing strong core muscles is essential. These muscles serve as a vital link between your upper and lower body, aiding in maintaining good posture and reducing the urge to slouch.



2 Incorporate microbreaks

Every hour, take a five-minute break from sitting to stretch or walk around the office. These short intervals of movement help reduce muscle stiffness, improve circulation, and can boost your concentration when you return to your desk, mitigating the detrimental effects of prolonged sitting.



3 Schedule walking meetings

Instead of sitting in a conference room, try walking meetings. This not only breaks the monotony of sitting but also promotes creativity and deeper engagement with colleagues, while also adding some physical activity to your day.



4 Organise workspace for movement

Arrange your workspace so that essential items are slightly out of reach, requiring you to stand up and move around more frequently throughout the day. This setup naturally integrates physical activity into your routine, decreasing sedentary behaviour.



5 Promote a wellness culture

Encourage a workplace culture that prioritises health and well-being. This could include implementing wellness programmes that provide resources and incentives for employees to take regular exercise breaks, participate in fitness challenges, or attend health workshops. This approach not only helps individual employees but also fosters a supportive environment that values employee health.



WHO: How much physical activity is recommended?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), maintaining good health involves specific physical activity requirements that vary by age and demographic. For adults aged 18-64, the WHO provides clear guidelines to ensure optimal health benefits.

Aerobic activity: Adults should aim for at least 150-300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity weekly, or 75-150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, or a combination of both. This helps in improving cardiovascular health and enhancing overall fitness.

Muscle-strengthening exercises: It is also recommended to engage in muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups at least twice a week. These exercises, performed at moderate or greater intensity, provide additional health benefits like increased muscle mass and improved metabolic rate.

Increasing activity for additional benefits: For further health advantages, adults may increase their aerobic activities beyond the standard recommendations. This could mean over 300 minutes of moderate-intensity, or more than 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity activities per week, or an equivalent mix of both intensities.

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the World Health Organization, a significant 28 per cent of adults globally do not meet the recommended physical activity levels of at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise per week. This inactivity is more pronounced amongst women (32 per cent) than men (23 per cent). The disparity in physical activity is also evident between economic groups; in high-income countries, 26 per cent of men and 35 per cent of women were insufficiently active, compared to only 12 per cent of men and 24 per cent of women in low-income countries.

Source: WHO

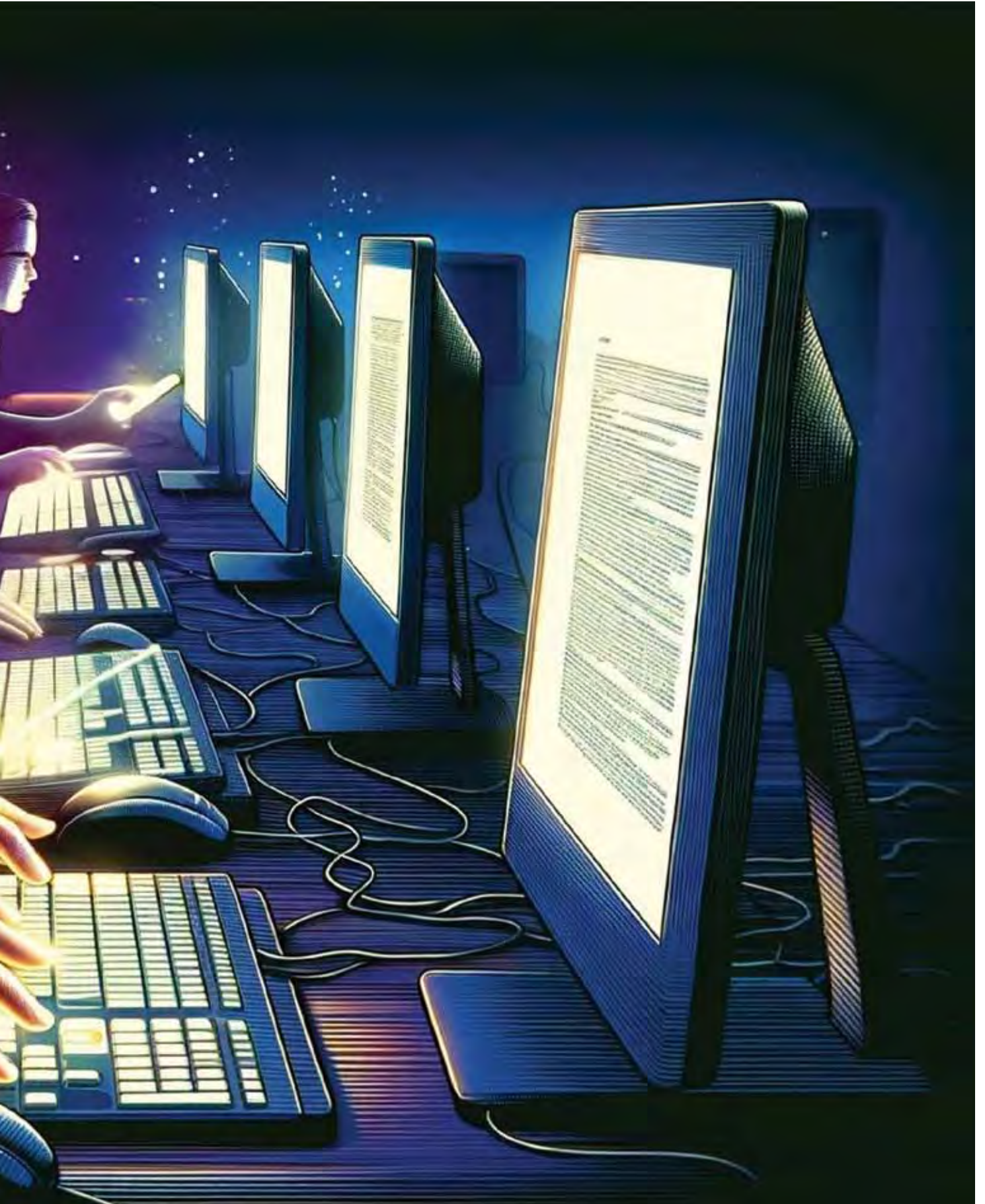


THE MONEY MAZE

A SOPHISTICATED MONEY LAUNDERING RING WAS DISMANTLED BY A DECISIVE POLICE OPERATION, RESULTING IN A TOUGH COURT SENTENCE AND A CLEAR WARNING AGAINST FINANCIAL CRIMES

BY WAJIH HASSAN

DIGITAL ILLUSTRATION BY ANANGPAL SINGH



In a major crackdown, a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) team of law enforcement in one of the emirates gathered in the operations room. Their target: a money laundering ring led by Hassan, with Sara and Hebo amongst its key members. This group had adeptly orchestrated large-scale fraud and impersonation schemes to illicitly acquire tens of millions of dirhams from unsuspecting victims.

After months of meticulous planning, the officers were poised to dismantle this network. Moving with precision, the CID team swiftly entered the perimeter of the gang's hideout.

The element of surprise was executed with such efficiency that the ring members barely had time to react.

As officers secured the area, Hassan, Sara, Hebo, and their accomplices were taken into custody. During the raid, significant amounts of incriminating evidence were seized, including computers and mobile phones containing extensive records of their criminal activities.

The gang members were brought to trial for their money laundering, fraud, and impersonation schemes.

In the courtroom, the head of the public prosecution in the emirate explained, "Their scheme involved creating and dispatching tens of thousands of fraudulent emails, crafted to appear as official communications from various institutions, departments, and banks, both local and international. These emails solicited financial transfers into accounts controlled by the gang."

The public prosecution stated that compliance by victims resulted in substantial financial losses, funnelled directly into the launderers' accounts. A police investigator summarised, "Each email was a masterclass in deception, tailored to exploit trust."

