

Gulf Weekly

The community newspaper at the heart of Bahrain

August 22 - 28, 2018

EID MUBARAK!

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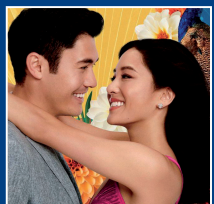
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LEISURE GUIDE:
Plan your week's
entertainment
SEE PAGES 8, 9 & 10



EATING OUT:
Beautiful brunch set
for celebrations
SEE PAGE 11



FILM WEEKLY:
Kristian reviews
Crazy Rich Asians
SEE PAGE 19

CARING FOR KERALA

HEARTBROKEN
and desperate
victims of

the Kerala flooding
nightmare are being
cared for and comforted
by a caring Bahraini
woman who headed
to the disaster zone to
offer help, comfort and
solidarity.

Well-known yoga teacher
and practitioner Fatima Al
Mansoori was set to conduct
a short course at Mangalore
University and visit a Keralite
friend's family home as well
as an eco-project in the region
as part of her Indian trip
itinerary.

Her plans suddenly changed
when weeks of heavy
monsoon rains triggered
landslides and floods. Instead
of fleeing the area she set off
in the direction of the disaster.
"When you find yourself in
the middle of a humanitarian
crisis in which a lot of
people have been affected,
you naturally want to offer
support and show some
solidarity," said Fatima, 35, in
a broken *WhatsApp* interview
on Monday morning amid
failing internet coverage.

"I just felt a pressing need
to go to the flooded areas and
help in any way I could, even
if it meant simply providing
emotional support, to listen to

SPECIAL REPORT
By STAN SZECOWKA
editor@gulfweekly.com



the victims' stories or simply
to be there to hold their
hands.

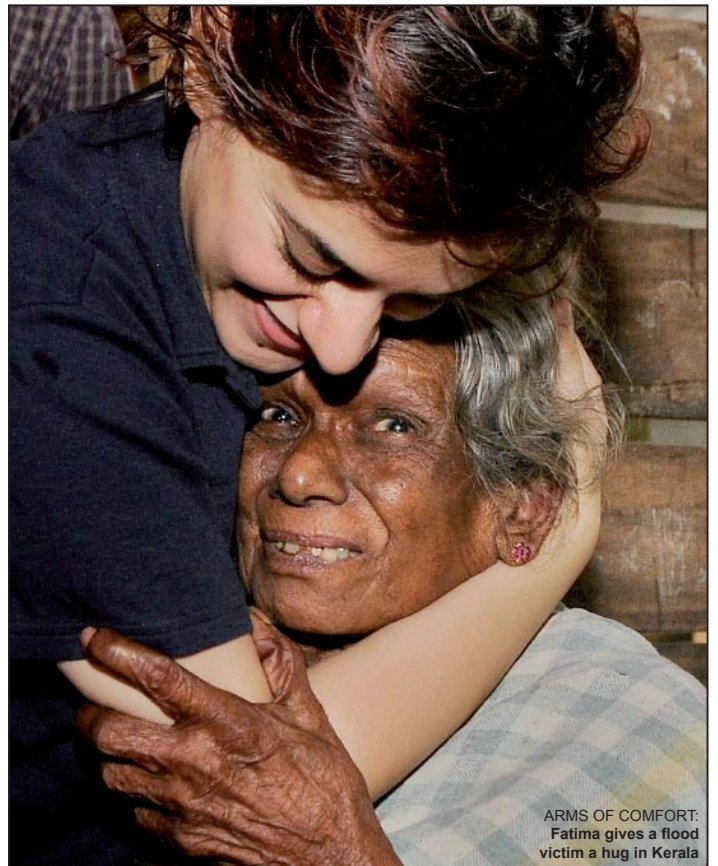
"People have lost so
much, in fact in many cases
everything they possess,
as houses and whole
communities collapsed under
the floods. Many people have
lost loved ones too and they
don't have a home to go back
to.

"I was anxious to highlight
the reality of this harsh and
painful disaster, so that
the suffering could be felt
and better understood and
make people fully aware, in
real time, the needs of the
people."

Fatima was able to achieve
this through live feeds to her
social media followers on
Instagram and *Twitter* posts
and her efforts were also
broadcast by *MediaOne*, an
Indian TV channel.

She has travelled 120km
and visited rescue centres,
temporary schools and
safe buildings used for
sleeping accommodation
for the homeless and seen
the devastation up close,
including a collapsed house
in which two people died and
the scene of a landslide.

Turn to Page 2



ARMS OF COMFORT:
Fatima gives a flood
victim a hug in Kerala



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Heartache of

From Page 1

About 22,000 people were rescued from the flood-hit Indian state of Kerala on Sunday alone after monsoon rains finally eased.

Military teams as well as disaster response forces and local fishermen reached some of the worst hit areas. Helicopters also brought much-needed supplies to communities 'cut-off' by two weeks of incessant rain.

More than 350 people have been killed, most of them in landslides, since the monsoon started in June. Kerala's chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the number of people taking refuge in the 5,645 relief camps now stood at 725,000. But he vowed 'to save even the last person stranded'.

Fatima was able to visit some of the rescue centres which she described as a humbling experience and says even those traumatised by the experiences they had suffered were warm and welcoming and grateful that someone was visiting them and showing compassion. "There was even one lady who wanted to share the little food she had with me. She had nothing left but the clothes she was wearing," she said.

Fatima has been made aware that the people of Bahrain have been quick to rally around to offer assistance, everyone from members of the Royal Family to the expat labourer, to help the people of Kerala and Fatima said: "I would like to thank you all for opening your hearts and please, please keep that support coming, it is so desperately needed."

As reported in our sister title, the *Gulf Daily News*, donations continue to pour in following appeals for help in the kingdom.

Today, Indians number at an estimated 400,000 people out of the country's total population of 1.3 million, making them the largest expatriate group in the country and the majority are from Kerala.

As a result, expatriate

STRONG WILL: Fatima meets some survivors



associations involved in the relief drive have been inundated with calls from Bahrainis and residents keen to donate essential items, or help in any way possible.

His Majesty King Hamad earlier assigned the Royal Charity Organisation to send relief material to the flood-hit.

Several expatriate associations in Bahrain, in solidarity with the flood victims, cancelled all celebrations of Onam and Eid and launched donation drives. The Indian Club has set up a committee to co-ordinate relief activities, collecting essential materials like blankets, clothes, dry food and medicines and The Asian School Bahrain Alumni has also launched an aid drive with donors asked to drop items at the school's reception.

A special 'Pray for Kerala' gathering was held at the National Evangelical Church on Monday evening with priests and ministers from Kerala in attendance.

Incessant rains since August 8 have caused Kerala's worst floods in a century with authorities releasing water

from 35 dangerously full dams, sending a surge into the state's main rivers. The floods have caused damage estimated at \$3 billion.

While it is normal for Kerala to get some of the country's highest rainfall during monsoon season, the India Meteorological Department said it had been hit with 37 per cent more than usual because of a spell of low pressure over the region.

Meanwhile, the head of the state's disaster management team, Anil Vasudevan, said he was preparing to deal with a possible outbreak of waterborne and airborne diseases in temporary relief camps.

He said authorities had already isolated people with chickenpox in a camp in Aluva, about 250km from state capital Thiruvananthapuram.

Rescue officials said efforts on Sunday had been concentrated on the town of Chengannur, where about 5,000 people were reported to be trapped, and in the Alapuzha and Ernakulam districts.

Fatima, who family originates from Muharraq,

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flood drama



will be in India for a couple more weeks and will continue to share her Kerala stories.

"I've chosen to dedicate my life to humanitarian work since my mother passed away earlier this year and I've been volunteering actively," she explained. "Despite the obstacles that I've stumbled upon, which has slowed me down and led to the disruption of my efforts, I found myself on the path of humanitarian action again without any prior planning, it's a God-guided mission and all I had to do was respond."

"I was originally preparing to deliver a five-day short course at the department of human consciousness and yogic sciences at Mangalore University which was supposed to start yesterday. I'm an adjunct professor at the department and come to India every semester to deliver special lectures."

"This time my friend Rajeev Kumar, an Indian businessman who lives in Bahrain, had invited me, not for the first time, to visit his family home in Kerala, and it happened that he was travelling there around the same time that I was planning

the short course at the university, so I accepted."

"We had no idea think that the situation of heavy rains would escalate into such a heart-breaking humanitarian crisis."

Another acquaintance, TV news reporter Sirajudheen who reports from Bahrain, connected her to his friend, Noufal, an active volunteer of a youth NGO in Kerala, who was able to guide her to flood-hit locations. "He was the man behind the camera helping me taking videos to shed light on the crisis," explained Fatima, who will be travelling to Tellicherry to stay with another Kerala family and friend who lives in Bahrain, Bijesh Kumar.

She was also due to visit Jatayu, the largest bird sculpture in the world and the area's first sustainable tourism destination, located at Kollam in Kerala. Its official inauguration was originally set for last Friday but, like most things in the region, it had to be cancelled due to more pressing concerns.

Fatima arrived in India on August 11 and is likely to stay for at least a couple more weeks.

"I don't plan," she

admitted. "I just keep myself always prepared and I prioritise humanitarian action over anything else - like my life depends on it!"

"I have few more things to do in India, such as going back to Mangalore University to deliver the lectures. But I will continue sharing what I have witnessed as I have a lot of videos I haven't released yet regarding the effect of the flooding on the clean water supply and many stories of the survivors."

There appears to be no rush to return, despite being in demand, as highlighted in *GulfWeekly* in 2016, when this newspaper featured her coaching session and the benefits of using yoga for those who stress over travel.

Aside from specialising in yoga counselling and one-to-one coaching, at the time Fatima also ran 'nostril cleanse breathing' therapy courses and also worked as an Ayurvedic lifestyle coach. This technique is one of the world's oldest holistic healing systems developed thousands of years ago in India and is based on the belief that health and wellness depend on a delicate balance between mind, body and spirit.

"I used to give private yoga therapy sessions by appointments at several hospitals in Bahrain but since I have decided to devote my life to humanitarian work I have stopped taking appointments," she said. "A lot of people ask how I can survive financially but if you surrender to God and take on a path of selfless service you don't need money!"

"Support comes in many ways, I get sponsored and I get invited as a paid guest speaker and I also offer corporate wellbeing services so I get requests every now and then which covers my pocket money."

Her comforting arms may not bring her riches but the smiles and hugs she received from the people of Kerala were reward enough.

● **Appeal letters: Page 4**



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THE executive committee and members of the Indian Club extend their solidarity to the victims of the natural disaster happening in the Indian state of Kerala.

As a response to the call of the Indian Chief Minister's Relief Aid, we have constituted a committee headed by Mohamed Hussain Malim, in association with the executive committee, to coordinate relief activities here.

The Kerala Flood Relief Committee consists of 20 members from different areas and communities and it will help coordinate all relief activities to rescue our brothers and sisters in Kerala.

We are collecting all essential materials like blankets, clothing, dry food, medicines etc and they will be forwarded immediately to the area.

The committee will also take the initiative to contribute financial aid to the Disaster Relief Fund in liaison with individuals, groups and various organisations.

Anyone interested to helping this noble cause, please feel free to contact the club's acting president Thankachan Vithayathil on 32230600 or convenor Mohamed Hussain Malim on 39666354 or the Indian Club on 17253157.

For and on behalf of The Indian Club Bahrain.

Siby Varghese,
Acting general secretary.
Mobile: 33726669

● **Editor's note:** More than 800,000 people have been displaced and over 350 have died in the worst flooding in a century in southern India's Kerala state

MONEY transfer, foreign exchange and payment solutions brands, UAE Exchange and Unimoni, have waived the service fee on remittances to Kerala Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund (CMDRF) in the wake of the catastrophic floods that has ravaged the Indian state.

The initiative, which enables the global Indian diaspora to contribute to the relief efforts, follows a personal contribution of two crore rupees made by group chairman Dr Bavaguthu Raghuram Shetty to help those affected by the floods. As a committed corporate



citizen, who firmly believes in helping communities in times of need, it was our responsibility to do all that is in our power to aid the people of Kerala, who are facing this unprecedented natural calamity.

Besides waiving off the service fee on remittances, we have also mobilised the India Unit of Unimoni to extend on-ground support to the ongoing relief efforts. With support pouring in from all quarters, we are confident that Kerala will soon recover from this disaster.

Contributions to CMDRF are completely tax exempt. **The account details are:**
Name of Donee: CMDRF
Account Number: 67319948232

Bank Name: State Bank of India
Bank Branch: City Branch, Trivandrum, Kerala
IFSC: SBIN0070028

Promoth Manghat,
executive director, Finabl and Group CEO.

● **Editor's note:** #StandWithKerala. Readers can also lend a helping hand to those affected by donating through Lulu International Exchange - also with no service charge - to the Federal Bank, Account Number: 10210100412397 - Bank Branch: Thiruvananthapuram / Palayam - IFSC: FDRL0001021.

THE prestigious Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa Award for Voluntary Work in the Kingdom of Bahrain has opened its doors for the first time to expatriate organisations too. The award, which has

been a high point of recognition for volunteer groups and individuals for eight years, carries a cash prize of \$5,000 and is given by The Good Word Society.

The deadline for submission of applications is August 30. An award ceremony will take place on September 17 at the Ritz-Carlton Bahrain to coincide with Arab Day for Volunteer Work.

The main award is presented in cooperation with the Arab Union for Volunteerism and recognises pioneers of voluntary work in the Arab world.

This year, His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa, has also instituted a new award for the Best Bahraini Voluntary Project. In recognition of the yeoman service rendered by our expatriate brothers and sisters, this award is open to both Bahraini and non-Bahraini charity organisations whose work benefits the community in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

A selection jury will choose the winners according to a pre-determined set of criteria. Priority shall be given to projects that are dedicated to addressing a social challenge in the fields of health, education, economic and social relevance.

Hassan Mohammed Buhaza, chairman of the board of directors of the Good Word Society.

● **Editor's note:** To participate, fill out an online form by visiting www.gwsocietybh.org

SINCE my first trip to the Kingdom of Bahrain, there

have been publications which I either buy or pick up from various places that I do business with when I'm here and those that I mostly follow online when I'm back home. In the case of *GulfWeekly*, it's both!

Dusty Golden, US.

