

999

SECURITY AND SAFETY FOR ALL

ISSUE 142 NOVEMBER 2023

**PLANET GUARDIANS
IN UNIFORM**

**GROWING FOOD IN
UAE'S DESERT**

**IN THE
SPOTLIGHT:
SAVINGS,
SERVICE,
SECURITY**



THE ROAD TO COP28 UAE

IN THIS ISSUE: BEWARE OF THE UNSEEN DANGERS OF OUR DEEPLY CONNECTED WORLD

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*What
distinguishes
the UAE is its
principle, inspired
by the nation's
leaders, that
environmental
responsibility
extends to every
member of society*

The world unites in the UAE

This November, the world turns its eager gaze to the UAE as it becomes the epicentre of hope and change. COP28, the 28th Conference of the Parties, has emerged as the singular beacon of 2023.

In the heart of the UAE, COP28 shall lay the groundwork for the fate of our planet. Here, under the roof of co-operation, nations from all corners of the globe will congregate, their leaders and delegates uniting in a purposeful mission. Their quest? To strategise for the planet's future. To confront head-on the spectre of climate change and global warming.

COP28 has raised the banner of urgency, sounding the clarion call that we are running out of time. The air is thick with expectations. Our cover story this month highlights why this is no mere gathering; rather, it is a climactic gathering on a stage where the future of humanity will be decided.

At the heart of this event lies the evaluation of global progress since the inception of the Paris Agreement on that fateful day, the 22nd of April 2016. This global event is not just about assessing achievements; it is about measuring the mettle of nations, a day of reckoning for the promises made in Paris.

The power to drive change and advance sustainability does not rely on world leaders and policymakers alone. Each individual—the everyday person—can play a crucial role to save our planet and become a force for change. In our special feature, **999** presents the remarkable journey of an Emirati farmer to grow food in the desert, offering a compelling testament to the boundless possibilities of desert agriculture. Through his unwavering dedication combined with cutting-edge farming techniques like hydroponics and vertical farming, this visionary farmer has transformed a parcel of land in Al Aweer, Dubai into a thriving agricultural oasis. What was once an empty patch of undulating sand has now become a mesmerising demonstration of what's possible when human ingenuity confronts nature's harshest challenges. The result: thousands of thriving pineapples, flourishing under the care of greenhouses.

What distinguishes the UAE is its principle, inspired by the nation's leaders, that environmental responsibility extends to every member of society. It's not limited to certain groups or professions but is a shared duty that unites the entire nation. This inclusivity is best exemplified by the involvement of the police force, who roll up their sleeves to become guardians of nature. **999**'s lens captures the remarkable initiatives and campaigns launched by the UAE police to raise eco-awareness and mobilise communities to make our planet greener.

The UAE's journey toward sustainability weaves a compelling narrative of hope amidst the challenges of climate change, serving as a testament to the limitless potential of human action, resonating across the globe.

As you may know, sustainability goes beyond the environment; it includes social and economic aspects. In this **999** issue, let's explore two forward-thinking topics: the UAE Cabinet's new end-of-service savings programme and turning mistakes at work into growth opportunities. Financial stability supports individuals and families during economic challenges, while personal growth enhances adaptability and value at work and in the community.

As you immerse yourself in these stories, remember that sustainability isn't just a concept; it's a way of life!



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United Arab Emirates**

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THE ROAD TO COP28 UAE

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Internationally
respected artist

UAE President receives credentials of foreign ambassadors



HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed alongside newly appointed foreign ambassadors to the UAE during an official ceremony held at Qasr Al Watan, Abu Dhabi

Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice-President and Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE and Chairman of the Presidential Court.

His Highness underscored the UAE's commitment to supporting and facilitating their diplomatic efforts, highlighting the UAE's dedication to fostering global co-operation and communication.

The President received the credentials of Dr Sultan bin Salmeen Al Mansouri, Ambassador of the State of Qatar; Martina Strong, Ambassador of the United States of America; Lucie Berger, Ambassador of the European Union; Gilbert Boustany, Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda; Dana Goldfinch, Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia; Olav Myklebust, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway; Meropi Christofi, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus; Joseph Kotski, Ambassador of the Czech Republic; Ridi Kurtezi, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania; Tony Joudi, Ambassador of the Bahamas; Tej Bahadur Chhetri, Ambassador of Nepal; and Karoly Benes, Ambassador of Hungary.

PRESIDENT His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan received the credentials of new foreign ambassadors to the UAE.

During a formal reception at Qasr Al Watan in Abu Dhabi, the President conveyed a warm welcome to the new ambassadors, in the presence of His

Theyab bin Zayed appointed as Chairman of Martyrs Families Office

PRESIDENT His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has issued a Federal Decree appointing HH Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan as Chairman of the Office of Development and Martyrs' Families Affairs at the Presidential Court, with the rank of Minister.

HH Sheikh Theyab, who currently holds the position of Chairman at the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Court and is a Member of the Executive Council, was previously appointed as Chairman of the Arab Youth Centre in August 2022. He also serves as Chairman of Etihad Rail, a UAE megaproject set to revolutionise trade, logistics, and regional transportation.



HH Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed

UAE stresses urgent need for humanitarian aid corridors in Gaza

PRESIDENT His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan held high-level talks with Arab and foreign leaders to help address the escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip.

His Highness held communications with HM King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein of Jordan, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah

El-Sisi, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Key amongst the discussions with Arab and foreign leaders is the urgent need to establish humanitarian corridors for the transportation of relief aid.

His Highness said safeguarding these routes would enable humanitarian

organisations to carry out their missions, preventing further suffering amongst the two million innocent civilians affected by the intensifying conflict.

His Highness also emphasised the protection of civilians, especially children, women, and the elderly, and called for the release of hostages.

UAE Cabinet approves Federal General Budget 2024-2026



The UAE Cabinet during the approval of the federal budget at Al Watan Palace, Abu Dhabi

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 approved the Federal Budget 2024-2026, totalling Dhs192 billion.

The announcement followed the Cabinet meeting at Al Watan Palace in Abu Dhabi, in the presence of HH Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice-President and Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE and Chairman of Presidential Court; HH Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of

Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Finance; and HH Lt General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior.

HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid stated: "Today, I chaired the UAE Cabinet meeting at Qasr Al Watan in Abu Dhabi, during which we approved the Federal General Budget 2024-2026, totalling Dhs192 billion. The investment in social development and benefits represents 42 per cent of the budget, followed by government affairs at 39 per cent. The rest of the budget was

distributed to investments in infrastructure and economic resources as well as financial assets and investments together with other federal expenses."

The federal budget for 2024 reflects estimated expenses amounting to Dhs64 billion and estimated revenue of Dhs65.72 billion.

According to a statement by the Ministry of Finance, the revenue projections for 2024 have risen by 3.3 per cent, while the estimated expenses have increased by 1.6 per cent compared to the previous fiscal year.

Mohammed bin Rashid issues Law on Dubai's emblem



HIS Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has issued Law No. (17) of 2023 regarding the use of Dubai's official emblem.

The law mandates that Dubai must have its unique emblem, one that reflects its values and principles. It allows the emblem's use in government facilities, documents, websites, and official events. Private entities can also use it, subject to prior approval from the Ruler of Dubai or his representative.

The law emphasises the consequences of improper emblem use, including potential penalties and punishments, such as imprisonment for a minimum of three months and a maximum of five years, along with fines ranging from Dhs100,000 to Dhs500,000, as specified in the law.

Dubai forms Boards of Directors for MBRHE, Nedaa

HIS Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, issued Decree No. (41) of 2023 pertaining to the formation of the Board of Directors of the Mohammed bin Rashid Housing Establishment (MBRHE).

The Board of Directors will be composed of Abdulla Abdul Rahman Al

Shaibani as Chairman and Mohammed Abdullah Al Tawhidi as Vice Chairman.

Other members of the Board include Nasser Abdullah bin Kherbash, Ali Muhammad Al-Mutawa, Hamdan Khalifa Al Shair, Jumaa Saeed Khalaf Al-Ghaith, Hind Obaid Al-Ghashiyah Al Marri, and Abdulaziz Mohammed bin Shafar Al Marri, besides the CEO of the Establishment.

His Highness also issued Decree No. (42) of 2023 constituting the Board of the Professional Communication Corporation (Nedaa) chaired by Hamad Obaid Al Mansouri, with Yousef Abdulmalek Ahli as Vice Chairman.

Other members of the Board include Jamal Hamed Al Marri, Humaid Rabai Al Suwaidi, in addition to the CEO of the Corporation.

Mansour bin Zayed establishes English Judicial Services bureau



HIS Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice-President and Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE, Chairman of the Presidential Court, and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department, has issued Decision No. 38 of 2023, establishing the Notary Services Bureau in English in Abu Dhabi.

The inauguration of the first-of-its-kind English language judicial services bureau in the Middle East represents a significant step in facilitating business operations in Abu Dhabi, as highlighted by Counselor Youssef Saeed Al-Abri, Undersecretary of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department.

This office aims to simplify business

operations by offering notarisation and authentication services for English-language contracts and documents, eliminating the requirement for translation.

Its judicial services include:

- Contracts of all kinds
- Declarations and undertakings, including monthly income declarations, non-objection to travel, waiver, and others
- Settlement agreements
- Powers of attorney of all kinds
- Signature authentication
- Board of Directors' decisions and meeting minutes

ADIPEC 2023 spearheads talks on decarbonisation, cleaner energy



HH Sheikh Mansour tours ADIPEC pavilions

the keen initiative of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed to bolster the UAE's global prominence in the energy sector.

Highlighting the significance of this year's ADIPEC, His Highness said it aligns with the strategic goals of COP28, an event the UAE is set to host with broad international participation on November 30 – December 12, 2023.

During the conference, HH Sheikh Mansour took a tour of several exhibition pavilions, where he received insights into the latest innovations and advanced technological developments in the energy sector.

UNDER the patronage of President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice-President and Deputy

Prime Minister of the UAE, and Chairman of the Presidential Court, inaugurated the 39th ADIPEC Exhibition and Conference.

His Highness Sheikh Mansour commended

Mubadala approves financial report for H1 2023



Mubadala's board meeting at Qasr Al Watan, Abu Dhabi

Additionally, various agenda items were discussed, and corresponding decisions were reached.

The meeting was attended by HH Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman of the Office of Development and Martyrs Families Affairs at the Presidential Court; Khaldoon Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Executive Affairs Authority, Member of the Executive Council, Managing Director and CEO of Mubadala Investment; HE Suhail bin Mohammed Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure; HE Dr Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology; Abdul Hameed Mohammed Saeed; and HE Saif Saeed Ghobash, Secretary-General of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council.

HIS Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice-President and Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE, Chairman of the Presidential Court, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Mubadala

Investment Company, has chaired Mubadala's board meeting at Qasr Al Watan in Abu Dhabi.

In the meeting, the Board approved the financial report for the first half of 2023.

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince inaugurates UAE Wind Programme



HH Sheikh Khaled with the team and partners behind the construction of the UAE Wind Programme on Sir Bani Yas Island

ON behalf 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 Abu Dhabi Executive Council, has inaugurated the UAE Wind Programme during a ceremony on Sir Bani Yas Island.

This landmark clean energy initiative builds on the UAE's commitment to developing alternative energy sources, with the first wind power station on Sir Bani Yas Island established in 2004.

The UAE Wind Programme is set to provide electricity for over 23,000 homes annually, displacing 120,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide, equivalent to removing more than 26,000 petrol-powered cars from the road each year.

The project spans four locations, including Sir Bani Yas Island (45MW wind farm and 14MW peak solar farm), Delma Island (27MW), Al Sila in Abu Dhabi (27MW), and Al Halah in Fujairah (4.5MW).

UNCTAD lauded for hosting World Investment Forum in Abu Dhabi



HH Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed and HH Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid during the opening of the 8th World Investment Forum

HIS Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of Abu Dhabi Executive Council, attended the opening of the 8th World Investment Forum—in the presence of HH Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

The Abu Dhabi Crown Prince lauded the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for

organising this global forum in the UAE, underscoring the country's pivotal contribution to the global economy through trade facilitation, investment promotion, and the establishment of a business-friendly environment.

His Highness also stressed the forum's significance as a platform for a shared vision that fosters global development and progress.

On the sidelines of the event, His Highness Sheikh Khaled met with heads

of state, government officials, decision-makers, business leaders, investors, and representatives from both local and international institutions and companies.

Their discussions encompassed the latest developments in the global investment landscape, alongside potential investment opportunities in the UAE. His Highness also spotlighted several initiatives, including "Make it in the Emirates", aimed at promoting sustainable development.

Abu Dhabi mulls plan to bolster smart-autonomous vehicle industry

HIS Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, has endorsed a plan to establish a world-leading Smart and Autonomous Vehicle Industries (SAVI) cluster in Abu Dhabi.

The SAVI cluster is poised to make a substantial economic impact, with projections indicating contributions of

Dhs90 to Dhs120 billion to the UAE economy and the creation of 30,000 to 50,000 jobs.

During the presentation of the plan by Ahmed Jassem Al Zaabi, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development, His Highness Sheikh Khaled, in the presence of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, delved into the details of this

ambitious initiative. The SAVI cluster will encompass multi-modal solutions, driving advancements in smart and autonomous vehicles across air, land, and sea.

His Highness issued directives to establish strategic partnerships aimed at nurturing Emirati talent and attracting global expertise, harnessing the latest technologies, fostering an enabling ecosystem, and propelling growth within the sector.

Saif bin Zayed leads Happiness and Positivity Council meeting



HIS Highness Lieutenant General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, led the

meeting of the Happiness and Positivity Council at the Ministry of Interior, at the Police Sports and Shooting Club in Ajman.

Central to the discussion were an array of projects and initiatives, each designed with the common goal of advancing the quality and efficiency of police services offered. The meeting also aimed to ensure that the services align closely with the evolving needs and expectations of the community.

Moreover, the meeting provided an opportunity to assess the outcomes of strategic indicators, a critical component in guiding the future of police work. The Council deliberated on strategies to further enhance community safety and security.

Interior Minister inks MoUs with Belarusian counterpart

HIS Highness Lieutenant General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, hosted a meeting with his Belarusian counterpart, Ivan Kubrakov, and his accompanying delegation in Abu Dhabi.

The discussions centred on ways to further enhance bilateral relations in the fields of safety and security. The highlight of the meeting was the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the governments of the UAE and Belarus to facilitate the recognition and exchange of driving licences for citizens of both countries.

A security cooperation agreement was also signed to bolster the fight against terrorism and transnational crimes while fostering knowledge exchange in the fields of



policing and security.

The meeting and signing ceremony were attended by Major General Staff Khalifa Hareb Al Khaili, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, as well as other Ministry officers. Andrei Loshnok, Ambassador of the

Republic of Belarus to the UAE, and Belarusian Ministry of Internal Affairs officials, including Alexander Shastela, Director of Internal Affairs, and Mikhail Starkovich, Director of International Cooperation, were also present.

Unified Electronic Platform team and partners honoured



HIS Highness Lieutenant General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior,

honoured the dedicated team and partners behind the Unified Electronic Platform for dispensing controlled and

semi-controlled medicines.

This national portal is the outcome of collective efforts by experts and specialists from local and federal authorities. It is dedicated to enhancing the responsible distribution of these medicines to enhance community security.

Amongst the entities honoured included the Ministry of Health and Prevention, the Presidential Court, the Department of Health - Abu Dhabi, the Health Authority - Dubai, and the Abu Dhabi Health Services Company (SEHA).

Additionally, 36 individuals from various agencies and partners received recognition for their unwavering support and contributions to the success of the platform.



اعرف أكثر عن
كل شيء نقدمه

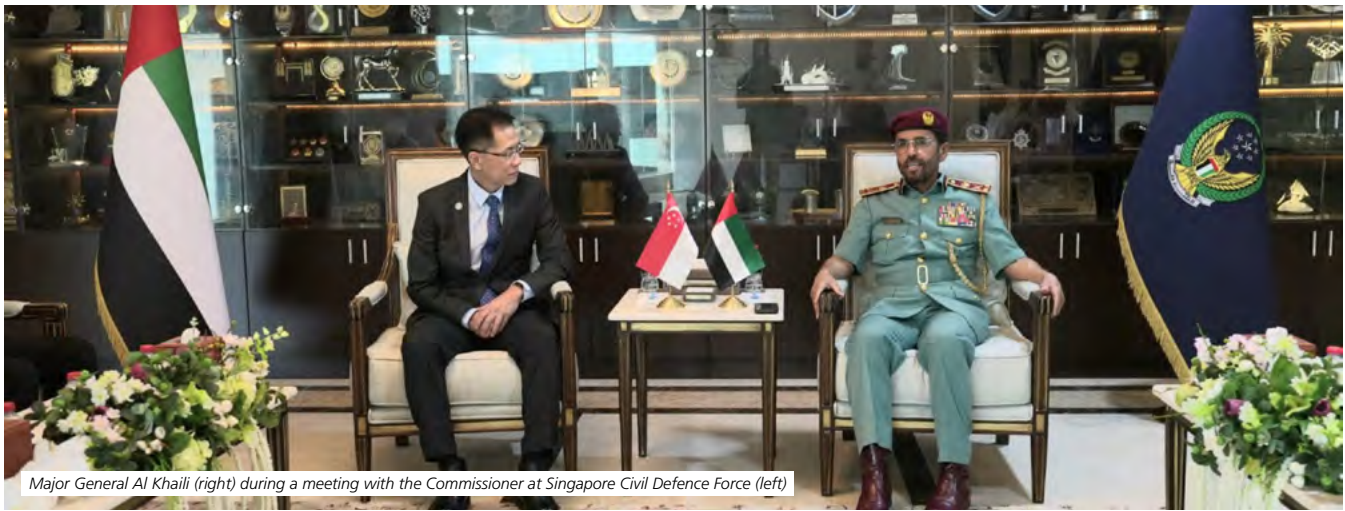


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Al Khaili meets with Singapore Civil Defence Force Commissioner



Major General Al Khaili (right) during a meeting with the Commissioner at Singapore Civil Defence Force (left)

MAJOR General Staff Khalifa Hareb Al Khaili, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Interior (MoI), held a meeting at the Ministry's headquarters in Abu Dhabi with Eric Yap, Commissioner at Singapore Civil Defence Force.

During the meeting, discussions took place on ways to enhance the existing relations between the UAE and Singapore in the police and security fields, especially those related to prevention, safety, and civil protection.

The meeting was attended by Major General Dr Jassim Mohammed Al Marzouqi, Commander-in-Chief of Civil Defence at the Ministry of Interior, along with several officers from the Ministry and

officials from the Singapore Civil Defence.

Meanwhile, Al Khaili led the Permanent Higher Committee for Internal Security meeting held remotely through a video conference. The meeting was attended by Committee officials, directors general, and several senior officers at the MoI and general police command.

The meeting delved into several strategic projects and initiatives, focusing on enhancing safety and security, meeting performance targets, updating internal security training, collaborating with key partners, and ensuring seamless community service delivery.

Furthermore, Al Khaili opened the 6th Forum for the Minister of Interior's

Excellence Award, which was held to foster a culture of excellence at both the organisational and operational levels of the police forces in the country.

In a video message during the event, Al Khaili emphasised upon the Ministry's unwavering pursuit of excellence, in line with the visionary guidance of the nation's leadership and the directives of the UAE government.

Al Khaili highlighted that under the guidance of His Highness General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, the Excellence Award assumes a pivotal role in cultivating a culture of excellence within the Ministry.

Mol Committee reviews legal provisions on honour crimes

THE Permanent Committee for Defining Offences and Crimes Affecting Honour and Trustworthiness at the Ministry of Interior (MoI) held its sixth meeting for the year 2023 at the Ministry's headquarters.

The meeting was led by Brigadier Dr Rashid Sultan Al Zaabi, Director General of Legal Affairs at the MoI, and attended by Committee members from various security, judicial, and legal authorities in the country, as well as officers working in the security and police field.

During the meeting, the Committee discussed legal provisions related to offences and crimes affecting honour and trustworthiness, which require judicial redress according to specific criteria set



by the Committee.

Furthermore, they assessed the agenda items and topics that the Committee is actively monitoring, to attain sustainable

development objectives and elevate community well-being in alignment with the highest global standards.

Al Mazrouei inaugurates quality management conference



Major General Al Mazrouei honours EFQM conference participants

MAJOR General Staff Pilot Faris Khalaf Al Mazrouei, Commander-in-Chief of Abu Dhabi Police, inaugurated the second edition of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) conference titled 'Shaping the Future through Excellence, Flexibility, and Sustainable Transformation'.

The conference was organised by EFQM in partnership with Abu Dhabi Police.

Al Mazrouei emphasised that Abu Dhabi's

global excellence in various fields, including security, is a result of the attention given by President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and the continuous commitment of His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Chairman of Abu Dhabi Executive Council, to continue the path of development and enhance capabilities to preserve comprehensive

developmental achievements.

He underscored the Abu Dhabi Police's resolute dedication, in collaboration with the EFQM and both internal and external stakeholders, to work cohesively to maintain the safety and security in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Brigadier Khalfan Abdullah Al Mansouri, Director of the Strategy and Institutional Development Centre at Abu Dhabi Police, explained that hosting this conference in Abu Dhabi is part of the commitment to achieve its vision of ensuring the continued global leadership of Abu Dhabi in the fields of safety and security.

Russell Longmire, EFQM Chief Executive Officer, said that the conference serves as a platform for dialogue, bringing together excellence and innovation to shape the future.

Engineer Isra'a Mobideen, EFQM Middle East Regional Director, added that the conference enhances transformation processes and partnerships as an assurance for sustainable growth and progress.

Abu Dhabi Police's ICT Department receives ADNOC delegation



ADNOC delegation receives a commemorative shield from the ICT Department at Abu Dhabi Police

A delegation from the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) led by Waleed Al Jassmi was briefed on the best practices implemented at the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Department at Central Operations Sector at Abu Dhabi Police General Headquarters, as well as its most significant achievements in the fields of police and security work.

Brigadier Dr Engineer Mohammed Abdullah Al Zaabi, Director at the ICT Department, met with the visiting delegation.

The meeting was also attended by Brigadier Engineer Tariq Matar Al Hassani, Deputy Director at the ICT Department, and Brigadier Engineer Yacoub Youssef Al Ahmad, Director at the Infrastructure Department.

They engaged in conversations regarding the sharing of scientific and specialised expertise, strengthening collaboration within the context of their strategic partnership, and conducting benchmark assessments to identify best practices in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Al Zaabi underscored the significance of forging strategic partnerships with diverse government entities to bolster initiatives aimed at harmonising institutional functions while elevating the standard of services.

The delegation received a comprehensive briefing on various aspects, including the Infrastructure Monitoring Room, customer service, and Abu Dhabi Police's diligent efforts in the implementation of cutting-edge practices and strategies associated with modern technologies.

Al Marri spearheads Dubai Appreciation Award's board meeting

LIEUTENANT General Abdullah Khalifa Al Marri, Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Dubai Appreciation Award for Community Service, led the inaugural meeting of the Award's Board of Trustees.

Al Marri conveyed appreciation to Lieutenant General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim, Deputy Chairman of Police and Public Security in Dubai, for his efforts during the past period. These efforts, Al Marri said, had a considerable influence on recognising community members by acknowledging their diverse contributions to humanitarian and social initiatives.

Al Marri welcomed the new members of the Council, emphasising the importance of the Award in highlighting and honouring individuals, organisations, and private institutions that make significant contributions to society through projects and initiatives in various fields including social, health, and educational care, amongst others.



Lt General Al Marri extensively discusses the Dubai Appreciation Award with the Board of Trustees

Al Marri emphasised upon the need to document the contributions of the Award recipients and highlight their efforts. This, he said, is crucial as their achievements benefit the nation, foster its development, and uphold societal values, particularly amongst the younger generation.

During the meeting, the Award's rules, categories, nomination process, finances, technical panel, and arbitration committee were thoroughly reviewed. They considered feedback and suggestions from members attentively, all with the aim of enhancing and expanding the award's scope.

Al Shamsi holds key meeting with legal, judicial officials

MAJOR General Saif Al Zari Al Shamsi, Commander-in-Chief of Sharjah Police, met with Dr Mansour Mohammed bin Nassar, Legal Advisor - Head of the Legal Department of the Government of Sharjah, and Judge Dr Mohammed Al Kaabi, Chairman of the Sharjah Federal Court of First Instance, as well as Anwar Amin Al

Harmoudi, General Lawyer of the Sharjah Procuratorate.

The discussions encompassed matters pertaining to security operations and their associated challenges, with a focus on their implications for societal safety. Additionally, the meeting explored co-operative strategies involving the Sharjah Federal Court of First

Instance and the Public Prosecution of Sharjah, encompassing various facets dedicated to the enhancement of security and stability.

Al Shamsi underscored the significance of the subjects deliberated during these leadership meetings, as they play a crucial role in advancing work processes by tackling vital security challenges in the future.

World Police Summit renews collaboration with Sia Partners



Brigadier Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah Al Mualla

THE Executive Office of the World Police Summit has renewed its collaboration with Sia Partners, the knowledge partner for the upcoming World Police Summit 2024 from March 5 to 7 at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

Brigadier Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah Al Mualla, Head of the Executive Office of the World Police Summit, explained that this collaboration is an extension of the valuable results and fruitful partnership achieved in the previous edition of the summit with Sia Partners.

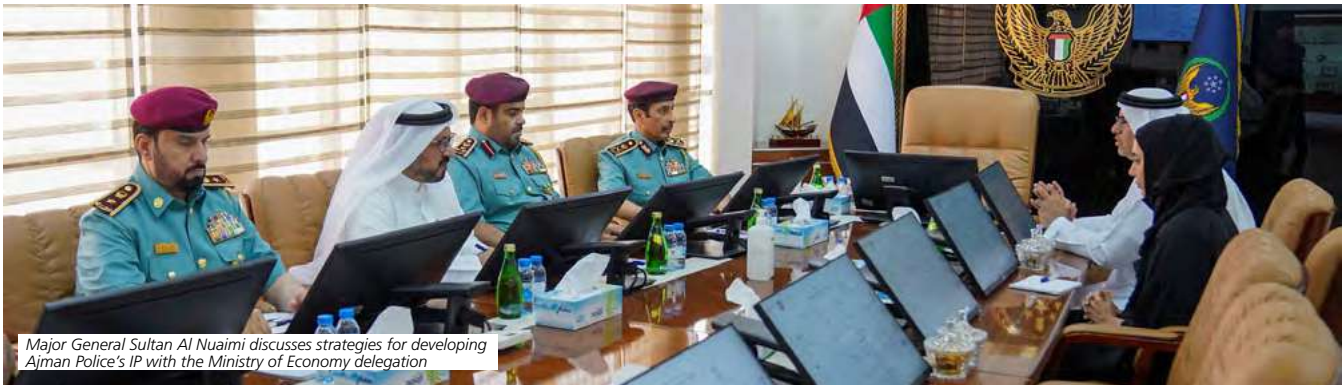
The company, Al Mualla said, has produced accurate reports that have helped both the police and security sectors, providing a more professional and comprehensive view of the global situation in the field of crime prevention and community security. He

highlighted that this allows law enforcement agencies worldwide to access and benefit from these reports.

