

Gulf Weekly

The community newspaper at the heart of Bahrain

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EID MUBARAK!

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FILM WEEKLY:
Anna reviews *Jurassic
World: Fallen Kingdom*
SEE PAGE 19

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

THE eyes of football fans will be firmly focused on Russia tomorrow when the 2018 FIFA World Cup Finals kick off with the hosts taking on our neighbours from across the causeway, Saudi Arabia.

With thousands of supporters arriving and his country under the spotlight for the globe's biggest sporting spectacle, Vagif Garaev, the ambassador of the Russian Federation in Bahrain, is confident Russia can deliver a tournament that will be remembered for all the right reasons.

He said: "First of all I'd like to offer a warm welcome to all Bahraini nationals in Russia during the World Cup Finals. Football fans from every nation will be made welcome. I do believe that all our guests will enjoy their stay during this major competition."

"I know that people have been landing in Russia over the past few days and many may probably stay longer to tour my country. We have provided visitors with many options and opportunities to watch the games and also to enjoy all that Russia has to offer."



GAME ON: Russian ambassador Vagif in his embassy in Manama hoping football fans will see 'the real Russia'

WORLD CUP REPORT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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Vagif, 63, who lives in Budaiya with his wife, Tatiana, was a keen football player during his high school days, and is delighted that families from across the

globe will tune in to watch the grand opening ceremony at the national stadium in Moscow starting two hours before the sporting action kicks off at 6pm Bahrain time.

Headlining will be Will Smith and Nicky Jam performing the official

song of the tournament, Live It Up. Additionally, the entertainment will also feature dances and performers paying tribute to all aspects of Russian culture and tradition.

In addition to the fun at the Luzhniki Stadium, there will be another concert staged in Moscow's Red Square where

international stars such as Placido Domingo and Juan Diego Flores will perform.

Russia has spent billions of rubles in advance of the tournament, not just on stadiums, but also on upgrades to airports and transit across the country.

Turn to Page 4



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New venues ready for action

THE kingdom's hotels, cafes and lounges are all gearing out to warmly welcome football fans for the World Cup Finals and plan to tackle the celebration with their own special spins on the global showcase event.

It's proving a challenge as the action kicks off tomorrow before Ramadan concludes which has meant a fine balancing act even the most talented football managers would admire.

The Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa will be presenting its newly-renovated Sherlock Holmes from the first day of Eid for the highly-anticipated sporting fiesta whilst retaining its time-honoured Old-English feel.

The venue will now sport half a dozen cosy booth seating areas, each with viewing screens and match commentary language options, plus charging docks for smart phones and USB

WORLD CUP REPORT

By STAN SZECOWKA
editor@gulfweekly.com



ports, revealed Kevin Rowe, Sherlock Holmes manager. "The renovation work has taken around two months and we'll be open with a completely fresh and different feel with new flooring and lighting," he added. "We have screens by the counter, in the games area and big screens spread around so wherever you are seated you will be able to have a great view of the action."

During the tournament, Sherlock Holmes will also theme its food and beverage offerings based around the teams playing.

Sunuj S. Dean, the hotel's F&B manager, said: "With the tournament being held in Russia the timing is fantastic for fans here in Bahrain, you couldn't have asked for anything better with just a one hour time difference. Most of the kick-offs will start at 3pm, 6pm and 9pm –



COMING SOON: An artist's impression of the new look Sherlock Holmes and, below, Dean and Kevin preparing to welcome fans

peak times to watch games." The opening match tomorrow between hosts

Russia and Saudi Arabia will attract many fans as it kicks off at 6pm. Guests will be able to break their fast and watch the action at the same time inside the hotel's Khaimat Al Khaleej Tent.

Fans are expected to flock the following days to Sherlock Holmes as a result of a promotion boasting the 'lowest beverage prices in town'.

"We expect a particularly big crowd on June 15 when Spain play Portugal as the Spanish LaLiga is very popular here in Bahrain and some of the top players will be on show," added Dean.

"We have timed the completion of the renovation to ensure it is back open with what we believe to be the best in audiovisual technology, plus an increase in the number of screens available to 23, of which four will be big screens."

A 'stadium style' service will be introduced to keep in the spirit of the event, with special themed dishes priced between BD2 and BD3 such as England captain's Harry Kane Battered Chippy, Argentina's Lionel Messi Cheesy Tacos, CR7 Chicken Pops, named after Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo who always wears the Number 7 shirt, and Mo Salah Fiery Shrimps in honour of the Egyptian striker.

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain, will be transforming its stunning Masaya Pavilion into the World Pavilion.

It will be open daily from 2pm to 2am, with free entry with a minimum spend of

BD10 per person.

Al Areen Palace & Spa will also be welcoming fans to its World Cup Tent to enjoy a tournament-inspired menu specially devised by the chefs for 'forwards, midfielders, defenders and goalkeepers' with fare from BD2 to BD5, plus FIFA Fever refreshments costing BD2 with apt names such as Dribbled by Neymar and Free Kick by Messi.

The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is also erecting its own air-conditioned 'football stadium' tented venue to show matches on a 4m x 10m high-definition screen, together with 160 LCD screens, offering 150 supporters a 'perfect view' of each game.

The aim is to recreate the 'thrilling atmosphere' of a packed football stadium, complete with grandstand-style seating, fan zone sections with bean bags and lounge areas with sofas. Spectators can take part in a range of activities too, from taking on friends in a

table football tournament to honing their scoring skills with PlayStation games, to add to the match day experience.

GM Richard Raab said: "For those unable to travel to Russia this summer, a visit to The Football Stadium at Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is the closest thing to actually being at the match. Four Arab teams have qualified for this year's tournament, a historic achievement that has generated unprecedented interest across the region."

During the early stages it will cost BD12 for entry with the cost rebated against food and drinks.

With so many World Cup venues popping up all over the kingdom, supporters won't be too far from a giant screen, a great atmosphere and some fabulous football throughout the 2018 World Cup.

● **Leisure Guide:** Pages 15, 16 & 17

● **World Cup Special:** Pages 11, 12, 13 & 14

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THE drama wasn't quite over when the Manama Theatre Club thespians stepped out on stage for a final round of applause after their latest production ... as a large section of the audience stepped up in unison to steal the show with a flash mob performance of their own.

Stunned actor, Guy Parker, was suddenly placed under the spotlight as the Manama Singers marked his birthday with a version of the Beatles' classic *When I'm Sixty-Four*. "I couldn't believe it," said Guy, an English language lecturer at the University of Bahrain. "I had no idea they had anything planned – it was a complete surprise."

Guy had been playing the role of Buttram, a bumptious family butler, in the light-heart comedy called *A Little Murder Never Hurt Anybody* by Roy Bernas which had been playing to sell-out crowds throughout its run last week at the British Club.

Friday evening's show was a theatrical dinner experience with a three-course meal being served at the tables for the audience. Guy would have noticed a few familiar faces in the crowd

On song for a surprise!

COMMUNITY REPORT

By STAN SZECOWKA
editor@gulfweekly.com



as he's also a member of the Manama Singers.

One of the kingdom's most iconic community institutions, the group of passionate vocalists rehearse every Tuesday evening at the Dilmun Club in Saar. In recent weeks Guy has been told to 'stay at home' as the choir was holding 'women-only' sessions.

In fact, they were all gathering to finalise their flash mob surprise and put the male and female parts together in perfect harmony for delivering on the night.

The play went to perfect precision too, without a hint of the off-stage drama that had taken place just days earlier when an electrical outage meant the cast had to rehearse under torch light.

The farcical fun was captured in all its glory by Matthew, played by Paul Phillips, who had made a New Year's resolution to



WHAT A GUY: The birthday boy, right, a scene from the play and the flash mob singing a merry tune

get rid of his wife, Julia, a role taken on with class and charisma by Catherine Noor. Throw in a dizzy daughter, Bunny (Stacey Barlow) and her beau Donald (Sam McClure) and a detective called Plotnik played with aplomb and a rather dodgy

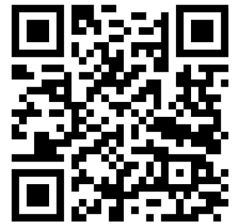
gangster accent (Ben Davis) and you get the gist, this was a splendid night of entertainment.

Congratulations go to director Sowsan Hasan and producer Carrie Bell for keeping the night moving sweetly along and taking the

post show celebrations in their stride.

Often in family crime epics, it's the butler who did it. Not this time, it was definitely the Manama Singers!

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ON THE BALL: Ambassador Vagif showing off his silky skills

From Page 1

As well as the capital, other hosts cities include Saint Petersburg, Sochi, Ekaterinburg, Saransk, Rostov-on-Don, Kazan and Kaliningrad for the first ever World Cup Finals to be held in Eastern Europe. It will feature 32 national teams and a total of 64 matches will be played in 12 venues with the final on July 15 returning to Moscow.

"The football will not be the only thing entertaining visitors as there are a wide range of programmes set in place around the cities where the matches are being staged, with cultural activities and historical attractions to enjoy," said Vagif. "I believe after their stay in Russia, whether it's their first time or not, it will change their points of view about my country. They will fall in love with it."

It could certainly prove to be a timely image boost. When Russia won its bid to host the planet's most

watched sporting event eight years ago, President Vladimir Putin made clear he intended the tournament to showcase his country at its best.

Recently the country has been getting global attention of a different kind, blamed for meddling in US elections, backing the brutal Syrian regime of Bashar Al Assad, and waging a not-so covert war in eastern Ukraine. In March, the US and European Union expelled more than 100 diplomats over the poisoning of former spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter in the UK, which the Kremlin denies any involvement in.

Hooligan rampages by the feared 'ultras' at Euro 2016 tarnished Russia's image too, with the country threatened with expulsion from the tournament in France and racism has reared its ugly head since then.

The Russian Football Association was fined by FIFA after sickening chants were directed towards black French players during a friendly between the two nations in March. France's 3-1 friendly win was played at the Krestovsky Stadium in St Petersburg, one of the venues for this summer's finals.

However, Vagif is confident measures are firmly in place to tackle unruly behaviour to ensure teams and genuine fans enjoy their stay. "We are staging the World Cup Finals not just to share our love for football and watch competitive play at its finest but also to showcase what Russia is all about," he said.

"We truly are a friendly nation and while there may be a small number of fans that are hooligans it doesn't mean that all football fans are like that. It's sad when a handful ruin it for everyone else.

"Russian police have already implemented safety precautions. Our guests are very important to us and we want everyone to see how friendly and beautiful our country is. We have partnered with representatives from the Ministry of Interiors from all the countries playing here. They will be working together and stationed around the cities.

"We know everyone in Russia is ready to welcome all foreigners to the country but we also do know that surprises or incidents can happen and, if they do,

we will be ready. We are organised and have everyone working together to ensure a friendly and peaceful tournament.

"There are tensions all over the world but when people are seated in the stadium, the main goal isn't politics or religion, it's sport. That is what truly unites people."

Vagif, who will be watching the action in Bahrain with his diplomat buddies and friends from across the Gulf States, is excited that the first match features his country against the kingdom's neighbours, Saudi Arabia.

"I believe that my Saudi friends that live in Bahrain will be upset with me because in my opinion Russia will win 2-0," he said. "I'm optimistic about my team."

He appears to be in the minority though. Only 'a miracle' can save Russia from crashing out at the group stage, according to leading Russian sports writer Alexander Sedov. "Seven matches without a win (the worst-ever run in the Russian national team's modern history under the same coach) and zero victories in 2018," he said.

Russia are only the third host nation that has failed to win a game in a World Cup year, he also pointed out.

As hosts of the World Cup, Russia qualified for the Finals automatically and at 70th are the lowest ranked team in this year's tournament, according to the world governing body FIFA.

Vagif dismisses the doom-mongers. "I'm confident Russia will make it through Group A. However, the next game will be difficult as they will face either Spain or Portugal."

He believes his country, has a better chance against the Portuguese because he thinks the Spanish might go all the way and lift the trophy.

"If they play against Spain then I don't think we have a chance," he said. "However, God only knows what will happen," he added. "We wish our team a lot of success and

victories, of course, but for some reason I feel that the Spanish team might win it. Brazil, Argentina and France all have a great chance too.

"Our group also includes Egypt and Uruguay. On paper Uruguay look the strongest but anything is possible. In all honesty, I will be very happy that alongside Russia, one of the Arab countries makes it through to the next stage."

Vagif, a diplomat of 40 years standing, formerly held the position in Egypt of head of desk in the consular department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and says during that time he played a few football matches against other embassy teams in diplomatic tournaments.

He went on to become consul general in Aleppo, Syria and senior counsellor in the Department of Middle East and Northern Africa of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was also the consul general in Erbil and in Basra, Iraq.

He holds diplomatic rank of Minister Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary 1st Class and is fluent in Arabic.

He was appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Kingdom of Bahrain in December, 2014. His wife joined him in 2015 and his son and three granddaughters currently live in UAE.

As football fans around the world count down to the start of the 2018 FIFA World Cup, a prominent Russian TV host has launched a campaign to support the national football team, with a nod to the head coach's facial hair.

Russian coach Stanislav Cherchesov is renowned for his signature moustache and presenter Ivan Urgant urged viewers to grow their own and post photographs using the hashtag #MoustacheOfHope.

Forgive normally clean-shaven Vagif if tomorrow morning he's looking a little hairier around the edges.



MIGHTY MOUSTACHE: Russian coach Stanislav



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BRIGHT and talented Filipino children will be showcasing their talents, good looks and their quick wit in a special pageant as part of Philippines Independence Day celebrations being staged by the vibrant expat community in Bahrain.

Around 20 youngsters, aged between three and 10, will be stepping out on stage to entertain family and friends at the Sheraton Hotel on Saturday, strutting down the catwalk in trendy evening wear and displaying their special skills and witty responses during a question-and-answer session.

The top contenders will be crowned Munting Prinsesa and Prinsipe (little princesses and princes) during the event being organised Media Circuit with the support of the Philippine Embassy in Bahrain.

Leslie Arlen Garduque, Media Circuit's managing director, said: "Most of the events taking place in our community these days are always targeted towards adults so we thought that we'd do something different and come up with an event catering to kids."

Filipino fiesta



COMMUNITY REPORT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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"We do have this kind of contest back home attracting a large number of participants. They are very popular."

The organisers are confident families will flock to the festivities which will also include interactive games and musical performances after the contest.

An open audition took place at the end of May to narrow down the number of those invited to appear in the grand finale. The interest in the show will result in the event becoming an annual attraction.

"We aim to create a platform for young boys and girls to showcase their talents and develop their public-speaking skills," Leslie added. "We hope that this pageant will become a stepping stone for our children and help them reach their full potential."

