



NEIGHBORS

Perilous Atlantic crossing parallels challenges faced by start-ups

Adventurers encourage entrepreneurs to aim for the stars

Egyptian adventurers and athletes Omar Samra and Omar Nour offered a lot of inspiration and food for thought to current and future entrepreneurs today (Monday) on the Sharjah Entrepreneurship Festival (SEF 2021) stage, as they drew fascinating parallels between their transformational, life-changing experience rowing across the Atlantic Ocean to the journey of entrepreneurship.

Speaking as part of the inaugural proceedings of the 5th edition of the two-day festival, organised by the Sharjah Entrepreneurship Center (Sheraa), Omar Samra, the first Egyptian to climb the Mount Everest, noted: "The beauty of life, and in entrepreneurship, lies in the highs and lows, but that is where uncertainly, loss and failure also resides. Your failure can be extremely public, but the key thing is to just start your journey, regardless of results."

His companion, Omar Nour, a renowned triathlete, who risked his life along with Omar Samra, when they embarked on a 3,000 nautical mile journey in December 2017 to cross the Atlantic on just a 7.5 metre x 2 metre light boat, with no outside assistance, added: "Just as in a risky adventure, you need to take that leap of faith in your business journey without often having the requisite experience. We had no previous rowing experience before the Atlantic expedition".

"But what we did have was plenty of heart and the wish to raise awareness on the plight of refugees who flee on sea," he further said.

Their boat may have capsized during the journey, with the duo rescued by a cargo ship, but the 12 hours they were left adrift at sea became the subject of the documentary 'Beyond the Raging Sea', bringing their story to a world-wide audience.

Drawing many parallels between their perilous adventure and the journey of entrepreneurship, the adventurers pointed out that putting oneself out there in risky situations are sure to bring successes and failures, in both business and sport.

"At the beginning of our journey, it was an exciting phase. We had all the focus and energy and the world's attention on us, but then reality kicks in and we were slumped over in exhaustion every day, with problems and complexities thrown at us that are akin to an entrepreneur's journey while building their businesses," said Omar Samra.

"Whether you are embarking on a journey like ours, or your own business, be prepared to be blindsided by unexpected things, like the wave that capsized us. In the ocean, as in business, things will go wrong, and it is how you choose to face it that makes your situation better. Keep at it with persistence and a nice solution will present itself," said Omar Nour.

The adventurers advised that while creating the ingredients for success is not in the hands of entrepreneurs, creating the right environment to usher in

the factors leading to success is entirely within their capacity. Not all variables can be anticipated or tackled with either, "but if you can practice what is within your reach, the process will flow automatically if not smoothly," said the duo.

Pauline Nguyen, business leader and author of The Way of the Spiritual Entrepreneur later spoke about realising one's full potential in her talk 'Why you need to awaken the spiritual entrepreneur in you'.

The fifth edition of the Sharjah Entrepreneurship Festival (SEF), one of the largest events for entrepreneurs in the region, organised by the Sharjah Entrepreneurship Center (Sheraa), is witnessing the participation of 55 speakers, including influential regional and global entrepreneurs, industry titans, and young creatives from social, cultural and sports sectors, and more. Bringing together more than 4,000 entrepreneurs and founders of startups across sectors on one platform, the two-day festival is discussing ways to make a meaningful impact and promote positive change in the entrepreneurship sector in the UAE as well as the region.

SEF 2021 is being organized in partnership with the ICT Fund - an initiative of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority and the Digital Government of the United Arab Emirates, Sharjah Media City (Shams), Alef Group, and the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority.



The National Aquarium — Al Qana

Abu Dhabi National Aquarium opens

The National Aquarium, Abu Dhabi's much anticipated landmark opened on November 12. Located within the Raddan Area, the National Aquarium is one of the 11 anchors found within Al Qana, one of Abu Dhabi's most iconic touristic and lifestyle destinations.