Cesar Moukarzel, Managing Director at Sia Partners, stated: "We are pleased to announce our continued collaboration with the World Police Summit for the second consecutive year. We are committed to making a positive impact on the global scene, and this ongoing partnership with the summit reflects our dedication to working together for a safer world."

He added: "Over the past year, we witnessed the strength of international co-operation and the dedication of law enforcement agencies from around the world to maintain peace, security, and justice. Our shared values of innovation, excellence, and integrity continue to drive us to new horizons."

Ajman Police, MoE collaborate on IP strategies



Major General Sultan Al Nuaimi discusses strategies for developing Ajman Police's IP with the Ministry of Economy delegation

MAJOR General Sheikh Sultan bin Abdullah Al Nuaimi, Commander-in-Chief of Ajman Police, held a meeting with the Intellectual Property (IP) Sector team at the Ministry of Economy, led by Dr Abdulrahman Hassan Al Muaini, Assistant Undersecretary for Intellectual Property Rights Sector.

The meeting aimed to develop strategies for advancing IP in the police force,

aligning with the Ministry of Interior's goal to foster innovation within the institution. This objective also coincides with the Ministry of Economy's mission to lead and enhance competitiveness in innovation and intellectual property rights protection.

During the meeting, they scrutinised the main focus areas and associated metrics of the Global Innovation Index. Discussions

centred on strategies to bolster these aspects to promote a culture of innovation. They also outlined the overall structure of the IP framework in the UAE and the national strategies supporting its realisation, along with the policies incentivising the innovation index. These efforts are directed towards achieving leadership and competitiveness in innovation and intellectual property rights.

Al Kaabi highlights GITEX Global's role in tech advancements



Major General Al Kaabi visits Fujairah Police's pavilion at GITEX Global

MAJOR General Mohammed Ahmed bin Ghanim Al Kaabi, Commander-in-Chief of Fujairah Police, highlighted the role of the GITEX Global exhibition as a fast-track platform for cutting-edge technologies.

Al Kaabi explained that this event brings together tech manufacturers and developers from around the world, highlighting the UAE's commitment to promoting innovative ideas. He added that it opens up opportunities for progress and growth, both locally and globally, helping police forces around the globe keep pace with technological advancements and promoting prosperity through modern innovations.

He made these remarks during his visit to the Fujairah Police pavilion at GITEX Global in the Dubai World Trade Centre.

Al Kaabi underscored that Fujairah Police's participation in the exhibition aligns with the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Interior, ensuring the delivery of services according to high-quality, efficient, and transparent standards.

RAK Police promote traffic awareness amongst government staff

THE Traffic and Patrols Department - Awareness and Traffic Media Branch of Ras Al Khaimah Police launched an awareness campaign directed at government employees in the emirate.

The initiative, titled 'Traffic Laws and Regulations, Objective and Purpose', seeks to educate both government workers and the wider community about traffic rules, procedures and the violation schedule in

line with Ministerial Resolution No. 178 of 2017.

The campaign's ultimate goal is to uphold road safety and enhance traffic security.

1st

UAE's leading position and 4th globally in terms of international tourist spending. In 2022, visitors contributed Dhs224 billion to the country's economy, as reported by the World Tourism Organization. The UAE's ranking closely trails behind the United States, Spain and the United Kingdom.

1st

UAE's leading spot in the Arab World and 22nd globally in the IMD World Talent Ranking 2023 report. The country has excelled in several sub-indexes, including inbound student mobility, zero income tax, the presence of highly skilled personnel, international experience amongst senior management, and more.

1st

UAE's top position in the MENA region and 7th globally for electric vehicle readiness, as per the 2023 'Global Electric Mobility Readiness Index (GEMRIX)' by Arthur D. Little. This marks an improvement from the previous year, with 82% of residents showing interest in purchasing an electric vehicle as their next car.

1st

UAE's ranking in the MENA region and 2nd worldwide in the list of countries with the highest concentration of wealthy Indian nationals, according to the 360 One Wealth Hurun India Rich List 2023. The United States is the top choice for wealthy non-resident Indians, with the UAE and UK following closely, as per the list.

1st

UAE's ranking in the Arab World and 23rd globally in the annual 'Global Pension Index' by Mercer and the CFA Institute, with an overall index score of 62.5. The Netherlands secured the top spot with a score of 85.

BE IN THE LOOP

MOI FORGES PARTNERSHIPS AT GITEX 2023



At GITEX 2023, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) sealed significant pacts with IBM Middle East and SAS Emirates to elevate staff expertise in AI, machine learning, and data analysis. Brigadier Ahmed Al Suwaidi, Acting Deputy Director of the General Directorate of Smart Services and Digital Security, represented the MOI. Shukri Eid, General Manager for the GCC, and Michel Al Gharib, Executive Director for the UAE, represented IBM Middle East and SAS Emirates, respectively.

MOI UNVEILS CUTTING-EDGE TECH AT GITEX 2023



The Ministry of Interior showcased an array of pioneering technological initiatives and projects, highlighting its unwavering commitment to digital transformation. These innovations included a digital payment gateway for service applications and electronic payments, as well as a smart parking system accessible via biometric fingerprint systems through smart tablets.

MOI JOINS UN TRAINING FOR PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS



The Ministry of Interior took part in a UN-organised training course in Ankara, Turkey, to develop UN-certified trainers for global police and peacekeeping roles. This course equips officers to partake in UN police duties, focusing on maintaining worldwide safety and security and engaging in humanitarian missions across the globe.

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UAE NEWS BULLETIN

POLICE NEWS, PEOPLE, NUMBERS AND EVENTS

ABU DHABI



DHS50,000

The Abu Dhabi Family and Civil and Administrative Cases Court ordered a man to pay Dhs50,000 in compensation for breaking into another person's house without permission, consuming drugs, and physically assaulting the homeowner, resulting in injuries and emotional distress. The court's decision was based on evidence outlined in the medical report of the homeowner.

AJMAN



33 PER CENT

Latest statistics from Ajman Police's Traffic and Patrols Department showed a 33 per cent drop in traffic accident fatalities over the past 8 months compared to last year, reflecting their commitment to road safety, aligned with the Ministry of Interior's goal for safer roads.

DUBAI



96

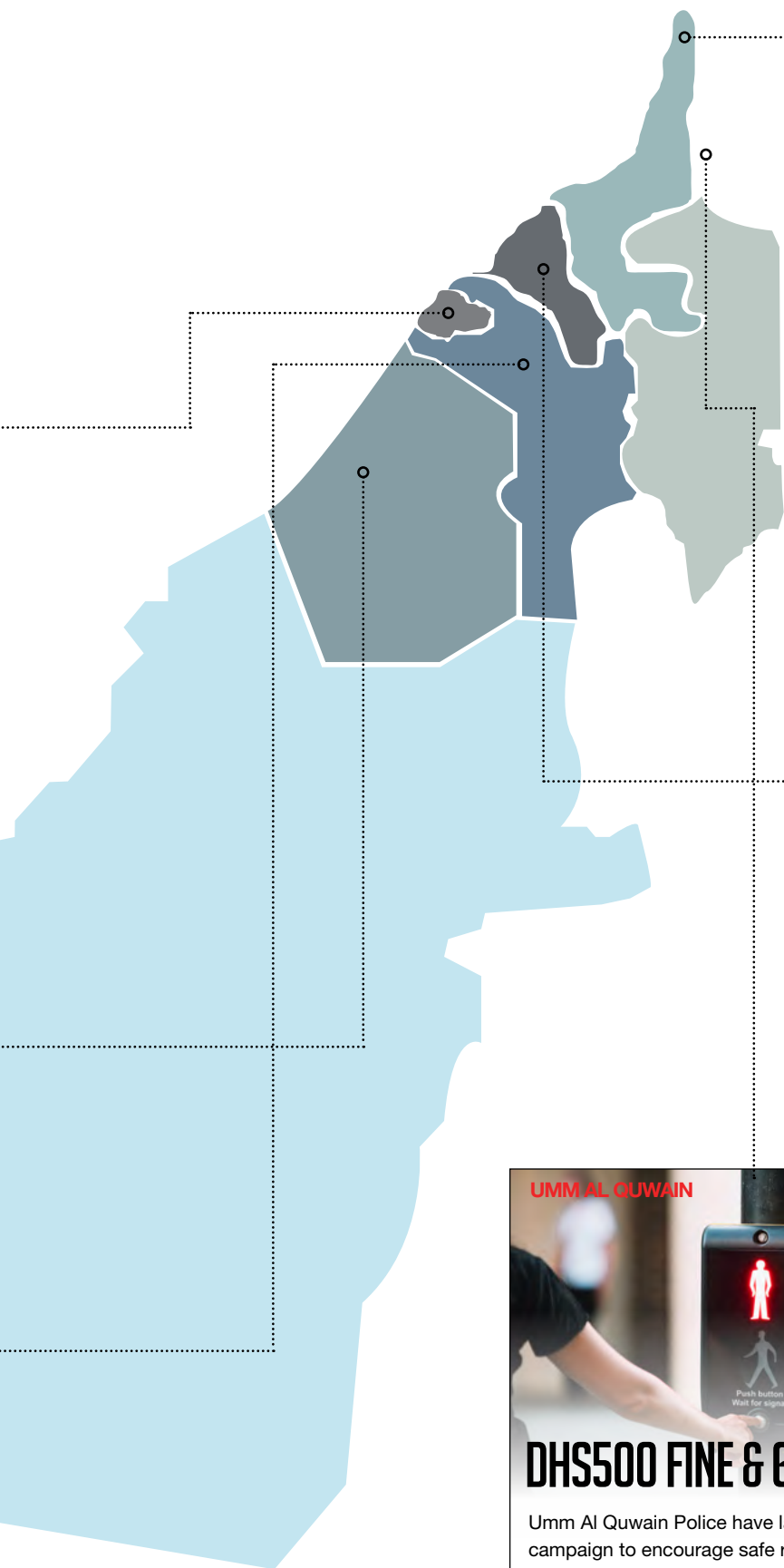
Dubai Police apprehended an Asian gang, who fraudulently obtained credit cards from banks using unsuspecting victims' names. The arrest led to the confiscation of 96 credit cards, 49 chequebooks, Dhs65,000 in cash, 22 passports, 21 ID cards, and mobile phones connected to the fraudulent activities. Legal proceedings are currently in progress.

RAS AL KHAIMAH



67 YEARS OLD

Ras Al Khaimah Police apprehended a male driver for a hit-and-run incident, where he fled after hitting a 67-year-old Asian man with his car. Surveillance footage aided in identifying and arresting the driver. The victim received medical treatment in the hospital, and the case is now with the authorities for legal proceedings.



FUJAIRAH


1



The UAE's emergency response team has rescued an exhausted lone hiker stuck in Fujairah mountains. The National Search and Rescue Centre, aided by Fujairah Police and Civil Defence, conducted the operation. A helicopter was deployed, and rescuers airlifted the man to a local hospital.

SHARJAH

36 HOURS



In under 36 hours, Sharjah Police swiftly arrested an Asian man involved in a murder. The victim was found dead in an industrial area, having been fatally stabbed with a blunt object. The police tracked down the perpetrator, and found that he was breaching entry and residence laws. Upon his arrest, the suspect confessed to the murder. Legal proceedings are underway.

UMM AL QUWAIN

DHS500 FINE & 6 BLACK POINTS



Umm Al Quwain Police have launched a road safety campaign to encourage safe road crossings. Motorists who fail to give way to pedestrians face a Dhs500 fine and 6 black points, while pedestrians jaywalking could face a Dhs400 fine.



THE ROAD TO COP28 UAE

IN THIS **999** CURTAIN-RAISER, EXPLORE WHY COP28 STANDS AS A RALLYING FORCE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE. THE EVENT SHINES A SPOTLIGHT ON THE UAE'S PIVOTAL ROLE AS A BEACON OF HOPE, UNITING THE WORLD FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

BY JUSTIN AGUILAR & LIANNE MICAH ASIDERA





“Since its inception, the UAE has embarked on a journey of transformative change. Sustainable development and climate action are integral parts of our strategy to achieve continued economic and social growth for both present and future generations

HH SHEIKH MOHAMED BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN
President of the United Arab Emirates

This month, global attention will converge on the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, also known as COP28. It carries substantial weight in the global effort to combat climate change, marking a momentous checkpoint in our climate journey.

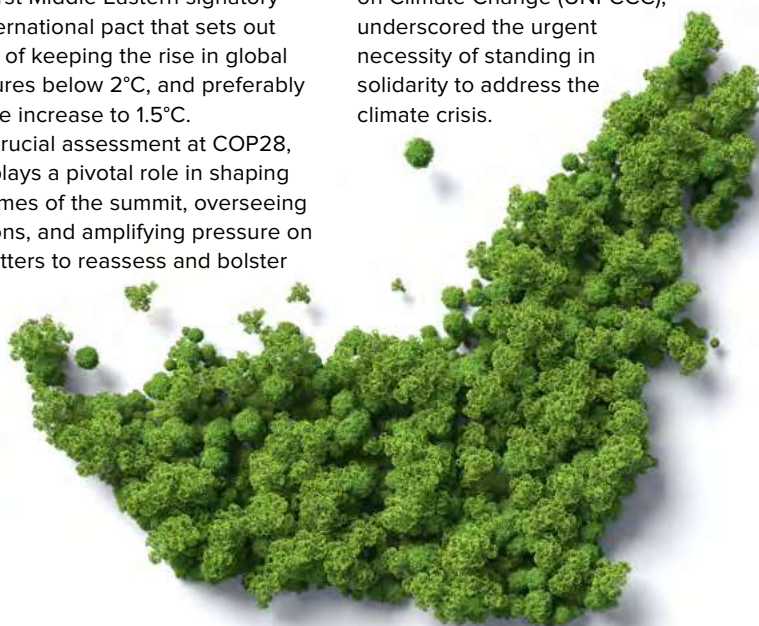
Fundamentally, COP28 stands as a watershed moment—it is the inaugural formal assessment of countries’ progress in alignment with the Paris Agreement on April 22, 2016. The Paris Agreement serves as our guiding compass in combatting climate change, and the UAE was the first Middle Eastern signatory to this international pact that sets out the target of keeping the rise in global temperatures below 2°C, and preferably limiting the increase to 1.5°C.

In this crucial assessment at COP28, the UAE plays a pivotal role in shaping the outcomes of the summit, overseeing negotiations, and amplifying pressure on major emitters to reassess and bolster

their efforts to curtail greenhouse gas emissions.

The urgency of mitigating the impact of climate change can no longer be ignored in light of recent extreme weather events worldwide, from sweltering heatwaves to devastating wildfires and catastrophic floods. These events serve as stark reminders of the pressing need for meaningful and immediate climate action.

In a joint statement, His Excellency Dr Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and COP28 President-Designate, and Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), underscored the urgent necessity of standing in solidarity to address the climate crisis.



“Now, more than ever, unity is a prerequisite for success. Globally, the world has experienced its hottest summer on record, climate change continues to impact people every day, particularly the climate-vulnerable, and they are looking to us to take decisive action. The signal we send for the conclusion of the first-ever Global Stocktake at COP28 will be crucial,” the statement reads.

UAE’S PROACTIVE STEPS

Inspired by the enduring legacy of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the nation’s Founding Father, the UAE remains steadfast in its dedication to sustainable growth. At the heart of COP28 lies the ambition to ignite public engagement, resulting in a lasting transformation that echoes the UAE’s values and aspirations.

President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan’s declaration of 2023 as the UAE’s “Year of Sustainability” stands as a clear testament to the nation’s global climate action. This declaration sets the tone for a powerful dialogue at COP28 to cement collective action to combat climate change.

“Since its inception, the UAE has embarked on a journey of transformative change. Sustainable development and climate action are integral parts of our strategy to achieve continued economic and social growth for both present and future generations,” HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed stressed.

“ COP28 embodies collective action, a platform where leaders and citizens from every corner of the world unite to forge a sustainable path forward



HE DR SULTAN AHMED AL JABER

Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and COP28 UAE President-Designate

“ Climate action is not only a strategic imperative for the environment and our future generations but also an opportunity for sustainable economic growth and socially inclusive prosperity



HE MARIAM AL MHEIRI

Minister of Climate Change and Environment

agriculture sector, and an 8 per cent cut in emissions from waste.

To bolster these emissions reduction goals, the UAE has set forth plans to triple its investments in renewable energy over the next seven years. Additionally, a dedicated national research and development centre for the hydrogen sector is on the horizon.

As a result of these measures, net greenhouse gas emissions in the UAE are projected to be reduced to 182 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by the end of the decade, marking a 19 per cent reduction compared to the 2019 base

CLARION CALL

The stark reality of the first-ever Global Stocktake at COP28 is unequivocal. At this year's UN climate summit, nations cannot

In November 2022, a significant milestone was achieved by unveiling the National Net Zero by 2050 Pathway, setting a clear framework and mechanisms to achieve net-zero emissions. Additionally, the UAE's revised second Nationally Determined Contribution underscored its commitment, aiming for a substantial reduction of approximately 93.2 million metric tonnes of CO₂, highlighting tangible and impactful emissions reduction efforts.

UAE'S STRICTER EMISSION TARGET

Leading up to COP28, the UAE announced a more ambitious target for reducing carbon emissions in July 2023. Through the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MoCCaE), the country is now aiming to achieve a 40 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030 from a business-as-usual level, surpassing its previous target of a 31 per cent reduction.

This groundbreaking commitment spans various sectors, including industry, agriculture, power grid generation, and transportation. The announcement was made by HE Mariam Al Mheiri, Minister of Climate Change and Environment.

Al Mheiri stressed upon the UAE Government's vision, stating, "Climate action is not only a strategic imperative for the environment and our future generations but also an opportunity for sustainable economic growth and socially inclusive prosperity."

The initiative entails specific reduction targets for different sectors, including a 51 per cent reduction in emissions from electric power grids, a 56 per cent reduction in transportation emissions, a 22 per cent decrease in emissions from the

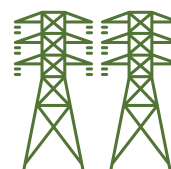
FACT FILE: UAE EMISSIONS REDUCTION TARGETS BY 2030



40%

National emissions reduction goal

CO₂



51%

Emissions reduction from electric power grids

CO₂



56%

Emissions reduction in transportation



22%

Emissions reduction from the agriculture sector



8%

Emissions reduction from waste



afford to evade the grim truth of their glaring shortfall in meeting climate change targets. During a meeting in Brussels in July 2023, Al Jaber emphatically emphasised upon the need for countries to acknowledge this shortfall and devise a concrete plan to align with the required trajectory.

Al Jaber, stressing the urgency of the matter, underscored that the Global Stocktake must culminate in decisive international commitments. These commitments should encompass a tripling of renewable energy capacity, a doubling of energy efficiency gains, and an upsurge in hydrogen production by 2030.

"We must be brutally honest about the gaps that need to be filled, the root causes and how we got to this place here today," Al Jaber remarked. "Then we must apply a far-reaching, forward-looking, action-oriented and comprehensive response to address these gaps practically," he added.

In a 100-day countdown statement, Al Jaber underscored the importance of unity and action, eight years post-Paris Climate Agreement. He said: "COP28 embodies collective action, a platform where leaders and citizens from every corner of the world unite to forge a sustainable path forward."

"The four pillars – fast tracking the energy transition, fixing climate finance, focusing on people, lives and livelihoods, and reinforcing everything with full inclusivity – are our guiding lights, illuminating the way to a

greener, healthier, more resilient world. At COP28, the world must unite, act and deliver," Al Jaber added.

For her part, Her Excellency Razan Al Mubarak, UN Climate Change High-Level Champion for COP28, stressed the need for unified action, uniting governments and non-state actors in this shared endeavour.

"A whole-of-society emergency requires a solution that includes the whole of society. Alongside top-down government action, we need a bottom-up groundswell of action as well by businesses, cities, NGOs, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and women to succeed. Climate action must be inclusive of all stakeholders from the global south and global north, and across every sector," Al Mubarak said.

ADAPTATION IS KEY

Last month, during the MENA Climate Week held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Al Jaber vowed to make climate adaptation a central focus of COP28, and urged countries in the region to build on their climate leadership legacy for inclusive progress.

He pointed out that in the MENA region, many people faced extreme challenges due to a lack of water and food. These critical issues, he said, must be tackled through adaptation. "To deliver for our region we must put adaptation front and centre of the climate agenda," said Al Jaber.

Focusing on the importance of

Climate action must be inclusive of all stakeholders from the global south and global north, and across every sector



HE RAZAN AL MUBARAK

UN Climate Change High-Level
Champion for COP28

renewables in mitigating climate change, he pointed out the significant increase in investments in regional wind and solar energy over the last 10 years. He also underlined the region's prominent position in producing clean hydrogen.

"I am filled with confidence that this region has the leadership, the vision and the capacity to shape a better future, not just for the Middle East and North Africa, but for the entire world," said the COP28 President-Designate. "Over the course of my lifetime, I have seen first-hand the transformative abilities of our region. I have experienced our resilience in the face of global events and climate change. And I can tell you that the track record, actions and political will of the UAE leadership and the COP28 team's determination to build a better future is absolutely unwavering."

He also emphasised upon the importance of a fair and well-managed energy transition for economic and climate progress, stressing the need to significantly increase global renewable energy capacity and enhance energy efficiency by 2030—a goal endorsed by 85 per cent of the world's economies, including the G20.

MOBILISING THE YOUTH

Her Excellency Shamma Al Mazrui, COP28's Youth Climate Champion, highlighted the commitment to empower UAE's youth in the battle against climate change. "We are committed to empowering UAE's youth by amplifying their voices on climate change and action. Our goal is to not only raise awareness about climate change impacts but also actively involve young people's perspectives from across the UAE and beyond in the decision-making process at COP28," said Al Mazrui.

To deliver for our region we must put adaptation front and centre of the climate agenda

“Youth in the UAE and across the world have the power to positively disrupt the status quo in climate action, accelerating progress and taking us closer towards fulfilling our climate ambitions



HE SHAMMA AL MAZRUI
COP28's Youth Climate Champion

“Youth in the UAE and across the world have the power to positively disrupt the status quo in climate action, accelerating progress and taking us closer towards fulfilling our climate ambitions,” she added.

In July 2023, the UAE handpicked 100 youth delegates from around the world to influence discussions at COP28. This team of eco-ambassadors, predominantly from developing nations, will play a pivotal role in amplifying the voices of the youth during crucial talks focused on safeguarding the planet for future generations.

The initiative, called the International Youth Climate Delegate Programme, aims to expand youth participation in the international climate processes by providing robust capacity-building for 100 young delegates and fully funding them to attend COP28, as well as other milestones in the climate negotiation process.

This includes delegates from countries on the list of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Indigenous Peoples, and other minority groups around the world.

Amongst those selected to be part of the programme is Shiela May Inmenzo Aggarao, a Filipina climate advocate. As a millennial feminist woman with a visual disability, her vision for COP28 is crystal clear: “As a young woman with visual impairment coming from a developing country often hit by disasters, I believe I can provide intersectional perspectives and an approach that addresses multiple layers of oppression experienced in the area of climate change,” Aggarao told 999.

“I’m just so happy and grateful that I was chosen to be part of this historic event; that the selection committee found my work on the intersection of gender and disability as



valuable and worthy to be heard in COP28,” Aggarao shared.

Regarding her goals for COP28, Aggarao’s aspirations are straightforward: “Comprehensive accessibility, universal design, and availability of community support services for persons with disabilities are the things that I will focus on to be included in the policy and/or outcome of COP28.”

COUNTDOWN TO COP28

In preparation for hosting COP28, the UAE has embarked on an impressive journey, focusing on a wide range of initiatives and projects to champion environmental causes. The country has given the green light to 78 environmental projects aimed at reducing carbon emissions, encompassing national strategies, solar energy projects, sustainable tourism, and eco-friendly development endeavours.

But it doesn’t stop there. The UAE Cabinet has also delved into discussions about investments, education, trade, housing, and various other crucial topics. This holistic approach reflects the nation’s dedication to ensuring a comprehensive and sustainable future.

Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) introduced the ‘Dubai

Sustainable Tourism Stamp,’ recognising hotels that excel in adhering to DET’s 19 ‘Sustainability Requirements.’ This initiative aligns with the UAE Year of Sustainability and underscores the tourism industry’s vision for an eco-friendly sector that’s both economically prosperous and environmentally responsible.

Rove Hotels in Dubai, the sole hotel at the COP28 site, will plant a minimum of 28,000 trees by the end of 2023, partnering with W&A Consular and Eden Reforestation Projects for this initiative.

Deutsche Hospitality’s Al Hamra Village & Resort and Intercity Hotels are doing their part, too, contributing to sustainability by reducing single-use plastics and adopting eco-friendly clothing options.

Meanwhile, the Ascott Limited’s Somerset Sustainability Passport Programme aims to encourage guests to make sustainable choices during their stay by offering discounts and perks. It’s a fantastic way to engage travellers in green practices.

These interconnected sustainability efforts are paving the way for COP28, showcasing the UAE’s unwavering dedication to addressing climate change and creating a sustainable future.



Expo City Dubai, the host venue of COP28

COP28'S TWO-WEEK CLIMATE AGENDA

DECEMBER 1-2

WORLD CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT

The World Climate Action Summit welcomes heads of state and government alongside leaders from civil society, business, youth, Indigenous Peoples' organisations, frontline communities, science, and other sectors and groups to evidence progress and forward-looking policy and investment across all pillars of the Paris Agreement. The summit is intended to provide momentum and guidance to the remainder of the COP28 and will feature sector-specific segments with diverse representation alongside leader-level statements.

1

DECEMBER 3

HEALTH / RELIEF, RECOVERY AND PEACE

This year, COP28 is set to introduce two themes that will bring a human perspective to climate impacts. Health Day will feature the first climate-health ministerial to build consensus on vital actions for the health system's response to climate change, alongside financial commitments for execution. Meanwhile, Relief, Recovery, and Peace Day will focus on expediting adaptation efforts and tackling loss and damage issues.

2

DECEMBER 8

YOUTH, CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILL

This day seeks to empower young people to shape the outcomes of COP28 and beyond, looking at equitable representation, stronger engagement mechanisms, and resource allocation across the COP themes and policy tracks.

Targets will include investment in youth-led innovation and entrepreneurship; capacity-building, skills training, and green jobs aligned with climate action; inclusion in policymaking processes; and transforming education to achieve climate ambitions.

7

DECEMBER 7

REST

COPs traditionally incorporate a 'day of rest' in the middle of the programme for participants to reflect and recharge ahead of the second week. The presidency will not run programming on this day.

6

DECEMBER 9

NATURE, LAND USE AND OCEANS

Nature, land use, and oceans are integral to achieving all the Paris Agreement's goals, and the recent adoption of the 30 x 30 biodiversity goal creates an imperative for integrated policy and investment for climate and nature.

COP28 will focus on delivering climate and nature co-benefits through a range of financing mechanisms and packages, co-designed with local and Indigenous Peoples, to sustainably manage and conserve natural carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots.

8

DECEMBER 10

FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND WATER

This day will tackle how climate change is creating severe pressure and risks for the agri-food and water systems that underpin human well-being.

Specific food and agriculture programmes include innovation investment, procurement around regenerative agriculture, and national transformation pathways, underpinned by financing mechanisms and project preparation.

9

DECEMBER 4

FINANCE, TRADE, GENDER EQUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This day will focus on three key areas: scaling up, improving access, and enhancing affordability through international financial system reform, sustainable finance market expansion, and bolstering voluntary carbon markets, with the overarching goal of mobilising private sector investment and enhancing equity.

