

# Weekly highlights by L'ECONOMISTE



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## National Education: The new roadmap



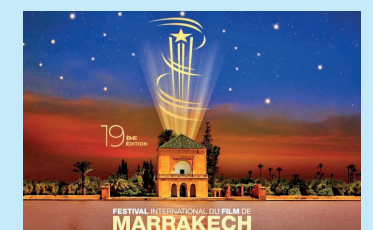
**Tourism: Great enthusiasm for Marrakech**



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EDITORIAL

Danger

Meriem OUDGHIRI

**I**T is climate chaos that is currently being discussed at COP 27. This high mass should in principle be that of the “implementation” of the commitments made during the previous years and which will make it possible to “move from promises to action”. Like previous meetings, this conference will have its highlights and its disappointments too, but it will be necessary to wait for the closing of COP27 before having a clear idea. In this great whirlwind, with its wind farms, its solar fields, and its green hydrogen strategy, Morocco pushes its pawns and ranks in the front runners. The country had understood that looking elsewhere and remaining inactive was no longer an option to be considered for the future and even for now. What is urgent is a profound ecological transformation. For a country whose economy is heavily penalized by the cost of importing fossil fuels, it is called upon to make significant efforts to ensure energy

transition driven by renewable energies. Alongside all these green strategies and major projects, the challenge is also to disseminate best practices on the ground that belongs to the regions, cities, and municipalities (and even to the citizens) who still find it difficult to put ecology on their agendas. The major projects that need to be implemented are still at the stage of knowing who will pick up the garbage and where they should be buried, and of planting a few trees in the middle of the main avenues on potholed sidewalks. The smallest vacant lot is transformed into an open dump, near shantytowns and beautiful villas. And everyone puts up with it until they no longer see them. The campaign against the washing of cars by private individuals ended up dying beautifully, while the country is under a water shortage alert. It is high time to stop hiding behind makeshift solutions. There is really danger in waiting. □



## Weekly highlights

# Tourism: Great enthusiasm for Marrakech

As expected, September and October 2022 were exceptional months for tourism in Marrakech thanks in particular to the All Saints' Day but also to the resumption of the events organized in the other city. Conferences, exhibitions, festivals... the agenda is full. These are events that attract both international and national tourists, such as the Marrakech International Film Festival, which has resumed its edition after two years of absence. The hotels rub their hands but shops and bazaars a little less. Nonetheless, the atmosphere of recovery is well and truly established. In terms of figures, at the end of September, Marrakech welcomed nearly 1.3 million tourists according to statistics from the Delegation of the Ministry of Tourism in Marrakech. These arrivals generated nearly four million overnight stays. In the eyes of tourism professionals and in particular hoteliers, the average occupancy rate is the true indicator of the health of tourism in Marrakech. "We hope for even more because the destination deserves it and its players and businesses have shown resilience despite the two-year crisis", said



At the end of September, Marrakech recorded nearly 1.3 million arrivals which generated nearly 4 million overnight stays.

Lahcen Zemat, vice-president of the Marrakech CRT (Regional Tourism Council) and president of the National Federation of the Hospitality Industry. Per foreign source market, France continues to lead in terms of arrivals, followed by the UK, the US, and Spain. Domestic tourism this year gave a place of choice to Marrakech with a total of 577,745 tourists who

stayed in Marrakech at the end of September. It should be noted that despite the strong heat of last summer, the other city managed to attract a large number of national and international tourists as well as Moroccans residing abroad, achieving records in August and July (see L'Economiste No 6323 of August 11, 2022). The outlook for December looks promising, thanks in

particular to the end-of-year celebrations. For the occasion, a big concert will be organized in the place of Jemaa el-Fna with the Congolese rapper Maitre Gims. In terms of air transport, Marrakech is gradually recovering its flights and its passengers. Since the reopening of the Moroccan borders in February, the Marrakech Ménara airport has received 3.7 million passengers (end of October), representing a recovery rate of 71%. In nine months, the airport recorded nearly 28,000 air movements with a recovery rate of 75% according to data of ONDA, the national airports authority. To stay in the "top of mind" especially on the eve of the 2022 winter season and to prepare for the year 2023, the National Tourism Board (ONMT) is launching a second wave of communication from November 11 onwards in 19 countries around the world. This communication campaign will be based on a TV media plan, on the major international channels but also in the cinema and on digital. In terms of billboards and the print press, the campaign includes a major regional focus as well as on social media. □