The winning pair will each walk away with \$500, plus a host of prizes.

After the contest, the fun will continue with games involving audience participation and entertainment by local groups in Bahrain.

The fun and festivities will be followed by *The TFC (The Filipino Channel) HOUR*, will be supported by the country's biggest TV network *ABS-CBN*, the mother company of *TFC*. The highlight of the celebrations will be a mini-concert conducted by popular Filipino celebrity singer, song writer and actor Martin Nievera.

He is one of the main hosts of the musical variety show *ASAP* on *ABS-CBN* and one of the four celebrity judges of *The X Factor Philippines*. In terms of albums, he has garnered 18 platinum, five double platinum, three triple platinum and one quadruple platinum album sales and appeared in 11 movies and seven TV series and specials.

Leslie said: "Martin was here over a decade ago and he is quite excited to be returning to Bahrain to again perform for

the Filipino community – this time celebrating the 120th Philippine Independence Day."

Alfonso A. Ver, the ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Bahrain, says the entire Filipino community in the kingdom is excited by the celebrations lined-up. "The Martin Nievera and Munting Prinsesa and Prinsepe concert will surely be a highlight as we celebrate the 120th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence and the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Bahrain," he said.

"I invite everyone, not just Filipinos but our brother and sister Bahrainis to come enjoy Philippine culture, songs and dances, with this event featuring no less than the Philippines' concert king, Martin Nievera, alongside performances from newly-discovered talent in the Filipino community in Bahrain."



TALENTED TROUPE:
The finalists

The Philippines and Bahrain established diplomatic relations in the early 1980s with the Philippine Ambassador to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, accredited as 'non-resident Ambassador to the State of Bahrain'. In 1992, due to the growing number of overseas Filipino workers, the Embassy of the Philippines in Bahrain was formally established with ambassador Leonides T Caday at the helm.

Over the years, the Filipino community has grown to become the fourth largest expatriate society on the island

with around 60,000 Filipinos in Bahrain considering the kingdom their 'second home', as well as to becoming 'positive contributors' to the community, the ambassador added.

The pageant, which is free to the public, will start at 10am and end at 5pm. The concert, which is priced at BD7 for general admission and BD20 for VIP tickets, will start at 7pm. The doors for the show will open at 6pm.

● For further details, call Leslie on 36311563 or contact Shereen on 36361195.

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Note: These special offers are available in Lulu Hypermarket stores until Tuesday.

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Karami classic basmati rice 10kg – BD5.990
Galaxy jewels 650gm – BD2.790

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Lindt caramel touch of sea salt 12x100gm – BD1.600
Bountry coconut chocolate 22x85gm – BD0.400
UCC strawberry coconut ice 12x150gm – BD1.750

Scramble to get the football action on screen

TV manufacturers have been scoring big as the buzz over the FIFA World Cup 2018 has helped boost sales from armchair viewers and venues aiming to entice fans to come out and enjoy the match with a crowd.

Smart TVs have proved particularly popular, analysts say, with sales up 40 per cent in some countries over the past two weeks, while curved TVs have also been attracting attention.

Howard Archer, economist at IHS Global Insight, said retailers were likely to see a continuing rise in spending habits throughout the tournament as shoppers snap up replica kits and souvenirs, as well as food and drink to eat while watching the matches from their sofas.

The current demand for televisions could simply be a case of bringing forward purchases that were already being planned by fans and may not boost the market for this year overall. It appears



sound bars, which boost television speaker quality, are also selling well supporters want the best sound as well as vision for the big match action.

Lulu Hypermarket, one of Bahrain's favourite retail operations, has seen its range of the latest models being quickly snapped up. A store spokesperson said: "The World Cup sporting event has a huge following and

with today's television technology offering such a dynamic viewing experience, Lulu has been seeing excellent uptake of the latest models of widescreen super TVs. We have some great offers as well that have pushed sales up."

In recent weeks one of the bestsellers has been the Sony 48-inch Smart LED TV. There were also discounts on LG screens attracting attention too.

GulfWeeklyBookClub – in association with The Bookcase



BOOK OF THE WEEK – THE FOOTBALL BOOK, DK, 9780241317631 (DK) BD9.800 for Gulf Weekly Book Club members
By Linda Jennings

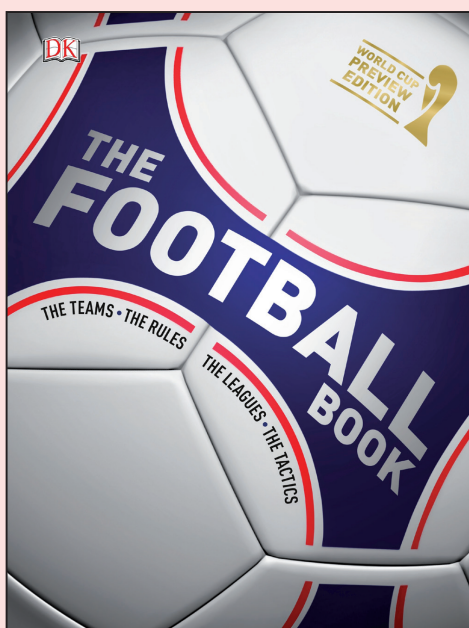
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THE 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia, The Official Book is the most authoritative and

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Whether you are watching the games live in Russia, in front of a television at home, with friends at a club, café, or hotel, this official FIFA book is the ultimate tournament preview.

MY FAVOURITE READ OF THE WEEK

FOOTBALL LEAKS: UNCOVERING THE DIRTY DEALS BEHIND THE BEAUTIFUL GAME, RAFAEL BUSCHMANN, MICHAEL WULZINGER, 9781783351404 (GUARDIAN FABER) BD6.400 for Gulf Weekly Book Club members
ONE anonymous football fan. 18.6 million confidential documents. This is the explosive story of the biggest leak in sporting history - and the shady



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underworld of modern football.

In 2016, a whistle-blower known only as 'John' started to leak a treasure trove of top-secret files to German newspaper *Der Spiegel*. These documents reveal the clandestine dealings of clubs, players and agents at the highest echelons of international football. And the story they tell is astonishing.

From the eye-popping details of player transfers, including Neymar Jr, Pogba and Coutinho, to the loopholes and opaque tax structures that ensure maximum earnings for players and agents alike, this is a tale rife with rapacious greed and questionable deals.

At the same time, it is the gripping story of a fan who wanted to free football from its corrupt overlords - and now finds himself on the run.



FinTechFocus

Editor Stan Szczewka takes a look at the world of financial technology and beyond...

Wham-bam he's the wallet man

ONE of the key players in the kingdom's FinTech revolution believes consumers will be using an array of digital currencies in the future as confidence grows and more consumers turn to alternative ways to pay for goods and services.

Top banker B. Chandrasekhar, CEO of AFS, a leading payments company and the inspiration behind the popular bwallet, warns that traditional banks will have to embrace a technological future to survive.

"The FinTech industry is growing exponentially at an astonishing rate," he told *FinTech Focus*. "We recognize FinTech as an opportunity and we want to embrace it to surge ahead."

"We believe that the growth will continue with new players entering the field giving tough competition to traditional banks. In response, the banks will also turn towards an adoption of digital methods to offer 'wow experiences' to their customers."

"The trends are pointing towards cashless and frictionless modes of payments. We are already seeing a shift in adoption of these technologies in Bahrain through the launch of bwallet."

"In a short period of four months we have on-boarded a significant number of users transacting and transferring monies seamlessly. Also banks will have to adopt technology at an accelerated rate to remain contextual and avoid obsolescence."

As reported earlier in *FinTech Focus*, bWallet, the first of its kind in Bahrain to provide peer-to-peer money transfers, was launched earlier this year by AFS, in partnership with telecom and Internet service provider, Batelco.

Customers can scan a QR code for merchant transactions and 'enjoy secure cashless payments with exclusive benefits', such as two-for-one offers at partner cafes and cinemas, through their mobile phones. The actual figures of how many people have signed up to its use have not been released, possibly for commercial reasons as others have entered the fray to woo



WAY TO PAY: B Chandrasekhar and, right, a customer checks out his smartphone account app

customers. "We have been ahead of the curve in developing and landing fintech solutions across Bahrain," said Mr Chandrasekhar. "AFS introduced Bahrain to its first frictionless solution using the Near Field Technology (NFC) called EasyPay. It allowed the user to pay with the tap of their mobile phone at participating merchants."

"AFS also launched bwallet with a groundbreaking electronic KYC (know your customer) process for swift and efficient customer registrations, P2P (person to person) and P2M (person to merchant) QR-enabled payments."

AFS, owned by 39 banks and financial institutions, boasts more than 70 clients in 21 countries and, as well as FinTech services, it also focuses on card processing and merchant acquisition.

In March, AFS and Bank ABC hosted the 2nd Middle East and Africa FinTech Forum, attracting industry keynote speakers from across



the globe. It was attended by more than 450 key decision-makers and leaders in the FinTech space from Africa and the Middle East.

"The clear message at the event was that more and more banks are embracing FinTech and not seeing it as a threat," said Mr Chandrasekhar, 54, who has more than 30 years of experience in retail banking and the payments industry in Bahrain, India, Lebanon and the UAE.

He joined Arab Banking Corporation in August 2010 as group head of products and marketing and took on the role of CEO of AFS in March 2011. During his career with Standard Chartered Bank, he held the positions of regional head of credit cards and personal loans for Middle East, South Asia and Africa from 2003 to 2008 and was the regional head of consumer banking for Northern Gulf, Lebanon and Jordan from 2008 to 2010. Mr Chandrasekhar was also a board director on the BENEFIT company in Bahrain from 2008

to 2010.

He has witnessed first-hand the banking industry dramatically change, with more innovations on the horizon such as Artificial Intelligence which he believes 'will become mainstream and permeate across all levels of the banking system'.

He is also convinced there will be many benefits as a result of FinTech's development, as all businesses in the sector will need to fully align with anti-money laundering (AML) regulations and compliance laws.

"To prevent exploitation from bad elements all FinTech companies should have an operational AML programme from the start that scales up as the business grows," he explained. "Having said that, technologies like blockchain can significantly help counter money laundering by helping in the KYC / verification of identities and eliminate the creation of fraudulent transaction histories. Also, blockchain solutions can also

substantially reduce processing costs, time and effort involved in KYC validations.

"As adoption of digital payments gains speed it will set up the environment for multiple digital currencies to emerge and gain momentum. We already have witnessed multiple cryptocurrencies being accepted across the globe like Bitcoin, Ripple and Ethereum for example, which are threatening the established fiscal markets and banking ecosystems."

"With time, formal pathways will emerge allowing trading with these currencies and the regulatory frameworks across the globe will become more accepting. Once regulators embrace this, the adoption will be easier, so a multi-digital currency environment may become the norm going forward."

It will not be all plain-sailing though and general concerns over cyber-security and data-related risks will have to be addressed. But, on that front, Mr Chandrasekhar

believes there will be business opportunities aplenty.

"With an increase in the digitisation of services there will be a lot of data generated across the board," he admits. "Managing digital data, and the identities of users and enterprises, will continue to be the focus area and more and more investments will be made in providing innovative authentication and authorisation services."

"This reflects in the fact that cyber security has become the fastest growing sector in IT."

"AFS is committed to providing the best solutions to our partners so that they can deliver superior experiences to their end-users and we recognise that FinTech will lead the path to accomplish that goal."

"We have embraced digital in many ways, including seamless and comprehensive payment solutions like digital banking, ewallets, NFC payments, eKYC, P2P, QR, tokenisation and more."

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THIS week the bwallet pioneers struck a partnership deal with Elite Hospitality Group, a leading name in the hospitality industry.

The aim is to give guests the opportunity to now pay at all its hotels in Bahrain for facilities ranging from rooms, restaurants, lounges to health clubs and more.

AFS CEO B Chandrasekhar said: "We are delighted to partner with Elite Hospitality Group, a successful and strategic



SPECIAL DEALS: AFS and Elite executives sign the partnership agreement

partnership in the hospitality industry.

Elite Hospitality Group promised to add 'attractive promotions' soon for bwallet users. Its COO

Sarosh Aibara added: "We are happy to partner with bwallet, they have established themselves as a unique and effective service in a short time."

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Fashion Weekly

Keeping you in on the latest trends and what they wore in the past



COOL COLLECTION: Modelling the trend-setting Nigerian look that is flying off the shelves and, below, some of the other countries shape up in style

Match fit for a footy frenzy

FASHION fans can't get enough of Nigeria's snazzy new football kits for the World Cup Finals and the cool white and green designed looks are selling like hot cakes, writes **Mai Al Khatib-Camille**.

People picking up the trendy team strips aren't even necessarily cheering for the African nation but the retro designs have definitely made an impression winning over fashionistas from across the globe.

The home and away shirts that are priced at around BD33 were sold out on the Nike website soon after they were released. Three million people pre-ordered the replica shirts, according to the Nigeria Football Federation, and shoppers even queued outside Nike's stores trying to get their hands on the clothing.

Why all the fuss? Its makers explained that the home kit is a subtle homage to Nigeria's popular 1994 edition celebrating the country's first qualification to the US World Cup Finals, with its eagle wing-inspired black-and-white sleeve and green torso. Meanwhile, the away kit is a cool, refined vision of a classic full-green strip.

It seems everyone has jumped onto the retro band wagon with vintage written all over them. Germany has brought back two classic home and away kits harking back to its iconic Italia 1990.

Like Germany, Colombia has also travelled back to World Cup Italia 1990 for inspiration with a design famously worn by the hirsute Carlos Valderrama Palacio also known as El Pibe (The Kid).

Argentina draws inspiration from the squad that won its last major honour at the 1993 Copa America tournament. Spain recreated its kit based on the classic jersey worn by the likes of Pep Guardiola and Luis Enrique at US 1994 and Belgium has resurrected its mid-eighties European Championship kit. Although it may not have been a successful tournament for them at least they looked great.

Hosts Russia will be wearing the kit worn by the USSR team who won gold at the 1988 Olympic Games and Mexico channels the early 1990s. While this year's home edition is a bit more conservative than some of their offerings over the years, it definitely owes something to their 1993 and 1995 home kits. England is basing its kit on its glory days of 1966.



Eating Out

The places to dine in Bahrain plus culinary tips for the food connoisseur

WOK Station quiz winner: CHITHRA SASHI won a 'Dim Sum Platter' for two at WOK Station by correctly answering that the restaurant in Galleria Mall can seat up to 115 guests. Watch this space for more.



MARVELLOUS Mawasim Restaurant & Lounge showcased its Ramadan buffet offering to members of the media last weekend with a tantalising tease of the captivating cuisine it offers on its unique menu of Mediterranean fare touched by Arabic excellence.