COP28 will also introduce trade's role in climate-smart and equitable growth, including supply chain decarbonisation, transition, and resilience efforts.

Gender Equality Day will focus on gender-responsive policymaking and improved financial access, crucial for achieving a Gender-Just Transition that promotes gender equality in climate action.

3

DECEMBER 6

MULTILEVEL ACTION, URBANISATION AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT/TRANSPORT

COP28 will feature a historic presence of local leaders, including mayors, governors, parliamentarians, business, and civil society leaders, united to accelerate climate action across all levels of government and society.

The day will also highlight solutions to transition to low-carbon and resilient built environments and infrastructure, sustainable and circular waste systems, and — through the interlinked transport pillar — more people-and-planet-friendly modes of mobility and freight. The day will particularly look at action in urban areas, where population growth, economic activity and greenhouse gas emissions converge.

5

DECEMBER 5

ENERGY, INDUSTRY AND JUST TRANSITION

This day will focus on levers and pathways for rapid decarbonisation and just transition across the full energy and industrial value chains, accelerating economic and job growth.

The package of outcomes will include massive deployment of renewable energy, greater energy efficiency, innovation and action for heavy-emitting sectors (including steel, cement, and aluminium), unlocking the potential of hydrogen, and decarbonisation of oil and gas supplies, including through methane abatement and carbon management technologies.

4

DECEMBER 11-12

FINAL NEGOTIATIONS

On the final two days of COP28, there will be no thematic days to avoid extensive programming when the negotiation text is often being closed. This decision was informed by widespread feedback received from stakeholders.

10





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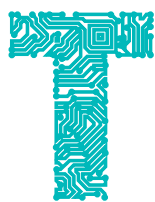
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DARK SIDE OF DEEPLY CONNECTED WORLD

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BY NASEEF CHEENATH





The sight of people hunched over their smartphones is now ubiquitous. There is hardly a country in any part of the world where this is not a tech-age phenomenon. But what are these people doing while they tap-tap on their screens, type, and scroll? Not every conversation, not every image posted online falls within the boundaries of civilised — or even legal — behaviour. To curb this, the UAE has in place one of the strictest cybercrime laws.

Legislative safeguards and their implementation are essential, because with the prevalence of smartphones, social networks, and messaging apps, people can now reach each other instantly at any time, and conversations on Facebook or

WhatsApp groups are visible to a number of people. The constant accessibility, combined with the faceless manner of online interaction, often results in a blatant disregard for personal boundaries, leading to a rising number of instances in which people's privacy and personal time are often compromised, with ominous implications for their mental health.

The Abu Dhabi Court for Family, Civil, and Administrative Cases recently sentenced a man to pay a woman Dh5,000 as compensation for material and moral damages for disturbing her with continuous phone calls.

The woman had filed a case, demanding that the man pay her Dh50,000 for the material and emotional harm she had endured, claiming in her lawsuit that the man disturbed her peace of mind by

making numerous phone calls.

Such misuse of a phone or any other digital device by a perpetrator can also lead to the victim being subjected to insults, harassment, and bullying. In the UAE, the general public is frequently warned of the penalties associated with using derogatory language to vent anger or criticise individuals online. Swearing or defaming someone on an information network, such as social media or messaging apps like WhatsApp, is also prohibited in this nation.

According to a warning from the UAE Public Prosecution, those found guilty may face prison time and fines of up to Dh500,000. The legislation, according to the legal authorities, was created to address online abuse. The Prosecution also stated in its post on the microblogging platform X

“Swearing crimes have changed during the digital era. In the past, people used to be face-to-face and used offensive language [against each other]. But now, it can happen with the click of a button on your phone



MOHAMMED NAJEEB
Legal adviser

(formerly Twitter) that “heavier punishments will be sought for acts against public sector employees in the line of duty or a person assigned to perform a public service.”

In a May 2023 report published by *The National*, legal adviser Mohammed Najeeb said that the UAE had a “firm stance” on foul language used on social networks. “Swearing crimes have changed during the digital era. In the past, people used to be face-to-face and used offensive language [against each other]. But now, it can happen with the click of a button on your phone,” he said. “People should be cautious of what they write on social media,” added the legal expert, since victims of online swearing could report the incident in the UAE even three months after being targeted by the “offensive content”.



IMPACT OF MOBILE HARASSMENT

The act of sending any text message, “sext” (sexually explicit text), photo, video, or voicemail via a mobile phone — if the content makes the recipient feel harassed, intimidated, tormented, embarrassed, or victimised in any other way — is known as mobile harassment.

People constantly exposed to these hurtful mobile phone interactions experience fear, anger, and sadness. This cycle of unfavourable emotions can have serious psychological repercussions, deteriorate general well-being, and possibly have long-lasting effects on mental health.

Due to the continual worry of getting threatening or nasty texts, mobile harassment victims may suffer from

persistent tension and anxiety. Stress levels may increase if a victim feels that they are being stalked.

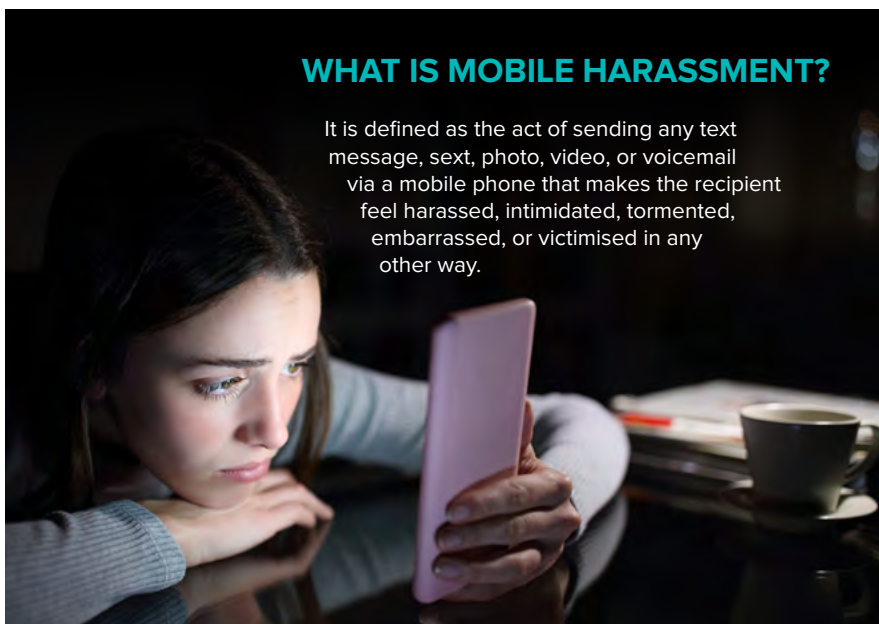
By enacting very stringent regulations prohibiting offensive language and images on digital platforms, the UAE has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring courteous and responsible online behaviour.

Once a person has sent an offensive message or put up a hurtful post, no excuses will do — “I didn’t mean it” will not be accepted as defence. For instance, in August 2022, the Dubai Misdemeanour Court sentenced a man guilty of calling a coworker a “hustler” over WhatsApp.

According to court records, the accused had problems with the victim at work and used the derogatory phrase in a message.

WHAT IS MOBILE HARASSMENT?

It is defined as the act of sending any text message, sext, photo, video, or voicemail via a mobile phone that makes the recipient feel harassed, intimidated, tormented, embarrassed, or victimised in any other way.



“People constantly exposed to these hurtful mobile phone interactions experience fear, anger, and sadness. This cycle of unfavourable emotions can have serious psychological repercussions, deteriorate general well-being, and possibly have long-lasting effects on mental health

“During school hours, our focus is on academic engagement and personal interaction. As such, the use of social media apps is not permitted for any year groups



CHANDINI MISRA
Principal, Repton Al Barsha

Although the defendant acknowledged sending the text message with that insulting word, he said that he did not want to hurt the victim. He said that the issues at work had prompted him to send the messages. This line of defence did not impress the court — the guilty verdict was given and the convict was fined Dhs5,000.

TOUGHER PROVISIONS

The current UAE Cybercrimes Law (Federal Decree Law No. 34 of 2021 on Combatting Rumours and Cybercrimes) toughens up the provisions of the 2012 law on combating cybercrimes, because digital offences are constantly evolving, e.g. with the increasing use of deepfakes, and the appropriate legal responses also have to be evolving.



WHAT THE LAW SAYS

Article 43 of Federal Decree-Law No. 34 of 2021 on Combating Rumours and Cybercrimes states that anyone who insults others or falsely attributes to them an incident that would subject them to punishment or contempt by others using an information network, information technology means, or an information system shall be punished by imprisonment and a fine of Dhs250,000- Dhs500,000, or either of these two penalties.



According to Article 20, it is illegal to defame, use abusive language against, or insult another individual or group while using a computer network or other information technology. WhatsApp also meets the criteria of “information technology”, according to a recent court ruling in the UAE.

In January 2023, the Criminal Investigation Department of Sharjah Police issued a warning to the public against abusing social networks by acting immorally or in ways that would negatively impact other people. These actions can result in defamation through abusive language, such as insults, which can harm or lower a person's reputation, honour, or social standing.

Colonel Omar Ahmed Abu Al Zawd, Director of Sharjah Police CID, emphasised upon the necessity of community members interacting appropriately and constructively on social networks. He said that the emirate's CID handled 85 reports of insults and six reports of defamation through digital channels in 2022.

In view of the stipulated punishment of imprisonment and/or a fine of up to Dhs500,000, it is best to restrain oneself to avoid any sort of negative or insulting comments on all social media and other digital platforms, including e-mail and WhatsApp.

“In view of the stipulated punishment of imprisonment and/or a fine of up to Dhs500,000, it is best to restrain oneself to avoid any sort of negative or insulting comments on all social media and other digital platforms, including e-mail and WhatsApp

HOW TO LIMIT THE IMPACT OF SMARTPHONES ON YOUR LIFE



SET A TIMETABLE

Define times when you can use your smartphone and set aside other times for relaxation or other activities.

PRACTISE DIGITAL DETOX

Take regular pauses from your smartphone to interact with others and engage in offline activities.

MANAGE ALERTS

Turn off any alerts that are not absolutely necessary, in order to avoid distractions and the desire to constantly check your phone.

ENGAGE IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Exercise and outdoor activities can have a favourable effect on mental health and counterbalance the sedentary nature of smartphone use. Absolutely do not use your mobile phone when taking an outdoor stroll.

FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS

Develop in-person relationships to overcome feelings of loneliness; encourage interpersonal interactions and discussion.

MEDITATION

Practise mindfulness and meditation to reduce stress and improve your awareness of smartphone usage patterns.

GET HELP IF NEEDED

It is crucial to consult mental health specialists if you are suffering from significant mental health problems as a result of smartphone misuse. They can offer advice, treatment, and techniques to assist you in managing your online behaviours and general well-being.

MOBILE PHONE-FREE CLASSROOMS

Some private schools in the UAE have implemented partial or outright bans on pupils accessing social media during class hours due to their potential misuse. Head teachers accept that social media are a part of students' lives, but also point out that abusing others on these platforms is a serious violation of school policies and is even considered a crime.

Speaking to the UAE media in August 2023, Ghadeer Abu-Shamat, Senior Vice-President – Education and Superintendent/ CEO of GEMS Al Khaleej International School, said, "We make sure that we share all communication guides with parents and students, and it is important to ensure that the whole school community is fully aware that the misuse of social media, to defame an individual or institution, or share inaccurate or inappropriate information, is criminalised under Articles 20, 24 and 32 of Federal Decree Law No. 5 of 2012 on Combating Cybercrimes."

She added, "Students are not allowed to use mobile phones in the school. Social media are banned during school hours. The school administration has the right to file a complaint with the authorities to take appropriate action against any person using social media to defame and negatively impact the reputation of the school. Such behaviour also violates the Parent-School contract signed by parents."

Many schools continually educated students about proper social media usage during school assemblies and through seminars. Chandini Misra, Principal of Repton Al Barsha, said, "We have a comprehensive social media policy in place that aims to cultivate responsible digital citizenship amongst our students. During school hours, our focus is on academic engagement and personal interaction. As such, the use of social media apps is not permitted for any year groups during school hours, including breaks."

Claire Smith, Academy Assistant Principal – Designated Safeguarding Lead, GEMS Wellington Academy – Silicon Oasis said, "All students have access to Internet Safety lessons, and if social media [are] mentioned as part of that discussion with the students, then the class teachers will talk through what being safe online looks like."

USE YOUR MOBILE PHONE RESPONSIBLY

Make sure your facts are correct before publishing anything on social media sites since spreading false rumours, particularly those that are posted there, may result in



up to three years in prison and a fine of up to Dh\$1 million. Those who knowingly disseminate false information that might endanger the public interest or disturb the peace are subject to punishment.

Social media was heavily used to share photographs and videos of the devastation caused by the 2016 floods in the UAE, some of which were obviously fraudulent.

It is best to leave the responsibility of alerting the people to any potential risk to the authorities in order to prevent pandemonium and general disturbance. A person runs the danger of breaking the law when they decide to start sharing and transmitting videos and images of any kind without being authorised to do so and without verifying authenticity.

Also, it is forbidden to “use a computer network and/or electronic information system or any information technology for the invasion of privacy of another person”—this includes spying on your spouse. You risk up to three years in prison and hefty fines for the offence.

A few years back, a lady in Ajman who had copied images from her husband’s mobile phone to her own over WhatsApp because she thought he was having an affair was found guilty of violating her husband’s privacy. The lady received a Dh\$150,000 fine and was deported.

Several sections of the Federal Law on Combating Cyber Crimes and the Criminal Code address the subject of invasion of privacy, while neither law expressly incriminates someone for looking through their spouse’s phone.

According to Article 2 of the UAE law on Combating Cyber Crimes: ‘Shall be punished by imprisonment and a fine not less than Dh\$100,000 and not in

excess of Dh\$300,000 or either of these two penalties whoever gains access to a website, an electronic information system, computer network or information technology means.”

PERMISSION TO TAKE PHOTOS

Moreover, it’s generally a good idea to get someone’s consent before taking their photo — but in Dubai, this is a must, especially if you want to share the image on social media. If someone objects to your sneaky photo, you might face a fine of up to Dh\$500,000 and up to

Nobody wants their image to be made public without their knowledge or agreement, thus it is not surprising that there exist regulations safeguarding the privacy of the general population. If you want to document a crime with pictures or video, it is recommended to only share

“The law is clear in stating that a person will be penalised when sharing any content that contains rumours, fake news, unofficial news or anything that disrupts national security



MOHAMMAD AL DAHBASHI

Managing Partner of ADG Legal

it with the authorities; otherwise, you risk risking jail time, fines, and deportation.

According to Mohammad Al Dahbashi, managing partner of ADG Legal, the only circumstance in which people are allowed to take pictures or make recordings of crimes or breaches of any type without the consent of the other party is to provide documentation of proof to the authorities.

He said the new cybercrime law places responsibility on users to verify the source and credibility of information before sharing it on social media.

“The law is clear in stating that a person will be penalised when sharing any content that contains rumours, fake news, unofficial news or anything that disrupts national security,” said Al Dahbashi.



HOW SMARTPHONES AFFECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

While mobile phones have many advantages, such as fast communication and information access, they may also exacerbate a number of mental health conditions when used carelessly or abusively. Abuse of smartphones may result in a number of possible mental health disorders, such as:



1 Grave threat to privacy

The intrusive nature of harassment infiltrates personal spaces as the barrier between online and offline environments blurs, having an adverse effect on mental health and generating misery. One's private life is now often harmed by the combination of mobile addiction and harassment; this demands a mindful approach to technology use and enhanced awareness of online etiquette.

2 Social Isolation

Excessive smartphone use, especially on social media sites, can cause feelings of social isolation and loneliness. Meaningless online friendships tend to push meaningful offline relationships out of people's lives. Moreover, people may compare their own lives to idealised representations, such as the social media posts of celebrities and sport stars in luxurious and glamorous settings, resulting in a negative self-perception.



3 Body Image Problems

Scrolling through your favourite social media platforms and being bombarded with images of seemingly perfect face and skin? As you consume these images regularly, a subtle pressure starts to build. You might find yourself comparing your own appearance to these perfected images, feeling like you fall short of what's being presented.

4 Depression and Anxiety

Heavy smartphone use has been associated with a higher risk of developing depression and anxiety. These mental health issues might be compounded by exposure to bad news such as fatal accidents or fraud; cyberbullying; or the need to maintain a carefully crafted online identity.





5 Sleep Disturbance

The blue light emitted by mobile phone screens can interfere with our natural sleep cycle by affecting the production of melatonin, a hormone that plays a crucial role in regulating our sleep-wake patterns. However, exposure to the blue light from smartphone screens before bedtime can suppress the production of melatonin, confusing our body's internal clock. This disruption can make it harder to fall asleep and maintain a restful slumber throughout the night.

6 Lower Attention Span

The constant stream of alerts, notifications from various applications, and the temptation to multitask on smartphones can have a significant impact on our ability to focus and sustain attention. When we frequently shift our focus from one notification to another or attempt to juggle multiple tasks at once, it can fragment our attention and hinder deep concentration.



7 Cyberbullying

Victims of online harassment often endure a range of emotional and psychological consequences. The continuous exposure to derogatory comments, threats, or demeaning behaviour can profoundly affect one's self-esteem, causing a decline in self-worth and confidence. Over time, sustained stress from cyberbullying can develop into more serious mental health issues, such as depression and heightened levels of sadness.

8 Phantom Vibration Syndrome

This is a phenomenon where people who regularly use smartphones often become conditioned to the sensations associated with their devices, including the vibrations or sounds from notifications. This condition can lead to false perceptions—believing the mobile phone is vibrating or ringing when it's not. It may trigger a person to repeatedly check his/her mobile phone, disrupting focus and causing unnecessary distraction.





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

CELEBRATE NOVEMBER'S ARRIVAL!

This is a month of celebration, reflection, and commitment to sustainability in the UAE, marked by Flag Day, Martyrs' Day, the hosting of COP28, and National Day preparations

The year 2023 is nearly at its close, and the countdown has commenced to usher in the new year, preceded by the UAE's 52nd Union Day celebrations, where its achievements are celebrated as the perfect conclusion to a hopeful beginning.

Reflecting upon achievements, whether at the national, institutional, or individual level, has become a cherished tradition in the UAE. This practice allows us to celebrate successes, build upon existing initiatives, and address areas in need of enhancement and refinement.

November stands out as an exceptional month in the UAE, marked by noteworthy achievements and significant events that allow us to reflect. On the 3rd of November, the nation observes Flag Day, an annual tradition since 2012, promoting a profound sense of belonging and unity amongst its citizens. During this day, flags adorn homes and institutions, with people proudly singing the national anthem.

This special day takes inspiration from the events of 30th November 1971 when Salem Suhail bin Khamis became the UAE's first martyr, bravely defending the nation's flag. He was tasked with maintaining law and order on Greater Tunb Island, alongside five of his colleagues. Despite the armed invaders' insistence and their use of various heavy and light weapons, Salem and his comrades refused to lower the UAE flag, which tragically led to his martyrdom. This event highlighted the importance of instilling a deep sense of patriotism and the defence of national symbols, especially the flag, in the hearts of our citizens.

The UAE not only celebrates Flag Day to enhance unity but also designates every 30th of November each year as Martyrs' Day to pay tribute to the sacrifices made by its martyrs.

Another event—of global significance—this November is the UAE's hosting of the 2023 Conference of the

Parties, also known as COP28. This is considered as the world's most significant event for climate action, from 30th November to 12th December 2023, at Expo City Dubai. This global event underscores the UAE's strong commitment to sustainability, especially after declaring 2023 as the 'Year of Sustainability' under the theme "Today for Tomorrow", as announced by President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

November's significance extends beyond national and climate-related matters; it also embraces physical well-being. The Dubai Fitness Challenge starts at the end of October and through the end of November,

motivating individuals to allot at least 30 minutes daily for physical activity over 30 consecutive days. This initiative is supported by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai, who launched the initiative in 2017 to motivate everyone to adopt a physically active lifestyle.

As national pride shines in its full glory in November, sustainability issues will be addressed at COP28, and health and fitness will take

centre stage with the Dubai Fitness Challenge. It's a month filled with cultural events, such as the Culture Summit Abu Dhabi, Sharjah International Book Fair, and Dubai Design Week, all of which serve as global platforms to discuss literature, ideas, arts, and human creativity.

As the year comes to an end, the UAE is actively engaged in a diverse range of events, celebrations, and achievements across social, national, global, cultural, and health spheres. These activities invigorate us for the new beginning in January, marked by continuous national, social, health, and cultural advancements that further enrich the UAE's ongoing journey as a nation.

As national pride shines in its full glory in November, sustainability issues will be addressed at COP28, and health and fitness will take centre stage

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SAVINGS SERVICE SECURITY

THE UAE HAS INTRODUCED AN END-OF-SERVICE SAVINGS PROGRAMME,
GREATLY IMPROVING THE FINANCIAL OUTLOOK FOR EMPLOYEES.

999 DELVES INTO HOW IT FOSTERS A CULTURE OF SAVINGS,
AND BOOSTS FAMILY STABILITY

BY ABDUL WASEY





“

The objective (of the end-of-service savings scheme) is to safeguard the savings of employees, which represent their end-of-service benefits in the companies they work for, ensuring their rights and providing stability for their families

HH SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM

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

The UAE has long served as a symbol of success, drawing people from all over the world with its assurance of security, inclusiveness and growth. The recent announcement regarding the end-of-service savings plan illustrates a deliberate approach to securing the long-term well-being of residents and citizens.

This forward-thinking move, championed by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, represents not just a policy shift, but a cultural transition towards promoting savings and ensuring family financial stability.

During a pivotal UAE Cabinet meeting in the first week of September 2023, HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid unveiled this groundbreaking measure, primarily aimed at employees in the private sector and free zones. This initiative builds upon the success of the DIFC Employee Workplace Savings (DEWS) scheme launched by Dubai International Financial Centre in 2020, which was subsequently extended to expatriate government employees.

PREMIUM ON SAVING MONEY

Even if the new programme's specifics are still being worked out, one thing is clear: the UAE is fostering a culture that

places a premium on saving money for retirement. The UAE is promoting itself as a desirable long-term residence, thanks to regulations that safeguard the interests of the people.

The plan anticipates the creation of private sector-sourced investment and savings funds. Its rigorous implementation will be supervised by the Securities and Commodities Authority (SCA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MoHRE).

This plan's main goal: strengthen the security of employees' retirement funds by ensuring their wise and prudent investment.

"This system will be optional for employers to join and will involve the creation of savings and investment funds from the private sector, supervised by the SCA in co-ordination with MoHRE. Through this system, employees can save and invest their end-of-service benefits in various investment options," HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid posted on social media.

Putting the fundamental tenet of this decision in focus, HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid stated: "The objective is to safeguard the savings of employees, which represent their end-of-service benefits in the companies they work for, ensuring their rights and providing stability for their families."

In a gesture that underscores the inclusivity of this initiative, HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid also announced on the microblogging platform X (formerly Twitter) that public sector workers would have the opportunity to participate in this end-of-service system, utilising it for savings and investments.





The UAE Cabinet

Expo City Dubai

“The decisions (regarding the end-of-service savings scheme) align with a series of strategic initiatives designed to enhance the country’s overall appeal across various sectors and attract talent



MOHAMMED QASIM AL ALI
Group CEO of National Bonds

A BRAND NEW FUTURE FOR WORKERS

“The UAE, renowned for its opulent skyscrapers and bustling markets, is committed to the financial well-being of its residents. The recently unveiled initiative primarily targets the private sector and free zones, aiming to provide employees with a secure financial future. This move further solidifies the UAE’s reputation as a hub for global talent,” said Rizwan Khan, a project manager at a Dubai-based construction company.

The scheme is thoughtfully designed. It offers three distinct investment options tailored to various risk appetites: A risk-free investment ensuring capital preservation; risk-based investments, ranging from low to high risk; and Sharia-compliant investments, in line with Islamic financial principles.

Companies that adopt this initiative will make monthly contributions. Employees will profit from their savings as well as the returns on the investments they have made when their employment is over.

REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

The SCA, in collaboration with MoHRE, will provide regulatory oversight in the way funds are allocated, ensuring responsible and strategic investments.

This move also aligns with the National Bonds Savings Index’s findings, which showed that 82 per cent of UAE workers are amenable to their employers investing their end-of-service benefits.

This initiative promises a number of benefits: Employees stand to receive considerable returns on their investments thanks to this scheme. The local economy will also experience a significant boost as billions of dirhams are invested in numerous industries.

The idea, according to

Mohammed Qasim Al Ali, Group CEO of National Bonds, a well-known Shariah-compliant saving and investment company based in the UAE, will boost job security, appeal to more people, and help businesses with staff retention plans. Al Ali emphasised the programme’s commitment to ensuring funds are securely invested, safeguarding individuals’ rights and promoting family stability.

“These decisions align with a series of strategic initiatives designed to enhance the country’s overall appeal across various sectors and attract talent. They also complement our efforts at National Bonds that aim to enhance employees’ end-of-service benefits in both government and

KEY TAKEAWAYS ON THE NEW END-OF-SERVICE INITIATIVE

- The scheme is optional for employers and isn’t mandatory at this stage.
- Employers who opt in will need to make regular contributions for eligible employees. Contribution rates are expected to match current end-of-service gratuity accrual rates.
- The scheme’s primary goal is to ensure the safe investment and protection of employee savings.
- Oversight will be provided by the Securities and Commodities Authority (SCA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MoHRE).

BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES INCLUDE:

- Potential for a higher end-of-service gratuity upon employment termination, depending on investment fund performance.
- Enhanced security compared to the current framework, where there’s no allocated fund for end-of-service gratuity. This can leave employees vulnerable if their employer faces financial challenges.
- The new scheme offers more certainty regarding the availability of funds.

Companies that adopt this initiative will make monthly contributions. Employees will profit from their savings as well as the returns on the investments they have made when their employment is over

private sectors. This is in line with our strategic approach to achieving financial prosperity and ensuring a secure future for both UAE citizens and residents by offering optimal and sustainable solutions and programmes,” said Al Ali.

Discussing the new investment scheme and its potential benefits for employees, Joanna Matthews-Taylor, Partner and Head of Employment at Baker McKenzie UAE, explained: “Upon termination of employment, employees have the opportunity to leave with a higher end-of-service gratuity compared to what they would typically receive under the conventional system, contingent on the overall performance of the investment funds.”

CHANGE IN FOCUS

The end-of-service gratuity was once thought of as a sizable one-time payment that was frequently spent without thought for the

future. The new programme, though, represents a significant change as it switches from a “defined benefit” to a more proactive “defined contribution” strategy.

“In the past, the emphasis was on the employer’s obligation to provide a set benefit upon an employee’s departure. With the shift to defined contribution, the focus is now on accumulated contributions and their investment returns. This transition underlines the UAE’s forward-thinking stance on retirement, prioritising long-term sustainability over immediate rewards,” said Ahmaren Siddiqui, a teacher at an Indian school in Sharjah.

“This new system is transformative. It allows employees to actively nurture and grow their end-of-service benefits. It not only safeguards employee rights but amplifies their savings, laying the groundwork for long-term financial stability,” she said. “The optional nature of this system gives employers the freedom to choose, making it beneficial for all parties involved.”

