

UAE



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SHARJAH

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# Sharjah Museums Authority launches summer programme

Sharjah Museums Authority (SMA) has announced the launch of its Summer Season 2026, featuring a comprehensive line-up of museum educational programmes, training initiatives, family activities, interactive experiences, and temporary exhibitions designed for children, youth, and families.

The summer programme reflects SMA's ongoing commitment to strengthening the role of museums as centres for learning, discovery, and creativity while reinforcing their position as preferred cultural and recreational destinations throughout the summer holidays.

The summer season begins with the 18th Sharjah Museums Ambassadors Programme, taking place from 13 to 16 July 2026, with a closing ceremony on 20 July 2026.

Targeting youth aged 13 to 17, the programme offers specialised training that develops participants' museum guiding, communication, presentation, and public speaking skills through practical workshops, hands-on activities, and guided experiences across three Sharjah Museums.

Running concurrently, SMA will host its distinguished Happy Holiday Summer Camp from 13 July to 20 August 2026, welcoming children aged

7 to 12. The camp offers a diverse programme of educational and interactive activities, alongside creative workshops that combine heritage, arts, and science across several Sharjah Museums, encouraging participants to develop new skills while nurturing their creativity and spirit of exploration.

As part of the museum programmes accompanying the summer season, SMA will also organise a series of specialised workshops and activities throughout July, including "From the Heart of the Palm" at Hisn Khorfakkan on 4 July 2026, "The Gilded Horse Bridle" workshop at Sharjah Archaeology Museum on 5 July 2026, and "Moon Day" at Sharjah Science Museum on 19 July 2026, inviting participants on an engaging interactive journey into the fascinating worlds of astronomy and space exploration.

During August, Sharjah Aquarium will once again host its annual Junior Aquarist Programme, running from 3 to 6 August 2026 and designed for children aged 9 to 15.

The programme offers participants a unique opportunity to discover the fascinating world of marine life through immersive practical ex-

periences, including learning about the role of Aquarist, observing live aquatic feeding sessions, understanding life support systems and water quality management, exploring behind-the-scenes aquarium operations, and participating in a range of educational and interactive workshops that deepen their understanding of marine ecosystems and inspire a lasting appreciation for the marine environment.

Also taking place during August is the "Young Calligrapher Programme," held from 3 to 6 August 2026 at Al Gasimia School - Museum of Education in Sharjah, where children will discover the beauty of Arabic calligraphy and Kufic script through hands-on workshops and interactive activities designed to nurture their artistic and creative abilities.

Family-focused activities will continue throughout August with "Summer is Better with Family" at Sharjah Science Museum, offering a rich programme of scientific and artistic workshops, educational demonstrations, interactive games, and family-friendly experiences that combine learning with entertainment for visitors of all ages.

SMA will also present the "Mould Story" workshop on 22 August 2026 at the Resistance Monument, where participants will explore the history and evolution of plate-making before creating their own handcrafted decorative plate using Jesmonite, adding personal artistic touches that reflect their creativity.

In addition to its seasonal programmes and events, Sharjah Museums continue to offer a diverse range of permanent interactive experiences housed within their galleries and facilities, providing visitors with engaging opportunities for learning and discovery throughout the summer.

Among these experiences is the "Little Archaeologist Hall" at Sharjah Archaeology Museum, the first interactive archaeology hall of its kind across museums in the UAE.

Designed for children aged 5 to 12, the gallery invites young visitors on an exciting journey through Sharjah's ancient history, combining hands-on activities with immersive educational experiences that stimulate curiosity, imagination, and a passion for discovery.

Gulf Today, Staff Reporter



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## UN leader joins global call for peace

**DUBAI:** Sajeda Shawa, Head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the UAE, has joined a growing chorus of international leaders, parliamentarians, faith representatives and humanitarian voices calling for greater dialogue and renewed efforts towards peace amid escalating global tensions. Speaking as part of a global appeal coordinated by the International Spiritual Council for Transforming Humanity (ISCTH), Shawa stressed the importance of putting people at the centre of decision-making during a period marked by armed conflicts, geopolitical rivalries and deepening divisions across regions.

"I hope leaders choose dialogue over division, compassion over indifference, and place human dignity at the heart of every decision," she said.