Their scheme involved creating and dispatching tens of thousands of fraudulent emails, crafted to appear as official communications from various institutions, departments, and banks, both local and international

The investigator revealed that the gang employed multiple methods to obscure the origin of the money following the receipt of illicit funds from unwitting victims. "This included transferring the amounts into personal accounts and withdrawing the funds via cash, cheques, or transfers to other accounts. To further launder the ill-gotten money, they invested in used luxury cars to disguise and integrate their illicit gains into the legitimate economy," the police investigator told the court.

However, even the most elaborate schemes

eventually crumble beneath the relentless scrutiny of justice. The gang's extensive conduct of money laundering activities and electronic fraud, attempting to blend the dirty money with the economy, was meticulous but traceable, as proven by the CID team and public prosecution.

The court delivered its verdict, sentencing the defendants to imprisonment followed by deportation. The court also ordered a collective fine equal to the value of the funds illicitly obtained, ordered the confiscation of their electronic devices, and imposed financial penalties on complicit private companies. The ruling included the confiscation of any assets owned by the defendants exceeding the laundered amount.

The public prosecution affirmed the country's commitment to combating money laundering. "This operation is a testament to our resolve against financial crimes. We will continue to protect our economy and citizens from such threats," it said.

Money laundering is a sophisticated crime that masks the illegal sources of income, making it appear as if it stems from legitimate activities. It's closely linked with various serious offences, including drug trafficking, robbery, and terrorism, highlighting its global scale.

The names and characters mentioned in the story are fictitious, and any resemblance with real people is purely coincidental.

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Dr Samar Al-Shamsi is an internationally respected artist who is renowned for her commissioned portraits of high-profile individuals, including Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Barack Obama, and others.

FOREVER PRESENT

The pain and scars from past relationships linger, yet conscious healing decisions can guide us to true personal fulfilment and recovery

Memories and places have nothing special about them. It is people who give them meaning, an unforgettable feeling that sets them apart. Some believe that our attachment to them stems from a craving for love and honeyed talk. They do not understand that our feelings are deeply true, good, and faithful. Differences melt away when we find our soul mates. Neither age, title, nor any other standard matters. We transcend to a higher spiritual realm that does not adhere to our will and philosophy. Spirits are pulled or pushed by chemistry, without conscience. Hail to those who attract our souls and are chosen by our hearts, for our tender hearts are homes where guests are honoured and, once they depart, we keep them dear to our hearts, as is typical of the virtuous.

I have learned to securely lock up my doors and fasten my windows, as some take advantage of opportunities to harm us, steal our dreams, and depart. I've discovered that some people exploit your suffering and sorrow for their amusement or to fill a void out of curiosity. I've learned that closed doors signify comfort. Not everyone who gets close to you is suited to be a friend or a lover. There are predatory people who sink their teeth into our bodies and our sad souls, indifferent to our wounds or pain. People who enter your life either dim your light or illuminate your darkness.

You would say to them, "I loved you deeply and felt your longing embrace mine. I saw a flash of light in yours that lit up my darkness, and I realised that love rises in the eyes of a lover. I will tell you honestly why I chose you—my heart sank. I felt your love and my heart pounded for yours. I follow you with my eyes because your beauty steals my sight. I passionately, jealously follow you everywhere. When you are out of my sight, my soul leaves my body. Your voice

is music to my ears. Your talk is sweet and captivating. Your innocent laughter brings forth the child in me, and I dance prancing in parks while the tides of your love lift me and throw me at your shores. It pains to speak of you in the past tense, while you live in every cell of me."

That child in you is inconsolable. She cannot be saved. You wander down memory lane, back to that secure, happy dream, reliving the details with deep pain. You'd shout, "It is not a dream," and deceive yourself into trying to recapture what you have lost. But you encounter rejection, and this

rejection could escalate into offence.

The child faltered in front of you. And you, you await the one who left you, hoping they will return and rescue you. They do not come. Even if they did, they would not save you and the child within you will not heal. Her heart will not smile unless you hold her and reassure her that all is fine. The child will not heal unless you tenderly and kindly mend her wounds. The child will die unless you breathe life into her and cease waiting for an illusion.

There's nothing wrong with a little sadness as long as you make the right decision to build your life on. Sometimes, hard-to-take decisions are the only way to a better, true reality.

We pay a high price for our hastiness.

We suffer hard blows when we realise

how imbecile our hearts have been. But our life continues like the journey of a train. Ambitious people leave and contented people return.

The difference between us is that I was looking for evidence of your innocence while you were looking for proof to condemn me. This war was lost since I started it with you. If you were unable to continue giving, just stop. Hearts that grow accustomed to care, die when care is lost. Everything becomes a memory except that moment when the heart is broken. It remains forever present.

We pay a high price for our hastiness. We suffer hard blows when we realise how imbecile our hearts have been. But our life continues like the journey of a train. Ambitious people leave and contented people return



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FRAUDULENT LIVES

IDENTITY THIEVES CAN DO MORE THAN JUST TRICK YOU INTO LOSING MONEY; THEY CAN ALSO USURP YOUR EXISTENCE, AND TAKE OVER YOUR LIFE

BY ALLEN MURDOCK



STOLEN EXISTENCE

WHERE: CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

WHEN: 1990

William Woods, homeless in Los Angeles, discovered his identity was being misused to accrue debt. However, when he reported this to a bank manager, he was ironically jailed for nearly two years on charges of identity theft. Despite his efforts to prove his identity, Woods was convicted in March 2021 and was ordered not to use his own name. He was released after 428 days in county jail and 147 days in a mental hospital, following a no-contest plea.

Undeterred, Woods continued to reclaim his identity by disputing records with financial institutions and contacting law enforcement. His efforts led him to Matthew David Keirans, a former Iowa hospital IT worker living in Wisconsin, who had been living under Woods's identity for decades. Woods's persistence paid off when, in January 2023, he reported his case to the University of Iowa Police Department. Detective Ian Mallory confirmed Woods's true identity through a DNA test with Woods's biological father, leading to the unravelling of Keirans's long-term identity theft.

Keirans had met Woods in the late 1980s in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Assuming Woods's identity in 1990, Keirans built a life under this stolen name, marrying, fathering a child, and even using Woods's identity to secure a job at the University of Iowa Hospital and to take out loans totalling over \$200,000 (Dhs734,000). His fraudulent activities were supported by obtaining a copy of Woods's birth certificate through genealogical research.



Johnson County Jail

Matthew David Keirans

In April 2024, Keirans pleaded guilty to federal charges, facing up to 32 years in prison for making false statements to a credit union and aggravated identity theft. The reasons behind Keirans's decision to assume Woods's identity remain unclear. However, court records paint a picture of a man with a troubled past, including running away at 16 and engaging in criminal activities before adopting Woods's identity and crafting a new life on the basis of falsehoods.

SMUGGLER'S IDENTITY

WHERE: CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

WHEN: AUGUST 2022

On 5th August 2022, Abel Alonso Valdez-Vazquez, a 59-year-old from Tijuana, Mexico, was arrested for smuggling three undocumented non-citizens into the United States through the Otay Mesa Port of Entry, using the identity of a US citizen known as G.P. This incident unveiled over 30 years of identity fraud by Valdez-Vazquez.

Further investigation by Homeland Security Investigations and the Social Security Administration's Office of the Inspector General revealed that the genuine G.P. had reported his identity stolen. Verification through family interviews and birth records confirmed G.P.'s true identity and exposed Valdez-Vazquez as an undocumented Mexican citizen in the US and the impersonator.

Since at least December 1992, Valdez-Vazquez had been misusing G.P.'s identity. He confessed to illegally receiving Supplemental Security Income between 2007 to 2017 and from 2019 to December 2021, despite his ineligibility due to his undocumented status. These funds, he acknowledged, were illicitly obtained from the US government.

