

# NATION

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**Jim Bridenstine**, Nasa chief

## Second school set to close its doors to Dubai students

**Kelly Clarke**

DUBAI — The Dubai schooling community has been left shocked by the announcement of a second school closure.

In the first quarter of 2019, the Emirates English Speaking School (EESS) — a 30-year veteran on the Dubai school circuit — will be closing its doors to the 1,550 students currently enrolled on its campus. The CBSE curriculum school is citing financial constraints as the reason behind the decision.

This latest announcement by the EESS means its last batch of graduating students will be rolling out in March 2019. All parents have been informed of the closure.

In a statement on Thursday, Mohammed Darwish, chief of regulations and permits commission at the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), said: “The KHDA has approved the school management’s request to discontinue educational services at the Emirates English Speaking School from the next academic year. The school has already put in place a plan to ensure students affected by the closure can be accommodated in other schools and it will help parents and students with a smooth transition.”

The news comes just weeks after the KHDA confirmed to *Khaleej Times* that the British Columbia Canadian School (BCCS) in Dubai Investment Park (DIP) — which opened only in 2017 — will be closing, too.

In a statement on July 10, Darwish said it was “aware that BCCS has sent a communication to parents informing them of the school’s closure, though we have yet to receive the official request from the school”.

Former student at EESS, Deepak Dinakaran, who attended the school in Grade 4 in 1996, said he was saddened to hear the news about its closure.

“It is really heartbreaking as I’ve



An exterior view of the Emirates English Speaking School in Al Safa, Dubai. — Photo by Neeraj Murali

# 1,550

Number of students enrolled in the school

“The school has already put in place a plan to ensure students affected by the closure can be accommodated in other schools.”

**Mohammed Darwish**, chief of regulations and permits commission, KHDA

“It is really heartbreaking as I’ve always cherished memories from my time there. I know it will be a terrible loss for the upcoming generations.”

**Deepak Dinakaran**, former student

always cherished memories from my time there. I know it will be a terrible loss for the upcoming generations too. These memories were as simple as eating a Max ice cream from the canteen to the bus ride along Jumeirah Beach, now La Mer,” he told *Khaleej Times*.

Speaking highly of his time at EESS, he said other standout memories include the friendly teaching staff and being awarded a gold star for his report card.

“They really built my confidence up as a student and I believe that school made me who I am today.”

Located in Al Safa, Dubai, the EESS is a private K-12 school and was founded in 1979.

In 2016/2017, the school received a ‘weak’ rating as part of the KHDA inspections, a drop from the ‘acceptable’ rating it held previously.

The EESS was contacted for comment and acknowledged the

### 30 YEARS LEGACY

- > **The EESS**, a school following CBSE curriculum, was opened in 1979
- > **The school** received a ‘weak’ rating from the KHDA in 2016/17, a drop from its ‘acceptable’ rating
- > **Parents** of the students at the school were informed about its closure this academic year
- > **The last batch** of students from the school will be graduated in March 2019

request, but did not respond with comments in time for print. The article will be updated online if a response is received.

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## UAE ties up with Nasa on manned space flights

**Sarwat Nasir**

DUBAI — The UAE Space Agency has signed an agreement with Nasa to cooperate in human space flights. The agreement was signed by the UAE Space Agency’s director-general, Dr Mohammed Al Ahabbi and Nasa chief Jim Bridenstine on Wednesday at the Farnborough International Airshow, being held in the UK.

The deal has been signed less than one month after the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) signed an agreement with Russia’s space agency (Roscosmos) to send the first Emirati to space onboard the Soyuz rocket in April, 2019. A Russian commander and an American engineer will also be on the flight to the International Space Station.

“This morning I met with the Director-General of the UAE Space Agency, Dr Mohammed Al Ahabbi. We signed a joint letter of intent for cooperation in human space flight. I look forward to working with Dr Al Ahabbi to further humanity’s exploration of space,” tweeted Bridenstine, who is the new Nasa chief under the Trump administration.

The UAE Space Agency also tweeted on Wednesday: “The UAE Space Agency, represented by Dr Al Ahabbi, director-general, signs a letter of intent with Nasa, represented by Jim Bridenstine administrator, while in the UK for @FIAFarnborough. The MoU

builds on joint cooperation in the fields of manned space flights #FIA18.”

