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## Singing star steals hearts



The Arab world's well-known singer Haifa Wehbe, from Lebanon, captivated the audience with her lead performance in a star-studded World Travel Awards gala at Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday. The event was attended by over 1,000 industry leaders and 65 winners from the Middle East and Africa were honoured. — Photo by Emanuel Cornelius See Page 14

# Dubai enforces phase I of ban

INDOOR PUBLIC AND WORK PLACES TO BE SMOKE-FREE

By staff reporters

DUBAI — On the occasion of World No Tobacco Day, Dubai yesterday began implementing the first phase of the ban on smoking in all government departments and educational institutions.

Minister of Health Humaid Mohammed Obaid Al Qutami announced that the federal law in this regard would come into effect by the end of the year.

"The law will be flexible for all local governments, which means that public places such as shopping malls would be given a chance to implement a blanket ban or designate an area for smoking," he announced.

"At present, the MoH is focusing on the urgent need to make all indoor public places and work places 100 per cent smoke-free."

"We have already banned smoking within the ministry so as to set an example, and we are ensuring that visitors to the ministry, too, respect the ban," he said.

Meanwhile, officials

from Dubai Municipality said a complete ban on smoking within the department has already been in force since 1999. "The Dubai Municipality is a no-smoking zone since 1999. Anybody who wants to smoke has to go out of the building. But a regulation against smoking in public will be useful in the long run. The municipality plans to hold campaigns in order to make the people aware about the ill-effects of smoking," said a municipality spokesperson.

Brigadier Mohammed Ahmed Al Marri, Director of Dubai Naturalisation and Residency Department, said smoking was already banned in the

halls and sections of DNRD. "We are a very civilised society. People know that they should not smoke in a public department and there is no need for an official rule to force them to relinquish smoking while in DNRD."

While pointing out that there was no place allocated for smokers in the department, he said: "Smokers can take a break outside if they feel like

smoking." An official from the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) said the no-smoking policy has already been in force for the past four years.

"Smoking has been prohibited in the DTCM building for almost four years. Turn to Page 22

**"The law will be flexible for all local governments, which means that public places such as shopping malls would be given a chance to implement a blanket ban or designate an area for smoking"**

## Dh500 fine for selling cigarettes to under-20

By Joy Sengupta

DUBAI — Shopkeepers who sell cigarettes to youngsters below the age of 20 will be fined Dh500, Zuhoor Al Sabagh, head of Clinics and Medical Services Section in the municipality, said yesterday.

She also said that Dh500 fine would also be imposed on people found smoking in public places.

However, these penalties will be imposed from the year 2009, she clarified.

Municipality officials, she added, would keep an eye on grocery stores and other outlets where cigarettes are sold. Meanwhile, Hussain Nasser Lootah, the acting director-general of Dubai Municipality, said shopping malls will have to implement the no-smoking regulations from September 15.



## Corruption case against Benazir withdrawn: report

By Afzal Khan  
Our correspondent

ISLAMABAD — In a significant development, probably hinting at the shape of political permutations to come, Pakistan's National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has withdrawn corruption cases against former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, former Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) director General Rehman Malik, and S. Jaffari, in the \$150 million "UN Oil for Food Programme" scam.

The NNI news agency of Pakistan, quoting reliable sources, has quoted the NAB as mentioning "no solid proof against the people involved in the scandal," for withdrawing the case. The "proofs" Turn to Page 22

## 35 Nato troops killed in Afghanistan

KABUL — Afghanistan's Taliban claimed responsibility yesterday for shooting down a Nato heavy-lift helicopter and said that 35 soldiers were killed, many more than the seven dead announced by the Western military alliance. Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousuf said

the death toll came from secret sources operating in the southern province of Helmand, scene of a series of bloody clashes between Taliban and Western forces. He said the twin-rotor Chinook was flying low ahead of a land vehicle convoy when it was shot down.—Reuters

## Saudi prisoner commits suicide at Guantanamo

MIAMI — A Saudi prisoner was found dead at the US detention camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on Wednesday after apparently committing suicide, the US military said.