THE Bahrain Writers' Circle (BWC) and the Art Exhibition "Confluence – Where Words and Images Meet" to be held from 16-20 of September at Bahrain Financial Harbour (inauguration is on September 15 at 6.30 pm).

Some of the artists are BWC members, as they're also writers, and some artists are friends or acquaintances of the writers. All the writers are BWC members.

It's the first time that the BWC is holding such an exhibition where artists and poets team up creating unique art pieces. Please feel free to contact me if you are interested in any interviews or if you need further information. Happy to be at your assistance!

Wishing you and your

I LIKE to joke that if there's anything I got out of my schooling, it's a better appreciation of sleep!

The need to be awake and running early in the morning coupled with late nights dedicated to non-negotiable revision meant little time left for slumber.

Still, I kept early hours for the most part, and am still a self-proclaimed morning person (and this becomes all the more true when compared with peers).

However, for those of you who go by 'night owls'

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

WE'VE all heard of the infamous Awali bounce but this is ridiculous! The Whisperer wondered whether PGA professional Rory Young, who once explained to enthusiasts in this newspaper how to 'spin their wedges', was teaching players at Awali Golf Club a few new tricks.

This is a very snaky way to make it across the bunker on the sand course's 12th hole.



families EID Mubarak!

Warm regards
Claudia Hardt
Bahrain Writers' Circle
Tel.: +973 39799370
bahrainwriterscircle.net

YOU cannot imagine the delight and pride that flooded me when I walked into work to see Mai Al Khatib-Camille's wonderful article on my daughter Maddie on the cover of last week's issue.

I am a super, super proud father of one incredible and amazing young lady and your article captured it

perfectly. Thank you so very much. I am sure that the whole of Bahrain will be as proud as I am of her – well maybe not quite as proud as me!

Kind regards,
Stephen Harrison-Mirfield, Saar.

● **Editor's note:** British expat and St Christopher's School pupil Maddie, 15, won the 2018 World Kickboxing Organisation's World Championship K-1 Light Ladies gold medal and held up the Bahrain flag in the ring after her victory in the UK.

Youth Talk

By
Sarah Belal



and prefer staying up as opposed to turning in early, there's more to this than just plain preference.

Sure, night-time is quieter and gives the illusion of more time in the day but cognitive neuroscientist Sarah-Jayne Blakemore whose work mainly focuses on development in the teenage brain found that

the reason adolescents are more likely to be found sleeping late is because part of the brain that regulates their circadian rhythms, and deals with melatonin production, does so later in the evening.

And, so, in just the same way that a toddler would have to snooze come midday, a teenager requires shut-eye later in the evening.

So, for those of you reprimanded for keeping late hours, you have science to back you up!

A leading mall in Bahrain is attempting to take the strain out of shopping with an innovative initiative that allows customers to pick up their purchases with 'hands free' ease.

The new service means that shoppers will no longer have to lug around countless numbers of bags and boxes, attempt to lunch with family and friends or entertain children when their hands are full.

Customers can now drop off their purchases at three different Hands Free Shopping collection desks spread across the popular mall and can pick them up at their convenience once they've finished running their errands, watched a movie or relaxed over a coffee and a cake.

Duaij Al Rumaihi, senior mall manager, Majid Al Futtaim - City Centre Bahrain, said: "The unique service is designed with every type of shopper in mind; whether a parent strolling the mall with their little ones, a keen shopper looking for some relief or a tourist looking to have his or her shopping delivered directly to a hotel at a later time.

"The Hands Free Shopping takes the strain away whilst visitors continue to shop, dine or catch up with friends."

The service is powered by Fetchr, a regional start-up that combines logistics, technological and digital expertise to deliver 'customer-centric solutions'. It was first launched in the UAE in 2016, and, according to a mall survey, customer satisfaction was recorded at 95 per cent with many shoppers praising its 'wow' effect of getting their bags delivered at the click of a button in a few minutes anywhere, anytime.

Bahrain's shoppers, such as retired Abdullah Ali and his wife Kawkab, have already put the service to the test.

"Usually we spend hours at the mall shopping and carrying tons of bags along with us," Kawkab, who lives in Juffair, said. "It can get pretty exhausting, especially if we aren't done with our shopping and have lots to carry while going from store to store.

"When the lady at the counter saw us carrying our bags, she called us over and explained the free service to us and we were pleasantly surprised.

"It's such a great idea and I really love it. We spent an hour-and-a-half in the mall shopping and really enjoying ourselves."

The collection desks are located on the ground floor with one situated next to Furn

Shopping 'hands free'



COMMUNITY REPORT

By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
mai.alkhatib@gulfweekly.com

Café, Westin Hotel entrance, another by Carrefour Hypermarket and behind the main customer service desk at the Central Galleria.

During the drop off, the bags are sealed by Fetchr representatives and sent to a storage facility located close by for safe keeping until ready for pick up.

Delivery can be arranged using a City Centre Bahrain mobile app or calling the Hands Free Shopping team on 77388827, 15 minutes before leaving the mall. Shoppers can also use the Fetchr app to request a home delivery.

Bags can be delivered to any location, be it at a gate, a vehicle within the parking facility or to a coffee shop. People staying at the mall's attached hotels, Westin and Le Meridien, can also use the service.

Although delivery within the mall is free, those wanting their items delivered to their homes within the same day pay BD3 and those not in a rush can pay BD1.8 for the service for next day delivery.

The only restrictions are that the weight of each Hands Free Shopping delivery bag should not exceed 5kg and each customer's shopping must fit into the delivery bags.

The mall also reserves the right not to accept certain



STAND AND DELIVER: Happy shoppers Abdullah and Kawkab at the Hands Free counter and, below, Duaij with the team

shopping items such as beverages, perishable items, flowers, delicate or breakable objects, prescription drugs, money, jewellery, precious metal and watches, personal belongings, animals and any items that are considered illegal under Bahraini law.

● For further details, visit www.facebook.com/citycentrebahrain or www.citycentrebahrain.com

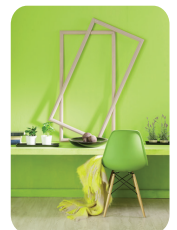


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Lulu Hypermarket

Afia Sunflower Oil 1.8Ltr. 3pcs – BD3.790
 Society Tea Dust 225gm 2pcs – BD1.590
 Kerrygold White & Red Cheddar Cheese per kg – BD4.390
 Freshly Foods Zingo Chicken Strips 500gm – BD1.690

Note: These offers are available in Lulu Hypermarket Stores from tomorrow until August 29.

Jawad Supermarket

Filiz Vermicelli 4x400g – BD1.000
 Libby's White Kernel Corn 2x433g – BD0.750
 Al Fares Icing Sugar 2x500g – BD0.890
 Alalali Basbousa Mix 2x500g – BD1.150
 Nature Valley Granola Bar Apple Crunch @20% off – BD1.100

Al Jazira Supermarket Zinj

Churchills Helter Skelter English Toffee 6x300gm – BD3.100
 Jubileu Moments Assortment 6x360gm – BD4.050
 Hacizade Rose and Lemon Turkish Delight 12x250gm – BD1.750
 Hacizade Rose and Lemon Turkish Delight Wooden 12x400gm – BD3
 Acizade Mixed Fruit Turkish Delight Blue 12x280gm – BD3.500

Carrefour Hypermarket

Mackintosh Quality Street 850g 10% – BD4.500
My Club Price BD3.990
 Sadia W.Chicken 900gx2 – BD1.750
My Club Price BD1.490
 Ariel Hs I Reg 7.5kg – BD6.250
My Club Price BD5.750
 Coca Cola Asst 2.25lx3 – BD1.390
 Nutella Chocolate Jar 750g – BD1.990
Note: These offers are available in Carrefour Hyper Market until August 26.

Rising high for mall's Eid entertainment

MULTIPLE Guinness World Record-holding Hungarian acrobatic troupe **FACE TEAM** is performing all this week for the first time in Bahrain at a popular mall.

The Britain's Got Talent finalists are presenting an action-packed Eid Al Adha show for the next four days at City Centre Bahrain with jaw-dropping moves and acrobatic tricks.

The 15-strong team members are famed for their mesmerising slam dunks, high-flying skills, combined with amazingly precise teamwork while presenting a spectacular and perfectly-choreographed entertainment programme.

City Centre Bahrain is also rewarding shoppers to daily 'Happy Eidiya' rewards, inviting customers spending BD30 or more to enter a draw for mall gift cards worth BD500. Ten lucky winners will win the daily prize until Saturday.



"Eid Al Adha is a special time when family and friends come together to celebrate and create lasting memories," says Duaij Al Rumaihi, senior mall manager. "Majid Al Futaim's vision is to create great moments for everyone, every day, and this unique, high-energy performance will deliver a compelling and memorable Eid experience. We are also excited to reward

shoppers during Eid Al Adha with a chance to win BD500 in gift cards each day during the special occasion."

The FACE TEAM 30-minute show takes place at the mall's central galleria, three times daily at 5pm, 30pm and 8pm.

For more details visit the mall's customer service desks, www.facebook.com/CityCentreBahrain or www.citycentrebahrain.com

Techtronic Specials

Your guide to the best in-store deals of the week

	Item	Make and Description	Store	Price
1	Water Dispenser	Nikai Water Dispenser (NWD 1208), 2 tap – hot and cold, cabinet storage, free standing, hot water tap with child lock for safety, cup holder.	Gajria Electronics	BD40
2	Camera	NIKON (D5300) DLSR Camera, 24.2 mega pixel, full HD video, 1/4000 second maximum shutter speed, 5 frames per second.	Home Electronics	BD269.990
3	Washer	Hisense (WTCT802) top load washer, 8 kg capacity, time indicator, 3D wind will Impeller, 5 program, smart fuzzy logic control, and self-programming function.	Sharaf DG	BD57.990 <i>Promotion from August 23-25.</i>
4	Cooking Set	Falez Silico Brown 9pcs cooking set.	Carrefour Hyper Market	BD32.900 <i>BD29.900 My Club Price</i> <i>Note: This offer is available until August 26, 2018.</i>
5	Television	Super General (SGLED55AUST2) 55-inch, 4K UHD, smart TV, WiFi, 2xHDMI, 2xUSB.	YKA Almoayyed & Sons	BD149.990
6	Washer Dryer	LG Washer Dryer Combo 8Kg/5Kg (F4J7THP8S), spin speed 1400RPM, 14 programs, true steam, steam refresh, 6 motion, smart thinq/add item, direct drive motor.	LG, Sehla showroom	BD330
7	Iron	Ceramic Steam Iron 2400w(X2150), auto shut off iron.	Kewalram & Sons	BD21.500
8	Notebook	Asus VivoBook Classic K542UF-GQ063T, Intel Core i7-8550U Processor, Windows 10 Home (64bit), 8GB DDR4 RAM, 1TB 5400RPM SATA, 15.6" 16:9 HD (1366x768) LED screen, nVidia GeForce MX130 with DDR3 2GB.	LuLu Hypermarkets	BD259.990 <i>Note: This offer is available from tomorrow until September 8, 2018.</i>

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GADGETS OF THE WEEK

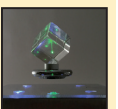
What is it called? JAR Password Device

What does it do? You can replace all of your passwords with this hardware. Instead of using passwords to access websites, you can log in or register with the touch of your finger. Visit www.amazon.com
Cost: BD37



What is it called? Magic Cube

What does it do? A magnetic levitation floating platform, which rotates prism cubes and objects. Its powerful magnetic technology creates a stunning visual presentation by suspending and rotating objects in mid-air while an embedded green laser illuminates the surfaces of the prism cube to produce a spectacular light show. Visit www.amazon.com
Cost: BD7.500



What is it called? ORKA Smart Water Bottle

What does it do? Track your water intake with this bottle. It keeps you hydrated as a Bluetooth signal will be sent to your phone and syncs your intake data, keeping you updated on your hydration level. Visit www.amazon.com
Cost: BD13



FinTechFocus

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



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Blockchain gaining ground

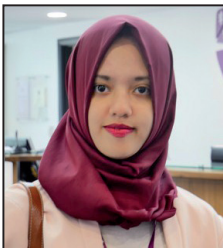
TRUST and money, two age-old concepts that keep the economic wheels turning, are at the dawn of fundamental change – on a scale we haven't seen before ... and the results could help provide an innovative solution to initiatives aimed at tackling poverty.

The internet has reduced the costs of searching, collaborating and exchanging information and virtually turned the world into a global village. Yet, as Peter Steiner said in his famous cartoon: 'On the internet, nobody knows you're a dog'.

We still can't trust others online when transacting, as the internet was created to move information, not value. That's where third parties, such as financial services providers, governments and tech companies, come in.

Although intermediaries do a great job resolving the trust issue, relying on them has become incredibly inefficient, leading to risks, decreased speed, increased costs and sometimes even fraud. Badreddine Tazrouti, a Netherlands-based tech specialist and trainer, and Namira Samir, a research fellow at the Bank of Indonesia, pictured above, have suggested that blockchain can solve this, in an article first published in *The Jakarta Post*, an Indonesian daily English language newspaper, which they agreed to share with *FinTech Focus*.

How? By making a network responsible for establishing trust, as opposed to centralised intermediaries, and giving the tools, mass collaboration and clever code to do so. This could reduce dependence on third



parties and significantly improve efficiency.

The original use of blockchain was to store and track crypto-currency transactions. However, new initiatives to benefit society more broadly are emerging. They include the establishment of secure digital identities, the fight against corruption, land registry and the coordination of food deliveries.

As such, some of these initiatives can be used to support the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in innovative ways too.

The SDGs cover a broad range of social and economic development issues. Although plenty of organisations are targeting the SDGs, achieving it will cost a tremendous amount of effort, which is not merely about financing, but also about the strategies that should be employed.

Recent estimates released by the World Bank reveal that more than a billion people live on less than \$1.90 a day.



These people's ability to escape poverty is strongly affected by several factors, and financial inclusion happens to be one.

One of the biggest gaps for the SDGs success is simply a lack of access to resources and funding. According to a report by the UN Development Programme '1.4 trillion a year is needed to reach global goals for the world's poorest'.

At this moment, billions of individuals are unbanked for a variety of reasons. While a large portion of the world's population may not have proper access to financial services, smartphone penetration rates are increasing. In some countries, more people have mobile phones than clean drinking water, electricity or toilets.

