

999

SECURITY AND SAFETY FOR ALL

ISSUE 112 MAY 2021

UAE CRACKS
DOWN ON
FAKE DEGREES

YAY OR NAY
FOR VACCINE
SELFIES?

**IN THE
SPOTLIGHT**
A LOOK BACK
AT UAE'S
FIRST HOTEL

***BEWARE:
DON'T FALL
FOR ONLINE
CON-HEARTIST***

UAE	5.000	AED
KSA	5.000	SAR
Kuwait	0.500	DK
Bahrain	0.500	BD
Oman	0.500	OR



IN THIS ISSUE: FIND HELP WITH 999 TO LEARN HOW TO SPOT SIGNS OF DRUG ADDICTION AND TACKLE THEM EARLY

KARAK YOUR WAY

كركك على مزاجك

Just Chill
DRINKS CO.



3 in 1

Authentic Arabic Flavour

نكهة عربية أصيلة

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Startup Mode



The law intends to protect the sanctity of education and the value of a hard-earned degree, and also save the public from unqualified people doing jobs that require skills

Skip this shop window

The UAE economy is expected to see a strong rebound, thanks to the country's excellent work in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic by testing, contact tracing, and vaccinating its citizens and expats. That means the job market will open up again, and people with skills will be in demand. In their zeal to compete and find employment, some people might be tempted to go shopping for readymade qualifications: fake degrees sold by websites that clearly state their merchandise looks like the *real thing*, but *isn't* the real thing. Browsing the goods at that kind of a shop window can be injurious to one's career health.

This month's **999** investigation blows the lid on how easily one might acquire, say, a nursing degree — lots of jobs there, since healthcare is a fast-growing sector. During this pandemic, when trained nurses are taking risks on the healthcare frontline and putting their years of education and experience to work, someone with a fake degree might saunter in, dodge scrutiny, and elbow out a genuine candidate. This is the kind of scam where the buyer is as guilty as the seller, and the UAE government has taken note of that — the Federal National Council has recently passed a draft law that stipulates a fine up to Dhs1 million and/or jail time up to two years for using a bogus degree in any situation. The law intends to protect the sanctity of education and the value of a hard-earned degree, and also save the public from unqualified people doing jobs that require skills.

In our cover story, another kind of fraud is also highlighted in this issue, and it's based on manipulating the most universally experienced emotion: love. The pandemic, in particular, has accentuated loneliness and made many people try to find human connection online. This has caused a spurt in the romance scam, where the fraudster befriends targets spotted on social networks, and then reels them into a fake affair, usually with the intention of financial or sexual blackmail. This issue helps you evade such a trap.

The pandemic has, however, led to some beneficial social trends as well, as this issue highlights — there's the phenomenon of vaccine selfies encouraging hesitant people to take the COVID-19 deterrent jab, though these selfies have caused some heartache as well; and the increase in family reconciliation in view of the enormity of this human crisis.

The role of the family is also getting more emphasis to prevent addiction among young adults. As families spend more time at home now, this presents a great opportunity for parents and elders to connect better with the younger generation, understand how they see life, and nip bad habits in the bud in a collaborative manner before they develop into full-blown drug abuse. Learn how to do so from our very informative article.

And finally, there's a very interesting look at an establishment that was the first proper hotel in the UAE, a rather famous one in its time. This is the BOAC Rest House on the Sharjah Airfield and it has quite a story to share with you.



100 MILLION ACTUATORS

EST. 1975

Belimo sets 100 Million Milestone

Since 1975, Belimo has been committed to providing innovative products that improve comfort, energy efficiency and safety in buildings. In January 2020, we achieved a special milestone by producing our 100 millionth actuator. We want to take this opportunity to thank the industry and our customers for this joint success.



999
Security And Safety For All



**Ministry of Interior
United Arab Emirates**

Khalil Dawood Badran
Head of the Development
Committee of 999 Magazine

Editor-in-Chief
Col. Awadh Al Kindi

Managing Editor
Issam Al Sheikh

Contact Us
Tel: +971 2 4194488
Fax: +971 2 4194499
P.O. Box: 38999
Abu Dhabi – UAE
www.moi.gov.ae

magazine999@moi.gov.ae
Toll Free: 800 9009

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media

PO Box 77910
twofour54
Abu Dhabi, UAE
Tel: 02- 491 7100
editorial@newperspectivemedia.com
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Tel. 8002220 Fax 02-6424842

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CAN YOU IMAGINE THAT THE NURSE GIVING YOU A LIFE-SAVING SHOT ISN'T A NURSE AT ALL, BUT GOT THE JOB WITH A FAKE CERTIFICATE? THE UAE IS CRACKING DOWN HARD ON THIS RACKET. **999** INVESTIGATES HOW IT ALL HAPPENS

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Motorists in the UAE aren't allowed to just dart in and out of traffic lanes. Their proper lane is determined by speed and required exit. **999** reinforces this rule, as well as other related life-saving road regulations, to ensure that no vehicle impedes the traffic flow

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More and more families in the UAE are saying 'yes' to reconciliation during the pandemic — this is a bright ray of light cutting through a bleak situation

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The Internet is reaping a rich harvest of images posted by people who've had their COVID-19 inoculation. **999** looks into this newest social media trend and its impact

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Standing on the Sharjah Airfield and housed within a fortified building, the Boac Rest House offered western hospitality to international visitors

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COVER STORY

DON'T FALL FOR SCAMS OF THE HEART

THE SOCIAL FALLOUT OF THE PANDEMIC — THE DECREASE IN HUMAN CONTACT AND THE PROPORTIONAL INCREASE IN ONLINE INTERACTIONS — HAS MADE THE INTERNET A HUNTING GROUND FOR SCAMMERS. TIME TO READ THE WARNING SIGNS



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Head of the News Centre at Dubai Media Incorporated



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Dr Maysa Rashed
Former Member of the Federal National Council (FNC), and UAE writer



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Dr Samar Al-Shamsi
Internationally respected artist

UAE leaders congratulate Arab, Islamic nations on advent of Ramadan



Dubai, and His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, joined the President in sending similar communications.

For his part, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid penned on Twitter: "We congratulate the people of the UAE and Arab and Muslim peoples on the advent of Ramadan, the month of mercy, goodness and blessings. We ask Allah the Almighty to bless humanity with safety, health and wellness."

Meanwhile, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed tweeted: "We congratulate the UAE people and Arab and Muslim nations on the advent of Ramadan. May the Almighty Allah bless our nation and bestow his mercy upon humanity, and protect it against pandemics and diseases."

PRESIDENT His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan has sent congratulatory messages to the kings, emirs, and presidents of Arab and Islamic nations on the advent of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa wished the

leaders and their people continued good health and well-being, and further progress and prosperity.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of

President pardons 439 inmates ahead of Ramadan

PRESIDENT His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan has ordered the release of 439 inmates serving various sentences in the UAE, ahead of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

The President also pledged to settle the financial obligations of the released prisoners, as part of His Highness'

humanitarian initiatives.

This move reflects the values of forgiveness and tolerance to give the inmates a new lease on life.

In turn, the recipients of the President's pardon are expected to positively contribute to the service of their families and communities.

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa's annual pardon ahead of the Holy Month aims to enhance family cohesion and happiness. It also provides former inmates an opportunity to reflect on their future and return to the righteous path, which will allow them to lead a successful social and professional life.

President restructures Central Bank of UAE's Board

PRESIDENT His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan has issued a federal decree restructuring the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of the UAE (CBUAE), under the chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs.

According to the decree, the CBUAE's Board of Directors shall be reconstituted by the following members: Abdulrahman Saleh Al Saleh as the Vice Chairman; Jassem Mohammad Buatabah Al Zaabi as Vice Chairman; and Khalid Mohammed Salem Balama as Governor of CBUAE.

The Board of Directors will now be composed of Younis Haji Al Khoori, Sami Dhaen Al Qamzi, and Dr Ali Mohammed Bakheet Al Rumaithi.

Established under Federal Law No. 10 of



1980 as a public institution, the CBUAE promotes financial and monetary stability, efficiency and resilience in the financial

system, and the protection of consumers through effective supervision that supports economic growth.

Vice President give 553 inmates a second chance at life



HIS Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has ordered the release of 553 prisoners of different nationalities from Dubai's correctional and punitive establishments, in time for the Holy Month of Ramadan.

The benevolent gesture was part of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid's humanitarian initiative to give inmates a second chance in life and help strengthen

family cohesion.

Attorney General of Dubai Chancellor HE Essam Issa Al Humaidan said this move reflects the Vice President's keenness to reunite the pardoned individuals with their families during the Holy Month. This, he added, will allow the inmates to be reintegrated into the community.

Dubai Public Prosecution, in collaboration with Dubai Police, carried out the legal procedures to implement the order.

VP's '100 Million Meals' drive reaches target ahead of schedule

UNDER the initiative of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the record-breaking '100 Million Meals' campaign launched on the advent of Ramadan has reached its full target donations well ahead of schedule.

As of press time, the food drive has already raised a whopping Dhs100 million from more than 185,000 donors.

Within the first hours after the unveiling of the food drive—dubbed as one of the biggest campaigns of this kind in the region—donations within the UAE and from many parts of the globe began pouring in to make the campaign's mission a reality. It was launched to provide 100 million meals as part of the UAE's unwavering humanitarian efforts.

For every Dhs1 donation, a meal can reach a person in need in 30 targeted



countries including Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Pakistan, Egypt, Palestine, Bangladesh, Tanzania, and Angola.

Food parcels are being distributed in an

integrated network of collaborations with 12 food banks in the region, such as the United Nations' World Food Programme and the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Humanitarian and Charity Establishment.

Vice President affirms UAE is 100% ready for Expo 2020 Dubai

HIS Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, affirmed that the country is all set to host the much-awaited Expo 2020 Dubai.

This came following the successful holding of a large-scale simulation drill participated in by a total of 72 groups from federal and local security departments.

"As part of the preparations for Expo 2020, 72 working teams from federal and local authorities completed a joint strategic exercise to simulate the Expo in October. We can say that the UAE is 100 per cent prepared for the largest cultural event in the world," the Vice President tweeted.

The exercise was attended by His Highness Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al

Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, and Her Excellency Reem bint Ibrahim Al Hashemy, Minister of State for International Cooperation and Director General of the Expo 2020 Dubai Office.

The forthcoming global event is expected to attract millions of visitors from across the world over six months.

Mohamed bin Zayed shares Ramadan greetings for UAE, Arab, Islamic nations



HIS Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, congratulated President

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, Their Highnesses Supreme Council Members, Rulers of the Emirates, and crown princes, on the advent of Ramadan, wishing them all continued good health, wellbeing and happiness.

His Highness also extended warm greetings to the UAE citizens and residents, expressing best wishes to the frontline heroes, including medical frontliners, security and emergency teams, volunteers, as well as other field workers.

"The Holy Month of Ramadan is now upon us and we welcome it with great joy. This is a time for patience, contemplation

and compassion and we pray for God's mercy and kindness," the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince tweeted.

Meanwhile, His Highness also congratulated the presidents and kings of Arab and Islamic nations on the religious occasion, wishing them good health and happiness, and praying to Allah Almighty that security, peace, stability and prosperity prevail in their respective countries. Amongst them were HRH King Salman bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques; Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman; and King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein of Jordan.

The Arab leaders reciprocated the same good wishes for the UAE under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

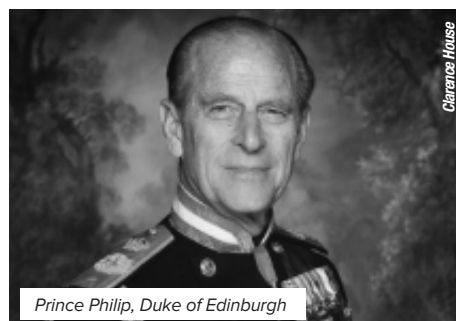
Abu Dhabi Crown Prince offers condolences to British royal family

HIS Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, has conveyed his condolences to HRH Charles, Prince of Wales, the Heir Apparent to the British throne, over the sad passing of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Through a phone call, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed conveyed the sincerest

condolences of President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan to Her Majesty Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom, and wished for Her Majesty's continued good health and wellbeing.

The Prince of Wales expressed thanks and appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed for his sincere sympathy toward their family.



Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince commends UAE cop for helping elderly motorist



Sergeant Ahmed Hassan Al Hammadi of Sharjah Police (L) praised for helping Zein Al Abideen (R), whose car had broken down on the road

HIS Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, has

praised a UAE police officer for his exceptional actions in assisting an elderly driver whose car had broken down along a Sharjah road.

Sergeant Ahmed Hassan Al Hammadi, who is part of Sharjah Police, helped the elderly man named Zein Al Abideen.

"Zein Al Abideen described how responsibility and empathy are the values of our nation, and Sergeant Ahmed Al Hammadi demonstrated these values through his exceptional actions," His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed said. "I would like to thank both of them and all those serving on the frontlines – we salute you."

Al Abideen was driving along Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Road when his vehicle broke down on Al Houm Bridge, near the Sharjah Golf and Shooting Club. Within two minutes, Sergeant Al Hammadi came to the rescue. Not only did he assist in diverting oncoming traffic on the busy highway, but he also contacted roadside assistance to transport the vehicle to a garage in Ajman. The police also paid for the cost of transporting the vehicle.

Vice President assigns Saif bin Zayed to lead new national programme

HIS Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has assigned His Highness Lt General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, to spearhead the newly-formed National Behavioural Reward Programme—making it a part of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Possibilities.

The programme aims to incentivise positive behaviour through a point-based system that can be used in payments for government services, and is a first-of-its-kind initiative in behavioural science, focusing on three main pillars – homeland, society, and family. Over 90 behaviours were selected for the strategy.

“Encouraging positive behaviour contributes to improving the quality of life and achieving societal happiness. Our inherent values have always been a hallmark of the Emirati personality,” said His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid.

As part of the programme, the Vice President also launched a smart app for the Behavioural Reward Programme and witnessed the



HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai (R), and HH Lt General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior (L)

graduation of the first batch of the Professional Diploma in Behavioral Economics, one of the programme's initiatives.

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's seeds of good deeds praised by Interior Minister



FOLLOWING a tweet of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander



of your guidance and patronage, Sir. The noble morals and human values you planted and cultivated in your people and in those who live

of the UAE Armed Forces, commending a UAE police officer, His Highness Lt General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, has penned a touching post for his brother.

“These are the fruits

in the UAE are values for a better humanity,” tweeted the Interior Minister, in reply to His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed.

“Your patronage is a medal all employees of the Ministry of Interior proudly wear, and they will be there to implement your directives in order to achieve your ambitions and aspirations, God willing,” His Highness Sheikh Saif added.

The Abu Dhabi Crown Prince earlier lauded the conduct of Sergeant Ahmed Hassan Al Hammadi, officer at Sharjah Police, for assisting an elderly motorist in moving his car from the middle of the highway when it had broken down, and even paying for the cost of transporting the vehicle.

Saif bin Zayed attends Expo 2020 Dubai's strategic simulation drill

HIS Highness Lt General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, attended a large-scale strategic training drill carried out by the Dubai Police General Headquarters and Expo 2020 Dubai Office, along with their strategic partners, at the site and Al Maktoum International Airport.

The simulation drill was also held in the presence of Her Excellency Reem bint Ibrahim Al Hashemy, Minister of State for International Cooperation and Director-General for the Expo 2020 Dubai Office.

Amongst the drills shown were the various smart technologies to be used in ensuring security and safety during the entire course of

the global event.

The Interior Minister was briefed about the different training stages aimed at leveraging security performance and boosting emergency response.

For her part, Al Hashemy said that the successful outcome of the simulation drill affirmed that the UAE is all set to host the 'World's Greatest Show', due to open in October this year. She conveyed her sincere appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Saif



HH Lt General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior (3rd from L), with HE Reem bint Ibrahim Al Hashemy, Minister of State for International Cooperation and Director-General for the Expo 2020 Dubai Office (2nd from L), and Lt General Abdullah Khalifa Al Marri, Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police (last from L)

bin Zayed Al Nahyan for his constant support and directives to ensure across-board cooperation amongst all federal and local security departments in the country for the Expo.

Al Sha'far attends GCC meet on multi-layered security



LT General Saif Abdullah Al Sha'far, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Interior, represented the Ministry at the 11th virtual meeting of Undersecretaries of Ministries of Interior in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Participants reviewed several reports and recommendations received from security agencies and specialised committees. They also discussed security efforts in the GCC to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as GCC members' readiness to take part in the World Expo, to be held in the UAE. The attendees adopted recommendations and decisions to submit to the Ministers of Interior during their next meeting.

Al Raisi meets Chilean envoy to bolster security cooperation

MAJOR General Dr Ahmed Nasser Al Raisi, Inspector General of the Ministry of Interior, had a meeting at the Ministry headquarters with HE Jorge Daccarett, Ambassador of the Republic of Chile to the UAE.

A number of issues of common interest were discussed as well as ways to step up security cooperation and coordination between the UAE and Chile.



999 Magazine honours Zayed Al Khair camp sponsor



EMIRATI businessman Khalifa Ahmed Al Suwaidi was honoured by **999 Magazine** for sponsoring the Zayed Al Khair camp in cooperation with Noor Dubai and the magazine as its media partner. The camp addressed the needs of those suffering from visual impairment.

Colonel Awadh Saleh Al Kindi, Editor-in-Chief of **999 Magazine**, presented an appreciation shield and certificate to Khalifa Al Suwaidi at the magazine's headquarters in Abu Dhabi. Al Kindi also conveyed the regards and appreciation of His Excellency Khalil Dawood Badran, Chairman of **999 Magazine** Development Committee, to the businessman for the latter's humanitarian gesture.

Federal Traffic Council rolls out new awareness drive

THE Ministry of Interior, represented by the Federal Traffic Council, rolled out the 2nd unified traffic awareness campaign for 2021, under the slogan 'Safe Driving, Necessity and Objective'.

The campaign, which runs till the end of June, is part of the traffic sector's initiatives to enhance

road safety and minimise accidents, reducing deaths to 3 cases per 100,000 residents by 2021.

Major General Engineer Advisor Mohamed Saif Al Zafin, Assistant Commander-in-Chief for Operations Affairs of Dubai Police, and Chairman

of the Federal Traffic Council, indicated that this campaign embodies the Ministry of Interior strategy for safer roads. He said that it was designed to ensure the highest levels of traffic safety for all road users and promote awareness on the damage caused by traffic accidents.

Al Sharifi inspects Capital Police Directorate

MAJOR General Maktoum Ali Al Sharifi, Director General of Abu Dhabi Police, made an inspection tour and was briefed on the most important development plans, initiatives, and operational mechanisms implemented by the Capital Police Directorate to enhance security following the best international practices.

Al Sharifi was accompanied by Major General Mohammad Suhail Al Rashidi, Director of Criminal Security, Colonel Hamad Abdullah Al Neyadi, Director of the Capital Police Directorate, and directors and heads of departments in the directorate.

He checked the readiness and plans put in place, and the efforts made to improve the process of police work. In addition, Al Sharifi expressed his appreciation for the distinguished efforts



Al Sharifi, 2nd from right, during the tour

of the affiliates in performing their duties, and also listened to the positive feedback from the public at the Customer Happiness Centre about the services provided to them.

Al Sharifi stressed the leadership's

directives to develop police work and deepen the sense of security and safety amongst members of society, to improve public well-being through continuous work, training, institutional excellence, and culture of loyalty.

Al Khaili lauds speedy services of Vehicle Leasing Dept



Al Khaili, centre, chats with a customer

MAJOR General Khalifa Muhammad Mubarak Al Khaili, Director of the Finance and Services Sector at Abu Dhabi Police, affirmed the force's keenness to implement the directives of the wise leadership to improve the services provided to the public and make them happy.

Al Khaili was briefed on the development plans and workflow in the Department of Vehicle Leasing, as part of the 'Visits of Leaders in the Field' initiative. He listened to an explanation of the services and efforts exerted in the prompt completion of tasks and the happiness of customers, and employee efforts towards service development initiatives.

He was briefed about the development proposals and their importance in maintaining speedy transactions per the best standards.

Dhahi Khalfan leads meeting of Drug Control Council



LT General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim, Deputy Chairman of Police and Public Security in Dubai, and Chairman of the Anti-Narcotics Council, chaired the fourth meeting of the Council for the

year 2021.

The meeting was attended by Brigadier Saeed Abdullah Al Suwaidi, Director General of the Federal Anti-Narcotics Department, and Deputy Chairman of the Council, as well as heads of the Council's Supreme National Committees and a number of officials, senior officers, and directors of drug control across the UAE.

The Council reviewed new trends in drug trading and trafficking schemes, and the new techniques of smuggling, trafficking, and peddling of narcotics.

Dr Hamad Al Ghafri, Director General of the National Rehabilitation Centre (NRC), and Chairman of the Supreme National Committee for Treatment and

Rehabilitation, and Social Inclusion, reviewed the committee's strategic plans, objectives, as well as the system of investigation and monitoring of drug abuse trends and appropriate solutions.

The Council approved the formation of a national committee concerned with social inclusion, which has a major role in limiting relapse or recurrence after treatment. It also discussed proposals to celebrate the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held on June 26 each year.

Dhahi Khalfan called for highlighting the UAE's fight against drugs on this day. In addition, the slogan 'We Are Committed, Oh Homeland. Drugs Are A Scourge' was adopted for the initiative.

Al Shamsi spearheads Permanent High Command meeting

MAJOR General Saif Al Zari Al Shamsi, Commander-in-Chief of Sharjah Police, lead the 4th meeting of the Permanent High Command Committee of Sharjah Police, in the presence of Brigadier Abdullah Mubarak bin Amer, Deputy Commander-in-Chief, and members of the Permanent High Command Committee.

The meeting discussed the decisions and recommendations of the previous meeting; the results of the work environment quality questionnaire for the year 2020; the digital development project to improve the efficiency and capabilities of employees; the project to reduce speeds on Sharjah roads during fog season; the output of the higher



leadership during the first quarter of 2021; and other topics on enhancing security and safety in the community.

Al Shamsi extended his appreciation to

the attendees for their efforts, calling upon everyone to maintain the successes achieved that contributed to greater efficiency in police work.

Sultan Al Nuaimi conducts virtual inspection

MAJOR General Sheikh Sultan bin Abdullah Al Nuaimi, Commander-in-Chief of Ajman Police, inspected the Department of Foreign Police Stations and the Manama Comprehensive Police Station via video-conferencing, in the presence of Colonel

Ali Jaber Al Shamsi, Deputy Director of the Comprehensive Police Centres Department, and Lt Colonel Badr Ali Al Muhairi, Head of the Traffic and Patrols Department in the Comprehensive Police Centres Department.

Al Nuaimi reviewed the data from

indicators that support the National Agenda and praised the distinguished efforts of all the officers and employees involved. He also spoke of the necessity of sustaining the development of services provided to the public.

Al Marri commends community volunteers for Dubai Police

LT General Abdullah Khalifa Al Marri, Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police, met with a group of volunteers who participated in Dubai Police's community initiatives.

Al Marri affirmed that the UAE promotes a culture of volunteerism, in order to achieve sustainable development and to ensure a better future. Volunteering, he said, had many positive effects on individuals, families, and society. He added that Dubai Police had always been working to cultivate the principle of social responsibility.

The official also thanked all the volunteers who had joined the Dubai Police Volunteer Platform in 2020, which had 107 volunteering opportunities. Of this number, 14,512 volunteers from 82 nationalities participated, including employees of Dubai Police and members



of the public.

He praised their efforts and desire to volunteer, which reflect their belief in the role of volunteering in the process of development and prosperity of society.

Captain Eng. Khalifa Al Roum, Director

of the Dubai Police Volunteer Platform, cited that the number of volunteer hours registered on the platform last year totalled 89,758 hours, which could be considered an accomplishment of Dubai Police in the field of humanitarian work.

Al Kaabi outlines Ramadan safety steps

MAJOR General Mohammed Ahmed bin Ghanim Al Kaabi, Commander-in-Chief of Fujairah Police, and Chairman of the Local Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Team of Fujairah, said underscored the importance of COVID-19 preventive measures adopted by the Team during Ramadan to make the community

safe and secure.

The slew of measures included preventing family gatherings and visits; prohibiting the establishment of iftar tents; preventing the distribution of iftar meals in front of homes or setting up iftar tables in front of mosques; and restricting the distribution of meals to the official

charitable bodies accredited in the country, according to protocol.

Al Kaabi added that the instructions also included avoiding gatherings in places related to Ramadan activities, such as crowded markets and shops, and a ban on commercial Ramadan tents and hookahs served at restaurants and other tourist places.

UAQ Civil Defence douses warehouse fire

THE firefighting teams of Umm Al Quwain Civil Defence Department brought under control a blaze in a warehouse in the Umm Al Tha'oub Industrial Area.

No casualties were reported, and 40 people were evacuated. This operation

was carried out in a highly collaborative manner, as civil defence worked with several other government agencies to prevent further damage.