Badra BERRISSOULE

## Covid Special Fund

# Expenditure of more than 42 billion MAD

WITH the resumption of the increase in the number of daily contaminations, the Special fund for the management of the Covid-19 pandemic has come to the surface, thanks to the parliamentary group of the USFP (Socialist Union of Popular Forces) in the House of Representatives, which requested and obtained clarifications concerning the management of this case. In fact, it was the response from the Ministry of Economy and Finance that provided new data. Finally, the Government, under the royal impulse, gave priority to the health of citizens since the expenses of this Fund totaled more than 42.06 billion MAD (about 4 billion USD). The distribution of this amount places support for families as a lead priority. Indeed, this decisive support consisted in the mobilization of 16 billion MAD (1.6 billion USD). The royal instructions were clear: help populations in vulnerable and



precarious situations. This is how the Economic Watch Committee (CVE) had put in place several measures as part of alleviating the negative economic impact of the pandemic. This assistance took a concrete form through the launch

of a solidarity operation intended for families benefiting or not from the RAMED scheme. The goal is to preserve the purchasing power of households carrying out an activity in the informal sector and directly impacted by the sanitary lockdown.

Finally, this operation was broken down into three stages and benefited 5.5 million families, 55% of them in rural areas and the rest in cities and outskirts.

Of the amount of 42 billion MAD, support for the national economy and preservation of jobs comes in second place and represented the mobilization of 8.53 billion MAD.

The vaccination campaign against Covid-19 was not left out. Indeed, since its launch in 2021 and 2022, the purchase of vaccines has cost 8.35 billion MAD. For its part, covering the expenses linked to the upgrading of hospital infrastructure required 4.6 billion MAD for the 2020-2022 period. What was urgent was to purchase medical equipment, medicines, and pharmaceutical products, as well as 1,000 resuscitation beds, 800,000 Covid test kits, 550 respirators, and a number of radiological device. □

Mohamed CHAUI



## National Education: The new roadmap

**“70% of pupils in the public system do not master the program at the end of primary school”.** This sentence in the mouth of the Minister of National Education slams like a burst of machine gun fire. And for good reason, the public school does not provide basic learning and arouses the mistrust of citizens. For the schooling of their children, they have chosen schools in the private sector or the foreign schools present in certain cities. In secondary schools, things are no better: on average, 10% of students in the public system do not master the program at the end of the course. With these figures, it is normal for school dropouts to exceed 300,000 students per year, and precisely, Chakib Benmoussa wants to reduce this figure by one third by 2026, i.e. the date of the end of the term of office of this government. In any case, his task is not small. This is why the minister has drawn up a roadmap supposed to rectify the situation which he presented to the Government Council before giving his outline to the press on Thursday 10 November. For Chakib Benmoussa, this is a long-term



For Chakib Benmoussa, Minister of National Education, this is a long-term reform whose impacts are staggered over time, starting from the 2022-2023 prefiguration, then the inflection during 2024-2025, before arriving at expansion in 2026-2027

reform whose impacts are staggered over time, starting from the 2022-2023 prefiguration, then the inflection during 2024-2025, before arriving at expansion in 2026-2027. The roadmap is based on three pillars: the student, the teacher, and the school. The first version proposed was shared

and discussed by more than 100,000 people including students, teachers, and families, which enriched the final 2022-2026 roadmap for a quality public school for all. This reform prioritizes the impact on students and proposes solutions and practical measures to improve the quality of public

schools. This roadmap is considered as a window of opportunity which is offered today to materialize the reform resulting from the royal orientations and to rebuild the confidence of the citizens in this public school, say our sources. □

Mohamed CHAUI

## Telecoms: 5G postponed indefinitely?

**R**OLLING out 5G on the Moroccan market in 2023 is a mission impossible. The so-called fifth-generation technology (networks and services) is theoretically supposed to be rolled out in a few months. Indeed, according to the General Guidance Note (NOG) for the development of the telecom sector, the launch of 5G is scheduled for the year 2023. Moreover, preparing for the arrival of 5G is a major challenge for the coming years. Morocco has set itself the goal of enabling the launch of 5G before the end of the guidance note. Today, many telecoms market analysts declare, with supporting arguments, to be skeptical about meeting the schedule. “The plan of the General Orientation Note will not be able to achieve the goals that have been set. The real goal lies in the deployment of fiber, the aim being to reach 20% in 2023, in other words, almost 2 million FTTH sockets”. Today, however, some 450,000 catches have barely been installed. This represents almost one quarter of the goal assigned for 2023. Moreover,