Moreover, Valdez-Vazquez admitted to obtaining a



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California driver's licence under G.P.'s identity, which he used in his 2022 attempt to enter the US. His identity fraud to secure government benefits and identification documents led to an 18-month prison sentence in September 2023 and a restitution order to pay \$81,185.35 (approximately Dhs298,000) to the Social Security Administration.

FORTUNE HACKER

WHERE: NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

WHEN: MARCH 2001

It was the early days of the Internet, but Abraham Abdallah had already perfected his modus operandi. He stole identities and hacked into the financial accounts of more than 200 people, several of whom had been featured in the *Forbes* rich list – it's entirely possible that he identified his victims from that list. In fact, when he was finally arrested, after about six months of running his racket, amongst other evidence, there was a copy of the magazine, with home addresses, telephone numbers, and bank account numbers written beside billionaire biographies. For some of them, Abdallah had even managed to get the US social security numbers. The names of his alleged victims read like the who's who of America – filmmaker Steven Spielberg, television host Oprah Winfrey, media baron Ted Turner, and corporate heavyweights Warren Buffett, George Soros, Michael Bloomberg and Larry Ellison.

Just how he had single-handedly run this racket for months was a mystery even to investigators. A lot seemed to hinge on keeping track of packages ordered in victims' names by using web-enabled mobile phones and virtual voicemail services. Essentially, what he had done was to clone the identities of victims, then set up bogus New York addresses, and then hack into bank accounts. Bank, brokerage and credit card accounts were in his control, and he used these to transfer money.

Suspicious first grew when the con man tried a particularly large money transfer. New York Police Department got an alert about a request to transfer \$10 million (Dh36.7mn) from an account



For illustration purposes only

belonging to Thomas Siebel, founder of the electronics firm Siebel Systems. His brokerage firm, Merrill Lynch, had requested a verification from Siebel, and was told that he knew nothing about it. The New York City Police Department traced the money transfer request to two e-mail IDs; then Merrill Lynch found the same mail ID used for five more wealthy clients. Requests to more Wall Street firms revealed a similar pattern.

When Abdallah was arrested, he worked as a small-time employee in the restaurant industry. He had a prior conviction for credit card fraud. Upon conviction in the identity theft case, he was given an 11-year prison sentence.

IMPOSTOR ACTOR

WHERE: LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

WHEN: APRIL 1998

Noted Hollywood actor Gary Oldman just couldn't take it any more – someone was going around the film industry, pretending to be him. The impostor had expressed his interest in a role in director Milos Forman's *Man on the Moon*, a biographical film about the comedian Andy Kaufman. He had spoken to actor Danny DeVito, who was in the film, about the script, pretending to be Oldman, of course. He had even made a fake casting audition videotape – as Oldman playing Kaufman – and sent it to Forman. No one suspected a thing.

It was Oldman himself who discovered the scam when he read in the papers that he was supposed to be in talks for a role in the film. Since he had already turned down the role, this was clearly the work of an identity thief. Oldman managed to track down Mark Tufano, an aspiring actor from Britain and a property development manager. The real star gave the name-stealer a stern warning that the latter would be sued if he carried on like this. Tufano was quite brash, reportedly saying that suing would be pointless as he didn't have any money.

Later, Tufano told the media, "What I've done is quite



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artistic. It's an artistic statement." Even Oldman had grudgingly acknowledged his acting talent.

The impostor also admitted that he had impersonated Welsh actor Anthony Hopkins and fabricated a friendship with actor Tim Roth to secure a meeting with the American director Oliver Stone.

IBN FADLAN'S

journey to the lands of Saqaliba, Rus, and Khazars

AFTER MEETING THE SAQALIBA KING, THE ARAB SCHOLAR AND TRAVELLER AHMAD IBN FADLAN JOURNEYED TO THE LANDS OF THE RUS AND KHAZARS, DETAILING THEIR SOCIAL CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS, AND TRADE

BY DR FALEH HANDHAL





Saint Basil's Cathedral in Moscow



islaminrus.com

Ibn Fadlan



Kunsthistorisches Museum

Portrait of Catherine II of Russia



Vasilisa Ivanovna

Portrait of Ivan the Terrible by Weigel, 1882

We left our previous discussion in the encounter between the Arab scholar and traveller Ahmad Ibn Fadlan and the Saqaliba king. Despite an unfulfilled promise by the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir to the Saqaliba king, Ibn Fadlan was permitted to explore the customs of various communities and shared Islamic teachings.

Ibn Fadlan offers a vivid account of the Saqaliba's burial customs: "In the city, when a Muslim dies, they are washed according to Muslim

traditions, then transported by cart to the burial site. There, after placing them on the ground, a grave is dug for burial. Unlike the women, the men weep and strike their backs with braided ropes, placing their weapons at the grave's entrance."

His chronicle briefly transitions from social customs to the Saqaliba king's tributary and trade policies: "The Saqaliba king pays tribute to the Khazars with sable fur from every house in his kingdom and levies a tenth on all goods on commercial ships, whether from the Rus, Khazars, or other nations." He also mentions the

king's family, "The Khazar king, after being refused the hand of the Saqaliba king's beautiful daughter, built a fortress to protect her."

He also recounts the king's request for financial aid from the caliph for building a fortress. The king explains, "I saw the flourishing state of Islam and its wealth spent on goodness. Building with my own silver and gold would have been difficult, so I sought the blessing of the Commander of the Faithful and asked him for assistance."

This exchange concludes Ibn Fadlan's journey and discussions in the kingdom

“Muslim traders, assisted by Tatars who embraced Islam, expanded into regions around Moscow, which Islam reached around 1200 AD

of the Saqaliba, moving on without further details to discuss “the Rus”. This abrupt conclusion leaves many questions unanswered, reflecting the sometimes fragmentary nature of historical records.

THE RUS

Ibn Fadlan, in his accounts, discusses the Rus people before the establishment of notable Russian states, providing a rare glimpse into their early society. Muslim traders, assisted by Tatars who embraced Islam, expanded into regions around Moscow, which Islam reached around 1200 AD.

During this period, Moscow was under the influence of the Khanate of Kazan, a medieval Tatar Turkic state that occupied the territory of the former Volga Bulgaria. This changed in 1550 AD when Tsar Ivan the Terrible conquered Moscow, destroyed its mosques, and relocated their domes to the Kremlin

and Red Square, still standing today. Subsequently, the Tsar waged wars against Islamic territories, a situation that persisted until the late 18th century under Queen Catherine II, Empress of Russia, who implemented a policy of religious tolerance, allowing Muslims along the Volga River to enjoy religious freedoms, including building mosques and publishing Islamic texts.

Ibn Fadlan’s earlier observations of the Rus are critical and detailed. He describes: “I saw the Rus who settled on the river Itil. I have never seen people of a more developed bodily stature. They are as tall as date palms, blond and ruddy.” He notes their unique attire and customs, “The men wear a garment covering half of their body, leaving one hand free. Each carries an axe, a sword, and a knife, never separated from their weapons. Their swords, of the Frankish type, are broad-bladed and equipped with rills.”