As reported in *GulfWeekly*, rather than wait until after the holy month, the outlet recently enjoyed its soft opening joining the growing Galleria Mall food scene in Zinj.

This bright and breezy new restaurant has opened in a popular dining out strip to much excitement as was evident by the large number of families enjoying the Iftar fare on Thursday evening.

There was everything you would expect on this seasonal banquet plus a little more thanks to celebrated Jordanian Chef Maher Ramzi, who commands a strong following after spellbinding work over a five-year spell at popular dining destinations in Bahrain.

Knowing his roots, it will probably come as little surprise that my standout dish was his take on Mansaf, a traditional Arab dish regarded as the national dish of Jordan, and can also be found in Palestine, Iraq, Southern Syria and Saudi Arabia.

It is a dish made of bone in lamb chunks (they have to be big as they will cook for a long time), slowly cooked in a goat yogurt sauce, served on a bed of rice, and topped with toasted pine-nuts and almonds.

For the uninitiated, it comes as quite a surprise when you

Mediterranean marvel



SERVICE WITH A SMILE: Portions of the special pizza are served to iftar guests and, below, Chef Maher and his merry team

GOURMET REPORT

By STAN SZECOWKA
editor@gulfweekly.com



pull aside the bread lid from the dish to discover the largest chunks of lamb.

According to my well versed friends Jameed, hard dry laban made from ewe or goat's milk, and the lamb are the most essential ingredients, and quite frankly Jordanians take their Mansaf seriously, don't you ever try to use chicken or beef!

A cascade of spices such as cinnamon, coriander, cloves,

and cardamom are used and Chef Maher was keeping tight-lipped out his own recipe, however, the lamb was marinated overnight and simply melted in the mouth.

I'm told the dish is meant to be eaten communally, as part of a social event, so joining friends breaking their fast was the perfect combination. When you are invited into a Jordanian house and you are served mansaf it is considered the ultimate sign of generosity and hospitality and being invited to Mawasim

Restaurant & Lounge and being served by Chef Maher and his team helped prove the point.

I'm looking forward to reviewing this restaurant again in the near future and putting some of its signature dishes to the taste test.

As I recently reported, this bright and breezy new restaurant has opened in a popular dining out strip to help capture those balmy days enjoyed holidaying around the Mediterranean Sea.

To give Iftar diners a pizza

of the action (*Editor's note: sorry folks, couldn't resist it!*) alongside the buffet, the waiting staff continually delivered slices of Italian excellence to the tables.

These are pizzas like none other I've seen in both shape and flavour. Take Tikka Bahraini – what a great name – for example, thinly-sliced juicy beef marinated in aromatic home-made herbs and spices and sliced onions, the Pizza Bruschetta, made with homemade tomato sauce,

fresh mozzarella, herbed olives, diced tomatoes, feta cheese, rocca leaves finished with parmesan cheese and balsamic glaze, and the Pizza Ristica, chargrilled aubergine, mushrooms, courgette, pesto sauce and crumbled feta cheese.

These are awe-inspiring triumphs delivered on a wooden pallet fresh from the oven and so tasty, with a clever combination of crunch and sweet savoury softness.

The restaurant can seat more than 200 guests on two floors. The restaurant is open from 6pm to 2am during the holy month and the big screen TVs upstairs are sure to score with football fans over the coming weeks.

Enjoy The Grand Mediterranean Iftar & Ghabga Buffet priced BD8,500, children - aged up to 10 - BD5,500, at Mawasim Restaurant & Lounge with Iftar: Sunset to 8.30pm and Ghabga: 8.30pm to 1am.

For reservations call 77232377 or 35911726.

● Check out Editor Stan's YouTube interview with Chef Maher by scanning the QR code with your smartphone.



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In focus



NBB has made a donation to Bahrain Down Syndrome Society as part of its ongoing donations and contributions programme. Chief human resources officer, Dana Buheiji presented the cheque to Bahrain Down Syndrome Society chairman, Adel Abdulla Fakhro. The presentation ceremony was attended by NBB's board secretary, Nasser Mohammed Nasser, the society's financial secretary, Ahmed Al Ali and its care centre president, Dr Mohammed Al Mannai.



MEMBERS from the Rotary Club of Salmaniya recently visited the Oncology Centre for Children at Salmaniya Hospital bringing gifts and treats to all the young patients undergoing treatment.



Y.K. ALMOAYYED & Sons has bid farewell to three of its employees who recently retired after long service with the company. T. V. Purushothaman, a salesman at Almoayyed Furnishing who completed 26 years of service, Jayakar Salins, team leader at YKA Bodyshop, having notched 25 years, and Jaafar Abdul Hasan, a bodyshop driver of more than 15 years standing, were thanked by the management for their perseverance, dedication and commitment. They were awarded a token of appreciation by Mona Almoayyed – MD, YKA who attended the presentation with Sonu Duggal, group HR & TQM manager.

SocialScene

Why wait a month! Join Social Scene every week

Friendship prospers

THE Bahrain – Bosnia & Herzegovina Friendship & Business Society recently held its Ramadan Ghabga event in Al Hawaj Gardens, off Budaiya Highway. VIP guests included Shaikh Khalid bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, founder executive chairman of the University College of Bahrain, the governor of the Northern Governorate, Ali Abdul Hussain Al Asfour and Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Senan, president of Muharraq Municipal Council and they were joined by the representatives of participating societies, businessmen and the Bosnian community in the kingdom. Jawad Al Hawaj, the society's chairman, welcomed guests and spoke of the growing friendship and business relationships developing between the two countries.



Driving ahead

EBRAHIM K. Kanoo, the sole distributor of Toyota and Lexus, has been presented with prestigious awards from Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC).

GM of TMC Koji Nagata presented vice chairman of Ebrahim K. Kanoo, Fuad E. Kanoo, with the TOYOTA Marketing Award for Excellence (Vehicle), and TOYOTA Customer Service Excellence Award in recognition of the company's 'outstanding performance' in sales and customer service.



The ceremony was attended by Ebrahim K. Kanoo's board of directors who were con-

gratulated on the company's continuous efforts and commitment to the success of the

Toyota and Lexus marques in the kingdom.

● **Motoring Weekly: Page 20**

Distributing gifts



EURO Motors has been handing out 200 Iftar meals each day during the holy month in Jaguar Land Rover vehicles equipped to store and distribute the gifts across the kingdom. The packages distributed during Maghreb prayers include water bottles, dates, laban, appetisers and a main course.

Telecom team



VIVA Bahrain held its annual Ramadan Ghabga for its staff members at the VIVA Masaya Pavilion at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain, in the presence of CEO Ulaiyan Al Wetaid and members of the management team. The event featured different entertainment activities and surprises.

Staff gathering



CrediMax recently hosted its annual staff Ghabga at ART Rotana Amwaj Islands. The evening included a range of fun activities including a raffle prize draw.

World Cup

Your complete World Cup 2018 guide



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Game on to lift the trophy

WITH the World Cup kicking off tomorrow, everyone has an opinion on who will raise the FIFA World Cup Trophy on July 15.

Thousands of fans will descend on Russia this week from all corners of the globe, not least those from Latin and South America who will undoubtedly ramp up the carnival atmosphere.

It promises to be a memorable four weeks, one great international party, and my hope for the tournament is that the quality of football is every bit as high, if not higher, than it was in Brazil four years ago.

From my point of view, there are four serious contenders and a couple of dark horses thrown into the mix.

Surprisingly, Brazil are favourites, but I think Germany, France and Spain all have stronger squads.

I'm personally struggling to see beyond Germany after watching their preparations this time last year at the Confederations Cup, where they breezed through the tournament with effectively a 'C' team.

The common consensus is they could have put out three different teams in this tournament – one experienced, one middling and one young – and not many nations can say that.

Any country that can drop Leroy Sane from the final 23 has to be taken very seriously. He would arguably be our most important player if he qualified for England, which gives you an idea of Germany's strength.

A lot of people fancy Brazil and they could win, although I'm not buying into all the hype around them yet.

Tite has turned things round very well since the 7-1 semi-final hammering by Germany four years ago, but I don't think those scars will have fully healed yet. The team is still all about Neymar too, which can be a bit overpowering and could affect the young forward's confidence, particularly as he hasn't hardly kicked a



CUP GLORY: Who will hold this prize aloft? Germany narrowly beat Saudi Arabia 2-1 in their final World Cup warm-up game and, right, Gabriel Jesus is mobbed after scoring for Brazil the warm-up victory over Austria

all-time leading goalscorer, Paolo Guerrero, back after his drugs ban was reduced and that in itself can galvanise a nation.

South American qualifying is very strong and, like Poland, the feeling is that if they can get out of the group they can grow along the way.

They play with a real attacking flair, work tremendously hard for each other, and have a nice balance between youth and experience. And it's their first finals since 1982, which will make things extra special for them.

Finally, what about England? I can see us getting to the last eight, not because we have a fantastic team but because the system that manager Gareth Southgate plays seems to be getting the best out of them. For the first time, there also seems to be little to no expectation from the media and England fans, which has led to a more relaxed atmosphere both within the squad and in the country.

We have the second youngest squad and quite a kind draw. We are more than capable of beating Belgium in the group, and then it would likely be Poland or Senegal in the last 16. Making it to the last eight would be a par score, and a great learning experience for the fledgling squad.

At that stage, with all predicted cards falling into place, it would be a clash with Germany where we will inevitably get beaten. Probably on penalties after withstanding the Siege of the Alamo for 120 minutes.



competitive ball in months due to injury, although he scored as Brazil swept aside Austria 3-0 in their final World Cup warm-up game in Vienna.

Germany have quality throughout their squad and can make changes that Brazil simply can't.

Spain are another team which massively underperformed last time out, where they crashed out in the group stage as the holders. The current crop is not as good as 2010, but there's still a ton of quality.

The concern is at centre-forward. Can Diego Costa thrive in a possession-based

team? I doubt it. But the midfield strength with Andres Iniesta, Thiago, Sergio Busquets, Saul, Isco, David Silva and Marco Asensio appears overwhelming. Add to that the best goalkeeper in the world in David de Gea and a top defence, and you have a formidable opponent for anyone.

That leaves us with the great enigma, France. On paper, their squad is absolutely ridiculous. In fact, you can judge that by the players left at home - Lacazette, Benzema, Payet, Rabio, Martial, Koscielny, Laporte, Coman to name

a few. That team would beat the first XI of most of the current World Cup crop. However, there's just something about France in major tournaments.

I wouldn't be surprised if they crashed out in the group phase and I wouldn't be surprised if they won the whole tournament.

The big question is whether they will come good or whether they will be like their rugby union side, who are capable of demolishing the All Blacks one day then getting demolished by Scotland the next.

That makes me wonder if there is something about the French mentality, that they have this incredible flair, aptitude and ability but something else that can undermine them. They crumbled in the final of Euro

2016 on home turf two years ago, and they just seem so fragile if there is disharmony in the team.

As for dark horses, Belgium have to be in with a shout, but will they come good? We keep saying this, and we keep waiting for them to hit their stride. Four years ago, they let everybody down so it will be interesting to see if Roberto Martinez can get the best out of their so-called Golden Generation.

Poland are the other nation who could cause an upset. They have a superstar in Robert Lewandowski and a feeling that the group could be relatively straightforward. If they get momentum out the group phase they could go a long, long way.

As for the surprise package, don't underestimate Peru. They have their captain and



Readers say on wh

RUSSIA – Yaroslav Levin, attaché and head of the ambassador's office in the Russian Embassy in Bahrain
I really hope that our team plays well and reaches the final. The other side to watch out for again will be Germany – they look solid and have a great chance of making it all the way. At every World Cup we discover new talent and I'm sure several young players will shine this year. One to look out for is Russia's Aleksandr Golovin who plays his club football in central midfield for CSKA Moscow.



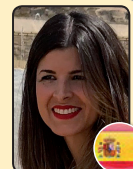
PORTUGAL – Isabel Santos, a bakery owner
Portugal will play Spain in the final. I believe my team will make it because we have a strong team and a great coach in Fernando Santos.
We have good reason to be optimistic, after all, we ALSO have the best football player on the planet, namely CR7.
My favourite player is Cristiano Ronaldo and this will be his last shot at leading his country to the ultimate prize. We have faith.



SAUDI ARABIA – Ruwaid Ahmed, engineer
I think Brazil will go all the way to the final and face Argentina. Saudi Arabia may not qualify for the second round. I think we will leave with at least a point from a draw against Egypt. My favourite player is our striker Fahad Al Muwallad because he plays for my favourite team in the Saudi League. On the tournament level, however, my favourite has to be Argentina's Lionel Messi. A World Cup winner's medal is the only thing missing from his football trophy cabinet. He is arguably the greatest player in the history of football.



SPAIN – Ana Moraza, fashion designer
I hope Spain will make it to the Moscow final, of course, probably playing against France. That would be a really good final.
We have a very good team and we won the World Cup in 2010. I'm sure we will make it through the early stages and build up the momentum to take the trophy again cup. My favourite player is Sergio Ramos. His personality and character are essential to the way the Spanish team play.



EGYPT – Anan El Kady, marketing & communications manager
I firmly believe that we will qualify to the quarter final stage but that's about it. I predict that the tournament will probably end with Brazil playing Germany in the final. Still, I remain optimistic about Egypt's chances and continue dreaming of great things because we have the legendary Mohamed Salah in our team. This young man is such an inspiration. He is not just known for his footballing abilities but also his good behaviour on and off the pitch.



MOROCCO – Hajar Taifi, waitress.
I believe Spain and Brazil will make it to the end and Spain will most likely win it.
As for Morocco, I'm not very hopeful. I don't think they will get very far.
They last played in the finals in France in 1998 and are back after hiring Herve Renard to guide their fortunes. A creative midfield is complimented by a strong defence but, although they won one of their qualifying games 6-0, scoring is still a problem.



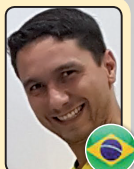
URUGUAY – Zapican Velasco, aircraft engineer
To predict the final is very difficult with the level of the teams but I would go for Uruguay against Germany. I believe my country is ready both physically and mentally for this tournament and they will reach until the last stages. From all the players selected, I like Diego Godin, he's like a boss on the back. He's such an astute defender and he has been playing really well for his Spanish club Atlético Madrid. You need leaders in every team and we have one of the best.



IRAN – Hassan Ebrahim, sales
My team in general are well organised and well-rounded and I do hope that they are able to move on to the second stage ... but I do understand it will be difficult. It all depends on their first game, whether they win, draw or lose against Morocco. If they draw or lose, I don't think they have much of a chance of progressing.
I think Brazil will play Argentina in the final. Those games are often noteworthy for the sheer level of competitiveness and talent of the two squads. I hope Argentina win.