in 2025, it will be required to increase that share to 50% of the market, according to the guidelines as set by the NOG. This corresponds to 5 million FTTH sockets (Fiber To The Home) to be installed to replace ADSL. This means that we are still far from the mark! “We are sure and certain that the ANRT (National Agency for Telecom Regulation) will not achieve the goals of the NOG 2023”, says a telecoms expert. In addition, nearly 9,000

radio sites will have to be fiberized, that is to say that they have neither 4G nor 5G. However, in order to have 5G, the pylons and stations must be fiber. “5G is necessarily fiber”, said the same expert, who added that “It would be easy to attribute this delay in deployment to the health crisis or to the economic situation... The goals could have been achieved if the right decisions had been made. This means opening up the market and regula-

tions to infrastructure operators, and it is the latter who will ensure pooling in coordination with local authorities, regions, and municipalities”. Another major constraint is the cost of investment which is exorbitant. Clearly, “it is impossible for each operator to roll out its own network itself”, notes the expert. Today, the alternative lies in opening up the market to operators dedicated to infrastructure to speed up pooling and sharing. The opposite scenario, that is to say the status quo, involves further strengthening the weight and monopoly position of the incumbent operator. Today, from consistent sources, world-class investors are showing interest in the Moroccan telecom infrastructure market. Investors include a GAFAM giant, Google itself. “These potential investors have presented their prerequisites for investing... But at present, the market does not respond favorably to this type of prerequisite”, says a source close to the public authorities. □

Amin RBOUB



## Weekly highlights

### International Film Festival

# Less glitter and still as much cinema

**I**N this period of global crisis, water stress, galloping inflation... the nineteenth edition of the International Film Festival has chosen to play the moderation card. A very sober opening ceremony, no gala evening, no bling bling parties or champagne afloat. Those who came for the rhinestones and sequins will be disappointed. Moviegoers, on the other hand, will have plenty of time to enjoy the eclectic program this year. Despite the economic situation, a host of international stars responded. James Gray, Marion Cotillard, Jim Jarmush, Isabelle Huppert, Tilda Swinton, Paolo Sorrentino, Nadine Labaki, Tahar Rahim, Asghar Farhadi... and many others have walked the red carpet, where are expected during this decade of cinema in the Ocher City. As a sign of the times, the movies in competition mainly deal with subjects echoing the concerns of younger generations around the world: the construction



Mélita Toscan du Plantier, advisor to the president of the foundation, surrounded by Rémi Bonhomme, artistic director, and Ali Hajji, general coordinator. The kingpin of the festival

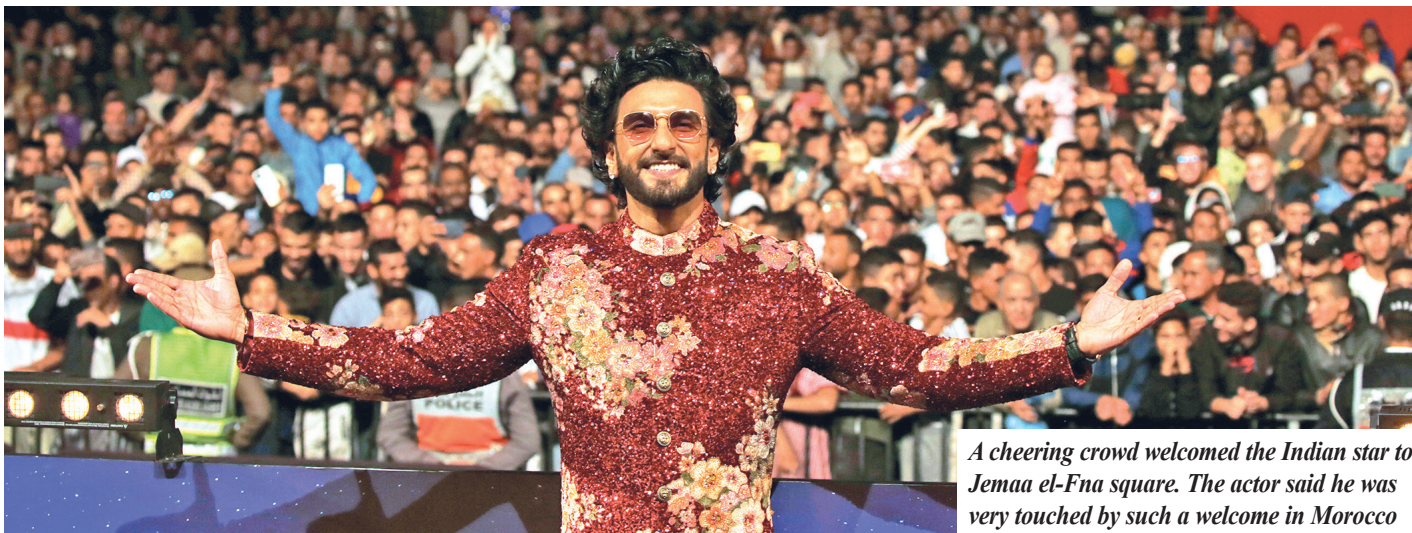
of identity and the need to have role models, the place of women in our contemporary societies, but also the emerging questions of transmission, be it tradition, political heritage, or quite simply love. For the Lebanese director and member of the jury, Nadina Labaki, the world of movies must be engaged in an era where political correctness takes prece-