Waseem Akhtar, a Pakistani national working with a media house in Sharjah, believes the new direction

“Upon termination of employment, employees have the opportunity to leave with a higher end-of-service gratuity compared to what they would typically receive under the conventional system



JOANNA MATTHEWS-TAYLOR

Partner and Head of Employment at Baker McKenzie UAE

will enhance the UAE’s stature as a global hub for skilled professionals. “The initiative will not only strengthen statutory entitlements for employees but also boost the UAE’s appeal in attracting and retaining top talent,” he said.

‘GAME CHANGER’

Echoing this sentiment, Mariecar Jara-Puyod, a private sector employee in Sharjah, sees this initiative as a game-changer, aligning the UAE with employment packages offered in countries like the United Kingdom,

the United States, and Australia. According to her, the UAE continues to set the bar for other countries in the Middle East when it comes to protecting labour rights.

"The overarching vision behind this initiative is clear: to instil a culture of savings and investment across all strata of the workforce. The fact that even public sector workers can participate in this end-of-service system highlights the government's commitment to promoting a savings culture," Jara-Puyod, a Filipina, added.

Ashraf Marhally, an Egyptian living in the UAE, said: "The UAE's end-of-service initiative is more than a policy revision; it's a call to action for residents to envision a long-term future in the country. The underlying message is clear: 'Your future is in your hands'. With informed guidance, the dream of a secure retirement in the UAE becomes achievable."

"This announcement catalyses a mindset shift. As the UAE evolves, it solidifies its status not just as an economic powerhouse but as a welcoming haven for retirees," he added.

INVESTMENT OPTIONS

This project is not a stand-alone undertaking. For non-Emirati workers in Dubai's government and public sector, His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai, introduced a new savings pension plan for non-Emirati employees in Dubai's government and

'MY ONE MILLION' PLAN: A PATHWAY TO PROSPERITY

As the UAE introduced an innovative end-of-service scheme, encompassing both public and private sectors, National Bonds has come up with an ambitious 'My One Million' plan.

Under the plan, the UAE's leading savings and investment firm offers its participants a golden opportunity to amass Dhs1 million through combined savings and projected profits by the end of their chosen term.

Tailored for both individual savers and corporate entities, the plan provides flexibility in tenures, ranging from three to a robust 10 years. Investors can either opt for monthly contributions or make a one-off lump-sum investment.

In a strategic move to bolster employee loyalty, companies are also empowered to contribute on their employees' behalf, either partially or in full.

Enrolling is straightforward. Prospective participants can sign up via the National Bonds app or visit any of the company's branches. After selecting the desired tenure, they can set up a monthly contribution and even kick-start their savings journey with an initial deposit.

For instance, a 10-year plan requires a monthly contribution of Dhs7,160, leading to total savings of Dhs859,200. With an anticipated profit of Dhs140,800, the grand total reaches Dhs1 million. On the other hand, a three-year plan requires monthly contribution of Dhs26,540, but with an impressive net profit of Dhs44,560, participants can achieve millionaire status in just three years. Those opting for a 10-year plan with an initial lump-sum investment of Dh100,000 need only contribute Dhs6,200 monthly to hit the Dhs1 million mark.

As an added incentive, to National Bonds' Dhs35 the coveted Dhs1 million

subscribers gain exclusive access million rewards scheme, including quarterly draw.





public sector in March 2022. For individuals who choose not to invest, this plan offered a range of investment choices, including Sharia-compliant ones that guaranteed capital protection.

Three years prior, DIFC introduced the DIFC Employee Workplace Savings (DEWS). Unlike the onshore scheme, this was a progressive end-of-service benefits plan for all workers. Its purpose was to replace the existing gratuity benefits and allow employees to augment their savings by contributing towards the savings scheme.

It became mandatory for all DIFC-registered employers to enrol their employees in this plan and commence the required contributions by April 30, 2020, with subsequent contributions made monthly.

In October this year, National Bonds, a Sharia-compliant savings and investment company, unveiled the “Golden Pension Scheme”, designed to support private-sector foreign employees with their financial planning, giving them a head start in retirement planning.

In a related development, National Bonds and the Umm Al Quwain Free Trade Zone Authority (UAQ FTZ) announced a partnership in September. This collaboration allows over 9,000 registered company employees to benefit from National Bonds’ savings solutions to aid their retirement planning.

PROTECTING WORKERS’ SAVINGS

This partnership aligns seamlessly with the recent announcement from the UAE government regarding the optional end-of-service gratuity system for employees in the private sector and free zones.

By offering employees the chance to invest in their future and by providing a range of investment options, the UAE is not only ensuring the financial well-being of its residents but also strengthening its position as a global talent magnet.

END-OF-SERVICE SCHEMES IN THE UAE



Traditional End-of-Service Gratuity System: Historically, the end-of-service gratuity system in the UAE required employers to pay employees a lump sum following the end of their work relationship. This amount was calculated based on the employee’s last basic salary, and an employee became eligible for this benefit after one year or more in continuous service. During the employee’s employment, these amounts did not accrue any earnings and were potentially at risk if the employer faced financial difficulties.

DIFC Employee Workplace Savings Plan: The Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), a financial free zone within the UAE, introduced the DIFC Employee Workplace Savings Plan in 2020. This plan replaced the traditional end-of-service gratuity regime in the DIFC. Employers were required to make contributions into this savings plan or an alternative qualifying scheme. It became mandatory for all DIFC-registered employers to enrol their employees in this plan and start the required contributions by April 30, 2020, with subsequent contributions made monthly.

New End-of-Service Savings Initiative: The UAE Cabinet approved a plan to introduce an alternative end-of-service gratuity system for private sector employees and free zone workers. This new, voluntary scheme involves establishing private sector investment and savings funds supervised by the Securities and Commodities Authority in partnership with the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization. Employers can choose to invest and save their employees’ end-of-service gratuities through these funds. The scheme offers three main investment options: risk-free investment, risk-based investment (varying from low to high risk), and a Sharia-compliant investment option.

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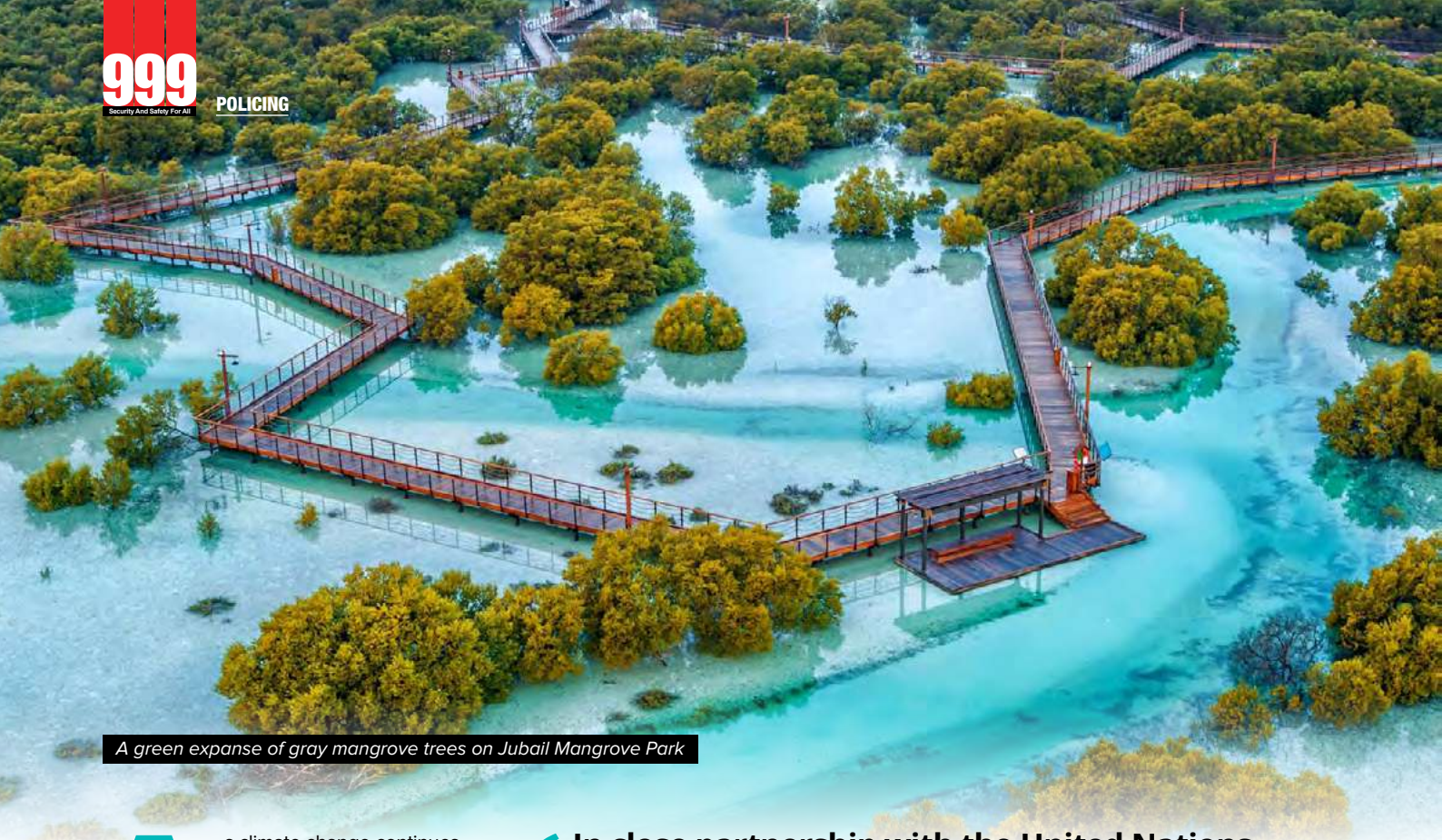


Planet guardians in uniform

UAE POLICE BOLSTER THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL ROLE, ALIGNING WITH THE NATION'S NET ZERO VISION. EXPLORE THE DEPTHS OF THEIR SUSTAINABILITY CONTRIBUTIONS IN THIS 999 FEATURE

BY JEREMY HOPMAN





A green expanse of gray mangrove trees on Jubail Mangrove Park

As climate change continues to pose unprecedented challenges, the role of law enforcement in mitigating its effects and protecting the environment is more critical than ever. In the UAE, a different kind of hero is emerging. The country's defenders of safety and security have taken on a new responsibility—not just to enforce the law, but to be guardians of our precious planet.

From the raucous hum of noisy cars on the roads to the careless discarding of waste, police forces here are embracing cutting-edge technologies to ensure a cleaner, more sustainable tomorrow. You can see them springing into action to rescue distressed wildlife and cracking down on the illegal ownership of wild animals.

By enforcing strict laws and actively participating in animal rescue operations, they ensure the safety and well-being of both endangered and domesticated species. This not only upholds the balance of the ecosystem but also aligns with the global initiative to preserve biodiversity.

What sets UAE police apart is their global perspective. Leading up to the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, also known as COP28, they've established an extensive platform that connects law enforcement agencies across borders, uniting them in a collaborative effort to combat environmental crimes.

Through innovation, proactive enforcement, and global co-operation, they

In close partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Ministry of Interior launched a groundbreaking move in March 2023, by forming a strategic alliance with global entities, including the United Nations and Interpol, to combat environmental crimes

are not just maintaining law and order, but also safeguarding our planet for generations to come.

FOSTERING GLOBAL COLLABORATION

In close partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Ministry of Interior launched a groundbreaking move in March 2023, by forming a strategic alliance with global entities, including the United Nations and Interpol, to combat environmental crimes.

Unveiled at the World Police Summit in March 2023, the International Initiative of Law Enforcement for Climate (I2LEC) serves as a platform to coordinate the global law enforcement community's response to the environmental fallout. This proactive approach to fostering global collaboration is a testament to the UAE's commitment to safeguarding the environment on a worldwide scale.

As part of COP28, a series of I2LEC events is slated to be held during the UN climate summit in Dubai from November 30 to December 12, aiming to elevate global awareness about this pioneering initiative.

Following the I2LEC launch, it unveiled its roadmap for the years 2023 to 2025 in July, focusing on five major initiatives aimed at tackling environmental crime and the climate crisis at large. These includes:

- Establishment of a global training centre in Abu Dhabi, initially online, enhancing worldwide police services;
- Creation of an Interpol-led climate operations unit focused on environmental crimes;
- Global assessment to evaluate countries' readiness to address environmental crimes;
- UN research paper exploring intricacies of environmental crimes;
- And specialised training for UN Police personnel as "climate incident observers" in climate-affected regions.

The suite of initiatives encompasses several groundbreaking measures, but central to this roadmap is the creation of a cutting-edge global training centre in Abu Dhabi, aimed at enhancing police services worldwide. Initially, it will operate online, with plans for a future transition into a fully-fledged physical hub.

“Not only is it critical that law enforcement is prepared for climate change but that we also have the means and understanding to prevent and prosecute crimes against the environment



LIEUTENANT COLONEL DANA HUMAID

Director General of the International Affairs Bureau at the Ministry of Interior

ONE WORLD, ONE RESPONSE

Commenting on the importance of the I2LEC Roadmap 2023 to 2025, Lieutenant Colonel Dana Humaid, Director General of the International Affairs Bureau at the Ministry of Interior, said: “Global challenges necessitate global solutions.”

She underscored that law enforcement agencies must be well-equipped to proactively prevent and effectively prosecute environmental crimes. “Not only is it critical that law enforcement is prepared for climate change but that we also have the means and understanding to prevent and prosecute crimes against the environment,” Humaid added.

Furthermore, as part of the I2LEC Roadmap, a specialised training regimen is in the pipeline for UN Police personnel, aiming to transform them into “climate incident observers”. This training is intended to equip them with the requisite skills and knowledge to be strategically positioned in regions that are grappling with the ramifications of extreme climate events. The UAE is determined to lead this effort and become a UN-accredited training centre.

Faisal Shahkar, United Nations Police Adviser and Director of the Police Division, emphasised upon the transformative potential of this collaboration. “Embedding environmentally-responsive policing through such seminal partnerships paves the way for a UN Police force that is robustly equipped for a future riddled with escalating temperatures, mounting food and water challenges, and the looming spectre of climate-induced crimes and conflicts,” he said.



HH Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed and officials of Abu Dhabi Police during the inauguration of Al Mes'hab Park in February 2023

GREEN COMMUNITY, HERITAGE TRIBUTE

Green parks are like lively messengers, showcasing the importance of caring for the environment and living sustainably right within our communities. These lush spaces go beyond being just trees and plants; they're living proof of our close bond with nature. This essence drove the inauguration of Al Mes'hab Park by Abu Dhabi Police.

In February 2023, His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Office, inaugurated Al Mes'hab Park. This new community facility, situated near Abu Dhabi Police College, is a collaborative effort between Abu Dhabi Police and the Department of Municipalities and Transport.

The park not only commemorates traditional policing culture and heritage but also advocates for a greener and more sustainable community. Al Mes'hab Park features lush green landscapes, recreational

areas, and sports facilities suitable for all age groups, including children's play equipment and outdoor sports training gear. These efforts aim to encourage community members to lead a healthy lifestyle and actively contribute to environmental protection.

At the heart of the park, visitors will discover a statue of a 'saqih' horse, one of the original Sicilian mares owned by the UAE's Founding Father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. The logo of the Abu Dhabi Police knights was derived from this horse. Additionally, the park showcases a plinth adorned with verses from the poems of Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed and the poet Abu Al Tayyib Al Mutanabbi, praising the beauty and strength of the Arabian horse.



“ In the first quarter of this year (2023) alone, we issued 327 offences for vehicle modifications and seized 250 vehicles



**BRIGADIER JUMA SALEM
BIN SUWAIDAN**

Acting Director of the General Department of Traffic at Dubai Police

POLICING POLLUTION

The Ministry of Interior has taken proactive steps to address a range of environmental offences, notably focusing on noise pollution, an often-overlooked aspect of environmental degradation.

To maintain tranquility in the city's neighbourhoods, Dubai Police conduct stringent crackdowns on bikers and motorists causing late-night disturbances with excessive vehicle noise.

Brigadier Juma Salem bin Suwaidan, Acting Director of the General Department of Traffic at Dubai Police, said the police actively patrol the emirate to curb these illegal modifications that negatively impact residents. “In the first quarter of this year (2023) alone, we issued 327 offences for vehicle modifications and seized 250 vehicles,” he said.

In 2022, the police force had registered 2,361 offences against

motorists who modified their vehicles to produce loud noises.

Dubai's permissible noise levels stand at 40-50 decibels from 7am to 8pm, dropping to 30-40 decibels at night, mirroring the typical noise levels of suburban areas.

Urging public cooperation, Suwaidan encouraged residents to report noisy vehicles through the ‘We Are All Police’ app or by dialling 901. “Our primary goal is to safeguard residents. While we don't relish issuing fines, stringent actions are imperative against those disregarding the law,” he said.

The police across the emirates routinely monitor late-night gatherings of motorcyclists to ensure they adhere to speed and noise restrictions. In 2016, Abu Dhabi Police introduced a pioneering noise-measuring camera designed to assist officers in addressing

excessively loud cars. The brainchild of Captain Ahmad Abdullah Al Muhairi, this innovative technology employs microphones to detect car horns and loud engines. If noise levels exceed the permissible limit, the built-in cameras capture the car's license plate and log an offence against the driver.

These noise-measuring cameras are strategically located in residential areas, as well as near hospitals, schools, and mosques to deter drivers from illegally modifying their vehicles to produce excessive noise.

Vehicles causing excessive noise in the UAE are subject to hefty penalties. Exceeding noise level restrictions incurs a Dhs2,000 fine and 12 black points against the driver. Those modifying their vehicles to increase noise will be slapped with a Dhs1,000 fine, 12 traffic points, and a 30-day vehicle impoundment.



Abu Dhabi Police's noise-measuring cameras





TECH-DRIVEN EMISSION CHECK

Throughout the UAE, police monitor smoke belching vehicles using innovative solutions, as these vehicles significantly contribute to air pollution and environmental degradation due to the harmful pollutants released into the atmosphere.

In Abu Dhabi, smoke belchers are being detected utilising a real-time vehicle emissions monitoring system that uses the NASA Spinoff EDAR (Emissions Detection and Reporting) system.

This initiative, a collaboration between Abu Dhabi Police and the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD), not only identifies the types and quantities of gases emitted but also captures the vehicle's license plate number for technical analysis, ensuring no personal data is compromised.

Dr Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri, Secretary General of EAD, emphasised the agency's commitment to enhancing the quality of life in Abu Dhabi. She said: "The transport sector is a notable contributor to air pollutants. With this project, we aim to make informed decisions based on real-time research. The advanced technology will enable us to collect data without traffic disruptions, facilitating the creation of effective emission reduction strategies."

Road litter can lead to collisions as drivers try to avoid the trash. Unfortunately, many undisciplined drivers and passengers irresponsibly discard their garbage on the road, disregarding safety.

The UAE police cannot disregard this road eyesore. For instance, in August, the Abu Dhabi Police General Command, in partnership with the Follow-up and Control Centre, launched an awareness campaign against this traffic violation.

Abu Dhabi police stressed that this move was not just about aesthetics; it's

a reflection of the broader commitment of everyone to environmental safety and public health.

WILDLIFE CRIMES TASK FORCE

In 2021, a task force was established by Dubai Police and Dubai Municipality to enforce Federal Law regulating

dangerous animal possession. This collaborative effort aims to maintain a healthy, safe, and animal disease-free environment in the emirate.

The new Environmental and Archaeological Crimes Division at Dubai Police will closely cooperate with the municipality to enforce Federal Law

TRAILBLAZING RESEARCH

In addition to carrying out their regular services, the police forces in the UAE have been actively conducting advanced scientific studies across various fields, especially those that align with global environmental initiatives.

A notable example from August 2023 is the research undertaken by 1st Lieutenant Engineer Al Reem Abdul Rahman Abdullah Ali of the Dubai Police's Explosives Security Department.

Her research introduced a scientifically validated method for decontaminating areas affected by explosives. This method employs a "vegetative" bioremediation technique using Vetiver grass (*Chrysopogon zizanioides*), which stands out as an eco-friendly, efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective solution.

"Environmental pollution from explosives and hazardous waste, especially from military industries and activities, poses a significant global challenge. The persistence of this pollution, given the hazardous nature of explosive substances, affects not just humans but also animals, microorganisms, and marine ecosystems," said Abdullah Ali.

Elaborating on her study, Abdullah Ali detailed the use of Vetiver grass in bioremediation, saying: "Vetiver grass is highly adaptable, thriving in varied conditions, from waterlogged areas to different soil types, and can withstand a range of temperatures. Its resilience to explosive toxicity, ability to absorb secondary explosive materials, and efficacy in removing high-explosive

“Environmental pollution from explosives and hazardous waste poses a significant global challenge. The persistence of this pollution, given the hazardous nature of explosive substances, affects not just humans but also animals, microorganisms, and marine ecosystems



1ST LIEUTENANT AL REEM ABDUL RAHMAN

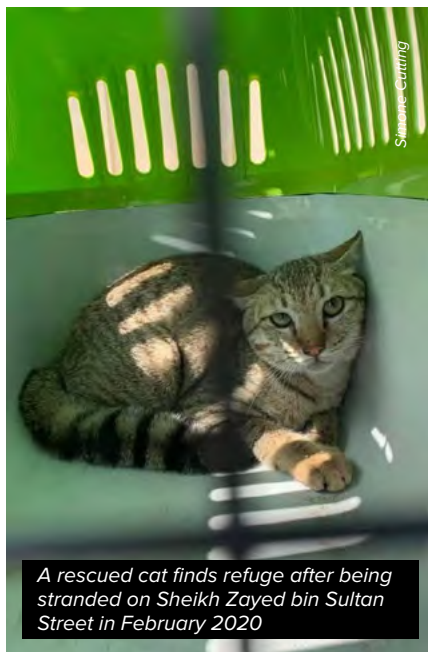
Dubai Police's Explosives Security Department at Dubai Police

substances make it a standout choice for remediation."

She further highlighted the unique attributes of Vetiver grass, such as its deep-rooted structure that can penetrate up to 4 metres underground. This grass also has the capability to transport and accumulate explosive compounds from its roots to its stems, making it an exemplary choice for plant-based remediation of explosive contaminants.

No. 22 of 2016, working to confiscate dangerous animals and relocate them to appropriate habitats or licensed animal welfare centres, ensuring they are kept away from residential areas.

This law prohibits the ownership, possession, trade, or breeding of dangerous animals, with violators facing imprisonment for one to six months and a fine ranging from Dh\$10,000 to Dh\$500,000.



A rescued cat finds refuge after being stranded on Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Street in February 2020

ANIMAL RESCUE MISSIONS

Immediately following its creation, the task force sprang into action with its inaugural case, apprehending an individual attempting to sell a wolf. After a thorough investigation, a successful trap was set, leading to the suspect's arrest and the safe relocation of the wolf with support from Dubai Municipality.

In Abu Dhabi, its law enforcement is demonstrating vigilance in safeguarding animal welfare, too. A case in December 2018 involved an investigation into the inhumane act of throwing five cats from a residential building on Al Najda Street. Prompted by a report from Dr Manal Al Mansouri of the Yanni animal welfare group, the authorities swiftly acted to address the distressing incident.

In another instance in February 2020, Abu Dhabi Police came to the rescue of a cat stranded on Sheikh Zayed Road. The operation involved closing six lanes of traffic, employing additional vehicles, and dedicating over three hours to safely retrieve the feline and transfer it

to the British Veterinary Centre.

The UAE's comprehensive approach exemplifies its unwavering dedication to addressing global environmental challenges through a united national effort, setting a compelling example for a sustainable future.

With law enforcement agencies going above and beyond their traditional roles to champion eco-friendly initiatives and campaigns under the Ministry of Interior's guidance, the country's vision of a greener, safer future is certain to yield substantial results.

WORLD'S FIRST CARBON NEUTRAL POLICE FORCE



In 2022, Dubai Police became the first police force in the world to go carbon neutral. Here's how it started:

In 2009, Dubai Police embarked on a journey to reduce their energy consumption. By 2014, they set an ambitious goal: to become a zero-carbon police force. This commitment wasn't just about their operations. It was about fostering a community-wide culture that prioritises reducing carbon emissions.

Using 2013 as a benchmark, Dubai Police had not only met but exceeded its targets for reducing electricity consumption. Their smart transformation initiatives have been particularly impactful.

To achieve these impressive results, Dubai Police implemented a comprehensive strategy including:

- Adopting energy-efficient appliances, such as LED lights;
- Implementing conservation measures to cut electricity and water usage in buildings;
- Expanding their solar energy initiative, which now encompasses solar water heaters;
- Conducting a pilot study on the creation and utilisation of a solar-powered boat;
- Installing solar rooftops on Dubai Police buildings, with plans to cover all such buildings;
- Incorporating electric vehicles into their fleet; and
- Optimising patrol routes to minimise fuel consumption.



PRESERVING TOMORROW

Ali Obaid is a veteran Emirati commentator and writer on local issues; he currently heads the News Centre at Dubai Media Incorporated

The UAE's commitment to environmental preservation, sustainable development, and global climate action underscores its deep-rooted heritage and principles

At the start of this year, on January 20, President His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan declared that 2023 would be celebrated in the UAE as the 'Year of Sustainability'.

The 'Year of Sustainability', initiated under the theme 'Today for Tomorrow', seeks to illuminate the UAE's rich heritage in sustainable practices. This heritage traces its roots back to the era of the UAE's Founding Father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Furthermore, it aims to raise awareness about environmental sustainability issues and foster community participation in advancing sustainable development. The nation is committed to building a more prosperous and flourishing future through this drive.

His Highness underlined that sustainability has always been a fundamental cornerstone of UAE society, pointing out that the country has consistently set a benchmark in environmental and climate work right from its inception. Sheikh Zayed, a global leader in environmental and climate efforts, left indelible marks in this field. Today, we continue to walk in his footsteps.

Designating 2023 as the 'Year of Sustainability' seeks to spotlight the nation's efforts to enhance international collaborative efforts addressing sustainability challenges. It underscores the UAE's role in developing innovative solutions that benefit the global stage. Thus, it is no mere coincidence that 2023 as the 'Year of Sustainability' aligns with the UAE's hosting of the 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28).

Some have raised this question: "How can the UAE dedicate a year to sustainability and host an international climate change conference when it relies heavily on oil as a significant source of income?"

Those raising this question may not be aware that the UAE upholds principles and values before pursuing its interests. Thus, when His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed referenced Sheikh Zayed's contributions to environmental

and climate sustainability, the President intended to remind us of the Founding Father's remarkable contributions to environmental preservation. These include establishing natural reserves, nurturing green landscapes across the UAE, safeguarding water resources, and constructing dams to harness rainwater. All of these actions contribute to environmental and climate sustainability, integral to the UAE's rich heritage of sustainable practices.

The UAE further solidifies its commitment to sustainability through a range of initiatives and events organised throughout the year. Notable amongst these are collaborative efforts, educational and awareness programmes, and the active participation of community members in achieving sustainability

goals across various sectors. Key sustainability initiatives include Vision 2023, the UAE Vision 2071, and the UAE Energy Strategy 2050, which outlines 50 targets for clean energy within the country, amongst other objectives. The Sustainable Development Goals in the UAE serve as guiding principles for most forthcoming projects.