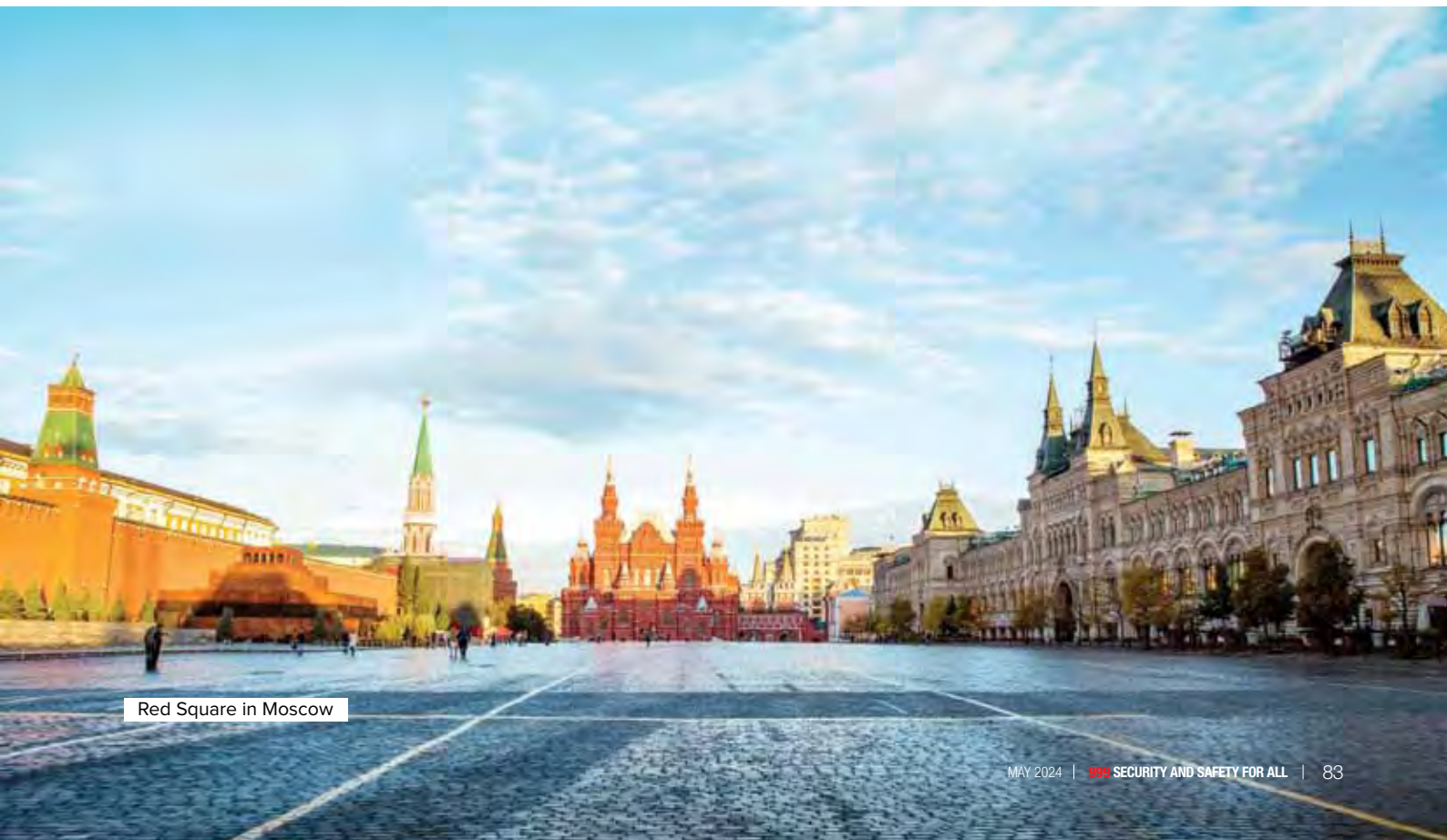
He continues, describing their tattoos and jewellery, “Each one is tattooed from the fingertips to their necks in dark green with designs of figures and trees. The women wear iron, silver, copper, or gold brooches on their chests, indicative of their husband’s wealth. They also wear neck rings of gold and silver.”

Ibn Fadlan’s account of the Rus people offers a detailed look at their rituals and

customs, particularly in dealing with death and trade. He describes their practices: “They build their houses near the riverbank, constructed of wood. When their ships arrive at the port, each local resident comes out carrying bread, meat, onions, and milk, along with a number of concubines and sable furs.

They say, ‘Oh Lord, I have come from a distant land, accompanied by concubines and sable furs, and I wish for you to provide me with a merchant who will buy my goods.’ If the sale proves difficult, they return, beseeching. But if they manage to sell, they declare, ‘My Lord has fulfilled my need, and I need to fulfil his need.’ They then gather several sheep and cattle, slaughter them, and give away the meat in charity, while placing the heads on the plank for the dogs to eat. Once the dogs consume the heads, they say, ‘My Lord is pleased with me, and has accepted my gift.’”

He further recounts their health practices and justice system: “If one of them falls ill, they erect a tent for him in a distant place, placing him inside along with bread and water, without approaching or speaking to him. If he recovers and stands up, he returns to them, but if he dies, they either burn him or leave him as he is for the dogs and birds of prey to consume. If they



Red Square in Moscow



Aerial view of Kazan Kremlin and the Volga River embankment

“ If they catch a thief or a robber, they bring him to a sturdy tree, tie a tight rope around his neck, and hang him there, leaving him suspended until he perishes due to storms and natural elements

catch a thief or a robber, they bring him to a sturdy tree, tie a tight rope around his neck, and hang him there, leaving him suspended until he perishes due to storms and natural elements.”

Ibn Fadlan provides a detailed observation of a cremation ritual he witnessed: “I was informed of the death of one of them, and they said he would be cremated. I went there and saw that they placed him in a grave, then collected his belongings and divided them into three parts: one for his family, one for his attendants, and a third to spend for a ritual gathering on the day his concubine was killed and burned with her master.

“The concubine was brought to the riverbank and placed her on a boat belonging to the deceased near the shore.

Then an old woman, called the “Queen of Death”, performed a ritual. She put a rope around the concubine’s neck and took a broad-bladed dagger, inserting it between her ribs, while another man strangled her with the rope until she died.

“Afterwards, they took the deceased from the grave, dressed him in trousers, a robe, and slippers made of linen, with a hat on his head. They then laid the concubine beside her master, piled up firewood, and placed the two bodies on top. Several people came with a flaming stick and threw it onto the wood. Soon, a strong wind blew, intensifying the flames and consuming everything in front of it.”

He continues, “Indeed, an hour later, the boat, the dead, and the concubine had turned into a pile of ashes.” This marks the

end of Ibn Fadlan’s observations of the Rus, as he then proceeds to discuss the kingdom of the Khazars.

THE KHAZARS

Before delving into Ibn Fadlan’s depiction of the Khazars, it’s important to understand their origins. They were a group of Mongolian ethnicity who migrated from Mongolia in the 6th century and settled along the Volga River, which flows into the Caspian Sea, referred to as the Sea of Khazars by the Arabs.

The Khazars converted to Judaism, positioning themselves strategically between Islamic and Byzantine powers. However, hostilities led to their state’s collapse, precipitating the migration of Jews to Europe.



Situated in Astrakhan Oblast in Russia, the Samosdelka Hillfort is believed by scholars to be the location of Itil (or Atil), the capital of Khazaria



Medieval town near Samosdelka

Ancient Arab historians described the Khazars as residing near the Itil River, which flows from the territories of the Rus and the Bulgars. Ibn Fadlan starts his account of the Khazars not by detailing his journey from the land of the Rus or his route but by focusing on their king. He describes the Khazar king, known as the “Great Khagan”, who is seen only every four months for leisure. His deputy, “Khagan Bakh”, handles day-to-day governance, including administrative matters, courts, and punishments.

Ibn Fadlan explains, “The Great Khagan leads the army, governs the state, manages the kingdom’s affairs, and wages wars, with neighbouring kings submitting to his authority. Each day, one of these kings visits him barefoot, carrying firewood, greets him, lights a fire, and then sits beside him.”

Discussing customs, Ibn Fadlan notes, “The Khazar king builds twenty houses along the river, each with a grave for himself, stating, ‘So that no human or

“The Khazar king’s city on the Itil River has two parts: one for Muslims and the other for the king and his entourage. Amongst the Muslims is a man named ‘Khaz’, who manages the affairs and needs of the Muslim community

beast can reach it.’ After someone is buried, those who buried him have their necks struck to keep the grave’s location secret, calling it ‘Paradise.’”