Lt Colonel Ahmed Salem bin Shaqwi, Acting Director of the Umm Al Quwain Civil Defence Department, said that the

firefighting teams dealt with the fire with high accuracy and professionalism. He stressed that the task was accomplished thanks to the cooperation from Umm Al Quwain Police, National Ambulance, Union Water and Electricity Company, and Umm Al Quwain Municipality.

RAK Police warn on Ramadan mishaps

THE Traffic and Patrols Department of Ras Al Khaimah Police warned motorists against driving at high speeds minutes before iftar time, to ensure their own safety and that of other road users.

This warning came after the traffic teams monitored, since the beginning of the blessed month of Ramadan, vehicles rushing around before the Maghrib prayer, as some people drove too fast to reach

home before the exact time for iftar.

The police force also stressed that the mix of fasting, irregular sleep patterns, and high temperature can have an adverse effect on the drivers' concentration and reaction time.

1st

The UAE's leading role in the region as the 1st country in the Middle East to have initiated local production of the vaccine against COVID-19. Made possible by the newly minted joint venture between China's Sinopharm CNBG and UAE-based leading technology company G42, the country has now started the manufacturing of Hayat-Vax (Hayat means life in Arabic), the first homegrown COVID-19 vaccine in the region.

8 billion

The number of vaccine doses that the UAE targets to transport across the world over the next two years through the partnership between Abu Dhabi's HOPE Consortium and Dubai Vaccine Logistics Alliance, bolstering the COVAX global vaccine sharing scheme.

2 billion

The number of needles and syringes being manufactured in Abu Dhabi for the COVAX Facility, a global effort aimed at equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. This number is 25 per cent of all the needles and syringes that COVAX needs to produce for its COVID-19 vaccine distribution efforts.

1st

The ranking of the UAE in the digital growth index recently released by the Middle East Business Intelligence (aka MEED). According to the latest MEED's Digital Transformation Index, the UAE tops the overall digital ecosystem in the Middle East and North Africa region in terms of physical infrastructure, cybersecurity, digital regulation, and digital business environment.

1st

The UAE's ranking in the Middle East region in the latest Kearney's 2021 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Confidence Index. The country jumped four places to 15th position globally in this index thanks to its robust business environment and other economic factors most important to investors.

BE IN THE LOOP

SAIF BIN ZAYED ATTENDS VIRTUAL GRADUATION OF PROFESSIONAL TALENT MANAGEMENT TRAINEES



HH Lt General Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior

His Highness Lt General Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, witnessed the virtual graduation ceremony of a number of Ministry's officers from a training course that certified them as trainers for staff/employees who possess special talents and skills, under the Professional Talent Management Programme. HH Sheikh Saif bin Zayed congratulated and encouraged them to utilise their creative energies, in line with the directives of the wise leaders to position the UAE as a global model for pioneering governmental work based on knowledge, advanced science and modern applications, and creativity.

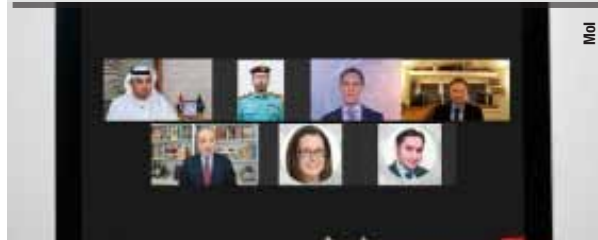
AL SHA'FAR WITNESSES GRADUATION OF 15TH CLASS OF NATIONAL SERVICE RECRUITS



During the graduation of the 15th National Service Recruits, Lt General Saif Abdullah Al Sha'far, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, honoured the outstanding graduates

Lt General Saif Abdullah Al Sha'far, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Interior (MoI), witnessed the graduation ceremony of the 15th Class of National Service Recruits, which was held at the training camp of the UAE Armed Forces in the Manama area, Ajman. The graduates presented an exhibition of the internal security operations, under the supervision of the MoI, ensuring their preparedness to participate in providing safety and security in Expo 2020 Dubai events.

MOI TAKES PART IN CERTIFIED FRAUD EXAMINERS 2021 CONFERENCE




Major General Dr Ahmed Nasser Al Raisi, Inspector General at the MoI and Member of the Interpol Executive Committee for Asia (1st from L), along with an esteemed panel of fraud risk and prevention experts

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) participated in the 6th Annual Conference of Certified Fraud Examiner in the Middle East 2021, which was held remotely. It was attended by Major General Dr Ahmed Nasser Al Raisi, Inspector General at the MoI and Member of the Interpol Executive Committee for Asia; Mohamed Al Quwaiz, Chairman of the Saudi Capital Market Authority; Preet Bahrara, Senior Law Analyst for CNN, who is also former US Attorney General for the Southern District of New York; along with Pamela Barnum, strategic and body language expert. The conference aims to limit the risks and damages resulting from fraudulent operations, by raising awareness and enforcing deterrent approaches.

Fifty years in the service of the nation



We extend our best wishes to
the  Magazine issued by
the Ministry of Interior on an occasion
The Magazine's golden jubilee

 **FIVE C TECHNOLOGY**

UAE NEWS BULLETIN

POLICE NEWS, PEOPLE, NUMBERS AND EVENTS

ABU DHABI



The Abu Dhabi Commercial Court ordered a bank to return Dhs80,000 worth of loan interest wrongfully collected from a customer. The claimant had taken a Dhs4.5 million loan from the bank for the construction of eight villas. She had paid off the loan but had been charged more than the agreed amount as interest, the court found.

AJMAN



Around 16,000 packed items of prohibited and expired tobacco and shisha products, amounting to Dhs1.5 million, were confiscated from an unlicensed warehouse in the Al Jurf industrial area in Ajman. The seized products were found to be containing hazardous chemicals and did not bear tax stamps.

DUBAI

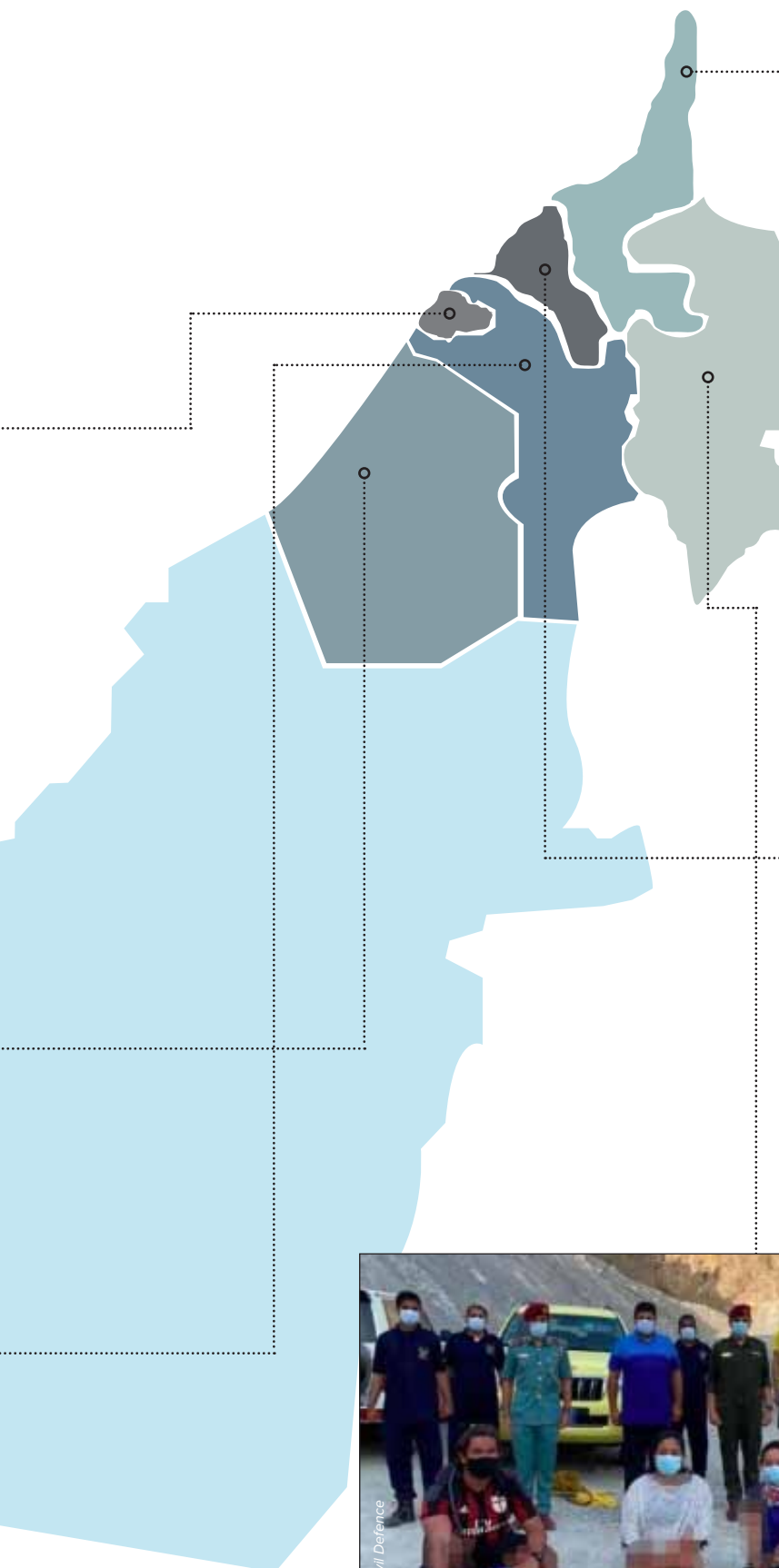


Doctors who botched up a young woman's surgical procedure, along with the centre where they did the operation, have been ordered to jointly pay Dhs10 million in compensation to the victim. Amongst those who were convicted by a Dubai civil court in the medical malpractice case were a surgeon, an anaesthesiologist, and an anaesthesia technician.

SHARJAH



A four-year-old boy in Sharjah choked to death after an electric wire got tangled around his neck while playing at home in the Al Taawun area. The boy was rushed to the hospital but didn't survive. The authorities called for a forensic investigation since it was a case of unnatural death. Police are constantly reminding parents/guardians to supervise toddlers, as they are prone to home accidents.



RAS AL KHAIMAH

2



A WhatsApp message saved two young women in Ras Al Khaimah from possible prostitution. A group of recruiters, who turned out to be human traffickers, initially lured them to apply as masseuses. Before being transported to a prostitution den, the victims were able to send a distress message to RAK Police, who swung into action immediately and rescued them. The three members of the human trafficking gang were each sentenced to five years in prison, followed by deportation.

UMM AL QUWAIN

20



At least 20 people were evacuated by Umm Al Quwain Civil Defence after a fire spread through a warehouse in the Umm Al Tha'oub Industrial area. No casualties were reported, and firefighters put out the blaze in record time. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

FUJAIRAH

Fujairah Civil Defence, in cooperation with Fujairah Police, rescued three expats who had lost their way while hiking in Dibba's Al-Ghub area. After hours of search, they found the hikers, who were then rescued and handed over to National Ambulance to receive the necessary care. The authorities remind people to make



Fujairah Civil Defence

3



DON'T FALL FOR SCAMS OF THE HEART

THE SOCIAL FALLOUT OF THE PANDEMIC — THE DECREASE IN HUMAN CONTACT AND THE PROPORTIONAL INCREASE IN ONLINE INTERACTIONS — HAS MADE THE INTERNET A HUNTING GROUND FOR SCAMMERS. TIME TO READ THE WARNING SIGNS

BY K NIVEDITA

Find a Match

As the novel coronavirus pandemic continues, it takes no stretch of the imagination to see people staying absorbed in their online world. And in a society where people do everything digitally anyway, means lots of searches for Internet relationship in the hope of warmth and happiness. However, given the global trend of digital fraud, these searches and the resultant 'connections' are more likely to lead to heartache and financial suffering.

ROMANCE SCAM AT A GLANCE

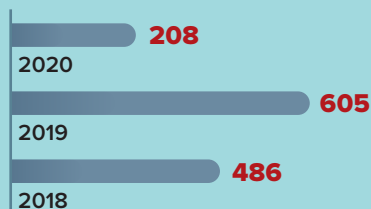
3 OUT OF 6

The number of people in the UAE who experienced various cyber threats after sharing their personal information to their 'online partners', according to Kaspersky Lab's 2018 study

430

The number of cyber-crime cases registered during the first three quarters of 2020, as per Abu Dhabi Police

CASES OF ONLINE BLACKMAIL IN ABU DHABI



Source: Abu Dhabi Police

Take the case of the woman featured in an Abu Dhabi Police video released in late March 2021. She was single and so was the man she met on a social network. He gained her trust, and she began sending him photos and videos. Then came the blackmail, turning their tale into a full-on horrifying story.

In the police video, the woman, whose face was blurred to protect her privacy, recalled the extortion. The man began squeezing her socially and financially to the point that she lived in fear. He threatened to kill her if she broke off the relationship. The victim retreated into a shell and started skipping work. Finally, a colleague checked up on her. "[A colleague] advised me to go to Abu Dhabi Police's social support department. I am surprised by how quickly and secretly they handled my situation and

my privacy," said the victim. "My message to every woman is this: you must not trust any person or message you come across on social media," she cautioned.

As for the culprit, he could be jailed for up to two years and be fined between Dhs250,000 and Dhs500,000, according to UAE law. If the blackmail involved an indecent and dishonourable act, the punishment could be increased to 10 years in prison.

The woman fell prey to the 'romance scam', an old crime that authorities in the UAE were closely monitoring during the pandemic, when people shut themselves in their houses and limited their outdoor activities to avoid COVID-19 infection. In 2018, a survey from cybersecurity company Kaspersky Lab revealed that 50 per cent of people (3 out of 6) seeking online relationships in the UAE also



An Arab woman sought Abu Dhabi Police's help after she was blackmailed by a man she met online

Abu Dhabi Police

“We get a number of cases that include romance scam. The cases involve both genders, but most of them are women. The pandemic has affected the numbers since it made people more attached to their computer screen



DR HASSAN ELHAIS

Lawyer at
Al Rowaad Advocates

fell prey to various cyber threats, such as IT security issues after sharing their personal information.

As the bulk of normal life went online, smooth-talking cyber-crooks began picking targets. Many victims were snared — there were 208 cases of alleged online blackmail between January and September 2020 in Abu Dhabi alone. But this number, according to Abu Dhabi Police, was significantly less than the 605 cases in 2019 and 486 in 2018 in the emirate, which means that the police are cleaning the worldwide web of such elements and that potential targets have become smarter about criminals posing as heartthrobs on social media.

The 208 cases formed almost half of the total 430 cyber-crime cases registered during the first three quarters of 2020 in Abu Dhabi. The authorities are

continuing with their online patrolling and crackdown. “The pandemic, which resulted in an increased use of the Internet, took the figure [romance scam] to slightly more than 200,” said Counsel Abdullah Al Mansouri, Chief Prosecutor at the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department. “In many cases, the extortionist would pose as an attractive woman and share photos and videos to entice unsuspecting male victims.”

The official added that there are two things that blackmailers were usually after — sexual favours and money — in return for not leaking private photos, videos, and voice recordings of the victims. “In one case, a woman paid the blackmailer large sums of money for an entire year in the hope that he would eventually go away. He did not. A blackmailer always raises the demand and never stops,” said Al Mansouri.

Dr Hassan Elhais, lawyer at Al Rowaad Advocates, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, told 999: “It is very unfortunate that we get a number of cases that include romance scam. The cases involve both genders, but most of them are women. The pandemic has affected the numbers since it made people more attached to their computer screen.”

Law enforcement in other emirates, too, has been combing the Internet for online relationship fraudsters. Police in Dubai and Sharjah have issued warnings to men and women looking for the perfect partner to be wary of fake matchmaking services online.

A senior officer in Sharjah Police told the media that they had detected a number of questionable social media accounts — these had 40,000 to 80,000 followers — that acted as matchmaking services in the UAE. “These centres [offering matchmaking services] ask clients to provide details such as photographs, job profile, academic qualifications, and family background. In a number of cases, there is no guarantee that this information will not be used for blackmail or some other crime. In addition, the matchmaking centres also charge clients a hefty sum for their services,” said the officer, adding that several couples interacted freely in the comments section of these sites, without any care about safeguarding their privacy.

TRUST THE COPS

Police have found engaging ways to draw attention to the peril. In February 2021, Abu Dhabi Police launched the ‘Be Careful’ campaign, in which a woman, enacting the role of a victim, has an



“Abu Dhabi Police launched the ‘Be Careful’ campaign in February 2021 to warn people against the romance scam

خلك حذر
BE CAREFUL
aman@adpolice.gov.ae
TOLL FREE **8002626** الرقم المجاني
SMS **2828** الرسائل النصية

online conversation with a stranger who compliments her. Won over, she is keen to please him when he asks her to share a few photographs of hers. The stage is set for the man's next move: blackmail. The video ends with information on contacting the police — aman@adpolice.gov.ae; toll-free number **8002626** and SMS to **2828**. What makes the work of the police harder is that a lot of people who are being blackmailed are wary of approaching law enforcement, as they're afraid of being put to shame. However, police officials in Abu Dhabi offer the assurance that the victims would be protected.

In case you've walked into the trap set by a blackmailer, you should let the police handle the criminal instead of negotiating a deal by yourself. If the blackmailer has incriminating information concerning you, they're not going to back away easily. The police are equipped to deal with such criminals. In February 2021, the Abu Dhabi Appeals Court heard a case in which a man stood in the dock for blackmailing a woman over her private photographs. He asked her for Dh\$700,000 to not post the photos all over social media, and she complied. When he continued to threaten her, the woman filed a complaint with the police. She gave them evidence in the form of her online chats with the blackmailer as well as receipts of the money she had transferred to him. The police arrested the accused, charged him, and put him on trial. The court not only ordered him to return the Dh\$700,000 he had taken from the woman but also to pay her an additional sum of Dh\$750,000 as compensation for



“

In case you've walked into the trap set by a blackmailer, you should let the police handle the criminal instead of negotiating a deal by yourself

damages. Now, what would've happened if the woman had not gone to the police? The blackmail would likely be continuing to this day, according to the police.

Dr Elhais advised people who have been scammed in an online romance, especially if they are expats who don't speak Arabic, must trust the police and authorities that they will be able to get their rights back when if come forward.

THEY GO CATFISHING

In February 2021, an article published online by Vox Media and written by American journalist Rebecca Heilweil informed readers that 'Online romance scammers stole more hearts (and money) in 2020 than 2019'. The reason was the heightened feeling of loneliness and a much greater degree of net-surfing during the pandemic. The article said: "In 2020, the amount of money people in the US lost to romance scams, which usually start online, surged 50 per cent from the year before, jumping from just over \$200 million (Dh\$735 mn) in 2019 to more than \$300 million (Dh\$1,110 mn) [in 2020], according to the Federal Trade Commission." That's Dh\$1.1 billion in scammers' pockets in a year when already so much had gone wrong. The timing of the article was deliberate — it was intended to warn people against online crooks just when they'd be most fervently searching for online relationship.

To inform people just how extreme the fakery could be, the article cited the case of a mature male model, whose photos are often used by catfishing scammers. Images of his face have been



“ Women victims are vulnerable to blackmail because they feared social backlash in case their private photographs were spread online — hence, they’d pay the blackmailer in the hope that things would be sorted out soon



copied from his social media accounts by scammers, who paste those images on fake passports and fake driving licences, convincing victims that they’re interacting with a very attractive man who’s presenting his credentials. The model told the article author that “during COVID, it’s definitely picked up because of more isolation”, referring to the spike in catfishing, which means creating a fictitious identity to lure someone else.

If you’re wondering how the blackmailers hit it off so well with their intended victims, just consider the fact that most of us have very visible lives on social media, and anyone can look that up to get close to us by feigning common interests.

MATCHMAKING APP TRAPS

Blackmailers tend to find their victims on social media platforms or dating apps. The latter is a hunting ground for criminals, although they’re frequently equipped with security mechanisms to detect potential crooks. Once a victim is identified, the scammer will indulge in harmless romantic conversations to gain the target’s trust, after which they’d want the relationship to proceed to some other messaging service where there’s no fear of being detected by a security protocol. At this point, the fraudster begins

persuading the victim to share intimate information, such as photos or videos, which would serve as blackmail weapons.

In some cases, a male criminal pretends to be an attractive woman to lure men on social media into a relationship. The scammer shares pictures of a beautiful woman — that’s his fake identity — and urges the man to send his own risqué images, which are then used for blackmail.

Seeking the companionship of online strangers can be just as damaging. Al Mansouri said that they came across cases in which blackmailers, claiming to be women, made friends with women. This friendship is based on flattery and girl talk. “The blackmailer develops a bond with the victim, congratulates her on her fashion sense, for instance, and requests her to send her photos,” said Al Mansouri. Since people are generally considerably less guarded with their own gender, obtaining such photos isn’t difficult once the target has been softened up.

The Chief Prosecutor added that women victims are

vulnerable to blackmail because they feared social backlash in case their private photographs were spread online — hence, they’d pay the blackmailer in the hope that things would be sorted out soon.



PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST ONLINE CROOKS



1 Nobody is going to stop posting on social media, especially not now, when physical meetings are still limited amongst friends. However, be mindful of what you post and don't give away everything about your life. Pay particular attention to privacy settings — if you're sharing news items, you could make the setting 'public'; if you're sharing photos of personal activities, you could make the setting 'friends' or 'specific friends' on Facebook; and you could also consider locking your Facebook profile so that only the people you've accepted as 'friends' can see your posts. On Twitter and Instagram, it's not possible to control who follows you, so take care what you post there; certainly don't display a flashy lifestyle and write about longings for a relationship that might make you a target for scammers.

2 Your parents were right: don't talk to strangers; at least, don't talk to them a lot on social networks, especially to those making romantic overtures. Even the UAE's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority recommends that you do not accept friendship requests from people you don't know. Even if the person has similar hobbies as you, never let your guard down. Sending any sort of

intimate photographs or videos is not wise under any circumstances, and more so when you have merely met a person on a gardening page of a social media platform.

3 A blackmailer often asks for money and it is one of the red flags in the relationship. Their tactic may involve telling the victim a sob story about themselves, being passive-aggressive, or threatening the victim outright. It's an absolute no-no for a person to send money to anybody with whom they've only had an online relationship. Never divulge your passwords or information such as bank account and credit card details, no matter what story they spin.

4 Abu Dhabi Prosecution has a smartphone app, called 'Inform the Prosecution', which you can use. The courts collaborate with social media and technology companies against hackers. In one case, a woman was being blackmailed by a person based in another country; he had hacked into her computer and accessed her private photos. Abu Dhabi Prosecution worked with a tech firm to ensure that the hacker could no longer control the woman's account.

5 Criminals are tech-savvy and may go to the extent of hacking

into your e-mail account and your laptop camera as well. It's not advisable to click on any link e-mailed by a person you barely know, as it could introduce malware into your system. Install security software on your computer for added protection.

MORE USERS, MORE SCAMS

The Internet penetration in the UAE in January 2021 was at 99 per cent, amongst the highest in the world, according to Statista. Practically every person in the country has access to the Internet — and there are 9.84 million social media users. During the COVID year of 2020-2021, the number of Internet users grew 1.6 per cent or by 158,000. The high use of social media makes the UAE vulnerable to attacks from romance scammers.





CAN WE AFFORD LUNAR LIFESTYLE?

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

Now that all the costs of living on the moon have been listed, the poets who compose verses about our planet's fascinating companion clearly can't afford to live there

From a dream nurtured in the minds of poets, living on the moon has come close to reality, it seems. Although it is considered costly as of now, prices may go down.

For further clarification, a British company specialising in financial and real estate brokerage has presented the first guide of its kind — it explains the costs of living on the surface of the moon, including the estimated cost of building a residence there for humans, thus establishing a foothold in outer space. Experts at Money, a credit broker for consumer products, issued the first study on getting a mortgage on the moon, revealing for the first time that living on the moon would cost \$325,067 (Dhs1.2 mn) a month.

According to information published in a detailed report, the price includes adding life-saving details to homes, such as airtight seals, industrial-strength air pumps, heaters, meteorite-proof windows, insulation and organic energy sources. The total cost of these reaches \$40 million (Dhs147 mn).

The guide lists the most desirable locations on the moon, suggesting that the area called 'Sea of Rain' would be the ideal family suburb. This area is located in the north, and it is one of the largest impact craters in the solar system. NASA's Artemis mission is scheduled to begin in 2024; the crew will explore building a stable habitat for humans there. Although the US space agency focuses only on sending astronauts, other companies are exploring when humans can live on the moon.

The guide says that with the increasing population on earth and the development of space technology, it will not be long before living on the moon becomes the new normal. It mentions that the company called Money took into account the cost of

construction and the high price of selling a home on the moon to create a comprehensive guide on how to afford a hefty mortgage and adapt to the lunar lifestyle. The research team used various factors to calculate the cost of a house on the moon, including the special materials for the lunar atmosphere, the astronauts required to travel for construction, and the average cost of transporting materials to the moon.