By leveraging blockchain technology, those without a formal identification could have an opportunity to obtain a digital identity, straight from their mobile phones. In combination with cheaper blockchain-

powered remittance services, low-income individuals and households can be enabled to save and lend more.

Ant Financial for example, an Alibaba subsidiary, is trialling blockchain remittances in tandem with Standard Chartered and GCash, whereas Sovrin and uPort are attempting to establish and manage digital identities by deploying blockchain technology.

As stated by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation 'roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year, approximately 1.3 billion tons, gets lost or wasted'.

That's a staggering amount. Consumer behaviour plays a big role. However, the study also discovered a lack of coordination between actors in the food supply chains as a major contributing factor. Most companies still keep records about their products in closed databases, or even on paper.

According to the IBM Food Trust initiative, leveraging

blockchain technology could create more efficient food supply chains, cut costs, improve shelf-life management and help reduce food waste.

The World Food Programme (WFP), the food assistance agency of the UN, distributes 3.5 million tons of food assistance annually to 90 million people in 80 countries. This is happening through a large physical and highly complex supply chain. It is currently researching and exploring how to benefit from blockchain technology for the traceability and optimisation of their physical assets.

Besides handing out food, the WFP increasingly hands out cash or vouchers to those in need, so they can buy food for themselves. Especially when food is available on the local market, but too expensive for the poorest to buy, cash and vouchers offer a solution without distorting the local economy.

Yet, this creates certain fraud and security risks and requires costly intermediaries.

Blockchain could play a major role in solving this.

That is why the WFP ran a pilot project named Building Blocks in the Jordanian refugee camp of Azraq, where 10,000 refugees redeem their digital vouchers and pay for their food through a blockchain-based system.

The results are positive. It enabled the WFP to improve the security, increase the privacy of the beneficiaries, reduce the possibility of risks and put every dinar that was saved on transaction fees in the hands of the refugees. The next phase of the pilot project aims to provide support to all of the 500,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan.

The above mentioned initiatives are just a few examples of the benefits the use of blockchain can create. There are more projects out there and possibilities beyond our imagination. Seizing them, however, will not happen overnight.

Blockchain technology could pave the way for the world's progress on realising the SDGs, which requires both macroeconomic and microeconomic approaches. However, one thing to be noted is that blockchain is not a singular solution. Collaborative efforts between stakeholders, in combination with the use of other technological advancements, are central to the SDGs realisation.



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Today (August 22)

The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay's poolside Italian restaurant, Vento, is offering a wide selection of pizzas from wood-fired ovens and artisan pastas. Available on weekdays from 11.30am to 11pm, and weekends from 11.30am to 12pm.

For reservations, contact 17115500.

The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is offering Family Spa bonding. Their 'Relaxed Us' offer aids muscle tension, releases stress and promotes wellbeing, 45 minutes for BD80. The 'Beautiful Us' offer is designed to cleanse, gently exfoliate and hydrate skin with a 100 per cent chemical-free product range from Australia and the UK, 45 minutes for BD85. The 'Glowing Us' offer is a special indulgent full-body treatment, 45 minutes for BD85.

For reservations, contact 17115500.



The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's Waves Seafood Restaurant is providing a Fisherman Platter, a delicious selection of seafood, priced BD6.5net. Held every Wednesday, from 6pm to 10pm. Also, at the hotel's Spices Restaurant, a Punjabi Thali Lunch is being held, offering a set menu priced BD5net, inclusive of one round of beverages.

Held every day, from 12pm to 3.30pm. Spices is also providing the Tandoori Kebab Sizzler, a mouthwatering dish skewered and cooked in tandoor, seasoned with the popular tandoori masala, priced BD10net. This August special is available until the end of the month. Spices is also hosting Tikka Thursday, comprising exotic Thursday specials, priced BD3.5net. Every Thursday, from 6pm-10pm.

For details, contact 17531122.

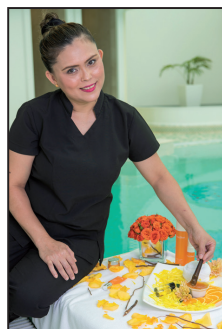
Relish this summer at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain by experiencing Thai mocktails



by the infinity pool or perfecting your tan at beach cabanas. The Summer Beach Pass provides access to Royal Beach Club facilities and lunch at La Med Restaurant. Priced BD25 per person, Sunday-Thursday. For details, contact 17586612.

Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's spa provides a refreshing wellness package, complete with a full-body massage followed by Vitamin-C scrub to help protect your skin. Priced BD90 for 90 minutes. This package is available until September 30.

For details, contact 17586808 or e-mail rc.bahrz.spa@ritzcarlton.com



Celebrate your birthday at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's Gourmet Lounge where celebratory afternoon tea, lunch, dinner menus and an inclusive birthday cake are provided. The special menu is available for a minimum of two and maximum of 10 guests. This offer is ongoing until September 31.

For details and reservations, contact 17586499.

Reef Resort's lobby café, Chocolaterie, is offering an array of signature teas, coffees, pastries, and delectable hand-made chocolates. The ideal venue for morning coffee or afternoon tea. Every day from 4pm-6pm. Net price of BD4.

Reef Resort's Tokyo Reef restaurant features a specially-created set menu that is offered on weekdays (Saturday-Wednesday, closed on Mondays) and guests can watch as the chef prepares sushi and sashimi before their eyes. The promotion is BD15++ per person.

InTouch Gallery in the InTouch Integrated Chiropractic and Rehabilitation Centre in Janabiya is staging a Family in the Mountains photography exhibition by Jody Peck starting at 7pm. The exhibition runs until the end of August. For details, contact senior curator Frances Stafford by emailing fstafford77@gmail.

com or calling 38327191 or WhatsApp 38872057.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's band the Eye Candies will entertain every evening, except on Saturdays, at the Crowne Plaza, Bahrain's Harvesters. The outlet is also dishing up a new Camel Burger with French fries and coleslaw and staging a Beast Burger Challenge which, if finished in the stipulated time, offers the meal for free, a T-shirt and wall of fame celebrity status. It runs daily from 11am to 9pm and is priced BD8.410. The hotel is also holding a steak night every Wednesday from 7pm at La Mosaïque Restaurant priced BD18net, with the 1kg steak challenge too.

For details, contact 17531122.

Tomorrow (August 23)

Experience the classic Japanese hotpot dish in Sato-style with Wagyu beef and homemade sauces at the Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa's Sato Restaurant for their Sukiyaki Promotion, ongoing until August 30.

For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfbahrain.com

There will be a Seafood Night at Ramada Hotel & Suites Amwaj Islands, every Thursday from 7pm-11pm. BD12++ for adults, BD6++ for children aged six to 12, children below six dine for free.

For details, contact 16000099 or email dining@ramadamanama-amwaj.com



Elite Resort & Spa hosts a sea & grill buffet dinner every Thursday and Friday from 7pm to 11pm at Al Naseem & La Brasserie priced BD12++ per person.

For details, contact 17313333.

Prime US beef and other gourmet cuisine will be on the menu at Mövenpick Hotel Bahrain's Al Murjan Ballroom from 7pm to 11pm. The Thursday Night Out is priced BD32net per person and includes selected beverages.

For details, contact 17460017 or email hotel.bahrain.fb@movenpick.com

Friday (August 24)

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's La Mosaïque Restaurant is hosting an International Theme Night buffet every Friday, from 7pm onwards.

Leisure Guide



Listings, lifestyle, travel, entertainment and sporting events by Kristian Harrison

Priced BD13net. For details, 17531122.

The Wyndham Garden Manama in Juffair is offering a Friday brunch at Café Mosaic from 12.30pm to 4pm, where food and soft drinks are priced BD12++ while food and selected beverages are priced BD22++.

For details, contact 66316666 or email dining@wyndhamgardenmanama.com

A buffet is served every Friday from 12.30pm to 4pm at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's La Med Restaurant, combined with drinks of your choice. Soft drinks priced BD30++, special beverages priced BD35++.

For details, contact 17586499.

Eat and party at the Reef Resort's Pool Delight with an unlimited seafood BBQ buffet accompanied by the chill out music from the Beat's Zone band. Every Friday from 7pm.

The Four Seasons Hotel's Bahrain Bay Kitchen is hosting back-to-school brunch Carnival Fridays, that will take place every Friday all through September. Enjoy homemade delicacies prepared by Executive Chef Hyung Gyu Kim as well as the carnival ambience with a photo-booth, face painting, stilt walkers, balloon artists and goody giveaways. Priced BD25++ inclusive of beverages, BD35++ inclusive of special beverages, BD12.5++ for children up to 12 years, and free for children below five years.

For details and reservations, contact 17115500.



The Four Seasons Hotel's Bahrain Bay Kitchen is hosting a family brunch from 1pm to 4pm. Priced BD25++ inclusive of soft beverages, or BD35++ inclusive of selected beverages.

For reservations, contact 17115500.

The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is hosting Friday Brunch at CUT by Wolfgang Puck Steakhouse from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. Priced BD26++ per person including



soft beverages, BD26++ per person including extensive beverage package for ladies, and BD36++ per person including extensive beverage package.

Also at the hotel's CUT by Wolfgang Puck Steakhouse, a Bistro-inspired lunch is being hosted every day from 12pm to 3pm. For details and reservations, contact 17115044.



The Crowne Plaza Bahrain hosts its Absolutely Fabulous Friday Brunch at Harvesters from 12.30pm to 4pm. It's priced BD31net for adults and BD8.750net for children aged seven to 12.

For details, contact 17531122.

Elite Crystal Hotel has a Friday Pool Party brunch at Waikiki from 1pm to 8pm with entertainment from DJ Santi, DJ Smiley and DJ Goose. It's free entrance for women with one welcome drink, BD10net for men with one complimentary beverage and BD25net inclusive of unlimited selected beverages and grills.

For details, contact 66666360 or 17360360.

The Mövenpick Hotel Bahrain's Construction-themed Friday Brunch offers a variety of food and a selection of drinks, a band and DJs from 12.30pm to 5pm at its Al Murjan Ballroom. It's priced BD36net per person, including unlimited beverages. Children aged six to 12 will receive 50 per cent price reduction and children under six dine for free.

For details, contact 17460017 or email hotel.bahrain.fb@movenpick.com

Saturday (August 25)

For Kids Special Movie Time, there will be a new movie showing at Ramee Grand Hotel & Spa, Seef's second floor Banquet Hall. This is being held every Saturday between 3pm to 5pm. It's BD2 per child, snacks included. For more details, contact 36693693 or 36479898.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's Waves Seafood Restaurant is hosting a three-course business lunch, from Saturday-Thursday, 12pm to 4pm. The lunch is priced BD8net.

For details, contact 17531122.

Experience spa treatments at the Crowne Plaza

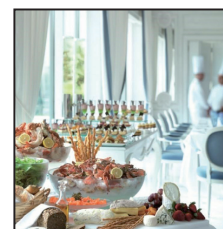
Bahrain's bFit Health Club. They are providing facials, body scrubs and combined packages to help you relax and rejuvenate, while their massage therapy focuses on alleviating stress and encouraging well-being.

For more details and bookings, contact 17525812.

The Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa is offering 'Art of Cooking' classes for those with busy lifestyles who have a passion for food. Classes will be taught through demonstration, from the building blocks of culinary practice to mouthwatering menus, led by professional chef instructors. Priced BD18net, including lunch. Seats are limited, book now. For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfbahrain.com

Families can enjoy a buffet meal at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's La Med Restaurant every Saturday from 12pm to 3.30pm. Soft drinks are priced BD15++.

For details, contact 17586499.



Enjoy an authentic Italian buffet at Ramada Hotel & Suites Amwaj Islands every Saturday, from 7pm-11pm. BD10net for adults, BD5net for children aged six to 12, children below six dine for free.

For details, contact 16000099 or email at dining@ramadamanama-amwaj.com

Soak up the stunning views from the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay's 50th floor and feast on Asian delights like Korean Fried Chicken Bao Buns, Wok Fried Shrimp Dumplings and Brisket Wontons at the Re Asia Cuisine by Wolfgang Puck's Saturday Brunch. The price is BD19++ and BD37++ with selected beverages. For reservations, contact 17115046.

The Bahrain Bay Kitchen at the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is staging a Saturday Brunch from 12.30pm-3.30pm offering a wide selection of Arabic favourites such as Lamb Ouzi and cold mezzeh, priced BD16++ including soft beverages.

For details, contact 17115000.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain has an Asian Night offering South East Asian specialties from Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, China and Japan starting at 7pm at La Mosaïque Restaurant priced BD13net (only food).
For details, contact 17531122.

Sunday (August 26)

The Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa's Fusion Restaurant will be offering steak wok, either grilled or wok-fried, with a choice of beef tenderloin, rib eye, or lamb chops, ongoing until August 31.
There is also an all-you-can-eat Sushi day, every third Sunday of the month for the price of BD12net. Terms and conditions apply.
For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfhotehbahrain.com

Ramada Hotel & Suites Amwaj Islands is hosting a ladies breakfast for the price of BD4net, every Sunday until Thursday from 7am-11am.
For details, contact 16000099 or email dining@ramada-manama-amwaj.com

Bahrain Ballet Centre is running a creative camp offering dance, accessory and costume design, arts and crafts, singing, group choir, sketching, story-telling and building games. The camp will run until the end of August for children aged five to 10, from 9am to 1pm, and is BD15 per day or BD55 per week.
For details, contact 17693232 or 33719180.

Inspire Bahrain is holding The Explorers Summer Camp until August 30 offering children music, art, drama, craft, science, cooking, sporting activities, teamwork and band production experiences. It's priced BD50 for one week, BD40 per week for three to five weeks or BD30 per week for six weeks or more.
For details, contact 39047734 or 33394774.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain hosts an Italian Night at La Mosaïque Restaurant from 7pm featuring pasta, pizza and more priced BD13net for the food only and there is a separate beverage package.
For details, contact 17531122.

Monday (August 27)

At the Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa's China Garden Restaurant, Chef Ding and his culinary brigade will be offering pan-seared Chinese delicacies, ongoing until August 31.
For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfhotehbahrain.com

Bahrain's award-winning Indian restaurant, Rasoi by Vineet, at the Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa, is providing an exclusive set menu by Michelin-starred Chef Vineet Bhatia, for the price of BD22++.
For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfhotehbahrain.com

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain has a French Night starting at 7pm and priced BD13net (food only) at La Mosaïque restaurant.
For details, contact 17531122.