“The king traditionally has 25 wives, each a daughter of a neighbouring king, and 60 concubines, each living in a separate palace. When he wishes to see one, her servant brings her to him,” Ibn Fadlan recounts.

He continues, “When the king travels, his army maintains a distance of a mile, and no subject may raise his head until he passes. If a detachment he sends

is defeated, its men are killed, and its leaders, along with their families.

“The Khazar king’s city on the Itil River has two parts: one for Muslims and the other for the king and his entourage. Amongst the Muslims is a man named ‘Khaz’, who manages the affairs and needs of the Muslim community.”

Ibn Fadlan’s account ends here, without details of his return to Baghdad or whether he met Caliph al-Muqtadir again, suggesting that parts of his journey might be missing from the original sources.

CREATOR'S BUDDY

The demand for devices that can seamlessly blend work, creativity, and leisure is increasing. Catering to this need, the **HUAWEI MatePad Pro 13.2** has been designed to serve as a great companion for modern creators and entertainment enthusiasts alike.

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PRICE: Starts at Dhs3,300

WEBSITE: www.huawei.com

MAGIC OF HONOR



HONOR has recently launched its latest technological marvel in the UAE: the **HONOR Magic6 Pro**, which incorporates advanced AI to elevate user interactions. It features the AI Falcon Camera for smart photography, Magic Portal for AI-driven understanding of messages and behaviour, and AI Privacy Call 3.0 for enhanced sound privacy and voice adjustments.

Moreover, this smartphone showcases a revolutionary display with the HONOR NanoCrystal Shield for durability, offering up to 10 times the shock absorption of standard screens. It also presents the highest industry display frequency at 4320Hz. Equipped with a 5600mAh second-generation silicon-carbon battery, and supporting 80W wired and 66W wireless SuperCharge, the Magic6 Pro ensures rapid charging—reaching full battery in just 39 minutes—catering to users' active lifestyles with uninterrupted gaming, music, and video streaming capabilities.

PRICE: Starts at Dhs5,160

WEBSITE: www.honor.com

ULTRA THIN GIZMO

The HUAWEI nova 12 Series sets a new standard in mobile innovation, combining high-performance technology with slim, stylish designs tailored for the fashion-conscious and tech-savvy user. This series, including the **HUAWEI nova 12s, 12 SE, and 12i**, showcases Huawei's commitment to aesthetic excellence and technological advancement. The unique Star Orbit Ring design on its back camera, inspired by cosmic harmony, gives these smartphones a celestial brilliance, further accentuated by a range of vibrant colours.

Beyond aesthetics, the nova 12 Series pioneers with groundbreaking camera technology, ultra-fast charging capabilities, and the introduction of EMUI 14, enhancing security, personalisation, and overall user efficiency. EMUI 14 introduces innovative features like Live View and customisable Lock Screen Themes, offering users a more interactive and personalised experience.

PRICE: Starts at Dhs1,599

WEBSITE: www.huawei.com



STREAM SMART



PRICE: Starts at Dhs521

WEBSITE: www.alldocube.com

Consumers are increasingly looking for gadgets that not only meet their daily technological needs but also come at an affordable price. The new Android tablet from Alldocube, the **iPlay 60 Lite**, perfectly fits this demand by offering a cost-effective solution for those who enjoy streaming high-resolution content from their favourite service providers, thanks to its Widevine L1 certification.

Although the 11-inch display has a modest resolution of 1280 x 800, it provides ample screen size for media consumption, web browsing, and more. Support for numerous LTE bands makes this tablet a suitable choice for users, enhancing its appeal to a global audience.

Additionally, the tablet is equipped with an 8000 mAh battery, supports 10-watt charging, and includes GPS, Beidou, and Glonass for reliable navigation. With Android 14 pre-installed, the iPlay 60 Lite stands out as an affordable, yet capable option for those seeking the latest software features and a reliable tablet experience.

SECURED SIGHT

Envision having the capability to monitor every corner of your home, visually and audibly, even from afar. Introducing the **Roku Indoor Camera SE**, designed to protect your residence and maintain your connection to it, irrespective of your location. This device combines a suite of remarkable functionalities, offering thorough home surveillance.

Equipped with motion and sound detection capabilities, the Roku Indoor Camera SE keeps you informed and alert at all times. Instant notifications are sent directly to your Roku Smart Home mobile app or your Roku TV or Player, ensuring that you stay in the loop and never miss a beat, no matter where you happen to be.

The Roku Indoor Camera SE also captures crystal-clear 1080p full-colour footage, thanks to its cutting-edge low-light amplifier for stunning clarity.



PRICE: Dhs99

WEBSITE: www.roku.com



PRICE: Dhs2,200

WEBSITE: www.irobot.com

ROBO-VACUUM

Introducing the **iRobot Roomba j7+**, the latest advancements in robotic vacuums. This robo-vacuum has mopping capabilities, enhanced navigation, and autonomous operation, requiring minimal effort from users. It stands out for its diligent approach to cleanliness. It features a dual roller brushes and intuitive app interface.

The Roomba j7+ distinguishes itself with sophisticated technology designed to dodge obstacles like sofas and pet toys. It is powered by the Clean Base Automatic Dirt Disposal system for an almost entirely autonomous maintenance experience. Integrated with the iRobot HOME app, it allows for remote scheduling and updates, further enhanced by compatibility with voice-activated devices such as Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant, promoting a seamless, hands-free cleaning routine.



TAKE UP YOUR OWN SPACE IN SOCIETY, INSPIRE COLLECTIVE TRANSFORMATION,
AND TACKLE THE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

BY JASON RAZMUS



RENAISSANCE VOICES

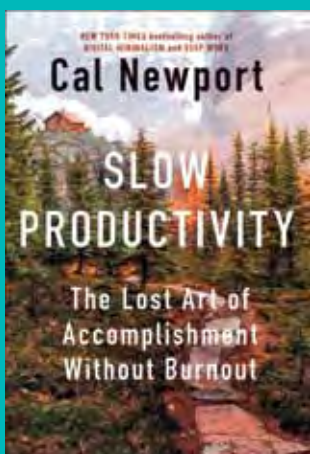
TITLE: *Shakespeare's Sisters: How Women Wrote the Renaissance*

AUTHOR: Ramie Targoff

PUBLISHER: Knopf

PRICE: Dhs68

This book redefines the English Renaissance, spotlighting four women writers who defied 16th and 17th-century norms when women were largely seen as men's property. It starts with Queen Elizabeth I's coronation, setting a backdrop for the stories of Mary Sidney, an acclaimed poet; Aemilia Lanyer, the first woman to publish original poetry in the 17th century; Elizabeth Cary, known for her groundbreaking play about Mariam, a Jewish princess; and Anne Clifford, a diarist who waged a long battle for her inheritance rights. These narratives reveal how, despite societal constraints and personal responsibilities, these women fiercely pursued their rightful place in society for their individual passion. Sidney and Lanyer broke ground in poetry, Cary in drama, and Clifford through her relentless fight in court, each finding ways to express their creativity in a world that offered little support for women artists.



CREATIVE PACE

TITLE: *Slow Productivity: The Lost Art of Accomplishment Without Burnout*

AUTHOR: Cal Newport

PUBLISHER: Portfolio

PRICE: Dhs67

Slow Productivity insightfully explores the work habits of history's renowned thinkers, such as Galileo, Isaac Newton, Jane Austen, and Georgia O'Keeffe, proposing a sustainable approach to contemporary work. Cal Newport contrasts their timeless achievements with today's hectic work culture, advocating for a paradigm shift towards 'slow productivity'. Through comprehensive research, Newport critiques prevailing productivity standards and proposes a more thoughtful, quality-centred way of working. He outlines practical strategies for managing workloads, integrating seasonal variations, and focusing on long-term goals rather than immediate outputs. This book challenges readers to reconsider productivity, advocating for a methodology that values meaningful work over constant busyness, aiming to guide professionals towards a more balanced career trajectory and a more humane approach to professional achievement.