According to the guide, the first fully functional home on the

moon would cost more than \$48 million (Dhs176 mn), which is a very high price for a home, given that large mansions on earth sell for a fraction of that cost. After the completion of the first house, the next ones will be built for around \$40 million (Dhs147 mn), as some of the construction materials and workers will already be on the moon.

The most effective way to generate electricity on the moon is to purchase a small, \$1.3 billion (Dhs4.8 bn) nuclear reactor, says the guide. To avoid such a shocking cost, the guide offers a better option, which is to invest in 34 solar panels that will provide enough electricity to run one home, and this option costs only \$23,616 (Dhs86,746), a very reasonable amount compared to other options.

After these expense details provided by the British financial and real estate brokerage company, it seems that the

poets might be the last to move to live on the moon, because the financial capabilities of this group are quite limited, to the extent that the most they can afford is a small apartment in a normal neighbourhood on earth. That is why they will remain dreamers wandering in the valleys of this green planet, singing about the beauty of the moon and metaphorically naming their beloved ones after the moon, without promising them a house there.

According to the guide, the first fully functional home on the moon would cost more than \$48 million (Dhs176 mn), which is a very high price for a home, given that large mansions on earth sell for a fraction of that cost



SEVERAL DEGREES FROM THE TRUTH

CAN YOU IMAGINE THAT THE NURSE GIVING YOU A LIFE-SAVING SHOT ISN'T A NURSE AT ALL, BUT GOT THE JOB WITH A FAKE CERTIFICATE? THE UAE IS CRACKING DOWN HARD ON THIS RACKET. **999** INVESTIGATES HOW IT ALL HAPPENS

BY K NIVEDITA

It takes many years of study and clearing several rounds of examinations and interviews for a person to qualify as a nurse in the UAE. However, a dishonest person might take an illegal shortcut and approach companies, mostly outside the country, that make fake documents. This degree mill would then hand the buyer a fake document that states they've graduated from a prominent nursing institute in the country or somewhere else in the world.

Imagine the danger such a racket poses to public health — if these cheats with fake degrees find their way into a hospital's staff roll, they might be standing by our bedside the next time any of us takes a hospital admission. According to news reports from across the world, fake certificates have helped people get into diverse jobs that require high skills, such as flying a plane, treating patients, or coaching sports teams. But since they got these jobs without having any actual skills, the consequences would be disastrous—which is why the UAE has zero tolerance for fake degrees.

In one such case that happened in Ajman, a man was selling fake certificates out of his car, which had a printer and a laptop connected to the car's battery. Seals and logos of different Arab educational institutions were found on the laptop. The suspect was caught in March 2021, after the police received an anonymous tip about him. They nabbed him red-handed, just as he was selling a forged high school diploma for Dhs1,500.

In this investigative report, **999** found several websites and online con artists who openly advertise on various Internet



fora, telling prospective buyers how to get a fake UAE diploma or degree. Just like in the movie *Catch Me If You Can*, they claim that they can change a profession in an instant. Such illegal activities, in the words of UAE Federal National Council (FNC) members, can render the role of education in the country meaningless.

At the click of a button — and for a neat sum of money — anybody can get fake degrees from any college, university, or institute in the world. On one website, whose URL name is a dead giveaway for its very shady business, a fake degree shopper is told: “Choose from many different authentic high school certificate stock designs. All of them look, read and feel just like those from a real school.”

The website promises a lot of bells and whistles, such as “emblems in raised ‘puffy’ gold foil, fully embossed gold foil or full-colour ink”. In words dripping with irony, the fake degrees are advertised as “all Realistic and Authentic (*sic*)”. This website charges \$150-650 (Dhs550-2,385) for a counterfeit diploma, **999** found.

Another site boasts that it can provide even a Harvard Business School diploma certificate (the genuine thing is one of the most sought after in the world) with “raised foil dual colour”.

Still another website offers a range of certificates as well as a copy of the distinctive seal of a university; these certificates will, according to the website's claim, “look as good as the real thing”.



Fake degree certificates bearing the names of prominent universities being sold online



BOGUS DEGREES OUTLAWED

To sniff the air, **999** followed the smell of money in this illegal activity, and discovered that most degree forgers operate online and they're based outside the UAE. Upon checking a number of websites, we found that many of them offer fake degree certifications bearing the names of prominent UAE universities. Through some e-mail exchanges, one of these websites said that a fake degree certificate for nursing would cost \$650 (Dhs2,400 approx), including shipping. "It will take us two days to make the certificate and the time for shipping is four to five days. We are a professional diploma production company and you can buy with confidence. You can use it to find a job," said the website in an e-mail.

In case the certificate's authenticity is not checked carefully by a hiring hospital or healthcare centre, a lot of patients, including those in a critical state, would be at the mercy of an untrained person with a fake degree.

In a move that's expected to have far-reaching ramifications amongst criminals

and people who like to brandish fake documentation in the UAE, the Federal National Council took the decisive step to pass a federal draft law in February 2021 that penalises the use of bogus degrees for any purpose, including obtaining jobs. An offender could be imprisoned for three months to two years, and fined between Dhs30,000 and Dhs1 million. The draft law, consisting of 11 articles, also makes it illegal for unauthorised institutions to issue educational certificates. "The practice of using fake certificates has seen a spike in recent years. By issuing these regulations, we intend to end the use of fake degrees and education certificates to get jobs at government agencies and private firms, or for any other purposes," said Shatha Saeed Al Naqbi, Member of FNC, as well as of the committee on education, culture, sports and information affairs.

This FNC committee, which tabled the

“ The practice of using fake certificates has seen a spike in recent years. By issuing these regulations, we intend to end the use of fake degrees and education certificates to get jobs at government agencies and private firms, or for any other purposes



SHATHA SAEED AL NAQBI

Member of the UAE Federal National Council

law before the Council for approval, also suggested that a dedicated government organisation be established to check if education certificates were genuinely issued by a recognised institution. The committee also stressed the importance of documents being attested by competent authorities from a person's country of origin. HE Hussain bin Ibrahim Al Hammadi, Minister of Education, was present when FNC approved the draft law.

The marketplace, especially online, is crowded with peddlers of fake certificates, giving one a glimpse of the dark underbelly of global education. Here, you don't need to have passed a course, or even



“ The Federal National Council took the decisive step to pass a federal draft law that penalises the use of bogus degrees for any purpose, including obtaining jobs. An offender could be imprisoned for 3 months to 2 years, and fined between Dhs30,000 and Dhs1 million

“Employers are in a high-risk group when it comes to damages indirectly caused by fake degrees, as they may be held legally responsible for an employee’s misconduct. This concept is described under the doctrine of vicarious liability



IVOR MCGETTIGAN

Partner at Al Tamimi

enrolled in one, to brandish an impressive document that says you aced the exam. As it happens, while these degree mills copy the certificates from genuine institutions, they also sell certificates with the names of non-existent institutions.

Mostly used for getting well-paid jobs, these fake certificates are also often used to impress one’s social network. According to George Gollin, a physics professor at the University of Illinois who first became interested in forged diplomas after being spammed fake college degree offers,



told a CNN report that it is a multi-million dollar global industry. In 2010, more than 100,000 fake degrees were sold, of which a third were postgraduate degrees, in one Western country alone. In 2012, there were 50,000 fake PhDs sold in that country — legitimately, only 45,000 PhDs were handed out that year.

CRACKDOWN ON SELLER & BUYER

In the UAE, where the government takes pride in being able to ensure quality and authenticity in everything, there’s zero tolerance for counterfeit degrees that can literally cost lives, e.g. that fake nursing degree that **999** was promised during its investigation.

The clear message given out by the

draft law is backed by strong action. The authorities have been clamping down through strict regulations and checks on both sellers and buyers of these fake documents peddled through websites — this is one crime where the buyer is as much a perpetrator as the seller, and the excuse of being a fraud victim won’t work. After all, if a person didn’t study for something or didn’t take an exam to earn a degree, then no one can fool them into believing that they did. Deliberately shopping for fake degrees from websites that openly declare those are fakes is very different from being duped by racketeers posing as distance-learning educators.

Ivor McGettigan, Partner at Al Tamimi and Co, warned companies about not verifying the authenticity of an employee’s degree certificate. “Employers are in a high-risk group when it comes to damages indirectly caused by fake degrees, as they may be held legally responsible for an employee’s misconduct,” McGettigan told **999**. “This concept is described under the doctrine of vicarious liability. The court will establish whether the employer is liable for its employee’s act or omission, taking into consideration several factors, including the connection between the wrong committed and the employee’s role and duties, the level of control that the company exercised over the employee, etc.” Talking to **999**, Alina Ponomarova, Associate at Al Tamimi and Co law firm in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, said, “In recent times, given the level of scrutiny education certificates undergo before being accepted by the relevant

THE PROCESS OF VALIDATING A UNIVERSITY DEGREE IN THE UAE



The authenticity of a degree can be verified by contacting the Commission for Academic Accreditation and/or Ministry of Education, according to Al Tamimi & Company.

Where the degree will be used for the purposes of a work permit/residency visa application, it will also need to be attested. The true copy of a university degree must be (i) obtained from the relevant college if not already in possession (ii) attested by the UAE Embassy in the country where the university is based and (iii) attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in UAE. The steps are:

- Contact the awarding institution of the highest degree that is relevant to the job title
- Obtain a true copy of the degree/award
- Get an official Arabic translation of the degree
- Contact the UAE Embassy in the home country and arrange an appointment to have the degree attested
- Send them to the UAE to get them attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in UAE



“ Given the seriousness of having individuals claiming that they have the requisite qualifications to work in a specific job title, it is warranted why the UAE would want to tackle this issue



ALINA PONOMAROVA

Associate at Al Tamimi and Co

authorities in the UAE for the purposes of issuing employment permits/visas, it's definitely not a severe issue that the government is dealing with.

“Nonetheless, it definitely does occur from time to time. However, given the seriousness of having individuals benefit from employment in the UAE as a result of false evidence, claiming that they have the requisite qualifications to work in a specific job title, especially where the UAE authorities strive to ensure that particular jobs are only filled by qualified individuals, it is warranted why the UAE would want to tackle this issue, no matter how often it actually occurs.”

The firm has dealt with some forgery cases of this kind a couple of years ago, when attestation procedures and penalties associated with fake certificates weren't as serious as they are today. “Since then, we have not come across such cases as a firm. Although not a regular occurrence, it does crop up from time to time and we believe that the new law will deter these one-offs from happening in light of the severity of the penalties,” added Ponomarova.

AN OLD GAME

The network of fake certificates is not only widespread but also centuries old. In an article titled ‘Faking It: The Fall-out from the Bogus Degree Epidemic’, Ponomarova and McGettigan of Al Tamimi law firm write: “The phenomenon of fake diplomas production dates back to the Middle Ages in France and Italy. The concept is known as ‘diploma mill’ or a ‘degree mill’ and

refers to a non-accredited company that declares itself as a higher educational institution and awards worthless degrees for a certain fee.”

According to the authors, some diploma mills may claim to give credits for “relevant life experience” while, in others, the victims of the scam may have to pass online exams and write term papers to create an impression of real education.

In 2018, an investigation revealed that a

diploma mill operating through a call centre in a South Asian country sold more than 3,000 fake degrees, including doctorates and PhDs, to citizens in Europe and the Middle East. These degrees were from hundreds of non-existent universities

TAKEAWAYS: WHY DO PEOPLE OPT FOR FAKE EDUCATIONAL CERTIFICATES

- 1** In a society that values degrees over skill, many people, who have trained on the job, such as running a business, but have no papers to show for it, are tempted to get a fake certificate, perhaps an MBA degree, to establish their credentials. A fake degree, they feel, provides formal proof of their qualifications and self-worth.
- 2** Some of the people who reach out to the websites that make fake certificates are those who feel that they were being denied promotions because their competition was armed with certificates of high education. Jobs at higher levels usually require higher qualifications that a person may not have and, thus, want to fake. With a fake degree to plump up their resume, they feel as confident as anybody else.
- 3** A lot of people have the requisite qualifications but have, unfortunately, lost their papers. They need documents urgently, either for work or to apply for citizenship, and cannot wait for their universities to go through the due process and send them replacements.
- 4** A person may feel inferior amongst friends and family because of a lack of higher education, especially if he or she is professionally successful. In such a case, a framed degree from one of the top universities can add grandeur not only to walls but also to one's social life.
- 5** A genuine degree requires years of hard work, discipline and dedication, while a fake degree can be obtained in an instant by going to a suitable website and paying up. To a lot of people, the latter makes sense.

that the company had created, such as Nixon University. The company had spread fake stories on the web about its imaginary universities, in case employers and potential clients wanted to do a background check. By the time he was arrested, the head of this diploma mill was running a \$140 million (Dhs514 mn) business in fake degrees. A year later, a watchdog in another Asian country revealed that one in 20 recruitments in that country — or 5 per cent — was based on fake qualifications.

All of this is proof that the Internet has enabled fraudsters to operate across borders, reaching out to various countries. The UAE, which has world-class institutes and attracts the best brains from across the world, takes this matter seriously. Hence, the FNC necessitated the kind of draft law that has been passed recently.

HE Dr Ahmed Bilhoul Al Falasi, Minister of State for Higher Education and Advanced Skills, had told FNC in January 2019 that 143 cases of fake degrees and certificates from foreign universities had been found by the UAE authorities in the previous year. In 2016, four cases of forged certificates had been detected between January and October.

In 2019, the Dubai Court of First Instance gave a 39-year-old man three months of suspended prison sentence after he was found out by the Ministry of Education, where he had applied for accreditation for his forged degree. According to the document, he was an honours graduate, but when the Ministry checked with his country's embassy in the UAE, they found that the university he had mentioned did not offer a distance-learning programme, as the man had claimed. He was immediately arrested.

Another example comes from the web page of Legal Advice, Middle East. In 2017, a person wrote to seek help for a curious problem: his friend, from Sharjah, had taken a fake degree to the foreign mission office in Sharjah for attestation. "All the attestation were forged (*sic*). However, the foreign office in Sharjah only objected to the UAE embassy stamp, and handed over

the person to the police...Now, the court has ordered the person to present the duplicate degree with the original stamp of the UAE embassy. The problem is that the degree is fake, so how can a duplicate be obtained and an original attestation be done? The passport of the person has been confiscated by the court. Do you have any advice how can he be free? (*sic*)"

In her answer, the legal consultant of Kochhar and Co. Inc's Dubai branch, Nikhat Sardar Khan, said, "One should be honest and cannot cover it with a reason of employment to defraud the employer. If he wants to leave, he has to be honest, serve the jail time and, in all likelihood, a lifetime ban will be imposed." Not quite what the job-seeker had in mind, then; the effort of trying to get employment with a fake degree simply wasn't worth the hassle and the humiliation that followed.

WHO BUYS FAKE DIPLOMAS?

The offender in the above example, according to the writer on the legal advice forum, "only did this act to obtain a good job, although the act cannot be excused whatsoever the reason was".

One of the reasons people buy fake degrees is to improve their lot. In January 2019, the Minister of State for Higher Education and Advanced Skills told FNC

that the federal government and local government in Abu Dhabi mandate that, before a person is recruited, their degree must be accredited by the Ministry, but many private companies do not follow this rule, and this is where the danger lies.

Perhaps the degree shoppers think that presenting one fake document, which would be filed away and forgotten, couldn't do much harm in a large job market. But as 999 found out about the fake nursing degree, the very existence of this business means the difference between life and death. In the words of McGettigan, "It is not easy to evaluate the overall impact that fake diplomas can have on the modern society. Fake degrees are a billion-dollar industry that costs lives and millions in damages. From "doctors" who perform fatal surgeries, to "engineers" who construct buildings that are doomed to collapse, to "forensic specialists" who wrongly send people to jail after being called upon as expert witnesses — this industry has caused and continues to cause immense damage globally."

There's one lesson we learned from our respective schools and universities that's dangerous to forget — the importance of integrity. Ultimately, it is one's personal character that improves one's life in a way that a fake degree cannot.

WHY PEOPLE MUST NOT SHOP FOR FAKE DEGREES

- 1** The fact that we live in a digitalised world means that your potential employer can e-mail the college or university you claim to have attended for verification. This would result in a loss of face as well as destroy your chances for future employment and growth, especially in the age of social media where all information has eternal life.
- 2** In case you have a higher education degree, such as a doctorate, you might be required to show proof of the thesis or research papers you have published. The world of scholarship is small and you may have to explain the teachers, peers, and field experts that you worked with. You would find it difficult to cheat an astute employer, official or curious friend.
- 3** In 2002, a child died in a Western country after receiving an inadequate dose of insulin. Upon investigation, the doctor was found to have a fake degree in nutritional medicine and certificates from a fake education board. He was arrested and convicted of manslaughter. So, it is easy to get a fake degree and more difficult to do the job.
- 4** Whatever your motivation for getting a fake degree, you might want to embellish your credentials with a higher and better degree. Your fake degree will not help if you want to study further. Of course, you could get another fake degree, but that would be compounding one wrong thing with another.



NARCOTICS MAKING FAMILIES CRY

WHEN YOUNG ADULTS DEVELOP AN ADDICTION, IT CAN BE DEVASTATING AND DANGEROUS FOR THE PEOPLE CLOSEST TO THEM. THEREFORE, IT'S IMPERATIVE TO LEARN HOW TO SPOT SIGNS OF ADDICTION AND TACKLE THEM EARLY. FIND HELP WITH 999

BY OWEN HARRIS



It was a scene no mother would ever wish to experience in her life. Abu Dhabi Police responded in early April 2021 to the desperate calls of a troubled woman; her voice was trembling at the very thought of reporting her son, who had pulled out a knife and threatened to stab his family members.

She revealed to the police that her son had been struggling with drug addiction. While he initially chose to remain isolated together with his family, his withdrawal symptoms were aggravated to the point

that he demanded the car keys and money to go out and buy drugs. His family refused to listen to him — that's when he threatened to kill them.

Abu Dhabi Police arrived within minutes at the family's residence to ask the son to surrender, but he attempted to escape. He was caught and arrested; the police found drug use paraphernalia and narcotic substances in his room. Blood tests showed that he had been using psychotropic substances, such as methamphetamine and pregabalin.

The incident underlines, yet again, how narcotics can threaten to destroy a family. Many drug users start young, and families need to know how to handle them and their addiction in the early stages, so that their lives can be brought back on the right track. Simply expressing anger and/or grief, and repeatedly asking the drug dependent to give up narcotics, might not help. If effective methods are not applied right at the beginning, there might be a situation like the knife-wielding young man in Abu Dhabi.

To make a difference in their own lives and the larger society, family members can learn to strategise and be informed about all the assistance they can get from UAE government programmes. Doing this proactively can help them stay prepared. This state of preparedness begins with acknowledging that drugs can find their way into the hands of any teenager — sometimes even pre-teens — regardless of their family's social standing and stability.

During a virtual session as part of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26, 2020, HE Hessa bint Essa Buhumaid, Minister of

“It is important to have specialised programmes that build a positive relationship and divide the roles between the family of the drug dependent and rehabilitation centres



**HE HESSA BINT
ESSA BUHUMAID**

Minister of Community Development

Community Development, stressed that families play an important role in stopping addiction. “The family is the main core of creating the child's personality. The Ministry is keen to organise educational workshops for families in cooperation with government bodies on precautionary and preventive measures,” she said.

The scourge of narcotics affects all corners of society — its impact is felt on families, a country's human capital, as well as government resources. Buhumaid said, “It is important to have specialised programmes that build a positive relationship and divide the roles between the family of the drug dependent and rehabilitation centres.”

During the same virtual conference, Lt General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim, Deputy

THE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

16 to 12 years old

The drop in the starting age of the youth getting addicted to narcotics, according to Lt General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim, Deputy Chairman of Police and General Security in Dubai and Chairman of the Juvenile Awareness and Care Association

65-75 per cent

Percentage probability of addiction relapse amongst teenagers after 3 months of recovery, as per the National Rehabilitation Centre

85 per cent

Percentage probability of addiction relapse amongst teenagers after 1 year of recovery, as per the National Rehabilitation Centre

“ There is a reduction in drug abuse age from 16 to 12 years. It is a worrying indicator. We need to increase the family’s role by educating them with procedures for quick intervention as soon as they discover that their children are consuming drugs



**LT GENERAL DHAHI
KHALFAN TAMIM**

Deputy Chairman of Police and General Security in Dubai and Chairman of the Juveniles Awareness and Care Association

Chairman of Police and General Security in Dubai and Chairman of the Juvenile Awareness and Care Association, warned that the starting age of the youth getting addicted to narcotics had fallen to the pre-teen level. “There is a reduction in drug abuse age from 16 to 12 years,” he said. “It is a worrying indicator.”

Dhahi Khalfan added, “There is a need for a quick review of child protection strategies. We need to increase the family’s role by educating them with procedures for quick intervention as soon as they discover that their children are consuming drugs, to prevent them from reaching the addiction point.” His session was aptly titled ‘Family, the First Line of Defence’.

DETECT THE EARLY SIGNS

Last April 2, the adverse societal consequences of narcotics were discussed by UAE-based experts, parents, and government representatives at a virtual conference titled ‘Impact of Drugs on Societies’, organised by Dubai Police in cooperation with the Hemaya International Centre at the General Department of Anti-Narcotics and the Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities Department.

Attended remotely by parents of students from several UAE schools,

“ Parents should look out for early signs of drug use, such as avoidance of contact with parents, not grooming themselves properly, size of their iris, anger issues, etc



**COLONEL ABDULLAH
MATAR AL KHAYAT**

Director of the Hemaya International Centre

the conference focused on stipulations in the UAE law that prohibited the use of illegal drugs and the repercussions of drug abuse on families. Musa Julid, representative of the Hemaya International Centre, also held a question-and-answer session with attending parents, sharing case studies of students who had been on drugs and how the Hemaya agency helped these former drug dependents reconnect with their parents.

Colonel Abdullah Matar Al Khayat, Director of the Hemaya International Centre, said, “Parents should look out for early signs of drug use, such as avoidance of contact with parents, not grooming themselves properly, size of their iris, anger

issues, and being more secretive than before with their own parents.” He added, “Some children also prevent their parents from checking their personal stuff or entering their rooms, which could be a sign they’re hiding drugs from their parents.”

Earlier, at another virtual conference, Al Khayat also shared the story of a young person whose father reacted negatively by punishing his son and taking away his mobile phone when he found out that the son had begun smoking. The officer warned parents that one wrong move could trigger a downward spiral of emotions amongst teenagers, pushing them towards substance abuse.

In this particular father-and-son case, the angry father could make the son stop smoking, but his method of doing so could have been different. “If this young man had reacted wrongly, he would’ve turned into a heavy smoker, but luckily he doesn’t smoke anymore. How a family reacts to such situations could be the difference between addiction and rehabilitation,” explained Al Khayat.

The officer added that many young men thought smoking was normal since they saw their fathers and elders do this in front of them; however, he also warned that most people started using substances other than tobacco when they began to experiment. Families need to keep both of these factors in mind.

TIRELESS VIGILANCE

Substance abuse is a huge threat for the future generation — it also poses a corresponding level of threat to the



“Our strong Customs intelligence, along with the use of advanced scanning equipment and inspection technologies, has been instrumental in deterring several drug trafficking attempts



IBRAHIM KAMALI

Acting Executive Director of the Customs Inspection Division at Dubai Customs

nation's security and progress — which is why the government agencies crack down so hard on drugs, doing their best to prevent narcotics from even entering the country, let alone find users.

In January 2021, citing investigations and raids conducted in the last three months of 2020, Abu Dhabi Police reported the seizure of drugs worth Dhs1 billion and the arrest of 22 members of an international gang that targeted the



UAE. One of the tricks attempted by the gang was to smuggle in crystal meth in the dissolved form, hoping that even the experienced anti-narcotics officers wouldn't be able to identify the substance. They were wrong — the racket was busted and the gang was netted.

Colonel Taher Gharib Al Dhaheri, Director of the Anti-Narcotics Directorate at Abu Dhabi Police, stated that these gang members were managed by a mastermind who lived outside the UAE. “Each gang had an identified role in smuggling and selling the drugs. One of the gangs used a brand new tactic of smuggling narcotics into the UAE — they

used dissolved crystal meth, believing that they might trick the police officers who are well-trained and extremely vigilant, something that helped the force bust the traffickers and seize a huge quantity of drugs from them,” said Al Dhaheri.

Also in January 2021, on the second day of the year, it was revealed that Dubai Customs had prevented the entry of Dhs47.5 million worth of drugs, of which 30.15kg was crystal meth, and the other 46.16kg was hashish. This very successful anti-narcotics operation was part of the ‘Safe Nation’ campaign launched by Dubai Customs’ Sea Customs Centres Management. A squad of K-9 sniffer dogs helped the authorities trace the illegal substances, which were hidden inside another inbound shipment. In a separate operation in March 2021, Dubai Customs seized close to 3 million Captagon pills hidden within a suspected container.