BRAZIL – Wellington Ceciliano, raw materials manager
In the last 18 months, the current coach has restored the spirit that had evaporated during the last World Cup campaign at home in Brazil. Now he is working on bringing back some of our old magic into play. We will end up in the final playing against Germany, I predict. My favourite player is Neymar Junior and as my daughter would simply say: "He scores a lot of goals and he is very famous!"



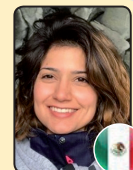
GERMANY – Claudia Hardt, public relations and communications consultant
Germany are certainly considered to be one of the favourites in this tournament and could go all the way and win the World Cup. However, they will have to overcome Mexico, Sweden and South Korea first to get out of the group stage which will not be easy. It's never easy in the World Cup Finals no matter what opponents you have. Saying that, Brazil, France and Spain all have a fair chance to go far in this competition.



SWITZERLAND – Humbert Vincent Buemi, businessman and Swiss Honourary Consul to the Kingdom of Bahrain
I predict Germany and France will reach the final. Switzerland have a chance to qualify for the second round, but we are in a tough group with Brazil as the top contender. With a bit of luck, we could reach the quarter-finals. My favourite player is the German Toni Kroos, a polyvalent player who plays in the shadow of others but has a tremendous positive impact on his team's results.



MEXICO – Nadia Noor, 29, accountant
I predict Spain and Brazil would make it to the final showdown. Spain play the most fluid and entertaining football. Brazil normally perform well in the World Cup Finals and have one of the world's best players in Neymar. Brazil haven't reached the final in the last three tournaments and this will be probably their best opportunity since 2002. Mexico have a good chance of getting through the group stages as I see them finishing second to Germany.



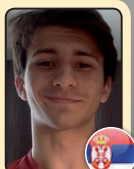
COSTA RICA- Mario Tristan, health research academic
I believe France and Argentina will make it in the final. Unfortunately Costa Rica will probably end up in third place at the end of the first round.
I don't think we will move onto the second stage of the tournament as the team does not look to be doing very well in recent matches.
My favourite international player is Egypt's Mohamed Salah. He is the best!



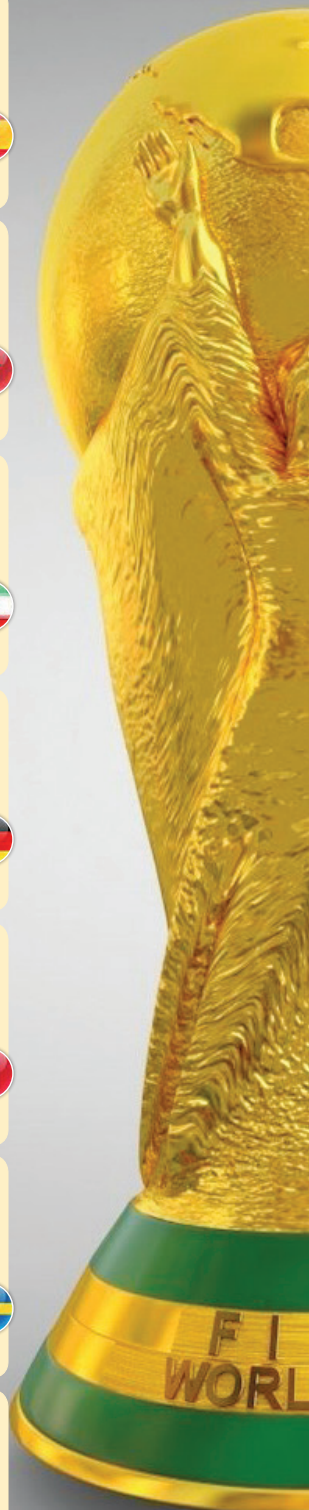
SWEDEN – Richard Raab, general manager of Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay
As a true Viking, having being born and having grown up in Sweden, my father's home country, I have to support both Sweden and Denmark. Unfortunately neighbouring Norway, my mother's country, did not qualify.
I believe Denmark will reach the Quarter Finals. My prediction final is a match between Brazil and Germany. Then again, my favourite player is Toni Kroos, the German midfielder. He controls the game completely.



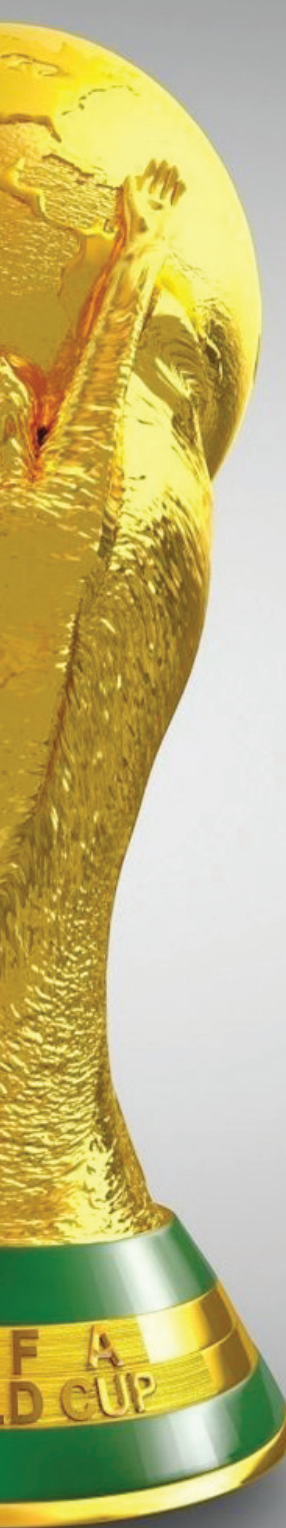
SERBIA – Sava Jankovic, student at St Christopher's
I predict a final between France and Germany. France have such a world class team with brilliant players like Antoine Griezmann. Germany will be there as well because they are simply the best team in the world. I hope Serbia at least reach the knock-out stages. Our players have great potential and could surprise a few. My favourite Sergej Milinkovic-Savic had a fantastic season playing in midfield for Lazio. He is already being linked with giants such as Real Madrid and Manchester United.



SOUTH KOREA – Jaewoo Oh, businessman
I don't think we have a big chance of winning many matches to be honest. Perhaps we can beat Sweden but with Germany and Mexico in the same group I don't think we will have much of a chance.
Germany and Brazil are my two favourites to make it all the way through to the World Cup Final. Germany are Number One and they have the experience and we can always say we lost to the eventual champions.
They might have to face a big test this time against a determined Brazil.



have their who will win



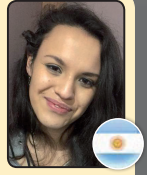
FRANCE – Renaud Hirondeau, graphic designer

With the strength of the French team this time around, I'd be hugely disappointed if we didn't make at least the semi-finals. Winning the entire tournament becomes something of a lottery at that stage, but I'll be cheering my team along in every match they play. I believe Antoine Griezmann will be the key. He's our best striker, so if he can score lots of goals we'll have a good chance. I'd love to beat Germany in the final.



ARGENTINA – Dulcinea Ruiz, waitress

Obviously I would prefer that Argentina win the World Cup and I would like to see us in the final either beating Brazil or Spain 5-0. The reason for Spain is because my husband is from Spain. I usually watch the games with him. Argentina is a country filled with fantastic football players such as the great Lionel Messi. I believe that we can perform great as a team. Our players just need to keep a level head on the pitch. There have been a few incidents which have led to red cards in the past.



AUSTRALIA – Lachie Bennetts, service desk analyst

I am feeling optimistic for Australia because whilst they are up against one of the big favourites in France, the other teams in our pool are not as strong as others. It is going to be slightly difficult but hopefully the true Aussie spirit will get us through, so we will see. I was hoping before the draw that we would avoid Spain or Brazil, so that's a bonus. Will we win the World Cup? Realistically, no, but there is every chance that we will surprise a few people and maybe make it through to the knock-out stage.



ICELAND – Matthias Nygårdsson, photographer

I'm just so delighted that Iceland qualified for the World Cup Finals for the first time. For such a sparsely populated country with limited facilities, it's like we've already won the tournament. It was a great joy for my country, so I have no doubt that the players in the squad will try their best for the fans. I don't expect much in terms of getting far in the tournament, but I don't care! I just hope our talisman Gylfi Sigurdsson recovers from injury to play a part, as he's the main reason we are here.



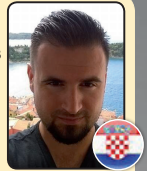
PERU – Joshua Nino, university student

Latinos are always passionate about football. The excitement is strongest when their beloved country is in the World Cup Finals. I am so proud that Peru made the finals for the first time in my lifetime, 1982 was the last time! I think we will struggle to get out of the group, but I don't care as I'm just happy to see my team there. I hope Uruguay win overall because I love Luis Suarez and Edinson Cavani.



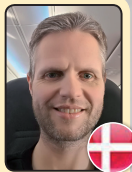
CROATIA – Danilo Kosanic, hotelier

I'm very excited about Croatia being in the World Cup Finals especially as we get to play Argentina. We always tend to get good scores against highly-placed teams but lose against the not-so-good ones. The reason we do so well playing against the better teams is because we are so motivated. We can do well if we can get through this group stage. Then anything is possible. My bet is that Brazil, France or Germany will take the cup. I don't think that Spain will win it.



DENMARK – Thomas Hansen, managing director

UEFA Euro 92 stands as Denmark's finest hour, when we showed the world that we have what it takes to be champions. Whilst there are talented players today, they do not play in the same teams. Most of the good players play overseas and even many of the Danish teams are now full of overseas players therefore the unity of the team is not what it was. All Danes wish this team the very best and look forward to them doing well to boost the nation, and with Christian Eriksen in the team, anything is possible.



NIGERIA – Ashu Kefni, marketing executive

My country will definitely qualify from the group stages as we are playing against Iceland and Croatia after facing Argentina in our first match. I think we are going to get through to the knockout stages. My favourite player in the team is Victor Moses because he has what it takes to surprise big teams. He plays in the English Premier League, one of the best leagues in the world. My prediction for the World Cup Final is Brazil against Germany.



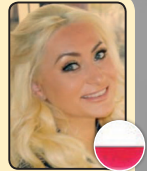
BELGIUM – Thomas Adrien, PR representative
I predict Belgium and Brazil will make it to the final. Since the 1986 semi-final appearance we've been nowhere ... but this year will be different.

We have a top team with top international players, including Eden Hazard, the best Chelsea player. The team's synergy is perfect and it's a young, eager team. We have a young, talented team with excellent technical skills. We're definitely going to beat England!



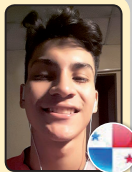
POLAND – Edyta Przybyla, consultant PR and marketing

I have high hopes for Poland, as we had an impressive qualifying campaign. We are now one of the strongest teams, with my favourite player Robert Lewandowski in superb form and with some luck – we have a chance to progress far in the tournament. There are other good players in the team but he's simply phenomenal, one of the best players on the planet! He has the quality to make a difference and is capable of winning games on his own.



PANAMA – Jean Almengor, student

This is the first time for us being in the World Cup Finals so it's amazing. When we qualified, our president ordered a national holiday! I don't believe we will get past the group ... but we can dream, right? I never thought I'd see my country on the world stage, but here we are. My favourite player in the team is Gabriel Torres, who is our main striker. I think Brazil will play Germany in the final and Brazil will win 2-0. They have the experience of winning the tournament.



SENEGAL – Wasu Eshetu, waitress

I'd love to see Senegal against Brazil in the final. No one will ever forget our last World Cup in 2002, where we beat then-holders France 1-0 in our first game and reached the quarter finals. This year I believe our team will do even better because we have strong players and a good team. My favourite player is our captain Sadio Mane. He has tremendous ability and just reached the Champions League final, and is the strongest player in the team.



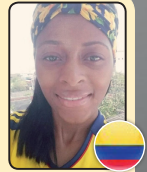
TUNISIA – Med Arbi Soualhia, insurance writer

The last time we played in the World Cup it was disappointing. This time we have a new team and I hope we get through to the second round. We didn't score many goals last time so anything better than that would be welcome. Saif-Eddine Khaoui has been tasked with supplying the creativity so I hope we score goals. I predict France to reach the final. They are one of my favourites. I think a Latin American team will be playing against them, maybe Brazil or Argentina.



COLOMBIA – Carolina Rodriguez, fitness instructor

I'm a big football fan and am looking forward to this year's World Cup Finals. I think the biggest threat in Group H for Colombia is Poland. Senegal don't worry me at all but Japan are getting better, they could be a dark horse. Many Colombians are hoping Radamel Falcao and James Rodriguez will star again and the entire country's hopes are pinned on them. I think the quarter finals is a realistic aim.



ENGLAND – Paul Sabberton, construction manager

Here we go again! If I was a traditional England fan, I'd say we had the potential to go all the way, but I'm a realist so I'm going to predict we scrape through the group stage before being knocked out at the first sign of a decent team. Probably on penalties. It's a young squad this year, which should mean more energetic football but I'm just hoping that the lack of experience doesn't come back to bite us. My money would be on France or Germany in the final.



JAPAN – Josh Falls, translator

I'm half Japanese and half American, but since the latter didn't qualify this year all my hopes are with the Land of the Rising Sun! I hope that Japan achieves the best result possible in the World Cup. I think we have a challenging group, I want Japan to move on to the next level and I think we have a good chance as there are none of the 'super' teams in our group. If Japan doesn't make it to the final, I predict that it will be Brazil and Spain, which will be a fantastic game to watch.





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World Cup

Your complete World Cup 2018 guide

President's promise

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has listed the things that fans can expect from the World Cup Finals. They include fantastic matches, smooth operation, fair play, a change in

people's perceptions and benefits brought about by the use of technology. "We have seen with the qualifiers that the football quality has been absolutely amazing," he said.