"The detainee was found unresponsive and not breathing in his cell by guards. The detainee was pronounced dead by a physician after all life-saving measures had been exhausted," the military southern command said in a statement.

It described the death as "an apparent suicide" and said an investigation was being held.

The statement stressed that a cultural adviser was assisting the military to ensure that the remains are handled in a culturally sensitive and religiously appropriate manner.

Last year, US officials stirred worldwide outrage by describing three suicides at Guantanamo as "an act of asymmetric warfare" and "a good PR move" on the part of terror suspects. The detention camp is located on a Navy base set in south-eastern Cuba on territory the United States occupies under the terms of a 1901 treaty since rejected by communist-led Cuba. — AFP

# They killed compatriot for Dh2,000

By Amira Agarib

DUBAI — Failure to return Dh2,000 that he had borrowed from his three compatriots cost an Indian labourer his life. The three men killed Vijayan Z. in a premeditated murder and buried his body in a pit in a warehouse.

However, they failed to elude the law and were arrested. Dubai Police have nabbed the three accused, all labourers, 32-year-old Raj B., 25-year-old Santosh J. and 30-year-old Shrini D., who have all confessed to their crime.

The three, who worked with a contracting company, had asked the victim to join them for dinner and drinks at a house in Al Barsha.

After consuming alcohol together, they strangled Vijayan to death, stole his money and mobile phone, and later moved his body to a deserted warehouse of their company in Al

Barsha, where they buried the body. Some 15 days after the incident, the victim's brother reported to the police that his brother was missing. He also told the police that his brother's mobile phone was not responding and that his employers too had no clue to his whereabouts.

The police later arrested the three suspects as they had friendly relations with the victim.

During the interrogation, the three confessed that they had killed Vijayan as he had failed to return the Dh2,000 he had borrowed from them more than a year ago.

They told the police that when their repeated pleas to return the money were ignored, they decided to kill Vijayan.

The accused told the police where they had buried the victim's body. When the police searched the warehouse, they were able to locate the body in a pit filled with waste.

## du landline, net services by year end

By Riyasbabu

DUBAI — du, the new telecom service provider in the UAE, will provide Internet and landline telephony services in the country by the end of this year, the company has announced.

Addressing the media yesterday, Osman Sultan, CEO of du, said: "Currently, du offers these services to customers living in certain parts of Dubai only. But we expect to provide these services to all our customers across the UAE by the end of this year."

The du CEO disclosed that instead of setting up their own infrastructure for these services, they would be using the existing facilities and were currently in talks with Etisalat for the same.

Osman noted that over 400,000 customers were currently using du mobile services. "The number booking campaign launched by du has been a thumping success. We aim to capture 30 per cent of the market by 2009," he declared.

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## AFTER CLIMBING GLORY...

# 'Spiderman' gets 15-day jail

SHANGHAI — France's Alain Robert, renowned for climbing the world's tallest buildings, wasn't going to let 15 days in a Chinese jail deter him from an attempt at scaling China's tallest building.

Clad in a Spider-Man costume, the 44-year-old made a barehanded ascent and descent of the 88-storey Jin Mao Tower yesterday, achieving the feat in 90 minutes.

His feet had barely touched the ground when he was arrested by police.

Robert had decided to mount the iron-and-glass structure without permission after authorities turned down two requests.

"If you obey all the rules, you miss the fun," Robert told Reuters in an interview

ahead of his ascent of the 420.5-metre tower.

"I've scaled the three tallest buildings in the world, so I reckoned I should also climb the fourth-tallest building. It's like there's something missing."

Robert had consulted lawyers and French diplomats before the attempt and said he expected to face 15 days in custody and a fine of up to 10,000 yuan (\$1,300).

In 2001, Chinese shoe salesman Han Qizhi became the first person to scale the Jin Mao Tower.

Han, who had happened to walk by the building and acted on a "rash impulse", was detained for about two weeks. — Reuters



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