Ibrahim Kamali, Acting Executive Director of the Customs Inspection Division at Dubai Customs, said that this proved Dubai would never be a place for drugs peddlers to proliferate and ruin the lives of the youth. He said, “Dubai Customs has recently stepped up its efforts to better counter drug smuggling into the country by raising alertness levels of its teams and enhancing the efficiency of control and inspection operations at various points of entry. Our strong Customs intelligence, along with the use of advanced scanning equipment and inspection technologies, has been instrumental in deterring several drug trafficking attempts,” explained Kamali.

DANGEROUS EFFECTS OF DRUGS

DEPENDENCE: When a teenager begins to take illegal drugs, there are substances including heroin and cocaine that require a progressive increase in the amount of drugs used for the substance abuser to get that desired euphoric effect. This repeated and alarming increase in dosage of prohibited substances can lead to very painful withdrawal symptoms once they try to get off the drug.

ORGAN DAMAGE: Teenage years are considered the formative years of the body before the transition to adulthood; using both legal and illegal drugs frequently may damage one's organs early on. WHO has said that synthetic drugs such as amphetamines could pose a risk to internal body functions such as the cardiovascular systems and the brain.

PSYCHOTIC EPISODES: Frequent use of hallucinogens could trigger mental images of things, persons, or otherworldly experience that are not really there. These episodes that a drug abuser experiences could lead them to self-harm or cause harm to others, including their loved ones.

CRIMINAL LIABILITY: Drug users who've developed a dependence on drugs may find themselves resorting to other illegal activities to sustain their habit. Families may experience theft within their homes or may be shocked that their teenager had been caught in other illegal, criminal activities.

PREMATURE DEATH: The most concerning threat amongst substance abusers is the increased risk of both accidental and deliberate overdose. Teenagers who frequently use these prohibited drugs slowly form tolerance, which not only increases their dependence but also makes them vulnerable to other viruses and diseases that directly attack their immune system.



FAMILIES MUST ACT NOW

The youth who are experiencing problems in their family life are more likely to resort to illegal substance use as an outlet for their frustrations. Bad company, smoking, and doing drugs are amongst the frequent wrong choices made by such young people — all of these three things feed each other and push the young person towards full-blown addiction. That's why the parents and other older family members need to know what's going on in the lives of their teenage sons and daughters, and what's their state of mind. Conversations should be encouraged and conducted in a non-confrontational way for the youth to share their problems and seek solutions.

Al Khayat said, "The family is the first and most important influence on a child, and if relations between parents and children are good, kids tend to confide in them on issues they may be facing. However, if parents don't lend an ear to their problems or ridicule them, the youth will start hiding their fears or problems from their parents."

There's data to back this. According to recent statistics from the National Rehabilitation Centre (NRC), headquartered in Abu Dhabi, 95 per cent of drug abuse and addiction resulted from family problems.

Dr Hamad Al Ghaferi, Director General at NRC, said, "Rehabilitation of teenagers is different from people above the age of 18. The rehab process includes the child and his parents. Family problems encourage children to find alternatives.

Protection and quick response are key factors to save the lives of youngsters."

The oft-used adage "prevention is better than cure" also applies to drug addiction, said the NRC chief, as 65-75 per cent of addiction relapse happened amongst teenagers after three months of recovery and 85 per cent of them could relapse after one year of recovery. "Addiction after the first time someone consumes drugs depends on the type of drugs. There are some types [of hard drugs] for which people can't escape addiction even if they've had it just once," added Dr Al Ghaferi.

That's why it's crucial to prevent the

“Rehabilitation of teenagers is different from people above the age of 18. The rehab process includes the child and his parents. Protection and quick response are key factors to save the lives of youngsters



DR HAMAD AL GHAFERI

Director General at the National Rehabilitation Centre

addiction in the first place, so that one doesn't have to seek the cure and risk a relapse.

TIMELY TREATMENTS

The UAE acknowledges that families of substance abusers are those that are affected the most, as they witness their loved one in a state of peril. This is why the authorities have also launched rehabilitation programmes all across



“The youth who are experiencing problems in their family life are more likely to resort to illegal substance use as an outlet for their frustrations

the country to help the affected families find their place and be reintegrated into society once again.

Ras Al Khaimah Police, for instance, have helped out at least 12 families whose children have been abusing drugs instead of making them face legal consequences. Rehabilitation instead of persecution is the best way to nurture young minds. "This is to support them and their families and help them get rid of drugs and be good members of society," said Colonel Ibrahim Jassim Al Tunaiji, Director of the Anti-Narcotics Department at Ras Al Khaimah Police, who referred all the cases to NRC for the quickest possible recovery.

In Abu Dhabi, local officials have launched the 'Chance for Hope' initiative, which rehabilitates young individuals who've been under the influence of narcotics. One of the beneficiary families of this initiative was a father who took his son to register for help and has seen his recovery through the past months. "I felt bewildered, anxious, and afraid of the scandal while I was seriously thinking how to save and treat my son from the addiction to drugs. Then, I saw on social media the news about the 'Chance for Hope' programme in Abu Dhabi and began to think that it would be the way



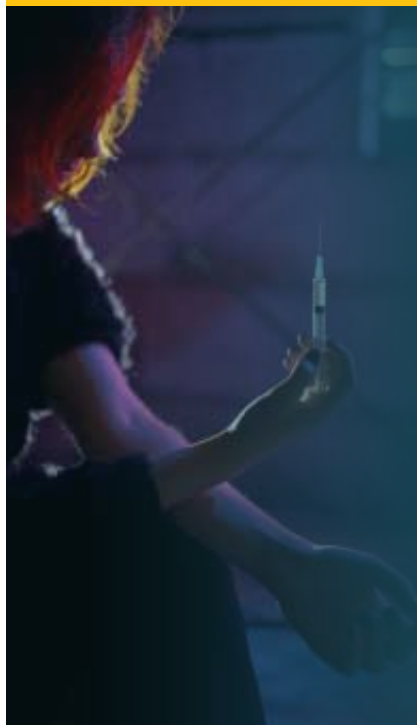
out for my son's problem, especially as the initiative maintains privacy and confidentiality," said the father who spoke on condition of anonymity.

A GLOBAL MENACE

Drugs pose a real threat to the physical, social, and mental development of adolescents. 'The Health of Youth: Facts for Action' report published by the World Health Organisation states that while the majority of teenagers use both legal and

illegal drugs to experiment with them, those who are prone to abusing these substances at an early age may witness staggered growth and struggle with their life due to dependence on these substances. A WHO statement said: "Abuse of both licit and illicit drugs often has its roots in adolescence and youth although the problems of chronic use may not be apparent until adulthood." This is why families remain the first line of defence, indeed.

INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION TIPS FOR TEENS



The following suggestions were formulated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in its 2018 edition of the '*International Standards on Drug Use Prevention*':

BRIEF INTERVENTION: An alarming concern amongst teenagers was that they resorted to drug use because of an apparent lack of quality time with their parents. This is why the UNODC has suggested one-to-one counselling sessions with trained health and social workers to determine the root cause of the substance abuse, which last anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes.

MEDIA CAMPAIGNS: In this age, both traditional and social media platforms play an important role in helping teenagers avoid being lured to even trying psychotropic substances. From printed warnings to digital short films, these campaigns highlight the dangers that drugs pose for the youth with a wide reach.

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES: Teenagers are urged to form hobbies such as sports and other structured leisure time activities not only to avoid substance abuse during their free time but also to pick up new skills that would help boost their confidence and social interactions in the future.

COMMUNITY-BASED MULTI-COMPONENT INITIATIVES: Beyond the corners of their homes and classrooms, it also takes an entire community to help teenagers avoid the risks of being lured to using prohibited substances. UNODC suggests that partnerships and action groups within the community could launch programmes to boost and sustain the prevention efforts done by families and schools.



YOUR SPEED, YOUR LANE

MOTORISTS IN THE UAE AREN'T ALLOWED TO JUST DART IN AND OUT OF TRAFFIC LANES. THEIR PROPER LANE IS DETERMINED BY SPEED AND REQUIRED EXIT. **999** REINFORCES THIS RULE, AS WELL AS OTHER RELATED LIFE-SAVING ROAD REGULATIONS, TO ENSURE THAT NO VEHICLE IMPEDES THE TRAFFIC FLOW

BY NEIL BIE

Some people think that they own the roads, when they have their hands on the steering wheel and their foot on the accelerator. This attitude is completely in contrast to the spirit of modern human civilisation, where smooth functioning of public spaces requires collaboration, not competition. Such drivers end up causing huge disruptions, debilitating injuries, and even loss of life. Police forces in the UAE try to make the roads safer through a strategy that involves both awareness campaigns and crackdowns.

As early as January 2020, Abu Dhabi Police have been reminding motorists to respect traffic lane rules. This was further reiterated by the Dubai Police General Command after launching the 'Give Way in the Fast Lane' campaign last March, in cooperation with the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA), in the middle of March 2021 and is scheduled to end shortly after Eid al-Fitr in May 2021.

Talking about the 'Give Way in the Fast Lane' campaign, Lt General Abdullah Khalifa Al Marri, Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police, stated, "The campaign aims to reach the highest level of traffic safety by controlling road safety and security, reducing accidents and preventing aggressive driving behaviours."

HE Mattar Al Tayer, Director General and Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of RTA Dubai, said the Authority

“ The campaign aims to reach the highest level of traffic safety by controlling road safety and security, reducing accidents and preventing aggressive driving behaviours



LT GENERAL ABDULLAH KHALIFA AL MARRI

Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police

continuously implements and enforces the best on-road practices, based on intensive studies from Germany, Australia, and the United States. "The campaign is one of the many joint events that RTA and Dubai Police have conducted to achieve the strategic objective of maintaining traffic safety across Dubai by implementing procedures and launching campaigns to inform road users," said Al Tayer.

The two-month traffic safety campaign

“ The campaign is one of the many joint events that RTA and Dubai Police have conducted to achieve the strategic objective of maintaining traffic safety across Dubai



HE MATTAR AL TAYER

Director General and Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of RTA Dubai

aims to raise awareness amongst community members and motorists on the importance of giving way in the far-left lane (fast lane) and limiting its use to overtaking and emergency vehicles. It also highlights the importance of using indicators when changing lanes, as well as keeping a safe distance between vehicles to avoid collisions.

All of these rules were broken by a motorist whose reckless driving behaviour was captured by traffic security cameras in Abu Dhabi. In March 2021, Abu Dhabi Police released a very brief but jaw-dropping CCTV clip. In the first couple of seconds, the footage shows vehicles on all five lanes slowing down in an orderly manner; then, out of the bottom edge of the screen comes the driver, rushing at the stationary cars at full speed, ramming into the several vehicles so hard that the flying dust became a cloud. The offending driver hit the first vehicle from behind, swerved left and right, moving in and out of lanes, hitting a total of six cars before coming out on the outer left lane and crashing into the road barrier.

This was a scene one might expect to see in a video game, but never in real life. Also, video games don't get the kind of massive traffic jams that this one driver caused on a very busy road. Fortunately, the other cars had stopped before this



Through the 'Give Way in the Fast Lane' campaign, Dubai Police and RTA aim to highlight limiting the use of far left lane to overtaking and emergency vehicles



In a video posted on its Instagram page in January 2020, Abu Dhabi Police warned: "A Dhs400 fine will be imposed for failure to give priority to vehicles coming from the back or left-hand side"

driver hit them; a collision at such speed between two moving cars would have caused far greater damage.

Any motorist driving at a particular speed must take their proper lane on the UAE's multi-lane roads; this rule exists to ensure that no vehicle impedes the traffic flow. For example, using the fast lane while driving slowly can frustrate other drivers or cause them to make unsafe passing manoeuvres.

The rule of thumb for motorists here in the UAE is that slower vehicles should be on the right lanes, while faster-moving vehicles should be towards the left. It's for the same logic why exits along the UAE's

highways are always on the rightmost lane, while those planning to take other exits are advised to remain on the middle or leftmost lanes. Abu Dhabi alone has recorded 30,606 distracted driving violations in 2020; the majority of these cases were of motorists who kept on changing lanes without indicators and some of them resulted in accidents, according to the recent data released by Abu Dhabi Police. Over the past several years, the police have been ramping up smart technology to crack down on those who just wouldn't respond to awareness campaigns.

KNOW YOUR LANE

When driving in the UAE, it's crucial to know which lane your vehicle is supposed to be in; it depends on both the speed and the type of vehicle.

Regular cars must avoid the leftmost and rightmost lanes. The leftmost lanes are allocated for emergency vehicles, while the rightmost lanes are usually for trucks, public

buses, and vehicles in need of towing and other emergencies.

Recently, a truck driver was found to have blatantly violated this rule and was caught on camera in the Capital. Abu Dhabi Police outlined that the said truck driver violated three rules: tailgating or not leaving sufficient distance between vehicles; improper overtaking; and failure to follow traffic signs and instructions. The Traffic and Patrols Directorate of Abu Dhabi Police posted the video that tracked down the said truck driver as a reminder for motorists and owners of other heavy vehicles to stay in their lane to avoid accidents.

Robert Hodges, an internationally recognised expert on road risk and road safety, advises motorists against entering any road at an extremely high speed, cutting through all three lanes just to reach the fast lane in the shortest possible time. In his article in the UAE Road Safety, titled 'Correct Procedures for Driving on Multi-Lane Roads/Highways', he warns that this is a dangerous act that can lead to clusters of fast-moving cars, and advises that it is safer to drive and progress between lanes at a steady pace.

"Always join in the rightmost lane and then via observations and signals, move safely and progressively lane-by-lane across to the higher-speed overtaking lanes to get past the slower traffic. Move progressively back to the right-hand lanes as soon as you have finished your overtaking procedure," explains Hodges.

He also reminds everyone that overtaking should only be from the left of

THE NUMBERS

30,606

The number of distracted driving violations recorded by Abu Dhabi Police in 2020; the majority of these cases were of motorists who kept on changing lanes without indicators and some of them resulted in accidents

35,000

The number of drivers in the Capital who were fined for tailgating in 2020, as detected by traffic radars, as per Abu Dhabi Police

64

The number of road accidents in Sharjah in 2020 resulting from sudden swerving and changing lanes without notifying fellow drivers, according to Sharjah Police



Caught on cam: Truck driver blatantly violating three rules: tailgating, improper overtaking, and failure to follow traffic signs in Abu Dhabi

other vehicles, stressing that overtaking from the right is illegal, as per the Federal Road Law of the UAE. “[Overtaking from the right] is extremely dangerous — doing so is often the factor responsible for the very common ‘side-swipe’ accidents we have in the UAE,” says Hodges.

OBSERVE PROPER GAP

Leaving proper distance between two vehicles is a must on UAE roads, with the authorities advising the two-second rule. This implies that it should take the motorist behind at least two seconds to close the gap between himself and the vehicle in front; some traffic experts advise making that a three-second gap. The gap is the cushion to prevent a collision in case the vehicle in front needs to brake hard because of a road situation; without the gap, the vehicle behind would ram into the vehicle in front, in case the latter brakes suddenly.

Tailgating has been a major cause of accidents, as observed in the past few years, and has caused many pile-ups and

other mishaps in the UAE. In Abu Dhabi, where the police had installed several smart systems and radars across key roads, some 35,000 motorists were fined for this offence in the past year. Erring drivers receive a text message regarding their violation, with warnings in case the motorist keeps on tailgating other vehicles on the road.

Sometimes, during rush hour, it may be difficult to keep that much distance between vehicles, and the police have a solution for that. The Traffic and Patrols Directorate of Abu Dhabi Police assured that this system would not be activated whenever there is traffic congestion in a particular area. “The 2-second rule will be applied while driving on highways. During traffic congestion, the smart detection system will not be activated,” read the police statement.

RISKS OF ILLEGAL OVERTAKING

In early February 2021, a minivan and a car collided head on in a two-way street in Dubai, resulting in the total wrecking of both vehicles. This accident was caused by one of the drivers attempting to overtake another vehicle from their lane. This major traffic mishap left 15 people injured, of whom four had severe injuries, and the rest had moderate to minor injuries.

Brigadier Saif Muhair Al Mazrouei, Director of the General Department

“Overtaking from the right is extremely dangerous — doing so is often the factor responsible for the very common ‘side-swipe’ accidents we have in the UAE

of Traffic at Dubai Police, said, “Emergency teams, first responders, and traffic police patrols were immediately dispatched to the accident site to provide first aid and emergency medical service to the injured. They also

PROMOTING PROPER LANE ETIQUETTE

- Remain within the lines, at the centre of your chosen lane. Avoid staying near the edge of the lines either towards the left or the right side of the lane.
- Stay on the rightmost lane that you can occupy to allow faster cars to use the lanes on your left.
- Overtaking from the right is illegal, according to UAE Federal Traffic Law No. 21 of 1995. Always do it from the left side.
- Always use your indicator when changing lanes.
- Do not drive on hard shoulders — this is reserved for emergency vehicles.
- Position your vehicle in the correct lane before you approach the intersection.
- Watch out for other vehicles and be considerate of your fellow drivers by showing good manners, even if they commit errors. Remember that you are always free to report violators and erring drivers directly to the police.

Source: UAE Road Safety



“Be patient while driving. Dubai Police are exerting all efforts to ensure residents have a peaceful Holy Month, but drivers must do their part



**BRIGADIER SAIF MUHAIR
AL MAZROUEI**

Director of the General Department of Traffic
at Dubai Police



facilitated the transfer of the severely injured to a hospital,” said Al Mazrouei.

Calling on motorists to observe traffic safety rules during the Holy Month of Ramadan to avoid such accidents, Al Mazrouei stressed: “Be patient while driving. Dubai Police are exerting all efforts to ensure residents have a peaceful Holy Month by regulating traffic, addressing traffic bottlenecks, and facilitating the movement of vehicles entering and leaving Dubai. But drivers must do their part.”

He also warned the public of the dangers of overspeeding on the road, following

reports in February 2021 that a vehicle flipped over after crashing with another car. “We received a report about a speeding vehicle that deviated from its lane and collided so hard with another vehicle that it veered off the road and turned over. The crash left both vehicles severely damaged, and resulted in two injuries, one of which was serious,” said Al Mazrouei.

In Ajman, the authorities released several videos of vehicular accidents, including those from speeding and swerving. One of these videos showed a vehicle that was supposed to be in the

rightmost lane, but the driver accelerated and swerved to make a left turn. This caused his vehicle to crash with two others. A statement said, “Ajman Police call on drivers to follow road lanes and cross properly in order to avoid accidents, as well as loss of life and property.”

STOP SWERVING

In Sharjah, more than 64 road accidents in 2020 were caused by motorists who suddenly swerved and changed their lanes without notifying their fellow drivers. This prompted the Traffic and Patrols

Department of Sharjah Police General Command to launch its latest online campaign, titled ‘Stick to Your Lane, Secure Your Safety’.

Captain Saud Al Shaiba, Director of the Traffic Awareness and Information Branch at Sharjah Police, underscored that this campaign aims to reduce traffic accidents and related injuries and deaths. The campaign, he added, comprises social media videos, messages, and electronic advertisements on the building façade of commercial centres across Sharjah. The messages — in Arabic, English, and Urdu — remind drivers to follow the correct procedures when using the road.

4 COMPONENTS THAT DETERMINE YOUR VEHICLE’S TOTAL STOPPING DISTANCE

Road Safety UAE has outlined several factors that contribute to where your vehicle will end up if you need to hit the brakes.

Your car doesn’t stop as soon as you hit the brakes; it’s carried forward by momentum before coming to rest. Hence, traffic authorities in the UAE promote the two-second rule — that’s the time required to close the gap between two cars in case of sudden braking by the driver in front, forcing the driver behind to brake as well.

- 1 **HUMAN PERCEPTION:** Time for the brain to react to the imminent danger
- 2 **MIND-BODY COORDINATION:** Time taken for the body to act upon the brain’s instructions
- 3 **VEHICLE REACTION TIME:** Your vehicle’s brake pedal free play and hydraulic properties also play key roles in determining if your vehicle will stop at your intended distance. This is why good motorists regularly check the functions of their brakes.
- 4 **VEHICLE BRAKING CAPABILITY:** Apart from your brake functions, other factors are your tyre pressure, total car weight, weather, and street conditions.

FORGIVE ME?

MORE AND MORE FAMILIES IN THE UAE ARE SAYING 'YES' TO RECONCILIATION DURING THE PANDEMIC — THIS IS A BRIGHT RAY OF LIGHT CUTTING THROUGH A BLEAK SITUATION

BY HEBA HASHEM



It's no secret that COVID-19 has affected many marriages and friendships. Around the world, relationships have been strained under the pressures of border closures, job losses, school closures, economic uncertainty, and the sheer difference in opinion amongst people with regard to the pandemic and their role in it. However, this very same crisis has led to something beneficial for many families — in view of the enormity of the global situation, many people who had fallen out with each other have now got back together, realising that life is short and some fights are not worth it.

That was the case for Rana (real name withheld), who had been divorced for six months when COVID-19 restrictions

came into effect in March 2020. She had been going through a rough patch with her spouse for two long years before they took the painful decision to part ways.

As a work-from-home mum, Rana proposed to take care of their son, and her husband promised to visit regularly. But as the movement restrictions came into effect, he couldn't do that anymore, and the unexpected separation took its toll on the couple's well-being.

"When I realised that my son wouldn't be able to see his father for several weeks, I started to question whether we had made the right decision [to divorce]. I felt anxious as the pandemic got worse, and I needed emotional support," said the Dubai-based Lebanese expat. Out of that anxiety emerged the solution for mending their broken relationship.

Rana said, "Once the movement restrictions started to ease up, we met a few times and tried to resolve our issues. We talked about everything: our worries and disappointments, and what made us fall in love in the first place. We had been married for seven years, and we had many good memories. Like any person, my spouse has his flaws, but I focused on his good points. We finally decided to put the past behind us, start fresh, and remarry."

GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

In the UAE, the pandemic has somehow encouraged more married couples to settle their disputes amicably. As much as 89 per cent of 11,003 family dispute cases in Abu Dhabi led to reconciliation in 2020, according to statistics from the Family Guidance Section of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department (ADJD). This represents a 17 per cent increase from the 2019 reconciliation rate of 72 per cent. A total of 13,950 counselling services were provided to couples and families last year, according to the department.

“The increase in the rate of family reconciliation during the year 2020, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, reflects the magnitude of efforts made to help spouses resolve disputes and reach settlements and amicable solutions



HE CHANCELLOR YOSUF ALABRI
Abu Dhabi Judicial Department Undersecretary

Similarly, in the Northern Emirates of Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, and Umm Al Quwain, divorce rates decreased by 15.9 per cent during the pandemic, as 618 couples filed for divorce in 2020 compared to 735 in 2019.

The UAE's family law has played a big role in bringing down divorce rates, as counselling sessions have always been mandatory for couples before they could file for divorce. Recent government efforts are also contributing further to reducing the likelihood of divorce.

"The increase in the rate of family reconciliation during the year 2020, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, reflects the magnitude of efforts made to help spouses resolve disputes and reach settlements and amicable solutions," said HE Chancellor Yosuf Alabri, Abu Dhabi Judicial Department Undersecretary.

One such effort is a new strategy that's

FAMILY WINS DURING THE PANDEMIC

89 per cent

Percentage of family dispute cases (9,792) that led to reconciliation in Abu Dhabi in 2020

17 per cent

Increase in family reconciliation in Abu Dhabi in 2020

15.9 per cent

Percentage decrease of divorce rates in the Northern Emirates of Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, and Umm Al Quwain in 2020

13,950

Total number of counselling services provided to couples and families in Abu Dhabi in 2020

Source: Family Guidance Section of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department

“The strategy will focus on its initial stages of developing initiatives that contribute to ensuring the quality of life for families, the youth, and senior citizens



DR BUSHRA AL MULLA

Executive Director of the Community Development Sector at the Department of Community Development in Abu Dhabi

being prepared by the Department of Community Development in Abu Dhabi to enhance the well-being of families. Announced in May 2020, the project involves studying and analysing social challenges that affect families' quality of life, including factors related to the pandemic.

According to Dr Bushra Al Mulla, Executive Director of the Community Development Sector at the Department of Community Development in Abu Dhabi, the data from the results would be applied through a set of programmes and initiatives after being studied and recommended in the new strategy. “The strategy will focus in its initial stages on studying the challenges related to the current situation with the spread of the coronavirus pandemic and developing initiatives that contribute to ensuring the quality of life for families, the

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The ‘Reconciliation is Better’ programme, being run by ADJD after its launching in September 2020, was designed to help spouses overcome difficulties in their marriages and resolve disputes

“When we go through something this serious, the real deep connections that we have in life are what matter the most. Working on these relationships is the best investment we can make



DALIA SHEIHA

Marriage and family therapist at Authenticity Coaching and Consultancy in Dubai

youth, and senior citizens,” she said in a statement last year.

Another initiative is the ‘Reconciliation is Better’ programme run by ADJD. Launched in September 2020, it was designed to help spouses overcome difficulties in their marriages and resolve disputes. The programme consists of counselling sessions by social, psychological, and legal counsellors to discuss couples' problems, explore their causes, and suggest remedies. It also includes a follow-up plan to ensure compliance with reconciliation agreements and eliminate any obstacles that come up during implementation.