The UAE's considerable efforts are geared towards creating a sustainable environment that ensures the success of developmental initiatives, with a keen focus on achieving a fully sustainable nation. These include the establishment of 46 air quality monitoring stations,

the creation of 33 desalination stations to meet water demands, and two major systems in Abu Dhabi and Dubai that harmonise construction projects to enhance sustainability, particularly in the real estate sector.

These efforts position the UAE as a role model for a nation that values its principles ahead of its interests. As we anticipate COP28, hosted by Expo City Dubai from November 30 to December 12, we envision it as a truly pivotal event in the world's journey towards confronting the threat of climate change. This vision aligns perfectly with the announcement by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed during the unveiling of 2023 as the 'Year of Sustainability'.

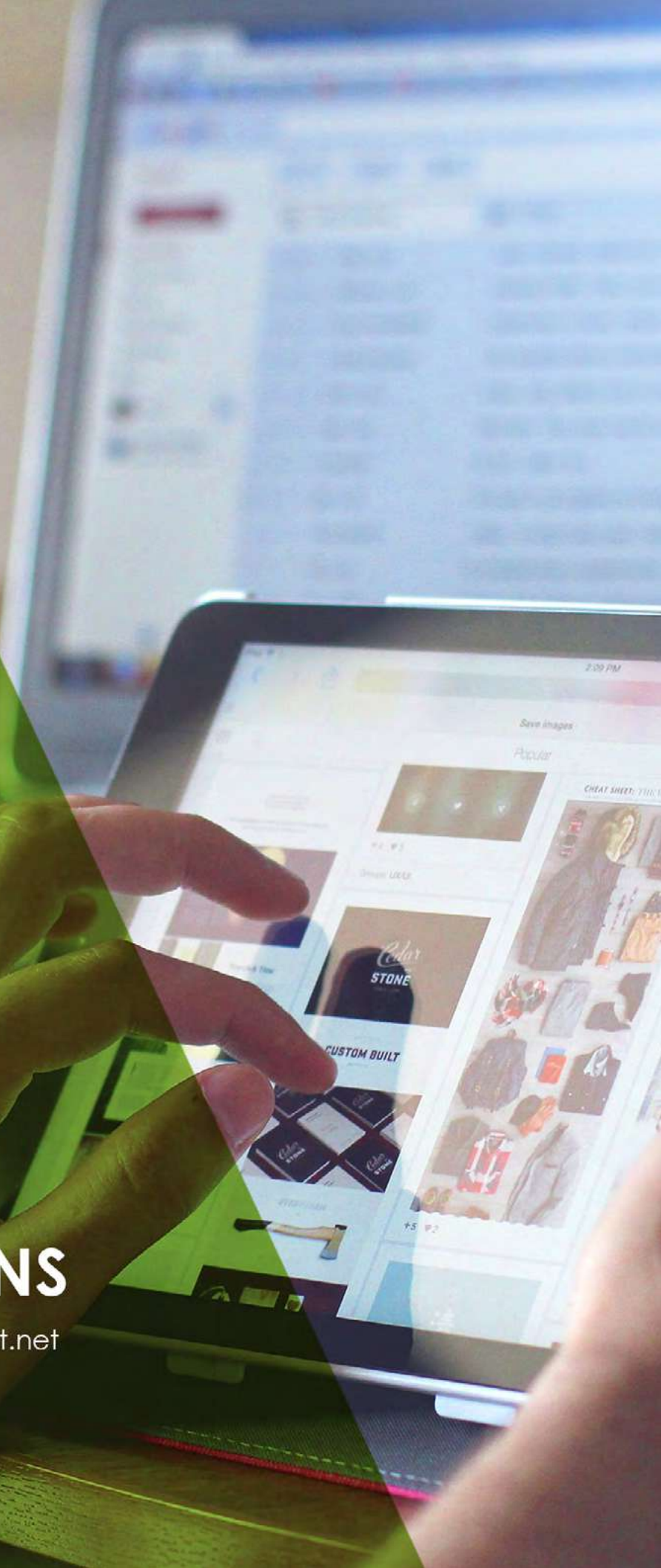
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TRANSFORMATIONAL PROGRESS

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH HAMID AL ZAABI, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND COUNTER TERRORISM FINANCING, HE OUTLINES THE EXTENSIVE MEASURES THAT THE UAE HAS LAUNCHED IN CRACKING DOWN ON MONEY LAUNDERING

BY RAMY SAMEEH, WAM





WAM

Al Zaabi at the headquarters of the Executive Office of Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing

Hamed Al Zaabi, Director-General of the Executive Office of Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing (EO AMLCTF), revealed that the UAE has completed a comprehensive review of AML/CFT progress made in the first half of 2023 which shows significant improvement across the board.

Al Zaabi stressed that the review's outcome demonstrates the robustness, responsiveness and effectiveness of the UAE national AML/CFT system.

During this period, the UAE has continued to implement the National Action Plan and National AML/CTF Strategy and is resolutely pursuing its agenda for combating illicit financing and preserving the integrity of the global financial system.

These efforts have substantially increased

key performance indicators, including Suspicious Activity Report (SAR)/Suspicious Transaction Report (STR), enforcement actions, inspections by supervisory authorities, and confiscations.

He also pointed out that the UAE successfully confiscated over Dhs1.309 billion from March 2023 to mid-July 2023, reaffirming its commitment to strengthening its financial system.

Al Zaabi stressed that the UAE will continue to build out its long-term, sustainable AML/CTF capabilities to investigate and detect money laundering and terrorist financing and will continue to broaden its international co-operation.

"The UAE's participation in the Eurasia Group plenary was followed by granting official observer status at the Asia/Pacific Group plenary. On the domestic level, the UAE Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs)

hosted the 2023 annual meeting of the Egmont Group in Abu Dhabi, a global organisation that facilitates the exchange of information, knowledge, and co-operation amongst 170 member FIUs. We look forward to continuing our positive progress in the second half of the year," he stressed.

The EO AMLCTF Director-General said that the achievement of the first quarter included the participation of a UAE delegation led by the EO AML/CTF for the first time in plenaries of two Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-Style Regional Bodies: the Asia/Pacific Group (APG) and Eurasia Group (EAG).

He added that supervisors of Financial Institutions (FIs) and Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs) imposed collective fines of more than Dhs199 million. The UAE also successfully confiscated over

“The UAE continues to prioritise international co-operation to combat financial and organised crime. This includes several high-profile cases of investigations, arrests, and extradition agreements between the UAE and other jurisdictions



HAMID AL ZAABI

Director-General of the Executive Office of Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing (EO AMLCTF)

Dhs1.309 billion from March 2023 to mid-July 2023.

From Q1 to Q2 2023, the UAE reported a 17 per cent increase in total STRs. During this period, DNFBP submissions increased by 14 per cent and dealers in precious metals and stones (DPMS) submissions by 23 per cent.

Al Zaabi explained that in Q2 2023, the number of inspections (69,407) surpassed the total number of inspections in 2022 (67,097), with an increase of 108 per cent compared to the first quarter of 2023.

The private sector reporting of Targeted Financial Sanctions (TFS) and Terrorist and Proliferation Financing (PF/TF) – related STRs/SARs to the FIU has increased. Statistics from March-June 2023 show an approximate increase of 93 per cent on the previous reporting period.

Since March 2023, the Executive Office for Control and Non-Proliferation (EOCN) conducted four training sessions for nearly 4,000 private and public sector professionals on TF/PF.

WHAT IS MONEY LAUNDERING?



Money laundering is defined as any financial or banking transaction aimed at concealing or changing the source of illegally obtained funds, by passing it through the financial and banking system in order to make it appear as originating from legitimate sources, and then re-pumping and investing it illegally.

According to the EO AMLCTF Director-General, the UAE continues to prioritise international co-operation to combat financial and organised crime. This includes several high-profile cases of investigations, arrests, and extradition agreements between the UAE and other jurisdictions.

He added that the UAE has successfully signed 45 Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) treaties, in line with efforts stated by the Ministry of Justice in its guide to international judicial co-operation in criminal matters. One MLA treaty was signed with the Republic of Türkiye, and further treaties are being developed.

The UAE focused on outbound MLA requests and other requests targeting trade-based money laundering (ML), third party ML, foreign predicate offences, and international facilitators. Between March and mid-July 2023, the UAE sent 82 outgoing MLA requests to 34 foreign countries, whereas in 2022, it had sent 290 requests to 72 countries.

In the first half of 2023, the UAE already sent 119 outgoing MLA requests to over 40 jurisdictions. Meanwhile, the country has received 201 incoming MLA requests — of this, 130 requests have already been provided with responses (approx. 73 per cent), while the remaining 71 are currently being processed by the respective PPs as of the end of June 2023, with one incoming MLA being withdrawn by the respective foreign jurisdiction. This continues the positive trends seen in 2022.



UAE'S ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING (ML) ACHIEVEMENTS



76

ML convictions between March-mid July 2023



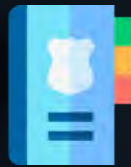
Dhs1.309 billion

Total value of funds seized by UAE authorities in connection with ML activities between March-mid July 2023



92.1%

Conviction rate in ML cases in the UAE between March 2023 and mid-July 2023



183

New ML cases referred to the national level between March and mid-July 2023, mostly investigations and prosecutions of large-scale, complex ML cases



45

The number of MLA treaties made by the UAE with other countries for international judicial co-operation



Dhs199 million

Total fines issued by the UAE issued in H1 2023, exceeding the totals from years 2022 (Dhs76.2 million), 2020 (Dhs8.4 million), and 2019 (Dhs800,000) combined



69,407

The number of inspections in Q2 2023, which surpassed the total number of inspections in 2022, an increase of 108% compared to the first quarter of 2023

According to the EO AMLCTF Director-General, the UAE invests significant resources into increasing the capacity of nationwide and regional supervisors to ensure that FIs and DNFBPs are compliant with AML/CFT requirements.

He added that from February to July 2023, the UAE has continued to intensify its outreach and awareness-raising initiatives, conducting 12 sessions that reached over 18,000 personnel across the public and private sectors.

Through 14th July, the MOE had completed 52 per cent (1,737 out of 3,360) of on-site full-scope inspections of high-risk DNFBPs and prioritised these on-site inspections based on the risks and size of the sectors.

Al Zaabi explained that the supervisors of FIs and DNFBPs issued collective fines amounting to Dhs199 million for H1 2023, which exceeds the totals from years 2022

(Dhs76.2 million), 2020 (Dhs8.4 million) and 2019 (Dhs800,000) combined.

Between March 2023 and June 2023, the Central Bank of the UAE (CBUAE) completed 30 on-site reviews and finalised 57 on-site reviews so far this year.

Inspections undertaken during the current reporting period resulted in 385 remedial actions identified, and 28 Remedial Mitigation Plans were issued to CBUAE regulated entities.

Al Zaabi said that supervisory authorities continue to invest in their human resources.

Investigations and prosecutions

According to Al Zaabi, the UAE's system to effectively investigate ML offences and to swiftly impose proportionate sanctions continues to improve and be enhanced to dissuade further criminal behaviour.

These efforts include implementing additional investigation tools and improved

investigative methods and techniques.

Between March and mid-July 2023, Al Zaabi said, the UAE has prioritised investigations and prosecutions of large-scale, complex ML cases. During this period, 183 ML cases were launched nationally by the relevant investigation and prosecution authorities.

Out of the new ML cases, 51 cases were based on FIU disseminations; 164 cases were judicially investigated by the Public Prosecutions (PPs); and 99 cases were referred to courts during this review period.

Al Zaabi underscored that the UAE maintains a 92.1 per cent conviction rate in ML cases between March 2023 and mid-July 2023, landing 76 convictions during the same period.

Approximately 45.3 per cent of the police investigations were generated by formal and informal international co-operation, such as incoming MLA requests,



Al Zaabi leads a meeting of the Executive Office of Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing

FIU-to-FIU, and police-to-police co-operation.

The EO AMLCTF Director-General noted that confiscating illicit proceeds is a high priority for the relevant authorities to ensure that the criminal funds are confiscated and prevented from entering the financial system again, deterring further criminal activity.

During H1 2023, the UAE demonstrated how financial intelligence is instrumental across relevant authorities in effectively assisting in ML and TF investigations.

The country has made significant investments to improve the FIU's capabilities and efficiency and is seeing significant improvements in the prosecution of financial crimes.

The FIU has invested heavily in improving the team by hiring highly experienced professionals with relevant experience in compliance, banking, law enforcement and investigations.

Al Zaabi said that 183 new ML cases have been referred at the national level by relevant investigation and prosecution authorities, which further enhances the capacity of investigation and prosecution authorities to use other sources of information and conduct Parallel Financial Investigations.

The FIU includes analysis information from foreign FIUs and provides financial intelligence for investigation and prosecution authorities to continuously pursue high-risk ML threats. Moreover, meetings with foreign FIUs and international stakeholders have increased.

Al Zaabi stressed that the UAE treats TF and PF risks seriously. Highly prioritised efforts and activities ensure that terrorist financiers are prevented from raising funds – either via the private or the non-profit organisation (NPO) sector – and

that the entities and individuals engaged in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are prevented from doing so in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The EO AMLCTF Director-General noted that the Executive Office for Control and Non-Proliferation continues to prioritise comprehensive outreach to the private and public sectors on TF/PF. Since March 2023, four training sessions have been conducted and attended by 4,000 participants, focused mainly on international CPF obligations, compliance best practices, and typologies.

He explained that the private sector

reporting of TFS PF/TF – related STRs/ SARs to the FIU – has increased compared to the past two reporting periods. Statistics from March to June 2023 showed an approximate increase of 93 per cent and 96 per cent in STRs compared to the past two reporting periods (Jul – Oct 22 and Nov 22 to Feb 23, respectively). This indicates an increasing and sustained trend.

He concluded that supervisors and all AML/CFT authorities are actively coordinating and participating in the ongoing process to update the second National Risk Assessment launched in October 2022.

THE RISKS OF MONEY LAUNDERING AND TERRORISM FINANCING



Economic recession



Increase in crime and corruption



Threat to economic stability



Weaken financial institutions



Growing food in the desert

999 LOOKS INTO THE UAE'S NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR FOOD SECURITY, WHICH AIMS TO POSITION THE COUNTRY AS A GLOBAL LEADER IN ADVANCED HYDROPONICS AND AI-DRIVEN FARMING SYSTEMS

BY JAMES MURDOCK



Pawan Singh / The National



Pawan Singh / The National

Emirati businessman Abdullatif Al Banna's greenhouse complex in Al Awir, Dubai has an annual yield of 4,000 delectably sweet pineapples growing using hydroponics



Amidst the sweltering heat of Al Awir desert, about 35km east of Downtown Dubai and not far from the shadows of the Burj Khalifa, there lies a cluster of remarkable, low-lying structures.

These off-white dome-shaped greenhouses emerge from the parched landscape like a mirage on the horizon. It's a testament to human ingenuity, and ability to adapt.

Within the shelter of these domes, a revolution is underway. Here, the heat of the desert is tamed by cutting-edge technology and innovation — where humidity is controlled and temperature kept to within 28°C to 30°C.

Inside, Abdullatif Al Banna, an Emirati entrepreneur, runs it. With an annual yield of 4,000 delectably sweet pineapples, Al Banna has emerged as a source of inspiration for many who are looking to venture into modern agriculture, especially hydroponics.

"With hydroponics system, we're saving

90 per cent of the water," said Al Banna, who hails from a Dubai family with a rich agricultural heritage.

"All we need is for people to work hard on their farms or gardens. I hope every individual plants something, even if they have a small patch in their garden. It will help the environment," he said.

GROWING PINEAPPLES IN THE DESERT

The technique used by Al Banna in his greenhouses is a notch higher than the drip-irrigation system, which already helps green Dubai's parks and city landscapes.

He also cultivates a variety of crops, including tomatoes, dates, and numerous other plants. Al Banna raves about his Dubai-grown pineapples—they're remarkably sweet. "I don't think we can find in the market pineapples sweeter than what we have."

He advises farmers to avoid using fertilisers. "Using chemicals will kill the insects that are really important for the environment cycle. We need to balance the environment cycle. Focus on growing high-

“ Focus on growing high-quality products without any fertilisers. That is the best way to benefit the environment

— ABDULLATIF AL BANNA
Pineapple grower in Dubai

quality products without any fertilisers. That is the best way to benefit the environment.”

Al Banna, however, said growing pineapples in the UAE's climate is no simple feat. He explains: "It requires a cool greenhouse, with not more than 30°C, 29°C, or 28°C temperature, and a little bit of humidity. We are saving 90 per cent of the water because of the hydroponics system."

These greenhouses, each 8x34 metres, feature advanced technology, with continuous fan circulation and 24/7 automated irrigation. Pineapples draw nutrients from perlite-filled reservoirs. Mature pineapples yield plantlets, which are separated and replanted for future growth.



Badia Farms/X

Local produce of Badia Farms, an indoor vertical farm oasis in Dubai's Al Quoz district

WATER-SMART FARMING

In arid desert regions like the Middle East, water scarcity poses a significant challenge for agriculture and food production. Advanced hydroponics and AI-driven farming systems emerge as a promising solution to overcome this hurdle. Hydroponics is a soil-less farming method that utilises a nutrient-rich water solution to grow plants. This method allows for efficient water usage, minimising wastage while maximising crop yields. The controlled environment of hydroponic systems enables precise monitoring of water and nutrient levels, ensuring optimal growth and reducing the overall water footprint.

Amongst the 38,000 farms in the UAE, a substantial portion has adopted advanced agricultural practices such as hydroponic and vertical farming, reflecting a notable transition toward modern and sustainable farming methods.

These innovative farming methods demonstrate that growing food doesn't solely rely on traditional soil. Often overlooked is the fact that water is also a vital component for food growth. This is being reinforced by the theme of this year's World Food Day, celebrated annually on the 16th of October and considered one of the most embraced events in the UN calendar. The theme, "Water is Life, Water is Food. Leave No One Behind", underscores the critical link between food and water, and emphasises upon the indispensable role water plays as the foundation for our sustenance.

Her Excellency Mariam Al Mheiri, Minister of State for Food Security in the UAE, recognised the importance of sustainable agriculture during the launch of the National System for Sustainable Agriculture in June 2020. She stressed that sustainability is not only a local but also a global imperative.

"Sustainability is a national and global trend to develop various vital sectors, including the food sector, while preserving the environment and natural resources. Sustainability in food security cuts down waste and addresses the challenges facing the sector, the most significant of which for the UAE is freshwater scarcity," Al Mheiri said.

"Agtech is a practical tool to strengthen the UAE system for sustainable agriculture, with closed environment agriculture (CEA's) systems reducing the amount of water used to irrigate crops by up to 90 per cent. The UAE Sustainable Agriculture System will distinguish products of local origin, facilitate

“Sustainability in food security cuts down waste and addresses the challenges facing the sector, the most significant of which for the UAE is freshwater scarcity

— HE MARIAM AL MHEIRI
UAE Minister of State for Food Security

their marketing, and raise the level of consumer confidence, thereby encouraging customers to switch to responsible consumption,” she added.

GREENING THE DESERT

The UAE supports sustainable farming, offering financial aid and essential materials to agtech farms like Al Banna's. Additionally, government technicians and engineers are readily available to provide assistance when needed, further contributing to the success of these agtech ventures.

The thriving greenhouse complex of Al Banna serves as a microcosm of the profound changes sweeping across the country.

With just 0.7 per cent of arable land, the UAE has its eyes firmly fixed on an ambitious target: claiming the number one spot in the Global Food Security Index by 2051 through the efficient use of agtech and smart farming systems.

It's a serious challenge for a country in the arid region. Food production must increase by 70 per cent, according to UN estimates, as the global population is estimated to possibly hit the 10 billion mark by 2051.

According to data from the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and the Environment, the 38,000 farms operating in the UAE employ a diverse range of farming methods and agricultural production systems,



WHAT IS HYDROPONICS?

Hydroponics is a soil-less farming method that utilises a nutrient-rich water solution to grow plants. This method allows for efficient water usage, minimising wastage while maximising crop yields. The controlled environment of hydroponic systems enables precise monitoring of water and nutrient levels, ensuring optimal growth and reducing the overall water footprint.

FACT FILE: GROWING FOOD IN THE UAE



0.7%
Percentage of arable land

But through innovative planting techniques, the UAE is leading a green revolution in the region



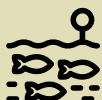
38,000
The number of farms operating in the UAE



46,000 acres
Expanse of organic farms across the seven emirates



2051
UAE's target year to attain top position in the Global Food Security Index



1,000 acres
Area covered by aquatic farms



156,000 tonnes
Annual vegetable production



200,000 tonnes
Annual fruit production



500 tonnes
Annual feed crops production



20 per cent
Percentage of domestic vegetable consumption produced locally



80 per cent
Percentage of cucumbers grown and sold locally



Source: UAE Ministry of Climate Change and the Environment

encompassing organic farming practices across a vast expanse of 46,000 acres and aquatic farms, which operate without soil, covering an impressive 1,000 acres.

The annual agricultural output of the UAE is truly noteworthy, with vegetable production totalling around 156,000 tonnes, along with an additional 500 tonnes of field crops and feed.

Fruit production scales up to approximately 200,000 tonnes annually. Notably, the UAE's domestic vegetable production now fulfils over 20 per cent of the nation's total demand for these essential crops, with cucumbers playing a

prominent role, accounting for 80 per cent of the overall production.

GREEN REVOLUTION

Amidst the coronavirus pandemic, the UAE stood resilient with a consistent supply of fresh produce and staples.

This was made possible by the emergence of cutting-edge vertical farms like the Al-Badia Market Garden Farm in Dubai, helping ignite a "green revolution" and reducing its reliance on food imports. This innovative farm produces a wide range of vegetables in a multi-storey format, meticulously controlling light,

irrigation, and recycling an impressive 90 per cent of its water usage.

Additionally, thanks to the airborne cargo services offered by the renowned carrier Emirates, which repurposed passenger seats to increase capacity, the UAE was even able to facilitate the re-export of various food products to neighbouring regions.

"It's a green revolution in the middle of the desert," Al-Badia Market Garden Farm director Basel Jammal said. "Each plant is given the amount of light, humidity, heat and water it needs. It's as if it were a guest in a five-star hotel."

"We no longer want to depend on imports. We want to produce locally, all year round, without worrying about climate change, rainfall or drought," he added.

The mountainous areas of the UAE are also witnessing the emergence of farms like Al Badia. In these areas, you can find farms that house cows in air-conditioned sheds, contributing to the local dairy market. Moreover, in expansive tanks monitored by a control room that replicates the natural light cycles of Norway, salmon is being cultivated, defying the scorching heat outside.

SUPPORT FOR HOMEGROWN PRODUCE

Many of these farms, though privately owned, receive active support from the relevant authorities. One prominent example is Manbat, the Emirati farmers' market, a collaborative venture of real estate developer Arada and the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment of the UAE (MoCCaE). This initiative aims to promote homegrown produce from the UAE in a family-friendly and enjoyable manner.

Manbat has gained substantial momentum, boasting the participation of over 200 vendors and farmers. In response to the country's new weekend practice since January 2022, the market has now shifted its operations to Saturdays and Sundays.

"We work with a huge range of farms across the UAE, from well-established technically advanced entities to smaller, family-run farms. Manbat's remit is to empower Emirati farmers, linking them with local consumers in a bid to support the UAE's long-term food security goals," Ray Tinston, Director of Manbat, said.

A GRAND MISSION

In November 2018, the UAE unveiled the National Strategy for Food Security, a visionary initiative aimed at positioning the country as a global leader in food security, as measured by

“It's a green revolution in the middle of the desert. Each plant is given the amount of light, humidity, heat and water it needs. It's as if it were a guest in a five-star hotel”



HH Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah, visits the wheat farm in Maliha, Sharjah, in March 2023 to attend the first harvest phase



Emirates Flight Catering's indoor farm marks a significant development towards local food production

The Economist Impact's Global Food Security Index (GFSI), by the year 2051. This strategy is built on the foundational goal of eradicating hunger by ensuring widespread access to safe, nutritious, and abundant food.

The strategy's multifaceted approach encompasses several key pillars, including leveraging modern technologies to promote sustainable food production, bolstering local agricultural output, and fostering international partnerships to diversify food sources.

The UAE government has also introduced accelerator programmes to support advancements in agricultural technology. Simultaneously, they are offering financial assistance and technical guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector.

These concerted efforts yielded significant results. In just one year, the

UAE made a huge achievement in the 2019 GFSI rankings, surging 10 places to secure the 21st position out of 113 surveyed countries.

By 2022, the UAE had not only topped the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region in overall GFSI rankings but also excelled in terms of food availability.

This remarkable progress owes much to the nation's unwavering economic and political stability. The COVID-19 pandemic heightened awareness about the importance of healthy, locally sourced food, and the UAE's robust food security measures ensured minimal disruption to its supply chains.

"As countries try to achieve food security, improve resilience, and protect the environment, climate-smart agriculture as an approach is hugely relevant," Robin George, an economist with the Boston Consulting Group, a global strategy consulting firm,

said. "Choosing climate-appropriate crops, adopting drought-resistant seeds, and integrating techniques such as precision farming and water management could help farmers in arid and semi-arid regions achieve sustainable livelihoods."

A REMARKABLE FEAT

A decisive moment in the UAE's forays towards food security occurred in March 2023 when the Emirate of Sharjah harvested an astounding 1,600 tonnes of wheat on a 400-hectare farm in Sharjah's Mleiha area.

Initiated in November 2022, this innovative wheat farming project was a strategic response to mitigate procurement disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

During its first phase, the initiative required 18,000 cubic metres of desalinated seawater daily for irrigation. Officials anticipate a reduction in energy costs as the project scales up. The ambitious goal is to expand cultivation to cover 1,900 hectares by 2025, yielding a substantial 15,200 tonnes of wheat. Currently, the UAE imports 1.7 million tonnes of wheat annually, with Sharjah contributing 330,000 tonnes.

The UAE's agricultural diversity extends beyond crops, encompassing dairy farming, apiculture, and aquaculture. While dairy farms are concentrated in the picturesque city of Al Ain, the mountainous region of Hatta, near the Oman border, has become a haven for beekeeping.

Sharjah is also charting a course for a cow breeding programme, envisioning the establishment of a dairy factory producing preservative-free milk. Likewise, Dubai's Fish Farm LLC, which began operations a decade ago to reduce seafood imports, stands as a testament to its success in farming Atlantic Salmon, European seabass, seabream and kingfish.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The UAE's relentless pursuit of advanced agricultural technologies and sustainable practices positions it as a global leader in the mission for food security, and these groundbreaking achievements signify a promising future of self-reliance and abundance in the nation's food production landscape.

During the G20 Agricultural Ministerial Meeting held in June in India, Minister Al Mheiri emphasised the UAE's commitment to catalysing global responses to various challenges stemming from climate change, spanning from food systems to clean energy and biodiversity.