SCHEDULE - GROUP STAGE (Kick-offs are shown in Bahrain time zone)

DATE	MATCH	VENUE	KICK-OFF
Thursday 14 June	Russia vs Saudi Arabia (Group A)	Moscow (Luzhniki)	18:00
Friday 15 June	Egypt vs Uruguay (Group A)	Ekaterinburg	15:00
	Morocco vs Iran (Group B)	St Petersburg	18:00
	Portugal vs Spain (Group B)	Sochi	21:00
Saturday 16 June	France vs Australia (Group C)	Kazan	13:00
	Argentina vs Iceland (Group D)	Moscow (Spartak)	16:00
	Peru vs Denmark (Group C)	Saransk	19:00
	Croatia vs Nigeria (Group D)	Kaliningrad	22:00
Sunday 17 June	Costa Rica vs Serbia (Group E)	Samara	15:00
	Germany vs Mexico (Group F)	Moscow (Luzhniki)	18:00
	Brazil vs Switzerland (Group E)	Rostov-on-Don	21:00
Monday 18 June	Sweden vs South Korea (Group F)	Nizhny Novgorod	15:00
	Belgium vs Panama (Group G)	Sochi	18:00
	Tunisia vs England (Group G)	Volgograd	21:00
Tuesday 19 June	Colombia vs Japan (Group H)	Saransk	15:00
	Poland vs Senegal (Group H)	Moscow (Spartak)	18:00
	Russia vs Egypt (Group A)	St Petersburg	21:00
Wednesday 20 June	Portugal vs Morocco (Group B)	Moscow (Luzhniki)	15:00
	Uruguay vs Saudi Arabia (Group A)	Rostov-on-Don	18:00
	Iran vs Spain (Group B)	Kazan	21:00
Thursday 21 June	Denmark vs Australia (Group C)	Samara	15:00
	France vs Peru (Group C)	Ekaterinburg	18:00
	Argentina vs Croatia (Group D)	Nizhny Novgorod	21:00
Friday 22 June	Brazil vs Costa Rica (Group E)	St Petersburg	15:00
	Nigeria vs Iceland (Group D)	Volgograd	18:00
	Serbia vs Switzerland (Group E)	Kaliningrad	21:00
Saturday 23 June	Belgium vs Tunisia (Group G)	Moscow (Spartak)	15:00
	South Korea vs Mexico (Group F)	Rostov-on-Don	18:00
	Germany vs Sweden (Group F)	Sochi	21:00
Sunday 24 June	England vs Panama (Group G)	Nizhny Novgorod	15:00
	Japan vs Senegal (Group H)	Ekaterinburg	18:00
	Poland vs Colombia (Group H)	Kazan	21:00
Monday 25 June	Uruguay vs Russia (Group A)	Samara	17:00
	Saudi Arabia vs Egypt (Group A)	Volgograd	17:00
	Spain vs Morocco (Group B)	Kaliningrad	21:00
	Iran vs Portugal (Group B)	Saransk	21:00
Tuesday 26 June	Denmark vs France (Group C)	Moscow (Luzhniki)	17:00
	Australia vs Peru (Group C)	Sochi	17:00
	Nigeria vs Argentina (Group D)	St Petersburg	21:00
	Iceland vs Croatia (Group D)	Rostov-on-Don	21:00
Wednesday 27 June	South Korea vs Germany (Group F)	Kazan	17:00
	Mexico vs Sweden (Group F)	Ekaterinburg	17:00
	Serbia vs Brazil (Group E)	Moscow (Spartak)	21:00
	Switzerland vs Costa Rica (Group E)	Nizhny Novgorod	21:00
Thursday 28 June	Japan vs Poland (Group H)	Volgograd	17:00
	Senegal vs Colombia (Group H)	Samara	17:00
	England vs Belgium (Group G)	Kaliningrad	21:00
	Panama vs Tunisia (Group G)	Saransk	21:00

Telstar 18: World Cup match ball

FIFA have unveiled the official match ball for the World Cup in Russia. The new adidas Telstar 2018 harks back to their first match ball in 1970



TELSTAR 2018

Russia: Modern interpretation of the iconic **Telstar** which featured in 1970-74, based on similar carcass to 2014 **Brazuca**



Six panels glued in seamless construction, with distinct 3D textured surface for greater control and grip



1970-74 TELSTAR

Mexico: Designed for black-and-white TV – 32 hand-stitched leather panels



1978-82 TANGO

Argentina, Spain: Sealed seams cut water intake



1986 AZTECA

Mexico: First synthetic ball with improved durability



1990 ETRUSCO

Italy: Polyurethane foam layer increases response and water resistance



1994 QUESTRA

U.S.: Polyethylene foam increases energy return, boosts speed



1998 TRICOLORE

France: Syntactic foam matrix layer further increases energy return



2002 FEVERNOVA

Korea/Japan: Durable woven chassis, syntactic foam. Speed can exceed 130km/h



2006 TEAMGEIST

Germany: 14-panel thermal-bonded layer. Surface responds more evenly for better control



2010 JABULANI

South Africa: Eight panels. Aero grooves improve flight stability



2014 BRAZUCA

Brazil: Six thermally-bonded TPU panels

Sources: FIFA, adidas

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FIFA World Cup 2018 venues

Russia hosts the FIFA World Cup for the first time, with 64 matches at 12 venues over four weeks. Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium hosts the final



Source: FIFA

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Ramadan Guide



Listings, lifestyle, travel, entertainment and sporting events by Mai Al Khatib-Camille



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The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay invites guests to break their fast at the Al Bahrain Ballroom, featuring a buffet with a wide selection of traditional Bahraini fare prepared by Executive Chef Hyung Gyu Kim and Executive Pastry Chef Imad Boukili. Iftar will take place from sunset until 8pm, and Ghabga daily from 9pm until 2am during Ramadan. A live band will play traditional music in the Ramadan tent.

Priced BD26++ for Iftar inclusive of soft beverages and Arabic coffee, and BD13++ for kids between five and 12 years old. Ghabga is BD28++ inclusive of buffet beverages, and BD14++ for kids between five and 12 years old. Kids below five years old enter free, and 13 years above are full price. Groups of minimum 30 people pay BD23++ per person for Iftar inclusive of beverages and BD25++ per person for Ghabga exclusive of beverages.

A large section within the Al Bahrain Ballroom will feature a kid's club hosting fun activities as part of the hotel's Kids For All Seasons Club.
For reservations call 17715500.

Experience tradition this Ramadan at The Sheraton Bahrain Hotel with Iftar at the Awal Ballroom, boasting a traditional Arabic décor, dishes, juices, and a dates corner and crepe station for all guests to enjoy. Iftar buffet is served from sunset to 8.30pm, priced BD16++ from Sunday to Wednesday and BD17++ from Thursday to Saturday. Children from four to 12 years old charged BD8.5++, and below four years old dine for free.

The hotel will be serving a daily Ghabga at Al Safir Restaurant from 9pm to 2am, priced BD12.9++ for adults.
For reservations, call 17533533 or book online at www.sheratonbahrain.com



The Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel, Residence and Spa, is hosting a curated Iftar at Bahrain's first rooftop venue, Al Fanar, during the holy month, featuring Arabian dishes and an overlooking view of the skyline of Manama. Priced BD14net per person. The hotel also invites guests to enjoy a unique dining experience with Ghabga at Blu, to enjoy a warm Bahraini hospitality ambience. Priced BD14net per person. Special group packages are



available for 10 guests and above.

For details, call 17531666 or email sales.diplomat@radissonblu.com

This year, celebrate Ramadan at Al Murjan Ballroom in The Movenpick Hotel Bahrain, with an Iftar buffet and live cooking stations, from sunset to 10pm. A designated beverage station will also be serving a range of classic Ramadan juices such as tamarind, Vimto and jallab. Priced BD19net per person inclusive of Ramadan beverages. In the spirit of the holy month of giving, BD1 will be donated from all bookings to a Muharraq charity fund. Also, during this month, two lucky winners will win a round-trip ticket to any destination, sponsored by KLM.
For more information, call 17460017 or email hotel.bahrain.fb@movenpick.com

The Elite Seef Residence & Hotel is celebrating the holy month with Iftar every evening at Oasis and Il Giardino with an unlimited international and oriental buffet with soft beverages. Priced BD7.990++ per person and BD3++ for children.

The hotel will also host a daily Ghabga with a Ghabga platter available for two or per family, and live entertainment. Priced BD14++ per person or BD16++ for two adults and two kids.

For details, call 17583388. Enjoy Iftar and Ghabga at Elite Resort & Spa's Noor Tent, featuring a Ramadan buffet and family entertainment. Priced BD9.9++ per person for Iftar and Ghabga, and BD5.5++ per person for Suhoor.
For details, call 17313333. The Elite Crystal hotel is

hosting Iftar buffet during the holy month of Ramadan at The Lotus. Priced BD7.9++ for Iftar and BD14.9++ for a Ghabga platter for two.
For reservations, call 17360360.

The Elite Grande Hotel invites guests to its Iftar at Julio's, featuring international and oriental buffet with soft beverages. Priced BD7.990++ per person and BD3++ for children. Suhoor is priced BD5++ per person. There is also a Ghabga by the pool at H2O rooftop lounge, with live oud performances on the weekend and free henna designer for ladies and children. Priced BD14++ per person or BD16++ for two adults and two children.
For details, call 17565888.

Guests at Al Areen Palace & Spa Bahrain during the holy month can enjoy an Iftar buffet, available on weekdays for BD14++ and BD16++ on weekend on the Early Bird package. The Ghabga buffet is priced BD13.5++ on weekdays and BD15++ on weekends on the Early Bird package. The regular package deal offers an Iftar buffet on weekdays for BD16++ and on weekends for BD18++, followed by the Ghabga buffet, which is BD15++ on weekdays and BD17++ on weekends. All buffets include sweets, Ramadan juice, live cooking stations and a raffle draw on weekends.

The hotel is also offering three discounted meal-and-spa options on its desert pool villas. The first package is for only BD140++, including desert pool villa and Iftar or Ghabga or breakfast. The second package is for BD160++, including desert pool villa, Iftar or Ghabga or

breakfast, and a 30 minute massage treatment. The third package is for BD190++, including desert pool villa, Iftar or breakfast, in-villa BBQ, and a 30 minute massage treatment.

Gallery 21 is inviting families, corporate groups and romantic couples alike in for a gastronomic Arabian experience over Ramadan. Set amidst the fashionable Adliya art district, a nightly art boutique takes place in the main art gallery and entrance, along with indulgent, aromatic buffets and traditional cuisines created by Gallery 21 chefs, until Thursday, June 14. A buffet of hot and cold mezzes, live cooking stations, displays of desserts and gourmet ice cream abound before opening up to a warm and comfy lounge and seating area in the main atrium. There are a variety of à la carte options to choose from, including Slow Cooked Lamb Leg Ouzi, Pan-Fried Bahraini Kingfish, Moroccan Couscous and more. Nightly entertainment also fills the air with Arabian melodies perfect for Iftar and Ghabga gatherings.



Seating starts at sunset until midnight, priced at BD15++ per person, inclusive of Arabic beverages. A mocktail menu is also available.
For more details, email reservation@gallery21bahrain.com or call 17711600.

The Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa is celebrating Ramadan with its famous Khaimat Al Khaleej at the Awal Ballroom. Iftar and Ghabga will take place daily, and will feature live Teppanyaki grills, chocolate fountains, a date tower, and live traditional entertainment. Priced BD20++ for Iftar from sunset until 8pm, BD18++ for Ghabga from 10pm onwards on weekdays, and BD20++ for Ghabga from 10pm onwards on weekends. Special rates available for Prestige Club members. Children up to five years enter free of charge, and between six and 12 years receive 50 per cent discount.
To find out more about the offer and special packages, call 17713000.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain is celebrating the spirit of giving during the holy month

of Ramadan. For every Iftar dinner, a donation of 500 fils will be made to children and mothers' welfare societies. Enjoy an Iftar buffet with a selection of traditional Arabic specialties served daily at La Mosaïque restaurant. Priced BD14.520net per person. Iftar and Ghabga private packages start from BD14.520net per person, for a minimum of 30 guests and above at Bahrain Conference Centre.

For bookings and details, visit www.cp-bahrain.com or call 17531122.

The Intercontinental Regency Bahrain will be serving authentic culinary dishes prepared by its award-winning chefs throughout Ramadan. Daily Iftar buffet price is BD15++, with Ghabga priced at BD14++ at the Rifaa Ballroom, served from sunset. Special packages include a whole ouzi and appetiser featuring a slow-cooked lamb with hot and cold mezzeh, sambousek and more, priced BD150net, serving up to 20 people. The second special includes a half ouzi and appetisers, with slow-cooked lamb, a variety of hot and cold mezzeh and more, priced BD80net, serving up to 10 people.

For details and reservations, call 17208308 or email convention.icbahrain@ihg.com



The Furn Bistro & Bakery at The Westin and Le Meridien City Centre Bahrain is hosting an Iftar buffet starting from the first day of Ramadan, from sunset to 8.30pm, priced BD18net per person. The à la carte Ghabga menu will be served from 9pm to 1am.

For details, call 17171441.

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain will be serving an Iftar buffet followed by a Ghabga in its Ramadan tent, all throughout the month of Ramadan from sunset to 2am. Featuring traditional Arabic and international cuisine in the stylistically reimagined Massaya Ramadan tent. Priced BD25++ for Iftar from sunset to 8pm, and BD27++ for Ghabga from 9pm to 2am. Pergolas can be booked for a maximum of eight guests, priced BD300++ with silver service included.
Call 17586499 or email rs.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com



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Tomorrow (June 14)

The Al Rashid Group is staging local bazaars at its Oasis Malls until Saturday featuring entertainment and activities including henna, face painting and clay modelling. There will also be traditional Arabic performance artists and the malls are also running a Clothes for Compassion initiative until the end of the holy month. The event is open to all from sunset to 10pm. For details, follow @alrashid_group on Instagram.

Friday (June 15)

Nepali Club Bahrain is presenting a Nepali Musical Night 2018 at the Deimon International Hotel Manama

starting at 6pm. Entry is priced BD5.

Saturday (June 16)

Mickey and Minnie Mouse along with a star cast will take audiences on a musical adventure as Disney on Ice presents the Bahrain debut of Passport to Adventure. Favourite Disney characters featured will include Simba, Timon and Pumbaa from The Lion King, Ariel and Sebastian from The Little Mermaid,



Peter Pan, Wendy and Tinker Bell from Peter Pan, as well as royal sisters Anna and Elsa from the Number One animated feature film of all time, Frozen. It opens at the Bahrain International Exhibition & Convention Centre from 3pm to 7pm today, at 11pm, 3pm and 7pm on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday and at 3pm on Wednesday. Ticket prices range from BD10 to BD85. For details, visit <http://www.disneyonicebh.com>

In celebration of Eid Al-Fitr, the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) presents a musical performance honouring the legacy of the late Abu Baker Salem presented by Bahraini

singer, Mohammed Al Bakri, at the Cultural Hall. The Saudi-Yemeni artist was known and loved throughout the Arab world both for his songs and poems. This tribute is part of the authority's Eid celebrations which coincide with the launch of the Bahrain Summer Festival. It starts at 8pm and admission is free for all. For details, call 17298777.