REKINDLING THE LOVE

“COVID-19 has changed our lives in significant ways, especially intimate relationships and the way families function. Prior to that, everyone was out and about, busy with their lives. All of a sudden, the pandemic came up and we found ourselves cramped together in one house, having to deal with one another on a daily basis for so many hours,” said Dalia Sheiha, Marriage and Family Therapist at Authenticity Coaching and Consultancy in Dubai, speaking to 999.

While the pandemic has disrupted well-established routines that offered comfort, stability, and rhythm, it has also made people realise the importance of relationships. Whether stuck together at home for days, or whether separated for

weeks by the mobility restrictions, people have discovered new things about their relationships, learned to weed out the problems, and found a way to ask for and offer forgiveness.

“The message it has given us is that there's nothing more important than family. When we go through something this serious, the real deep connections that we have in life are what matter the most. Working on these relationships is the best investment we can make,” said Sheiha, the first and only certified Emotionally Focused Therapist in the Arab World.

For Rana and her spouse, the separation caused by COVID-19 helped

COUPLES SPEAK

“Once the movement restrictions started to ease up, we met a few times and tried to resolve our issues. We talked about everything: our worries and disappointments, and what made us fall in love in the first place. We had been married for seven years, and we had many good memories. Like any person, my spouse has his flaws, but I focused on his good points. We finally decided to put the past behind us, start fresh, and remarry

- Rana, Dubai-based Lebanese expat

“We went for online couples therapy and it really made a huge difference. We learned how to communicate and express our discontentment in a healthier way. As we practised these new skills, things took a turn for the better and we actually grew closer than before

- Joanna, a South African expat in Abu Dhabi

“It wasn't just about financial support; I needed emotional support. We used to be inseparable in our teenage years. We patched up and I even went to India and stayed with him for a week. It felt good to reconcile with my brother after such a long time; it was the best thing to come out of this pandemic for me

- Rajeev, Dubai-born Indian expat

“ Couples have said, ‘When I had COVID, I was looked after very well. My partner was really there for me.’ It makes couples think, ‘Life is short, let’s bury the grudges and resentments and try to find a way forward



NICOLA BEER

Dubai-based Relationship Counsellor

them appreciate what they had. For other couples, being home-bound is what gave them the opportunity to build a stronger, more intimate bond.

Nicola Beer, a Dubai-based Relationship Counsellor who has more than 200 podcast episodes on how to save a marriage, said that many positives had come out of the pandemic, especially in the Arabian Gulf region, where expatriates often led a hectic lifestyle and constantly travelled for business prior to the “new normal”. Speaking to **999**, she said, “Many people in this region were struggling in their relationships because they weren’t having quality time together. Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in the UAE last year, they have been able to have a lot more quality time, because they weren’t travelling. Those couples who were struggling to spend time together have really enjoyed having more time with each other.

“Also, sometimes couples who were working would have conflicts over who’d be picking up the children and driving them to after-school activities. So, not having to take the children to all their different clubs [during the school closures] gave them more couple time.”

In the summer, a lot of the families in the region traditionally had an arrangement where the father would stay back and work at his job as usual, and the mother and children would visit their hometown.



Such arrangements often caused a disconnection and distance and sometimes depression for the father; this was avoided last year with COVID-19, according to Beer.

Moreover, many couples grew closer when one or both of them tested positive for the novel coronavirus. “Couples have said, ‘When I had COVID, I was looked after very well. My partner was really there for me. They made my meals, and stayed by my side.’ Others who got it at the same time made it through together. Often with all these health scares, it makes couples think, ‘Life is short, let’s bury the grudges and resentments and try to find a way forward,’” said Beer.

A study from researchers at the University of Bath in the United Kingdom and the University of Lisbon in Portugal, published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* in January 2021, found that the

COVID-19 lockdowns provided some unexpected benefits to caregivers.

As many as 48 per cent of the 385 respondents, who were predominantly mothers, said that they spent more time with their families, which led to closer relationships and a better understanding of each other. Some also said that they appreciated being more involved in their children’s lives.





DEVELOPING EMPATHY

According to Beer, prior to the pandemic, many relationships had been functioning well because the two partners had their own spaces. Those who enjoyed having the house to themselves when their partner went out to work or on business trips were significantly affected because of having too much time together. They had to learn to communicate better with each other and try to empathise with the other's situation, and this benefited their marriage.

This is what Joanna and Steve (real names withheld), a South African couple living in Abu Dhabi, experienced when the stay-at-home measures were implemented in the early stages of the novel coronavirus outbreak. Being constantly together brought their existing problems into a much sharper focus.

"We both had to work from home without much advance notice, and our two children had to study from home as well. It was too much. We were getting on each other's nerves all the time," said Joanna. A drastic increase in her domestic workload as she home-schooled her children and tackled household duties also led to frustration. At the same time, her partner found it difficult to concentrate on his work at home and had to make conference calls amidst the constant noise.

The relationship was on the verge of a breakdown, prompting Joanna to seek

help from a marriage expert, and she persuaded Steve to participate. "We went for online couples therapy and it really made a huge difference. We learned how to communicate and express our discontentment in a healthier way. As we practised these new skills, things took a turn for the better and we actually grew closer than before."

Since the pandemic started, Sheiha has seen several couples like Joanna and Steve, who were having underlying issues that were brought to the surface by the pandemic. "The problem starts at home, with the way couples express their frustration, anger or pressure. It causes more disconnection and conflict.

In therapy, we help them to express their frustration and anger in a way where the other person can have compassion, listen, and feel how hard it is for the other person. This is what real forgiveness is about," said Sheiha.

Working women were affected even more, she noted, because they weren't only wearing the hats of the employee, the wife, and the mother, but also of the home-schooling teacher. "All of a sudden, the woman found herself with her husband and kids in the house. This was overwhelming for many women but also for men, who were not used to spending so many hours at home and dealing with their children. The woman was feeling



burdened with more chores to do and she felt like she wasn't getting the help she needed from her spouse; he now considered the house as his office, so his view was 'why should I be doing anything extra,'" explained Sheiha.

These changes caused tremendous agitation and sometimes aggression; couples were being easily triggered by one another, and conflicts increased. Such challenging times require us to shift our perspectives, have more compassion for one another, and forgive and understand each other. And many couples have, either on their own or with help, achieved this. Seeing their relationship pushed to the brink, they managed to pull themselves back to safety.

FAMILY MATTERS

Dubai-born Indian expat Rajeev managed to overcome a rift within his family during the peak of the pandemic. After losing his job because of staff reductions in his company, he spiralled

into depression and loneliness. Most of his friends had moved back to India, and he had no relatives in town. That's when Rajeev decided to reach out to his elder brother back home, with whom he had not been in touch for years due to major conflicts in their shared past.

"It wasn't just about financial support; I needed emotional support. We used to be inseparable in our teenage years. He was surprised to hear from me but also pleased, and as I expected, he was there for me. We patched up and I even went to India and stayed with him for a week. It felt good to reconcile with my brother after such a long time; it was the best thing to come out of this pandemic for me," said Rajeev.

According to Sheiha, forgiveness is not only about the problem being solved, but also about expressing our pain in a vulnerable way and getting an empathetic response from the person we care about. "It's about how we can express all of our emotions in a way that allows the people

we love and care about to really want to be there for us, not in a way that pushes them away," she said.

At the same time, the therapist cautioned against emotional reactivity, one of the biggest problems to emerge during the pandemic. The tendency to overreact to situations has been creating a lot of dysfunction in family relationships as people have been getting easily triggered by the social and economic pressures and their fear of the pandemic itself.

"Every member of the family should be aware of their own triggers. A lot of us during the pandemic forget that we're human. It's okay to feel sad, scared, and frustrated," advised Sheiha. "When we feel those feelings, it's okay to just sit with them and see what these emotions are trying to tell us. They're probably trying to tell us to take it easy, take it day by day, or to lower our expectations. Once we have this awareness — that it's mostly about us, not the other person — we can handle it because we can own it."

TIPS TO STOP THE PANDEMIC STRESS

Dalia Sheiha, marriage and family therapist at Authenticity Coaching and Consultancy in Dubai, says:

- **Practise self-care and self-love.** Recharge your batteries and be kinder to yourself. We're experiencing a new way of living, so we're grieving the "old normal" life we had. With grief, comes a lot of different emotions — sadness, fear, loneliness — and that's okay.
- **Choose love and compassion.** Learn to practise this over being right and trying to prove yourself. It's a choice we make every single day.
- **Function from a place of curiosity.** When you can tell that something is not right with your spouse, instead of blaming, criticising, or defending it, be curious about what's going on with them, without any judgements. Just be there, actively listen, and be empathetic.
- **Don't hold 'score sheets' for one another.** Choose to let go and don't hold on to grudges and resentments. This only takes its toll on you physically and emotionally and causes more disconnection.
- **Communicate openly.** Talk about your needs, fears, and expectations from a place of vulnerability, not from a place of reactivity.

Nicola Beer, Dubai-based Relationship Counsellor, says:

- **Create good routines that support both you and your spouse,** whether that's a home-schooling routine or a weekend routine. If you plan things together, you're not going to be disappointed.
- **Understand what you can do to keep your relationship alive during these times.** If you're unable to go out or travel, what are the things you can look forward to? We always need things to look forward to.
- **You've got to have at least an hour to wind down.** It's important to make sure that before we sleep, we're putting positive things into our minds. Whatever you absorb and consume before you go to bed will play in your subconscious mind for eight hours.





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

RAMADAN 2021: A MIX OF ANXIETY AND AWARENESS

The continued implementation of safety restrictions against COVID-19 reminds us how we used to take our privileges for granted in the pre-pandemic era

The blessed month of Ramadan is with us and we have welcomed it with great joy like never before. Perhaps the reason is that it comes in the time of the novel coronavirus pandemic, which has impacted our lives as a whole.

The pandemic was totally new for everyone with all its repercussions, effects, and ways to deal with it. Last year's Ramadan was so unusual that nobody, even the older generations, had witnessed a Holy Month like this; it was the month described as "The Ramadan that we did not get used to".

This year, in the first week of Ramadan 2021, we found it different, as if we had not yet left the days of the pandemic behind us, as if we had not passed the stage of national sterilisation, as if we had not gone beyond this ordeal. Anxiety exists and is evident in the social distancing that we still must practise, the visits that have been limited, and the Ramadan tents that have been cancelled. These restrictions are necessary despite the UAE's commendable management of the crisis with multi-pronged measures, the most prominent of which is the vaccination campaign against COVID-19, which has so far reached 8 million doses.

Despite the awareness of people and the continued implementation of precautionary measures, the novel coronavirus has managed to claim lives and leave people struggling with loss and grief. The anxiety amongst the people is surrounded by caution, and the mind continues its search for salvation from this crisis and a return to our shining lives.

A little deprivation combined with a lot of commitment means that we will progress towards a future without concern, one without a pandemic, taking us back to our normal work and life. We will realise the blessings we lost, after they were available in

all forms and yet we complained. In the Holy Month, our anxiety has turned into spiritual energy, unleashed by returning to mosques and praying together.

Anxiety brought us back to our families, after a long period of being distracted by life's rapid rhythm and its demands on our capabilities. Our energy was wasted on unnecessary matters rather than on priorities, especially our elders and children. During the pandemic, staying with our family became the best option for individuals, given the travel restrictions and border closures.

We are not negative or pessimistic, but we analyse the situation from our current reality. Whoever claims that Ramadan 2021 is like the Holy Month in any other year is exaggerating. The scenario is different and quite predictable, in light of the current situation, not only for the UAE but for the entire world. Many countries are still suffering from the impacts of the pandemic that forced them to continue with months of closure. That leads us to wonder about how these countries would recover from the economic setbacks that require a

Anxiety brought us back to our families, after a long period of being distracted by life's rapid rhythm and its demands on our capabilities

lifetime to overcome.

What matters during this year's Ramadan in the UAE is that we are happy with what we have accomplished before Ramadan, which we welcomed and considered a 'warrior's break', a warrior that the pandemic could not stop from moving towards the future with remarkable achievements from the Hope Probe to Mars and the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant, to the relationships we made, the initiatives we announced, and the bridges of hope we extended to the world.

Ramadan Kareem to all!

YAY OR NAY FOR VACCINE SELFIES?



THE INTERNET IS REAPING A RICH HARVEST OF IMAGES POSTED BY PEOPLE WHO'VE HAD THEIR COVID-19 INOCULATION. **999** LOOKS INTO THIS NEWEST SOCIAL MEDIA TREND AND ITS IMPACT

BY SANCHITA GUHA



To share or not to share, that is seldom or never a question for social network users. Any significant moment — from drinking coffee on a rainy day to celebrating an anniversary — requires a selfie for the 24x7 connected population; so, it's a no-brainer that most such Internet users would see getting the COVID-19 vaccine as a selfie-worthy occasion and post it online.

As vaccine rollouts around the world have picked up pace in the past several weeks, there has been an explosion of hashtags such as #vaccineselfie, #igottheshot, #gotthevaccine, #gotthejab, and similar.

This category of selfie

represents a moment of triumph for the individual and for medical science, as all the COVID-19 vaccines now available around the world were made and tested in record time, shrinking the usual vaccine development-and-trial timeline of several years to just a few months, thanks to the pharmaceutical sector going into

an overdrive to counter the contagion.

In the UAE, the nation's leaders have been seen taking the vaccine in officially published photos (not selfies) to boost public confidence in taking the jab — the top leaders in these 'vaccine portraits' include His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and His

Highness Lt General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. Elsewhere, American President Joe Biden, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have been officially photographed taking their shot.

Well, then, with so much enthusiasm from the public and such a lot of official endorsement from world leaders, a visual post showing one taking the COVID-19 vaccine must be a good thing? Not for everyone. Speaking to **999**, a 30-year-old British expat who gave his name only as Joe, said that he didn't post a vaccine selfie, as it felt too much like bragging. "It's like taking a video of yourself doing a good deed.

The intention of that good deed video wasn't to do something nice, it was to be seen doing something nice. The intention of a vaccination selfie isn't to be protected; it's to be seen [as] being 'the better person'. Get your vaccine, stay safe and stop posting about it," said Joe, who participated in the **999** straw poll on the subject of "Yay or nay for vaccine selfies?"

The straw poll



“

From the United States to India, government authorities and private entities in a range of countries have set up ‘selfie stations’, where people who’ve just got a shot can click a photo alongside some sort of an upbeat message related to vaccination

covered a small but well-represented expat population of seven nationalities: British, American, Swedish, Ukrainian, Indian, Filipino, Zimbabwean. That’s four continents and diverse mass media cultures touched upon in this magazine’s quest to find out what the vaccine selfie means for people. And we found that for both the “yay” (72 per cent) and “nay” (28 per cent) groups, the action of posting or not posting a photo is a well-considered one.

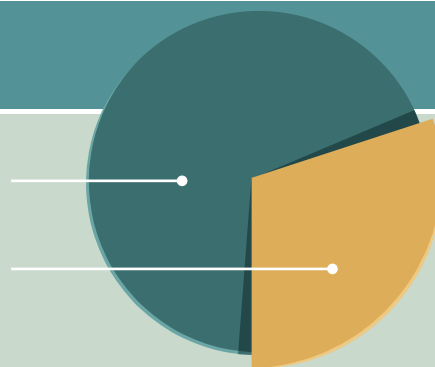
On one side, selfie-averse Joe is joined by 30-year-old British national Shannon (“vaccine selfie is too attention-seeking”); and 34-year-old Indian national Sarath Kumar (“I don’t think I’m doing anything special to put up on social media”).

On the other side are people like 32-year-old British expat Belinda, whose

999 STRAW POLL

72 PER CENT
YES TO VACCINE SELFIE

28 PER CENT
NO TO VACCINE SELFIE



RESPONSES

BRITISH EXPAT BELINDA

I did it to encourage others to get their vaccines. If people are unsure or on the fence, if they see others having done it and nothing going wrong, that'll give them more assurance to do it themselves

UKRAINIAN EXPAT ANDRII

99 per cent were supportive and asked if there were any side effects, [and] 1 per cent said it's reckless

BRITISH EXPAT JOE

The intention of a vaccination selfie isn't to be protected; it's to be seen as being 'the better person'. Get your vaccine, stay safe and stop posting about it

FILIPINA EXPAT JANE EMBOLTORIO

[I took the selfie] just to encourage [people] to do the vaccination because of this pandemic situation, to prevent the spreading of the virus all over the world

INDIAN NATIONAL SARATH KUMAR

I don't think I'm doing anything special to put up on social media

AMERICAN EXPAT JUDY ABUHJLEH

I think it helped people show some relief and solidarity

vaccine selfie was received extremely well by her social media circle. Asked by 999 how they reacted to her post, she said, “Everybody was super supportive. Lots of comments and thumbs ups.” Her reason for posting the photo goes way beyond showing everyone the personal privilege of getting a vaccine dose; she intends to allay vaccine fears through the image. “[I did

it] to encourage others to [get] their vaccines. If people are unsure or on the fence, if they see others having done it and nothing going wrong, that'll give them more assurance to do it themselves,” she said.

All the other 999 straw poll respondents who’ve posted vaccine selfies cited similar reasons: “to encourage others” and “increase awareness” and more on those lines. “[I took the selfie] just to

encourage [people] to do the vaccination because of this pandemic situation, to prevent the spreading of the virus all over the world,” said 38-year-old Filipina expat Jane Emboltorio. For her part, 64-year-old American Judy Abuhijleh said, “I think it helped people show some relief and solidarity.”

The vaccine selfies are also triggering conversations, with friends and acquaintances seeking advice and information from those who’ve already got the jab. For 33-year-old Andrii, an expat from Ukraine, the social media reaction to her vaccine selfie was just great. She told this magazine that “99 per cent were supportive and asked if there were any side effects, [and] 1 per cent said it’s reckless”.

SELFIE STATIONS

From the United States to India, government authorities and private entities in a range of countries have set up ‘selfie stations’, where people who’ve just got a shot can click a photo alongside some sort of an upbeat message related to vaccination. This nudge approach helps



A selfie station set up at a mass vaccination site in New Jersey, US



Elvis Presley receiving his polio vaccination

NYC Municipal Archives

WHEN 'THE KING' GOT HIS SHOT

A host of showbiz personalities around the world have been posting their COVID-19 vaccine selfies, and in some cases, it's not just a spur-of-the-moment decision. In America, the Biden administration is collaborating with leading entertainers to spread the message of wearing a mask and taking the vaccine.

That recalls the iconic 1956 photograph of Elvis Presley, the King of Rock 'n' Roll, freeze-framing the moment when he took the polio vaccine live on television, on The Ed Sullivan Show. It was much more than a celebrity moment; it was a call to millions of young adult Americans to sign up for the vaccine at a time when polio plagued the country. Children were being given the polio shot, first developed around 1955 by the American scientist Dr Jonas Salk, but teenagers and people in their twenties were reluctant to take it.

The sight of an inoculated Elvis Presley, then aged just 21, catalysed tens of thousands of fans into taking their own polio vaccine, slowing down the spread of the disease in America.

spread the word about getting the jab and breaks down vaccine hesitancy among those who haven't come forward yet.

A CNN Business report published in March 2021 captured what might be described as the vaccine zeitgeist. Speaking to the news agency, Daniel Moise, Director of Communications and Engagement at Virtua Health, a not-for-profit New Jersey-based health system, explained its rationale for a selfie station when inoculating its own staff in mid-December 2020. "From the first day, we realised that our frontline employees were eager to document this major moment in their lives, and so we created a 'selfie station' in the observation area of our

clinic," said Daniel Moise. "It proved instantly popular with most employees stopping to take a photo."

In January 2021, when Virtua Health partnered a vaccine mega-site in New Jersey, it used a similar strategy, giving selfie-lovers a chance to be photographed near the exit, holding paddle signs that said, "I Got My COVID-19 Vaccine!" and "First Dose!" The paddles were sanitised after every photograph.

Rachel Blades, a speech pathologist who works with adults of all ages in Kentucky, US, said that she took a selfie to dispel misinformation and also to honour her grandfather, who succumbed to COVID-19 in April 2020. "I shared as a way for people

to see real people choosing to get the vaccine," she told CNN Business.

In Delhi, one of the 'high-burden states' in India during the peak pandemic months of 2020, there was a concerted effort from the start of the 2021 rollout to make vaccination a cheerful event, something to be proud of. At Lok Nayak Hospital, one of the major medical establishments in New Delhi, the administration invited both hospital staff and the general public to take a selfie after getting inoculated. "We have created a 'selfie point' for those getting vaccinated, so they can be promoted on social media. As soon as the beneficiary comes out of the vaccination centre, the staff outside the room hands them a rose while others cheer," said Dr Suresh Kumar, Medical Director of the hospital, speaking to the media in January 2021.

VACCINE HEARTACHE

There's little doubt that spontaneously posted vaccine selfies can give government campaigns a shot in the arm, breaking down myths around vaccination and inviting others to come forward and get their dose, because that's the only way for the world economies to reopen safely.

However, there has been anger against vaccine selfies in some parts of the world. That's not because those feeling upset have anything against vaccines; it's because they want vaccines but can't hope to get a jab anytime soon. The UAE, fortunately, is a highly organised country with a relatively small population, and the government has made the vaccine available to everyone free of cost — few others have created such beneficial circumstances.

As news headlines have been informing us, many rich countries are stockpiling vaccines in multiples of their entire population, whereas many less affluent nations are yet to get enough doses for even an initial rollout of any significance. That's a disparity the international community can't afford. As the World Health Organization said: "No one is safe until everyone is safe."

The UAE, which has been leading from the front at the international level all through the pandemic, spearheaded the launch of the HOPE Consortium in November 2020. The Abu Dhabi-headquartered Consortium, a complete

“Our destiny as nations is linked, as global health security depends on the well-being of all societies. The faster we can vaccinate populations, while ensuring equitable and fair access to vaccines in a cost-effective manner, the faster we can overcome the virus and begin to recover globally



HE SHEIKH ABDULLAH BIN ZAYED AL NAHYAN

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

global supply chain solution designed to facilitate vaccine availability across the world, had its first summit on March 29-30, 2021. Speaking at the summit, HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, said, “Our destiny as nations is linked, as global health security depends on the well-being of all societies... Our HOPE Consortium has gathered expertise to secure more vaccines for all world



countries. The faster we can vaccinate populations, while ensuring equitable and fair access to vaccines in a cost-effective manner, the faster we can overcome the virus and begin to recover globally.”

Even within high-income countries, the vaccine distribution isn’t uniform across regions and this has caused heartache. The website of The Conversation, a collaboration between academia and journalism that publishes research-based news and analysis, had an article titled ‘Posting COVID-19 vaccine selfies on social media can cause anger, frustration’ in February 2021. Quoting frontline healthcare workers in Canada, it assessed the impact of vaccine selfies on the minds of those who needed a dose urgently but hadn’t received it, despite the wide availability of vaccines in their country.

Speaking to the correspondent, Alan Drummond, an emergency physician in Perth, Ontario, referred to the vaccine queue-jumping by those who didn’t work with coronavirus-infected patients, getting ahead of the frontliners who were more at risk. “The inequities are starting to show.... We need an appropriate queue — we certainly aren’t in it. And [the selfies are] the icing on the cake,” he said.

This heartache is happening in the US, too, where COVID-19 numbers are very high. The abovementioned CNN Business report quotes Shira Gabriel Klaiman, Associate Professor of Psychology at the

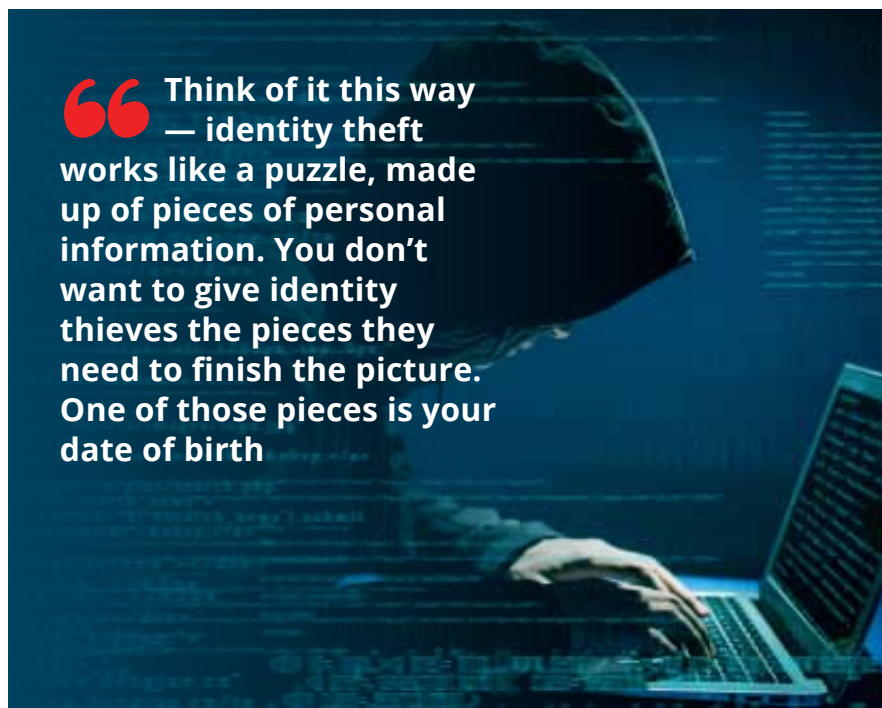
University of Buffalo, as saying that there was a “very real negative” to vaccine selfies. “Many people are reporting feeling jealous or even depressed when they see that other people are getting a shot and they don’t even know when they will be eligible... People who don’t have time to hunt down appointments may be envious when they see that others have them,” said Klaiman.

