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SHARJAH BOOK FAIR: LOVE FOR BOOKS DOESN'T AGE FOR THIS 89-YEAR-OLD

Emirati Ali Fardan, 89, browses through one of the titles on display at the Sharjah International Book Fair on day one of the exhibition on Wednesday. Themed 'We Speak Books', the 2023 edition of SIBF runs until November 12 with the participation of 2,033 publishers from 108 countries. **SEE ALSO P4**

In world first, Sharjah replaces fire-risk cladding of buildings

Flammable facade of 40 structures across the emirate to be redone

SHARJAH
BY AGHADDIR ALI
Senior Reporter

In a civic project considered the first of its kind in the world, the Sharjah City Municipality has completed replacing the flammable facade of a residential tower with non-combustible material.

Work is already under way to replace the cladding of 40 resi-

dential towers located across various areas of Sharjah.

The SCM has successfully completed the replacement of aluminum facades with non-combustible materials, endorsed by the Sharjah Civil Defence, for the first building in its planned list. This significant accomplishment has fortified the building's security and safety system while boosting residents' feelings of safety.

Dh100 million project

Obaid Saeed Al Taniji, Director General of SCM, said that this project embodies the emirate's keenness to provide a safe environment for residents by providing the high-

est rates of safety and security in residential and commercial buildings.

This project, which costs Dh100 million, is being implemented at the government's expense.

Engineer Khalifa Bin Hadda Al Suwaidi, Acting Director of Technical Services at SCM, said work is progressing on the towers and other buildings in four stages that have been identified to complete the entire project. Building owners have been duly notified, with the final designs for each building being presented before starting implementation.

SEE ALSO P2

India storm into World Cup semis

A comprehensive win over Sri Lanka helps hosts maintain unbeaten record

DUBAI
BY SHYAM A. KRISHNA
Senior Associate Editor

India lived up to the tag of favourites in the Cricket World Cup 2023. The thumping 302-run win over Sri Lanka at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai yesterday helped retain their unbeaten record and storm into the semi-finals.

Seven wins with 14 points did it for India, although they are yet to play South Africa and the Netherlands. India face the Proteas on Sunday, which could be billed as the virtual final since the two have been the dominant teams in the tournament.

India's winning streak puts them in pole position to win the tournament. But South Af-

rican batting has been imposing as they posted five scores of over 300 and one over 400. And their bowling too is formidable. Yet they have choked against the less-fancied Netherlands, which shows the Proteas can collapse under pressure.

Red-hot form

The Netherlands haven't been much of a hurdle for India, who should beat them in their final league fixture. That should help India swell the points tally to an unassailable 16 points even if they lose to South Africa. A loss to South Africa, that's unlikely, given India's red-hot form. But this is cricket, limited-overs cricket. Anything can happen.

That shouldn't worry India, having come through stern examinations against Australia and New Zealand. But the next phase is tricky because it's a knockout. There can be no comebacks.

SEE ALSO P14

Bahrain envoy returns from Israel: Manama

BLINKEN HEADS TO MIDEAST SEEKING 'CONCRETE STEPS' TO SPARE CIVILIANS

DUBAI

BY STEPHEN N. R.
Senior Associate Editor
KHITAM AL AMIR
Chief News Editor

The ambassadors of Bahrain and Israel have returned to their respective countries some time ago, the National Communication Centre of Bahrain (NCC) has confirmed, according to the Bahrain News Agency. The NCC also said that direct flights between Bahrain and Tel Aviv were suspended several weeks ago.

The NCC reiterated Bahrain's unchanged approach of advocating for enhanced security and stability and peace in the region, which can be achieved only by finding a just solution to the Palestinian issue. The resolution should lead to a two-state solution in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative, ensuring the right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The current efforts should primarily concentrate on safeguarding civilian lives in Gaza, the NCC said, underlining the need for creating urgent humanitarian corridors to deliver relief and medical aid to the people.

The return of envoys comes a day after Jordan said it recalled its ambassador to Israel.

Israel's bombardment of the

UAE HOSPITALS TO TREAT GAZA KIDS

UAE President His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan has directed the provision of medical treatment at UAE hospitals for 1,000 Palestinian children accompanied by their families from the Gaza Strip.

—WAM

small Palestinian enclave of 2.3 million people has killed at least 9,061 people, including over 3,750 children, according to Gaza health authorities.

Hamas-run health ministry yesterday said 27 people were killed in Israel strike near UN Gaza school.

Blinken returns today

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said yesterday he would seek "concrete measures" from Israel to minimise harm to Gaza civilians as he heads to the Middle East on his second crisis trip since a Hamas assault triggered a war.

"We will be talking about concrete steps that can and should be taken to minimise harm to men, women and children in Gaza," Blinken said.

"This is something that the US is committed to," he said.

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Pakistan border crossing overwhelmed as Afghans face expulsion | P10

BUSINESS

Qatar Airways' Doha-RAK service to boost tourism in emirate | P6

THE TAKEAWAY

Consistent exercise can help ward off a range of diseases | P12-13



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Seven people killed as Storm Ciaran hits Western Europe | P10



ENTERTAINMENT
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