Sunday (June 17)

BACA presents a Ta'a AlShabab Festival concert of Bahraini and Arabic music at the Cultural Hall featuring Harmony, a group of young musicians including singers Mohammed Assiri and Yousif Al-Jabri. Admission is free.

The concert starts at 8pm.

THE 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee will be held at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain. Two international forums will take place. The Young Heritage Professionals Forum, running from June 17 to 26, will receive 30 young heritage experts from all over the world, who will interact with locals to exchange experiences and ideas. There will be a set of activities introducing local culture and heritage. A Site Managers Forum is planned to take place from June 21 to 28, offering a platform to reflect on heritage protection and also share information. The World Heritage

Committee Meeting runs from June 24 to July 4. The event starts at 10am and is free for all. For details, visit <http://42whc.bahrain2018.bh>

Monday (June 18)

The 10th edition of the Bahrain Summer Festival returns under the slogan Muharraq Capital of Islamic Culture with a two-month programme. It will take place in the Nakheel Tent at Arad Fort and will offer a variety of children's activities. Nakheel and Nakhoola, the adventurous mascots will welcome families on arrival. The tent is open every day, except on Sunday, from 5pm to 9pm and admission is free. For details, call 17567171.



FOOTBALL fans can enjoy the 2018 World Cup Football Games at the exclusive World Pavilion at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain daily until July 15 from 2pm to 2am. Guests will also enjoy a football-themed atmosphere, à la carte menu options and special beverage menus by beverage partner BMML. Entrance is free with a minimum spending of BD10 per person. For information, contact 17586499.

THE Football Stadium at Four Seasons will show matches on a massive 4x10m high-definition screen, together with 160 LCD

screens, offering 150 supporters a perfect view of each game. The fully air-conditioned venue aims to recreate the thrilling atmosphere of a packed football stadium, complete with grandstand-style seating, exclusive fan zone seating sections with bean bags and comfortable lounge areas with sofas. Spectators can take part in a range of fun activities, from taking on friends in a table football tournament and honing their scoring skills with Play Station games. Entry cost BD12 from June 14 to 28 June, BD18 from June 30 to July 15 with the cost taken off the overall bill spent for food and drinks.

There is also a BD150 all-inclusive package for groups of five or more, with complimentary beverages and food platters.

For information, contact 17115500.

THE FIFA Soccer world championship will be a part of the programme in both Downtown and Elements restaurants at the InterContinental Regency Bahrain. For details, call 17208308.

WATCH all the thrills of the World Cup after Ramadan in the Gulf Hotel Bahrain's newly-renovated Sherlock Holmes. The venue will include additional screens at every

angle, continue to retain its Old-English feel along with modern entertainment features from surround sounds to state-of-the-art lighting. For more details, call 17713000.

GATHER your friends to watch the opening ceremony of FIFA World Cup 2018 at the Mövenpick Hotel Bahrain. The games will be broadcasted on a giant screen at the Fun Zone outdoor air-conditioned tent, which was particularly designed for this sporting occasion which also features a special menu. For information, contact 17460017.

WATCH all the games in comfort and style with soccer-style snacks and refreshments at Al Areen Palace & Spa.

And get fit like Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi by joining special 45-minute World Cup Training Sessions in the Fitness for Life studio. Classes are BD5 for 45mins with mixed and ladies only sessions. For details, contact 17845000.

ENJOY the FIFA World Cup 2018 at Crown Plaza's Harvesters Lounge & Terrace from 11am. For details, call 17531122.

THE Lost Paradise of Dilmun marks Eid with a 10-day celebration featuring an array of activities including performances by Arab singers, DJs and street-style entertainment. There will also be tasty Eid offerings along the newly launched Shebab Avenue Food Street. To celebrate World Cup fever, three freestyle football jugglers from Europe will be performing and showing off

their eye-catching tricks and gravity defying skills. Also, seven of the most popular Arabic singers will jumpstart the waterpark's biggest Eid music festival to date. The show will begin with Moroccan singer Sana Mohammed, followed by Arab Idol season 2 semi-finalist Oussam Naji along with popular Iraqi singer Wissam Dawood on June 17.

Singer Khalid Haneen will be performing on June 18 and Ammar Habeeb on June 19 and the festival concludes with Nasser Al Bahar on June 22.

Prizes games and competitions will be staged throughout the event. For more information on events, schedules and timings, call 17845100 or follow their Facebook/ IG @lpodwaterpark



GALLERIA Mall in Zinj is joining hands with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation-ITPO Bahrain and the Arab International Centre for Entrepreneurship and Investment, to host the Bahrain Entrepreneurs' Eid Pop-Up Market. The event will take place on the second and third evenings of Eid and feature Bahraini entrepreneurs who are building creative businesses in fashion, food,

traditional crafts, floral décor, accessories and special entertainment for children. The Pop-Up Market will run from 7pm to 11pm and will take place in the fountain area of the mall next to Tim Horton. The Entrepreneurs Market will also showcase Bahraini zari embroidery and traditional crafts in addition to some jewellery, food, fashion, floral decor and accessories.

EID LISTINGS

THE Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain will be featuring its grand buffet brunch at the award-winning La Med restaurant on the second day of Eid Al-Fitr.

The feast will be accompanied by musical entertainment. Classic spreads of brunch favourites will feature with freshly-made bakery items, braised meats, seafood dishes, traditional Arabic dishes, mezzes and more. The brunch is priced at BD30 per person with soft drinks or BD35 per person with special beverage pairings.

Executive Pastry Chef Jonathan Challenor and his team will also be creating a special Eid cake this season at The Ritz Gourmet Lounge. Available in the shape of a half-moon or rounded version, the indulgent almond sponge cake incorporates ingredients like rose water, saffron, raspberry compote and white chocolate, topped with festive decoration to reflect the Eid Al-Fitr holiday season.

For dining reservations, including the Eid Brunch at La Med, email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com or call 17586499.



THE Mövenpick Hotel Bahrain is hosting a special Eid brunch on June 16 with a tasty lunch priced at BD18net inclusive of soft drinks and

water.

For more information, call +973 174 600 17 or e-mail hotel.bahrain.fb@movenpick.com

THE Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is offering an Eid Brunch on the first three days of Eid in its Ramadan Tent.

The brunch buffet will include live cooking stations and a vibrant family atmosphere from 12.30pm until 4pm on all three days. There will also be a band. Bahraini food as well as Turkish and Indian specialties will be available from the first day of Eid and the brunch is priced at BD28 including soft beverages, BD 38 with extended beverage package.

Also, this Eid, the hotel's younger guests are invited to participate in the Kids For All Seasons programme which features daily educational activities, arts and crafts, cinema hours, face painting and more. The kids programme is complimentary for Eid al-Fitr Brunch guests.

For details, contact 17115500.

CUT by Wolfgang Puck also welcomes all steak-loving guests to indulge their taste buds in a three-course set

menu created by Executive Chef Ben Small.

Start with a butter lettuce salad with Roquefort blue cheese, avocado and herb vinaigrette and a USDA certified Black Angus petit filet mignon with wasabi-yuzu kosho butter for the main course. End the course with a white coffee ice-cream banana cream pie. This is priced at BD29, excluding beverages.

For details, call 17115044.

REEF Resort is celebrating Eid Al Fitr with a special BBQ menu to feast on around the pool from 7pm.

The BBQ includes an assortment of oriental flavours and International dishes featuring a wide selection of appetisers, soups, main courses and live cooking stations for BD18++ per person.

Children between six and 12 get 50 per cent discount, and

those under six dine for free. For details, contact 13110110.

THE Gulf Hotel's Lebanese restaurant Zahle will launch an exclusive entertainment programme for Eid featuring Ms Jamila performing alongside Arabic singers. There is a dinner menu set for the three-day celebrations at BD26++.

Al Waha Restaurant will also be dishing out an Eid buffet for lunch and dinner with entertainment by the QBA Inside band at BD20++.

Chef Hussain and his culinary team will delight diners at Takht Jamsheed restaurant with a Persian-inspired buffet at BD19++.

Celebrate Eid at Bahrain's award-winning Rasoi By Vineet Restaurant featuring a specially-designed menu by Michelin star Chef Vineet Bhatia, priced at BD22++. Chef Vineet will also be making a special visit to Bahrain on June 19 with an exclusive à la carte available with a minimum spent of BD15 per person on food.

For details, contact 17713000 or email afbm.gh@gulfothelbahrain.com

CELEBRATE the second day of Eid with a dinner at the InterContinental Regency at Selections Restaurant and indulge in Arabian and international dishes with an oriental musical performance. The dinner will be from 7pm to 10.30pm and is priced BD14++ per person.

For details, call 17208308.



THE Crowne Plaza is hosting its Eid lunch at La Mosaic Restaurant during all three days from 12.30pm to 4pm and is priced BD15net for adults and BD8net for children aged seven to 12. For details, call 17531122.



AL AREEN Palace & Spa is hosting a family-friendly Eid Al Fitr Carnival brunch for BD17++ which includes Arabic and international

dishes paired with cooking stations at its Rimal and Saffron restaurants, entertainment, with access to the pool, and a raffle

draw for all members of the family on the first, second and third day of Eid. For details, contact 17845000.





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(domestic violence
or sexual violence)

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Visit us!
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Hospital

Open 24 hours. Free and confidential. All women welcome.
كل النساء مرحب بهن

Write to the editor

Follow Stan on Twitter @stanszczowka

Your views make all the difference – email Stan Szczowka at editor@gulfweekly.com

UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency – provides much-needed cash assistance to extremely vulnerable Syrian refugee families without any alternative sources of income. This has been made possible through innovative mechanisms, primarily UNHCR's Zakat initiative, a trusted and efficient route for people to fulfil their Zakat obligations.

Zakat contributions this year have already saved 1,152 refugee families in Jordan and Lebanon from falling deeper into debt and poverty, and from the risk of exploitation. However, 5,465 families are still in urgent need of sustainable cash assistance. A contribution of approximately \$2,000 (BD755) feeds, clothes and houses an extremely vulnerable family for a year.

We are very thankful for the donations received so far. As we enter the last days of Ramadan, we urge Muslims to allocate their Zakat to struggling refugee families. Such an allocation is guaranteed to make an immediate difference in the lives of the most vulnerable refugee communities in the Middle East.

Your contributions will save families who solely rely on our monthly aid to survive from the grasp of extreme poverty. Help us keep a roof over their heads, food on their table and clean water to drink. Eligible refugee families need your Zakat.

Quarterly reports on how Zakat funds are distributed are posted on UNHCR's Zakat website zakat.unhcr.org

Houssam Chahine,
Head of Private Sector
Partnerships for UNHCR
in the MENA region.

● **Editor's note:** As one of the Five Pillars of Islam, zakat is a religious obligation for all Muslims who meet the necessary criteria of wealth. It is a mandatory charitable contribution, the right of the poor to find relief from the rich.

I'VE never really understood the football craze that takes over fans during the World Cup, and especially so here in Bahrain where football has such a large following.

Fans are gearing up for the matches coming ahead, championing their favourite teams and counting



down the hours until the tournament starts.

I, however, will be quietly chipping away at my usual routine, searching the web for delicious reads or tackling a movie from a to-watch list, paying no special heed to the whole unfolding of a major football event.

Maybe I should check what all the fuss is about, and gain insight on how football, like most sports indeed, bring so many people together and serves as a means of both bonding and camaraderie, or rather of friendly enmity?

Sarah Belal,
university student.

LOVED the double page spread of our Greek Sails trip you published recently. Thanks so much. The layout was outstanding. We go again shortly.

Pamela and Stanley Henderson-Monsef,
Hamala.

I WAS about to post this on Facebook, but a friend has suggested it might be better to send this as a letter to the editor.

Leo, a darling little rescued desert pup diagnosed by a vet with some non-specific problem that caused gapping of the joints, died on June 9.

I often foster injured animals while they are recovering. I was asked by its rescuer to administer part of a tablet, presumably an antibiotic, but it seems he may have been exposed to danger.

This letter is not to elicit judgements or sentimental outpouring. It is to warn dog lovers and rescuers to be on the alert for dogs coughing, mucus/nasal

discharge, swollen joints, stiff gait, muscle-twitching and swollen paw pads and to be particularly mindful when transporting dogs from one area to another for risk of spreading infection.

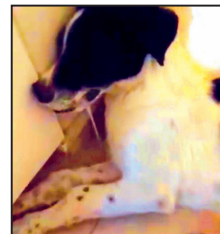
This includes disinfecting kennels and transport where there is even the slightest risk of contagious disease.

We all want to help save lives and improve the quality of life of stray dogs. But this must be done responsibly. Trying to save the life of one (and Leo, right, was past the point of no return when he came here) is not the wisest course of action when others are now also at risk.

Anna, Bahrain.

● **Editor's note:** Puppies and adolescent dogs who

have not been vaccinated are most vulnerable to the distemper virus. They are typically rescues with unknown vaccination histories. Make sure your dog has completed his series of vaccinations. Also, routine cleaning and disinfecting your home will ensure that the virus is not in your dog's living environment.



THE WHISPERER

You don't know me; I know you, I know what's being said about you. I'm the 'whisperer'. I am socially mobile: Arab, Brit, Indian, Pakistani, American and the rest, they all invite me and share their world with me. Not much gets past me but if you think it may have done, email me on ...

...editor@gulfweekly.com

GULFWEEKLY'S reporter Kristian 'The Voice of Sport' Harrison may be a bit of a damp squid when it comes to the prediction game. Only last week he ruled out England's cricket team ever winning another match just moments before they hammered Pakistan in the second match.

So that will probably rule out Germany winning the FIFA World Cup – the German coach will know who to blame if it all goes horribly wrong in Russia.

Our hapless hack has flown back home to Blighty and very nearly didn't make it. As he prepared for the flight he placed his best denims in the wash and left his passport in the back pocket. Fortunately the baking heat in Bahrain managed to dry out the soggy document and somehow he managed to get through customs at both airports.

Good job too, as he had an important assignment to get to the church on time, as a godparent to his niece, Lana May, above. He'll no doubt be good at wetting the baby's head too.



EMAIL from the Editor: 'For your next column please could you write your perspective on the World Cup'.

Wait, sorry, the World Cup is on, has it started? Oh, I'm really not that bothered this year.

'You have to watch England, support your home country,' he suggested. 'Err ... no I don't', I replied.

Over the years I've excitedly followed the World Cup, glued to the television with my three brothers.

I watched the Liverpool legend and heartthrob of the time, Kevin Keegan in 1982, Maradona's dodgy goal in 1986, Gazza's tears in 1990 and then England's last great World Cup performance in 2002 with Golden Balls Beckham's match-winning outpouring. But since then ... well, for over a decade England

Ellissa's island life

An expat wife, mother, artist and runner



haven't won a knockout game since 2006. They are perceived as the perennial underachievers. It's embarrassing.