The Mövenpick Hotel Bahrain has a Seafood Night offering the freshest catch of the day, a buffet and live cooking station priced BD24net including soft drinks, or BD29net

including unlimited selected beverages.
For details, contact 17460017.

Tuesday (August 28)

Ladies Night at the Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa every Tuesday, where women get a 50 per cent discount for the hotel's lounges, spas and restaurants, excluding Raosi by Vineet.
For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfhotehbahrain.com

The Wyndham Garden Manama in Juffair is hosting an American Night at Player's Lounge, the hotel's gastropub. Enjoy their offer of special beverages and Angus steaks every Tuesday from 12pm to 2am.
For details, contact 66316666 or email dining@wyndhamgardenmanama.com

At the hotel's Via Brasil Restaurant, the Cuban duo, First Class, Martha and Claudia, will perform live. Indulge in a Brazilian-style all-you-can-eat barbecue restaurant, where there is a wide selection of meats,

salads, hot appetizers, side dishes and drinks selection to complement your meal. Located on the rooftop of the hotel, the restaurant provides scenic views overlooking the Bahrain skyline, open from 7pm-2am.
For details, contact 66316666.



South American duo, Notre Viú, will be performing at the hotel's Player's Lounge. The



duo, Josie and Adye, starred at locations as varied as Venezuela, The Democratic Republic of Congo and the UAE before touching down in the kingdom. The Player's Lounge is open from noon to 2am.
For details, contact 66316666.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain has a Catch of The Day Seafood Night starting at 7pm and priced BD18net (food only with beverage package available) at La Mosaïque restaurant.
For details, contact 17531122.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's bFit Health Club is offering swimming classes every Monday and Wednesday. Classes for children aged eight to 11 are from 4pm-4.45pm, classes for children aged five to seven are from 5pm-5.45pm, and adult classes are from 6pm-6.45pm. The classes are priced BD40 per month for bFit Crowne Plaza Bahrain members, and BD50 per month (eight sessions) for non-members.
For bookings, contact 17531122.

THE Gulf Hotel Bahrain, Convention & Spa invites rock and roll fans to jump and sway at Sherlock Holmes in September to the sounds of Rolling Stones tribute band The Rolling Clones.

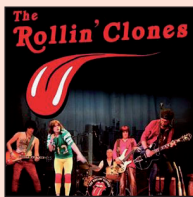
The popular act from London aims to thrill Bahrain with some of the chart-topper's greatest hits including *Jumping Jack Flash* and *Satisfaction*. The seven-man band was formed in 1997 to celebrate the Stones music and since then have been playing sell-out concerts in the UK and abroad.

According to various reviewers, they enjoy the reputation of being 'The best tribute to the Rolling Stones ever' and that no other band has come close!

Their shows are said to be electrifying, mimicking the actual band in energy and stage presence. The sets are packed full of luminously played classics from the early 1960s, 1970s and 1980s along with newer releases. The band members are also known for adding their own humour and flare to the original stars.

There will be a concert at Sherlock Holmes starting at 9pm on September 6 and tickets are BD5 if purchased in advance and BD7 on the night. There will also be a Tribute Band Brunch on September 7 from 12.30pm to 4pm priced at BD23 if bought in advance and BD28 on the day.

For details, visit www.gulfhotehbahrain.com



THE Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa is offering an Eid Al Adha-themed lunch buffet for three days at the hotel's Zahleh Restaurant, with live Lebanese entertainment, 'one man show' Raed and female singer Ella, priced BD20++.
For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfhotehbahrain.com

THE venue is also staging evening Eid entertainment featuring a belly-dancer, Arabic singers with a special dinner menu available during the three-day celebration for the price of BD26++.
For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfhotehbahrain.com

AT THE hotel's Iranian restaurant, Takht Jamshed, the stage will be set for a fulfilling Eid



lunch and dinner buffet during the three days, priced BD19++.
For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfhotehbahrain.com

THE Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is hosting special Eid brunches this week at its celebrated restaurants. The Bahrain Bay Kitchen will feature festive Eid favourites, live interactive cooking stations and cuisines dedicated to Arabian, international, Asian-fusion and Indian cultural fare. This will be held from today until Friday, from 1pm-4pm. The cost is BD25 for adults, BD12.5 for children aged six to 12, and free for kids under five.

Reserve a table by calling 17115500.
● See Eating Out: Page 11

MEANWHILE, CUT by Wolfgang Puck is serving up a stylish steakhouse feast, designed by Executive Chef Brian Becher.

This will take place from 7pm
Reserve a CUT by Wolfgang Puck Brunch place by calling 17115044.

THE Crowne Plaza Bahrain is hosting a special Eid lunch at it's La Mosaïque Restaurant

is inspired by the Danish 'leg godt' which means 'play well'. At the last count, 600 billion Lego parts had been produced at a rate of 5.2 million per hour.

The group began developing the interlocking toy bricks in 1949 and since then it has created a global subculture with supporting movies, games and competitions. Six LEGOLAND amusement

parks have been developed under the brand name and LEGO replaced Ferrari as Brand Finance's 'world's most powerful brand'.

Simultaneously, the kingdom is also set to host the Cartoon Network Live! Heroes Unite show which will run until Saturday.

The production brings together an international, award-winning creative



THE Movenpick Hotel Bahrain is hosting a special Eid lunch at Al Murjan Ballroom, featuring a variety of live cooking stations, Eid specialties and an international buffet. The cost is BD15++ per person, including soft drinks, and is available from 12.30pm-4pm.
For more information, call 17460017.

EID HAPPENINGS

on each day of Eid. Feast on authentic Arabic dishes and make this Eid a special occasion with friends and family. It takes place from MIDDAY onwards and the cost is BD15.750 net.
For more information, call 17531122.

REEF Resort & Spa's Chocolaterie is hosting a 'Reef Eid's high tea' event on every day of Eid from 4pm-6pm. Offering a comfortable, casual and relaxed setting, its range of signature teas, Eid pastries, sandwiches and delectable hand-made chocolates is the perfect way to spend an afternoon. The cost is BD4.



HUNDREDS of children have taken part in Heya Beya heritage festivals staged around Bahrain's coastal areas to mark the start of the Eid Al Adha celebrations.

Heya Beya is grass planted in baskets made of palm tree leaves. Every year, parents encourage their children to plant them before Eid, while others buy ready-made ones from local markets.

It is believed that the celebration dates back to

the ancient Dilmun-era as the tradition is only marked in Bahrain.

Bahraini children wear traditional clothes and head to the seaside at sunset with family and friends singing and chanting folk songs and at all at once they cast the baskets of grass into the sea. The ritual highlights Bahrain's unique heritage and teaches children to sacrifice something to which they have become attached to.

THE Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) is set to host a summer series of LEGO SHOWS, plus appearances by star characters from children's TV channel *Cartoon Network*, at the Bahrain International Exhibition and Convention Centre throughout Eid Al Adha.

THE LEGO SHOWS aim to bring to life the world of

LEGO under one roof and will feature millions of bricks, huge sculptures and models from today until August 31. The popular toy brick building brands such as Ninjago, City, Duplo, Friends and Star Wars will be present, alongside build challenges and obstacle courses.

LEGO was invented in 1932 by Danish entrepreneur Ole Kirk Christiansen and

team to put on a stage show for audiences of all ages featuring the channel's most popular heroes such as Ben 10, The Amazing World of Gumball, Adventure Time and The Powerpuff Girls.

Hosting this event comes in line with BTEA's strategy to further develop the kingdom's tourism sector and strengthen it under the slogan of 'Ours. Yours.'



THE new Mediterranean restaurant, Ya Hala, is open at Ramada Hotel & Suites Amwaj Islands.

The restaurant and lounge has a menu that boasts influences from the Middle East, Southern Europe to the Levant, alongside a relaxing environment with live music, where guests can take in the Amwaj Marina view.

The restaurant is open from 5pm-2am on weekdays, and 12pm-2am on weekends.

For more details, contact 16000099.



JOIN Nathalie Najem in a week of Ashtanga yoga, that will be held from October 5-12 at Namaste Bahrain, located on Budaiya Highway. Whether you are being newly introduced to this yoga style or would like to broaden your experience, this workshop is suitable for all abilities.

Mornings start with a traditionally-led class of the primary series, where breath and movement are perfectly synchronised, while afternoons are used to break down challenging poses. The week continues with Mysore style classes encouraging self-practice, where you will be receiving personal attention during this time.

Fridays include a led class from 9am-11am, then a primary series lab to work on challenging postures from 1.30pm-4pm. Saturdays include a led class from 9am-11am, an arms balances and inversions workshop to overcome fears and develop

confidence from 1.30pm-4pm, then home practice and Q&A from 4pm-5pm. Mysore practice is on Sundays-Thursdays, from 5pm-8pm.

For more details, visit www.namastebh.com/Nat and for bookings, contact 17591565.



ALSO at Namaste Bahrain, join Danielle Holding on September 8, from 9am to 12pm, in prenatal yoga, that is priced BD25. You will discuss pregnancy anatomy and related movement techniques, learn massages to ease aches

and pains during pregnancy and labour, explore movement and breathing exercises, build strength and stamina in preparation for labour and motherhood, meeting other mothers-to-be and building a supportive community.

You must be pregnant and have had permission from your doctor in order to participate. Bring healthy snacks, water, a notebook and pen.

For details and booking, email info@namastebh.com or contact 17591565.

SUMMER CAMP

Ongoing until August 30

The Bahrain Rugby Football Club's Tekkers Summer Camp has energetic activities planned for children aged six and above. 10am-3pm. BD12 per day, BD15 with lunch or BD50 per week, BD65 with lunch.

For details, call 17695809.



Ongoing until September 5

The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's summer camp involves a selection of outdoor activities including water sports, swimming, adventure games, along with culinary classes, arts & crafts and talent shows. From 9am-6pm. BD5 per activity.

For details, call 17586612.

Ongoing until September 30

The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is hosting a summer camp until September 30 from Sunday to Wednesday, 9am to 6pm, and Thursday to Saturday, 9am to 8.30pm. It will include an outdoor camping experience,

culinary events, swimming lessons and educational art workshops.

It costs BD7 for an hour, BD15 for three hours, BD30 with lunch or dinner for full day, BD135 with lunch or dinner for five days, BD155 with lunch or dinner for one week, BD265 with lunch or dinner for two weeks, and BD400 with lunch or dinner for one month.

The camp is complimentary for in-house guests and spa members. Children under the age of four must have a parent or nanny with them.

For details, call 17115091.



DATES FOR THE DIARY

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's La Mosaïque Restaurant will host a Picasso-themed brunch on August 31. Enjoy an afternoon of sculptures, collages, and an artistic feast. Priced BD31net with unlimited selected beverages, and

BD12.750net for children aged seven to 12. For details, 17531122.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's Spices Indian Restaurant is hosting its monthly Bollywood Karaoke Night, where you

can sing the night away with friends and family whilst indulging in a savoury buffet. Priced BD8.6net (food only) and BD12net (with special beverages), the event will take place on August 31, from 7pm onwards.

GulfWeeklyBookClub – in association with The Bookcase



BOOK OF THE WEEK by Linda Jennings – MAISY GOES TO PRESCHOOL, LUCY COUSINS, 978-0763650865 (WALKER)
BD2.900 for Gulf Weekly Book Club members

GOING to preschool is a lot more fun with a friend like Maisy to show you the ropes!

For preschool for Maisy means a day filled with friends and things to do, from the time she hangs her coat on a special peg to the time she says good-bye.

There's painting and snack time, stories and nap time (and a bathroom break in between). Soon everyone's ready to haul out the instruments and make some noise,

then head outside for a turn at the sandbox or slide.

In a bright, full-size storybook full of familiar scenes, this child-friendly look at a day in the life of a pre-schooler is one that newcomers and seasoned pros alike will be happy to share.

A global phenomenon, Maisy books have sold more than 21 million copies worldwide and are available in 29 different languages.

READ IT NOW IN PAPERBACK
MY SCHOOL DAY (SCHOOLIES), ELLEN CRIMI-TRENT
978-1849158534 (PRIDDY BOOKS)
BD4.900 for Gulf Weekly Book Club members.

FROM waking up to favourite lessons, the bus ride home to bedtime, children will love spending a day with the Schoolies!

This brilliant, bright board book is packed full of fun activities with lots to look for and do. Includes a clock with moveable hands, so that young readers can turn the hands to the right time as the Schoolies enjoy their day.

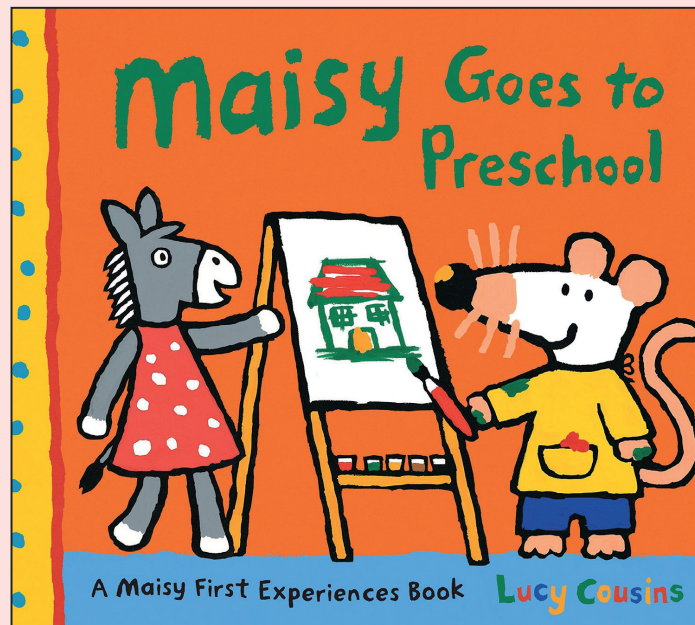
A very good way to help little ones understand the passing of time - with practical reassurance that with the moving of the hands, mummy will soon be at the nursery door for home time!

MY FAVOURITE READ OF THE WEEK

I'M READY FOR SCHOOL (SKILLS FOR STARTING SCHOOL), DK
978-0241184608 (DORLING KINDERSLEY)
BD4.900 for Gulf Weekly Book Club members.