dence: "I believe in the mission of art in general. Art creates empathy and humanizes certain subjects that the public might ignore or feel less concerned about. We lift the veil on the struggle of other people. This is why we have a very important role to play in current political and societal conflicts or issues", explained the director of the Capharnaüm movie, during the press conference of the festival jury, a conference during which were hot topics in the news and particularly the war in Ukraine were discussed, but the public, present, did not hide its pleasure and reserved a warm welcome to national and international stars. The screening rooms are full. The tributes, competition, master classes, workshops, and screenings continue throughout the week, making the Marrakech festival a true celebration of the so-called "seventh art", accessible to all. □

A.Bo

## A film lesson made in Bollywood

**R**ANVEER Singh still has his head a bit in cloud nine. After receiving a Gold Star, as a tribute, during the opening ceremony of this nineteenth edition of the Marrakech International Film Festival on Friday, November 11, and an extremely warm welcome at the Jemaa el-Fna square for the screening of the film "Bakhiro Bastani", the Bollywood superstar offered, on Saturday, November 12, a great cinema lesson in front of a young and conquered audience. It is within the framework of the program called "In conversation with..." that the Bollywood actor lent himself to the game of questions and answers. Being a true "chameleon", the self-taught actor and perfect outsider, is one of the most popular icons for the youth of the Indian subcontinent and far beyond. Donning an open leopard shirt, matching shoes and dark glasses, the star made a sensational entrance, performing a few dance steps in the purest Bollywood tradition. The tone was set, and the conversation continued between humorous traits, performances, and emotional sessions. "I'm still on cloud nine, I've been very impressed and touched to see all these



A cheering crowd welcomed the Indian star to Jemaa el-Fna square. The actor said he was very touched by such a welcome in Morocco

young boys, gathered yesterday, at the Jemaa el-Fna square, performing my signature gesture together", recalls the actor. Ranveer Singh talks about his film debut. The 30-year-old actor has always dreamed of becoming a movie star and embodying the quintessence of the hero of Indian films. A bet that was far from being won in advance! After a difficult start (it must be said that it was very complicated to break into the world of cinema at that time without being part of one of the Bollywood dynasties), the actor still managed to establish himself in this very closed environment from his first

role in Band Baaja Baaraat which was a hit and launched his career. "Within only one weekend I had become a star. The immense Shahrukh Khan even called me. He congratulated me for my role and encouraged me to pursue my career", recalls the actor with emotion. The film represented the beginning of a series of collaborations with Sanjay Leela Bhansali, who directed the actor in three successive films: Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela, Bajirao Mastani, and the magnificent Padmaavat, where he revisited the role of the antagonist of contemporary Indian films, and built

an unforgettable character for the big screen, the anti-hero Khilji. "(Sanjay Leela Bhansali) was the director who taught me the most, it was him who influenced me enormously in terms of cinema and art in general. He taught me that the realm of creativity is limitless". With Sanjay Leela, the actor became more and more confident, he learned to live his roles rather than play them. The director allowed Ranveer Singh to interpret his roles more freely, and to contribute to the writing of his roles. "There is a before and an after when I met Sanjay Leela", says Raveer. □