CAREFUL WITH THE CARD

Our social media posts, exhilarating as they are, can sometimes lead us to trouble. Identity theft is always a possibility; giving away too much information is unwise even in a joyous moment. Those warnings apply to vaccine selfies, too.

Even a brief look at Instagram reveals that out of the nearly 32,000 images hashtagged #igotheshot, quite a few are photos of vaccination record cards. Some of the images are only of the cards, and some have both the card and the person who has been vaccinated.

In the US, the physical paper card issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the only authentic proof of vaccination as yet; therefore, many see it as a prized possession to be flaunted online, which isn’t a good idea at all. This card contains the vaccinated person’s name and date of birth, followed by vaccination details — the first two bits of information leave a person open to identity theft. Some of the selfie posters have shown the presence of mind to ink out the date of birth, but many haven’t.



“ Think of it this way — identity theft works like a puzzle, made up of pieces of personal information. You don’t want to give identity thieves the pieces they need to finish the picture. One of those pieces is your date of birth

“ You’re posting a photo of your vaccination card on social media. Please — don’t do that. You could be inviting identity theft



SEENA GRESSIN

Attorney, Division of Consumer & Business Education of the US Federal Trade Commission

Is it such a risky proposition to let people see one’s date of birth? It may be, if scammers have managed to gather other data about a person and need only the DOB, which is very frequently used for identity authentication across the world.

In her February 2021 blog post on the website of the US Federal Trade Commission, blog author Seena Gressin, Attorney, Division of Consumer & Business Education, FTC, headlined her article as ‘Social media is no place for COVID-19 vaccination cards’, making the message as abundantly clear as possible. “Some of you are celebrating your second COVID-19 vaccination with the giddy enthusiasm that’s usually reserved for weddings, new babies, and other life events. You’re posting a

photo of your vaccination card on social media. Please — don’t do that! You could be inviting identity theft,” wrote Gressin.

The blog explained why: “Think of it this way — identity theft works like a puzzle, made up of pieces of personal information. You don’t want to give identity thieves the pieces they need to finish the picture. One of those pieces is your date of birth. For example, just by knowing your date and place of birth, scammers sometimes can guess most of the digits of your [United States]

Social Security number. Once identity thieves have the pieces they need, they can use the information to open new accounts in your name, claim your tax refund for themselves, and engage in other identity theft.”

As 999 has reported in some earlier issues, the COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to all kinds of scams, including fake job offer scams, so it’s best not to hand the scammers personal details such as full name and DOB on a platter through a vaccine selfie. The precious vaccine is to keep all of us safe — that purpose would be served if people are as careful about their data as they are about their health.



A look back at UAE's first hotel

STANDING ON THE SHARJAH AIRFIELD AND HOUSED WITHIN
A FORTIFIED BUILDING, THE BOAC REST HOUSE OFFERED
WESTERN HOSPITALITY TO INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

BY JEREMY SIMON

Modern UAE is a fascinating blend of infrastructure engineering and aesthetic architecture, two factors that make the country a powerhouse of construction and tourism. UAE hotels are the stuff of legend, especially the glittering Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi; the iconic Burj Al Arab in Dubai; the magnificent Atlantis, The Palm; and the chic Armani hotel inside Burj Khalifa. But before all of them, there was the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) Rest House in the 1930s, the first-ever hotel to be established in the region.

As thousands of hotels across the UAE get ready this year to welcome the World Expo 2020, it calls for a trip down memory lane to learn about the BOAC Rest House and its humble beginnings.

According to WAM, the hotel was established at the Sharjah airfield. At that time, Imperial Airways was the British carrier serving long-range flight routes in Asia and Africa. This company was later merged with British Airways. The resultant entity was called BOAC, formed in 1939. As an ode to the UAE's heritage of culture and art, the Rest House was used as an overnight stop on the route connecting the United Kingdom and India.

According to an article in Liwa, a journal published by the UAE's National Archives, one wing of the rectangle-shaped defensive building at the



The Rest House guest wing, with a shaded sitting area above. The garage (L) and the Met station occupy much of the courtyard (1940-1941)

Sharjah airfield was allocated for guest rooms of the Rest House. The hospitality space had six single rooms

and three double rooms, with a total capacity of 12 persons.

“

Furnished and managed as per the lodging standards of the West, this hotel became a popular hub for visiting businessmen and others. It was also the only air-conditioned hotel until the early 1960s

RULING THE TRUCIAL STATES

The BOAC Rest House was the only hotel in the Trucial States, the umbrella term for the territories ruled by sheikhs under protective treaties signed with the British government. Furnished and managed as per the lodging standards of the West, this hotel became a popular hub for visiting diplomats, businessmen and others. It was also the only air-conditioned hotel until the early 1960s.

Nicholas Stanley-Price, an archaeologist, writes that many visitors to the Trucial States in the 1950s and 1960s referred to the BOAC Rest House as the only accommodation available in the vicinity of Sharjah and Dubai.



The Rest House after undergoing an extension (1945)



Harold Dunn with a visiting official of the Trucial State in the courtyard of the Rest House (1952-1953)

IMPORTANT GUESTS

The Rest House catered to important visitors, such as Bahrain-based British diplomats on their duty tour of the Trucial Coast as well as businessmen and entrepreneurs who visited Sharjah and Dubai.

Moreover, the Rest House indirectly contributed to the establishment of what became the British Bank of the Middle East and the Al Maktoum Hospital in Dubai. Some of the personnel connected to these institutions, which were then under construction, stayed in this hotel and commuted to Dubai or Sharjah. The founders and owners of the hospital also resided for extended periods at the BOAC Rest House, according to archaeologist Stanley-Price.

HOTELS GET BUSY FOR MEGA-EVENT



The World Expo is set to welcome 190 participating countries and an estimated 25 million visitors. Aside from giving visitors a chance to appreciate the architecture and engineering feat of each UAE hotel, the Expo will also offer them warm Emirati hospitality and showcase the values of inclusion, tolerance, and cooperation.



Clive Adams with the head guard at the Rest House entrance (1940-1941)

The hotel was visited by eminent guests during a two-week period in November 1949. Then, around 1957, the oilman and explorer Wendell Phillips arrived in Dubai, to be told that the only real accommodation was the BOAC Rest House.

The author has quoted the novelist Hammond Innes as saying in 1954 that the rest house was “no more than an airport transit hotel” and that “for a desert hostel, it is incredibly good”, while surmising that one day, Sharjah would become a colourful winter resort for rich travellers.

OASIS OF COOL

For a long time, the BOAC Rest House retained its supremacy as the only air-conditioned hotel in the cluster of emirates.

Stanley-Price notes that the Airlines Hotel in Dubai, which opened in 1961, was not air-conditioned. The construction of modern hotels in Sharjah had to wait until the end of the 1960s, when three opened — the Seaface on the waterfront, in the former residence of the British Political Agent; the Sheba in the new town; and the Carlton, which is still operating today, near the beach in the Al Khan area, according to the National Archives journal.

In the 1960s, an Egyptian journalist named Salim Zabbal called the BOAC Rest House the “only hotel in all the Trucial Coast that provided a good meal and an air-conditioned room for sleeping”.



The cistern in the courtyard of the Rest House (1933)

ROAD SAFETY AND RAMADAN

THE HOLY MONTH, A TIME OF SERENITY AND HARMONY, SEES AN UNFORTUNATE SPIKE IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS EVERY YEAR. ALREADY STRETCHED BY BATTLING THE PANDEMIC, POLICE FORCES ARE URGING MOTORISTS TO BEHAVE BETTER

BY MIKE PETRELLI

The spirit of Ramadan teaches people to take control of their lives through self-discipline. This extends to everyday actions, such as driving, which requires both technical skill and respect for other road users. However, both of these are often missing in some motorists whose disregard for everyone else shatters the peace of the Holy Month. Consequently, police forces across the UAE become extra-vigilant during Ramadan and also increase their awareness campaigns on safe driving habits.

Road mishaps in the Holy Month usually peak just before sunset, caused by the pre-iftar rush. Psychologically speaking, the mix of fasting, irregular sleep patterns, and high temperature can have an adverse effect on the drivers' concentration and reaction time. Nonetheless, these things are not unexpected and motorists cannot use this change in the body's rhythm as an excuse for being impatient, putting themselves and others in peril.

Ramadan 2021 is particularly significant from the law enforcement perspective, as the UAE has been moving towards normalisation following its COVID-19 vaccine rollout, but the fight against the pandemic remains. For the police and the health authorities, and several other government agencies, a fine balancing act is required to keep caseloads under control and also to let people experience the community bonding that's part of the Holy Month.

In this situation, the least that everyone behind a wheel can do is to make law-keepers life easier by driving safely.



Abu Dhabi Police run a campaign titled 'Our Month of Obedience and Commitment' urging all drivers to abide by speed limits and give themselves enough time to get to their destinations well before breakfast

With so much on their plate already, the authorities shouldn't have to worry about some motorists mindlessly hurtling through traffic and causing accidents.

Spreading the message of careful and lawful driving, Abu Dhabi Police are running a traffic campaign titled 'Our Month of Obedience and Commitment' until the end of Ramadan. The police force's Traffic and Patrols Directorate has called upon all drivers to abide by speed limits and give themselves enough time to get to their destinations well before breakfast, to avoid traffic accidents and being stuck in congested traffic flow. It also noted that a high number of traffic accidents are traditionally recorded in the evenings during the Holy Month, as many drivers tend to rush home to break their fast.

As part of the campaign, the police have also urged motorists not to stop or park

their cars in a haphazard manner, thereby hindering traffic, near mosques during the evening and Taraweeh prayers.

Police personnel at the Command and Control Centres, too, are working around the clock to receive calls from the **999** emergency hotline, dealing with accidents and other mishaps in record time. But while the police force can provide the best response rate to road mishaps, the utmost obedience of drivers is the only immediate force that can stop accidents from happening. Hence, on the first day of Ramadan, the Happiness Patrol of Abu Dhabi Police went the extra mile by handing out greeting cards to drivers, bearing a reminder to maintain safety while driving at all times.

It was explained that the initiative was one of the strategic priorities of the police, aimed at enhancing road safety through



UAE police call upon drivers to avoid illegal parking on vital roads and near mosques during prayer hours



“The launch of the campaign coincides with the advent of Ramadan. It is based on statistics for the past year showing that the number of cases of illegal parking reached 17,812, in addition to 12,927 traffic obstructions



**LT COLONEL MOHAMMAD
ALI AL NAQBI**

Director of the Traffic and Patrols Department
at Sharjah Police

awareness. “Abu Dhabi Police’s Happiness Patrol aspires to make the roads safer, as it spreads a culture of abiding by traffic regulations and encourages positivity amongst motorists. During this Holy Month, we call upon motorists to follow traffic rules, as they follow the safety protocols for COVID-19,” said Captain Khalid Obaid Al Dhaheeri, Happiness Patrol Officer.

Meanwhile, the police forces have also increased their presence on the roads to ensure safety and smooth flow of traffic

“Happiness Patrol aspires to make the roads safer, as it encourages positivity amongst motorists. During this Holy Month, we call upon motorists to follow traffic rules, as they follow the safety protocols for COVID-19



**CAPTAIN KHALID OBAID
AL DHAHERI**

Happiness Patrol Officer at Abu Dhabi Police

during Ramadan. They, too, are stressing the message of remaining considerate towards other traffic participants and pedestrians.

Brigadier Saif Al Mazroui, Director of the Traffic Department at Dubai Police, said, “I call upon people to cooperate with officers for the good of all community members.” He reiterated that “random parking near mosques or on pavements” during prayer hours created difficulties for other road users.

The Traffic and Patrols Department of Sharjah Police is running a related awareness campaign, titled ‘Avoiding Wrong Parking’, in line with the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Interior to make roads safer. Last month, Lt Colonel Mohammad Ali Al Naqbi, Director of the Traffic and Patrols Department at Sharjah Police, said, “The launch of the campaign coincides with the advent of Ramadan, as complaints of illegal parking on vital roads and near mosques, markets, commercial complexes, and busy residential neighbourhoods see a surge during this month every time of the year. This campaign aims to raise awareness amongst motorists to avoid violations while on the road, that can endanger their own lives as well as the lives of other road users. The campaign is based on statistics for the past year that show that the number of cases of illegal parking reached 17,812, in addition to 12,927 traffic obstructions.”

THE NUMBERS

45 per cent

Percentage share of road accidents in the UAE caused by young drivers aged 18-24, as per 2019 data released by the Ministry of Interior

18 years old

Legal age for driving in the UAE

342

The number of minors arrested for driving their parents’ vehicles without a licence between January and June 2019, as per Abu Dhabi Police

86

The number of underage drivers caught for the second time in 2019, according to Abu Dhabi Police

256

The number of apprehended underage drivers whose parents signed a pledge that they wouldn’t let their children drive in 2019, as per Abu Dhabi Police

Top 10 road safety tips for Ramadan

1. Be aware of your own limitations
2. Watch out for other traffic participants potentially under the same limitations
3. Expect the unexpected — we all must drive defensively
4. Plan for possible delays and add a time buffer
5. Always wear your seat belt — Ramadan is a good time to finally start this habit
6. Motorists should try to anticipate sudden movements by others, including cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians
7. Approach signals carefully at iftar time — even when the light is green — and don’t jump red lights
8. Keep a sufficient distance between vehicles and don’t tailgate
9. Avoid fatigue and get enough sleep. Pull over immediately when you becoming drowsy
10. If possible, use public transport or taxis

Source: RoadSafetyUAE



NO OFFENCE TOO SMALL

In the UAE, no traffic offence is considered too small, because these can easily snowball into bigger offences and lethal mishaps. Aside from the Ramadan-related road accidents, police in the UAE also watch out for other kinds of traffic offences. These are underage driving, playing loud music while driving a vehicle, driving in a sleep-deprived state, bad decision-making in driving, and unruly behaviour on the roads that may pose a threat to the driver himself or to other road users.

In a truly shocking incident in November 2020, on a stretch that was unlit and unpaved in the Al Gheil area in the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, a driver and his two passengers were involved in an SUV accident. They were 13, 12, and 11 years old, respectively.

The 13-year-old driver died in hospital several days after the accident, which was caused by his loss of control at the wheel; the 12-year-old passenger died on the spot; and the 11-year-old was the only survivor, though with serious injuries. As underage and, therefore, unlicensed driving goes,

“Parents who allow children below 18 to drive on the roads endanger the lives of their children and of others as well. They’ll be held accountable under the juvenile delinquency law

this had to be one of the worst examples. This incident reinforced the idea that all of society has a role in making the roads safer; law-keeping agencies alone can’t bear the responsibility.

MENACE OF UNDERAGE DRIVERS

The fatal accident caused by the underage driver in Ras Al Khaimah wasn’t the first time this has happened in recent years. In June 2016, a driver aged 17 and his two passengers aged 16 and 19 were flung out of their car, which veered off the road while speeding. The unlicensed driver and the younger passenger died in the accident.

A driver without a licence — anyone under 18 would automatically be unlicensed, but even those above 18 might be driving without a licence — has obviously not been trained properly or had his driving skills assessed by the competent authorities. The police in the UAE hold the families responsible, too, for such an illegal act committed by their children or wards.

Abu Dhabi Police data between January and June 2019 showed that 342 minors were arrested for driving their parents’ vehicles without a licence. Of these, 86 teenagers were caught driving without a licence for the second time, and the police referred them to the family court. The officers dealt with the remaining 256 arrested teenagers by calling in their parents, who signed a pledge that they wouldn’t let their children drive.

Brigadier Ahmed Al Hantubi, Deputy Director of Central Operations, Abu Dhabi Police, said that the police forces in the UAE were implementing over-arching plans to tighten supervision in the streets, especially in residential areas, to curb underage driving. Al Hantubi said, “The

“Young drivers and novice motorists (owning a driving licence between 0-5 years) cause almost half of all accidents. The lack of experience and the feeling of being invincible drives up the appetite for careless and reckless driving



THOMAS EDELMANN

Founder & Managing Director of RoadSafetyUAE

UAE traffic law requires drivers to produce a valid driving licence when requested by traffic patrol police. Parents who allow children below 18 to drive on the roads endanger the lives of their children and of others as well. They’ll be held accountable under the juvenile delinquency law.”

Traffic safety advocate Thomas Edelmann, Founder & Managing Director of the digital platform RoadSafetyUAE, explained, “The young drivers and novice motorists (owning a driving licence between 0-5 years) cause almost half of all accidents. The lack of experience and the feeling of being invincible drives up the appetite for risk and for careless and reckless driving.” This is borne out by Ministry of Interior data released in 2019, showing that 45 per cent of all road accidents in the UAE involved young drivers aged 18-24.

Ras Al Khaimah Police reminded people of the penalty: “As per Article 51 of the federal traffic law, a jail term of not less than three months and or a fine of minimum Dhs5,000 shall be slapped on anyone found guilty of driving a vehicle without a licence.”



PENALTY: Dhs5,000 or a jail term of not less than 3 months

DANGER OF LOUD MUSIC IS REAL

One of the first known entertainment accessories to be added to most vehicles was a radio, back in the 1930s. Over the decades, studies have proven a link between driving decisions and listening to music.

Research from the London Metropolitan University in 2013 revealed that the best music tempo for safe driving should be within 60-80 beats per minute (bpm), mimicking the rate of the human heartbeat. This study found that when the tempo of the music went up to 120 bpm, double the recommended rate, drivers became twice as likely to act recklessly, resulting in accidents.

Music volume also plays a crucial role in driver behaviour. A study in Canada revealed that drivers who were listening to loud music took 20 per cent more time to complete mental and physical tasks. That meant they were distracted by the music and their concentration was not fully on controlling the vehicle, thereby increasing the risk of an accident.

In 2016, a 17-year-old Arab driver captured on his mobile phone what could have been the last few moments of his life, as his car flipped when he attempted a stunt. Netizens who watched the video pointed out that the young man was playing loud music in his vehicle, and alleged that he might have been distracted while drifting and speeding on the road.

In the UAE, those caught playing loud music in their vehicles are fined Dhs400 and get four black traffic points.



PENALTY: Dhs400 and 4 black traffic points.



UNRULY ROAD BEHAVIOUR

Road rage is an issue in any country with a high degree of vehicle density, and the UAE witnesses it, too. The pandemic has made this even more pertinent, as most people behind the wheel have experienced personal troubles during this crisis that might trigger unruly behaviour on the roads with greater intensity or more frequently. Naturally, this carries the risk of a mishap, maybe even a fatal one.

Some cases of unruly driving behaviour are easy to spot, such as the case that the Dubai Court of First Instance heard in December 2018, in which one driver, aged 31, was accused of beating another driver, aged 42. Reason? The victim said, "He was overtaking me. I lowered my window and confronted him. He pulled over, got out, came to me and insulted me, to which I responded in a similar manner."

He attacked me from behind, hit me on the back of my head and grabbed me by my shirt. He bit my ear. I took out a wrench from my car and hit him on his head because I felt scared he could kill me." The older driver had to undergo surgery to reconstruct his ear and continued his visits to the hospital for surgeries.

THE STATE OF ROAD RAGE

73 per cent

Percentage of UAE drivers who admitted falling into road rage, responding "often" to "sometimes"

63 per cent

Percentage of UAE driver who said they witnessed other drivers displaying road rage

58 per cent

Percentage of UAE drivers who observe rude retaliating driving or stopping, blocking traffic as an act of road rage

36 per cent

Percentage of UAE drivers who resort to foul gestures and 24 per cent foul language

Source: November 2019 study commissioned by RoadSafetyUAE and Noor Takaful—Ethical Insurance



According to a collaborative study in November 2019 between RoadSafetyUAE and Noor Takaful—Ethical Insurance, 73 per cent of drivers admitted to falling into road rage, responding “often” to “sometimes” when asked about themselves. Some 63 per cent stated that they witnessed other drivers displaying road rage.

Speaking to **999** about the study, Edelmann said, “We wanted to understand how tolerant UAE motorists are to each other in the case of true mistakes and in the case of deliberate acts of bullying, but also how prone we are to road rage and in which situations we’re losing our temper. In order to craft the right communication and engagement initiatives to raise awareness and, consequently, better the behaviour on the roads, we need to understand the motivators for the behaviour we experience on the roads.”

SLEEP-DEPRIVED DRIVERS

Risks of sleepy driving in the UAE are amplified during Ramadan. Data from studies (including the research titled ‘*Sleep-related collisions (SRC) in United Arab Emirates*’ conducted by researchers from UAE University in Al Ain) show that two out of five, or 42 per cent, of car crashes in the country occur during this period, citing that both Muslims and non-Muslims are affected by a different sleep pattern during the said period. “A logistic regression model has shown that driving during the lunar month of Ramadan and on highways were the most significant independent contributors to increasing the odds of SRC,” said the UAE University study.



Drivers should be well-rested before they head out on the roads. Statistics from the National Sleep Foundation, United States, showed that fatigued drivers were more likely to get themselves in a car crash as their reaction times slowed down when they went 20 hours without sleep. Sleep deprivation-related accidents, according to authorities’ estimates, results in an average of 100,000 police-reported crashes every year in the United States alone, leading to 1,550 deaths and countless injuries.

POOR DECISION-MAKING

Individuals who hastily make decisions while driving are also prone to accidents. Drivers must think far ahead. Research by the Hamdan bin Mohammed Smart University revealed that human errors in decision-making led to many road

accidents in 2012-2016. These included doing sudden turns and swerving (22 per cent) and overspeeding (12 per cent).

In August 2020, Dubai Police reported multiple accidents due to swerving, including the case of a driver who was badly injured when his car swerved towards the tramway and the case of a driver who was killed after swerving and crashing into another vehicle.

In September 2020, Abu Dhabi Police announced changes in traffic fines. These include fines for decision-related violations like speeding, swerving, and failing to give priority to pedestrians. Fines were set at Dhs5,000 for these three violations.

Reckless driving and jumping the red light now attract a whopping fine of Dhs50,000 and vehicle impoundment. Jumping the red light also comes with a 6-month suspension of the driver’s licence. Impounded vehicles will be released only at the end of the complete impounding period, and only if all the fines are settled by then.

AT A GLANCE: SLEEP-RELATED COLLISIONS

42 per cent

Percentage share of sleep-related collisions in the total number of traffic accidents during Ramadan, according to a study from UAE University

100,000

Estimated sleep deprivation-related accidents every year in the United States, leading to 1,550 deaths and injuries, according to the US National Sleep Foundation



PENALTIES:



Dhs5,000

Fine for three decision-related violations—speeding, swerving, and failing to give priority to

pedestrians in Abu Dhabi

Dhs50,000

Fine for reckless driving and jumping the red light in Abu Dhabi. Jumping the red light also comes with a 6-month suspension of the driver’s licence

6 WAYS TO AVOID CYBERCRIME PANDEMIC

SAFEGUARD YOUR PERSONAL DATA AND IDENTITY FROM
CYBERCRIMINALS, WHO CONSTANTLY DEVELOP NOVEL WAYS
TO PENETRATE DIGITAL SYSTEMS

BY MARKUS REDD



While the pandemic prompted the acceleration of digital transition in various sectors and the core operations of organisations, it has also led to increased exposure to crime risk. The banking and financial sector is particularly vulnerable to cyber-crime.

Before the pandemic struck, there was already a significant increase in the number of cyber-attacks using malicious mobile software. In 2018 alone, mobile device users faced the fiercest cyber-attacks, according to multinational cyber-security and anti-virus provider Kaspersky Lab. Therefore, the need for mobile security protection against all forms of online threats must keep up with today's hyper-connected, highly mobile-dependent universe.

In the UAE, increased cases of cyber-crimes, including identity theft and those targeting online merchants and

businesses were noted in 2020. A study conducted by KPMG titled 'UAE COVID-19 Cybercrime Survey 2020' revealed that 83 per cent of UAE businesses surveyed had seen a change in cyber-crime as a result of the pandemic. In particular, they experienced or observed a significant change in the following: 50 per cent phishing scams; 46 per cent e-mail spamming; and 38 per cent online scams.

The findings of the study showed that 75 per cent of respondents have adjusted or increased their capability to detect cyber-threats and implemented preventative strategies. As the KMPG report says: "The first line of defence against any cyber-threat is increasing perception and awareness: 'prevention is better than a cure.'"

