

Fifty years in Dubai. One family, *two homes*, the same route back.

A family from Tamil Nadu walked out of the arrivals hall at Dubai airport on 7 October 1976. Fifty years to the day, the same five people stood in Terminal 1 again, then drove the old route to the two flats that first sheltered them. Parents MM Mohiuddin and Shameem, children Dr Tasneem Jamil, Mir Arif and Tabassum.

STILL IN THE PASSPORT
Arrival stamp: 7 October 1976
DUBAI INTERNATIONAL · TERMINAL 1

The photo album

8 PICTURES · 1970S → 2026



1970s Outside the first flat, one car



1977 Newborn Tabassum, in the flat



1970s Weekend by the water



1970s With friends, flares and all



2026 Terminal 1 arrivals, 7 Oct



2026 Passport with the 1976 stamp



2026 First home, Fish Roundabout



2026 Apt 609, Al Ghurair Centre

Timeline

1975 → 2026

1975

Father arrives alone from Tamil Nadu, joins ETA-ASCON. Dubai is a few streets either side of the Creek.

7 Oct 1976

Wife and two children land. First flat, opposite the water tank near Fish Roundabout.

1977

Third child, Tabassum, born at Rashid Hospital.

1981

Al Ghurair Centre opens, the first mall. Family rents in its tower. Contract no. 003.

2002

Family leaves apartment 609 after two decades there.

Retirement

Father retires from ETA, 8,000 people under him. Writes two books.

7 Oct 2026

Fifty years to the day. Airport, first home, second home, dinner at the grill they have used since 1976.

50 YEARS TO THE DAY

5 FAMILY MEMBERS ON THE WALK

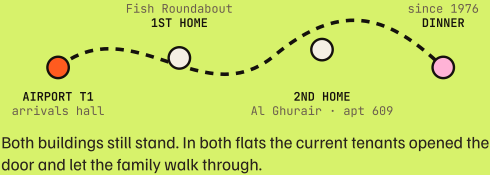
003 TENANCY CONTRACT NO.

609 THE APARTMENT NUMBER

8,000+ STAFF REPORTING TO HIM

2 TV CHANNELS IN 1976

The route, 7 Oct 2026



Both buildings still stand. In both flats the current tenants opened the door and let the family walk through.

Dubai firsts they remember

- Al Rawabi, first supermarket in their Deira street. Before it, groceries were shouted from the balcony to the corner shop.
- Al Fajer Department Store, Bur Dubai, the city's first escalators. The kids rode them for fun.
- Al Ghurair Centre, 1981, the first mall. "A whole new world."
- Dairy Queen, Jumeirah, first taste of fast food.
- Choithrams, so Indian ingredients were never a problem for a mother who cooks.
- Mushrif Park weekends: swimming lessons and barbecues with friends.
- Baba Yaseen on TV in Arabic, watched without understanding a word.
- World Trade Centre alone on the Abu Dhabi road, nothing around it.

Then and now

	1976	2026
Getting around	No car for months, taxis rare.	The old route in one morning.
The street	More sand than buildings.	Towers all around the first flat.
School	Son's class was a portacabin.	All three schooled here. Two came back.
Neighbours	Grandma rang doorbells down an empty corridor.	The family now in 609 welcomed them in.
Home	Back to India in a few years.	"We have never doubted that this is our country."

What the father taught

"There are no shortcuts to success."
MM MOHIUDDIN, ENGINEER, ETA.
QUOTED BY HIS DAUGHTER

- Build networks. Dubai rewards hard work and patience.
- Visit the site yourself, even in summer.
- Faith held through two Gulf wars, 2008 and Covid.
- Team mantra: "The race for excellence has no finish line."

Want the full story? Page 2: every photo larger, the two homes in detail, the father's career, the parents' books, a short FAQ.