Speaking at Farnborough, Dr Al Ahabbi said: “This agreement strengthens our ongoing mutual collaboration and contributes to the strategic objectives of the UAE Space Agency. The formation of close partnerships with leading space agencies and organisations around the world continues to contribute to the strengthening of our international standing within the global space sector.

“This agreement is particularly important due to NASA’s wide-reaching expertise in manned space missions. NASA has a record number of successful manned spaceflights that have brought significant contributions to humankind’s development, and our agreement with NASA will enhance our national capabilities in this advanced field.”

Nasa and the UAE Space Agency have held several meetings in the past to find ways to strengthen their partnership. One agreement was signed between the two agencies last year, where they agreed to cooperate in aeronautics research and to utilise airspace and outer space for peaceful purposes. In 2016, they signed an agreement to cooperate in exploring Mars. However, this is the first agreement between the two in terms of cooperation in human space flights.

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(with inputs from Wam)



The MoU builds on joint cooperation in manned space flights.

## Visitors on trial for smuggling attempt

**Marie Nammour**

DUBAI — A woman, who was caught trying to smuggle more than 7.4kg of hashish through a Dubai airport, was charged at court. The public prosecution records show the Indian woman, 26, was caught on March 15 at the Dubai International Airport in possession of more than 7.4kg of hashish. She had a male accomplice, 26, also an Indian.

A customs inspector said she was on the job at Terminal 1 when they suspected the baggage of the woman. “When she reached the inspection point I asked her whether she had anything to declare about any banned substance and her reply was negative.”

The crime lab report showed the quantity seized from the female defendant was hashish and weighed more than 7.4kg.

The court will pronounce a ruling on July 30.

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## Worker stalks, molests 11-year-old in Dubai

**COURT ROUND-UP**

**Marie Nammour**

DUBAI — A worker was charged at a Dubai court on Wednesday for allegedly molesting an 11-year-old schoolboy in the lift of a residential building.

The 39-year-old Pakistani worker is accused of inappropriately touching the Indian boy while none was around. He denied the charge at the Court of First Instance, claiming it was unintentional.

The incident allegedly took place on May 30, and a complaint was lodged at Al Rashidiya police station.

The schoolboy told the investigators that after touching him in the lift, the defendant followed him to his place.

A police sergeant, who went to the building after the incident was reported by the boy’s father, said: “We checked the CCTV footage which showed the accused stalking the boy from the moment he came

He admitted he parked his car outside that building in the International City to take a break. He then spotted the boy.”

**Police officer**

back from school and entered the building until he reached his flat. He then quickly disappeared from the scene.”

The officer added that after circulating the suspect’s picture, he was caught.

“He admitted he parked his car outside that building in the International City to take a break.

“He then spotted the boy, went inside the lift to molest him and followed him. He sneaked his way out through the emergency exit not to be caught.”

The boy identified the man among other suspect at the police station.

The next hearing is set for July 29.

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## SMS solves mystery of maid’s murder; sponsor arrested

**Amira Agarib**

DUBAI — The Dubai Police have managed to uncover the mystery behind the death of a maid in Al Nahda, which was reported earlier as a natural death.

Colonel Ahmed Humaid Al Marri, director of the crime scene department at the Dubai Police Criminal Investigation Department, said that the incident came to light when the police received a call from a GCC woman, who asked the police to send an ambulance for her African maid, claiming that she just fainted and was motionless.

At the site of the incident, the

“The medical report revealed that the death was caused by beatings on the woman’s head and various parts of the body.”

**Colonel Ahmed Humaid Al Marri**, director of the crime scene department, Dubai Police

criminal investigation team found that the maid was already dead and the examination of the body showed old scratches and signs of beating. However, the owner of the house insisted that the maid fell on the ground and nobody hit her.

Colonel Al Marri said that the body was transferred to forensic medicine department and medical report revealed that the death was caused by beatings on the woman’s head and various parts of the body.

The criminal investigation teams arrested the GCC woman neighbours testified that the maid was beaten up and tortured by the woman.

Later, a woman reported to the police about a message that was wrongly sent to her by the sponsor of the maid. In the message, the husband had said he had warned his wife many times not to hit the maid.

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