999 highlights tips to keep your personal data from cybercriminals:

A LOOK AT TYPES OF CYBER-CRIMES IN UAE IN 2020



50 PER CENT
Phishing scams



46 PER CENT
E-mail spamming



38 PER CENT
Online scams

Source: UAE COVID-19 Cybercrime Survey 2020 by KPMG

1

NEVER SHARE PERSONAL INFO

One of the basic preventions against fraud and other cyber-threats is to never share your password with anyone. Experts are advising the public not to write down their login information.

Create a unique and complex password or passcode for each account and device that you own — this may be a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols completely unrelated to you (your name, birthday, address, age, etc). You can also create a passphrase, which would be hard for attackers to compromise, and at the same time would be easier for you to recall.

Regularly change your password to avoid hacking and cyber-attack. If possible, enable two-factor authentication on all platforms as an added protection.



2

SHRED EVERYTHING

Shred or destroy old bills, ATM receipts, bank statements, and credit card statements as well as credit card offers before throwing them into the trash bin. These documents contain your personal information that can be used by cybercriminals. Destroying these documents reduces your likelihood of becoming a victim of online theft.

Also immediately shred credit card bills or utility bills after paying, along with sales and cash withdrawal receipts from ATMs and junk mail credit card offers.



3

MONITOR YOUR ACCOUNTS

Periodically monitor your account activity by creating an online account with your bank and each of your credit card and loan accounts. Log in to check your account regularly to ensure that no unauthorised charges have been made on your account.

Keep your operating software and applications up to date and log out of software that's not in use. Install mobile apps only from official sources such as Google Play on Android devices, Huawei App Gallery, and the App Store for iOS.

Block the installation of applications from unknown sources in your smartphone's settings. These mobile apps may contain malware that might compromise your personal data.



4

INSTALL FRAUD ALERT SYSTEM

Subscribing to a fraud notification alert is a wise move, as it prevents thieves from opening accounts under your name. The fraud alert option works by cautioning other businesses to confirm your identity before proceeding with an application. This will also help you report for any fraudulent activity as you're entitled to a free credit report annually.

Don't click on any link or open any attachment sent from a suspicious e-mail. These suspicious messages may be a form of phishing, wherein thieves are posing as the official website(s) of institutions or organisations to steal data.





5

ENROL IN CREDIT REPORT

One way of detecting fraud is credit monitoring, as it provides another layer of protection against suspicious or fraudulent activity involving your personal data. These identity theft protection and monitoring services proactively track your activity against fraud and assist with recovery in case of a data breach. Some financial institutions are offering this protection for free, albeit on a limited scale. Customers may also apply for paid services that offer more comprehensive data monitoring and scans.

6

REPORT ANY LOST/STOLEN CARDS, DOCUMENTS RIGHT AWAY

Lost your credit card, passport, or Emirates ID? Immediately swing into action the moment you realise it's missing. Bear in mind that someone might milk your plastic buddy by racking up fraudulent transactions, or use personal information in your documents to log in and alter or use your immigration details to a crime. That could spiral into deep trouble for you.

It's always wise to report your lost card or immigration document before anyone uses it in illegal rackets so that you won't be liable for any unauthorised transaction or dealings done under your account or your name.



Did you know?

Think identity theft rarely happens? According to the Consumer Sentinel Network, maintained by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which tracks consumer fraud and identity theft complaints in the United States, there were 4.8 million identity theft and fraud reports received by the FTC in 2020. This number increased by 45 per cent from 3.3 million in 2019. The increase was primarily due to the 113 per cent spike in identity theft complaints. Last year, 1.4 million complaints about identity theft were made, up from 651,000 in 2019.



HATRED TAKES YOU NOWHERE

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.

If you don't let go of your dominance, others may respect the authority you represent, your uniform, but not your person

Lately, new types of people, suffering from an awkward illness called low self-esteem have come into view. While they loathe themselves for lack of confidence about who they are and what they can do, they tend to deflect their weakness onto others to hide their own flaws.

The actions of such people are often driven by hatred. They turn their entry-level position into a weapon to provoke or fight with their peers. They resort to all sorts of technicalities in order to justify their deeds. They convince themselves that they are only doing their job when, in fact, they only want to boast of their position.

The truth is that their actions are neither legal nor well-founded on occupational regulations. Rather, their behaviour is dictated by a miserable attempt to say "I exist." Yet when they are confronted, they quickly pass the blame on others, taking advantage of their position.

Such an act illustrates that some people are ill with hatred and envy because they feel inferior and inadequate. Their behaviour could even escalate

into aggressiveness and dominance, driven by their sick psyche, their self-hatred, and chronic inadequacy. Such people blend into high society figures, thinking of themselves as influencers who enjoy annoying others.

However, there's a fine line between fulfilling one's

duties and showing dominance that's fueled by one's inflated ego and tendency to control others. Imposing oneself on others, though, will only end up with rejection. Dominance is weakness; power is delusion. Aversion is the result; rejection is the outcome.

Listen up, never take advantage of other people's tolerance, for they can see

through your real intention. Your inadequacy is written on your forehead. Your inferiority is reflected in your eyes. Your freedom ends when you impose it on the freedoms of others.

If you don't let go of your dominance, others may respect the authority you represent, your uniform, but not your person. Do not test others' patience as comeuppance will be lying in wait. Hatred takes you nowhere.

Dominance is weakness; power is delusion. Aversion is the result; rejection is the outcome

SCHOOL TRAGEDIES

CLASSROOMS AND HALLS FILLED WITH YOUNG
DREAMS, INSPIRING LESSONS, AND HOPE FOR THE
FUTURE WERE DESTROYED BY UNIMAGINABLE
DISASTERS AND TRAGEDIES

BY NEIL BIE

DORMITORY DISASTER

WHEN: MARCH 2001

WHERE: MACHAKOS, KENYA

In late March 2001, 69 students died in a dormitory at the Kyanguli Secondary School in Machakos, Kenya, when two students pulled out a plan to burn down their boarding school.

Davis Onyango Opiyo, then 16 years old, hatched a plan together with fellow student Felix Mambo Ngumbao to set their dormitory ablaze and send out their message of hatred to the school administration, specifically to their new principal at the time for the alleged diminishing quality of their food in the school, along with other complaints. Opiyo and Ngumbao attempted to gather fellow students to join their cause to form a strike against the school administration but were dismissed by the student body organisation.

That night of the grim incident, some students complained of the smell of petrol at their dormitories, but the school authorities didn't find anything suspicious when they searched the premises, or so they thought.

Opiyo and Ngumbao had actually bought 600 Kenyan Shillings (Dhs20) worth of petrol at a nearby gasoline station. At 1 am on March 25, the duo carried out their plan by spreading litres of petrol over their dormitory and setting it on



Twenty years ago, fire razed down Kyanguli Secondary School in Machakos, Kenya, killing at least 69 students

fire. Students cried for help as smoke and fire billowed in the dormitory. The authorities managed to put out the fire, but by then, 69 students were burned alive. Of them, 58 were buried across six mass graves within the school premises.

Both the students were arrested and arraigned in court for arson after two years. However, the families of the 69 victims didn't get any compensation until two decades later. It was only in July 2019 when the Kenyan government finally released Ksh 54 million (Dhs1.8 million) for the bereaved families, who received Ksh 857,000 (Dhs29,000) each.

EXPLOSIVE TRIGGER

WHEN: MARCH 1937

WHERE: NEW LONDON, TEXAS, USA

A joyous inter-scholastic meet filled the halls of New London School's gymnasium with around 500 students and more than 40 teachers, educators and staff. Right before the start of the festivities, Lemmie Butler, one of the school's instructors, turned on an electric sander, which acted as the trigger for what's now known as one of the deadliest explosions to hit a school in the history of the world.

Within minutes, parents rushed towards the site of the explosion, fearing the worst. Reports stated that the sound of the explosion was heard up to four miles away from the New London School. All civilians immediately began rummaging through the debris with their bare hands. An hour after the blast, doctors, government and non-government bodies such as the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and other entities conducted a massive search-and-rescue operation to look for survivors.

The official body count of Texas officials revealed that 298 individuals died from the blast, the majority of whom were students of New London School. Around 130 students managed to survive the incident, but not without the need for serious psychiatric intervention following the traumatic experience at a young age.



A total of 298 individuals died from a blast at New London School's gymnasium in 1937

Investigations that followed learned that the school received gas from the United Gas Company until January 1937. However, to save some \$300 (Dhs1,100) of gas expenses, the school had decided to use a residue gas line of Parade Gasoline Company – the only crucial thing was that officials did not notice a gas leak had already begun from a faulty connection beneath the building. This accumulation of odourless, colourless gas for nearly two months ignited and exploded on that day in March 1937. Weeks after the disaster, the Texas Legislature passed a law requiring an odour to be added to natural gas, which previously was odourless and, therefore, undetectable.

BLOWN AWAY

WHEN: MARCH 1925

WHERE: MISSOURI, INDIANA, AND ILLINOIS, USA

On March 18, 1925, Betty Moroni was a seven-year-old student at the De Soto School in Southern Illinois, enjoying an ordinary spring morning at her school. However, come noon, the winds began blowing with such ferocity that she couldn't even stand. Little did she know that this was the warning sign of an unprecedented tornado.

By 2:38 pm, the tornado ravaged their entire school, with cries of young students all around the four corners of their



Schools were left in ruins after a super tornado ripped through three US states in 1925

rooms. "There were only three boys left in my class. They were all killed in the tornado, all but three," recalled Moroni in an interview with The Southern.

No amount of preparation ahead of time could have saved American residents of southern Illinois, southwestern Indiana, and southern Missouri from this wrath of nature. Most of them either fled their homes or braced for the worst as the cluster of tornadoes, now known as the 'Tri-State Tornado' disaster, ravaged lives and property.

The tornadoes destroyed nine schools across all three states. Similar to Moroni's story, students from nearby schools were not spared by the destructive tornado, as it left 69 students dead. This catastrophe remains at the top of natural disasters that killed the most number of students and destroyed the most number of schools in a single day.

In total, the tornadoes caused the deaths of 695 people, injured over 13,000 and left more than 15,000 families homeless. It also cost \$1.4 billion (Dhs5.1 billion) in property damages, which to date, remains the highest amount of property damage in the history of the United States.

'TOTAL COLLAPSE' OF EDUCATION

WHEN: JANUARY 2010

WHERE: OUEST, HAITI

In January 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck the town in Ouest, Haiti. It was the foreshadowing of dozens of aftershocks that would signal the tremors of destruction in the country – its worst in 200 years.

The lives of young students came to a halt, with half of Haiti's schools and three of its main universities either severely damaged or worse, totally destroyed by the earthquake. Estimates reveal that around 15,000 primary schools and 1,500 secondary schools had been hit during the series of quakes and aftershocks that lasted for the entire month.

Joel Jean-Pierre, then Haiti's education minister, described the unprecedented incident as the "total collapse" of Haiti's education, citing that it took the lives of nearly 200,000 people. Of this number, Jean-Pierre estimated that it included over 38,000 students, 1,300 educators, and thousands of school administrative staff.

Haiti's Education Ministry, in cooperation with relevant agencies, set up several large tents weeks after the search-and-rescue operations. These tents



Rubbles of a destroyed school building in Ouest, Haiti after a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck in 2010

acted as temporary learning spaces, equipped with water and sanitation facilities for the children's needs while their schools were being rebuilt.

Today, reconstruction of Haiti's schools and infrastructure is still ongoing, aided by the government in cooperation with international agencies. The United Nations affirmed that it would continue supporting the development of the country to get back on its feet.



NIGHTMARE WITH A BLACKMAILER

A YOUNG WOMAN WHO IS ABOUT TO GET MARRIED
LIVES IN THE SHADOW OF FEAR, AS A BLACKMAILER
TURNS HER LIFE INTO A NIGHTMARE

BY WAGIH HASSAN

Staying connected with everyone through a mobile phone is a very convenient thing for most of us. But in the hands of a blackmailer, the mobile phone, especially the now ubiquitous smartphone, can become a weapon of emotional destruction.

Zara, 24, found out just how dangerous it can be to share numbers with strangers and start a friendship on social media, a virtual space where people can pretend to be someone they're not.

She narrated to a lawyer how her simple friendship with a man named Iman, 31, turned her life into a nightmare. She said, "I'm from a family with a well-known social status. I couldn't pursue my college education, even though I was eager to do so, because of the migraine that I've been suffering from for many years. I had to be satisfied with my high school diploma."

Then, she met Iman, who lived in the same neighbourhood; his family home was close to where Zara lived with her family. She recalled, "One evening, in a garden near our place, I had a coincidental eye contact with him. Something danced deep inside me, marking the possible beginning of an emotional relationship between us."

Iman came over and began chatting with Zara. After some conversation, "I gave him my mobile number, and then we started meeting online, getting to know each other more and more, through Facebook, WhatsApp, and even face-to-face meetings," according to Zara.

The lawyer asked if during any of these interactions she noticed Iman crossing the line of decency. She said she hadn't

and that at first, "he was like an innocent kid and never acted suspiciously". However, this "innocent kid" soon became a sinister man.

Taking a deep breath, she continued, "In the first few meetings, we talked about various things. This changed into intimate meetings, and he would photograph me using his mobile phone. I didn't take the matter seriously, but rather believed that those were part of his affection."

“

The man I thought had respect for me started extorting money from me. He threatened that if I wouldn't comply, he'd tell my fiancé and future husband everything

The lawyer asked Zara for more details to understand how and when things took a turn for the worse, so much so that she needed legal help against Iman.

She said, "This went on for two years until we broke up. Then, someone who has a good education and a good job proposed to marry me. And here comes the biggest problem: he is a friend of Iman.

After learning that Zara had been engaged with his friend, Iman showed what he really was. Being aware of how much Zara gives utmost importance to the good reputation of her family, he

turned into a blackmailer. "The man I thought had respect for me started extorting money from me. He threatened that if I wouldn't comply, he'd tell my fiancé and future husband everything."

So, this is where the lawyer's help was needed – he had to figure out how to stop the blackmail and let the victim carry on with her life. "I'm at lost," Zara said. "I'm always terrified by my ex's games and threats, as he can ruin my relationship and awaited marriage."

The lawyer advised, "Listen carefully to what I say. This blackmailer won't dare to expose you. Do not worry and do not pay him any attention anymore. He'll eventually feel ashamed of what he's doing and will refrain from his trivial threats and leave you alone."

The lawyer added, "Try asking him this question: what if one of your sisters got into a difficult situation like me; wouldn't the reason be someone like you, with your heinous acts? Wait for his reaction, and if he doesn't leave you alone, I recommend that you report the matter to the police or hire me to file a case against him."

As it happened, Iman didn't stop harassing Zara and she was scared that he might post her photos on social media or websites, as he threatened. Zara had soon found the courage to report everything to a police station near her area and she hired a lawyer.

In cooperation with the department of cybercrime, the police managed to arrest the blackmailer and he was referred to the judicial department. His phone was confiscated, and he was sentenced to imprisonment and slapped with hefty penalties, as well as deportation after serving jail time.



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THE ARABS OF MOHAMMERAH

STARING DOWN THREE HUGE POWERS IN ITS
VICINITY, A SHEIKHDOM SHOWED ITS PROWESS
IN TERRITORIAL CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY FOR
SEVERAL EVENTFUL DECADES

BY DR FALEH HANDHAL

“THE EMIRATE OF MOHAMMERAH WAS RULED AND INHABITED BY THE ARABS OF BANI KAAB. ALTHOUGH THIS REGION WAS UNDER PERSIAN’S RULE POLITICALLY, ITS RULERS HAD A LOT OF INDEPENDENCE IN THEIR FOREIGN RELATIONS

Turning the pages of the 1908 book *The Gulf Guide*, written by British political resident John Gordon Lorimer, we’ve already seen Lengeh, the coastal town of Persia with a close connection with the UAE. The historical section of the fifth part of the book chronicled Persia from 1760 to 1905, which was the period of the rule of the Zandid state and the Qajar state.

Persia was ruled by Shah Karim Khan Al-Zand from 1760; in 1795, the rule passed to Shah Agha Muhammad Khan Qajari, and the Qajar state continued until 1905, when it was overthrown in a military coup led by Reza Shah.

Those were eventful years. Lorimer was most interested in highlighting the history of the western part of Persia, facing the Arabian Gulf, due to the British presence in that region and the absence of other European powers after the decline and withdrawal of the Portuguese and the Dutch.

Thus, three major powers emerged in the Arabian Gulf region – Persia and Turkey, which were present in Basra and extended their influence to the coast of Al-

Ahsa; and the British, who were in Bushehr in Persia and Basra in Iraq, in addition to their presence in the Gulf emirates and their merchant and warships that sailed through the Gulf Sea from India to Basra and vice versa.

From Lorimer’s book, we have chosen the news of the “Arabistan” region and the Emirate of Mohammerah, which was ruled and inhabited by the Arabs of Bani Kaab. Although this region was under Persian’s rule politically, its rulers and politicians were Arabs, who had a lot of independence in their foreign relations, whether with the Turks or with the British.

The book does not specify the year in which the tribe of Bani Kaab migrated from the Arab coast to the Arabistan and Mohammerah regions, but rather quotes a British diplomat who said, “The Bani Kaab were originally from the Ottomans, and for a long time, they owned large lands [at] the borders of Persia, and for a few years, they paid large sums for it to the treasury of the Pasha. When disturbances occurred in Persia following the fall of Nader Shah, Bani Kaab seized other lands from Persia



American Numismatic Society

Silver coin of Shah Karim Khan Al Zand minted in Ganja, dated 1763

and became from both countries – from Jaban, which is located in the lands of the Turks, and from Druq in Persia.”

Later, the power of the Bani Kaab began to rise during the reign of Sheikh Salman Al Kaabi and their numbers increased. The sheikh benefited from the conflict between Persia and Turkey and became the undisputed ruler of Mohammerah. Therefore, the ruler of Persia, Karim Khan Al-Zand, was forced to send soldiers to subjugate him in 1757, but it failed. Then, the Turks sent soldiers who were repelled by Sheikh Salman, and he even besieged Basra from the Shatt al-Arab side.

The ruler of Persia, who was horrified by his defeat in the hands of Sheikh Salman, sought help from the Turks and attacked again in 1765, but his campaign did nothing but destroy several water sources.

The Turks began negotiating with the British to launch a joint campaign to eliminate the Emirate of Mohammerah. It seems that the secrets of their negotiations reached Sheikh Salman, and he decided to launch a pre-emptive attack. Lorimer said, “It wasn’t long before the name of Salman resounded in Europe. He started unprecedented raids in the Arabian Gulf against British ships.”



www.mohammerah.com

Palace of Sheikh Khazal in Basrah (undated photo)



Mohammerah (1917) from 'Album of Tour of the Gulf'. The original photo was part of the British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers

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IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THE NAME OF SALMAN RESOUNDED IN EUROPE. HE STARTED UNPRECEDENTED RAIDS IN THE ARABIAN GULF AGAINST BRITISH SHIPS

confronted them and killed three officers, a sergeant, and 13 soldiers, and wounded 23, as well as seized 23 boxes carrying British equipment.

In October, a letter from the ruler of Persia, Karim Khan Al-Zand, reached the Turkish Kikhia, asking him to stop fighting the Bani Kaab. The Kikhia responded and his forces withdrew. As for the British, their ships remained in their place at sea. Thus, the relationship of the Bani Kaab kept fluctuating between the Ottoman and British powers, relying on themselves to defend their lands without the interference of the Persian government, which claimed that Mohammerah belonged to it.

In Mohammerah, when Sheikh Salman Al Kaabi passed away, his son Ghanem became the ruler, followed by Sheikh

The most famous of his attacks was on a British merchant ship that was sailing under the protection of a warship called *Fort William*. This merchant ship was seized by Sheikh Salman, while the warship drifted to the shore and its crew was captured by Arab fighters on July 19, 1765.

The government in Bombay, India, now sensed the danger, and it began to take note of the sheikh's actions. In January 1766, it dispatched a naval force consisting of six warships and a troop carrier with 50 European soldiers, 150 Indians and 25 artillery soldiers, as well as sailors.

The forces were commanded by Captain Leslie Bailey. He was ordered to negotiate with Sheikh Salman first and get the latter to hand over the ships he had seized and pledge not to carry out other raids. If the sheikh refused, the British captain was to cooperate with the Turks; and if the Turks refused, the captain was to destroy all Bani Kaab ships. Under these orders, the campaign reached Basra in March 1766.

The Turks did not react due to their insufficient strength, until the arrival of 1,500 soldiers led by Kikhia Mahmoud Agha, who took over the Turkish command and entered the Mohammerah area with his forces. The British fleet went to Khor

Musa, and from there, it headed to where the captive warship *Fort William* and the merchant ship were held. But before the British could make it to the ships, Sheikh Ghanem bin Salman, the prince of Mohammerah, set the two vessels on fire.

The Turks decided to continue their advance by land and the British supported them by sea, but the Bani Kaab were faster, so they quickly attacked the Turkish boats that were carrying gunpowder and destroyed nine of them. As for the British, the infantry forces landed to occupy the forts of Mohammerah. The Bani Kaab



Palace of Sheikh Khazal in Failiyah (1921)



Qatar National Library

Karun River, Mohammerah (1917) from 'Album of Tour of the Gulf'. The original photo was part of the British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers

Barakat in 1777, then his cousin Sheikh Ghadban, then Mubarak bin Barakat.

In Persia, the rule of the Zandid state founded by Karim Khan came to an end and was replaced by the Qajar state, when its first leader, Shah Agha Muhammad Khan, took over in 1795, followed by Fateh Ali Shah in 1797.



WikiArabianGulf

Sheikh Khazal Khan ibn Haji Jabir Khan wearing military uniform and honours bestowed on him by both the British and Persian governments (unknown date)

As for the conditions of Mohammerah and the Bani Kaab, the book has given us a vague description of the succession of rulers – while several names appeared, none remained for long in power. However, in 1800, Sheikh Haji Jaber Al Muhaisni, known amongst the Arabs as Jabir bin Mardaw, emerged and ruled from 1819 till 1881, a long six decades.

Sheikh Haji Jaber Al Muhaisni was known to be a highly competent man who managed to solve the problems between Mohammerah and Persia. The government agreed for him to occupy an administrative position and gave him the title of “victory for the king” and granted him guns and other weapons. One of his most famous achievements was improving the navigability of the river Qaroun.

In 1881, Sheikh Haji Jaber Al Muhaisni passed away and was succeeded by his son Muzal. He improved relations with the British and the consulate in Basra. In 1897, this sheikh was slain, and thus the rule passed to his brother, Sheikh Khazal, the youngest son of Sheikh Haji Jaber.

Sheikh Khazal was known for his good relations with all the three political parties in the Gulf – Persia, Turkey, and Britain. In 1921, his political stature had risen so much that he was competing with King

Faisal bin Al Hussein for the throne of Iraq. However, when Shah Reza Pahlavi took control of Persia and declared his Persian national policy by eliminating all Arab sheikhdoms, his government arrested Sheikh Khazal, banished him to Tehran, and overthrew the rule of the Bani Kaab in Mohammerah.

In 1937, the sheikh was found hanged at his house in Tehran. Thus, the Arab Emirate of Mohammerah lost its independence, while the Bani Kaab suffered under Persian rule, as the arrests, executions, and protests went on.

“

WHEN SHAH REZA PAHLAVI TOOK CONTROL OF PERSIA AND DECLARED HIS PERSIAN NATIONAL POLICY, HIS GOVERNMENT ARRESTED SHEIKH KHAZAL AND OVERTHREW THE RULE OF THE BANI KAAB IN MOHAMMERAH



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TAKE A PEEK AT THE NEWEST MUST-HAVE HIGH-TECH ELECTRONIC DEVICES

FANTASTIC LENS

There's no question that many of those in search of new smartphones prioritise the quality of the camera. In most cases, the price increases when the lens quality and megapixels of the smartphone camera are better.

Xiaomi's latest addition to the Redmi series, the **Redmi Note 10 Pro Max** gives users the luxury of a huge 108MP quad rear camera packed with an 8MP ultra-wide lens, 5MP super tele-macro lens, and a 2MP depth sensor. It also boasts unique features, including photo and video clones, enables long exposure photos in high detail, and a 'vlog' mode.

The Redmi Note 10 Pro Max also has a large 5,020mAh battery and a screen protected by Corning Gorilla Glass 5, which is highly resistant to scratches. The smartphone's speed when loading apps is optimised by Qualcomm Snapdragon 732G, augmented by 8GB RAM and up to 128GB of storage.

Website: www.mi.com

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5G-READY SMARTPHONE

The world is moving towards the use of 5G networks, and while 5G-enabled smartphones are beginning to gain popularity amongst consumers, their prices remain very steep.