HELP your child to be ready for school.

Join the **FREE** Gulf Weekly Book Club in association with The Bookcase by emailing bookclub@gulfweekly.com with your contact details.

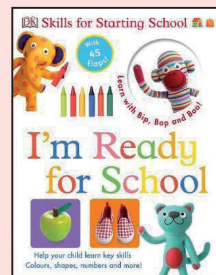


This interactive board book helps your little one learn key skills for school time through fun activities set in and around the home. Help your child match shoes in the bedroom, count fruit in the kitchen, spy colours and shapes in the playground, and sort toys in the garden.

This new series of interactive books and playbooks brings the brightest and best start to learning for every child. The 45 lift-the-flaps and peep-through cover in I'm

Ready for School enable your child to learn key skills and knowledge through play, exploration and conversation.

Colourful characters, Bip the Cat, Bop the Elephant, and Boo the Monkey, will inspire and develop a confident, curious and capable child.



Eating Out

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

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Adding flavours to your Eid

FOR families like mine, living the Bahrain expat dream, the Friday brunch scene will remain forever engraved on our hearts.

It's a shame it only happens one day a week ... although, surprise, surprise, that's not the case this week!

For the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay has extended a warm invitation for guests to welcome Eid Al-Adha together with family and friends at a special four-day Eid Brunch Extravaganza at Bahrain Bay Kitchen.

It seemed only fair that I called into one of my favourite dining destinations to share some of the delights in store for the festivities - and the brunches to come now that everyone is returning to the island after their summer holidays.

Executive Chef Hyung Gyu Kim and his team have prepared an extensive gourmet buffet to mark this holiest of occasions, which started yesterday and features a traditional goat carving station as its centrepiece.

Diners can also enjoy a diverse feast of regional and global specialities, including hot and cold mezze items, a sushi station and salad bar, generous buffet set-ups with dedicated live cooking stations, a Moroccan tagine island, homemade pasta station and an Asian section.

Guests with a sweet tooth will also appreciate the rich dessert buffet, which offers a selection of family favourites including specialities from Pastry Chef Imad Boukli, all rounded off with a free-



FAVOURITE FARE: Traditional dishes alongside some unique offerings and, below, left, Sushi Chef Dilep

GOURMET REPORT
By STAN SZECOWKA
editor@gulfweekly.com



flowing chocolate fountain.

In keeping with the 'spirit of giving' associated with Eid, a delicious box of traditional Bahraini sweets is also being presented to each table for guests to take home and enjoy with their families.

I met up once again with director of food and beverage Vincent Chasseignaux and executive sous chef Ravneet Manchanda who introduced me to one of the new stars of the show, sushi chef Dileep, a recent recruit who is a master of the Japanese dish, who was determined to show off

his prowess, which I totally encouraged.

Now, as regular readers of the *Eating Out* page will be well aware, I'm a bit of a sushi snob having been served by world champions in the art, no less.

Sushi Chef Dileep is dynamite, on a par with the very best, and his two creations of note are worth the visit alone ... and that is saying something because the Bahrain Bay Kitchen never fails to impress, in fact, I'd go as far as to say, its award-winning brunch somehow gets better every time I visit.

One outstanding offering contained a crispy shredded

crab in a delicate rice frame that was truly outstanding, it really gets its claws into your palate, narrowly ahead of a superb slice of salmon settled in a web of cream cheese and mixed vegetables.

For once the good lady wife, Kathryn, agreed with me. Eyes sparkling, she whispered softly in my ear: 'the very best'. I thought she was talking about me but, no, it was the sushi.

It's always great to start on a culinary journey on a high note and the journey continued on its path to perfection when we ventured towards the main courses.

I decided to have a little

slice of everything and was prepared for the bouquet ahead after a 5km morning run in the sun (the only reason I put on my trainers every day is so that I can tuck into some treats, a small price to pay for guilty pleasures).

I went for a bit of everything, firstly strips of luscious lamb featured in the Arabic favourite ouzi kept hot under a bed of rice, followed by slices of slowly-roasted Australian Wagyu rump and pieces of melt-on-your tongue beef brisket. Perfection on a plate came complimented with a generous helping of asparagus spears, green and

gorgeous, still crisp to the bite the way I like it.

I had to venture back for some herb-crusted smoke salmon and a helping of ribs, because Kathryn kept raving about them, served in a smoky sauce of their own, surf and turf at its supreme.

As you would expect, the desserts were just as delightful such as the Chocolate Crunchy Cake and the Almond Financier was totally nuts and well worth investing in!

The Eid Brunch Extravaganza will take place each day at Bahrain Bay Kitchen until Friday between 1pm and 4pm. The event costs BD25 per adult. Children below five eat free, while youngsters between six and 12 will receive 50 per cent savings.

And, coming soon, will be the Back to School Brunch with a carnival atmosphere, photo-booth, face painting, stilt walkers, balloon artists and goodie giveaways - can't wait to try that!

● For more details, call 17115000, visit fourseasons.com/bahrain and check out Stan's YouTube interview with Vincent and Chef Ravneet by placing your smartphone over the QR Code.



Millions on the ma

COMMUNITY REPORT

By STAN SZECOWKA
editor@gulfweekly.com



MUSLIMS are completing the annual hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia which includes circling the Kaaba in Mecca that Islam's faithful face five times each day during their prayers.

Hundreds of Bahrainis were among those taking part in the five-day pilgrimage which represents one of the world's biggest gatherings every year, and is required of all able-bodied Muslims once in their life who are physically and financially capable of undertaking the journey.

The hajj offers pilgrims an opportunity to feel closer to God amid the Muslim world's many challenges. "We are very blessed by Allah to be in this place, and we pray to Allah to make the Islamic nations from the West to the East in a better situation," said pilgrim Essam Eddin Afifi.

Muslims believe the hajj retraces the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad, as well as those of the prophets Ibrahim and Ismail. Muslims believe God stayed the hand of Ibrahim after commanding him to sacrifice his son, Ismail. In the Christian and Jewish version of the story, Abraham is ordered to kill his other son, Isaac.

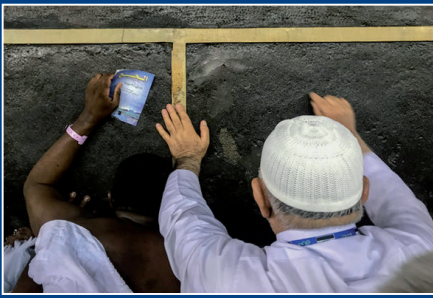
The Kaaba represents the metaphorical house of God and the oneness of God.

Muslims circle the Kaaba counter-clockwise seven times while reciting supplications to

God, then walk between the two hills travelled by Hajar, Ibrahim's wife. Mecca's Grand Mosque, the world's largest, encompasses the Kaaba and the two hills.

Before heading to Mecca, many pilgrims visit the city of Medina, where the Prophet Muhammad is buried and where he built his first mosque.

After prayers in Mecca, pilgrims head to an area called Mount Arafat, where the Prophet Muhammad delivered his final sermon. From there,



March to show faith



STANDING TALL:
Pilgrims circling
around the Kaaba
during Hajj

Eid al-Adha celebration. The holiday, remembering Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son, sees Muslims slaughter sheep and cattle, distributing the meat to the poor.

Major General Mansour Al Turki, the spokesman of the Saudi Interior Ministry, told journalists that more than two million Muslims from abroad and inside the kingdom had taken part in this year's hajj.

The Ministry of Communication's Smart Hajj initiative also offered pilgrims phone apps to help them navigate the pilgrimage.

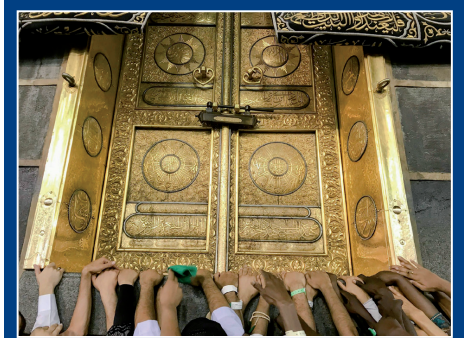
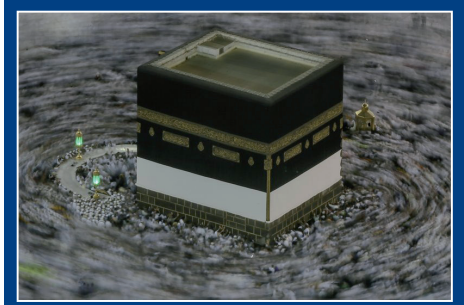
The *Manasikana* app, launched by the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah guided pilgrims through every step of the journey.

The authorities also reinforced the internet infrastructure in and around Mecca by placing 3,000 mobile antennas to improve 4G reception. They also worked to provide WI-FI coverage for pilgrims throughout the journey.

The towers provided visitors with uninterrupted mobile internet to maintain contact with their families and make use of the ministry's online services.

"Saudi Arabia is moving to a new era with a huge ambition. We will open doors and combine minds to spread a message that serves Islam and technology," Nouf Al Rakan, the chief executive of the Saudi Federation for Cyber Security, Programming and Drones.

● **Eid celebrations:**
Pages 8, 9 & 10



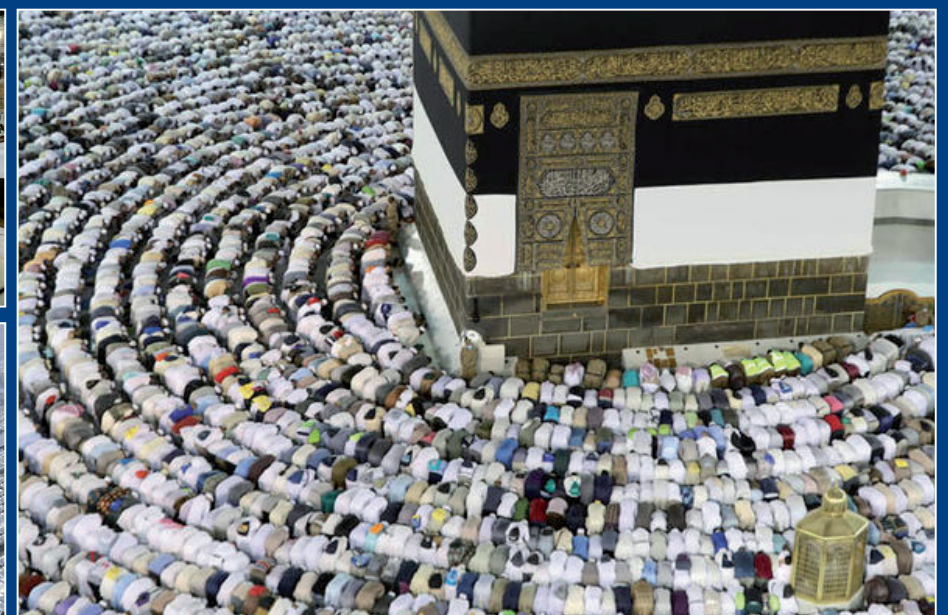
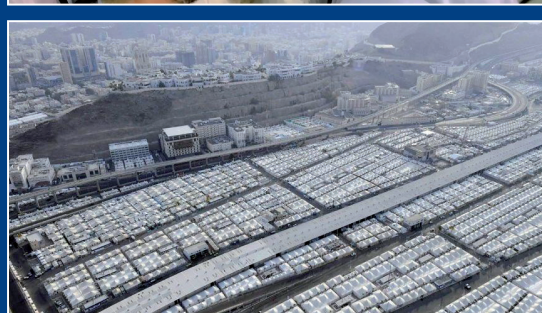
pilgrims head to an area called Muzdalifa, picking up pebbles along the way for a symbolic stoning of the devil and a casting away of sins - that

takes place in the Mina valley for three days.

At the hajj's end, male pilgrims shave their hair and women cut a lock of hair in a

sign of renewal for completing the pilgrimage.

In Bahrain and around the world, Muslims are now marking the end of hajj with the



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New in Post

GULF Brands International has appointed Phil Williams as GM. The company says his appointment will play a 'critical role' in supporting its growth strategy and drive its position in the Bahrain beverage market. He replaces Ron Peters who has taken on a new group-wide leadership role as deputy CEO of the Gulf Hotels Group.

Phil joins Gulf Brands International from Spinneys Abu Dhabi where he led the retail division, operating and developing nine retail stores. Phil's career has seen him specialise in brand building, marketing, on trade sales and retail operations within the industry in the UK and Middle East.



In focus



BAHRAIN Islamic Bank (BisB) has recently signed an agreement with Kingdom Properties Real Estate to provide property financing for potential residents of the Janayin Al Hamala Project, enabling Bahraini nationals working in the kingdom to make a down payment on selected homes starting from five per cent under the Mazaya Ministry of Housing initiative.



GPIC's health committee organised a lecture on cupping therapy presented by family medicine consultant Dr Sumaya Al-Jowder. Cupping is traditionally used to provide relief from general fatigue and muscle aches, amongst other conditions, and involves placing a heated specially-made cup on the body, increasing the blood flow to achieve a therapeutic outcome.

SocialScene

Why wait a month! Join Social Scene every week

Bright future



A WORKSHOP was recently held by Dr Simon Galpin, MD of Bahrain Economic Development Board in collaboration with Bokhwa Group and Saar Mall.

The Invest in Bahrain workshop formed part of a summer training programme being staged at the mall and was attended by team leaders and trainees.

Lounge launch



PARTY people were welcomed by hotel GM Antony Hurtis to the soft opening of Rainforest Lounge. Located at Gulf Suites Hotel in Amwaj Islands, revellers were treated to complimentary beverages served with cocktail snacks.

Also present at last Wednesday's opening were President Group Bahrain managing director and chief executive Abdul Sattar, Lona Real Estate general manager Chris Woodward and members of the media.

The tropical design of the outlet features plants, waterfalls and an array of figures of rainforest animals, including elephants, tigers, monkeys, frogs, crocodiles and tropical birds.

Rainforest Lounge served seafood, beef, ribs and chicken to pastas and pizzas on the night after a cake-cutting ceremony with entertainment provided by a five-piece Cuban band and DJ Sonia.