With innovations including video mapping technology and signage guides on your personal device, this attraction is expected to quickly take its place among the world's best aquariums. Iconic species include the world-famous Super Snake, believed to be the longest reptile on display in the world, along with a large school of Hammerhead sharks and many other hero creatures. The facility includes over 60 exhibits across 10 zones and it is expected to take an average of two hours to complete the journey.

Paul Hamilton, General Manager at The National Aquarium says, "We are absolutely delighted to be opening our doors to the public this November 12th, and be able to showcase our gigantic and diverse array of animals

and animal-related activities to visitors from around the world. The Emirates has a unique relationship with the Arabian Gulf, and it is our mission to honor this connection by incorporating the UAE's history into the project. The National Aquarium has been years in the making and we are especially excited to be opening in the same year as the UAE's 50th Anniversary."

In addition to its spectacular biodiversity, The National Aquarium boasts an array of unforgettable experiences. Visitors will be able to fully immerse themselves during their visits, with glass bottom dhow tours and personal animal encounters with sharks, puffins and a variety of other fascinating species. Scuba diving with one of the most diverse collections of sharks and rays on earth is also available. In July 2020, the National Aquarium signed a five-year partnership with The Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD), to create the largest and most innovative rehabilitation program of its kind to protect and rehabilitate wildlife in the emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Winning research teams to be announced in January

UAE identifies qualified rain research proposals

The National Center of Meteorology (NCM) today announced that it has identified the qualified research projects for the fourth cycle of the UAE Research Program for Rain Enhancement Science. The announcement was made following the meeting of the international technical review committee that convened virtually from the 3rd till the 4th of October, 2021 to evaluate the full proposals that reached the final stage of evaluation.

During the month-long evaluation phase, the committee reviewed 8 full-proposals that were submitted by 51 researchers, scientists and experts affiliated with 26 institutions in 9 countries. The evaluation was based on five-point criteria: overall scientific & technical merit, significance and innovation; investigator/team; capacity building; approach; and resources and budget.

The shortlisted proposals covered various research areas such as cloud microphysics, cloud seeding assessment, new seeding materials assessment, droplet charge measurement, cloud seeding prediction support, and the use of artificial intelligence techniques for accurate weather forecasting that supports cloud-seeding operations.

Earlier, the program announced the shortlisted pre-proposals from the ini-

tial evaluation phase, following a month-long evaluation process that culminated in the meeting of the international technical review committee virtually from 17 to 19 May, 2021. In total, 81 pre-proposals were submitted, which were presented by 378 scientists and researchers affiliated with 159 institutions across 37 countries on five continents. They were scored based on four evaluation criteria: research excellence, impact and quality; experience and/or expertise of the proposers, and potential for success; multidisciplinary collaboration across academic, industry and government partners; and the potential to enhance or transform the weather modification research community and industry in the UAE and across the globe.

His Excellency Dr. Abdulla Al Mandous, Director General of NCM and President of the Regional Association II (Asia) of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), said: "We are delighted with the timely completion of the evaluation of shortlisted projects qualified for the program's fourth cycle grant. This phase is a key step towards identifying the most innovative ideas with potentials to advance rain enhancement research locally, regionally and globally. This aligns with the program's objective of promoting rain enhancement

research to address global water security challenges as envisioned by the UAE's wise leadership. We are confident that the projects selected for grant will offer valuable knowledge and scientific input to help mitigate global water scarcity."

For her part, Alya Al Mazroui, Director of the UAE Research Program for Rain Enhancement Science (UAEREP), said: "During the evaluation process, the international technical review committee focused on proposals that can make a valuable addition to the UAE's ambitious efforts to address water scarcity challenges in arid and semi-arid regions across the globe. The shortlisted proposals stood out for their high quality and scientific merit, requiring the committee members to make rigorous efforts to identify the best among them based on stringent selection criteria. This will ensure their effective contribution to enhancing cloud seeding and breaking new ground in this important scientific domain, while complementing the existing research efforts with new ideas."

Al Mazroui added: "At the program, we are committed to driving the development of rain enhancement research given its importance in ensuring a water-secure future. We look forward to the special event to be held beginning of next year to reveal more details about the winning projects."

editor's choice