In November 2018, the UAE unveiled the National Strategy for Food Security, a visionary initiative aimed at positioning the country as a global leader in food security by the year 2051

PIONEERING SUSTAINABLE FARM PROJECTS IN UAE DESERTS

Here's a look into some of the ambitious initiatives in the UAE conceived to promote sustainable farming:



HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid visits Emirates Crop One (ECO 1) — the world's largest vertical farm in September 2022

Vertical Farm

The world's largest hydroponic farm, Bustanica, emerged on the scene last year, propelled by a substantial \$40 million (Dhs146.8 mn) investment. This facility is the first vertical farm venture of Emirates Crop One, a strategic partnership between Emirates Flight Catering (EKFC), renowned for its expansive catering operations serving

over 100 airlines worldwide, and Crop One, a pioneering force in technology-driven indoor vertical farming.

Situated near Al Maktoum International Airport at Dubai World Central, this sprawling 330,000-square-foot facility is engineered to yield more than 1 million kg of premium-quality leafy greens annually,

while reducing water consumption by a staggering 95 per cent when compared to conventional agriculture.

At any given time, Bustanica nurtures an impressive count of over 1 million plants, resulting in a daily output of 3,000kg of fresh produce.

Bustanica's success is underpinned by cutting-edge technology, including machine learning and artificial intelligence, coupled with advanced agricultural methodologies. A dedicated in-house team comprising agronomy experts, engineers, horticulturists, and plant scientists collaborates seamlessly to ensure the cultivation of pristine, pesticide-free, and herbicide-free greens.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive at Emirates Airline and Group said: "Long-term food security and self-sufficiency are vital to the economic growth of any country, and the UAE is no exception. We've specific challenges in our region, given the limitations around arable land and climate. Bustanica ushers in a new era of innovation and investments, which are important steps for sustainable growth and align with our country's well-defined food and water security strategies."



The Food Tech Valley aspires to be a global hub for food tech startups and industry experts

Food Tech Valley

In 2021, Dubai unveiled the groundbreaking Food Tech Valley initiative, with the aim of tripling the UAE's food production capacity while pioneering urban planning for smart, self-reliant cities.

This initiative, a collaboration between the Ministry of Food and Water Security and Wasl Properties, is focused on achieving three key objectives: food self-sufficiency,

sustainability, and the judicious conservation of resources. Its approach revolves around the establishment of four distinct clusters.

These clusters will embrace a plethora of modern farming techniques and pioneering projects that span the domains of bioengineering, automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin

Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, said: "Food Tech Valley is part of a series of projects that aim to sustain the UAE's food, water and agricultural systems in line with the National Food Security Strategy. Food and medicine represent strategic sectors that help us ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for the next generation."

At its core, the initiative aspires to create a fully integrated modern city, poised to serve as a beacon for future clean-tech-based food and agricultural products. Moreover, it seeks to nurture a vibrant ecosystem, acting as an incubator for researchers, entrepreneurs, startups, and industry experts working tirelessly to develop transformative solutions that promise to shape the future of the food industry.

This new city will not only spearhead innovation but also harness the power of collaborative networks to lead a regional transformation and share valuable knowledge on sustainable food systems on a global scale.



Al Mheiri visits an array of local produce at the inaugural National Dialogue for Food Security in March 2023

The National Farms Sustainability Initiative

This initiative is dedicated to achieving the goals outlined in the National Food Security Strategy 2051 by enhancing domestic production. It aims to achieve this by securing purchase agreements, elevating self-sufficiency levels for specific food commodities, bolstering the income of UAE farmers, and maintaining a balanced approach to food trade.

This collaborative effort brings together the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment, local farms, national enterprises, agricultural companies, government and semi-government entities, and private sector institutions.

The core objective of the drive is to cultivate a sustainable market for both national and state-level farms. This will be accomplished through the establishment of contractual arrangements with government and semi-government agencies, executed in three progressive phases:



A thriving farm in Dubai

UAE Sustainable Agriculture System

In 2020, the UAE unveiled the UAE Sustainable Agriculture System to achieve several critical objectives, such as increasing self-sufficiency in targeted agricultural crops

by an annual rate of 5 per cent, boosting average annual farm income by 10 per cent, and expanding the agricultural workforce by 5 per cent every year.

It also aims to affect a substantial 15 per cent yearly reduction in water consumption for irrigation per production unit.

A pivotal component of this initiative is its emphasis on marketing, aimed at encouraging consumers to make sustainable product choices and facilitating the development of a resilient supply chain.

Leveraging the power of smartphone applications, artificial intelligence, and blockchain technology, the initiative enables real-time tracking and management of insect movement, while preserving soil fertility—a testament to its dedication to innovation and sustainability.



One Million Trees initiative

In 2010, HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid unveiled the ambitious 'One Million Trees' initiative. It focused on enhancing Dubai's greenery through afforestation, thereby enriching the city's aesthetics and contributing to its overall beauty.

The strategy involved the establishment of a tree nursery, generously provided with land by the Dubai Police Academy, where young trees could thrive and mature before being strategically distributed throughout the emirate.

The project was executed through a collaboration between 'Green Land,' a private company, and a government-supported environmental organisation, combining their efforts to develop and manage the tree nursery, thus kickstarting the planting of one million trees.

"Our responsibility is not only in public safety and law enforcement. We take part in the development and beautification of our city, which is why we wanted to join hands with environmental initiatives to do something for Dubai," Lieutenant General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim, Deputy Chairman of Police and Public Security in Dubai, said.

By working with the Roads and Transport Authority as well as the Municipality, the desert will "come to life," he said. "This is our attempt to stop desertification, and to add to the aesthetic appeal of Dubai."



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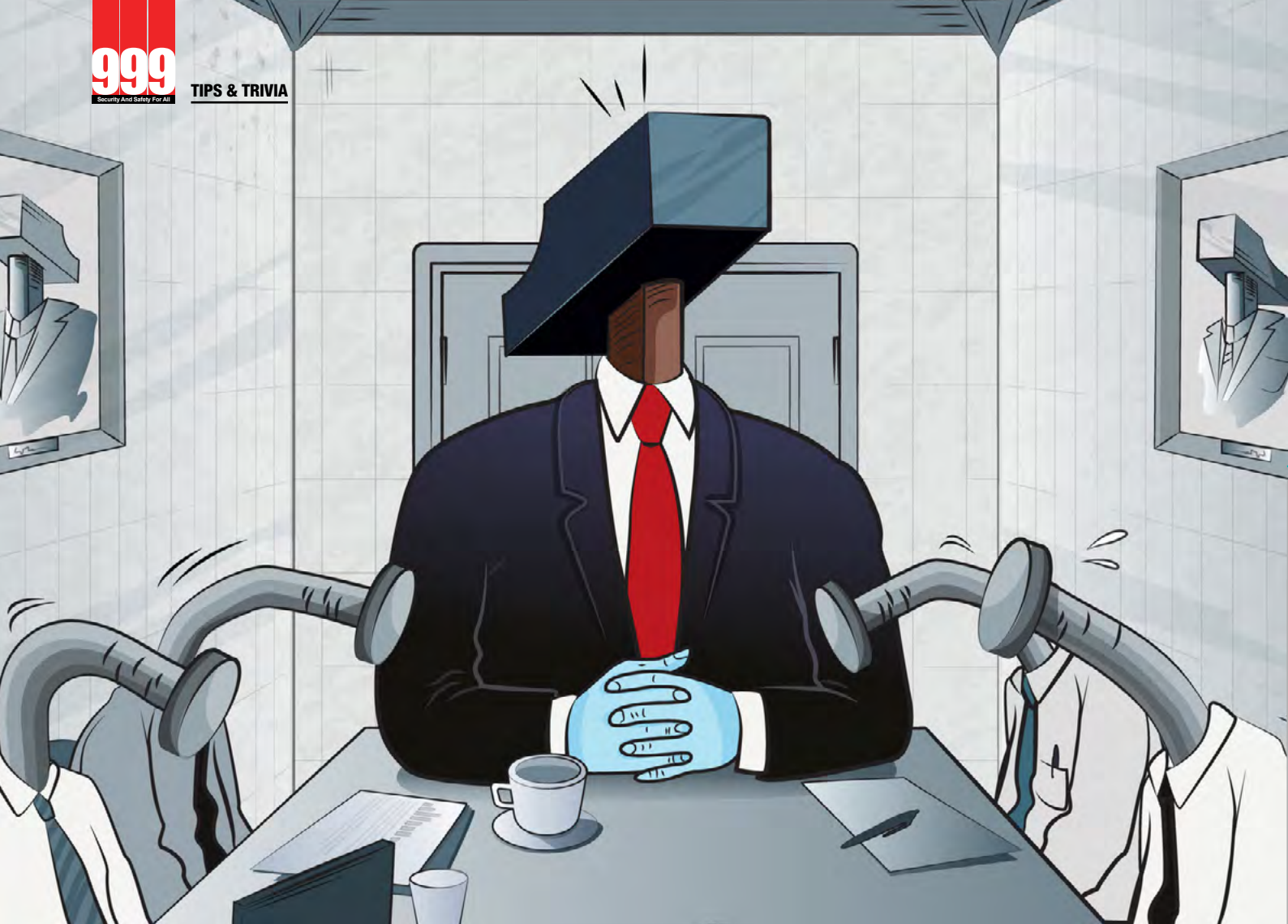
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THE COMEBACK CODE: FROM BLUNDER TO BRILLIANCE AT WORK

LEARN TO BOUNCE BACK AFTER MAKING MISTAKES AT WORK. FROM ACKNOWLEDGING ERRORS TO SHOWCASING RESILIENCE, **999** GIVES YOU THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO TURNING SETBACKS INTO STEPPING STONES FOR SUCCESS

BY MARK NITUMA





Let's face it – no workplace is immune to mistakes. Whether it's a small hiccup or a major goof-up, they're part and parcel of our professional lives. It's essential to grasp the reality that, no matter how careful we are, mistakes are an inevitable part of the journey. What truly distinguishes professionals and organisations is how they respond to and glean wisdom from these blunders.

In our workplace, mistakes can wear many hats. It could be a mix-up in communication with a colleague, a blip in a report, a deadline that slipped through the cracks, or a decision that didn't quite hit the mark. These slip-ups, however, are far from being labels of failures. Instead, they present golden opportunities for growth and progress.

As renowned American Hall of Fame basketball coach and player John Wooden once said, "If you're not making mistakes, then you're not doing anything."

Meet Sarah, a hardworking HR manager in a prestigious Dubai company. With her dedication and planning skills, she was entrusted with a vital task—organising a team-building event for more than 400 employees of their company.

Sarah meticulously planned every detail, leaving no room for mistakes. But, as stories often go, unexpected twists showed up. On the day of the event, a communication mix-up disrupted the plans, turning the event into a mess.

In the face of errors, owning up and taking corrective actions can turn a challenging situation into an opportunity for growth. And that's what Sarah exactly did. Amidst the whirlwind of disappointment and worry, she owned up to the mistake. Immediately, the following day, she sent a heartfelt email to the team, apologising and taking responsibility. This act marked the first step towards making things right and regaining trust.

In a recent article in *MIT Sloan Management Review*, author and Professor of Leadership at the University of Reading's Henley Business School, Benjamin Laker, highlighted Amy C. Edmondson's psychological safety theory on how acknowledging errors cultivates key pillars for thriving businesses.

Laker wrote: "This encourages creative problem-solving, collaboration, and innovation – all essential components of successful businesses."

“Creating spaces where employees feel safe to try something new and, crucially, to make mistakes without fear of repercussions or judgment helps to encourage them to step outside their comfort zones



BENJAMIN LAKER

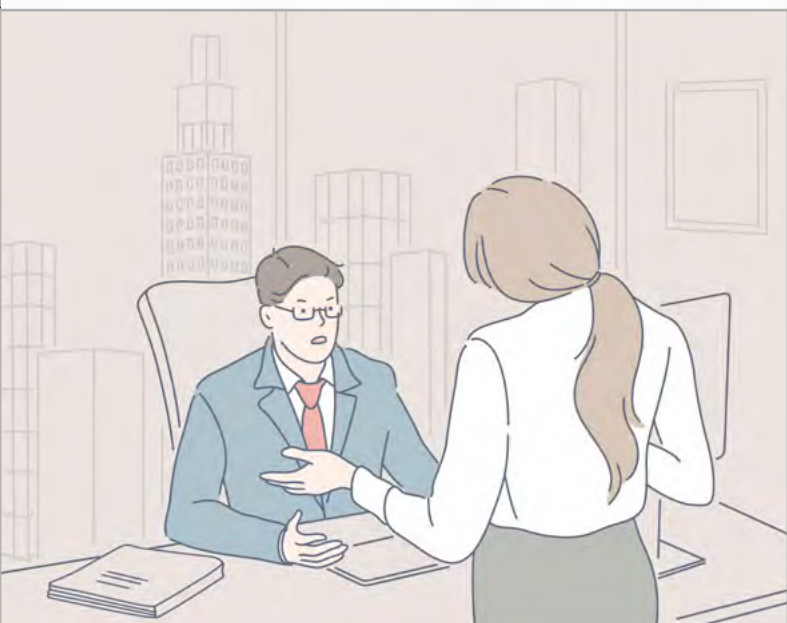
Author and Professor of Leadership at the University of Reading's Henley Business School

"Creating spaces where employees feel safe to try something new and, crucially, to make mistakes without fear of repercussions or judgement helps to encourage them to step outside their comfort zones, learn from their experiences, and develop innovative solutions that help propel the organisation forward," Laker added.

Think of work like being a carpenter with a hammer and nails. The nails are the tasks you need to do. Sometimes, you hit off target, like hitting the wood instead of the nail - that's a mistake. But, a good carpenter doesn't stop trying. They adjust and try again, just like we should learn from and fix our mistakes at work.

By acknowledging our missteps and rectifying them, we can bounce back from even the gravest of professional blunders. Remember, it's not about falling; it's about how we rise after the fall that defines us in our careers and lives. Here are seven key steps to help you bounce back and grow after making a mistake at work:

Think of work like being a carpenter with a hammer and nails. The nails are the tasks you need to do. Sometimes, you hit off target, like hitting the wood instead of the nail - that's a mistake. But, a good carpenter doesn't stop trying. They adjust and try again



1 Demonstrate genuine apology

Words are powerful, especially when they come from the heart. If your mistake affected others, it's crucial to show genuine remorse. Arranging conversations to express your regret is an effective way to demonstrate this. These conversations provide a platform to acknowledge the impact of your actions on your co-workers and the team as a whole. Letting your team know that you're truly sorry and committed to making amends conveys your sincerity in rectifying the situation. It reassures your co-workers that you're not taking the matter lightly and are dedicated to rebuilding trust. In essence, these conversations initiate the process of healing and mending relationships that may have been strained due to the mistake.

2 Take responsibility

What's admirable about Sarah's story is that she knew she had to face the music and own up to her error. Her gesture to send an email to all team members involved, openly admitting the mistake and expressing her genuine apologies, speaks volumes about her values and professionalism.

It's tempting to pretend it didn't happen or blame someone else, but that won't clean up the mess. Similarly, when you make a mistake at work, whether big or small, it's important to admit it. Acknowledge your error without shifting blame. This shows maturity and responsibility, setting the stage for making things right.



3 Learn from your mistake

Once the dust settles from a mistake, take a moment to reflect. How did this happen? What were the factors that led to this error? Was it a miscommunication, lack of information, or an oversight? Learn from what went wrong and figure out how to avoid a similar misstep in the future. This way, a negative incident can become a valuable learning experience.

In the case of Sarah, she sat down with her team to dissect the events that led to the error. They identified communication gaps and devised a clear protocol to prevent similar mishaps in the future. By learning from the mistake, they transformed a negative incident into a catalyst for process improvement.



4 Offer solutions and rectify your mistake

Apologising is a good start, but actions speak louder than words. Take proactive steps to rectify the mistake and prevent it from happening again. Collaborate with your team to come up with practical solutions. Whether it's organising a follow-up event, redoing a task, or finding an alternative approach, show your dedication to making amends through tangible actions. This shows that you're willing to invest effort to put things right.

Going back to Sarah's course of action, she worked closely with the HR team to devise an event protocol, ensuring that any activities of the company would run smoothly.

5 Communicate openly and transparently

Imagine trying to mend a broken bridge without telling anyone what you're doing – it wouldn't work. Similarly, when trying to rebuild trust after a mistake, clear communication is essential. Be open about the steps you're taking to rectify the situation and prevent a repeat. Furthermore, keeping all relevant stakeholders in the loop ensures that everyone understands the plan to move forward. This shared understanding fosters an environment of trust, where doubts and uncertainties are dispelled. It sets the stage for rebuilding faith in your capabilities.





6 Rebuild trust through consistent performance

Rebuilding trust requires consistent effort and reliability. Show your dedication by consistently excelling in your daily work. Meet deadlines, honour commitments, and let your actions reaffirm your capabilities and commitment. Through this ongoing display of commitment and excellence, you not only restore the trust in you but also fortify it, proving that you can be relied upon to deliver and exceed expectations. This, too, will reinforce your professional integrity within the workplace.

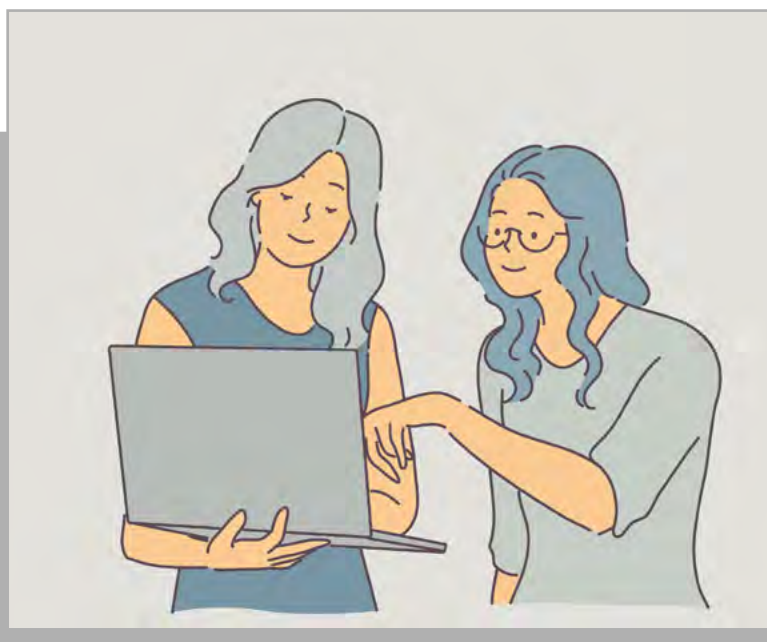
7 Accept constructive criticism

Actively seek feedback from your team and supervisors. Use their insights to further refine your skills and approach. Because like a compass, feedback can help you navigate stormy weather. Listen carefully, reflect on the feedback, and apply the constructive aspects. This not only shows your willingness to learn and grow but also demonstrates your determination to avoid repeating the same mistake. Accepting feedback gracefully can turn a setback into an opportunity for improvement.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ever wondered why those afternoon hours at the office can sometimes feel like a productivity slump? New study published in the science journal *PLOS ONE* reveals some fascinating insights. Over two years, researchers observed nearly 800 office-based employees, analysing computer usage data such as typing speed and mouse activity. The study found that the afternoon is the time of the day when a dip in productivity and an uptick in typo errors usually happen, especially on Friday afternoons.

Source: *PLOS ONE*



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TRAITOR COMPATRIOT

A WOMAN AGREES TO CARRY SOME FESTIVE ORNAMENTS
TO HER HOME COUNTRY ON BEHALF OF A MAN WHO
TRUSTS HER — AND THEN SHE BETRAYS HIM

BY WAGIH HASSAN
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN VIRGIL GUNDA



This is a story of betrayal that unfurled between two compatriots, fracturing the trust that had once brought them together in a distant land. Amina, a 28-year-old woman, and Ahmed, a 29-year-old man, shared their roots and a promise. Ahmed had purchased some gold jewellery as a gift meant for a joyous family occasion back in their home country. He asked Amina to deliver this precious gift to his relatives in their hometown.

She agreed to do this, but darkness lurked beneath her friendly façade. Her true character was different from what her friend believed it to be.

Amina, instead of fulfilling her entrusted duty, chose to betray Ahmed's faith in her. She took the valuable jewellery, worth hundreds of thousands of dirhams, from him, but then simply hid the ornaments, denying any knowledge of their whereabouts, pretending that he never gave her anything to carry back to their home country.

Left aggrieved and extremely anguished by this deceit — the loss of trust hurt as much as the loss of valuables — Ahmed took swift action. He filed a report at a nearby police station, seeking justice for the theft that had taken place. The authorities promptly intervened, investigating the matter and apprehending Amina as she attempted to flee the country with the jewellery. She was caught red-handed at the airport.

At the police station, Amina faced intense interrogation. She vehemently denied the allegations, despite the

overwhelming evidence against her. The truth, however, was undeniable; she had unlawfully acquired the gold jewellery that rightfully belonged to Ahmed.

Such was her greed that even with the evidence stacked against her, Amina clung to her ill-gotten gains, refusing to acknowledge her misdeeds. The case was then escalated to the Public Prosecutor's Office, marking a crucial stage in the pursuit of justice.

Following a meticulous investigation, Amina was brought before the court, charged with the grievous crimes of betrayal of trust and embezzlement. The court emphasised that such crimes occurred when possessions of rightful owners were entrusted to another, only to be misappropriated.

The gavel was struck, and the verdict was given: Amina was ordered to return the stolen gold jewellery to Ahmed and was sentenced to a year behind bars. Her punishment, however, did not end there. Upon completing her sentence, she would be deported, her betrayal staining her reputation for years to come.

In this tale of betrayal, the moral compass of UAE society and its justice system pointed true north. Trust, a cornerstone of Arab and Islamic

principles, was not to be taken lightly.

Society everywhere is built on trust; its violation causes a tear in the social fabric. That is why Amina was punished by the court not just as a thief, but also as someone who had violated the trust of Ahmed. This was the message of the law: our selfish desires and a reckless disregard for trust can lead us astray from the right path.

Society everywhere is built on trust; its violation causes a tear in the social fabric. That is why Amina was punished by the court not just as a thief, but also as someone who had violated the trust of Ahmed

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



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

MOMENTS OF A LIFETIME

Life teaches us that the passage of time cannot diminish the enduring love and memories that shape us, even when places and faces change

It's not a buried nostalgia of the past or a reluctance to embrace the present. It's not a longing for innocence and a passion for life. Rather, it's a strong, enduring love and a steadfast spirit that soars every time. It's love for a spirit that instilled in us its love and appreciation. It became a spring, a pulse, a sea, and a source of fresh water with the sweetness of rain and the purity of the sky. So, over the years, those places that once made us laugh now make us cry with nostalgia.

I never thought that I would have a date with absence. I was looking at your face, and my pain subsided and was relieved, as if my tongue was saying: "The doctor is gone, there is no medicine, and there is no hope of recovery."

I turned back when my soul saw life and breathed its beauty, magic, and simplicity. These pictures were like beautiful paintings, which took us with them to the old days, with their sweet and bitter moments, and witnessed the most beautiful memories. Perhaps you, reader of my lines, may object and wonder, "Is this nostalgia for distress?"

These are the days that led us to this peaceful life. If it were not for the people who sacrificed before, our lives would not be like this.

Everything around us reminds us of a beautiful memory, a kind word, and a piece of wisdom they left behind. It still consoles us when life is cruel and drives us away from injustice, recklessness, and greed.

And when moments and days pass by, stolen from our lives without our awareness, this is how life passes year after year to tell us clearly that the passing remains passing no matter how deeply rooted the feeling is in us, and the departed. He returns when the intentionally absent person is not worth the wait. The stranger remains a stranger even if we delve deeply into him, and this is

how life goes on. She walks with us and tells us a lot and a lot. No matter how much I gave others what I once wanted to have, I gave them while my heart was full of scars. I gave them unlimited warmth while I was shivering in the cold. I planted reassurance in their souls while fear was heading away. From me, I was describing the road to them while I was lost.

The ship of life may sail us to shores where we do not want to anchor, but it is our destiny. If they give us back the places, who will give us back the comfort? There are places we loved only because we stole from life moments of happiness and laughed in them from our hearts. And

whenever we pass by those places, their walls will continue to remind us. In those moments, every time I did something beautiful because I believed that all the beautiful things I gave to others would come back to me one day, I always found myself apologising for the ugliness and negativity in the world I encountered. I wanted to see the smile on their faces so I could feel proud of myself.

It is as if I'm telling the days: "This is how good people leave without prior permission." When I wanted to lament my life, I said, "I

found you alive in the core of my heart. You did not die. Yes, you left this world, and your spirit still resides in our souls, and you have not left us for a moment. There's nothing more painful to the soul than the departure of hope. I wish we could stop time at moments when we were truly happy. We may be gravely mistaken when we think that the hands of the clock do not kill. Rather, they practice the most horrific types of murder in us when they take our lives and we do not realise that they are creeping between the hands of the clock. Seconds and minutes capture life's most beautiful moments."

There's nothing more painful to the soul than the departure of hope. I wish we could stop time at moments when we were truly happy

MURDERS IN MOTION

UNCOVER HARROWING TALES OF HOW ORDINARY VEHICLES TURN INTO
INSTRUMENTS OF CRIMES AND REPREHENSIBLE ACTS OF VIOLENCE

BY MARK NITUMA



MURDER ON MUSCLE CAR

WHEN: MARCH 2023

WHERE: BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA, USA

The Dodge Hellcat, a powerful and limited-edition version of the Challenger SRT, is highly desired by car enthusiasts. Less than 18,000 have been made in the past eight years, as per KGET News.

Moreover, with a purchase price ranging between \$90,000 (Dhs330,300) and \$150,000 (Dhs550,500)—both the Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat and its cousin, the Dodge Charger, are stolen five times more often than the average car in the United States, as noted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Both muscle car enthusiasts and car thieves are drawn to Hellcats, including businesswoman Vicki Hampton. She owned two Dodge Challengers—one black and one maroon. On the morning of March 19, 2023, a grey Toyota Prius arrived at Hampton's residence. A man dressed in dark clothing broke a window, entered Hampton's muscle car parked on the street, manoeuvred it into neutral, and, likely aided by an accomplice in the Prius, pushed the Hellcat down the street and out of sight.

Minutes later, Hampton noticed the theft on her home surveillance monitor and decided to track her car using an Apple AirTag. This tiny device emits a Bluetooth signal, allowing her to pinpoint the location of her stolen car. Following the signal, Hampton located the stolen Hellcat nearby and, instead of contacting the police, decided to confront the car thieves.

Unfortunately, not involving the police proved to be a fatal error. Hampton confronted the thieves, and she was shot twice in the head. She clung to life for almost two weeks but passed away on April 1.



Dodge Hellcat (for illustration purposes only)

The autopsy revealed that Hampton's only gunshot wound was to the back of her head, indicating a point-blank range shot from behind. The investigation led to the arrest of four suspects accused of stealing Hampton's Hellcat and, in one suspect's case, murdering her.

The suspects were identified as 19-year-old David Tyrone Thompson of Bellflower, 18-year-old Adam Ransom of Lynwood, 23-year-old Joseph Bush of Anaheim, and 19-year-old Giovanni Garcia of Long Beach. They now face various charges, including carjacking, grand theft auto, and, in Thompson's case, first-degree murder.

The suspects are currently in custody, awaiting trial. Three of the suspects are scheduled for a preliminary hearing on October 25, where they will be tried together.