Our players get paid obscene amounts of money, live in a designer-lifestyle bubble but unlike their German or Spanish



counterparts, when it comes to playing with intelligence and technique, they fail.

They have an inability to keep the ball and can't cope with the pressure and end up playing abysmally.

So I have decided to compile a short list of things I would rather do this year than watch England play in the World Cup:

- Be Donald Trump's secretary
- Attend a Trump Rally
- Drink a can of Coke Zero that has been sat in the car for two hours
- Invite 10 children over for a bake-off
- Discuss Brexit
- Let my kids play with glitter
- Have Gordon Ramsay critique my cooking
- Watch the film *Fifty Shades of Grey*
- Eat herrings
- Watch the Glee box set

Film Weekly



Movie-loving Anna Romanska checks out the big screen releases on show in a cinema near you



Small seismic shift

WATCHING highly-detailed graphically-rendered dinosaurs hunt mostly helpless humans through a gorgeous Victorian-esque manor will always be a guilty pleasure, but I fear that the Jurassic franchise may be one headed for extinction.

Jurassic Park, when it first came out, was hailed for its uncompromising approach to serious and ethically-charged subject matter, coupled with goofy jokes and highly likeable characters.

The basic formula remains, but as some of the world's best geneticists will tell you, the key is to try and improve upon the original, not create a carbon copy.

Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom opens with a 21st Century edition of an extinction threat: a topically relevant volcanic eruption. When the island's dormant volcano begins roaring to life, our previous heroes, Owen and Claire, played by Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard respectively, mount a campaign to rescue the remaining dinosaurs from this extinction-level event.

Some new characters join the cast,

JURASSIC WORLD: FALLEN KINGDOM REVIEW

STARRING: Bryce Dallas Howard, Chris Pratt, Ted Levine

DIRECTOR: J. A. Bayona

GENRE: Action, Adventure, Sci-Fi

RATING: PG13

RUNTIME: 128 Mins

including our new antagonist, Eli Mills, played by Rafe Spall, dinosaur expert Zia Rodriguez, played by Daniella Pineda, and nervous wreck nerd Franklin, played by Justice Smith. Without revealing too much, we see some all-too-familiar faces, including Jeff Goldblum, in a few sneaky cameos.

From the start, we see a lot of similarities to this movie's predecessor. Genetic scientists get too big for their boots and decide to create 'the ultimate killing machine' as a way to elicit greater profits. No one seems to stop and think: maybe creating an alpha predator that can commit mass slaughter isn't such a great look for the dinosaur park, but let's

give them the benefit of the doubt.

The special effects are truly something spectacular. Every ripple of every muscle is in eye-popping clarity, in itself a measure of the budget and attention to detail spent on each scene.

The same can be said for the impressive action set pieces. It's packed with edge-of-your-seat chase scenes, made all the more immersive by the increasingly anthropomorphized dinosaurs.

If you've got a keen eye, you'll spot a lot of Spielbergian homages to previous Jurassic films, as well as other huge action blockbusters that the great director has produced before. As a result, this movie is wildly more poignant than its prequels, with a surprising depth that leaves you truly moved at many points.

The biggest potential issue here is a wildly concocted story treating itself with too much sobriety. You've got Chris Pratt cracking jokes in the midst of a serious look into the privatisation of genetic weaponry, and on the other hand an innocent, curious, and highly intelligent young girl caught in the midst of a greed-driven and murderous household.

It can't seem to decide what tone it wants to strike. In some ways that's appealing and leaves you with a lot of questions to ponder. In other ways it's wobbly. The good thing is, this movie saves itself with a great cast and excellent visuals; even though the story could use refinement.

Not quite extinct, but it's fearfully close to making the endangered species list.

Now showing in: Cineco, Seef II, Dana Cinemas, Wadi Al Sail, Mukta A2, Al Jazeera

ANNA'S VERDICT



1 popcorn - stay home
5 popcorns - start queuing



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Bite-sized trailer

Last Rampage: The Escape of Gary Tison

DIRECTOR: Dwight H. Little

CAST: Robert Patrick, Heather Graham, Bruce Davison

PLOT: The true crime thriller which follows convicted murderers Gary Tison and Randy Greenawalt's escape from a Arizona State Prison and their murderous rampage through the southwestern desert in the summer of 1978.

SHOWING IN: City Centre, Seef II



Solo: A Star Wars Story

DIRECTOR: Ron Howard

CAST: Alden Ehrenreich, Woody Harrelson, Emilia Clarke

PLOT: With the emerging demand of hyperfuel and other resources, Han Solo finds himself in the middle of a heist alongside other criminals, where they meet the likes of Chewbacca and Lando Calrissian in an adventurous situation exposing the criminal underworld of the *Star Wars* saga.

SHOWING IN: City Centre, Juffair, The Avenues, Seef II, Saar, Dana, Wadi Al Sail, Seef Muharraq, The Walk



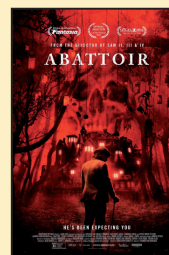
Abattoir

DIRECTOR: Darren Lynn Bousman

CAST: Jessica Lowndes, Joe Anderson, Lin Shaye

PLOT: An investigative reporter works to solve the mystery behind a mysterious man who has been buying houses where tragedies have occurred. Set in a world where it always feels like night, even in daylight hours, real estate reporter Julia Talben's life is turned upside down when her family is brutally murdered. It is believed to be an open and close case, but Julia quickly realises there is much more to this story when she returns to the crime scene to find the murder room deconstructed and physically removed from her sister's home.

SHOWING IN: Seef II



imdb movie charts

Current Position	Title	Weekend Takings	Gross to date
1	Ocean's Eight	\$41M	\$41M
2	Solo: A Star Wars Story	\$15M	\$176M
3	Deadpool 2	\$14M	\$279M
4	Hereditary	\$13M	\$13M
5	Avengers: Infinity War	\$7M	\$655M
6	Adrift	\$5M	\$22M
7	Book Club	\$4M	\$57M
8	Hotel Artemis	\$3M	\$3M
9	Upgrade	\$2M	\$9M
10	Life of the Party	\$2M	\$50M

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Motoring Weekly

Steering you to the best deals on wheels

Rising to creative challenge

MAZDA designers and engineers were issued a challenge: to build a car that can be used anywhere, in any way, to support creative, individualistic lifestyles.

The result has been the launch of the Mazda CX-3 which has received rave reviews from industry experts and motoring pundits alike.

One leading magazine described the vehicle as a 'feisty runabout with a can-do attitude, offering taut handling and edgy styling'.

A 148-hp 2.0-litre four-cylinder and a six-speed automatic transmission with front-wheel drive provide the 'zoom-zoom'. The CX-3 relies on its sport-tuned suspension and creative weight-saving measures to maintain Mazda's unique brand of driving pleasure. 'The cabin is equally well designed, with high-quality materials and modern driving aids', one reviewer added.

The marque's 'Soul of Motion' strategy aims to combine quality and style and it delivers it with a

full suite of revolutionary SKYACTIV technology in this vehicle.

Mazda's new-generation all-wheel-drive system i-ACTIV, AWD is engineered to offer confident driving on any road surface while also contributing to environmental compatibility.

The system helps prevent tyre slippage and minimizes energy losses, enhancing both drivability in poor conditions and fuel economy, by instantly distributing power optimally between the front and rear wheels.

This is achieved by continuously monitoring road conditions according to various factors such as road gradient, outside temperature and weather, as well as detecting front wheel grip. In addition, i-ACTIV AWD assesses a driver's intentions to precisely adjust torque distribution.

Mazda's Proactive Safety philosophy is firmly grounded in a belief in the driver's abilities, aiming to support safe driving while maintaining all the fun of the open road. Safe driving



RAVE REVIEWS: Mazda CX-3

demands early recognition of potential hazards, good judgment and appropriate action, and Mazda works to support these essential functions so owners can drive safely and with peace of mind despite changing driving conditions.

Active safety measures to identify risk early and

reduce the chance of damage or injury include Mazda's i-ACTIVSENSE suite of advanced safety technologies. Passive safety measures feature a version of Mazda's high-strength SKYACTIV-BODY, newly-developed for this go-anywhere crossover. The Mazda-developed

Active Driving Display shows the most essential driving information with no need to look away from the road. In addition, frequently used operations are controlled by steering wheel mounted switches and paddle shifters without taking the hands off the steering wheel. Information for MZD

CONNECT's audio, communication and navigation functions is displayed on a seven-inch LCD mounted on top of the dashboard. This separate-type centre display greatly reduces the downward viewing angle and its graphics are designed for instant legibility. Multi-stage operations of MZD CONNECT are quickly and accurately controlled by a commander control located on the floor console where the driver's hand naturally falls.

Prices start from a very competitive BD7,750 on the road. The International Motor Trading Agency's special holy month promotion includes a service package for five years or 100,000kms, whichever is first, extended warranty for five years with unlimited mileage, registration, insurance, rust proofing and window tinting.

For more information drop into the showroom in Tubli, call 17875777 or visit www.mazda.kekanoo.com and download the MAZDABAHRAIN application on Androids and Apple phones.

Race ace up for the test

FORMER professional racing driver Kenny Brack has joined McLaren Automotive, the British luxury, high-performance sports car and super car company, partly-owned by Bahrain's sovereign wealth fund, Mumtalakat, as chief test driver.

Kenny, 52, who has 35 years' experience in motorsports including a racing driver in IndyCar, CART, F3000 and rallying and a test driver in Formula 1 and NASCAR, will be responsible for leading the dynamic development engineering of all McLaren road cars.

He will report to Dr Jens Ludmann, chief operating officer, McLaren Automotive, who said: "Recruiting Kenny Brack as our new chief test driver is a real coup for McLaren Automotive and perfectly aligns with our determination to ensure our next generations of luxury sports cars and super cars retain the dynamic excellence for which McLaren is renowned."

"Kenny's record as a formidable first-class racing driver speaks for itself, but I believe his talents as a development driver are even more impressive and make him the ideal person to lead the team shaping the way that McLaren cars drive."

Having previously worked closely with the McLaren engineering team as a driver consultant, Kenny was integral to the dynamic development of both the McLaren 720S and McLaren Senna. He has also been assisting on yet-to-be announced future models.



STAR TURN: Kenny

THREE new Mercedes-AMG models CLS 53 4MATIC+, E 53 4MATIC+ Coupé and E 53 4MATIC+ Cabriolet are now available to be ordered.

The centrepiece is the new electrified 3.0 litre engine with twin charging, 320 kW (435 hp) output and an EQ Boost starter generator.

Visually, the new 53-series models have a distinctive unique look. The distinctive feature common to the models is the twin-blade radiator grille in silver chrome. AMG-specific side sill panels lend the 53-series models a more dynamic silhouette. Viewed from the tail end, it is the restyled rear apron with its classically round twin tailpipe trims which catches the eye. The spoiler lip on the boot lid is painted in the body colour, but is optionally also available in carbon-fibre.

The 53-series models combine a powerful 320 kW (435 hp) output with a sporty style and high efficiency. The

Dynamic new arrivals

EQ Boost starter generator briefly provides an additional 16 kW of output plus 250 Nm of torque and feeds the 48 V on-board electrical system.

It unites the starter and alternator in one electric motor and is integrated between the engine and transmission. This innovation as well as the intelligent charging via an electric auxiliary compressor and an exhaust gas turbocharger all have the same goal: to enhance the hallmark AMG performance and driving dynamics, while at the

same time reducing fuel consumption and emissions.

The extremely fast-shifting AMG SPEEDSHIFT TCT 9G transmission, the fully variable AMG Performance 4MATIC+ all-wheel drive and the autonomous AMG RIDE CONTROL+ air suspension also help to create the dynamic driving experience, its engineers promise.

The 48 V on-board electrical system is therefore paving the way for further hybridisation. The functions include boost, recuperate,

load point shift, gliding and the virtually imperceptible restarting of the engine with the start/stop function.

The interior of the new AMG models welcomes passengers with model-specific, exclusive appointments, luxurious materials and significantly extended options. With the optional, fully digital Widescreen Cockpit the driver can select the display look in the three styles Classic, Sport and Progressive and configure the individually relevant information and views.

The interior is rounded off with the new, standard-fit AMG performance steering wheel in nappa leather with individualisation options such as wood inserts in piano lacquer or DINAMICA microfibre in the grip area.

The newcomers will be at the dealers from August. For prices and more details, contact Al Haddad Motors on 17785454.



NEW LOOK: 53-series on the road soon

cerebrally crust & crema



@crustandcrema

crustandcremabh



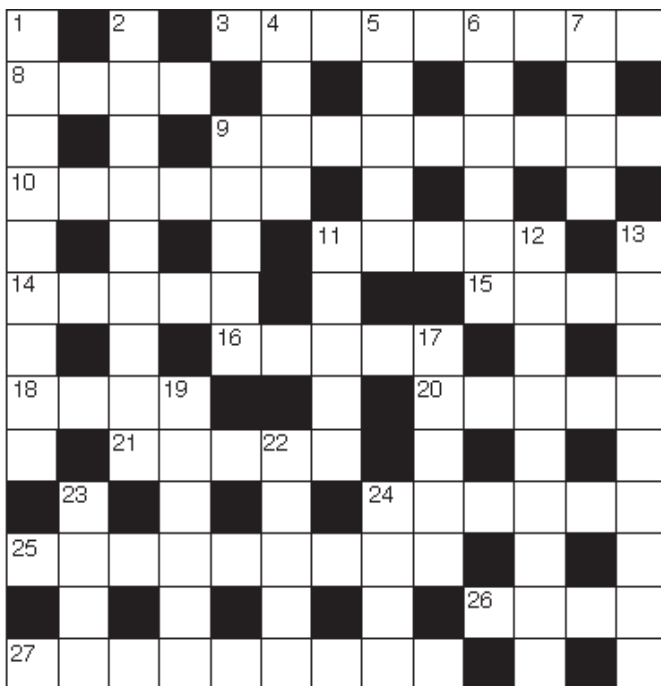
WIN A CUP OF COFFEE at crust & crema by answering this quiz question and emailing your answer to editor@gulfweekly.com

Coffee was the first food to be freeze-dried. a) True b) False

Entries must be received by noon on Sunday. The first correct one opened will be emailed a coupon. Normal GulfWeekly contest rules apply. The Editor's decision is final.

