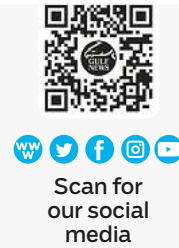


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Dubai girl leaps 3 grades in one year

DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Chief Reporter

Imagine beginning your Year 9 in school in September 2023 and joining Year 12 in September 2024. Rida Balchandani, 15, an Indian expat student at Dubai Scholars Private School, has achieved this extraordinary academic milestone by completing her International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) Year 11 exams in just one year instead of the usual three.

"When I received the books for biology, physics, and chemistry, I found them all easy," said Rida. She convinced her parents and approached the school to fast-track her education.

Her school head, Sapna Changrani, noted that while allowing Rida to skip ahead was a tough decision, they trusted her potential and allowed her to sit for Year 11 exams in June 2024 after she excelled in several pre-tests and the mock exams in December 2023. In August 2024, the "child prodigy" passed her exams with flying colours and advanced to Year 12.

SEE ALSO P4



WAM

DOWN MEMORY LANE: TRIBUTE TO SHAIKH MOHAMMAD

Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid, yesterday attended a ceremony marking 20 years of Mohammad Bin Rashid Centre for Leadership Development (MBRCLD). To mark the occasion, Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad shared a video of Shaikh Mohammad during his training days at Mons Officer Cadet School in UK. The video went viral, with 648,000 views in less than seven hours. A still, above, from the video shows Shaikh Mohammad, second from left. **FULL REPORT P5**

Oil prices drop to lowest in over two years

DUBAI
BY JUSTIN VARGHESE
Your Money Editor

Oil's collapse to the lowest level in more than two years is the market's indication that there's hope for the global economy to have a firmer

growth grip over the coming year. Global benchmark Brent crude yesterday fell below \$70 a barrel for the first time since December 2021. What's more, this raised the prospect of a descent toward \$60 a barrel in 2025.

It was flagged by forecasters from Citigroup Inc. to JPMor-

gan Chase & Co., and echoed on Monday by one of the world's largest commodities traders, that this could further bolster the chances of the US and its peers weathering the effect of high borrowing costs without a damaging recession.

SEE ALSO P7

US debate fails to throw up clear winner

TRUMP, HARRIS GIVE DISTINCT VISIONS
OF AMERICA DURING FIERY FACE-OFF

DUBAI
BY ALEX ABRAHAM
Senior Associate Editor

If fence-sitters were hoping to make up their minds after watching the debate between former US President Donald Trump and Vice-President Kamala Harris, they will be a disappointed lot.

Falsehoods, accusations and insults later, neither candidate came out on top. In fact, more often than not, neither of them gave a straightforward answer to some of the questions, instead choosing to beat around the bush or point a finger at the other.

Both showed they were comfortable in their areas of strength. While Trump raised his voice on immigration and the economy, Harris went on the offensive on the topics of abortion and diplomacy.

What eventually came out were two distinct visions of America. For Trump the country is a grim place where im-

migrants steal jobs and is devastated economically. "They're eating the dogs, the people that came in, they're eating the cats," Trump said, before being corrected by the ABC News moderator that the authorities in the town of Springfield have said this did not happen.

For Harris, America is a hopeful place that can play its part on the global scale with a new generation of leadership. "Let's turn the page and move forward," Harris said repeatedly. "Frankly, the American people are exhausted with this same old tired playbook."

At least one person made up her mind after the debate. Megastar Taylor Swift voiced support for Harris and called the Democratic candidate a "steady-handed, gifted leader."

For others who are still undecided, the next 53 days will be crucial. Any misstep by a candidate could prove costly.

It's going to be a close finish in the November 5 elections.

SEE ALSO P10

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