TRUNK OF TERROR

WHEN: OCTOBER 2002

WHERE: MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, USA

Terror swept through the residents of Montgomery County in Alabama from October 2 through October 24, 2002, following a series of indiscriminate shootings that claimed the lives of 10 individuals and critically injured three.

However, the perpetrators were unaware that amongst their victims was FBI intelligence analyst Linda Franklin, who had just completed her shopping at a home improvement store.

Franklin's tragic death prompted the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to elevate the investigation to a top priority. The Bureau collaborated closely with the Montgomery County (Maryland) Police Department, under the leadership of Chief Charles Moose, and enlisted the cooperation of other law enforcement agencies.

Within a matter of days, the FBI had deployed approximately 400 agents across the country to work on the case. They established a toll-free number to gather tips from the public, and teams of new agents in training were actively manning the hotline. Evidence specialists were tasked with digitally mapping the evolving crime scenes, while behavioural analysts helped create a profile of the shooters for investigators.

Their inquiries led them to a dark blue 1990 Chevy Caprice with the licence plate NDA-21Z, spotted in a parking lot in Maryland. Prior to approaching the scene, the police established a perimeter to ensure that no one could escape the area.

Upon closer examination of the vehicle, evidence experts and FBI agents discovered a peculiar hole cut in the trunk near the licence plate. The team deduced that this opening facilitated the placement of



John Allen Muhammad (left) and Lee Boyd Malvo

the Bushmaster .223-calibre rifle, which was used in all the attacks and was found within the trunk. The backseat had also been altered, removing the sheet metal between the passenger compartment and the trunk, allowing the shooter to access the trunk from inside the car.

During the search, police officers found a digital voice recorder, as well as the manual for the Chevy Caprice, confirming that the vehicle's owners, John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo, had recorded and written their extortion demands on some of their victims.

Muhammad and Malvo were apprehended by law enforcement agents while they were asleep. The suspects were arrested without resistance. Muhammad was executed by lethal injection in 2009. Currently, Malvo is serving multiple life sentences at Red Onion State Prison in Virginia.

DEADLY DISPUTE

WHEN: APRIL 2021

WHERE: SURREY, UNITED KINGDOM

Matthew Tester, a 49-year-old father of two, held a special place in the hearts of Surrey's community as a cherished scooter icon. Alongside his successful scaffolding business, Matthew enjoyed a strong support network with his loving family and the camaraderie of fellow scooter enthusiasts.

However, a harrowing piece of news reached Matthew's family and friends in April 2021. Matthew got involved in a heated dispute with another driver, 26-year-old Shaan Mir. Onlookers witnessed the altercation amidst the daylight, and their astonishment peaked as Matthew was struck down in a car park by a white BMW 1 series driven by Shaan in a fit of rage.

Emergency responders and the police immediately arrived on the scene to help both drivers. Matthew bore the brunt of the collision and was pronounced dead on the spot, despite the efforts of the medical teams on site.

Shaan, along with another man in his 40s, sustained major injuries and was sent to the hospital.

When Shaan recovered, he was summoned to the Guildford Crown Court. He was convicted of manslaughter by the court with a jail-term of 15 years in December 2021.

The loss of Matthew, also known by his family and peers by his nickname 'Tik', saddened his family and the [scooter] community, who never imagined that their loved one would pass away due to a dispute on the road. Tik's brother said that they still felt the ache in



Matthew Tester

their hearts, especially their mother who had to endure burying her own son.

"This tragedy has absolutely rocked the family, who have been devastated by Tik's death. The hurt and sadness we've felt over the past few days simply cannot be fully quantified, and something no one should ever experience. The consequences and ripples of Tik's death will have a lasting effect on so many lives. No mother should expect to outlive their son," said Tik's brother.

Tik's daughter remembers her dad as someone who filled the room with laughter, even during their low moments as a family: "Dad taught me how to live. Our favourite thing was just to laugh because even in our darkest time we did it together."

AXED DETECTIVE

WHEN: MARCH 1987

WHERE: SYDENHAM, LONDON, UK

Daniel Morgan and his business associate Jonathan Rees experienced three years of thriving success. They effectively launched their enterprise, Southern Investigations, capitalising on Morgan's remarkable memory for recalling minute details, specifically car registration numbers.

They were last spotted at a saloon in March 1987, celebrating life and success. On that very evening, a BBC sound producer was astonished to discover Morgan's lifeless body next to his car beside a pool of his own blood. It was a gruesome scene as an axe blade was embedded in Morgan's skull at the time.

Authorities assigned Detective Sergeant Sid Fillery to work on the case — however, officers didn't know that Fillery had been working for Southern Investigations, which compromised his position as head investigator. Fellow officers learned about Fillery's engagement with Southern Investigations the following month in April 1987, which led him, Rees, Glenn Vian, Garry Vian, and two other officers to be arrested on suspicion of Morgan's murder. But no charges were filed, and all six were released.

The following year (1988), the court summoned numerous personnel from Southern Investigations to provide their testimonies and statements. Amongst them, the company's accountant, Kevin Lennon, played a pivotal role by offering authorities a crucial lead. Lennon revealed that Rees's business ties with Morgan had been steadily deteriorating in the preceding months. Shockingly, he went on to disclose that Rees had been contemplating and planning the murder for as long as six months before Morgan's tragic demise.

In 1989, Rees found himself behind bars once more, this time



Daniel Morgan

alongside two accomplices for Morgan's murder. Yet, just as before, charges were dropped due to a lack of concrete evidence.

The case went cold for almost a decade until 1997, when Sir Paul Condon, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, pledged to reopen the investigation. Over the next three years, a harrowing revelation of Rees's corruption and immoral actions came to light. A listening device planted at the Southern Investigations office uncovered Rees's sinister plot to frame an innocent woman for drug use, all in an effort to sway a child custody battle in their client's favour.

While Morgan's murder remained a mystery, Rees was charged with other offences and jailed for seven years. In 2021, an independent panel studying the case for years stated in its final report that internal problems within the police force had permanently impeded any further investigations of the case, with no convictions ever secured for Morgan's murder.

THE TRAVELS OF BENJAMIN OF TUDELA

HERE'S A FASCINATING TALE OF A JEWISH MAN'S JOURNEY THROUGH
THE ARAB ISLAMIC EAST FROM THE IBERIAN PENINSULA OVER AN
EIGHT-YEAR PERIOD (1165 TO 1173)

BY DR FALEH HANDHAL







The Aljafería Palace, a medieval fortress-palace constructed in the latter part of the 11th century within the Taifa of Zaragoza, a region in Al-Andalus

In the year 1165, a courageous Jewish traveller named Benjamin embarked on a remarkable journey from his hometown “Tudela” in Spain. He left behind the safety of Christian-controlled Zaragoza, and started his journey from the northeastern Iberian Peninsula.

At that time, a significant portion of the Iberian Peninsula was under the Muslim conquest, notably by the Umayyad. Known as Al-Andalus, this region encompassed Spain, Portugal, and parts of Southern France. Cities like Cordoba and Granada stood as strongholds of the Islamic faith in that era.

During the Middle Ages, the Islamic world became the refuge and sanctuary for Jews from all over Europe, a period when Europeans regarded them with hatred and disdain. This, as the Christian kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula were steadily pushing back against Islamic control in a process known as the Reconquista.

Benjamin’s eight-year journey continued until the year 1173. Initially, he toured European countries, concluding his travels with a visit to the Arab Islamic East.

He left us with descriptions of the Arab cities he visited. At that time, the Arab world was divided between the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad and the Fatimid Caliphate in Cairo. The Crusades were ongoing in Palestine since the fall of Jerusalem in 1099 and persisted until 1187 when it was reclaimed by Salah Uddin (also known in the West as Saladin), the Ayyubid ruler.

As for Benjamin, his name appears in the original book as “Rabbi Benjamin”. When his book was written, he gained fame and the book was copied by scribes in various regions. Several editions of the book emerged, and it was translated into several languages, reaching various countries.

There is a handwritten Hebrew copy of the book in Baghdad dating back to 1556. It was reprinted using stone in 1865, making it a rare edition that was later translated into Arabic by Azara Haddad.

There’s also a digitised copy from Marcus Nathan Adler’s “*The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela: Critical Text, Translation and Commentary*” (New York: Phillip Feldheim, Inc., 1907) with the University of Washington.

It’s certainly a fascinating piece of



Benjamin of Tudela, a medieval Jewish explorer

history, as told from a Jewish standpoint. Benjamin also provided useful footnotes explaining its content, commenting on each city he visited, the era it was in, and the Islamic ruler, thus offering an understanding of the prevailing conditions at that time.

“They asked me in various ways to reveal my secret and to tell them if I can discover the treasures hidden in the earth. When they wanted to know my origin country, I said, ‘I am from the West’

“The Jews, who enjoyed protection under the benign rule of the Caliphs, transmitted to the Arabs the learning and science of the Greeks. Schools and universities arose in all parts of the Empire. The dark age of Christendom proved to be the golden age of literature for Jews and Arabs,” according to the introduction of the Washington University copy.

Furthermore, the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi sought the expertise of Dr Abdul Rahman Abdullah Al-Sheikh to study the translation and compose an introduction. The translated work was published in 2002.

In our presentation of this journey, we will focus on the accounts related to Benjamin’s travels through the Arab world, as he moved between its vibrant cities and flourishing villages. Notably, he visited Jerusalem, which was under Crusader occupation at the time. He explored various regions of Palestine and wrote about Beirut and Damascus. He cast his traveller’s staff in Baghdad, then journeyed to the Arabian Peninsula, visiting Yemen. From there, he travelled to Cairo, Alexandria, and several other cities.

THE COURSE OF THE JOURNEY

Benjamin departed from Tudela and travelled to the northeastern coasts of Spain. From there, he entered southern France and then proceeded to Greece. He made a stop in Constantinople, providing readers with a detailed description of the city, which was under the rule of the Byzantine Romans at that time. Afterwards, he embarked on a journey by sea from there and headed towards the Arab lands.

Antioch was the first city Benjamin reached, and it is well known as a significant hub in the Levant. It is situated on the Orontes River. Benjamin described this city as follows: “[Antioch] is a large city built by King Antiochus on the slope of a towering mountain, overseeing it from all sides, surrounded by a sturdy wall. On the surface of the city and at the top of the mountain, there is a spring of water distributed by an appointed man. It flows through underground channels

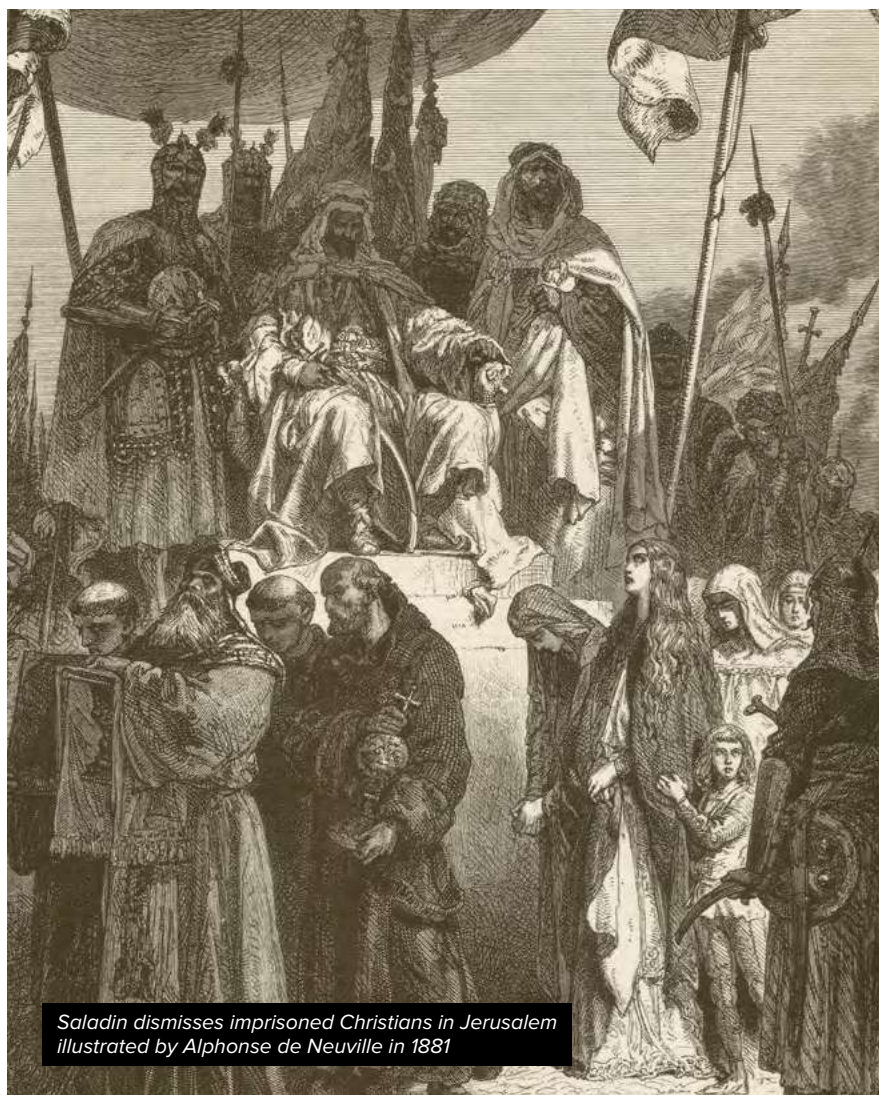
and reaches private houses. The city’s location is very fortified, and it is ruled by Prince Bohemond of Poitiers.”

THE ‘HASHSHASHIN’

Benjamin also tells about a place called “Jabala”, located in the foothills of the Lebanon Mountains. On the surface, it is inhabited by a community known as the “Hashshashin”, a sect of assassins feared for terrorising the rulers of the region with their attacks.

They follow the teachings of their leader Hamdan Qarmat, and they obey him unquestionably, whether it leads to life or death. Their stronghold is in a fortress called “Cadmus”, and their territory spans an eight-day journey. They are in constant conflict with the Christian Franks and the emir of Tripoli in the Levant.

Benjamin provides detailed information, including the names of their fortresses. Regarding the Hashshashin, he described their secretive abode as accessible only to their own members. They would block the pilgrimage route and were infamous for their poisoned knives. At times, they targeted kings and princes. They repeatedly attempted



Saladin dismisses imprisoned Christians in Jerusalem illustrated by Alphonse de Neuville in 1881

“[Antioch] is a large city built by King Antiochus on the slope of a towering mountain, overseeing it from all sides, surrounded by a sturdy wall

to assassinate Salah Uddin Ayyubi, but failed every time.

Benjamin continues by describing the town of “Jbeil” (Byblos), stating that it is ruled by seven princes from an Italian family. In Jbeil, there are ruins of temples, a seated idol made of gold on a stone pedestal, statues of two nymphs around it, and an altar for burning incense and offering sacrifices in front of it.

It is worth commenting on Benjamin’s statement that Jbeil is a famous Phoenician town located north of Beirut, with an ancient history dating back to 3000 BCE. The ancients called it Byblos, a centre of worship for the goddess Ashtar and Adonis. The river passing through it, the Ibrahim River, was formerly known as the Adonis River.



The map of the Holy Land drawn by Marino Sanudo in 1320

DOME OF THE ROCK BUILDER

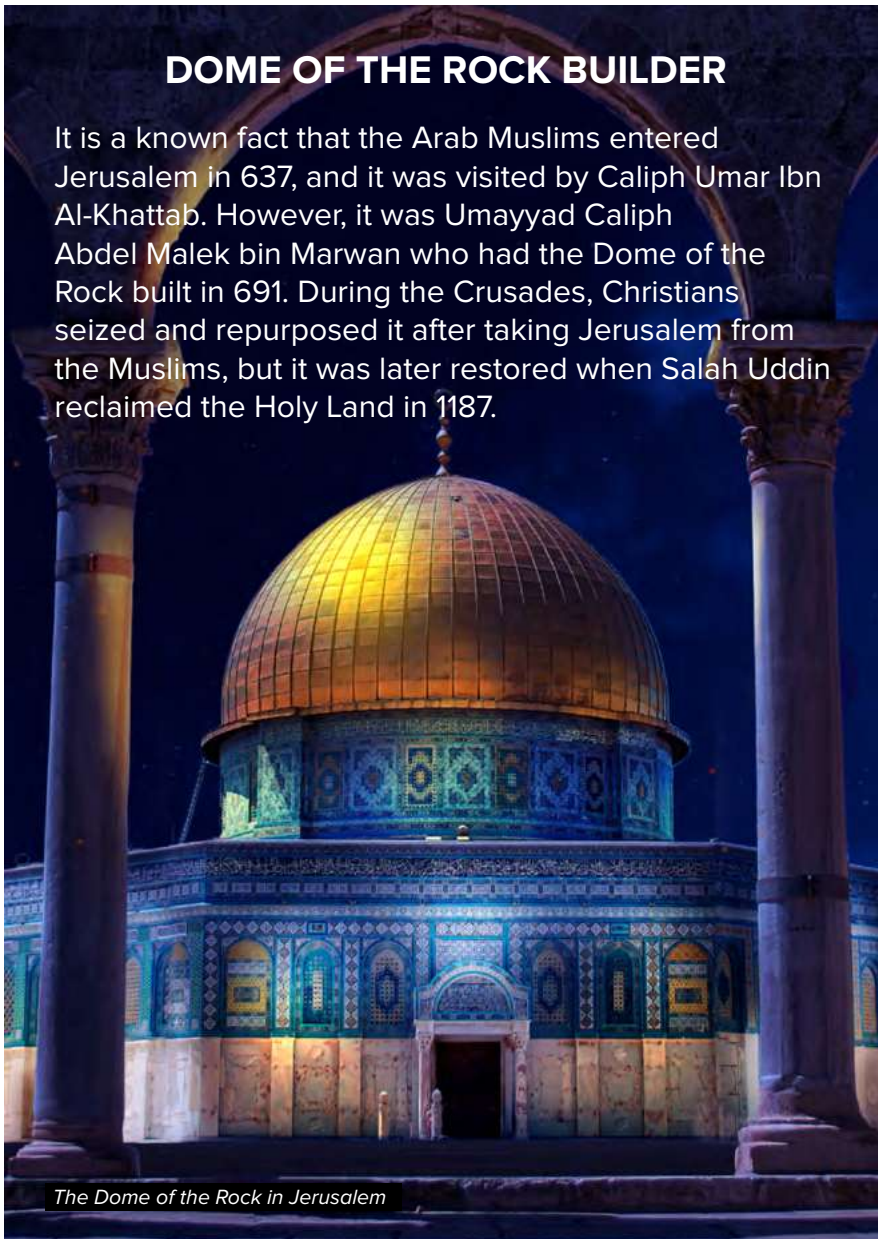
It is a known fact that the Arab Muslims entered Jerusalem in 637, and it was visited by Caliph Umar Ibn Al-Khattab. However, it was Umayyad Caliph Abdel Malek bin Marwan who had the Dome of the Rock built in 691. During the Crusades, Christians seized and repurposed it after taking Jerusalem from the Muslims, but it was later restored when Salah Uddin reclaimed the Holy Land in 1187.

“[Jerusalem] is a great and well-fortified city surrounded by three walls. It is inhabited by a large number of Jacobites, Syriacs, Armenians, Greeks, Karaites, and Franks — a mixture of every nation and tongue. As for the Jews, they reside in a neighbourhood adjacent to the Tower of David

VISITING THE HOLY LAND

Benjamin continues by providing detailed accounts of the cities of Akre, Haifa, and Nablus. He then delves into Jerusalem, which, during his visit, was under the occupation of the Crusaders since 1099. The Crusaders maintained their control over the city until 1187 when Salah Uddin reclaimed and conquered it.

Around the year 1168, when he visited Jerusalem, he wrote: “It is a great and well-fortified city surrounded by three walls. It is inhabited by a large number of Jacobites, Syriacs, Armenians, Greeks, Karaites, and Franks — a mixture of every nation and tongue. As for the Jews, they reside in a neighbourhood adjacent to the Tower of David. This tower, ancient and built by Muslims, rises to a height of ten cubits, and there is no other building in the city that rivals the Tower of David in strength.



The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem

as the Church of the Resurrection. As for the gates of Jerusalem today, they are the Gate of Hebron, the Gate of Damascus (also known as the Gate of the Pillar), the Gate of Zahari, the Gate of Subat, the Gate of the Moroccans, and the Gate of Zion (also called the Prophet David's Gate).

Regarding what he said about the "Temple of Solomon", it refers to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Caliph Umar Ibn Al-Khattab considered it a sacred site. As for his mention of the "Western Wall", it is the Western Wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, known to Jews as the Western Wall of the Temple, or the "Wailing Wall".

CHRONICLES OF JERUSALEM

Benjamin continues his narrative, stating: "About the appearance of the city, near the Gate of Shu'fat, there is a

valley leading to the Mount of Olives, from where you can see 'Sodom'. Jerusalem is adjacent to the 'Mount of Zion', where there is a covenant with the Christians and ancient Jewish tombs surrounding it. Jerusalem is surrounded by towering mountains."

When Benjamin concluded his journey to Jerusalem, he went from there to Damascus, one of the oldest cities in the world. Some attribute its construction to one of Noah's sons, while others claim it was built by the Prophet Abraham. Some even identify it as the city of "Iram of the Pillars". Its name is mentioned in the Torah and the Bible as the place where the Apostle Paul found guidance.

Damascus was under Roman rule until it was conquered by Khalid Ibn Al-Walid in 635. It was besieged by the Crusaders but remained unconquered. Benjamin arrived in Damascus during

the rule of Governor Mahmoud Ibn Noor Al-Din Al-Zenki (1135-1173), although he did not specify the exact year of his visit.

In his chronicles, Benjamin stated: "Damascus, the flourishing city, the residence of Nur Al-Din, the Sultan of the Toghrmians, known as the Turks. It is a vast, beautiful city surrounded by sturdy walls, and its gardens and orchards extend up to fifteen miles on each side. I have not found the likes of its fruits and trees anywhere else in the world. Two rivers, Abana and Pharpar, flow into the city from Mount Hermon, overlooking the city.

"As for Abana, it runs inside the city and its water is distributed to private houses through canals that pass through markets and alleys. Pharpar, on the other hand, irrigates the gardens outside the city."

“Damascus, the flourishing city, is the residence of Nur Al-Din, the Sultan of the Toghrmians, known as the Turks. It is a vast, beautiful city surrounded by sturdy walls, and its gardens and orchards extend up to fifteen miles on each side



Present-day cityscape of Damascus

CONNECTIVITY POWERHOUSE

Welcome the future while holding a masterpiece of modern technology, the **iPhone 15 series**—which includes the iPhone 15, iPhone 15 Plus, iPhone 15 Pro, and iPhone 15 Pro Max. The latest Apple flagship series switched to the widely embraced USB-C port to ensure you're in sync with global connectivity standards.

The newest iPhone series boasts a stunning 48-megapixel main camera sensor. Every snap you take bursts with detail and clarity, even in low-light conditions, thanks to the enhanced night mode. Bid farewell to manually switching to Portrait mode; your iPhone 15 does it for you. Selfies have never been this delightful, with the front camera's autofocus and portrait lighting making you shine.

But that's not all! The iPhone 15 ensures you stay powered up all day long with its "all-day battery life". And with the second-generation ultra-wideband chip, connecting to other devices is a breeze.



PRICE: Starts at Dhs3,399

WEBSITE: www.apple.com

MULTI-TASKING SIDEKICK



PRICE: Dhs1,170

WEBSITE: www.hihonor.com

Picture a smartphone that's more than just a device; it's your sidekick for a turbocharged life. The **HONOR 90 Lite 5G** packs a punch with its mighty 8GB of RAM and 256GB storage capacity. Whether you're multi-tasking like a pro or capturing memories, this smartphone keeps up with your pace.

The smartphone's camera system is a showstopper, featuring a formidable 100MP main camera, a 5MP wide and depth camera, and a 2MP macro camera. It's like having a professional photographer in your pocket, ensuring every shot is a work of art.

Powered by Android 13-based HONOR MagicOS 7.1, this smartphone can help you conquer the fast-paced world we all live in.

PHOTOGRAPHY PRODIGIES

Rev up your smartphone experience with the **Xiaomi 13T** and the **Xiaomi 13T Pro**. This piece of gizmo gives you a photography studio in your hands, thanks to Leica custom photographic styles under Pro mode. Craft your unique style with personalised settings for Tone, Tonality, and Texture. Your photos become a canvas for your creative vision.

And let's not forget the video capabilities. Capture the world in stunning 8K video, or shoot cinematic 4K videos at all focal lengths.

Under the hood, these devices are powered by the efficient MediaTek Dimensity chipsets, ensuring you have the horsepower to tackle any task. This Xiaomi 13T series will put you in the driver's seat of your digital experience.



PRICE: Starts at Dhs1,403

WEBSITE: www.mi.com

COMPACT CANVAS



PRICE: Dhs143
WEBSITE: www.ugee.com

Looking for a sketchbook that's as versatile as your creativity? The **ugee Q6 Mobile Drawing Tablet** brings that dream to life. It's like having an art studio that fits in your bag, ready for your next burst of inspiration.

This tablet is sleek and lightweight, like a trusty sketchbook, measuring 166x218mm and weighing a mere 249g. Whether you're at home or on the go, your creative space is just a reach away. Its vertical layout is optimised for compatibility with Android phones, tablets, and other mobile devices, providing you with a seamless drawing experience.

The stylus is your magic wand, offering 8192 levels of pressure sensitivity and a tilt function of ± 60 degrees, capturing each stroke with precision. No cables, no charging – just pure artistic freedom.

CLEANING INNOVATOR

Meet the **Bespoke Jet AI**, Samsung's newest smart cleaning tool that works like a dusting and sweeping wizard who understands your home's unique needs.

The AI Cleaning Mode of this intuitive vacuum is where the magic happens. It detects the floor type, analyses the texture, and adjusts suction power and brushroll speed to ensure optimal cleaning. A cleaning butler who knows exactly what to do, indeed!

It also features HexaJet Motor, with up to 280W of suction power. And the battery life? Well, you'll have an endurance athlete with the Bespoke Jet AI on your cleaning team, because it provides up to 100 minutes of cleaning on a single charge.

The Bespoke Jet AI makes cleaning your home a delight. More than just a vacuum, it's your smart cleaning companion.



PRICE: Dhs3,669
WEBSITE: www.samsung.com

ROAD GUARDIAN



PRICE: Dhs1,467
WEBSITE: www.vantrue.com

Hit the road with confidence, knowing the **VanTrue Nexus 5 dashcam** is your ultimate co-pilot for every journey. With it installed on your windshield, you'll have a trusty travel companion who never misses a moment, capturing your adventures and keeping you safe at the same time.

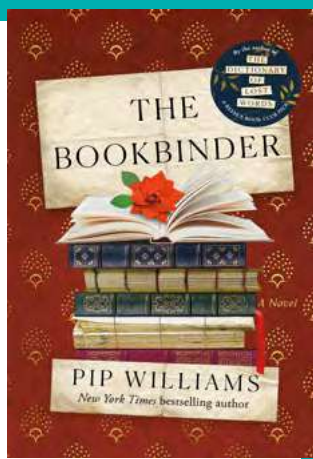
With its 4-channel dash cam setup, including a rear cabin camera, you can be sure that you'll have eyes all around your vehicle. What's more, its Sony's STARVIS 2 sensor ensures your footage is crystal clear, even in the darkest hours. Whether it's scenic road trips or everyday commutes, the Nexus 5 is your vigilant eye on the road.