COURAGEOUS TESTIMONY

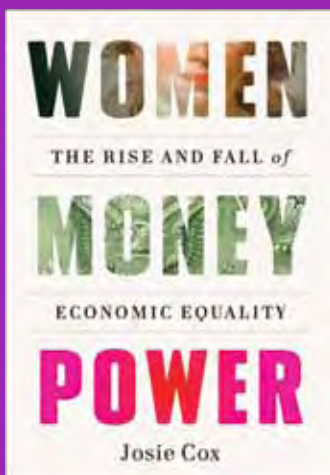
TITLE: *One Way Back: A Memoir*

AUTHOR: Christine Blasey Ford

PUBLISHER: St. Martin's Press

PRICE: Dhs94

On 27th September 2018, Christine Blasey Ford's testimony before the US Senate Judiciary Committee regarding Judge Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court nomination marked a significant moment in history. Alleging sexual assault by Kavanaugh at a high school party in the 1980s, Ford's compelling narrative became one of the most unforgettable in American public discourse. Her memoir details the arduous process of bringing her story to light while striving to protect her family from backlash. Drawing an analogy with her experiences as a surfer, Ford depicts the bravery required to navigate unknown waters. As a scientist, surfer, mother, and patriot, Ford's story transcends the headlines, offering a nuanced memoir of an inadvertent whistleblower. Her experience underscores the significance of individual courage in effecting collective change, positing that speaking truth to power can contribute to a ripple effect with the potential to grow into a wave.



FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

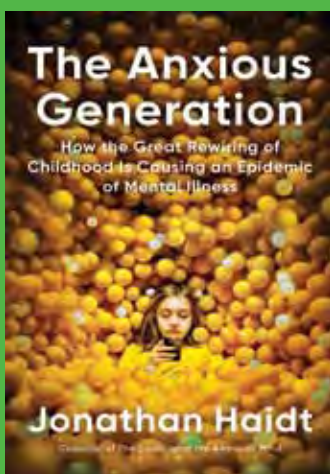
TITLE: Women Money Power: The Rise and Fall of Economic Equality

AUTHOR: Josie Cox

PUBLISHER: Harry N. Abrams

PRICE: Dhs99

Centuries of denied access to monetary resources, property ownership, and financial autonomy left women at a significant disadvantage, restricting basic rights like opening bank accounts or taking loans without a husband's consent well into the 20th century. The author chronicles the courageous efforts of women who challenged societal norms and legal barriers, including the "Rosies" who took on industrial roles during WWII and a woman advocate for landmark equal pay legislation. This book highlights that even though there has been notable progress, women continue to fight for financial equality, facing current challenges and ongoing systemic obstacles. This inspirational narrative showcases the relentless fight of women for financial freedom, power, and the continuous effort required to achieve true equality in a society that still holds back their financial empowerment. This book emphasises the work that remains to be done for women to gain full financial and societal equality.



GENERATION UNPLUGGED

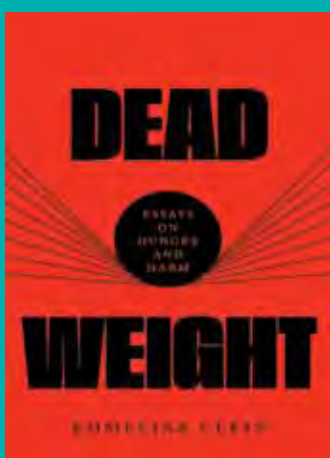
TITLE: The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness

AUTHOR: Jonathan Haidt

PUBLISHER: Penguin Press

PRICE: Dhs70

In *The Anxious Generation*, Jonathan Haidt addresses the alarming surge in adolescent mental health issues that began in the early 2010s, including significant increases in depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicide rates. Haidt explores the shift from a play-based childhood, prevalent until the 1980s, to the mobile phone-based childhood of the 2010s, and its detrimental effects on children's social and neurological development. He identifies multiple mechanisms, such as sleep deprivation, addiction, loneliness, and social comparison, through which modern childhood has been adversely transformed. Particularly, he discusses how social media has a more negative impact on girls, while boys increasingly escape into virtual worlds, impacting their real-world engagements. Haidt not only diagnoses the problem but also proposes actionable solutions. He outlines four simple rules and recommends steps for parents, educators, tech companies, and governments to combat this mental health crisis and advocate for a return to a more balanced, humane childhood.



THIN LINES

TITLE: Dead Weight: Essays on Hunger and Harm

AUTHOR: Emmeline Clein

PUBLISHER: Knopf

PRICE: Dhs83

In this book, Emmeline Clein interweaves her own battle with an eating disorder and the experiences of women across history, popular culture, and her personal life. She navigates through her personal journey of fluctuating between starvation and bingeing, examining the impact of societal ideals on her and others. She explores the dark corners of pro-anorexia blogs and the paradoxical effects of treatment centres, and pays tribute to those lost to eating disorders. Through narratives of struggle and survival, Clein delves into the economic, cultural, and political dimensions of eating disorders, scrutinising the issue of orthorexia. *Dead Weight* is both a deeply personal memoir and a critical examination of the cultural and economic forces that fuel the obsession with thinness, calling for a collective shift towards genuine recovery and empowerment.

Abu Dhabi crowned Arab Environment Capital for 2023



Abu Dhabi has been named as the Arab Environment Capital for 2023 by the Secretariat General of the Arab League and the Council of Arab Environment Ministers, a recognition of its extensive environmental protection and climate action initiatives.

These efforts have been spearheaded by the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD), under the guidance and follow-up of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler's Representative in the Al Dhafra Region and Chairman of EAD.

His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan said that the emirate's environmental achievements align with the visionary leadership of the UAE and the country's commitment to sustainability by declaring 2023 and 2024 as both 'Years of Sustainability'.

"Abu Dhabi is consistently guided and inspired by the overarching vision of the UAE's leadership, which is recognised worldwide for investing in knowledge-based initiatives that safeguard the environment and provide a sustainable future for generations to come," His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan added.

Abu Dhabi's strategic approach to climate action includes reducing carbon emissions, adapting to climate change effects, and boosting environmental awareness. The emirate has embarked on various projects, including the development of natural carbon sinks, planting millions of mangrove trees, transitioning to low-emission transportation, and diversifying energy sources, marking it as a leader in sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Sharjah's Conservation Centre welcomes first Arabian Tahr birth

The Environment and Protected Areas Authority in Sharjah (EPAA) has welcomed the first birth of an Arabian Tahr at the Al Hefaiyah Mountain Conservation Centre, marking a significant milestone since the inauguration of the Centre's expansion in early March by His Highness Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah.

This milestone signifies the initial success of the Arabian Tahr conservation project within the Centre's recent expansion efforts. The EPAA aims to protect rare, endangered animals, including the Arabian Tahr, and has successfully reintroduced this species to the Hajar mountains.

Hana Saif Al Suwaidi, Chairperson of the EPAA, commended the team's efforts at the Centre for mountain environment conservation in Sharjah's eastern region.

These efforts are part of Sharjah's strategy to bolster its role in biodiversity conservation locally, regionally, and internationally, while supporting environmental strategies for wildlife protection and the promotion of endangered species' reproduction. By creating an ideal natural breeding environment, the Centre serves as a sanctuary for over 30 types of mountain wildlife.