The **Samsung Galaxy A52 5G**, as evident from the name itself, is one of the newer 5G-powered smartphones. What separates it from the rest is its affordability, while still maintaining top-tier specs, including a 64MP quad-cam set-up, video stabilisation, 32MP front cam, Octacore processor with 8GB RAM, and storage expandable to a huge 1TB, to name a few.

Samsung's latest entry to its 'Galaxy A' series is also resistant to spill, splash, and splatter, helping users recover the mobile phone quickly from minor water accidents. It packs a 4,500 mAh battery along with 25W of superfast charging.

Website: www.samsung.com/ae

Price: DHS1,650

VLOGGING BUDDY

YouTubers and vloggers are the real stars of the Internet generation, with many popular channels earning up to 10x more than the 9-to-5 employees at the desks. This is why many individuals have begun venturing into this field of video content creation to share their perspectives in life and possibly earn from it at the same time.

The **Sony FX3 Cinema Line camera** is meant for both seasoned and amateur vloggers, with an assurance of quality videos captured by this state-of-the-art camera. It boasts only 715g for the main unit, making it very lightweight and easy to carry around. It produces 4K video at 120fps and has both slow-motion and quick-motion functions, and a multi-functional focus system to help highlight important details on each video you capture, even before you begin editing.

On a full charge, the Sony FX3 will provide up to 135 minutes of continuous recording or up to 600 photo shots. Each photo and video you take will produce content that's rich in detail, with realistic colours for your viewers to enjoy.



Website: www.sony.co.uk

Price: DHS18,500

SPEAKER SLASH MIXER



Website: www.transpa.rent
Price: DHS4,500

Music helps people in a variety of ways – this is why many put a premium on their earphones, headphones, and home speakers.

The new **Transparent Speaker** combines two elements: sound quality and a sleek design that would be a great fit for any home. Its design features three options to mix – volume, treble, and bass – as a tribute to classic yet essential mixing of audio output. The tightly sealed 10-litre acoustic volume and the custom-designed 6-inch woofer help in creating a very controlled reproduction of sound.

In addition, the Transparent Speaker also sports a modular design meant for future upgrades on its components. This future-proof feature helps users to amplify their audio experience with a compartment at the back of the speaker that can hold and power various modules, including new voice control protocols or other wireless technology.

HIGH-TECH HELMET

For many bikers, protecting the exposed parts of their body during a trip is a must, as many countries enforce strict laws for the safety and protection of the public.

The **POC Omne Eternal Helmet** not only protects your head but also has a light that enhances its wearer's visibility at night. The light comes on automatically when in dark places.

Users need not worry about charging the device or any on-and-off buttons as the POC Omne Eternal is solar-powered and charges itself from any light sources. It has a Uranium Black Matt colour finish, giving it a classic, stylish look, and is lightweight, safe, and well ventilated, providing much-needed comfort for its wearer even when worn for long periods.

Website: www.pocsports.com
Price: TBD



AI-CALIBRATED FITNESS BIKE

Fitness is the name of the game, especially nowadays during the COVID-19 pandemic, and people are finding ways to continue with their fitness regime from the gym to home.

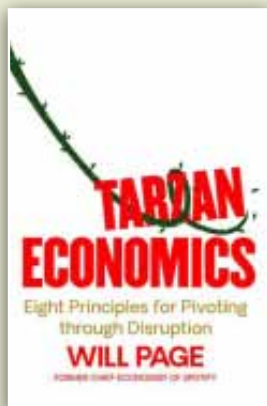
The newly-launched fitness bike called **CAROL** helps individuals keep track of their fitness goals through an AI-powered performance tracker. This allows users to get in and out of the bike for quick sprints without having to push many buttons just to change the resistance or edit the intensity.

CAROL enables users to optimise their exercise routine by engaging in maximum intensity sprints at any time of the day. It continues to study and learn your ability with each performance; it also adapts each ride to push its user even further to the next level of intensity. The bike's computer-controlled magnetic brake system applies a personalised and precisely calibrated resistance at the right time and pace.

Website: www.carolbike.com
Price: DHS9,700



FEED YOUR MIND WITH INSIGHTFUL GUIDES TO ATTAINING CAREER GOALS AND ADAPTING TO BE ABLE TO THRIVE, ALONG WITH NOVELS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS AND MYSTERIES



RESILIENCE ICONS

Title: Tarzan Economics: Eight Principles for Pivoting Through Disruption

Author: Will Page

Publisher: Simon & Schuster UK

Price: Dhs102

This book helps readers harness the power of disruptive change. It draws practical lessons from a variety of case studies, including Radiohead, Starbucks, and Groucho Marx. The notion of 'Tarzan Economics' ties these principles together: a framework for recognising and acting on disruption, by letting go of the old vine and grabbing onto the new. It also provides insights that a business needs to adapt to survive the pandemic era as well as the impact of accelerating technological and economic changes.

SELF-REINVENTION

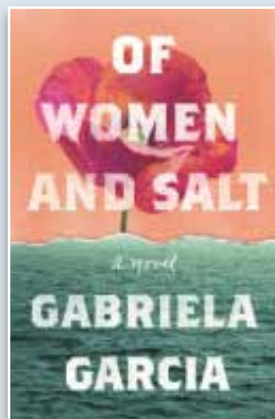
Title: Skip the Line: The 10,000 Experiments Rule and Other Surprising Advice for Reaching Your Goals

Author: James Altucher

Publisher: Harper Business

Price: Dhs73

The era where experience acts as the key to a promotion is over. This book offers advice on how to ride the wave in which clear-cut career trajectories no longer exist. The author mixes his personal story with concrete — and unorthodox — insights that will guide you to pursue your passion. This book will transform your mindset to easily execute ideas, become an expert negotiator, attract the attention of those around you, scale promising ideas, and improve leadership — catapulting you towards your goal.



WOVEN SECRETS

Title: Of Women and Salt: A Novel

Author: Gabriela Garcia

Publisher: Flatiron Books

Price: Dhs51

Miami-based Jeanette, daughter of a Cuban immigrant, is determined to learn more about her family history from her reserved mother Carmen, who is struggling with the trauma of displacement. She makes a snap decision to take in the daughter of a detained neighbour and then they travel to Cuba to meet her grandmother and understand more about the secrets of their family. It weaves the timeline of a daughter who is eager to learn her family history and her mother who is reluctant to talk about it—a haunting diaspora involving heartbreaking decisions of mothers, betrayals, and a family legacy that begins in Cuba.

KIDS ON THE RUN

Title: Raft of Stars
Author: Andrew J. Graff
Publisher: Ecco
Price: Dhs51

It's the summer of 1994 in Claypot, Wisconsin, and the lives of ten-year-old Fischer "Fish" Branson and Dale "Bread" Breadwin are shaped by their fathers they don't talk about. A character-driven story of adventure and trials in the wilderness, this historical fiction revolves around a murder, which the two young boys think they've committed.

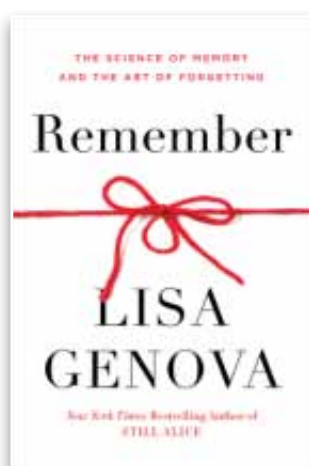
One night, a gunshot rings out and the duo flee the scene. They head for the woods, where they find their way onto a raft, but the natural terrors of Ironsforge threaten to overwhelm them. The book will take you on a vivid ride in the Upper Midwest along with dilemma, hope, loss, and heart-pounding adventure. Will their families trying to find and protect them reach them before it's too late?



PROTECT OUR MEMORY

Title: Remember: The Science of Memory and the Art of Forgetting
Author: Lisa Genova
Publisher: Harmony
Price: Dhs88

Have you ever felt a crushing wave of panic when you can't remember the name of that actor in the movie you saw last week, or you walk into a room only to forget why you went there in the first place? From the Harvard-trained neuroscientist and bestselling author of Still Alice, this book tackles the fascinating exploration of the complexities of how we remember, why we forget, and what we can do to protect our memories. The author draws upon personal experiences to make a conversational mash-up of science and fiction.



DAZZLING ISLAND

Title: Popisho
Author: Leone Ross
Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
Price: Dhs92

Somewhere far away lies an archipelago called Popisho. A place of stunning beauty and incorrigible mischief, destiny and mystery, it is also a place in need of change. A portrait of community and meditation on desire and addiction, the book is inspired by the author's Jamaican homeland and inflected with rhythms and textures of an amalgam of languages. This novel, set over the course of one day, is a dazzling work of fiction that mesmerises the readers in a world where magic is everywhere along with characters brimming with food, politics, and relationships.



UNRAVEL

Title: Hummingbird Salamander
Author: Jeff VanderMeer
Publisher: MCD
Price: Dhs64

Security consultant "Jane Smith" receives an envelope with a key to a storage unit that holds a taxidermied hummingbird and salamander. Silvina, the dead woman who left the note, is the daughter of an Argentine industrialist. By taking the hummingbird from the storage unit, Jane sets in motion a series of events that quickly spin beyond her control. A thriller filled with dark conspiracy, endangered species, and an impending apocalypse.



UAE studies electric charge emissions as potential rain booster

The UAE's water security strategy has taken another step with the launch of a new study that will gauge the efficiency of electric charge emissions to enhance rainfall across the country.

A research campaign spearheaded by the National Centre of Meteorology (NCM), through the UAE Research Programme for Rain Enhancement Science (UAEREP), will study if these emissions will modify the behaviour of cloud droplets in the UAE's environment. The research aims to find other means of improving the country's rainfall process, apart from cloud seeding.

The study, currently taking place at the SANAD Academy, uses several advanced unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs, aka drones) equipped with a payload of electric charge emission instruments and customised sensors. These UAVs are used to deliver a charge to the cloud formations, without the need for any solid particles such as silver iodide.

"Such efforts are crucial in driving and encouraging innovation in applied scientific research to advance global rain enhancement capacity. With the continued



A UAV equipped with electric charge emission instruments and customised sensors at the SANAD Academy

support of our wise leadership, NCM is committed to mitigating the risk of water stress on arid and semi-arid regions around the world, while enhancing the country's status as a global hub for rain enhancement research," said Dr Abdulla Al Mandous, NCM Director and President of the Regional Association II.

The campaign is led by Giles Harrison, Professor of Atmospheric Physics at the University of Reading in the United Kingdom and a second cycle programme awardee, with the support of experts from NCM, UAEREP and several local and international research and academic organisations.

Abu Dhabi recycles 80% of construction, demolition waste



Abu Dhabi has recycled a total of 1.9 million tonnes or 80 per cent of the emirate's construction and demolition (C&D) waste in 2020.

The recycling facilities of the Abu Dhabi Waste Management Centre (Tadweer) have contributed greatly to reducing waste from C&D activities across

the Capital by following international standards. In total, Tadweer has collected 2.4 million tonnes of C&D waste, which is 32 per cent of the total waste it handles.

Abdalmohsin Alkatheeri, Acting Director of Projects and Facilities Department at Tadweer, stated that the move was in line with the centre's aim to repurpose

waste to recycled aggregate and treated sand. "Such efforts help us ensure the preservation of natural resources and keep Abu Dhabi's environment clean, safe and sustainable," said Alkatheeri.

The byproducts from the recycling facilities are then used for the construction and upkeep of roads and vital infrastructure projects in Abu Dhabi, such as Etihad Rail, Khalifa Port, Abu Dhabi Airports, Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Louvre Museum, Saadiyat Island, Ghweifat International Highway, and ADNOC's oil fields, amongst others.

"We aim to promote the use of recycled aggregate in the construction of strategic projects to support the national economy and accelerate sustainable development," added Alkatheeri.

To date, Tadweer handles on an average 212,000 tonnes per month of demolition and construction waste, with a maximum of 334,629 tonnes per month, and a minimum of 147,887 tonnes per month.

Dubai takes the lead in turning waste to energy



Architectural rendering of the Dubai Centre for Waste Processing at the Warsan area

Dubai will soon witness the rise of one of the world's largest energy-from-waste (EfW) facilities that will annually provide at least 200 MW of electricity from 1.9 million tonnes of waste.

The Dubai Centre for Waste Processing at the Warsan area will be developed to treat 5,666 tonnes of waste produced daily in the emirate. This translates to

1.9 million tonnes of waste per year. The renewable energy thus produced will be provided to local communities.

This Dhs4 billion project will be managed and operated by Dubai Holding, in partnership with ITOCHU Corporation, Hitachi Zosen Inova, Dubal Holding, BESIX Group, and Tech Group. The project will cover a 35-year concession period with

Dubai Municipality.

The landmark public-private partnership will help minimise the volume of waste in landfills and help develop alternative energy resources in line with the Dubai Clean Energy Strategy 2050. This shift to renewable energy is also aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Dawoud Al Hajri, Director General of Dubai Municipality, said that the move would actualise the emirate's vision to shift to sustainable energy by converting tonnes of waste to a product that would benefit the public – this would also attract foreign investors supporting renewable energy. "The strategic focus of this project is to achieve environmental protection, reduce carbon emissions, divert waste from the landfills, and contribute towards the realisation of Dubai's strategy to shift towards clean energy. Dubai Municipality is setting up an attractive environment for investors to support increased foreign direct investment," said Al Hajri.

Etihad Rail relocates over 300 animals from Sharjah

Etihad Rail, the developer and operator of the national railway network in the UAE, has started the relocation of over 300 wild animals from the Misanad Protected Area, through which the planned route of the national railway runs.

Amongst the relocated animals from the Misanad Protected Area included 242 Middle Eastern short-fingered geckos, 24 Baluch rock geckos, and 5 saw-faced vipers.

The relocation is being carried out in cooperation with the Sharjah Environment and Protected Areas Authority (EPAA), alongside environmental experts, specialists and relevant national authorities, and is in line with Etihad Rail's commitments to reduce its impact on communities and natural diversity along the railway's planned route.

The conservation project follows the signing of an agreement by Etihad Rail with Emirates Nature-WWF, Fujairah Environment Authority, and Fujairah Adventures, to implement environmental conservation efforts and habitat



rehabilitation projects near the village of Al Bithnah in the emirate of Fujairah.

In this project, they aim to develop a new nature and heritage trail in Al Bithnah, in collaboration with local tourism and government authorities in Fujairah.

"Generating crucial societal benefits lies

at the heart of this initiative, and highlights again that healthy, diverse and functional natural systems are the necessary foundation for social and economic progression in the UAE," said Laila Mostafa Abdullatif, Director General at Emirates Nature-WWF.

Sinovac works against COVID-19 Brazilian variant, says study



Preliminary data from a study in Brazil has shown that the vaccine developed by China's Sinovac Biotech Ltd works effectively against the Brazilian variant of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Butantan Institute, the producer of CoronaVac in Brazil, conducted trials to test its efficacy against the Brazilian strain and discovered that it has

neutralising capabilities against the new mutations. "We're all worried about the variants. We have to keep our eyes wide open and find out if the vaccines produce antibodies against them. We knew CoronaVac was provenly effective against the UK variant [B.1.1.7] and the South Africa variant [B.1.351]. Now we know it's also effective against P.1 and

P.2 [Brazilian variants]," said Dimas Covas, Head of Butantan Institute, in a press conference.

"In the analysis, we added P.1 and P.2 to a cell culture containing blood serum from vaccinated subjects. The result was highly satisfactory, albeit from a small number of samples. The antibodies present in the serum neutralised the action of variant P.1," said Dr Ricardo Palacios, Butantan Institute's Medical Director of Clinical Research, to AFP.

The study was conducted by taking blood samples of those people who were vaccinated by Sinovac. A test on the neutralising ability of antibodies in plasma samples taken from survivors of COVID-19 caused by earlier versions of the virus was conducted by researchers.

The Chinese vaccine, which was 50.65% effective against COVID-19 in clinical trials, is one of the two vaccines that the Brazilian government has lined up. An inactivated vaccine, it works by using inactivated viral particles to expose the body's immune system to the novel coronavirus without risking a serious disease response.

Research reveals cancer cells may dodge chemotherapy

Cancer cells can dodge chemotherapy by entering a state of "active hibernation", allowing them to evade aggressive treatments, a new study suggests.

The research findings, published in the journal Cancer Discovery, said that this could explain why some cases of cancer recur even after a series of aggressive treatments.

Senior author Ari M. Melnick from Weill Cornell Medicine cited a type of leukaemia, which was the disease samples tested in the study. She said, "Acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) can be put into remission with chemotherapy, but it almost always comes back, and when it does it's incurable."

The researchers found that a subset of AML cells went into a state of hibernation, or senescence, entering a condition similar to inflammation when




the cancer cells were exposed to chemotherapy.

Further research indicated that giving leukaemia cells an inhibitor against a type

of protein called ATR before chemotherapy can prevent them from entering the state of senescence, thereby allowing chemotherapy to kill all of the cells.

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We extend our best wishes to
the  Magazine issued by
the Ministry of Interior on an occasion
The Magazine's golden jubilee



WHAT THE MONTH HAS IN STORE



Aries (March 21 – April 20)

"Today I feel the whole world is a door," wrote poet Dennis Silk. In a similar spirit, 13th-century Zen master Wumen Huikai observed, "The whole world is a door of liberation, but people are unwilling to enter it." There will be times in the coming weeks when the whole world will feel like a door to you. And if you open it, you'll be led to potential opportunities for interesting changes that offer you liberation. This is a rare blessing. Please be sufficiently loose and alert and brave to take advantage.



Taurus (April 20 – May 21)

Taurus philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein was called a genius by Nobel Prize-winning author Bertrand Russell. His Philosophical Investigations was once voted the 20th century's most important philosophy book. Yet one of Wittgenstein's famous quotes was "How hard it is to see what is right in front of my eyes." In the following weeks, you'll see a whole range of things that were previously hidden, even though some of them had been right in front of your eyes. Everyone whose life you touch will benefit because of this breakthrough.



Gemini (May 22 – June 20)

Why don't rivers flow straight? Well, sometimes they do, but only for a relatively short stretch. According to the US Geological Survey, no river moves in a linear trajectory for a distance of more than ten times its width. There are numerous reasons why this is so, including the friction caused by banks and the fact that river water streams faster at the centre. The place where a river changes direction is called a 'meander'. This phenomenon should serve as a metaphor for your life in the coming weeks. Your 'regular' flow is due for a course change—a meander.



Cancer (June 21 – July 22)

Cancerian poet Denis Johnson eventually became a celebrated writer who won numerous prizes, including the prestigious National Book Award. But life was rough when he was in his twenties. Because of his addictions to drugs and alcohol, he neglected his writing. Later, in one of his mature poems, he expressed appreciation to people who supported him earlier on. "You saw me when I was invisible," he wrote, "you spoke to me when I was deaf, you thanked me when I was a secret." Are there helpers like that in your own story? Now would be a perfect time to honour them and repay the favours.



Leo (July 23 – August 22)

What do you believe in, exactly, Leo? The coming weeks will be a fine time to take an inventory of your beliefs—and then divest yourself of any that no longer serve you, no longer excite you, and no longer fit your changing understanding of how life works. For extra credit, you should dream up some fun new beliefs that lighten your heart and stimulate your playfulness. For example, you could borrow poet Charles Wright's approach: "I believe what the thunder and lightning have to say." Or you could try my idea: "I believe in wonders and marvels that inspire me to fulfil my most interesting dreams."



Virgo (August 23 – September 22)

Virgo poet Charles Wright testifies, "I write poems to untie myself, to do penance and disappear through the upper right-hand corner of things, to say grace." What about you, Virgo? What do you do in order to untie yourself and do penance and invoke grace? The coming weeks will be an excellent time for you to use all the tricks at your disposal to accomplish such useful transformations. And if you currently have a low supply of the necessary tricks, make it your healthy obsession to get more.



Libra (September 23 – October 22)

Folklore expert Clarissa Pinkola Estés celebrates the power of inquiry. She says that "asking the proper question is the central action of transformation," both in fairy tales and in psychotherapy. To identify what changes will heal you, you must be curious to uncover truths that you don't know yet. "Questions are the keys that cause the secret doors of the psyche to swing open," says Estes. We need storms. They bring refreshing rain, and keep the earth in electrical balance. Metaphorical storms often generate a host of necessary and welcome transformations.



Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)

"Unexpressed emotions will never die," declared trailblazing psychologist Sigmund Freud. "They are buried alive and they will come forth, later, in uglier ways." This is why you should not bury your emotions—especially now, when they urgently need to be aired. Please don't allow a scenario in which they will emerge later in ugly ways. Instead, find the courage to express them soon—in the most loving ways possible, hopefully, and with respect for people who may not be entirely receptive to them. Communicate with a compassionate clarity.



Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)

Sagittarian author Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz wrote a poem titled "Not Doing Something Wrong Isn't the Same as Doing Something Right." I propose that we make that thought one of your guiding themes during the next two weeks. If you choose to accept the assignment, you will make a list of three possible actions that fit the description "not doing something wrong," and three actions that consist of "doing something right." Then you will avoid doing the three wrong things named in the first list and give your generous energy to carrying out the three right things in the second list.



Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

Capricorn poet John O'Donahue suggested that a river's behaviour is worthy of our emulation. He said the river's life is "surrendered to the pilgrimage". It's "seldom pushing or straining, keeping itself to itself everywhere all along its flow." Can you imagine yourself doing that, Capricorn? Now is an excellent time to do so. O'Donahue rhapsodised that the river is "at one with its sinuous mind, an utter rhythm, never awkward," and that "it continues to swirl through all unlikeness with elegance: a ceaseless traverse of presence soothing on each side, sounding out its journey, raising up a buried music." Be like that river, dear Capricorn!



Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)

Sometimes when a disheartening kind of darkness encroaches, you're right to be afraid. In fact, it's often wise to be afraid, because doing so may motivate you to ward off or transmute the darkness. But on other occasions, the disheartening darkness that seems to be encroaching isn't real or else is actually less threatening than we imagine. Novelist John Steinbeck described the latter when he wrote, "I know beyond all doubt that the dark things crowding in on me either did not exist or were not dangerous to me, and still I was afraid." This is the nature of the darkness you're currently worried about. Can you, therefore, find a way to banish or at least diminish your fear?



Pisces (February 19 – March 20)

"Some people, if they didn't make it hard for themselves, might fall asleep," wrote novelist Saul Bellow. In other words, some of you act as if it's entertaining, even exciting, to attract difficulties and cause problems for yourselves. If that describes you even a tiny bit, Pisces, you should tone down that bad habit in the coming weeks—maybe even see if you can at least partially eliminate it. The cosmic rhythms will be on your side whenever you take measures to drown out the little voices in your head that try to undermine and sabotage you. At least for now, say no to making it hard for yourself. Say yes to making it graceful for yourself.

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see solvable challenges that
need flexible solutions.



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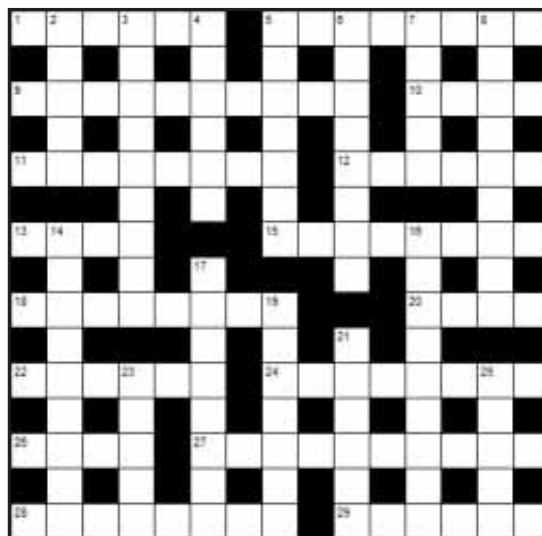
PUZZLES

ACROSS

- 1 Mountainous region (6)
- 5 Screen fight (8)
- 9 Endless revenue (10)
- 10 The Ring (4)
- 11 Identified daughter (8)
- 12 Unlimited (6)
- 13 Concealed toilet (4)
- 15 Current swimming (8)
- 18 Unworried but depressed (8)
- 20 Grass followed by drinks (4)
- 22 Humoured slap (6)
- 24 Central period (8)
- 26 Quiet rebuke (4)
- 27 Harbour gate (10)
- 28 Italian city (8)
- 29 Store orders (6)

DOWN

- 2 Knight stands up (5)
- 3 Abandoned person (9)
- 4 Iron Maiden (6)
- 5 Botched energy (7)
- 6 Back-to-back (8)
- 7 Political statesman (5)
- 8 Holding grudges (9)
- 14 Native inhabitant (9)
- 16 Heartless objection (9)
- 17 Underworld queen pub (8)
- 19 Opening restaurant (7)
- 21 Car thief (6)
- 23 Thick-skinned leadership (5)
- 25 Genius character (5)



Easy

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

Medium

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

SOLUTIONS

FOR THE APRIL ISSUE



www.alberichcrosswords.com

www.dailysudoku.com

easy

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


medium

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



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We extend our best wishes to
the  Magazine issued by
the Ministry of Interior on an occasion
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