And here's the icing on the cake: the advanced 10-second pre-recording function captures complete incidents, leaving no details unrecorded. That makes your journeys safer, memorable, and worry-free.



DISCOVER THESE BOOKS THAT CENTRE ON AMPLIFYING UNDERREPRESENTED PERSPECTIVES AND EMPHASISING THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVOCATING FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIETY AND DIVERSE VIEWPOINTS TO SHAPE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

BY JASON RAZMUS



KNOWLEDGE QUEST

TITLE: The Bookbinder

AUTHOR: Pip Williams

PUBLISHER: Ballantine Books

PRICE: Dhs51

In 1914, during World War I, young Peggy and her twin sister Maude work at a book bindery in Oxford. Peggy loves books and reading; she's ambitious and smart, though she's been told her role is just binding books. Maude is content with her work and companions in the bindery.

The arrival of refugees from war-torn Belgium creates ripples in the Oxford community, shifting the lives of the sisters. Peggy begins to envision a different future, one where she can educate herself and utilise her intelligence, not just her manual skills.

This novel delves into themes of knowledge—its creators, accessibility, and the truths that may be overlooked. The author skillfully uncovers a lesser-known historical perspective through the eyes of women.

STORY WEAVERS

TITLE: The Mythmakers

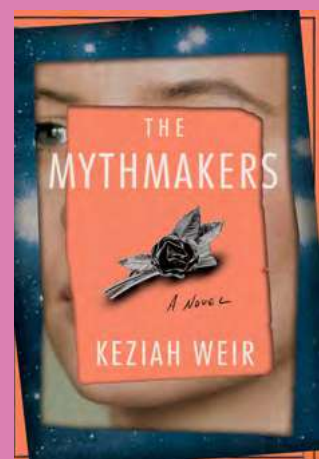
AUTHOR: Keziah Weir

PUBLISHER: S&S/ Marysue Rucci Books

PRICE: Dhs55

Sal Cannon is at a breaking point in her life. Her relationship is falling apart, and her journalism career takes a hit when her article about a playwright turns out to be riddled with errors. Feeling like everything is falling apart, Sal stumbles upon a short story written by Martin, an older author she met years ago. To her surprise, the story is about her and the day they met.

Intrigued, Sal discovers that the story is part of an unpublished novel by Martin. However, she soon learns that Martin has passed away. Eager to escape her own troubled life and read the entire manuscript, Sal sets out to find Martin's family. This becomes complicated when the story of Martin's daughter comes to light. Who has the right to a story, and who gets to be the storyteller?



FRACTURED IDENTITY

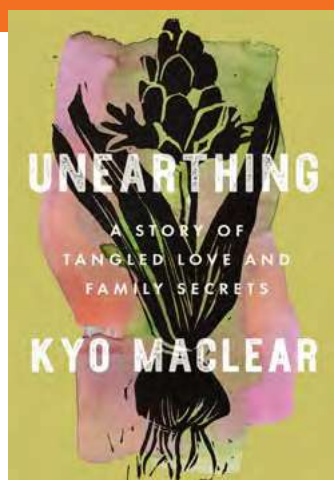
TITLE: They Called Us Exceptional: And Other Lies That Raised Us

AUTHOR: Prachi Gupta

PUBLISHER: Crown

PRICE: Dhs51

Prachi Gupta's family embodied the American dream—a doctor father, a caring mother, and two successful children straddling both the Indian American community and Pennsylvania's white suburbia. However, their sense of belonging hinged on the myth that Asian Americans excel at achieving middle-class ideals, crafting close-knit, ambitious families seemingly invulnerable to life's challenges. Adapting to this ideal often carries a significant hidden cost. In this memoir, Gupta candidly explores the conflict, shame, and isolation experienced while being showcased as the epitome of the American dream, all while privately grappling with traumas hidden from the world.



HIDDEN ROOTS

TITLE: *Unearthed: A Story of Tangled Love and Family Secrets*

AUTHOR: Kyo Maclear

PUBLISHER: Scribner

PRICE: Dhs55

This heartfelt memoir unveils a family secret exposed by a DNA test, unravelling profound lessons about love and family ties. Following the passing of Kyo Maclear's father in December 2018, she received unexpected DNA test results three months later. The results revealed that she was not biologically related to the father who had brought her up. This revelation transformed Maclear into a detective within her own life, piecing together a family mystery and uncovering the story of her biological father. During this journey, she contemplated significant questions—what truly constitutes family and kinship?

This memoir is a compelling and swiftly moving account of inheritance that delves beyond mere genetics. It delves into themes of race, lineage, and our fascination with recreational genetics.

UNITED STRUGGLES

TITLE: *Dream Town: Shaker Heights and the Quest for Racial Equity*

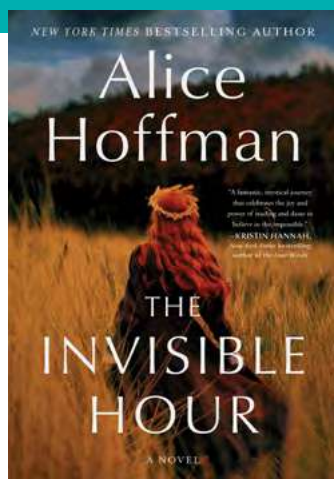
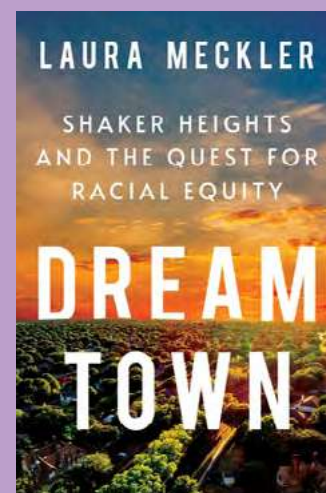
AUTHOR: Laura Meckler

PUBLISHER: Henry Holt and Co.

PRICE: Dhs58

Can a well-meaning group achieve racial integration? In this candid exploration of the ideals and realities of racial integration, Laura Meckler, an award-winning journalist from *The Washington Post*, unveils the story of Shaker Heights, Ohio. Over decades, this town pursued racial integration, but faced persistent challenges in housing, education, and fostering a united community.

Back in the late 1950s, Shaker Heights embarked on pioneering efforts that turned it into a national example of housing integration. By narrating the stories of the people who have built and lived in Shaker Heights, Meckler poses crucial questions: What's needed to fulfil the promise of racial integration? The result is a nuanced and impeccably researched portrayal of a community that, while not without flaws, has achieved more than most. It also provides guidance for other communities seeking to do the same.



TALE OF HOPE

TITLE: *The Invisible Hour*

AUTHOR: Alice Hoffman

PUBLISHER: Atria Books

PRICE: Dhs55

Feeling utterly lost and desperate, Mia Jacob finds solace in the power of words. The classic novel *The Scarlet Letter*, penned almost two centuries ago, oddly mirrors the life of Mia's mother, Ivy, and their existence within the Community—a stifling cult that shuns contact with the outside world and deems books as malevolent. How could this tale resonate so deeply with the pain and sorrow Mia carries within her?

In a journey marked by heartache, love, and the passing of time, Mia must break free from the rigid regulations enforced by the Community. Along this path, she discovers that reading can transport her to distant realms or draw those worlds close, and that both readers and writers hold a mysterious connection. She realises time is more flexible than she ever imagined, and love possesses a strength greater than the shackles that confine you.

Nearly half of global animal species facing decline, study shows

A study led by Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland examined over 71,000 animal species worldwide, revealing that approximately 50 per cent of them are facing decline.

This comprehensive research on biodiversity loss, published in the *Biological Reviews* journal, underscores the severity of the issue—surpassing previous estimates and highlighting the urgent need for action.

Researchers, who analysed data on mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish, and insects, found that the extent of biodiversity loss was more significant than indicated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, also known as the IUCN Red List, which identified 28 per cent of over 150,000 species as threatened with extinction. The new study found that 33 per cent of species



Wildlife gathering at Okaukeujo Waterhole in Namibia

classified as non-threatened by the IUCN are actually declining.

Catherine Finn, lead author of the study, emphasised upon the magnitude of the situation, stating, "Almost half of the animals on Earth for which assessments are available are currently declining." She further noted that many

supposedly non-threatened species are, in fact, experiencing progressive declines.

In addition, the study found that 49 per cent have stable populations, and only a mere 3 per cent are experiencing population increases.

As reported by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), human activities, such as land use, water consumption, and energy use, are significant drivers of biodiversity decline. Agriculture, a major culprit, is responsible for 90 per cent of deforestation and

70 per cent of freshwater consumption globally. Greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, too, pose further threats to species and ecosystems.

The natural process of extinction has been exacerbated—now occurring at 1,000 to 10,000 times faster than before, according to WWF.

Japanese scientists confirm presence of microplastics in clouds

Japanese scientists have confirmed the presence of microplastics in clouds, raising concerns about their potential impact on climate in ways that are not yet fully understood.

Microplastics, which are defined as plastic particles under 5 millimetres, originate from various sources such as industrial effluent, textiles, synthetic car tyres, and personal care products.

In a study published in *Environmental Chemistry Letters*, researchers climbed Mount Fuji and Mount Oyama to collect water samples from the mists enveloping their peaks. Advanced imaging techniques were then employed to assess the physical and chemical



A view of Mt Fuji from Lake Kawaguchi

properties of these samples.

The study identified nine different types of polymers and one type of rubber in the airborne microplastics, with sizes ranging from 7.1 to 94.6 micrometres. Each litre of cloud water contained between 6.7 and

13.9 pieces of these plastic particles. The authors noted, "To the best of our knowledge, this is the first report on airborne microplastics in cloud water."

Lead author Hiroshi Okochi of Waseda University warned that: "If the issue of 'plastic air pollution' is not addressed proactively, climate change and ecological risks may become a reality, causing irreversible and serious environmental

damage in the future."

Okochi highlighted that when microplastics reach the upper atmosphere and are exposed to ultraviolet radiation from sunlight, they degrade, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions.

Antarctic winter sea ice hits 'extreme' record low

The United States National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) reported that sea ice encircling Antarctica reached "extreme" record low levels during this winter in the Antarctic region, raising concerns amongst scientists about the impact of climate change in the southern hemisphere.

Researchers warned that this drastic change could adversely affect creatures such as penguins, which breed and nurture their young on the sea ice. Additionally, the reduction

in sunlight reflection due to decreased white ice could accelerate global warming.

Antarctic sea ice reached its maximum extent on 10th September this year, covering 16.96 million square miles—marking the lowest winter maximum since satellite records commenced in 1979, as stated by the NSIDC.



Antarctic sea ice melting faster than ever before since satellite records commenced in 1979, as stated by the NSIDC

This figure is approximately 1 million square kilometres less than the previous winter record set in 1986.

NSIDC senior scientist Walt Meier stated, "It's not just a record-breaking year; it's an extreme record-breaking year."

The NSIDC noted in a statement that the

figures were preliminary, with a comprehensive analysis scheduled for later release.

An academic article recently published in the journal *Communications Earth and Environment* highlighted climate change as a probable contributing factor. The study demonstrated that rising ocean temperatures, primarily propelled by human-induced greenhouse gas emissions, have played a role in the diminished sea ice levels observed since 2016.

Ariaan Purich, a sea ice researcher at Australia's Monash University and co-author of the study, stressed, "The key message here is that to protect these frozen parts of the world that are really important for a whole number of reasons, we really need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions."

Emperor penguin colonies on brink of extinction due to sea ice decline

Emperor penguin breeding sites in a significant part of Antarctica faced a "total breeding failure" during the 2022 season due to sea ice loss, as revealed in a study published recently by the British Antarctic Survey.

Using satellite imagery, researchers observed that sea ice in the central and eastern Bellingshausen Sea region broke up well before the period when penguin chicks typically develop waterproof feathers, making breeding impossible.

The study, published in the journal *Communications Earth & Environment*, warned that if global warming persists at its current rate, over 90 per cent of emperor penguin colonies in Antarctica could



A colony of emperor penguins on the expanse of Antarctic sea ice

become "quasi-extinct" by the end of the century.

Peter Fretwell, a geographic information scientist at the British Antarctic Survey and the study's lead author, stated, "We have never seen emperor penguins fail to breed,

at this scale, in a single season. The loss of sea ice in this region during the Antarctic summer made it very unlikely that displaced chicks would survive."

Emperor penguins lay their eggs between May and June during the Antarctic winter. It takes about 65 days for the eggs to hatch. However, the chicks don't develop waterproof feathers until December and January, which are the summer months in the Southern Hemisphere.

Peter Fretwell noted, "We know that emperor penguins are highly vulnerable in a warming climate — and current scientific evidence suggests that extreme sea ice loss events like this will become more frequent and widespread."

Turmeric may effectively treat indigestion, study finds



In European and Western countries, doctors often prescribe omeprazole, a protein-pump inhibitor, to assist with excess stomach acid leading to dyspepsia.

Dyspepsia, commonly known as indigestion, encompasses various discomforts in the upper abdomen, like pain, bloating, and the sensation of being

overly full or unwell after eating. These sensations typically manifest in the stomach or chest.

A recent double-blind, placebo-controlled trial compared omeprazole's efficacy with that of the natural spice turmeric, renowned for its antacid properties in Southeast Asia. This study,

published in the journal *BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine*, is the pioneer in directly comparing these two antacid treatments.

The results highlighted that curcumin, the primary component in turmeric, is just as effective as omeprazole in alleviating dyspepsia.

The study, conducted in Thailand, involved 206 participants. The average age was approximately 49.7 years, with a range of plus or minus 11.9 years, and a majority of 73.4 per cent were women. The study spanned 28 days.

The researchers affirmed that curcumin was safe and well-tolerated by all participants. However, while both curcumin and omeprazole were equally effective in easing dyspepsia, combining the two did not yield any additional benefits compared to using either alone.

Dr Krit Pongpirul, the corresponding author of this study and an associate professor at the Faculty of Medicine of Chulalongkorn University, explained: "Turmeric has been utilised by Thai traditional medicine practitioners for alleviating symptoms akin to dyspepsia. It's part of Thailand's National List of Herbal Medicines, yet robust scientific evidence remains crucial."

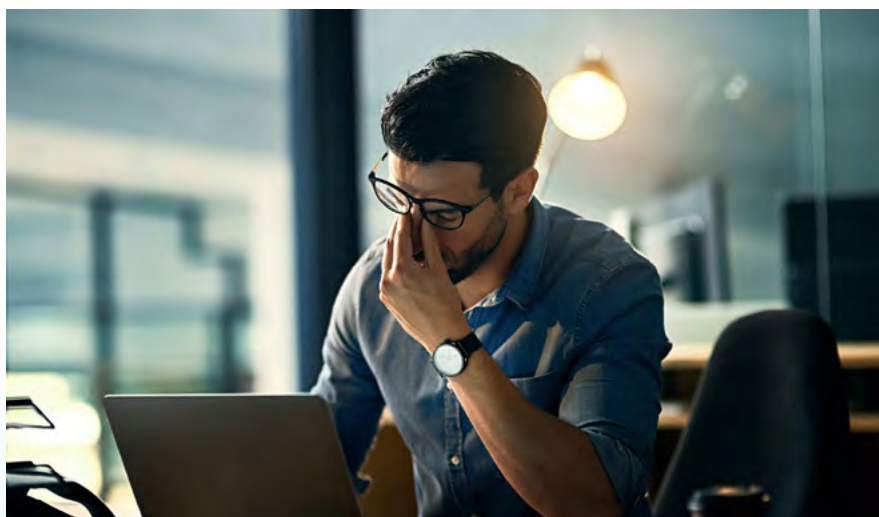
Study says work stress nearly doubles heart disease risk for men

Recent research indicates that men exposed to stressful working conditions with low rewards despite their efforts have nearly twice the risk of heart disease compared to those without these psychosocial stressors.

The study, involving 6,500 white-collar workers in Canada with an average age of 45, examined the combined effects of job strain and effort-reward imbalance at work.

Job strain refers to high job demands and limited control over work decisions, while effort-reward imbalance occurs when employees invest much effort into their work but receive little in return.

The study, published in *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes*, equated the combined effect of job strain and effort-reward imbalance to the impact



of obesity on coronary heart disease risk. The physical and psychological toll of high effort and low reward in the workplace on heart health calls for strategies to manage work-related stress effectively and protect our hearts.

Dr Oliver Guttmann, a consultant cardiologist at The Wellington Hospital (not involved of the study), emphasised upon the negative impact of a low-reward job, highlighting that lack of appreciation

hinders the release of positive substances beneficial for both physical and psychological well-being.

Guttmann pointed out that stress can harm the heart and blood vessels in several ways. When stressed, he explained, the amount of plaque in our heart arteries can increase, making our platelets stickier. This raises the chance of dangerous clots that may block blood flow to our heart.

Almonds prove to be a valuable addition to weight loss diets

People often shy away from consuming calorie-dense nuts like almonds in their pursuit of weight loss. Nevertheless, a recent study has shown that people who included almonds in their diets achieved comparable weight loss results to those who abstained from eating them.

Traditionally, almonds have been deemed a dietary hindrance due to their substantial calorie content — a 100-gram serving contains a hefty 579 calories and almost 50 grams of fat, according to the US Department of Agriculture. However, fresh research featured in the *Obesity* journal suggests that nuts, particularly almonds, could be a remarkable asset for people on a weight loss journey.

This study, reportedly the most extensive of its kind, found that individuals who integrated almonds into their calorie-restricted diets



experienced a significant reduction in body weight, approximately 9.3 per cent.

The study enlisted 140 male and female participants, aged between 24 and 65, all of whom had a body mass index (BMI) within the overweight or obese range. The subjects were randomly allocated to either an almond-enriched diet or a nut-free diet.

Those on the almond-enriched diet received 15 per cent of their daily caloric intake from unsalted, whole, natural California almonds with skins. Meanwhile,

the other group was provided with an equivalent number of calories in the form of carbohydrate-rich snacks, such as rice crackers or fruit cereal bars.

Upon rigorous analysis of the collected data, the research team found that both groups experienced comparable weight loss, approximately 7kg. Furthermore, the participants witnessed enhancements in several key cardiometabolic parameters, including blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and lipid profiles.

Prolonged sitting linked to increased dementia risk



New research has brought to light a striking link between spending more than 10 hours a day sitting and the risk of dementia amongst older people. This study, published in *JAMA*, covered all forms of dementia.

Dementia is a broad term encompassing symptoms arising from unusual changes in the brain. These

changes result in a decline in memory and cognitive abilities, affecting daily life.

The study highlighted that a considerable portion of Americans, approximately half, spend over 9.5 hours each day in a sedentary state. Many previous studies have already demonstrated a clear link between excessive sitting and a decline in

cognitive abilities, alongside alterations in brain structure.

For this particular study, sedentary behaviour was defined as any waking activity with an energy expenditure of ≤ 1.5 METs while sitting or reclining. Examples of such activities included watching TV, driving, and using a computer or gadget.

The researchers gathered and analysed data from an extensive genetic and health database with over 500,000 people aged 60 and above. They have no initial diagnosis of dementia. These participants wore accelerometers on their wrists for a week, and a machine learning analysis was conducted on the collected data to measure sedentary behaviour.

Over an average follow-up period of 6.72 years, the study found that those who remained sedentary for around 10 hours daily faced a significantly higher risk of dementia, a number very close to the US national average of 9.5 hours.

However, the researchers stressed the necessity for more extensive research to fully understand the exact relationship between sedentary behaviour and dementia.

WHAT THE MONTH HAS IN STORE



Aries (March 21 to April 19)

Embrace your fiery spirit, Aries! This month, your energy and enthusiasm will be your best allies. Channel them into your work and personal projects for substantial progress. Stay focused, set clear goals, and let your dynamic personality shine.



Taurus (April 20 – May 20)

Health is wealth, Taurus! This is a great time to prioritise your well-being. Focus on physical exercises, maintain a balanced diet, and indulge in mental relaxation. Small lifestyle changes can yield significant long-term benefits. Nurture your body and mind for a happier you.



Gemini (May 21 – June 20)

Communication is your forte this month, Gemini! Express your thoughts and ideas clearly to avoid any misunderstandings. Engage in constructive conversations that can open up exciting opportunities. Networking and socialising will be fruitful, bringing new perspectives and collaborations your way.



Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

Home is where your heart is, Cancer! This month, focus on strengthening family bonds and creating a harmonious living space. Your nurturing nature will bring joy and stability to your loved ones. Set aside time for self-care, too; a peaceful mind makes for a happy home.



Leo (July 23 – August 22)

Financial matters take the spotlight, Leo! It's time to budget wisely and make informed decisions. Seek advice from professionals if needed. Your efforts towards financial stability will pay off in the long run. Stay disciplined and watch your investments grow.



Virgo (August 23 – September 22)

Self-reflection is your theme, Virgo! Focus on personal growth and self-improvement. Set achievable goals and work towards them. Your analytical mind will guide you to meaningful insights.



Libra (September 23 – October 22)

Socialise and connect, Libra! Your network holds immense potential this month. Engage in meaningful conversations and build valuable connections. Collaborations and sharing of ideas will lead to exciting opportunities, both personally and professionally. Strive for balanced relationships that bring harmony to your life.



Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)

Let creativity flow, Scorpio! Your artistic side is beckoning. Immerse yourself in hobbies or projects that ignite your passion. Express your creativity freely; it's a great time to showcase your talents. Trust your instincts and let your imagination roam free.



Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)

Time for self-reflection, Sagittarius! Focus on personal introspection and mental well-being. Find moments of calm amidst the chaos, and seek inner peace. Reflect on your thoughts and feelings, paving the way for self-discovery and growth.



Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

Capricorn, approach your career with the structured precision of an architect crafting a masterpiece. Set clear goals and work diligently towards them. Your well-being is your foundation; maintain a harmonious work-life balance and safeguard your financial future through prudent investments.



Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)

Feed your intellect, Aquarius! This month is all about education and learning. Dive into a new subject or hobby that piques your interest. Enhance your knowledge and embrace the joy of continuous learning. Challenge your mind and expand your horizons.



Pisces (February 19 – March 20)

Embrace compassion, Pisces! Your caring nature can make a positive difference in the lives of others. Volunteer your time or offer assistance to those in need. Helping others will bring you immense satisfaction and contribute to a better world. Stay true to your compassionate self.



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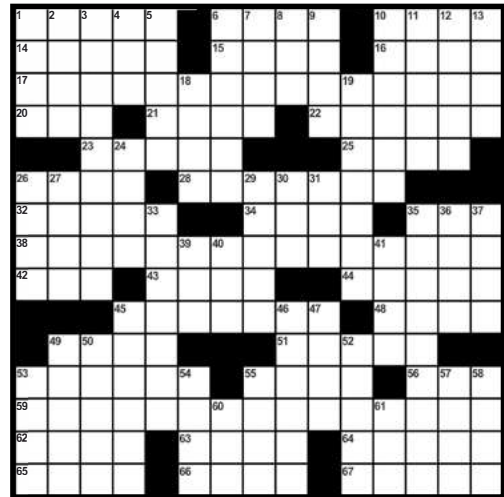
ACROSS

- 1) Place to store heirlooms
- 6) Rowing team, e.g.
- 10) "I know the way!"
- 14) Kitchen decentraliser?
- 15) Start to focus?
- 16) Like a noted ranger
- 17) Case for an Alaskan trooper?
- 20) Dutch_ disease
- 21) Carve in stone
- 22) Carpenter's plane
- 23) Contradict
- 25) Type of pilot
- 26) Bad aroma
- 28) Dry red beverage
- 32) Indian princesses
- 34) Dress for 32-Across
- 35) Mud bath locale
- 38) Censor's action on a weird radio call-in guest?
- 42) Certain female kin, informally
- 43) On the safe side, at sea
- 44) Continental monies
- 45) Neat

- 48) Nota _(Latin phrase)
- 49) Central A/C outlet
- 51) "The Age of Anxiety" poet W.H.
- 53) Jewelled headpieces
- 55) Christiania, once
- 56) Old Pontiac muscle car
- 59) Certain officer area?
- 62) Alternatives to lagers
- 63) Learning method using memorisation
- 64) Lackluster finish
- 65) Foolhardy
- 66) Low poker pair
- 67) More mud bath locales?

DOWN

- 1) Highest point
- 2) Plane or c-clamp, e.g.
- 3) Certain brasses
- 4) Suffixes with "arm" or "road"
- 5) Angler's basket
- 6) ATM button
- 7) Baseball legend Babe
- 8) Biblical ending?
- 9) Trials and tribulations
- 10) Duplicates
- 11) Emotional states
- 12) Start of something
- 13) Not even once, poetically
- 18) Narc chaser?
- 19) Trellis pattern
- 24) "... 15 miles on the_ Canal"
- 26) Eyeballs, to a poet
- 27) Surrealist Salvador
- 29) Daisylike bloom
- 30) "Go team!"
- 31) "... _he drove out of sight"
- 33) Michigan State athlete
- 35) Tanzania wildlife reserve
- 36) Latin American laborer
- 37) Anagram for "peas"
- 39) Up there in years
- 40) Society-page word
- 41) Bumpkin
- 45) Strong inflow
- 46) They come together in a wink
- 47) Time of "comfort and joy"
- 49) Kind of concerto
- 50) Facilitates
- 52) Guarantees the failure of
- 53) Alpine transport



- 54) Arrange in alphabetical order
- 55) "Beetle Bailey" dog
- 57) London gallery
- 58) Aces, sometimes
- 60) "... what?"
- 61) Common house pet

Easy

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

Medium

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

SOLUTIONS

SOLUTIONS FOR THE OCTOBER ISSUE



easy

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

medium

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

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

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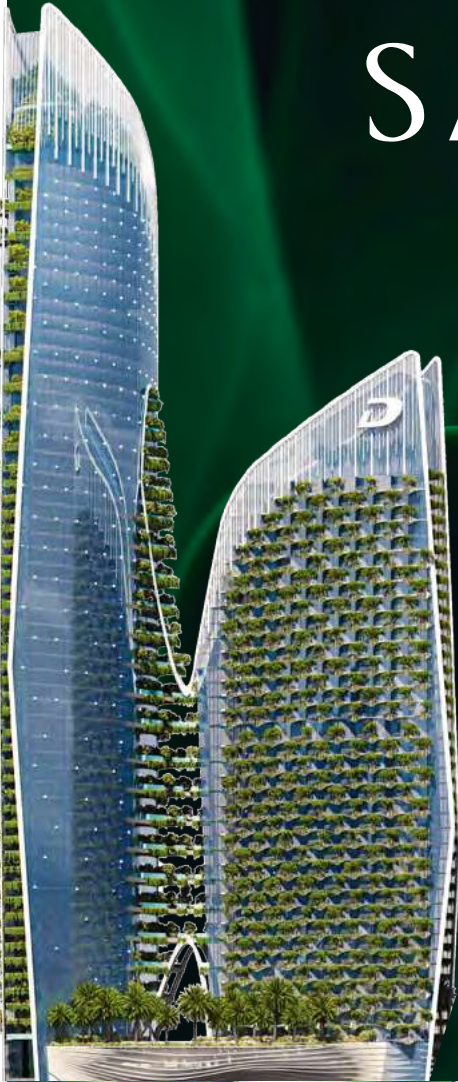
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