The Arabian Tahr, a diurnal animal that forms small groups, has a lifespan of 8 to 16 years and weighs between 15 to 40 kg. It primarily resides on rugged mountain slopes close to permanent water sources. Their diet consists of water, grass, small shrubs, leaves, and wild fruits.



'Exceptional' drought threatens Amazon River Basin

The Amazon River Basin, home to the world's largest rainforest, has been experiencing "exceptional" drought since mid-2023. The river levels are at their lowest in 120 years, a rare meteorological phenomenon.

The drought is endangering the wildlife within the vast riverine system of the Amazon, a critical hotspot of biodiversity and an essential component of the global hydrological and carbon cycles.

Moreover, it poses a significant threat to the livelihoods and energy supply of 30 million people residing in countries within the river basin, including Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Bolivia.



The destruction of vegetation, fires, biomass burning, corporate farming, cattle ranching and other socio-climate problems made the drought more severe and prolonged. Another factor that contributed to the drought is the occurrence of El Niño, which is a natural phenomenon that affects the weather patterns in the Pacific Ocean and reduces the rainfall in the Amazon.

Scientists found that human-induced climate change—the combination of low rainfall and high temperatures—caused the reduction of the amount of water available in the river and the soil.

Experts warned that unless the world rapidly stops burning fossil fuels and deforestation, this kind of meteorological and agricultural drought will become more frequent.

Cities sinking faster than sea levels are rising, global study finds

Many coastal cities around the world are sinking faster than sea levels are rising due to climate change.

According to a study by scientists from the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography on 99 coastal cities worldwide, cities of Tianjin in China, Semarang and Jakarta in Indonesia are seeing the most rapid rates of subsidence.

Other notable populous cities in Asia such as Chittagong in Bangladesh, Manila in the Philippines, and Karachi in Pakistan are sinking at an alarming rate due to excessive



Orleans and Houston are also experiencing the same trend due to glacial rebound and the weight of its buildings.

Land subsidence can have serious consequences for coastal cities, such as increased flood frequency and severity, damage to infrastructure and buildings, and loss of land and ecosystems.

Sea level rise globally is projected to rise at least one foot above year-2000 levels by the end of this century. Scientists recommend that city planners and decision-

groundwater extraction.

Cities in the United States like New York as well as those in the Gulf of Mexico like New

makers account for subsidence in their adaptation and mitigation strategies for the impacts of rising sea levels.

Abu Dhabi rolls out hygiene, safety inspection at beauty centres



Throughout the campaign, over 100 inspections were conducted to check adherence to essential health and public hygiene standards. Establishments found in violation for the first time received warnings and were subjected to subsequent inspections to guarantee compliance.

The authorities checked cosmetics expiration, protective equipment and uniforms, proper storage of products, and sterilisation of hairdressing tools and equipment.

The primary objective was to enhance awareness amongst the staff of these centres about the critical importance of delivering safe and hygienic services to customers.

The municipality also stressed the significance of collaboration with regulatory bodies and utilised social media channels and the “Freejna” app to distribute educational materials in both Arabic and English. These efforts sought to underscore the importance of following health guidelines to avoid potential penalties, including fines of up to Dh5,000 for non-compliance.

The Abu Dhabi City Municipality's Public Health Department launched a rigorous five-day inspection campaign, targeting beauty centres, women's salons, and barbershops to ensure they comply with

health and safety regulations.

This inspection visits coincided with the Eid Al Fitr celebrations, a period known for increased patronage of these establishments.

Neurological conditions now leading cause of ill-health worldwide

A recent global study confirmed that neurological conditions—ranging from migraines to strokes, Parkinson's disease, and dementia—are now the leading cause of ill-health and disability worldwide with 11.1 million deaths in 2021.

The findings, published in *The Lancet*, underscore a marked increase in the prevalence and mortality associated with neurological conditions over the last 30 years, impacting an estimated 3.4 billion people worldwide in 2021.

The study, titled ‘Global Burden of Disease, Injuries, and Risk Factors’, highlights a rise from approximately 375 million years of healthy life lost in 1990 to 443 million in 2021, across 37 neurological conditions.

This uptick is attributed to factors such as population growth, longer life spans, and increased exposure to environmental, metabolic, and lifestyle



risk factors including pollution, obesity, and dietary habits.

In the United Kingdom alone, data from Brain Research UK reveals that 1 out of 6 people suffers from a neurological condition, with 2.6 million people affected by traumatic brain injury or stroke, and over 944,000 living with dementia—a figure set to rise beyond a

million by 2030.

Diabetic neuropathy is identified as the most rapidly increasing neurological disorder worldwide, with its prevalence jumping to 206 million in 2021 from 1990. The study also notes a gender disparity in the impact of neurological disorders, with conditions such as migraine or dementia affecting women more severely than men.

USFDA approves 1st vaccine to prevent chikungunya

The United States Food and Drug Administration has approved the first chikungunya vaccine for individuals aged 18 years old and above.

Chikungunya is a viral infection transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito.

The recently approved vaccine is a single-dose immunisation containing a live, weakened version of the chikungunya virus.

The vaccine's safety underwent evaluation through two clinical studies involving adult patients in North America – 3,500 patients who received the vaccine and 1,000 patients who received a placebo. Almost all vaccinated participants achieved an antibody level for the chikungunya virus during the trial.

Vaccine recipients may experience symptoms similar to those with the chikungunya virus, such as headache,



fatigue, muscle pain, joint pain, fever, nausea, and tenderness at the injection site. Only 1.6 per cent of recipients experienced severe chikungunya-like adverse reactions necessitating medical intervention.

Over the past 15 years, at least 5 million cases of chikungunya virus infection have been

reported. Its common symptoms encompass fever and joint pains, along with manifestations like a rash, headache, and muscle pain. For some patients, particularly older adults and those with pre-existing medical conditions, the joint pain can be severe and persistent, lasting for months or even years.

Mixing heat with hair products carries health hazards—study



People often use various hair care products like shampoos, conditioners, sprays, and more at home, usually inside bedrooms or bathrooms. However, experts have warned that many of these products contain chemicals that can turn into

vapours, and inhaling them may negatively impact health.

In a report published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal *Environmental Science & Technology*, researchers explored how these volatile organic

compounds (VOCs) impact indoor air quality. They discovered that using these products can quickly alter air composition, with heat styling methods—like straightening and waving—further increasing VOC levels. Longer hair usage also resulted in higher VOC releases.

One such chemical is siloxane, known for making hair shiny and smooth. The study, conducted in a ventilated small house, measured real-time emissions of VOCs, including siloxanes, before, during, and after hair styling.

Activating an exhaust fan removed most air pollutants from the room within 20 minutes after completing a hair care routine. However, scientists said this may impact outdoor air quality in densely populated cities.

The extent of the health risks from daily inhalation of these VOCs requires further investigation, as per the study authors.

A separate 2023 study on dogs and cats in New York, United States, links birth defects, neurocognitive issues, reproductive impairments, and cancer to VOC exposure.

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WHAT THE MONTH HAS IN STORE



ARIES (MARCH 21 TO APRIL 20)

Dare to leap! May brings a surge of energy that will propel you towards new opportunities. Embrace leadership roles as they come your way. This month is ideal for starting projects that require courage and initiative. Financial gains are likely if you stick to your plans.



LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 23 – OCTOBER 22)

Balance is key this month. Strive for fairness in all your dealings, and you'll find that relationships, both personal and professional, thrive. Your aesthetic sense is heightened, making it a perfect time to redecorate or revamp your wardrobe. Financial decisions should be made with long-term benefits in mind.



TAURUS (APRIL 20 – MAY 21)

This month, your world will revolve around harmony. Seek balance in your relationships and your work-life equilibrium. Focus on improving strained relationship in the family; this will give you inner peace. Financially, focus on saving rather than spending.