Beat the heat



AS PART of VIVA Bahrain's ongoing community-focused initiatives, the telecom operator conducted a nationwide 'Beat the Heat' campaign, which involved the distribution of more than 3,000 complimentary ice creams in the local community to help battle the



scorching summer heat.

Two VIVA trucks travelled across Bahrain to hand out the icy treats at various outdoor locations including con-

struction sites, playgrounds and neighbourhoods in Sitra, Riffa, Manama Souq, Hamad Town, Salmabad, Souq Muhharraq and other areas.

Career-tasting



ROTARY Club Salmaniya held its regular lunch meeting at the Golden Tulip Hotel with a presentation by Amal Kooheji on an inspirational 'career-tasting' youth project that the Rotary Club of Adliya is supporting. The year-long project links students with potential employers.

Education Matters



An educational insight and comment by head teacher Chris Fenton

THE end of the academic year for those who sat their A* levels came last week when the results were announced along with the associated whoops of joy or sobs of disappointment that came along with them.

I'm delighted to say that my nephew performed wonderfully and is now on his way to Oxford in September and, in a few days' time, it will be the turn of those who sat their GCSEs in May and June to await the outcome of their hard work or, in some cases, lack of it.

One of those awaiting his results is my eldest son. He has worked hard and hopefully will get the grades he needs to enter the college of his choice, but if he doesn't then my job is to ensure that we regroup and rebuild to be sure that the path he wants to take opens up to him next year.

If he does then alongside

the celebrations, my job again will be to support and encourage him as he embarks on the next stage on his path to become a doctor which is the ambition he holds at the moment.

Either way, it is the support we give as parents that helps students make sense of, and learn from, the sometimes miserable experience of sitting exams.

The end of August is always a trying time both for schools and students because the number of passes is ultimately a reflection.

If a school has a consistent pattern of success it suggests that it must be a good school which in the Kingdom of Bahrain impacts on the number of applications they receive and equally the fees they can charge. And, so conversely, if a school doesn't perform as well, the opposite assumption is often made.

What the end of year exam results don't adequately



reflect, however, is progress. Experienced educationalists will know that attainment and achievement are two entirely different things and although receiving a pass grade from A* to C, is seen as success, a child

who scores a D, E or F hasn't necessarily 'failed' just because they haven't achieved a universally recognised pass.

What the finalistic system of grading gives us is a distorted view of

what constitutes success in an education and examination system that leans too heavily on the memorisation of facts rather than demonstrating a deep understanding through practical opportunities to

apply knowledge learned.

Let's take for example a child who in his final year of GCSEs working at an average F grade. Now, he works hard, attends tutoring and tries his hardest and, at the end of the year, scores an average D grade. Is he a failure? He has moved forward two whole grade bands in a year which is a magnificent achievement for anybody, yet under the current accepted norms, he has failed because his achievement and his attainment don't add up to an agreed view of success, and that can be catastrophic.

It takes an experienced staff to lift a student who is experiencing this mismatch and get them to dust themselves off and make the same level of progress again the following year to open up the doors to the fabled A* - C grades give access to ... and I only hope that schools in Bahrain are equipped to do so.

SocialScene

Pakistan Independence Day



MORE than 300 members of the expat community and guests attended the flag hoisting ceremony at the Pakistan Embassy Bahrain to celebrate the 71st Pakistan Independence Day.

The national anthem and

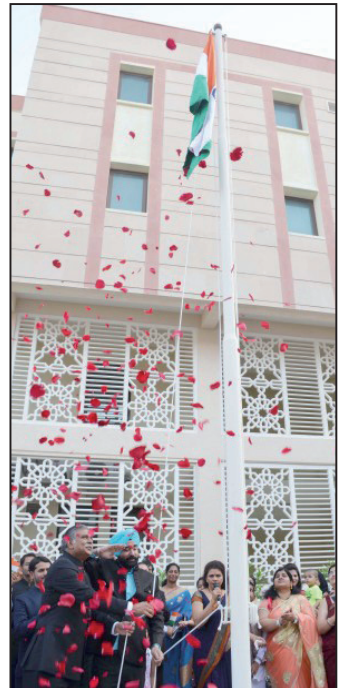
patriotic national songs were featured alongside a cake-cutting.

Murad Al Wazir, Pakistan Embassy charge d'affaires, attended with other embassy officials.

Every year, the Pakistan Club

also celebrates the event with a flag ceremony, followed by a breakfast for more than 200 Pakistanis. For the occasion, the club also invited singers, artists and performers both from Bahrain and Pakistan to take to the stage.

India Independence Day



THE Indian flag was raised at the Indian Embassy in Seef and the national anthem was played during an event hosted by Indian Ambassador Alok Kumar Sinha as members of the Indian community in Bahrain celebrated their country's 72nd Independence

Day yesterday.

Indian schoolchildren also staged a cultural show at the ceremony, at which Mr Sinha read out a message from Indian President Ram Nath Kovind.

A reception was later staged at the Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel, Residence & Spa. Assis-

tant Foreign Minister Abdulla Al Doseri attended the event along with MPs and local businessmen and families.

Flag-hoisting ceremonies also took place at the Kerala Catholic Association (KCA) and the Bahraini Keralaeya Samajam.



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Property Weekly

A guide to the best properties home and abroad – edited by Mai Al Khatib Camille email: mai.alkhatib@gulfweekly.com

Let's lounge around in style

A delightful modern and spacious fully-furnished apartment is up for sale in bustling Juffair offering stunning views of the sea for a touch of the high life.

The apartment, which features a total built-up area of 72sqm is located in the 24-storey Spark Residence, developed by Bin Faqeeh Group, which is located close to an array of shopping malls and popular restaurants.

The property includes a guest washroom, a sizable living and dining area and an open plan kitchen. The bedroom has a built-in wardrobe and ensuite bathroom and step out on to the balcony for the calming views of the sea and the surrounding area.

As for amenities, there is a swimming pool and a gym for men and women. Each apartment is allocated one parking space.



FACTS AT A GLANCE

Location: Spark Residence, Juffair

Reference number: AP656

Rental price: BD500

Reception Areas: 1

Bedrooms: 1

Bathrooms: 1

Additional information: There is a swimming pool and a gym.

For further information on this and other homes call Star Real Estate 17298210.



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ROVE RESIDENCE

Modern Townhouses in Al Jasra

BD 1,200 with private pool exclusive / BD 1,000 without pool exclusive

Each Semi-furnished villa features the following:

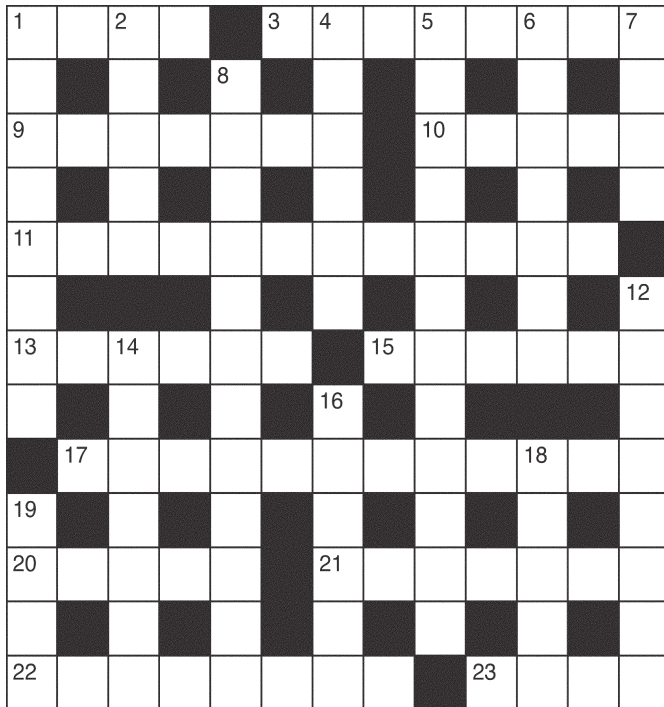
- 4 En-suite Bedrooms
- Living Room
- Outdoor Kitchen
- 2 Parking Spaces
- Servants Quarter, Laundry Room
- 4.5 Bathrooms
- Indoor Kitchen
- Small Private Garden
- Pool, Gym

Time Out



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crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

1. Attendant (4)
3. Gone (8)
9. Insult (7)
10. Junction (5)
11. Independent (12)
13. Disc (6)
15. Accumulate (6)
17. Refractory (12)
20. Boredom (5)
21. Prolonged shortage (7)
22. Make-believe (8)
23. Dropped (4)

DOWN

1. Dais (8)
2. Blunder (5)
4. Ensnare (6)
5. Judgement (12)
6. Slimmer (7)
7. Obligation (4)
8. Tory (12)
12. 'On the wagon' (8)
14. Purify (7)
16. Sour (6)
18. Quarrel (5)
19. Cry (4)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... scored a maiden century for India in the 1st Test against England in March, 2007?

WHAT ... does PVFS stand for?

WHERE ... was the writer J.R.R. Tolkien born?

WHEN ... did Europol, the EU criminal intelligence agency, become fully operational?

WHO ... wrote the song *Piggies* on the album *The Beatles*?

WHAT ... Premier League football team did Craig Short play for from 1995-99?

WHERE ... in the Mediterranean would you find a flag featuring a Trinacria?

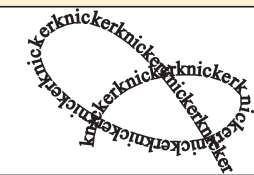
WHEN ... was the author Paul Auster born?

just so

m r o w

shook shook shook shook shook

CHARDONNAY ♀♀♀ & ♫



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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 6 Feature; 7 Throw; 9 Broad; 10 Miracle; 12 Involuntary; 14 Poltergeist; 18 Impulse; 19 Arrow; 21 Knell; 22 Pervert.

Down: 1 Yearn; 2 Attain; 3 Art; 4 Thwart; 5 Forlorn; 8 Rivulet; 11 Boorish; 13 Commend; 15 Tousle; 16 Strive; 17 Mourn; 20 Wet.

JUST SO: Joan of arc, It stands to reason, The wizard of Oz, Even money.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

Joe Dante; Russia; Walford; 1990; Frances Hodgson Burnett; Dog; Woolloongabba, Brisbane, Queensland; 1961.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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

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Fashion Weekly

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

Collection worth falling for

POPULAR UK fashion line Marks & Spencer will be launching its Autumn Winter 2018 collection in stores around the globe and online next month convinced it can make a positive impact against the competition and win over hearts with its style and grace.

The brand has designed a collection that is simple yet elegant, cohesive yet versatile and believes it is tailored to suit a woman's ever-changing needs from day to night.

The Poetic line features a colourful array of clothing in pink tones from soft blush to rose and rich burgundy to fuchsia. Hues are highlighted by luxurious textures such as chunky knitwear and plush corduroy. The Sartorial collection sees classic shapes and chic tailoring reworked through a sports lux lens with emerald green and cobalt blue giving the aesthetic an upgrade. Classic check separates meet quilting and wool blends for a strong fabric direction.



FASHION
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
mai.alkhatib@gulfweekly.com

Those are the Autumn-inspired offerings. Winter offers a more supple and sumptuous vibe in the Soft Heritage look. It's all about layers of animal print and caramel tone with a hint of lilac lifting the overall mood. Meanwhile, Onyx offers a contemporary take on the party spirit with hero dresses, statement pieces and a rich colour palette of teal and ochre.

The Occasion wear will make any female stand out with sparkly, sequined dresses and figure hugging jumpsuits coming in an array of eye-catching fabrics and flattering styles.

From the beginning, when Marks and Spencer sold its first bra in 1926, the brand became a byword for British-made quality goods. Shoppers fell in love with 'easy-care' fabric dresses in the 1950s and 60s and with its tailoring and knitwear in the 1970s and 1980s.

A renewed focus on design in the 1990s saw the

retailer scale new heights. Its clothing even graced the front cover of *Vogue* magazine. Supermodel Amber Valetta was featured wearing the M&S polyester shirt.

And with acclaim from the fashion press came bumper sales. Marks and Spencer's sales peaked in 1997 and 1998 but in more recent years the store has struggled against discounters and budget chains at the lower end. Brands like Zara and H&M have been taking a chunk out of the middle end of the market too, while designer labels has taken a bigger bite at the higher end.

Marks and Spencer should be about beautiful basics, according to fashion observers and the revival in its appeal started to take place three years ago when fashionistas went mad for its mid-length suede skirt after it was worn by fashion celebrity Alexa Chung.

This latest collection should add to the feel good factor. Check out the range at stores in City Centre Bahrain and Seef Mall shortly.



Film Weekly



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



Rich cultural plot

THERE is a reason that people love a good Cinderella story. If it's done well, it shows us a beautiful and glamorous royal or rich world that many of us dream of, then exposes its sordid underbelly.

Crazy Rich Asians, based on the book by Kevin Kwan, takes that classic story, infuses it with buckets of charm and gives us a look into the culture of Singapore with a cast that all deserve to be seen again and again.

In the film, Rachel (Constance Wu) is dating Nick (Henry Golding), but is unaware of his family's extraordinary wealth. When they fly back home for a friend's wedding, Rachel learns about the money and is faced with the judgment of his family, particularly his mother Eleanor (Michelle Yeoh) and friends.

The story may be simple at first, but it's not just Cinderella dressed in a new set of clothing.

During the film, we get a look at the culture of old money in Singapore, and the differences between what people want for their children in different cultures.

Eleanor tells Rachel that in America, there is too much emphasis on following your passion, whereas in Asian cultures, they know how to build something that lasts.

It's not just the culture of the haves and have-nots here. It's the culture clash between the East and the West.

While we're watching that story, we're also indulging in the glamour and extravagance of money, from the insane bachelorette party on a private island, to the lavish flower-viewing social event of the season. It's hard not to drool over

CRAZY RICH ASIANS

STARRING: Constance Wu, Gemma Chan, Lisa Lu, Henry Golding

DIRECTOR: Jon M Chu

GENRE: Romantic Comedy

RATING: 15+

RUNTIME: 113 Mins

the first class plane suite, the fairy tale wedding with water and flowers actually running down the aisle, the *Great Gatsby*-style parties and the food.

While we're watching that, however, we're feeling Rachel's discomfort, trying to be a good guest and to be respectful of family traditions, and being rebuffed and judged, despite her best efforts.