The appeal comes at a time when conflicts in different parts of the world continue to exact a heavy humanitarian toll, displacing millions and placing increasing pressure on international relief efforts. Founded with the objective of promoting peace through dialogue and cooperation, ISCTH has brought together voices from across political, humanitarian and spiritual spheres to advocate for peaceful resolutions to ongoing conflicts.

Among those supporting the initiative is Dr HC Nik Gugger, a member of the Swiss Parlia-

ment, who warned against further escalation of global tensions.

"The world is on fire. World leaders must choose dialogue over escalation and nonviolence over retaliation. Dialogue is not weakness. It is the only path forward," he said.

Ján Figel', President of FOREF Europe and former European Union Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU, highlighted the role of human rights in achieving stability.

"Respect for the dignity and fundamental rights of every human being is the surest path to lasting peace," he said. Religious leaders also echoed similar concerns. The Dalai Lama reiterated his long-standing message that sustainable peace begins at an individual level.

"Peace begins within each individual. Lasting peace cannot be achieved through force, but through compassion," he said. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, called for stronger advocacy for peace and greater attention to vulnerable communities affected by conflict.

"There is a need for more voices for peace, more voices against the madness of the arms race, more voices raised in favor of our poorest brothers and sisters," he said. The appeal

also referenced recent remarks by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, who called for compromises aimed at achieving long-term peace agreements.

At the centre of the initiative is Maitreya Dadashreeji, spiritual leader and founder of ISCTH, who warned of the wider consequences of prolonged conflict on both humanity and the environment.

He urged nations to pursue dialogue and peaceful settlement of disputes, particularly in regions that carry significant geopolitical influence and demographic weight.

In his message, he appealed specifically for a peaceful resolution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, arguing that diplomacy and cooperation offer a more sustainable path than continued confrontation. The International Spiritual Council for Transforming Humanity said the appeal is intended to encourage policymakers, institutions and citizens alike to prioritise human life, dignity and long-term global stability over conflict.

As humanitarian crises continue to unfold across multiple regions, the organisation said the decisions taken by world leaders today will have lasting implications for future generations.

Jamil Khan, Staff Reporter

## Wadi Wurayah on path to World Heritage List

**FUJAIRAH:** Deep in the Hajar Mountains of Fujairah, about 45 km from the city, Wadi Wurayah stands as one of the UAE's most prominent natural treasures.

Here, perennial springs and channels support unique biodiversity, creating a scene that embodies the richness of the UAE's environment and reflects its firm commitment to protecting its natural heritage.

Wadi Wurayah is not merely a nature reserve but a complete ecological system spanning 220 km<sup>2</sup>.

It is home to more than 1,099 species of living organisms, including 216 plant species, 114 bird species, 20 mammal species, and 30 reptile and amphibian species.

Rare and endangered species such as the Arabian Tahr and Blanford's Fox, as well as other notable animals like the caracal, further contribute to making it one of the most important ecological sites in the region.

The wadi is distinguished by its permanent natural waterfall and springs, which have provided a source of life in this mountainous region for centuries and contributed to the formation of an exceptional ecosystem.

It is also home to rare plants, most notably the wild orchid (*Epipactis veratrifolia*), the only one of its kind in the United Arab Emirates.

The wadi also serves as an important site for scientific research, as environmental studies have contributed to the rediscovery of rare organisms, documenting their presence within the reserve and naming them after their discovery, reinforcing the wadi's status as a natural laboratory for studying biodiversity in the region.

The wadi's importance is not limited to its ecological value but also extends to its historical and cultural significance. For hundreds of years, it has been linked to the lives of local communities and is adjacent to several prominent historical landmarks, including Al Bidyah

Mosque, the oldest standing mosque in the United Arab Emirates.

This reflects the deeply rooted relationship between people and nature in Fujairah.

This natural heritage is now at the forefront of international attention, as the United Arab Emirates has submitted a nomination file for Wadi Wurayah for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a natural site of Outstanding Universal Value.

The nomination file is based primarily on Criterion (ix), which pertains to representing ongoing ecological and biological processes of global significance, reflecting the wadi's unique integration of geological formations, perennial freshwater springs, and natural habitats that have maintained their continuity over thousands of years, as one of the most prominent mountain desert ecosystems in the Arabian Peninsula.

Gulf Today, Staff Reporter