Quiz winner: Suruchi Joshi won coffee and cake by correctly answering that shepherds discovered coffee in b) Ethiopia circa 800 A.D.

crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

3. Misfortune (9)
8. Ogle (4)
9. Conduct (9)
10. Dodged (6)
11. Cut (5)
14. Suffer (5)
15. Curb (4)
16. Moribund (5)
18. Weary (4)
20. Wireless (5)
21. Vacant (5)
24. Dread (6)
25. Slight (9)
26. Drawback (4)
27. Extol (9)

DOWN

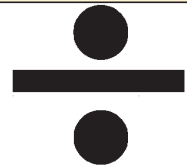
1. Ease (9)
2. Tomb (9)
4. Action (4)
5. Rub out (5)
6. Tremble (6)
7. So (4)
9. Whiskers (5)
11. Piquant (5)
12. Translation (9)
13. Hearten (9)
17. Avarice (5)
19. Appear (6)
22. A feline (5)
23. Fruit (4)
24. Brisk pace (4)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... launched the film and television production company DreamWorks SKG in 1994?
WHAT ... was the title of Madonna's twelfth No.1 UK single?
WHERE ... in Scotland is the Savings Bank Museum?
WHEN ... did the western film director John Ford die?
WHO ... wrote the award-winning play *On the Shore of the Wide World*?
WHAT ... does Mardi Gras literally mean?
WHERE ... did Michael Langrish succeed Hewlett Thompson as Bishop in 2000?
WHEN ... did the film *Lady and the Tramp* receive its premiere?

just so

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tuition

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darn tough sudoku

So you think you're good enough at Sudoku to crack this baby? Remember, we were the first in the Gulf to bring you this bit of Japanese mayhem...so we don't kid around

Last week's sudoku

8	4	7	9	2	1	3	5	6
9	3	1	5	4	6	8	2	7
5	6	2	8	3	7	4	9	1
1	5	3	2	8	9	6	7	4
6	7	4	3	1	5	9	8	2
2	9	8	7	6	4	5	1	3
4	8	5	6	7	2	1	3	9
7	1	9	4	5	3	2	6	8
3	2	6	1	9	8	7	4	5

1	4	2	3	6	7	5	9	8
3	5	9	4	1	8	6	7	2
8	7	6	5	2	9	3	4	1
7	9	4	8	3	1	2	5	6
5	6	1	9	7	2	4	8	3
2	3	8	6	5	4	7	1	9
9	8	7	2	4	6	1	3	5
4	2	5	1	8	3	9	6	7
6	1	3	7	9	5	8	2	4

darn tough sudoku

2	3	5	7	6	8	4	9	1
6	1	4	2	9	5	3	8	7
9	8	7	4	3	1	5	2	6
3	6	8	5	2	9	1	7	4
1	4	2	3	7	6	8	5	9
7	5	9	8	1	4	6	3	2
4	7	6	9	5	3	2	1	8
8	9	3	1	4	2	7	6	5
5	2	1	6	8	7	9	4	3

Sudoku

	1		5			9		7
	5				8		3	
3				7			6	2
	8		7			6		1
		4	3		6		5	
7		9			5			
9	4			6				3
	3		9				7	
		2			4		9	

Sudoku

				8				2
		8	2		9	4		
		9	5		1	8		
4	8						1	
	1	5	7		8	9	6	
	7						5	
6		4	8		7	3		
		2	3		6	5		7
			9					

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 1 Chef; 3 Advanced; 8 Neat; 9 Studios; 11 Introductory; 13 Escape; 14 Comet; 17 Acceleration; 20 Inedible; 21 Sofa; 22 Detonate; 23 Vend.

Down: 1 Consider; 2 Elastic; 4 Detour; 5 Additional; 6 Choir; 7 Dusk; 10 Completion; 12 Standard; 15 Noisome; 16 Pellet; 18 Crest; 19 Find.

JUST SO:

At close quarters, A block of flats, Long time no see, Lean over backwards.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

Daniel Powter; Sensex; The Hawthorns; 1999, Kym Marsh; Andy Millman; Malta; 2003.

Darn Tough Sudoku

					3	6	7	
4				9				
7	6							3
				3	9		6	
			8			5		
	1		2	5				
5							1	2
				4				9
	9	7	3					

Falcons fly as Pharoahs wait

From Page 24

Al Sahlawi has not responded and, apart from posting regular images on his social media account for fans to enjoy, rarely comments and prefers to let his boots do his talking.

It will not be easy, as going into a major tournament, you want momentum, stability and unity. Saudi Arabia have none of these things.

The man responsible for guiding the Green Falcons to their first World Cup since 2006, Bert van Marwijk, achieved the unthinkable - he lasted two years at the helm, as reported earlier in *GulfWeekly*. But a few days after the steering the team through an arduous qualifying process, a disagreement with the Saudi FA, saw him out of a job.

His replacement, Argentinian Edgardo Bauza, was sacked after just five games in charge, including defeats by Ghana, Portugal and Bulgaria. It was nothing

NEW TACTICIAN: Coach Pizzi and, right, Ramos shouldering the blame for Salah's injury nightmare



new. Saudi Arabia's revolving door managerial policy has seen six managers come and go in the last five years.

Their current manager, Juan Antonio Pizzi, only took charge last November after resigning as Chile manager having failed to qualify for the World Cup. Pizzi, who used to play for Barcelona,

led Chile to Copa America triumph in 2016 and has over 10 years of managerial experience.

He has a job on his hands by all cup competitions often witness one unfancied side prospering. Perhaps it's Al Sahlawi and Saudi Arabia's turn to sparkle?

Arriving as the

tournament's lowest ranking side, they may not be the most prolific achievers at a World Cup but history has shown they are not just heading to Russia to make up the numbers.

In the 1994 World Cup, Saudi Arabia's first, they qualified from their group with wins against Morocco



and Belgium to set them up with a last 16 tie against Sweden which they lost 3-1.

As for Salah, he was included in Egypt's final 23-man squad, despite the team's medical staff suggesting it will be touch and go for the player to be ready in time for their Group A game against Uruguay on Friday.

The Liverpool star was forced off early in the Champions League final defeat to Real Madrid after

suffering a shoulder injury following a tangle with Spanish hard-man Sergio Ramos. "We are optimists and we are waiting for him," said Egypt coach Hector Cuper.

The clash against Saudi Arabia on June 25 may perhaps be a more likely prospect and whichever Mo - Salah or Al Sahlawi - is hottest could determine which of these two countries advance in the competition or fly home.

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Flags fly twice for Ferrari!

SEBASTIAN Vettel led from the pole to the chequered flag - and then some - to claim a long-awaited Ferrari victory at the Canadian Grand Prix.

The four-time world champion sped on after the flag was waved one lap too early, finishing his wire-to-wire victory at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve on Sunday to claim his third win of the year and the lead in the Formula One standings.

"I was a bit confused. I told them I don't think the race is over yet," said Vettel, who confirmed on the counter in his car and with his team that he was only completing his 69th of the scheduled 70 laps.

"Some of the marshals were already celebrating," he said. "I was just worried that people don't jump on the track and start celebrating. We're still going at full pace."

Canadian model Winnie Harlow blamed race officials for telling her the wrong time to wave the flag. Formula One regulations say that if a chequered flag is waved too early, the race is over as of the last completed lap, making the results official as through 68 laps.

F1 spokesman Matteo Bonciani said there was confusion getting the message from a course official to Harlow on the platform.

"WHEN THEY TELL YOU TO WAVE THE FLAG A LAP TOO EARLY!" Harlow wrote on *Instagram*. "You had one job, sir!!! Hahaha but so grateful everyone was safe today and no one got hurt!"

Had any passing occurred on the 69th or 70th laps, it



SECOND HELPINGS: Vettel crosses the finish line to win the race, below, from left, he shakes hands with Bottas, Ricciardo takes a turn at the Senna corner ahead of Hamilton and the winner kisses his prize on the podium

would not have counted, Bonciani said. But there was not, and Vettel picked up the 50th win of his career, his second in Montreal and the first for Ferrari at the track since Michael Schumacher won three in a row from 2002-04.

Mercedes was second with Valtteri Bottas - not erstwhile championship leader Lewis Hamilton - about six seconds back after never really challenging for the win. Max Verstappen was third and the other Red Bull car, driven by Daniel Ricciardo, was fourth.

Hamilton, who was fifth on Sunday, fell from the top of the Formula One standings and now trails Vettel by one point, 121-120. He had been going for a record-tying

seventh victory in Montreal and a third win in four races.

"I'm the opposite of confident," said Mercedes executive director Toto Wolff, whose team failed to deliver with an engine upgrade in time for the weekend and also botched its tyre strategy in practice.

"I think this is a major wake-up call for every member of the team," he said. "Everybody needs to assess how to improve performance. Those marginal gains are going to make all the difference."

Starting cleanly, Vettel was pulling away from the field when a crash between Brendon Hartley and hometown favourite Lance Stroll brought out the safety

car in the very first lap. On the restart, Sergio Perez skidded onto the grass but managed to straighten himself out and rejoin the race.

Vettel had no such trouble, leaving the jostling behind him as he steered through the 4.36-km track named for the Ferrari driver and Montreal native who earned his first Formula One victory here 40 years ago.

"Grazie," the German said to his Italy-based team before grabbing a red and yellow Ferrari flag and waving it on his way to the podium.

"They've been waiting long enough for Ferrari to win here," Vettel added. "Forty years after Gilles won his Grand Prix here, it's nice to show Ferrari is still alive. It's

nice to become part of that story, hopefully a little bit more in the future."

Bottas finished second for the fourth time in seven races this season. "The Ferrari was controlling the race and we just weren't quick enough," he said. "I backed off late in the race to save some fuel which is why Max got so close."

"We were the only top team that didn't bring a new engine for this race, everyone else had an improved power unit. Hopefully the introduction of our new engine in France will help us in the fight with Ferrari and Red Bull."

The fifth place finish was Hamilton's worst of the year, but he said his engine was giving him problems all

season. "It was a tough day in the office but I'm just very grateful that I finished today's race and score some points," he admitted. "From the start I was down on power and my engine was overheating. I couldn't get the temperatures down, so I just thought it was going to fail. Every single lap I was waiting for the power to just drop away and disappear - but it kept going."

"I could have lost a lot more points today; fifth is not the strongest result, but it could have been a lot worse. Ferrari have been doing a slightly better job and brought a better package, but we are very close. The guys are working really hard, but each and every one of us can always do better and improve. We will just keep our heads down, keep pushing and stay positive."

Verstappen's podium was his second of the year, and it eases some of the pressure he has felt with a series of mistakes that cost him and the Red Bull team in Azerbaijan and Monaco. After arriving in Montreal, Verstappen half-jokingly threatened to headbutt any reporter who asked about the crashes.

The day was less positive for McLaren's two-time world champion Fernando Alonso, who was celebrating his 300th Formula One race. He retired to the garage after 43 laps - the eighth time he has failed to finish in Montreal.

It was also a short day for Stroll, a Montreal native who locked up with Hartley heading into Turn 5 on the first lap. A year ago, Stroll picked up the first Formula One points of his career in his hometown.



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THERE'S MORE THAN ONE MO!



EYE FOR GOAL: Salah and, left, Al Sahlawi

ALL eyes on the football world have been concentrating on whether Egypt's ace striker Mohamed Salah will recover from injury in time for the action ... but there's another mighty Mo determined to make a goal-grabbing impact in the FIFA World Cup Finals, Saudi Arabia's Mohammed Al Sahlawi.

To stand any chance of success at any tournament, you need a goal scorer - and Saudi Arabia have one in prolific marksman, Al Sahlawi. The striker, who plays for Al-Nassr in his homeland, bagged an impressive 16 goals in qualifying, the same number as Poland's Robert Lewandowski.

Saudi Arabia qualified for Russia, finishing second in their group behind Japan. They will kick-off the 2018 World Cup tomorrow when they take on tournament

WORLD CUP REPORT
By STAN SZECOWKA
editor@gulfweekly.com



hosts. They'll also play Uruguay and Egypt. The 31-year-old, who has scored 28 times in 38 internationals, sharpened up his game ahead of this event by spending three weeks training with Manchester United. The arrangement was part of a commercial agreement between the English Premiership giants and sporting authorities in Saudi Arabia.

The Reds signed a memorandum of understanding with the Gulf nation's General Sports Authority (GSA) which will see the club help develop the Saudi football industry, as part of its 2030 Vision - the plan to diversify the Saudi economy and to develop its public sectors.

Al Sahlawi has scored 119 goals in 226 appearances over nine seasons for his club and he has picked up the best player of the league accolade

twice in a row during that time.

He was 17 when his talent started to become clear and by the end of the 2008 season he had established himself as the leading goal scorer in the top division.

He moved to Al-Nassr in 2009 for SR32 million from Al-Qadsiah, at the time the largest deal in Saudi football history. In his first season with the club he scored 21 goals in 36 matches and received the

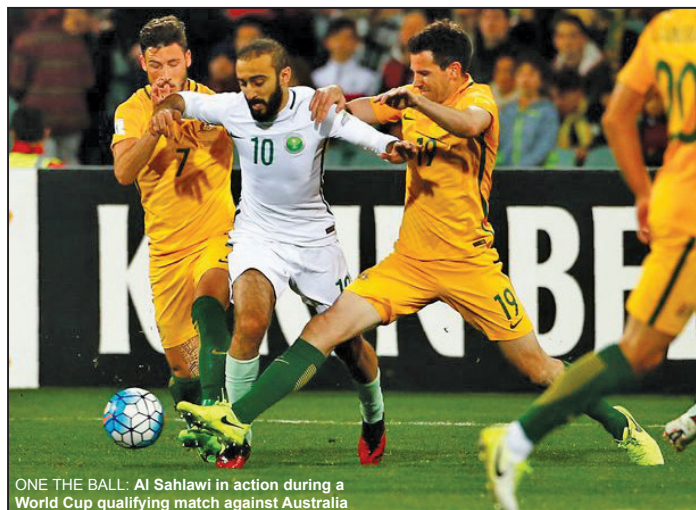
Young Player of the Year Award.

His goal-scoring prowess has not gone unnoticed. The UK's *Independent* newspaper marked Al Sahlawi out as Saudi Arabia's 'go-to man for goals' adding:

'Defenders, beware'. The *Real Sport* website described him as the team's 'predatory striker' and US TV network *Fox Sports* labelled him the 'star' attraction and the main man up front for the Saudis, highlighting his campaign tally.

Peculiarly, the only negative comments have appeared in the local media. In a World Cup preview, English-language publication *Arab News*, reported on its website that: 'Saudi Arabia just do not have top-quality strikers' suggesting Al Sahlawi and his teammate Mohamad Aseri were 'unlikely to strike fear into opposition defences'.

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ONE THE BALL: Al Sahlawi in action during a World Cup qualifying match against Australia

Gulf Weekly EAN