Aside from director Jon M Chu's luscious visuals, the film rests firmly on its cast. Wu brings bucket loads of charm, and is the perfect way in for viewers. The chemistry between her and Golding is palpable (and he's clearly got a future as a romantic lead). Yeoh is devastating as Nick's judgmental mother. She doesn't even have to say a word. Her withering glance is enough.

She's so good at the stare that it makes you wonder if they cut out paragraphs of dialogue once they realised that she can say it all with scrutinising eyes and pursed lips.

The big standout here, though, is Awkwafina who plays Rachel's college buddy Peik Lin. Her energy carries the viewer through the scenes with her family that might have been tedious in another film. Ken Jeong, who plays Peik Lin's father, also adds to the merriment.

It must be said, all is not happy in the end here.

Cinderella story or not, *Crazy Rich Asians* doesn't wrap everything up in a neat little bow. Not everyone is going to come around in a week in real life, and it isn't all roses here either. It's more relatable that way, moving forward despite obstacles, rather than just conquering them.

If there is a critique, it's that some of the minor characters get lost. It's something that often happens when a book is translated into film. It relies on the fact that book readers know who the two step-sister-like women snarling at Rachel are, or that they know the depths of the extended family's characters. Some of the jokes here rest on that, and as someone who hasn't read the book, I was very aware that I was missing quite a bit. It didn't take away from the overall enjoyment, but I wish I was in on the jokes.

Overall, *Crazy Rich Asians* stuns with its glamour, and gives us the sort of vicarious wish-fulfilment that is the appeal of Cinderella stories the world over.

We see the lives of the wildly wealthy and what life would be like if we had that kind of money, but also, the drama, judgment and restrictions that go along with it. It's got a standout cast, all of whom should be appearing as leads in films going forward.

It shows us a culture that many might not be familiar with. Whether you're familiar with the book or not, it's definitely worth a watch.

● **Showing in:** Cineco, Saar, Seef II, Wadi Al Sail, The Avenues

KRISTIAN'S VERDICT



1 popcorn - stay home
5 popcorns - start queuing

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Bite-sized trailer

The Equalizer 2

DIRECTOR: Antoine Fuqua

CAST: Denzel Washington, Pedro Pascal, Ashton Sanders

PLOT: Denzel Washington returns to one of his signature roles in the first sequel of his career. Robert McCall serves an unflinching justice for the exploited and oppressed – but how far will he go when that is someone he loves?



SHOWING IN: City Centre, Juffair Mall, The Avenues, Seef I & II, Saar, Wadi Al Sail, Seef Muharraq

Down a Dark Hall

DIRECTOR: Ben Lewin

CAST: Paul Rudd, Connie Nielsen, Mark Strong

PLOT: Kit (AnnaSophia Robb), a difficult young girl, is sent to the mysterious Blackwood Boarding School when her heated temper becomes too much for her mother to handle. Once she arrives at Blackwood, Kit encounters eccentric headmistress Madame Duret (Uma Thurman) and meets the school's only other students, four young women also headed down a troubled path. While exploring the labyrinthine corridors of the school, Kit and her classmates discover that Blackwood Manor hides an age-old secret rooted in the paranormal.



SHOWING IN: City Centre, The Avenues, Seef II, Seef Muharraq

BlackKkKlansman

DIRECTOR: Spike Lee

CAST: John David Washington, Adam Driver, Laura Harrier

PLOT: It's the early 1970s, and Ron Stallworth (John David Washington) is the first African-American detective to serve in the Colorado Springs Police Department. Determined to make a name for himself, Stallworth bravely sets out on a dangerous mission: infiltrate and expose the Ku Klux Klan. The young detective soon recruits a more seasoned colleague, Flip Zimmerman (Adam Driver), into the undercover investigation of a lifetime.



SHOWING IN: City Centre, The Avenues, Seef II, Seef Muharraq

imdb movie charts

Current Position	Title	Weekend Takings	Gross to date
1	Crazy Rich Asians	\$25M	\$34M
2	The Meg	\$21M	\$84M
3	Mile 22	\$14M	\$14M
4	Alpha	\$11M	\$11M
5	Mission: Impossible – Fallout	\$11M	\$181M
6	Christopher Robin	\$9M	\$67M
7	BlackKkKlansman	\$7M	\$23M
8	Slender Man	\$5M	\$21M
9	Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation	\$4M	\$154M
10	Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again	\$3M	\$111M

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Motoring Weekly

Steering you to the best deals on wheels

Hydrogen full steam ahead

TOYOTA is increasing its investment in hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, designing lower-cost, mass-market passenger cars and SUVs and pushing the technology into buses and trucks to build economies of scale.

As Toyota concentrates on improvements for the next generation of its Mirai hydrogen fuel cell vehicle (FCV), expected in the early 2020s, it is hoping it can prove wrong rival carmakers and industry experts who have mostly dismissed such plans as commercially unviable.

The maker of the Prius, the world's first mass-produced 'eco-friendly' petrol-hybrid car in the 1990s, says it can popularise FCVs in part by making them cheaper. A fuel cell doesn't burn the hydrogen. Instead, it's fused chemically with oxygen from the air to make water. In the process, which resembles what happens in a battery, electricity is released and this is used to power electric motors that can drive the vehicle.

"We're going to shift from limited production to mass production, reduce the amount of expensive materials like platinum used in FCV components, and make the system more compact and powerful," Yoshiyuki Tanaka, chief



PRODUCTION PLANS: The pioneering Mirai might be the start of a 30,000 fuel-cell surge in cars and buses

engineer of the Mirai, said.

It is planning a phased introduction of other FCV models, including a range of SUVs, pick-up trucks, and commercial trucks beginning around 2025, a source with knowledge of the automaker's plans said.

The company declined to comment on specific future product plans. But it has developed FCV prototypes of small delivery vehicles

and large transport trucks based on models already on the road, as Tesla develops a battery-operated commercial semi-truck from the ground up.

"We're going to use as many parts from existing passenger cars and other models as possible in fuel cell trucks," said Ikuro Ota, manager of new business planning for fuel cell projects at Toyota. "Otherwise, we

won't see the benefits of mass production."

Toyota hopes to eventually build 30,000 fuel-cell passenger cars and buses a year, although it did not say exactly when it hoped to achieve that goal. It's a major increase from the 3,000 fuel-cell vehicles Toyota said it built last year. The company expects its home market of Japan to account for about one third of that

volume. Toyota already sells the Mirai fuel-cell sedan in 11 countries. The car is built in the same Motomachi plant that built the Lexus LFA, and like the LFA the Mirai is churned out in very small numbers. That's due in part to lack of hydrogen fuelling infrastructure, as well as a high purchase price (the Mirai starts at \$59,285, around BD22,000) in the US) owing to high production costs.

The company is also betting on improved performance. Toyota wants to push the driving range of the next Mirai to 700-750km from around 500km, and to hit 1,000km by 2025, a separate source said.

Driven by the belief that hydrogen will become a key source of clean energy in the next 100 years, Toyota has been developing FCVs since the early 1990s.

Paul's legacy could be kept alive by Walker brothers

NEARLY five years after Paul Walker's death, his brothers say they're open to playing his character again in the *Fast* and *Furious* franchise.

Producers asked Caleb and Cody Walker to fill in for their brother and help complete *Furious 7* after he died in a fiery off-set car crash in November 2013.

His face was digitally superimposed onto his brothers' performances for scenes that Walker had not yet shot and in a modified ending in which his character Brian O'Conner drives off

into the sunset.

The character remains alive in the fictional *Fast* universe and is mentioned twice in 2017's *The Fate of the Furious*.

"I just hope we get to – I don't know – have a little cameo and bring Paul back to save the day and I get to help create that again," Caleb Walker, 40, said in a recent interview last week. "That's my dream and I hope we get to do that in one of the future movies."

"I think there could potentially be a way to do it. But it would take a lot of

thought and it'd have to be tasteful," Cody Walker, 30, added. "He was the real deal, the real car guy."

Caleb and Cody Walker were promoting *I Am Paul Walker*, a new one-hour documentary about the actor's childhood, family and career, directed by Adrian Buitenhuis.

Both Walker brothers became fathers for the first time last year and live in Southern California. They have not re-watched the full *Furious 7* film since attending the premiere in April 2015.

"It's kind of creepy

sometimes when you're like, 'Oh, that's me.' It doesn't feel right," Caleb Walker said. "I think one day, when our kids are a little older and we are able to share that experience with them and be like, 'Hey look, this is your uncle Paul. He was the greatest guy in the world and here we are being able to portray him and finish up this movie for him.' That's when I think it will really hit that 'I think it was really worth it and special' and all that."

Walker was 40 when the Porsche Carrera GT he was driving spun out of control,



UNITED FRONT: From left, Cody, director Adrian and Caleb, and, below, the wreckage of Paul's Porsche Carrera GT

struck three trees and burst into flames on a street in Santa Clarita, California.

The next scheduled film in the *Fast* franchise is a spin-off featuring Dwayne Johnson and Jason Statham. It's set for release next year.

● **Film Weekly:** Page 19



Mighty trucks and fine fare

AL Haddad Motors held an official handover luncheon with Agility (Bahrain) to celebrate several years of partnership and handover 26 Mercedes-Benz Actros trucks.

A number of representatives from Agility, Al Haddad Motors and Mercedes-Benz Trucks attended the event staged at ART Rotana Amwaj Islands.

The new Mercedes-Benz Actros trucks were recently launched by Al Haddad Motors in their showroom in Tubli, as reported in *MotoringWeekly*, and are equipped with state-of-the-art technologies its designers say help in ensuring a safer, more comfortable and more efficient journey.

The luncheon was attended by a number of executives including the senior vice president of Agility – Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman, Vivek Veetil, Agility Bahrain CEO, Baiju Thomas, as well as the head of sales & key account management Mercedes-Benz Trucks, Ross Davies, key account manager Mercedes-Benz Trucks, Ionut Dumitrescu, Al Haddad Motors GM Warren Hudson, and Al Haddad Motors commercial vehicles manager, Ashraf Shareef.

For more details about Mercedes-Benz Actros trucks call into the Al Haddad Motors showroom, call 17785454 or visit the Mercedes-Benz website on www.bahrain.mercedesbenzme.com



HAPPY HANDOVER: Executives from Al Haddad Motors and Mercedes-Benz Trucks and Agility at the luncheon

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He made a second return to McLaren in 2015 with the belief he could help turn around the team as it paired with manufacturer Honda. It led to three frustrating seasons as McLaren-Honda was unreliable and unable to compete. Alonso didn't hide his unhappiness and McLaren split with Honda at the end of last season.

Now with Renault, McLaren is still struggling and Alonso, who is currently ninth in the standings, had been debating his future, although this year the season didn't start off too badly with McLaren scoring points in consecutive races with both cars for the first time since the 2014 season. But despite the progress, Alonso conceded after the second race in Bahrain - where he finished in seventh place with teammate Stoffel Vandoorne just one behind - that the result flattered the car's performance.

He was not permitted to skip the Monaco Grand Prix to return to Indianapolis in May, but he was allowed to compete in the World Endurance Championship super-season and enter Le Mans. A two-time winner at Monaco and now a Le Mans winner, Alonso only needs to win the Indy 500 to complete motorsports' unofficial Triple Crown.

Zak Brown, CEO of McLaren Racing, called Alonso 'the pre-eminent driver of his generation'. "There is a time for everyone to make a change and Fernando has decided the end of this season to be his," Brown said. "We respect his decision, even if we believe he is in the finest form of his career."

"Our open dialogue with Fernando has meant we could plan for this eventuality. While evaluating his future during the past months, Fernando's competitiveness has been undimmed. He has continued to perform at the highest level throughout, as we know he will do in the remaining nine races of this year's championship."

Brown was a key player in Alonso's entry at Indianapolis, Daytona and Le Mans. He supported Alonso's quest to enter other series and signed off on the driver skipping the Monaco Grand Prix in 2017 to race at Indianapolis.

Brown is also behind McLaren's potential entry into IndyCar and the team is believed to have courted four-time IndyCar Series champion Scott Dixon to be Alonso's teammate. Dixon on Monday announced a contract extension to remain with Chip Ganassi Racing, but acknowledged the presence of McLaren in his free agency talks made it a 'noisy' process.

Alonso will be remembered for ever Bahrain having won the grand prix here in 2005 and 2006 driving for Renault

Alonso's triple triumph



GOOD TIMES: Alonso's win in Bahrain in 2010, right, above, 2005 and, below, 2006

and 2010 sitting in the Ferrari hot seat.

04-04-04 will always be a date to be treasured in Bahrain. That was the day the kingdom witnessed its first Formula One race at the brand new \$150-million circuit. According to Martin Whitaker, who was then the BIC's chief executive officer, although the Ferraris conquered a new frontier as Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello completed a second one-two finish of the season, for Alonso, who was to win the next two races here, it was 'a good learning experience'. He proved his growing reputation finishing sixth after having started from 16th on the grid.

In 2005 Bahrain got a corner seat as Formula One witnessed a change of guard. Alonso, who later that year became the youngest champion, made it a pole-to-podium victory. He was in a class of his own as Ferrari's hopes of making a winning debut with its new

car evaporated in the stifling desert heat. He further joined the world champions' misery lapping Barrichello towards the end of the race while Schumacher went off the track on Turn 10 of lap 12.

Whitaker described Alonso's victory as a 'one-man super show', years later reminiscing in *GulfWeekly*: 'The day clearly belonged to the superlative Spaniard who was in imperious form'.

The same thing could be said for the following season's outing in Sakhir which featured classic Formula One action as Alonso won the race with an air of a chess grand master.

The 24-year-old star, who started fourth on the grid, outwitted the seven-time champion Schumacher in a magnificent move coming out of the pit lane and held on for a memorable victory. That deft move was the defining moment of a daring race embellished by six classic overtaking manoeuvres, two

spin-offs and a car blaze.

The BIC kicked off the 60th anniversary season of the FIA Formula One World Championship in 2010 with a new layout from its existing 5.412km circuit to 6.299km and Alonso made his mark again. He celebrated a triumphant Ferrari debut with his first win since 2008.

Even if a bottle of non-alcoholic vintage was the victor's traditional reward in Bahrain for cultural reasons, the double Formula One champion splashed the superlatives.