SCORPIO (OCTOBER 23 – NOVEMBER 21)

Intense and passionate, this month is about deep connections and powerful transformations. You might find yourself exploring emotional depths in relationships, which could lead to strong bonds or significant endings. Financially, be cautious with investments.



GEMINI (MAY 22 – JUNE 20)

Expect a whirlwind of activity this May! Your communication skills will be your biggest asset, allowing you to navigate through tricky negotiations and network effectively. Keep an eye on both your health and your workload, as stress could take a toll if you're not careful.



SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 22 – DECEMBER 21)

Adventure calls, Sagittarius! Travel and learning are especially favoured this month. Your naturally curious spirit will lead you to valuable insights and new friendships. Be open to unexpected opportunities that may arise. Financial prospects look bright, particularly from mid-month onwards.



CANCER (JUNE 21 – JULY 22)

A reflective start to the month urges you to look inward and contemplate your personal goals. Family and home are highlighted, with possible changes on the domestic front. Emotionally, you will find clarity that will help resolve past issues and strengthen current relationships.



CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 22 – JANUARY 19)

A practical approach to the month will ensure you make the most of the opportunities that come your way. Hard work will pay off, so focus on your goals and stay disciplined. Relationships require effort; be patient and communicative with your loved ones. Financially, conservative strategies are advised.



LEO (JULY 23 – AUGUST 22)

Step into the spotlight this May, Leo! Your charisma and confidence will attract both admiration and opportunities. It's a good time to push forward with creative projects. Your warmth and generosity will bring you closer to those you care about. Financially, risk-taking might pay off.



AQUARIUS (JANUARY 20 – FEBRUARY 18)

Innovative ideas will flow freely this month, Aquarius. This is a time to think outside the box and engage with community projects. Social interactions will be particularly rewarding and could lead to exciting collaborations. Manage your finances wisely to support future projects.



VIRGO (AUGUST 23 – SEPTEMBER 22)

Precision and attention to detail will serve you well this month. Organise your life to improve both efficiency and productivity. Health-wise, focus on maintaining routines that enhance your well-being. Your practical approach will help stabilise your finances during this period.



PISCES (FEBRUARY 19 – MARCH 20)

Dream big, Pisces! Your creativity is at an all-time high, making this a great month for artistic endeavours. Emotional sensitivity could lead to meaningful connections but watch out for over-idealising people. Financially, intuition will guide your decisions, but be mindful of the details.

PUZZLES

ACROSS

- 1) Cream-filled pastries
- 6) Snaky shape
- 9) Way out there
- 13) Product demonstrators' pitches
- 15) Sinks
- 17) Playground rejoinder
- 18) Views of the future
- 19) Suffer a huge financial loss
- 21) Clever comment
- 22) Masters org.
- 23) Hardly long-winded
- 26) Hang in there
- 28) Remove, as fat
- 32) Spinnaker or spanker
- 33) Make public
- 36) Numbered work
- 38) Boo-hoo
- 39) Prudish sort
- 43) Cleveland hoopster, briefly

44) "For pity's..."

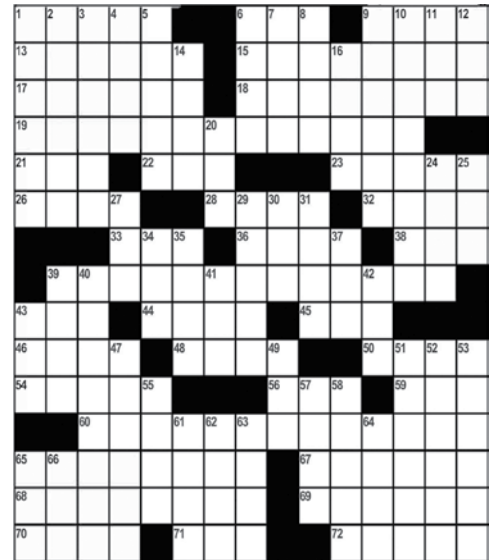
- 45) Locks (Huron-Superior link)
- 46) Resto orders
- 48) Court plea, for short
- 50) Free TV ads, for short
- 54) Repair bill component
- 56) Nile slitherer
- 59) Guinness suffix
- 60) Leader's protectors
- 65) Judge, as a coin dealer
- 67) Loose oomph
- 68) Interior designer's container
- 69) Words that can precede the last words of 19-, 39- and 60 Across
- 70) Daly of "Cagney & Lacey"
- 71) Crude home
- 72) Flies, roaches and such

DOWN

- 1) Book after Job
- 2) Yank out of the ground
- 3) Big bash

- 4) Wine and dine
- 5) The John B of song, e.g.
- 6) They may be inflated
- 7) Old French coins
- 8) Green of "Austin Powers" movies
- 9) Really goes for
- 10) 1 OK or marathon
- 11) Parrot's word, in comics
- 12) TLC specialists
- 14) Karaoke selection
- 16) Open, as an envelope
- 20) "Mangia!"
- 24) "Dear" addressees
- 25) English cathedral site
- 27) Former NBA star_ Ming
- 29) Spur wheel
- 30) Wall St. debut
- 31) Touse, as hair
- 34) TSA requests
- 35) Actress Irene or Meg
- 37) "...nuff!"
- 39) Big bash

- 40) It may be applied to a tennis ball
- 41) Bout stopper, briefly
- 42) "Alley..."
- 43) Place for a tassel, maybe
- 47) "Tristram Shandy" author Laurence
- 49) Intercontinental gp. since 1948
- 51) Some Japanese watches
- 52) Trip to the summit
- 53) Dictaphone users, perhaps
- 55) Sing like Cab Calloway
- 57) Concluded, with "up"
- 58) Before surgery, informally
- 61) Loaded with butter, say
- 62) Hairy twin in Genesis
- 63) "M*A*S*H" quarters
- 64) Barn attachment
- 65) Quick to catch on
- 66) Shell out



Easy

		7		8		9		
6	9		4					8
5	8		3			4	6	
	5	9			8			6
2								4
7			5			8	3	
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9					5		4	2
		3		1		7		

Medium

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	7						6	
9	2							
		4	5	2		9		
	8	2	1		4	6	3	
		3		7	6	1		
							9	8
	3						4	
6			3	8				

SOLUTIONS

SOLUTIONS FOR THE APRIL ISSUE



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www.dailysudoku.com

easy

6	5	4	9	3	2	1	7	8
8	9	3	5	7	1	2	6	4
1	7	2	4	8	6	3	9	5
5	2	6	8	4	7	9	1	3
4	1	8	3	2	9	6	5	7
9	3	7	1	6	5	8	4	2
3	6	5	2	9	4	7	8	1
7	8	1	6	5	3	4	2	9
2	4	9	7	1	8	5	3	6

medium

6	2	7	4	1	3	9	5	8
8	1	5	9	7	2	4	6	3
3	4	9	8	5	6	2	7	1
7	3	2	5	8	4	6	1	9
1	9	4	3	6	7	8	2	5
5	8	6	2	9	1	7	3	4
2	5	3	7	4	9	1	8	6
4	7	1	6	3	8	5	9	2
9	6	8	1	2	5	3	4	7

C	O	I	F	S	B	E	G	A	N	C	A	R
O	N	T	A	P	I	G	L	O	O	R	U	E
B	O	O	T	L	E	G	G	E	R	S	O	D
A	Q	U	A	T	I	C	M	A	J	E	S	T
C	U	R	C	L	A	M	S	O	U	L		
R	E	B	H	O	B	O	S	B	R	E	E	D
D	Y	N	E	S	B	E	E	P	S	G	A	B
N	E	E	I	N	E	L	E	G	A	N	T	L
E	I	N	N	E	V	E	R	L	E	A	S	E
T	E	D	G	R	E	T	A	S	A	N	D	S

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