"It's a very special day for me," said Alonso, savouring his third sweet victory in Bahrain, the first driver to complete a hat-trick of wins at the Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix, one more than his Brazilian team mate Felipe Massa, who came second. "Coming back to the top of the podium is always special but I think it is even more special with Ferrari, with all the history behind the team and

all the expectations a driver has when he drives for Ferrari. There is no better way to start the relationship. I am in the best team in the world," added Alonso.

But it was all to turn sour. Despite his two titles, some motorsport analysts suggest Alonso's time at Ferrari will provide the pervading memory, the way he dragged so much more out of uncompetitive cars than they deserved and, in 2010 and 2012, came agonisingly close to the title in cars that were not the quickest.

In 2010, he missed out only because of a massively misguided strategy call by Ferrari at the final race of the season in Abu Dhabi. That year, the Ferrari was on average 0.7secs a lap slower than the Red Bull in qualifying - although only 0.3secs off in the second half of the year, when Alonso closed a 47-point gap with driving of a consistent excellence no-one else could achieve.

In 2012, when the Ferrari was only the fourth fastest car, he somehow contrived to win three races and lead the championship for much of the season. Only a late-season burst by Sebastian Vettel, ironically now with Ferrari, after a decisive development on the Red Bull, and Alonso's awful luck in being involved in first-corner accidents in Belgium and Japan for which he was in no way to blame, cost him the title.

Alonso's relationship with Ferrari went downhill after that, as the frustrations of fighting against ever-bigger odds grew too much.

In hindsight, it's hard not to see his move to McLaren-Honda for 2015 as an emotional one after the titanic ructions of his time with McLaren-Mercedes in 2007.

To say that year defined Alonso's career would be oversimplistic, the BBC's chief F1 writer Andrew Benson, suggested. He was at McLaren for only a year the first time

All eyes on the new kid on the block

From Page 24

"Fernando is, of course, one of them, so it's particularly special that I'll be taking his seat as part of the next generation of Spanish racing drivers behind the wheel of a McLaren."

McLaren Racing chief executive Zak Brown said Sainz, who began his F1 career with Toro Rosso, provided 'the perfect blend of youth and experience'.

"We're incredibly excited to have Carlos join us as a McLaren driver,"

added Brown. "We've been assessing him for some time now and rate him very highly among the next generation of young talent emerging through the ranks in Formula 1."

After the Hungarian Grand Prix, Sainz sits 11th in the drivers' championship standings with 30 points, with his best race finish fourth in Singapore while racing for Toro Rosso in 2017. McLaren's other driver is currently Belgian Stoffel Vandoorne.

SPANISH SPEED: Sainz and Alonso



in Sakhir

well," Alonso said afterwards, referring to technical mishaps in off-season testing that limited McLaren to the fewest laps of the 10 teams running at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya.

McLaren Group's two main shareholders are Muntalakat and businessman Mansour Ojeh. Shaikh Mohammed bin Essa Al Khalifa, is executive chairman of the holding company which combines British racing and manufacturing conglomerate McLaren Technology Group and McLaren Automotive.

Despite the F1 challenges, the entire team joined Brown in paying tribute to Alonso's 'enormous contribution' to McLaren, with the CEO describing him as 'a legend both for the championship and for the team'. "Fernando is an important part of our story and will join an illustrious line of McLaren drivers," he said. "On behalf of Shaikh Mohammed, Mansour and our entire board, we wish Fernando every success in the future."

Rima Al Masri, chief operating officer at Muntalakat who sits on the McLaren Group board, posted a photograph of herself with the race ace holding a coffee table book full of images of the kingdom on the internet business network site LinkedIn and wished him 'all the success' in the future.

But perhaps the last words, should go to the driver himself, hinting his departure from F1 may not be forever. "I want to thank everyone at McLaren," Alonso said. "My heart is with the team forever. I know they will come back stronger and better in the future and it could be the right moment for me to be back in the series; that would make me really happy."

"I have built so many great relationships with many fantastic people at McLaren, and they have given me the opportunity to broaden my horizons and race in other categories. I feel I am a more complete driver now than ever."

"Finally, I would also like to thank my former teams, team-mates, competitors, colleagues, partners, journalists and everyone I have worked with in my F1 career. And, especially, my fans all over the world. I am quite sure our paths will cross again in the future."



around. But the seismic nature of events certainly coloured opinions of him ever since.

In short, Alonso fell out with the then McLaren team boss Ron Dennis, who it's claimed reneged on a promise to give him priority status in the team over then-novice Lewis Hamilton. In the vortex of distrust that followed, a cataclysmic weekend at the Hungarian Grand Prix, in which Hamilton also shares some blame, proved the effective end of the line.

In one massive row with Dennis, Alonso threatened to reveal incriminating emails to governing body the FIA in the ongoing 'spy-gate' case in which McLaren were accused of illegally possessing Ferrari technical information and stormed off. He sent his manager back to apologise and withdraw the threat, but it was too late. Dennis had phoned FIA president Max Mosley, and told him of the emails.

The resulting hearing cost McLaren \$100m when they were fined by the FIA. Mercedes, as 40 per cent shareholder, had to pay \$40m.

The other controversy for which Alonso will always be remembered was 'crash-gate' in 2008, when his Renault team were found guilty of orchestrating a crash by his team-mate Nelson Piquet to help Alonso win the Singapore Grand Prix. Alonso was cleared by the FIA of any involvement.

For the past three years with McLaren, Alonso could only dream of having a car reliable enough to compete with the top teams in Formula One. Or at least finish races.

After several years marked by technical issues and race retirements, Alonso failed to finish 17 races over three seasons.

In the first race of the current challenge, Alonso showed that his team now at least had new fight since switching from its Honda-made engines to ones made by Renault as he took fifth place with a strong performance at the opening Australian Grand Prix, while Vandoorne finished ninth.

"The last couple of years have been difficult, and I think the winter has been difficult, as



SIGNING IN: Alonso with fans and, right, with Al Masri



A glance at what could've been

VOICE OF SPORT
with Kristian Harrison

ASSESSING Fernando Alonso's Formula One career is somewhat peculiar to say the least.

If you read any of the opinion pieces about the great man that have been published in recent days, including this one, you'll see a recurring theme. They all have a kind of 'what might have been' element to them.

He won two world titles, numerous races, was a title contender in three other seasons (to the final race), and produced some of the finest moments of driving brilliance the sport has ever witnessed.

Yet, even with that kind of record, fans are still asking ourselves how much better a career he could have finished with.

Just eight more points spread the right way and Alonso would be leaving F1 as a five-time rather than double world champion – that would have been a much better reflection of his actual stature.

One of F1's all-time greats bids the series goodbye at the end of the season, the final throw of the career dice that was his move back to McLaren having floundered on the team's deep-seated problems.

He made some bad calls out of the car, none more so than in Hungary 2007, a misstep from which his career would never fully recover. Alonso's subsequent row with team boss Ron Dennis played a huge role in the emergence of the 'spygate' scandal, when McLaren staff were found to have received technical information from Ferrari, as mentioned in the main article about his F1 departure. The McLaren infighting allowed Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen to snatch that year's title.

Imagine if he'd stayed at McLaren first time around for the full three years of his contract. Both Felipe Massa and Lewis Hamilton made several crucial errors in their 2008 title fight and it's difficult to imagine Alonso would have.

Then he'd have been in place in 2009 to have witnessed the rise of Red Bull – and maybe he'd have had the opportunity of joining Sebastian Vettel there from 2010 onwards. In fact, it's widely believed in the paddock that he turned down an offer to drive for them around that time, perhaps sceptical of the viability of a newly-bought team run by a soft-drinks company being competitive compared to the long-standing, iconic manufacturers.

Had it happened that way, would anyone have some close to Alonso's career stats?

That misstep ultimately created room for rival Lewis Hamilton's career to grow in the way it did, by giving him a free run at McLaren and by relegating his number one rival to a lesser performing car for the duration of his career.

When Alonso took Michael Schumacher around the outside of 130R in Suzuka, with an apex speed of 208mph in 2005, it was as if a baton was being passed. He was already a newly-minted world champion at that point, but this single move was arguably a greater rubber-stamp of greatness than the title.

He prevailed again after a season-long fight with Schumacher in 2006 and, following the German's retirement, might have expected to have enjoyed a period as the pre-eminent man of the era. You might argue he was unlucky that the one guy who would be able to challenge that status should come along in the very next season – and as his team-mate.

The paranoia that arose from that was natural. It seemed unfeasible that a rookie could be at that level and given that McLaren had backed Hamilton since he was 13, a British team investing in a British driver, alarm bells began ringing in Fernando's mind.



TOP GEAR: Kristian with Alonso at the BIC

In hindsight, his reaction to that was when his career began to be less than it was going to be. He'd had to fight his way through racing from a Spanish backwater without a silver spoon – and with no McLaren backing him through the ranks. He did so with a ferocity that's said to be typical of the region. He was wily and smart but his was perhaps an unsophisticated intelligence.

His reaction to the Hamilton-McLaren situation – intensified by his firm belief that Dennis had promised him a number one driver priority and was not now living up to that – was not measured. It was uncompromising and raw. For all he was a double world champion, he was still young – and for one so strong-willed, circumstances couldn't have been more unfortunate. That all came to a head that day in Hungary. There were those at McLaren and Mercedes who wanted him out of the car there and then. Wiser counsel prevailed and he remained there, but only until the end of the season.

He's a really good guy and immensely likeable. But that competitive ferocity will take him to extreme places, and unfortunately it bruises people. Under just slightly different circumstances, that ferocity would only have fuelled more achievements. But just a slight tilt of circumstance put limits upon the possibilities of a virtually limitless talent.

At 37, he still remains one of F1's best drivers. He may not be as ultimately fast as Hamilton, but he's arguably more complete. His race craft, intelligence and engineering knowledge have enabled him to outperform his car on numerous occasions.

Of course, the complication is that Alonso's total focus on success, and singular vision in how to achieve that, also made him difficult to work with, which hurt his career by eliminating his chances of securing drives at most top teams.

It's not entirely his fault; his failure to secure a top drive is as much an indictment on the sport's political map as his own demeanour.

Since the infamous Hamilton-Rosberg duels, top teams are reluctant to put two high-profile drivers together in the same garage. Mercedes and Ferrari are very content with Valtteri Bottas and Raikkonen playing second-fiddle to Hamilton and Vettel – even if they outwardly deny it – whilst Red Bull have built their entire marketing strategy around wonderkid Max Verstappen.

Why upset the apple cart now, especially as it would require forking out a huge salary? Sadly, F1 is often about the business and political practicalities rather than what the fans want these days.

Once again, we are left wondering what might have been.



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TOP OF THE LEAGUE FOR LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL SPORT

August 22 - 28, 2018

FAREWELL FERNANDO

TWO-TIME champion Fernando Alonso, who raced to victory three times at the Bahrain International Circuit, will leave Formula One at the end of the season.

Fearless Alonso, who turned 37 in July, is competing in his 17th F1 season, his fifth with McLaren, and has amassed 32 wins, 22 pole positions and 97 podiums to date.

Beyond his two titles – in 2005 he became the then-youngest world champion in F1 history – and has been championship runner-up three times.

“After 17 wonderful years in this amazing sport, it’s time for me to make a change and move on,” he said. “I have enjoyed every single minute of those incredible seasons and I cannot thank enough the people who have contributed to make them all so special.

“There are still several races to go this season, and I will take part in them with more commitment and passion than ever.

“Let’s see what the future brings; new exciting challenges are around the corner. I’m having one of the happiest times ever in my life but I need to go on exploring new adventures.”

Next stop is potentially a move to IndyCar in the United States.

McLaren Racing, partly-owned by Bahrain’s sovereign wealth fund, Muntalakat, confirmed last week the Spaniard will not return to F1 next year for an 18th season, and Alonso said F1’s leadership group tried to



MOVING ON: Alonso behind the steering wheel of an F1 car until the end of this season before starting a new challenge

FORMULA 1

By STAN SZECOWKA
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persuade him to stay with the series.

“I made this decision some months ago and it was a firm one,” Alonso said. “Nevertheless, I would like to sincerely thank Chase Carey and Liberty Media for the efforts made to change my mind and everyone who has contacted me during this time.”

There is speculation that McLaren will enter IndyCar with Alonso as one of its drivers. Alonso ran the Indianapolis 500 last year and was in position to win the showcase race until his

engine failed.

He also ran the Rolex 24 at Daytona as a warm-up for the 24 Hours of Le Mans, in which Alonso was part of the winning team. Alonso has been pursuing the top motorsports events and has said he would like to return to Indianapolis and add a win in ‘The Greatest Spectacle in Racing’ to his resume.

IndyCar, Indianapolis Motor Speedway and NASCAR used social media accounts to urge Alonso to race next year in the US following his announcement. NASCAR mocked up a formal invitation to the Daytona 500 that ‘requests the honour of your presence’.

Alonso delivered a farewell video to F1 and in it noted he had ‘some other bigger challenges than you can offer me’ as the camera showed Alonso standing in front of his Indy 500 helmet.

Alonso enjoyed his one IndyCar race, which was a partnership between Andretti Autosport and McLaren. He led 27 laps and had one of the strongest cars on the track until the engine failure ended his race. IndyCar drivers have openly called for him to return to the series.

“It would be appealing to me, if I were him,” said Ryan Hunter-Reay, winner of the 2014 Indianapolis 500. “He’s as hungry as ever

to win. I think IndyCar is a great sport. This series is the most competitive series in the world. You cannot name who is going to win each race. There are no favourites.”

That’s not the case in F1, where it appears, unless a major incident occurs, only a handful of drivers are in contention each round. The top teams are evident at the start of each season and catching the leaders is a virtually impossible task. Alonso is behind only Kimi Raikkonen as the oldest driver on the F1 grid. His last championship was in 2006 and his last F1 victory was in 2013.

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Welcome Carlos Sainz

CARLOS Sainz has signed a multi-year deal to replace Fernando Alonso at McLaren from the 2019 season, the team have confirmed.

Fellow Spaniard Sainz, 23, is currently on loan at Renault from Red Bull and said it was a ‘childhood dream’ to join McLaren.

“I’ve been a McLaren fan for as long as I can remember,” he added. “It’s a great name in the sport with an incredible heritage, and the list of drivers that have raced for McLaren over the years are among the heroes of Formula 1.

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FRESH FACE: Sainz

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